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THE SHRINE OF WISDOM

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- (2) To enshrine the most essential and vital aspects of Truth which have been presented by the great religious, philosophical, and mystical systems of the world, and by the known great Teachers of mankind, and which are most capable of elevating, enriching, and expanding the human consciousness.
- (3) To contribute towards the synthesis and harmonious integration of all presentations of the wisdom of the ages by relating all particular expressions to the universal first principles from which all are derived.
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THE FIRST PRINCIPLES OF IDEAL GOVERNMENT AS SET FORTH IN THE "REPUBLIC" OF PLATO

In the *Republic*, as in his other Dialogues, Plato sets forth fundamental philosophical principles, but these are by no means fully evident at first sight, for, as Olympiodorus says, "his meaning cannot be apprehended without great difficulty because his writings, like Homer's, are to be considered physically, ethically, theologically, and in short, multifariously; for these two souls are said to have been generated all-harmonic: and hence the writings of both Homer and Plato demand an all-various consideration."^{*}

In the *Republic* the aim of those taking part in the inquiry is to discover the nature of justice in the human soul. But since this is found to be a very difficult task, Socrates suggests that just as the same words can be read more easily when written in large, clear letters than when written in small letters, so the nature of justice may shine out more clearly when it is seen in a large-scale plan of a state or city consisting of many individuals than when seen in the image of a particular individual. Hence, as Proclus says, "The design of Plato in this dialogue is both concerning a polity and true justice, not as two distinct things, but as the same with each other. For what justice is in one soul, that such a polity as is delineated by Plato is in a well governed city."

^{*} Thomas Taylor's translation is used except where otherwise indicated. For the sake of brevity parts of quotations from different paragraphs are sometimes given as though they were continuous, in cases where no alteration of the sense is involved.

Thomas Taylor, in his introduction to the *Republic*, says: "With respect to justice, the subject of this dialogue, such, according to Plato, is its universality and importance that if it had no subsistence injustice itself would be sluggish and vain.

"Thus, for instance, if a city were full of injustice it would neither be able to effect anything with respect to another city nor with respect to itself, through the dissension arising from those that injure and are injured. In a similar manner, too, in an army, if it abounded with every kind of injustice it would be in sedition with itself, and being in sedition with itself, would be subverted and become inefficacious for the purpose of war. Thus, too, a household in which there is no vestige of justice, as it must necessarily be full of dissension, will be incapable of effecting anything, through the want of concord in its members. But what is most wonderful of all is that injustice, when inherent in one person only, must necessarily fill him with sedition towards himself and, through this sedition, must render him more weak with respect to any kind of endurance, and incapable of pleasing himself. Of necessity, therefore, everyone who acts unjustly, if he is able to effect anything whatever, must possess some vestige of justice; so inseparable is the union between power and justice.

"It follows that even in the worst habit of the soul, in which reason is blinded and appetite perverted, such habit is indeed inefficacious in consequence of justice being most obscure in such a soul, so as to appear to have no subsistence whatever; yet such a habit has a being in a certain respect, so far as it is impossible that common conceptions can entirely desert the soul, and especially its desire of good. So far, therefore, as it is impelled towards good, it participates of justice. And if it were possible that the soul could be perfectly, that is, in every respect, unjust, it would perhaps perish, for this is the case with the body when it is perfectly diseased. But that in such a habit there is a vestige of justice is evident, for it is unwilling to injure itself and to destroy things pertaining to itself, . . . but not knowing how to preserve itself, it is unjust, attempting to preserve itself through such things as are not proper."

Proclus explains the correspondence between a republic and a human soul by showing what they have in common. He says: "Indeed the three genera from which a polity consists are

analogous to the three activities of the soul; the guardian, as that which consults, to reason; the auxiliary, as that which engages in war, to the irascible (passionate) power; and the mercenary (economic), as supplying the wants of nature, to the desiderative power."

After some discussion, it is agreed that justice consists in virtue and wisdom while injustice consists in vice and ignorance, and that justice will eventually produce unity, harmony, and perfection, while injustice will lead to disintegration, discord, hatred, and sedition. This holds good both for a city or state and for the individual soul, for justice is the characteristic virtue essential for a good life whether in the soul or in a community.

Socrates and his friends then fashion from its beginnings an imaginary city or state and during the process the principles necessary for the establishment of justice are seen to emerge and play their part in the right government of the citizens.

It is out of the needs of mankind that a state arises, since no one is entirely self-sufficing, therefore the needs of the imaginary citizens are considered. These, in the first (and better) stages, will be the simplest and most necessary—food, lodging, clothing—and the inhabitants will consist of husbandmen, craftsmen, shopkeepers, merchants, and those who have to do with the necessary imports and exports and with exchange, including money. As the city or state develops and becomes more luxurious there will be the fine arts, education, medicine, and so on. If wealth is allowed to accumulate indefinitely and the life of the people extends more and more beyond the boundary of necessities, there will follow, with increasing population, the desire for extension of the borders of the state and the possibility of invasion by enemies seeking spoil. Hence war may arise, and here is seen the need for a body of wise and strong guardians to govern and guide the state as well as to defend it.

