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THE CUP OR MONAD

A Discourse of Hermes to Tat

From the Corpus Hermeticum of Hermes Trismegistus

1. *Hermes*. The Creator (Demiurgus), not with His hands, but by His Word (Logos) made the Cosmos. So thou shouldst think of Him as everywhere and ever-being, the Author of all things; One and Only Who, by His will, framed the things that are. For this is the Body of Him, not tangible, nor visible, nor measurable, nor extensible, nor like any other body; nor fire, nor water, nor air, nor wind; but all things are from Him, for, being the Good, He willed to consecrate this Body to Himself alone, and adorn it.

2. As an ornament of the divine Body, he sent down Man—a life that dieth and yet cannot die. And over all other lives, and over the Cosmos, did Man excel, because of his reason and the Nous.* For man became the spectator of the works of God, and marvelled, and did strive to know their Author.

3. Reason then, O Tat, hath He imparted to all men, but Nous not yet; † not that He grudged it to any, for grudging cometh not from Him, but hath its origin below in the souls of men devoid of Nous.

Tat. Wherefore then, O Father, did not the Creator impart Nous to all men?

* Nous is the spiritual aspect of mind, or Intellect in its essential nature.

† Nous is potential in all men, but cannot be consciously possessed until man is purified and united to his divine Source.

Hermes. It was His will, O son, that Nous should be established in the midst, as a prize for souls to win.

4. *Tat.* And where did He establish it?

Hermes. He filled a vast cup with Nous and sent it down, together with a herald, whom he commanded to proclaim to the hearts of men: "Hearken thou, dip thyself, if thou wilt, in this cup, recognizing the purpose for which thou wast brought into being, and believing that thou shalt ascend to Him Who hath sent down the cup."

Those who heeded the proclamation and immersed themselves in the cup of Nous became partakers of divine knowledge and thus became complete and perfect men. But those who heeded not the proclamation are they who possess reason only, but not Nous, and are ignorant of their purpose and of their Creator.

5. The perceptions of such men are like those of irrational animals, and because they heed only their feelings and natural impulses they do not value the things worthy of contemplation.

But they who have partaken of the divinely imparted gift of Nous, these my son, in comparison with the others, are as immortal Gods to mortal men. They embrace in their own Nous all things that are on earth, in heaven, and above the heaven—if there be anything above—and, raising themselves to that exalted height, they behold the Good. And, having beheld the Good, they look upon their earthly life as miserable, and disdain body, they speed on their way to the One and the Good.

6. This, my son, is the knowledge of Nous: the inspection of divine things, the knowing of God; for the cup is God's.

Tat. I too, Father, would be immersed in this cup.

Hermes. Unless thou first shalt hate* thy body, my son, thou canst not love thy Self, but if thou lovest thy Self thou shalt have Nous, and having Nous, shalt receive the divine knowledge.

Tat. What meanest thou, O Father?

Hermes. It is not possible, my son, to give thyself both to things mortal and to things divine. For there are two kinds of things: the corporeal and the incorporeal, the mortal and the

* This evidently means antipathy to bodily attachments and limitations.

divine. Man, with the will to choose, must take the one or the other, for it is not possible to take both. The waning of attachment to the one causeth the growth of the other to become manifest.

7. The choice of the more excellent not only proveth most glorious to him who doth choose, since he becometh godlike; but it also showeth his piety towards God. The choice of the worse, on the other hand, though it destroyeth the body, yet doth not affect God: even as processions pass through the midst of the people and merely obstruct them, so do these men pass through the world led away by bodily pleasures.

8. This being so, O Tat, those things which are from God have belonged to us and shall continue to be ours; but those which are dependent on ourselves let us strive to achieve without delay; for it is we, and never God, who are the cause of evil things, preferring them to the good.

Thou seest, my son, through how many bodily conditions we must make our way, through how many celestial choirs and starry spheres we must travel as we press onward towards the One and only Good. For It is not to be transcended: It is unbounded and endless; unto Itself without beginning, but unto our knowing seeming to have a beginning.

9. Knowledge to the Good is not a beginning, but to us it doth afford the beginning of Its being known. Let us, therefore, lay hold of this beginning, and speedily make our way thither. It is hard for us to discard familiar things and return to our ancient home, for things seen delight us, while it is difficult to believe in things which are invisible. Now evil things are most apparent, but the Good Itself is not visible to our bodily eyes, for It hath no form or shape.

10. The Good is like Itself alone, and unlike all else. It is impossible that the incorporeal should be apparent to bodily senses.

The Monad, being the Archē and the root of all things, is in all things as it were the root and the beginning; for nothing is without a beginning, but the Beginning (Archē) is from nothing but Itself, since It is the beginning of others.

