

THE SHRINE *of* WISDOM

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A DISCUSSION ON THE IMMORTALITY OF THE SOUL

From the *Phaedo* of Plato*

When this discourse was ended there was a long silence, as though Socrates and those who had listened to him were meditating on what had been said. Then Socrates, noticing that Simmias and Cebes were whispering together, asked whether they still had doubts, and offered to help them to examine again any point which seemed obscure. Upon this Simmias said, "Indeed, Socrates, I will tell you the truth: for some time since, each of us being agitated with doubts, we impelled and exhorted one another to question you, through our desire of hearing them solved: but we were afraid of causing a debate, lest it should be disagreeable to you in your present circumstances." But Socrates, upon hearing this, gently laughed, and said, "This is strange, indeed, Simmias; for I shall with difficulty be able to persuade other men that I do not consider the present fortune a calamity, since I am not able to persuade even you."

Simmias put forward the suggestion that the argument which Socrates had used might be applied to harmony and the lyre—that harmony was indivisible, incorporeal, beautiful, and akin to the Divine, abiding in the lyre which was harmonized, and that the lyre, when broken, perished, while the harmony survived; for someone might say, "You cannot imagine that the visible lyre and broken strings remain still undecayed while the invisible harmony, immortal in nature, perishes immediately." Hence he might say that the harmony must exist somewhere, and that the wood and strings would decay before it decayed.

* For previous section see *Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 97.

Simmius added that his notion of the soul was that of a harmony of the composites of the body which could be conceived as strung up and held together by its elements; and that when the strings of the body were unduly strained or loosened through disease or injury, the soul, like other harmonies, must at once perish.

Cebes raised a different point. He likened the soul to an old weaver who died, and after his death someone said, "He must be alive, for the coat which he wore is still whole", and went on to explain that the man, who lasted longer than many coats, must still live, since the less enduring coat remained; yet such a man would be talking nonsense, because the weaver would have outworn many coats although the last one was still whole. Similarly, might not the soul outwear many bodies and at last die, though no one could have had any experience of this?

On hearing these arguments they all, so Phaedo declared, had an extremely unpleasant feeling; for after having been firmly convinced, they now felt their faith shaken and began to wonder whether there were any true grounds for belief in the soul's immortality. Echebrates also shared this feeling and demanded of Phaedo, "Tell me, I beg, how did Socrates proceed? Did he appear to share the unpleasant feeling which you mention? or did he receive the interruption calmly and give a sufficient answer? Tell, as exactly as you can, what passed."

"Often as I have admired Socrates," answered Phaedo, "I never admired him more than at that moment. That he should be able to answer was nothing, but what astonished me was first, the gentle and approving manner in which he regarded the words of the young men, and then his quick sense of the wound that had been inflicted by the argument, and his ready application of the healing art. He might be compared to a general rallying his defeated and broken army and urging them to follow him and return to the field of argument."

Before resuming the discussion, Socrates gave a warning against the danger of hating or belittling ideas or intellectual pursuits in general and denouncing all arguments merely because some arguments which at first sight seemed to be true had turned out to be false, and the power to discover the truth was lacking.

Beginning with Simmias's point, Socrates showed that the conception of the soul as a harmony resulting from the elements set in the frame of the body did not agree with the idea of the soul as pre-substisting the body—a conception that had resulted from the argument that knowledge was recollection—because if the soul really were a harmony, it would be the effect of the composition of the body, and could not have existed before the body. Simmias agreed that an argument from probability, such as he had used, was very deceptive, and that the soul could not be a harmony such as he had imagined, but must have existed before coming into body, because the soul belonged to the class of essential things.

Socrates completed the demonstration by making two further points, first that a harmony only followed the parts of which it was made up and could therefore have no motion or quality opposed to the parts—for example the soul, if it were a harmony, could never be at variance with the affections of the body—but yet the soul, for its own purposes, could and did oppose the feelings of the body, refusing it food when hungry, and coercing it in other ways; and secondly that harmony admitted of degrees, being more perfect when the parts were more completely harmonized, but the soul did not admit of degrees—for no one soul was less completely a soul than another.

Both Simmias and Cebes were satisfied with this conclusion, and Socrates took up Cebes's point. He began by saying that as a young man he had been keenly interested in the natural sciences, for he had hoped through them to discover the causes of all natural things. At first he was satisfied with proximate causes, as for example, that addition was the cause whereby two units added together became two. Then he had heard of the theory of Anaxagoras that mind was the cause of all, and was delighted, supposing that mind would be regarded as ordering all things for the sake of that which was best, so that "the best" would be the ultimate or final cause. He had hoped to learn the nature of the best and the manner in which all things were related together and ordered to this end, but to his dismay he found that the books of Anaxagoras gave particular things as causes—as though the bones, muscles and nerves were the causes of a man's posture—and he did not seek to discover the principle of the good. Socrates then decided to

try to discover the truth of existences by looking to ideas. "I first", he said, "assumed some principle which I judged the strongest, and then I affirmed as true whatever seemed to agree with this, whether relating to the cause or to anything else; and that which disagreed I regarded as untrue."