It is agreed that in each of these occupations the workers chosen should be those best suited to it by their nature and ability; that workers should be carefully trained and should aim at reaching perfection in their particular occupation. All children in the state are to be educated according to their capacity, boys and girls having a similar kind of education. A watch is to be kept for any children in any section of the state

who show a suitable disposition and capacity for the highest and most arduous work of the state, namely guardianship, and to these must be given the longest and most complete education and discipline. This work of guardianship, says Socrates, "should require the greatest leisure from other things and the greatest art and study." Also "a competent genius, acute in perception, swift in pursuit, strong and spirited, unterrified and unconquerable, and at the same time of a gentle and magnanimous disposition." This combination of qualities is to be found only in one who has, together with the spirited disposition, the nature of a philosopher—a lover of wisdom and knowledge—for the guardians "are to be pious and divine men, as far as it is possible for man to be."

The education of those who appear likely to become suitable guardians is then outlined. Since the beginning is the chief part of any work, the earliest impressions of the children should be only such as tend to bring out the noblest qualities of character; the stories told them must give examples of beauty and nobility of soul which will appeal to the virtues latent in themselves, and must above all give them true notions concerning Deity. God is to be described as perfectly good, the giver of good to all; as changeless, being of surpassing excellence and beauty, and in no manner deficient, so that any change must needs be for the worse; as eternally true in all expressions of Himself.

Both body and mind should be trained with the aim of inculcating the basic virtues of temperance and fortitude. To this end music and gymnastic should be used, for music, by moderating and harmonizing the all-various desires in the soul, leads to temperance, through which the soul, becoming subject to the beautiful and the good, is rendered mild and generous to others; while gymnastic leads to fortitude by the disciplining of the passionate or irascible nature, and both together balance the disposition, so that reason is ruler in the soul.

Music includes not only harmonies and rhythms in sound but also the best and noblest literature of every kind in which the desired correspondence in sentiment, harmony, and rhythm is preserved, the harmony and rhythm being subservient to the sentiment, which itself must be tuned to the temper of the soul in which the beautiful and the good are to reign, and in which "beauty of expression, fine consonancy, and propriety, and

excellence of numbers are subservient to the good disposition, namely the reasoning part truly adorned with excellent and beautiful manners."

"Is it indeed then according as I say," asks Socrates, "that we shall never become musicians, neither we nor those guardians we say we are to educate, before we understand the images of temperance, fortitude, liberality, and magnificence, and the other sister virtues; and on the other hand again, the contraries of these which are everywhere to be met with; and observe them wheresoever they are, both the virtues themselves and the images of them?" And this being agreed, he continues: "Must not the person who shall have in his soul beautiful manners and in his appearance whatever is proportionable and corresponding to these, partaking of the same impression, be the most beautiful spectacle to any one who is able to behold it?" "And what is most beautiful is most lovely?" This is agreed, and the theme is developed to the point "where it ought to terminate, as the affairs of music ought somehow to terminate in the love of the beautiful."

Not only the guardians, but all in the state are to be influenced by the beautiful, for all workers are to be enjoined to put into their work "the image of worthy manners; restraining and not exhibiting that which is illiberal, undisciplined and indecent." "We must seek," says Socrates, "for such workmen as are able, by the help of a good natural genius, to investigate the nature of the beautiful and the becoming, that our youth, dwelling as it were in a healthful place, may be profited on all sides, so that from beautiful works something will be conveyed to the sight and hearing, as a breeze bringing health from salutary places, imperceptibly leading them on directly from childhood to the resemblance, friendship, and harmony with right reason."

Gymnastic, which brings health to mind as well as body, and disciplines the irascible power, includes mathematics, astronomy, and the other sciences, and also the art of reasoning, which trains the mind to form healthy and just judgments and to direct upon the causes of things. And these subjects must be connected beyond their individual scope and related one to another. When all these studies reach the point of intercommunion and connection with one another, and come to be considered in mutual affinities, then, I think, and not till then," says

Socrates, "will the pursuit of them have a value for our object."*

Beyond music and gymnastic, considered in their outer aspect, and leading them both to their highest and inward culmination, is the science of dialectic, which is also an art through which real principles may be perceived and examined, just as are sensible objects by means of sight. "And when a person begins dialectic and sets out on the discovery of the Absolute by the light of reason only, and without any assistance from sense, and does not rest until by pure intelligence he attains pure Good, he finds himself at the end of the Intelligible World, as in the other case at the end of the visible."

Not all will reach the summit to which this final stage of the ideal education leads, but from those who reach it and those who approach nearest to it the governor guardians are to be chosen. The others will be "auxiliaries" or military guardians, while those who do not reach the high standard required for these duties will be given occupations for which they are suited.

In the course of their education those who show promise of becoming true philosophers are given office in various departments of the army and the state, suitable to their age, in which they are tested for a number of years. "And when they are of the age of fifty, such of them as are preserved, and have excelled in all these things, in actions and in the sciences, are now to be led to the end, and are to be obliged, inclining the ray of their soul, to look towards That which imparts Light to all things, and, when they have viewed The Good Itself, to use It as a paradigm, each of them, in their turn, in adorning both the city and private persons, and themselves, during the remainder of their life. For the most part, indeed, they must be occupied in philosophy; and when it is their turn, they must toil in political affairs and take the government, each for the good of the city, performing this office, not as anything honourable, but as a thing necessary. And after they have educated others in the same manner still, and left such as resemble themselves to be the guardians of the city, they depart to inhabit the islands of the blest."

These guardians, who do not aim in any respect at their own advantage, are to have dwellings and possessions of such a kind as to enable them to remain the best of men and to remove

* Jowett's translation.

any motive for injuring their fellows. Hence they are allowed no private means, their dwellings are to be in common, after the manner of encampments, and only sufficient to protect them from heat in summer and cold in winter. Their meals are to be public, their clothing and other necessaries only such as temperate and brave warriors can require, and the reward of their guardianship is to be that they shall have neither surplus nor deficiency at the end of the year.

Any guardians found to possess lands, houses, or money privately are no longer to be retained as guardians, but are to take up some other useful occupation.

In the state as a whole, if it is to be truly happy, there must be an absence of great extremes of wealth or poverty, and every man is to be employed according to his natural genius, so that unity may be maintained. "The key to the happiness of the guardians, as of all others, is education and nurture," says Socrates, "for if they, being well educated, are temperate men, they will easily see through the false satisfaction that wealth and a life of pleasure promise."

The state must give the first place among their institutions to the worship of Deity, for this is of the greatest importance.

"Once such a republic were set up," says Socrates, "it would continue increasing as a circle, for whilst good education and nurture are preserved they produce good geniuses, and good geniuses, partaking of such education, produce still better than the former."

The question next arises "In what form does justice reside in this republic which, if rightly established, is good, that is, wise, brave, temperate, and just?" Taking these virtues in order, wisdom is seen chiefly in its councils and has its place first in its governors; fortitude is especially shown in the education of the guardians and auxiliaries and others which inculcates right opinion of what is and is not to be feared. Temperance is "a certain ornament and a government of certain pleasures and desires" (the government of the state by its wisest power); and since both rulers and ruled agree as to who is to govern, temperance resembles a kind of harmony because it is diffused through the whole, "connecting the weakest and those in the middle all in one symphony."

Justice, therefore, appears when everyone, applying himself

to that work relating to the city to which his genius is best adapted, does his own affairs, and when there is no attempt on the part of those who are unworthy of rulership, but are puffed up by riches or by a following among the people, to become governors. It is also agreed that in the individual soul, when temperance, fortitude, and wisdom all play rightly their own part, justice will be found.

An inquiry follows as to whether such a government is possible, and it is agreed that a model has been made, and the state most closely resembling it will be the most happy. "Do not then oblige me to show you all these things, and in every respect, existing in fact, so perfectly as we have described in our reasoning," says Socrates; "but if we be able to find out how a city may be established the nearest possible to what we have mentioned, you will say we have discovered that these things which you require are possible." . . . "We are now, it seems in the next place, to endeavour to find out and to show what, if at all, is the evil which is now practised in cities through which they are not established in this manner we have described; and what is that smallest change which, if made, would bring the city to this model of government. . . . Upon the change of one thing I am able, I think, to show that the state can fall into this model of government. But the change is not indeed small nor easy, yet it is possible. . . . Unless either philosophers govern in cities, or those who are at present called kings and governors philosophize genuinely and sufficiently, and these two, political power and philosophy, unite in one; and till the bulk of those who at present pursue each of these separately are of necessity excluded, there shall be no end to the miseries of cities, nor yet, as I imagine, to those of the human race; nor till then shall ever this republic, which we have gone over in our reasonings, spring up to a possibility and behold the light of the sun."*

Finally there is an inquiry into the causes of the gradual

* "The republic of Plato pre-subsists or is contained causally in an intelligible nature, subsists openly in the heavens, and is in the last place to be found in human lives. As it therefore harmonizes in every respect with each of these, it is a polity perfect in all its parts, and may be considered as one of the greatest and most beneficial efforts of human intellect that has appeared, or ever will appear, in any of the infinite periods of time."—Thomas Taylor, Introduction to the *Republic*.

degeneration of a state and of the kinds of government that might be expected to arise in the course of such a degeneration.

"Every republic changes," says Socrates, "by means of that part which possesses the magistracies, when in this itself there arises sedition; but whilst this agrees with itself, though the state be extremely small, it is impossible to be changed." Then in a metaphorical and mystical passage he speaks of the periods of fertility and sterility of body and soul, to the perfect knowledge of which all the wisdom and knowledge of the rulers may not attain, and of the consequent possibility that in the course of time even the best among the successors of the original rulers in an ideal government may not be worthy to succeed to their fathers' places, and when they come into power as guardians will be found to fail through undervaluing first music, then gymnastic, so that the education of the youth will suffer, and finally men may be appointed as rulers who have none of the true qualities of guardians, but whose qualities are mixed so as to produce irregularity and lack of balance. Thence will arise strife and contention. Some will fall to acquiring land and money, others will hold to the love of virtue. When the lovers of contention and power become dominant, the ideal government, named by Socrates the aristocratic, will give place to another form which he calls a timocracy. Further degeneration will bring other changes, so that in all, five main forms of government will be possible, though there may also be many other forms having some resemblance to one or more of these.