Explaining his meaning further, he asked whether anything other than absolute beauty could be beautiful except that which participated in absolute beauty. This being denied, it was agreed that absolute beauty was the cause of all beauty; and similarly, not addition, but number was the cause why eight was exceeded by ten; and that things were great through participation in greatness, but small by participation in smallness, and that although a thing could participate in greatness and smallness at the same time in different relations, as a man of medium height could be taller than a short man and of less height than a man taller than himself, yet the principle of absolute greatness could never participate in its opposite, and even in existing things greatness would never admit the small or admit of being exceeded: instead of this, one of two things would happen—either the greater would flee or retire before the advance of the less, or at the advance of the less would cease to exist; but if in certain relations smallness was admitted, the thing itself would not be changed, just as the man of medium height would remain unchanged while admitting smallness in relation to the taller man. And just as the idea of greatness could never become smallness, so neither could any other opposite become its own opposite, but would either pass away or perish in the change.

To this Cebes agreed, but someone objected that this was directly contradicted by the first argument of all—namely that opposites were generated from their opposites. Socrates rejoined, "I like your courage in reminding us of this, but you do not observe that there is a difference in the two cases; for then we were speaking of opposites in the concrete, and now of the essential opposite which can never be at variance with itself: then, my friend, we were speaking of things in which opposites were inherent and which were called after them."

It was agreed that these causal ideas could never become their opposites. Socrates next called attention to a middle class of causes, coming between the essential causes and natural existences.

"There is a thing you term heat and another you term cold?"

"Certainly," said Cebes.

"But are they the same as fire and snow?"

"Most assuredly not."

"Yet you will surely admit that when snow is under the influence of heat they will not remain snow and heat; but at the advance of the heat the snow will either retire or perish."

"Very true."

"And the fire under the influence of the cold will either retire or perish?"

"That is true."

"And in some cases the name of the idea is not confined to the idea; but anything else which, not being the idea, exists only in the form of the idea, may also lay claim to it?" The example was given of the idea of oddness and the odd number, the number three being called both three and odd, and similarly with the class of even numbers. Moreover these participants in oddness and evenness rejected the opposite idea, so that three could never be even, nor two odd. The particular things, however, were not opposed, just as three was not opposite to two. It thus appeared that there was a number of natures which, though not themselves opposites, would not admit opposites; just as the triad would not admit the nature of the even, nor the double the nature of the odd.

Socrates then asked a series of questions concerning these intermediate causes, but first gave an example of the kind of answer he required: "If anyone asks you why a body is diseased, you will not now say from disease, but from fever; and instead of saying that oddness is the cause of odd numbers, you will say that the monad is the cause."

Cebes agreed that he understood what was required.

"Tell me then," said Socrates, "what is that the inherence of which will render the body alive?"

"The soul."

"And is this always the case?"

"Yes, of course."

"Then whatever the soul possesses, to that she comes bearing life?"

"Yes, certainly."

"And is there any opposite of life?"

"There is."

"And what is that?"

"Death."

"Then the soul, as has been acknowledged, will never receive the opposite of what she brings. And now what did we call that principle that repels the even?"

"The odd."

"And that principle that repels the musical, or the just?"

"The unmusical, and the unjust."

"And what do we call that principle which does not admit of death?"

"The immortal."

"And does the soul admit of death?"

"No."

"Then the soul is immortal?"

"Yes."

"And we may say that this is proven?"

"Yes, abundantly proven, Socrates."

It was agreed that if the immortal were also indestructible, the soul when attacked by death could not perish. But the immortal, being indestructible, must be also imperishable, therefore when death attacked a man, the mortal part of him might be supposed to die, but the immortal was preserved safe and sound, and the soul would truly exist in another world.

Cebes expressed his satisfaction with the argument, and Simmias also saw no further room for uncertainty beyond that which arose out of the greatness of the subject and the feebleness of man.

"Indeed, Simmias," said Socrates, "you not only speak well in the present instance, but it is necessary that even those first hypotheses which we established and which are believed by us, should at the same time be more clearly considered: and if you sufficiently investigate them, you will follow reason, as it appears to me, in as great a degree as is possible to man. And if this becomes manifest, you will no longer make any further inquiry."