The five chief forms of government described correspond to five conditions of the human soul. In each case the extreme form is given—a form which might never arise in actuality—and there is a certain correspondence with types of government known to Plato in the history of the Greek states.

The first stage in the degeneration from the ideal aristocracy is a timocracy in which those of an ambitious and warlike spirit have leadership, competing and contending for power with one another. In such circumstances the people will begin to fear their rulers and the spirit of sedition will spread throughout the state. Since the two chief parties in the state—the lovers of virtue, who are the minority, and the aggressive, self-

seeking rulers—are opposed to one another, they will decide to give up the common dwelling-places and live apart from one another, “then, enslaving those who were formerly kept by them as freemen—friends and tutors—they will keep them as domestics and slaves for service in war and for their own protection.”

The leaders will not dare to bring the most wise men into the government, and in time it will have no longer any simple and inflexible men; the leaders will become lovers of wealth and personal power, and a likeness will be seen to the form of government next in order of degradation—an oligarchy.

In an oligarchy the most wealthy will be the rulers. The rich will be honoured, and the poor will be despised. The faults of an oligarchy are:

1. Wrong valuation of the requisites for leadership. (The dire results which would follow from adopting the criterion of wealth for leadership in any other skilled profession are self-evident.)
2. Disunion in the state owing to the presence of two divisions—the poor and the rich—whose interests are opposed.
3. Incapacity for military defence owing to the danger of arming the poor who may then turn against their oppressors.
4. The reluctance of the government, through avarice, to spend money on public services, the wasting of private wealth through extravagance without advantage to the state, and the production of unemployment owing to various causes which are given.
5. The production of a criminal class from those among the poor who have become mischievous. This class will become more numerous owing to lack of education, bad nurture, and the corrupt constitution of the state.

In an oligarchy there will be a tendency to all kinds of extravagance and to unlawful methods of acquiring wealth, and the more honourable wealth is considered to be, the more will virtue be despised.

The change from an oligarchy to a democracy will come about because the habit of extravagance will be encouraged, and “the governors will be unwilling to dissuade and restrain such of the youth as are dissolute from having the liberty of squandering and wasting their substance, so that by purchasing the

property of such persons and lending them money upon usury, they may become still more rich."

The poor, however, will be very conscious of the defects in such a state, and some will wish to depose their rulers, and will come to hate them, while others will be aware of the inefficiency of the leaders and will desire a change. "For as a diseased body requires only the smallest shock from without to render it sickly, and sometimes without any impression from without is in sedition with itself, so with the city."

If the poor can overcome the rich, the resulting government will be characterized by a far greater degree of freedom of action and speech than before. "Hence men and manners of all kinds will arise, and this variegated republic will seem most desirable, just as women and children are pleased when gazing at variegated things."

"The indulgence of such a city seems generosity and it is lax in its neglect of those things formerly said to be necessary for the right education of man." The chief motive for taking part in politics will be the fact that one is well disposed towards the state. A certain equality will be distributed to all alike. "Democracy regards liberty as the chief good, and its insatiable thirst for this destroys it in the end, for it neglects other things and becomes in need of a tyrant." Its liberty degenerates into licence, and if bad rulers take office anarchy will tend to arise with the attempt to depose any rulers who will not grant every extreme of liberty desired. Finally this anarchy "will find its way into the private families and in the end reach even the brutes. As when children cease to revere their parents, and parents fear their children, and teachers fear and flatter their scholars, and scholars despise their teachers, and the elders imitate the young in manners that they may not appear morose and despotic, while the young contend with the old both in words and deeds.

"But all this makes the souls of the citizens so delicate and sensitive that if anyone brings near to them anything pertaining to slavery they are filled with indignation and cannot endure it and tend to shake off all masters.

"In fact this is the government from which tyranny springs, for the doing anything to excess usually occasions a mighty change to the reverse, and excessive liberty leads to excessive slavery."

The transition to tyranny is outlined as taking place through the despoiling of the more temperate and wealthy by the idle and aggressive who abuse their position of leadership, and try to cover themselves by setting the people against their victims.

The people, ignorant and deceived by slanders, seek to injure the more wealthy, then come accusations, trials, contentions. "The people always have some leader whom they nurse into greatness, and this is the root from which a tyrant springs. When he first appears above ground he is a protector; then having a mob at his disposal, he is not restrained from shedding blood. Some he kills and others banishes, and by the favourite method of false accusations he brings them into court and murders them, at the same time proclaiming abolition of debts and partition of lands.

"Must not such a man either perish at the hands of his enemies or from a man become a wolf—that is, a tyrant?" If the victimized are not strong enough to drive him out or get him condemned to death by public opinion, they plot to put him secretly out of the way. "Then comes the usual request for a bodyguard which is made by all those who have got thus far in their career. 'Let not the people's friend,' they say, 'be lost to them.' This the people readily grant; all their fears are for him, they have no fear for themselves. Then the protector is no longer a protector but a tyrant."

At last suffering under excessive taxation and exasperated at being led into wars, and at seeing all those destroyed who expressed a desire for freedom, or who adversely criticized their ruler, the people begin to turn against the tyrant "and the most courageous of those who set him up will speak their minds to him and to one another, finding fault. Then the tyrant must get rid of them. He cannot remain while he has a friend or an enemy who is good for anything, so he will make a purgation of the better men and leave the worse. The more detestable he is in his actions, the more satellites and the greater devotion in them will he require, and in order to subjugate the people he will disarm them and enslave them."

In each case it is the most extreme form of the particular government which is considered, no pure examples of which would be likely to exist. But such a consideration makes clear the principles involved in each case. These hold good whether

it is a state or a human soul whose government is in question.

It is agreed that the soul in which reason, guided by the intellectual contemplation of Divine Ideas, rules over the desiderative and irascible powers, corresponds with an aristocracy whose rulers are true philosophers and whose aim is the real welfare of all in the state. "Such a man," says Socrates, "will be moderate in all that pertains to the body, and he who possesses magnificent conceptions in his dianoetic part and a contemplation of the whole of time and the whole of being cannot be afraid of death or place upon this life an undue importance. And the man who is moderate, not a lover of money, nor illiberal, nor cowardly, cannot possibly be an ill co-partner and unjust."

Corresponding to the timocratic government whose rulers are characterized by ambition and contention is the soul in which the government is delivered up to the middle power, the irascible or passionate nature, to which reason is subordinated. Such a man will be a lover of power, ambitious, haughty, contentious, a lover of argument. Avarice and jealousy will readily spring up in such a soul and, since wealth is a source of material power, there will be the possibility of degeneration into the oligarchic condition of soul.

The oligarchic government corresponds to the soul in which the desires rule both the reason and the irascible nature. In this case ambition will be towards wealth, and the inquiries of the mind will be chiefly in connection with methods of gaining wealth, since this will be a means for satisfying the bodily desires. A tendency to hoard wealth will follow, and finally either avarice or extravagance will dominate such a man who will also be filled with envy and hatred of those more wealthy than himself.

Corresponding to a democracy will be the soul in which reason is dethroned while the desiderative and irascible powers contend for mastery. Such a man will desire freedom to follow every inclination, hence there will be a loss of reverence for authority, while boastfulness and falsity will increase. Temperance will be called unmanliness, moderation will be named meanness; violence, anarchy, wastefulness, and insolence will follow; the craze of the moment will rule the life, which will become increasingly lawless and chaotic.

The tyrannical government corresponds to a soul which, having become completely lawless in the name of liberty, nourishes a master passion and enthrones it as ruler over his reckless desires until he has "purged away temperance and brought madness to the full," becoming in the end more like a brute than a man.

In a discussion with Adimantus, Socrates draws a picture of the man who realizes that his whole soul can be perfected and ennobled by the acquisition of justice and temperance and wisdom more than ever the body can be by receiving gifts of beauty, strength and health, in proportion as the soul is more honourable than the body.

"In the first place," * says Socrates, "he will keep under his body, and so far will he be from yielding to brutal and irrational pleasures that he will regard even health as quite a secondary matter; his first object will not be to be fair or strong or well, unless he is likely thereby to gain temperance, but he will always be desirous of preserving the harmony of the body for the sake of the concord of the soul."

"Certainly," Adimantus replied, "that he will, if he has true music in him."

"And there is a certain principle of order and harmony in the acquisition of wealth; this also he will observe and will not allow himself to be dazzled by the opinion of the world and heap up riches to his own infinite harm."

"I think not," he said.

"He will look at the city which is within him and take care to avoid any change of his own institutions, such as might arise either from abundance or from want; and he will duly regulate his acquisition and his expense in so far as he is able?"

"Very true."

"And for the same reason, he will seek such honours as he deems likely to make him a better man; but those that are likely to disorder his constitution, whether private or public honours, he will avoid?"

"Then if this be his chief care, he will not be a politician."

"By the dog of Egypt, he will! in the city which is his own, though in his native country perhaps not, unless some providential accident should occur."

* Jowett's translation.

"I understand; you speak of the city of which we are the founders and which exists in our ideas only, for I do not think there is such a city anywhere on earth."

"In heaven," I replied, "there is laid up a pattern of such a city, and he who desires may behold this, and beholding, govern himself accordingly. But whether there is or will be such a one actually is of no importance to him; for he will act according to the laws of that city and of no other?"

"True," he said.