"You speak truly," said Simmias. Socrates continued: "But it is just, my friends, to think that if the soul is immortal, it requires our care and attention, not only for the present time, in which we say it lives, but likewise with a view to the whole

of time: and it will now appear that he who neglects it must subject himself to a most dreadful danger. For if death were the liberation of the whole man, it would be an unexpected gain to the wicked to be liberated at the same time from the body, and from their vices together with the soul: but now, since the soul appears to be immortal, no other flight from evils, and no other safety remains for it, than in becoming the best and most prudent possible. For when the soul arrives at Hades, it will possess nothing but discipline and education, which are said to be of the greatest advantage or detriment to the dead at the very beginning of their progression thither. For thus it is said, that the daemon of each person which was allotted to him while living, endeavours to lead him to a certain place, whence it is necessary that all of them, being collected together, after they have been judged, should proceed to Hades, together with their leader who is ordered to conduct them thither from this world. But there receiving the allotments proper to their condition, and abiding for a necessary time, another leader brings them back hither again, in many and long periods of time."

There followed the mythical account given by Socrates of the true earth, of which the visible earth was as it were the dregs, and of the soul's journey to the other world—a part of this true earth—and her allotment there, according as she had lived well or ill. "Those who are remarkable for having led holy lives are released from this earthly prison, and go to their pure home which is above, and dwell in the purer earth; and those who have duly purified themselves with philosophy, live henceforth altogether without the body, in mansions fairer far than these, which may not be described, and of which time would fail me to tell.

"Wherefore, Simmias, seeing all these things, what ought not we to do in order to obtain virtue and wisdom in this life? Fair is the prize and the hope great!

"I do not mean to affirm that the description which I have given of the soul and her mansions is exactly true—a man of sense ought hardly to say that. But I do say that inasmuch as the soul is shown to be immortal, he may venture to think, not improperly or unworthily, that something of the kind is true. The venture is a glorious one, and he ought to comfort

himself with words like these, which is the reason why I lengthen out the tale. Wherefore, I say, let a man be of good cheer about his soul, who has cast away the pleasures and ornaments of the body as alien to him, and rather hurtful in their effects, and has followed after the pleasures of knowledge in this life; who has adorned the soul in her own proper jewels which are temperance and justice and courage and nobility and truth—in these arrayed she is ready to go on her journey to the world below, when her time comes. You, Simmias and Cebes, and all other men, will depart at some time or other. Me already, as the tragic poet would say, the voice of fate calls. Soon I must drink the poison; and I think that I had better repair to the bath first, in order that the women may not have the trouble of washing my body after I am dead."

When he had done speaking, Crito said: "And have you any commands for us, Socrates—anything to say about your children, or any other matter in which we can serve you?"

"Nothing particular, only as I have always told you, I would have you look to yourselves; that is a service which you may always be doing to me and mine as well as to yourselves. And you need not make professions; for if you neglect yourselves, and walk not according to the precepts which I have given you, not now for the first time, the warmth of your professions will be of no avail."

"We will do our best," said Crito, "but how would you be buried?"

"Just as you please," said he, "if you can but catch me, and I do not elude your pursuit." And at the same time gently laughing and addressing himself to us, "I cannot persuade Crito, my friends, that I am that Socrates who now disputes with you and methodizes every part of the discourse; but he thinks that I am he whom he will shortly behold dead, and asks how I ought to be buried. And though I have spoken many words in the endeavour to show that when I have drunk the poison I shall leave you and go to the joys of the blessed, these words of mine with which I comforted you and myself have had, as I perceive, no effect upon Crito. And therefore I want you to be surety for me now to him that I shall not remain, but go away and depart; and then he will suffer less at my death, and not be grieved when he sees my body being burned

or buried. . . . Be of good cheer, then, my dear Crito, and say that you are burying my body only, and do with that as is usual and as you think best."

Phaedo then spoke of his and his companions' sorrow; for they seemed like children about to become orphans. He told of the distress of the gaoler who could not refrain from tears, and of their own outbreak of grief when Socrates had drunk the draught and alone remained calm amid them all. His last words were to Crito: "We owe a cock to Æsculapius; will you remember to pay the debt?*"

"Such," said Phaedo, "was the end, Echecrates, of our friend, whom I may truly call the wisest, most just, and best of all the men whom I have ever known."†

* "Should it be asked," says Olympiodorus, "why Socrates desired that a cock might be offered for him to Æsculapius, we reply that by this means he might heal the diseases which his soul had contracted in generation. Perhaps, too," says he, "according to the Oracle, he was willing to return to his proper principles, celebrating Paeon."

Olympiodorus adds that Socrates is said by Plato to have been the best of men, because he was in every respect good; the most prudent, according to knowledge, and the most just, according to desire.

From Thomas Taylor's notes on the *Phaedo*.

The introduction of Æsculapius at the end of the dialogue appropriately links it with the beginning, where the hymn to Apollo is mentioned. Æsculapius is an aspect of Apollo, and with both is associated the power of making whole or healthy the objects of their care; Apollo especially restoring the soul to wholeness, as well as the mind, and Æsculapius restoring health to the mind and lower nature by purifying them from the results of inordination.

† Besides the proof of the soul's immortality given in the *Phaedo* there are references to the subject in the *Meno*, the *Phaedrus*, the *Republic*, the *Timæus*, and the *Apology*, while the immortality of the soul is implied in the *Theætetus* and the *Symposium*.

TRIADS OF WISDOM*

Translated from the Welsh for *The Shrine of Wisdom* from the Myvyrian Archæology

92. Three things which do not see truly and rightly notwithstanding the amount of light: cupidity, pride, and emnity.

93. Three things from seeing which nothing else is rightly seen: pride in being comely, greater wealth than is profitable, and satisfaction in laziness.

94. Three things done in the dark: violence, lust, and envy.

95. Three men there be whom the devil cannot debase: a miser, a hypocrite, and a slanderer.

96. Three agreements which make a man fortunate: agreement with God's word, agreement with his wife and family, and agreement with his neighbours.

97. Three things which ought to be obeyed: God's commands, the country's laws, and the claims of conscience.

98. Three things which should be thoroughly considered before acting upon that which is thought: the flux of time, the flux of country and nation, and the flux of nature.

99. Three things without which intelligent *Awen*† cannot be attained: education from a teacher, food against famine, and contentment of the mind.

100. Three things which cannot have being without intelligent *Awen*: correct skill, good endowments, and blameless delight.

101. For some three sayings no one is loved, even by those wiser than himself: an unpalatable truth out of place and time, advice without asking for it, and aspersion.

102. Three things which make man knowing: love of inquiry, love of fellowship, and love of reflection.

* For previous Triads of this Series see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 75, 94, 95, 96 and 97.

† *Awen* signifies inspirational genius.

(To be continued)

THE DIVINE NAMES

BY DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE*

CHAPTER III

What is the power of Prayer, also concerning the Blessed Hierotheus and concerning Reverence and Theological Writings.

First, if thou wilt, let us look at the perfect Name of Goodness which makes manifest all the Divine Emanations, after invoking the Trinity, the Principle of all Goodness and surpassing all goodness, which reveals the whole of Its own Providential Goodness. For we must first approach It in prayer as the Fount of Goodness, then drawing nearer to It, we must be initiated into the mystery of all those good gifts which are established around It. For It is indeed present unto all things, but all things are not present to It. But when we have called upon It with holy prayers, with purity of mind, and with a fitting disposition towards Divine union, then we are also present to It. For It is not in space, so It cannot be absent from any place, nor move from one place to another. Even to speak of It as being Itself within all beings falls far short of Its all-transcending and all-embracing Infinitude.

Let us then uplift ourselves by our prayers in the sublime return to those beneficent Rays, as though a luminous cord hung from the highest heaven and we, seizing it with hands upstretched one after another, appeared to draw it down, but in truth did not draw it down, since it extended both above and below, but were ourselves raised upwards to the higher splendours of the luminous Rays. Or as though, after going on board a ship, we pulled upon cables stretched from a rock to ourselves, placed as it were for us to seize, then we should not be drawing the rock towards ourselves, but in truth should be drawing ourselves and the ship to the rock. Again, if anyone standing on a ship pushes against a rock which is on the shore,

* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 96 and 97.

he does not affect the stationary and immovable rock, but separates himself from it, and the more he pushes, the more he is thrust away from it. Hence, before every work, and especially in theological matters, we must begin with prayer, not as though we were drawing to ourselves the Power Which is everywhere and nowhere present, but that by our remembrance and invocation of Deity we may entrust ourselves to It and be united to It.

Perhaps, also, this demands an apology, that whilst our renowned leader Hierotheus has compiled his inspired *Theological Elements* we, as though these were not sufficient, have composed others as well as the present theological treatise. Now if he had intended to deal systematically with all the theological writings and had expounded the whole content of theology with detailed interpretations, we should not have gone to such an extreme of folly or stupidity as to think that we could undertake to investigate all these theological matters with a more divine insight than he, or to waste our time and labour in superfluous speech by saying the same thing twice over, besides doing a wrong to our friend and teacher by whom, next to the divine Paul, we have been instructed, by appropriating as our own his most renowned speculations and expositions.

But since he, indeed, whilst instructing us in divine things in a manner suitable to presbyters, gave us profound definitions such as summed up many things in one and were fitted to our mental grasp and to that of those who, with us, were teachers of the newly initiated, and bade us unfold and explain in discourses according to our capacity the comprehensive and unific doctrines of this great man of mighty intellect; and you yourself have often urged us to do this and have sent back his treatises as being too sublime; we also therefore—whilst giving him a place apart, as a teacher of perfect and developed minds, and for those above the common rank as a kind of second scriptures, next in value to the divinely-inspired writings—will expound the divine teachings, according to our powers, to those who are similar to ourselves. For if solid food is meet for the perfect, how great must be their perfection who give this food to others.