DEITY

God is a Being absolutely perfect, unmade or self-originated, and necessarily existing, that hath an infinite fecundity in Him, and virtually contains all things; as also an infinite benignity or overflowing love, uninviciously displaying and communicating itself; together with an impartial rectitude, or nature of justice, Who fully comprehends Himself, and the extent of His own fecundity, and therefore all the possibilities of things, their several natures and respects, and the best frame or system of the whole: Who hath also infinite active and preceptive power; the Fountain of all Things, Who made all that could be made, and was fit to be made, producing them according to His own Nature (His essential goodness and wisdom), and therefore according to the best pattern, and in the best manner possible, for the good of the whole; and reconciling all the variety and contrariety of things in the Universe, into one most admirable and lovely harmony. Lastly, Who contains and upholds all things, and governs them after the best manner also, and that without any force or violence; they being all naturally subject to His Authority, and ready to obey His laws.

—*Ralph Cudworth*, Cambridge Platonist.

THE SUPREME ONE AND ITS PRINCIPLES*

But after this it is necessary to consider in the third place that, of progressions, such as are nearer to their cause are indicative of a greater multitude of things, and are at the same time most nearly equal to their containing causes: but that such as are more remote possess a less extended power of signification; and, on account of the diminution of their power, change and diminish at the same time the amplitude of production. For if, of progressions, that which subsists the first in order is more similar to its principle, and that which gives subsistence to the greatest number is both with respect to essence and power more similar to the generating principle of all things, it is necessary that, of secondary natures, such as are nearer to the monad and which receive dominion after it should give a greater extent to their production; but such things as are more separated from their primary monad should neither pervade in a similar manner through all things, nor extend their efficacious energies to far distant progressions. And again: as similar to this, it is necessary that the nature which gives subsistence to the greatest number of effects should be placed next to the monad,† its principle; and that the nature generative of the most numerous progeny, because it is more similar to the supplying cause of all things than that which is generative of a few, must be placed nearer to the monad, according to hyperaxis. For if it is more remote it will be more dissimilar to the first principle; but, if it is more dissimilar, it will neither possess a power comprehending the power of similar natures, nor an energy abundantly prolific: for an abundant cause is allied to the Cause of all. And universally, that which is generative of a more abundant, is more naturally allied to its principle than that which is productive of a less numerous progeny. For a defect of power results in fewer productions; but a subjection of essence is a defect of power; and a subjection of essence adds that which is foreign,

* For first part see *Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 92, page 182.

† A monad is a leader or principle of a series of things or beings.

on account of dissimilitude with its cause, and distance from its principle.

Again, therefore, in addition to what we have previously demonstrated, we assert that which possesses the most indubitable truth—I mean it is requisite that, prior to the causes which are participated, imparticable causes should everywhere have a prior subsistence in the universality of things. For if it is requisite that a cause should have the same relation to its progeny as *The One* has to the universal nature of beings, and that it should necessarily possess this order towards things secondary; and if *The One* is imparticable,* as being equally exempt from all beings, and as that which is productive of all things uniformly: in consequence of this it is necessary that every other cause which describes the excellency of *The One* in all things should be exempt from the beings subsisting in secondary ranks, and from the natures participated by them. And again, it is requisite that every imparticable and primary cause which is similar to *The One* should establish monads of secondary natures similar to itself prior to such as are dissimilar. I say, for instance, it is requisite that one soul should distribute many souls to different natures; and one intellect, participated intellects to many souls. For thus every exempt genus among the Divine orders will be universally distributed analogous to *The One*. And secondary natures which participate kindred causes will be analogous to these exempt genera; and, through the similitude of their kindred causes, will be conjoined with their imparticable principles. Hence, prior to the forms subsisting in other natures, those are established which subsist in themselves; and prior to composite causes, such as are exempt; and imparticable monads prior to such as are participable. Consequently (as that which is demonstrated at the same time with this) the exempt causes are generative of such as are composite, and imparticable natures extend participable monads to their progeny, and natures which subsist in themselves produce the powers which are resident in other natures.

* The imparticable is that which is not consubsistent with subordinate natures. Thus imparticable intellect is Divine intellect, which is not consubsistent with soul.

Participation is the assimilation of one nature or principle to another.

It is therefore necessary from the preceding axioms, that since there is one Unity, the principle of the universe, from which every hyparxis derives its hypostasis, that this Unity should produce from Itself, prior to everything else, a multitude of natures characterized by unity and a number the most of all allied to its cause.

For if every other cause establishes a progeny similar to itself prior to that which is dissimilar, much more will *The One*, since It is superior to similitude and is *The One* Itself, produce according to union Its first progeny. For how can *The One* establish Its processions except in a manner characterized by unity? for nature generates things posterior to itself naturally, soul animastically,* and intellect intellectually. *The One*, therefore, is through union the cause of the universality of things: and the progression of *The One* is uniform. But if *The One* is that which first produces all things, and the progression is characterized by unity, it is requisite that the multitude produced from thence should be self-perfect unities, the most allied of all things to their producing cause.

Besides, if every monad establishes a number allied to itself, as we have previously demonstrated, by a much greater priority must *The One Itself* produce a number of this kind. For, in the progression of things, that which is produced is often dissimilar to that which produces, through the over-ruling sway of diversity; and such are the last of beings, and those which are far distant from their principles.