We are therefore right in saying that the true contemplation

of the Intelligible Word and the comprehensive teaching of it require developed powers, but the knowledge and thorough understanding of the reasons which lead to it are fitting to purified and consecrated subordinates.

We have therefore, in order to avoid repetition, carefully followed this rule, that whatever things have been fully explained and clearly set forth by our divine teacher, those we have in no wise touched upon, nor have we given the same explanation of the part of Scripture with which he dealt. For amongst our inspired hierarchies when we, as thou knowest, met together with him and many of our holy brethren to behold that body, source of life and receiver of God, when James the brother of God was present and Peter, the most honoured, chief and most excellent of the sacred writers, and when, having beheld it, each of the hierarchs present praised, according to his power, the Omnipotent Goodness of the Divine Weakness of the Godhead, he, as thou knowest, surpassed all the initiates, next to the writers of the Scriptures, being wholly transported, wholly lifted above himself, and so deeply absorbed in communion with the sacred things he was celebrating that to all who heard and saw him and knew him, yet knew him not, he seemed as one inspired by God with Divine words. But why should I tell thee of the divine things there spoken? For if I do not forget, I know that I have often heard from thee certain fragments of those inspired utterances, so zealous hast thou been to follow wholly things divine.

But turning from those mystical experiences, since they must not be told to the multitude, and since they are known to thee, when it was our duty to pass on these things to the multitude and to bring as many as possible to those sacred teachings which we possessed, he so excelled all but a few of the holy teachers in the time spent, in purity of mind, in precision of demonstration, and in all his mystical writings, that we should hardly have dared to gaze upon so great a sun face to face. For we are conscious in ourselves and well know that we are neither able to pass onward to a full understanding of those intelligible divine things nor to explain and set forth the things spoken about the divine science. For we fall so far short of the understanding of theological truth possessed by those divine men that we should, through extreme veneration, have

dared neither to hear nor say anything about divine philosophy, had we not realized in our minds that we ought not to neglect such knowledge of divine things as is possible for us. Of this we were persuaded not only by the natural inclinations of the mind which always lovingly cling to such supernatural contemplations as are granted to us, but also by the most excellent decree of the Divine Law itself which on the one hand forbids to us too great an occupation with things beyond our power, both because we are unworthy of such things and because they are unattainable by us, and on the other hand insistently urges us to inquire into everything which is granted and allowed to us, and give generously of our knowledge to others.

In obedience to these behests and not flinching through weariness or weakness in the search for that Divine Truth which is attainable by us, and not daring to leave without help those who have no greater power of contemplation than ourselves, we have set ourselves earnestly to composition, not venturing, indeed, to teach anything new, but only by simple and detailed explanations to interpret and simplify the things that were spoken by the true Hierotheus.

CHAPTER IV

Concerning Good, Light, Beauty, Love, Ecstasy, Jealousy; and that evil is neither existent, nor does it arise from that which exists, nor is it in being.

Now let us go on to the Name Good, already mentioned in this treatise, which the sacred writers give pre-eminently, above all other things, as it seems to me, to the summit of the Godhead when they call the Divine Being Itself of the Deity Goodness, because the Good as Essential Good, by Its Being, sends forth Its Goodness to all things that are.

For just as our sun, not by deliberation or choice, but by being what it is, enlightens all things which are able to receive its light according to their own power of participation, so also the Good, Which is as far superior to the sun as the transcendent archetype is superior to its faint image, pours forth by Its very

Being the Rays of Its unitive Goodness to all beings according to their receptive capacity.

Through these Rays subsisted all Intelligible and Intellectual Essences, Powers and Energies. Through these they are and have life eternal and never-failing, free from all corruption and death and matter and generation; exempt from all the instability, fluctuation, and alternation of change.

As intellects, they have a supermundane intelligence and are enlightened as to the reasons of all things in a unique manner, while they in turn pass on an appropriate knowledge to others which have similitude with themselves.

They abide in Goodness wherein is their foundation, stability, protection, and nourishment. In aspiring to It they possess their being and their well-being, and by conformity with It according to their capacity they are both patterns of good and impart to those below them, as the Divine Law decrees, the gifts which have come down to themselves from the Good.

Thence are their supermundane orders, their unions amongst themselves, their mutual penetrations, their unmingled distinctions, the powers elevating the lower to the higher, the providences of those above for those below them, the guarding of the attributes of each power, their immutable revolutions, the sameness and loftiness of their aspiration to the highest Good, and whatever else has been set forth in our treatise concerning the characteristics and orders of the angels.

Furthermore, all that belongs to the Celestial Hierarchy, the angelic purifications, the supermundane illuminations, the consummation of the whole angelic perfection, proceed from the universal Cause and Source of Goodness, whence it was given them to possess the form of Goodness Itself and to reveal the hidden goodness within themselves, so that the angels, as interpreters of the Divine Silence, send forth as it were shining lights revealing Him Who is within the innermost sanctuary.

And next to these sacred and holy intelligences, souls and all the goodness in souls are from that Goodness Which is above all good; thence they derive their intellect, their essential life, incorruptibility, their very being; and so are they able, by striving towards the living angelic powers, to be led through their most good guidance to the Source of Goodness above all that is good; so may they participate in their own measure in

the illuminations poured forth from It and receive the gift of goodness so far as they are able, and the other blessings which we have set forth in our treatise concerning the soul.

Moreover, if we may speak of the irrational souls or animals which cleave the air or walk or creep upon the earth or dwell in the waters or are amphibious or are hidden beneath the earth and burrow in it—in a word, all that have a sensitive soul or life—all these have their soul and life from the Good. And all plants have their living power of growth and nourishment from the Good; even those substances which are lifeless and without soul exist through that same Good and from It receive their measure of substantiality.

But since the Good, as indeed It is, is above all beings; and since Itself, being formless, creates all forms; therefore in Itself alone non-being is super-excellence of being; non-living is super-fulness of life; the non-intellectual is superlative wisdom; and whatever is in the Good is a super-eminent formation of the formless; and if it is lawful to say so, even that which is not aspires to the all-transcendent Good and strives by self-abnegation to find its home in that Good which is above all being.

Again—a point which escaped our notice in the midst of other matters—even the heavens, from their summit to their furthest bounds, are caused by the Good; the celestial orbs also, which neither increase nor diminish nor change their courses, and the noiseless movements—if such there be—of the vast celestial revolutions; the starry orders in their beauty, their light and their inerrancy, and the various wanderings of certain stars, and the circulations of those two heavenly bodies which the Scriptures call great, in their return to the same point from which they set forth, according to which our days and nights are reckoned and our months and years, and which by their measures set bound and number, order and distinction to the movements of time itself and of the things in time.

And what shall we say of the rays of the sun considered in themselves? For the light comes forth from the Good and is an image of goodness; wherefore the Good is celebrated under the name of Light, just as the archetype is manifested by the image.

For just as the Goodness established by God above all things

reaches from the highest and most perfect beings to the lowest, and yet is above all, so that the highest cannot excel Its perfection, nor the lowest escape Its embrace, but rather It gives light to all that can receive It and creates them and gives them life, perpetuates and perfects them; and is the measure of beings and their Principle of eternity, number, order, and integration; their Cause and End; so, too, the great sun, wholly bright and ever-shining—the manifested image and a feeble and distant echo of the Divine Goodness—both illumines all that can receive its light, whilst itself preserving its exempt unity, and unfolds to the visible universe above and below the splendour of its own rays. And if anything does not participate in them, this is not because of any weakness or deficiency in its distribution of light, but rather is due to an inaptitude for the reception of the light on the part of those things which do not open themselves to receive it.

For indeed the light passes over many such substances and enlightens the things which are beyond them, and there is no visible thing to which it does not reach in the exceeding greatness of its own splendour. It also contributes to the generation of natural bodies, moves them to life, nourishes them, causes them to grow, perfects, purifies and renews them; and the light is the measure and number of years and days and all our time. For it is the light itself, even though it was then formless, which, the divine Moses says, characterizes that first triad of our days.

And just as Goodness attracts all things to Itself and is the Principle which binds together all things that are scattered, as the Divine Fount of Unity and the Principle of Unity; and all things desire It as their Source and Bond and End; and just as it is the Good, as the Scriptures say, from which all things subsisted and are brought into being by a perfect Cause, and in It all things subsist, being guarded and ordered as in an omnipotent receptacle; and just as all things are turned to It as to their own proper end, and all things seek It: the intellectual and rational, indeed, through knowledge, the sensible through the senses, and those lacking sense-perception through the innate movement of their vital instinct, and those without life, which have but existence, through their capacity for participating in mere existence; even so, in the likeness of its highest arche-

type, does the light draw together and attract to itself all things: those with sight, those with movement, those which are enlightened and warmed by it, those that are entirely held together by its rays; whence the sun is named Helios, because it brings all things together into existence and binds into one that which is scattered. And all things which have sensitive powers desire it, either to see it or to be moved and illuminated and warmed and held together by the light.

I do not say, as was held in ancient times, that the sun is God and Creator of the world, since it is the governor of manifested things, but rather that the invisible things of God are clearly to be seen in His creation of the world, being understood through the things that are made; even His eternal Power and Deity.

But these things have been examined in our *Symbolic Theology*. Let us now celebrate the intelligible Name of Light given to the Good, and declare that He Who is the Good is called Intellectual or Spiritual Light because He fills all the Celestial Minds with super-celestial Light and drives out from all souls whatever ignorance and error there may be within them, and imparts to them all His holy Light and purifies their intellectual sight from the mist in which their ignorance envelops them, and energizes and opens the eyes that were closed through the great weight of darkness, and bestows at first a tempered radiance; then when they taste the light as it were and desire more, He gives it in greater measure and shines upon them more abundantly because they have loved much, and ever uplifts them to things beyond, according to their power of gazing upward.