But the first number, and that which adheres to *The One*, is uniform, ineffable, and superessential, and is similar to its cause. For neither can diversity happening to first causes separate generated natures from their generating cause and transfer them into another order; nor can a motion of the cause, producing a subjection of power into dissimilitude and infinity, produce the generation of the universality of things: but the Cause of all, excelling all motion and division, according to the characteristic of unity, establishes about Itself a Divine number, and conjoins it with Its own simplicity. *The One*, therefore, prior to beings establishes the unities of beings.

Again, according to another mode of speculation, it is necessary that such things as are first should participate the

* In an animated manner.

first cause through their proximate unities: for all second natures are conjoined with their antecedents through similars. Thus bodies through particular souls are conjoined with universal Soul; souls with universal Intellect through intellectual monads; and first beings with *The One Itself* through uniform hyparxes: since being itself, according to its own nature, is dissimilar to *The One*. For essence, because it is indigent of a unity assumed in order to accomplish the first union, cannot of itself be conjoined with that which is superessential, and is distinct from its nature. But the unities of beings which subsist from the imparticipable and exempt unity are able to conjoin beings with *The One Itself* and convert them to their own superessential natures. And Parmenides, demonstrating this in his second hypothesis, connects being with *The One*, contemplates all things about *The One*, and demonstrates that this nature, which proceeds and finishes Its progression with the last of things, is *The One Itself*. For it is necessary that the unities should be established prior to true beings themselves, since, as Timaeus observes, it is not lawful for Him Who is the first, to produce anything except that which is the most beautiful of all. But this is the most similar to that which is singularly the best.

But a multitude characterized by unity is the most similar to *The One*: and the Demiurgus of the universe, because He is good, constituted all things similar to Himself. Much more, therefore, must the fountain of universal good produce and establish in beings goodnesses naturally conjoined with Himself.

There is, therefore, one God, and many Gods, one unity, and many unities, prior to beings themselves; and one goodness, and many, posterior to the first goodness, through which that beneficent Intellect, the Demiurgus, and every intellect, is Divine, whether it is an intellectual or an intelligible intellect. And that which is the first superessential is *The One*; after which many superessentials subsist.

Is then this multitude of unities imparticipable like *The One Itself*, or is it participated by beings, so that the unity of every being is as the flower, summit, and centre of that being about which it subsists? But if these unities are imparticipable, in what respect do they differ from *The One*? For each of them is

one and has the first subsistence after *The One*. Or how, since they are exuberances of the first cause, were they constituted by It? For it is everywhere necessary that the nature which is second should be subject to that which is prior to itself, should fall off from its union, and on account of some addition should diminish the monadic simplicity of that which is first. What addition, therefore, can we assert in addition to *The One* if each of these unities is a unity by itself? For if every unity is both one and many we shall appear to transfer the property of being to the unities themselves. But if it is one only, in the same manner as that which is one itself, why does this latter possess a cause exempt from all other causes, while each of the unities is allotted a secondary dignity? On this hypothesis, therefore, we shall neither preserve the supremacy of the first cause over posterior natures, nor establish the progression of the unities from the first, unconfused either with respect to themselves or the one principle of their subsistence.

But neither shall we believe in Parmenides producing *The One* together with being and demonstrating that there are as many principles of *The One* as of being, and that every being participates of *The One*; that *The One* subsists everywhere together with being; and lastly, that *The One* of the second hypothesis participates of, and is participated by, being; the mode of participation not being the same in either: for this one participates of being as that which is not the first one, nor exempt from being, but as illuminating truly subsisting essence. But being participates of *The One* as contained by It, as replenished with Divine union; and as returning to that which is *The One Itself* and imparticipable; for the unities which are participated conjoin beings with *The One* which is exempt from the universality of things, in the same manner as participated intellects unite souls with universal Intellect, and participated souls conjoin bodies with universal Soul. For it is not possible that the dissimilar genera of secondary natures should be immediately united with that cause which is exempt from all possible multitude. But it is necessary that this conjunction should take place through similar natures: for a similar multitude, so far as it is multitude, participates of that which is dissimilar: but so far as it is similar to the monad prior to itself, so far is it conjoined with the monad. This similar multitude, therefore, being

established in the midst of similitude and multitude, becomes united with the whole and with *The One*, which is prior to all multitude; but contains in Itself far-distant progressions, and such as are dissimilar to *The One* in Its own nature. And through this *One* all things return to this similar multitude, and extend themselves towards the first cause of the universe—dissimilars indeed through similar natures, but similars through themselves. For similitude essentially collects and conjoins many things in one, and converts second natures to the monads which are prior to themselves: for the very subsistence of similitude proceeds from *The One*. Multitude, therefore, is conjoined with *The One*, from which it derives its progression. Hence, similitude is that which causes many things to be allied and to sympathize with each other, and to subsist in friendship among themselves and with *The One*.

No objections of any weight, no arguments but such as are sophistical, can be urged against this sublime theory, which is so congenial to the unperverted conceptions of the human mind that it can only be treated with ridicule and contempt in degraded, barren, and barbarous ages. It is this theory which those who declaim against the theology of the ancients should first endeavour to understand before they attempt to subvert it. At the same time, unfortunately, it is a theory which has been almost entirely neglected.