The Good, therefore, Which is above all light is called spiritual Light as being the Source of all Rays and the overflowing plenitude of Light, illuminating all intelligences above, around, or within the world from Its fulness, and renewing all their powers of intelligence and enclosing them all in Its transcendent embrace, whilst abiding above them all in Its super-excellence. And It contains within Itself in a simple manner the whole sovereignty of the Light-giving Power and is the Archetypal Light above all light, and possesses the Light within Itself in a manner above and before all things, and so draws together and brings into unity all spiritual and rational

beings. For just as ignorance disperses those who have gone astray, so the presence of spiritual Light accomplishes the unification of those whom It enlightens, perfects them, and converts them towards That Which truly *is* by drawing them away from a multitude of opinions and collecting their various views—or to speak precisely, notions—into one true, pure, and uniform knowledge and filling them to the full with unitive and unifying Light.

This Good is celebrated by the sacred theologians as the Beautiful and Beauty, as Love and the Beloved, and by all the other Divine Names which are appropriate to Its beautifying and gracious blossoming. But Beauty and the Beautiful are to be distinguished in the Cause by which the universe is embraced in unity, for if we divide all created things into participants and participation, we call that beautiful which participates in beauty, but the name beauty is given to that which participates in the efficient cause of all beautiful things.

But the super-essential Beautiful is called Beauty because of the beauty communicated by It to all beautiful things in accordance with their nature, and because It is the cause of the harmony and splendour in all things, flashing forth upon them like light the beautifying beams of Its fontal Ray; and It calls all things to Itself, whence It is also named Beauty, and It gathers together all in all in Itself.

It is called the Beautiful because It is altogether beautiful and more than beautiful, and is eternally and changelessly beautiful, subject neither to generation nor corruption, increase nor decrease; not beautiful in one part and in another part ugly, nor beautiful at one time and not at another; not beautiful in relation to one thing and not to another, nor in one place and not in another, as though It were beautiful to some and not to others; but Itself beautiful in Itself, by Itself, uniquely and eternally beautiful, fore-containing in Itself transcendently the beautiful Cause of all that is beautiful.

(To be continued)

THE ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY

PROCLUS*

Proposition CLXX

Every intellect at once intellectually perceives all things. But imparticipable intellect indeed, simply perceives all things. And each of the intellects posterior to it perceives all things according to one

For if every intellect establishes its essence in Eternity, and together with its essence, its energy, it will intellectually perceive all things at once. For to every thing which is not established in Eternity, the successive objects of its perception subsist according to parts. For every thing which is successive, is in time; the successive consisting of prior and posterior, but the whole of it not existing at once.

If therefore all intellects similarly perceive all things, they will not differ from each other. For if they perceive all things similarly, they are similarly all things, since they are the very things which they intellectually perceive. But being similarly all things, one intellect will not be imparticipable, and another not so. For their essences are the same things as the objects of their intellection; since the intellection of each is the same with the being of each, and each is both intellection and essence.

It remains, therefore, either that each intellect does not similarly perceive all things, but one thing, or more than one, but not all things at once; or that it perceives all things according to one.† To assert, however, that each intellect does not perceive all things is to make intellect to be ignorant of some particular being. For if it suffers transition in its energy, and intellectually perceives, not at once, but according to prior and posterior, at the same time possessing an immovable

* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 56 to 97.

† By an intellectual perception of all things *according to one*, Proclus means a perception of all things in one. For all intellectual forms are in each; so that a perception of one form is a perception of all forms, and therefore of all things.—Thomas Taylor.

nature, it will be inferior to soul, which understands all things in being moved, or in a mutable energy; because intellect on this hypothesis will only understand one thing by its permanent energy. It will therefore understand all things according to one. For it either intellectually perceives all things, or one thing only, or all things according to the one of intellection. For in all intellects indeed, there is always an intellectual perception of all things; yet so as to bound all things in one of all. Hence there is something predominant in intellection and the objects of intellection; since all things are at once understood as one through the domination of one, which characterizes all things with itself.

Proposition CLXXI

Every intellect is an impartible essence

For if it is without magnitude, incorporeal and immovable, it is impartible. For every thing which in any way whatever is partible, is either partible on account of magnitude, or multitude, or on account of energies which are borne along with the flux of time. But intellect is eternal according to all things, and is beyond bodies, and the multitude which is in it is united. It is therefore impartible. That intellect also is incorporeal is manifest from its conversion to itself; for no body possesses self-convertive power. That it is also eternal, the identity of its energy with its essence evinces. For this has already been demonstrated. And that the multitude in it is united is evident from the continuity of intellectual multitude with the Divine unities. For these are the first multitude; but intellects are consequent to these. Hence, though every intellect is a multitude, yet it is a united multitude. For prior to that which is divided, that which is collected into profound union, and is nearer to The One, subsists.

Proposition CLXXII

Every intellect is proximately the producing cause of beings perpetual and immutable according to essence

For every thing which is produced by an immovable cause, is immutable according to essence. But immovable intellect

being all things eternally, and abiding in Eternity, produces by its very being that which it produces. If however it always is, and is invariably the same, it always produces, and after the same manner. Hence, it is not the cause of things which sometimes have existence, and at other times not, but it is the cause of things which always exist.

Proposition CLXXIII

Every intellect is intellectually both the things which are prior and posterior to itself

For it is those things which are posterior to itself, according to cause, but those things which are prior to itself, according to participation. Yet it is still intellect, and is allotted an intellectual essence. Hence it defines all things according to its own essence; both such as are according to cause, and such as are according to participation. For every thing participates of more excellent things in such a way as it is naturally adapted to participate, and not according to their subsistence; for otherwise, they would be similarly participated by all things. Participations, therefore, are according to the peculiarity and power of the participants. Hence in intellect, the natures prior to it subsist intellectually.

But intellect is likewise intellectually the things posterior to itself; since it does not consist of its effects, nor does it contain these, but the causes of these in itself. But intellect is by its very being the cause of all things. And the very being of it is intellectual. Hence it contains intellectually the causes of all things. Thus every intellect possesses all things intellectually, both such as are prior, and such as are posterior to it. As, therefore, every intellect contains intelligibles intellectually, so likewise it contains sensibles intellectually.

(To be continued)

BUDDHIST PARABLE

THE WAY

The best of ways is the Eightfold Path; the best of truths are the Four Truths*; the best of virtues is serenity; the best of men is the man of vision.

This is the Way, there is no other that leads to pure vision. Walk on this path to victory over Mâra. †

By walking this way you will make an end of suffering. This way was taught by me when I had gained a knowledge of the removal of sorrow.

You yourself must make the effort; the Tathâgatas (Buddhas) do but point out the Way. Those who are devoted to meditation become free from the bondage of Mâra.

“All compounded things are unenduring”; he who truly sees this becomes indifferent to pain. This is the way to purity.

“All compounded things are subject to grief and pain”; he who truly sees this becomes indifferent to pain. This is the way to purity.

“All objective forms are unreal”; he who truly sees this becomes indifferent to pain. This is the way to purity.

He who does not rouse himself when it is time to arise; who, though young and strong, is yet given to sloth, whose will is weak and inert—such a one finds not the way to wisdom.

Watching his speech, restraining well his thoughts, let a man never do any evil deed. If a man but keep clearly to these three paths of action he will attain to the Way made known by the wise.

Through right concentration wisdom is gained; through lack of right concentration wisdom is lost. Let a man who knows this twofold path of gain and loss follow that whereby wisdom is increased.

* The Four Noble Truths are: (1) The existence of suffering; (2) The cause of suffering; (3) The cessation of suffering; (4) The Noble Eightfold Path.

The Noble Eightfold Path is: (1) Right views; (2) Right aims; (3) Right speech; (4) Right actions; (5) Right mode of livelihood; (6) Right efforts; (7) Right thoughts; (8) Right peace of mind.

† The Tempter-Evil.

Cut down the whole forest of desires, not merely one tree. Dangerous is the forest of desires. When you have cut down both the forest and its undergrowth, then, O Bhikshus, you will be free from desires.

So long as one has not cut down the last little sapling in the forest of lustful desire, so long is the mind in bondage, like the sucking calf to its mother.

Cut away the love of self, as one cuts an autumn lotus. Cherish the path of peace, of Nirvana made known by the Blessed One.

“Here shall I dwell in the season of rain, here in the winter and summer”; thus thinks the fool, unwitting of what may come.

Death comes and carries off that man, honoured for his children and flocks, his mind set upon having and holding, as a great flood carries off a sleeping village.

There is no refuge in children or father or kinsfolk; there is no help from kinsmen for him who is assailed by death.

The wise man, controlled in all his actions, who knows the meaning of this, delays not to clear the way to Nirvana.

SEED THOUGHT

O mortal, thou knowest not Him, the Creator of the Universe, Who, though beyond thee, yet resides in thee. . . . Thou knowest Him not because thou art enveloped in ignorance; because thou wastest thy precious life in aimless thought. Transient sensual pleasures and external splendour of mundane things consume thy time. Thou hast not exerted thyself to know the Creator, Preserver, Director, and Dweller of the Universe, to acquire knowledge, to follow the path of right action, to worship Him wholeheartedly: that is why thou hast not been able to know Him.

—*Rig Veda.*