SEED THOUGHTS

Whosoever is able to reduce all kinds of things under One and the same Principle, this man seems to me to have found out an excellent Specula, a high Station, from whence he may be able to take a large view and prospect of God, and of all other things; and he shall clearly perceive that God is the Beginning, and End and Middle of all things that are performed according to Justice and Right Reason.

—*Archytas*.

There is One Principle of All Things Unmade; for if it were made it would not be a Principle, but that would be the Principle, from whence it was made.

—*Timaeus Locrus*.

THE ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY

PROCLUS*

Proposition CLIII

Every thing perfect in the Gods is the cause of Divine perfection

For as the hypostases of beings are of one kind, but those of superessential natures of another, so likewise with respect to perfections: those of the Gods Themselves, according to hyparxis, are different from those of beings which are secondary and posterior to Them. And the former indeed are self-perfect and primary, because *The Good* subsists primarily in Them; but the latter possess perfection according to participation. Hence the perfection of the Gods is one thing, and that of deified natures is another. The perfection, however, which is primarily in the Gods, is not only the cause of perfection to deified natures, but also to the Gods Themselves. For if everything, so far as it is perfect, is converted to its proper principle, that which is the cause of all Divine conversion is the perfective genus of the Gods.

Proposition CLIV

Every thing which is of a guardian nature in the Gods preserves every thing in its proper order, and is uniformly exempt from secondary natures and established in those that are primary

For if a guard immutably preserves the measure of the order of every thing, and connectedly contains all the natures that are guarded in their appropriate perfection, it will impart to them a transcendency exempt from subordinate beings, and will firmly establish each thing unmingled, in itself, existing as the cause of undefiled purity to the natures that are guarded, and fixing them in superior beings. For every thing is perfect which adheres to primary natures; is in itself alone, and is expanded above things subordinate.

* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 56 to 92.

Proposition CLV

Every thing vivific in the Gods is a generative cause, but every generative cause is not vivific

For a generative is more total than a vivific cause, and is nearer to the Principle of all things. For generation manifests a cause which produces beings into multitude. But vivification represents to us the Deity Who is the supplier of all life. If therefore the former multiplies the hypostases of beings, but the latter gives subsistence to the progressions of life, then it follows that, as being is to life, so is the generative order to the vivific series. The former, therefore, will be the more total, and the cause of a greater number of effects, and will on this account be nearer to the Principle of all things.

Proposition CLVI

Every cause of purity is comprehended in the guardian order. But on the contrary, not every thing of a guardian order is the same with the purifying genus

For purity imparts to all the Gods the unmingled with things inferior, and the undefiled in the providence of secondary natures. But a guardian power also effects this, and contains all things in itself, and firmly inserts them in superior natures. The guardian therefore is more total than the purifying genus. For, in short, the peculiarity of the guardian power is to preserve the order of every thing the same with reference to itself, and to the natures prior and posterior to itself. But the peculiarity of purity is to keep more excellent natures exempt from such as are subordinate. These powers, however, primarily subsist in the Gods. For it is necessary that there should be one cause preceding that which is in all things, and, in short, it is requisite that there should be uniform measures of all good, and that these should be comprehended by the Gods according to cause. For there is no good in secondary natures which does not pre-exist in the Gods. Hence in the Divinities purity is likewise a primary good, guardianship, and every thing of this kind.

(To be continued)

SEED THOUGHTS

God does not desire to put on you any difficulty : He wishes to purify you that He may complete His favour on you, so that you may give thanks. —*Koran.*

Plato everywhere ascends from multitude to Unity, from whence also the order of the Many proceeds ; but before Plato, and according to the Natural order of things, One is before Multitude, and every Divine Order begins from a Monad. Wherefore though the Divine Number proceed in a Trinity, yet before this Trinity must there be a Monad. Let there be Three Demiurgical Hypostases ; nevertheless before these must there be One ; because none of the Divine Orders begins from Multitude. We conclude that the Demiurgical Number does not begin from a Trinity, but from a Monad, standing alone by Itself before that Trinity. —*Proclus.*

There must needs be mind in us, as also the Principle and Cause of Mind, God. Not as if He were divided, but because though remaining in Himself, yet He is also considered in many, as capable to receive Him. As the Centre, though it remain in itself, yet is it also in every line drawn from the circumference, each of them, by a certain point of its own, touching it. And by some such Thing in us is it that we are capable of touching God, and of being united to Him, when we direct our intention towards Him. —*Plotinus.*

PRAYER

Lord, Thou abidest in all, Thou art All, Thou assumest all forms, all are from Thee. Hence Thou art the Soul of all. Salutations unto Thee.

Thou art the Soul of all, the Lord of all, the One Dweller in all. What shall I speak unto Thee Who art seated in my heart, and knowest my innermost thoughts?

O Thou, the Soul of all beings, the Sovereign Lord of all creation, the Source of all that exists, Thou knowest all creatures as well as their desires.

—*Vishu Purana, 1-12.*

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