The Monad, then, being the beginning, containeth every number, but Itself is contained by none; It engendereth every number, but is engendered by no other one.

11. Now all that is engendered is imperfect and divisible, subject to increase and decrease; but the Perfect One is subject to none of these things.

In this discourse, O Tat, I have described the Image of the Good for thee, as far as this is possible, and if thou dost contemplate this Image with thy heart's eyes, believe me, O son, thou shalt find the way to the things above; or rather the Image Itself will become thy guide, for the Divine Vision hath this peculiar power: it draweth to itself and wholly possesseth those who behold it with unclouded eyes even as the loadstone draweth iron.

SONNET TO RELIGION

BY JOHN CLARE

Thou sacred light, that right from wrong discerns;
 Thou safeguard of the soul, thou heaven on earth;
 Thou undervaluer of world's concerns,
 Thou disregarder of its joys and mirth;
 Thou only home the houseless wanderers have;
 Thou prop by which the pilgrim's woes are borne;
 Thou solace of the lonely hermit's cave,
 That beds him down to rest on fate's sharp thorn;
 Thou only hope to sorrow's bosom given;
 Thou voice of mercy when the weary call;
 Thou faith extending to thy home in heaven;
 Thou peace, thou rest, thou comfort, all in all:
 O sovereign good! on thee all hopes depend,
 Till thy grand source unfolds its realizing end.

WALTER HILTON

Walter Hilton, a fourteenth century mystic, was one of a group of early English writers who enlarged and enhanced the religious literature of the time. It may be assumed that these contemporaries influenced each other in both choice of subject and style; and all show a common source of inspiration and direction from St. Augustine in particular, and less noticeably from St. Gregory, St. Bonaventura, St. Bernard, Meister Eckhardt, Richard Rolle and Richard of St. Victor. Hilton also owes a debt to the anonymous author of *The Cloud of Unknowing*, and a translation of *Dionise Hid Divinite*. Certainly his own writings were widely read, being circulated in manuscript form. His major work, *Scala Perfectionis*, was not printed until 1494, when his reputation was firmly established. Perhaps his simplicity and humanity endeared him to this large following, for his style was straightforward and profound, and whilst recognizing the foibles and frailties of mankind, he gloried in their essential divinity. He passed on to the rank and file of the Christian communities and to the laity, the ideas of those great writers he so much admired.

Hilton's birthplace and date of birth are unknown, but he died in the spring of 1396, and therefore lived through years of theological controversy and witnessed the condemnation of Wycliff in 1382.

His contemporaries included Dame Julian of Norwich, Richard Rolle of Hampole, and Ruysbroeck—the last-named dying whilst Hilton was still quite young. It is thought the Lady of Norwich was especially influenced by him, and certainly a comparison of their outlook and styles, and in some instances even phrases, would lead to such an assumption. Both showed deep spiritual sagacity, mental integrity and what, in Hilton's case, has been called "sanctified commonsense".

Few details of his life are available. He was a canon of Thurgarton Priory, near Newark in Nottinghamshire. As such, his life would not be that of a recluse, for, like most Augustinian Houses, the inmates would be mixed, a devotional and practical routine running concurrently within its precincts, the monks

performing a variety of ecclesiastical and secular offices beyond its walls. The complete solitude of his contemporaries at Hampole and Norwich would not be his, for the maintenance of so large an endowment as Thurgarton appears to have been, would have entailed regular contacts with the outer world. Perhaps it was to such duties that he owed his understanding of human nature and his practical approach to man's difficulties.

Hilton showed no special scholarship, though he had a good knowledge and appreciation of current religious writings. The Bible was his principal source of inspiration, and in particular his mind was saturated with the Psalms and St. Paul's Letters, to which in his writings he refers constantly. He frequently quotes from St. Augustine, and to a lesser extent from St. Gregory, St. Bernard and others previously mentioned, though, as was so customary in his time, usually without acknowledgment. These, and the writings of Dionysius the Areopagite,* are all drawn upon to illustrate or emphasize his themes. He uses these gleanings with aptitude, occasionally amplifying the borrowed idea for his special purpose. Naturally his orientation is strictly Christian, and at times his dogmatic statements, which are rare, strike the modern mind as narrow and even crude. But such passages are negligible in relation to his total writings, which aim simply at directing his readers along the straightest road back to God. Though not a contemplative himself, he fully appreciated the essential value of contemplation and prayer in the truly religious life, whether in the world, or within a closed community. His writings dealt with this subject practically and exhaustively.

Only three publications are known with certainty to be his work, though several small treatises have been attributed to him, and there is hope that further research may determine the authorship of the doubtful ones.

Scala Perfectionis (*Ladder of Perfection*, or, more usually, *Scale of Perfection*), *The Song of Angels*, and *An Epistle to a Devout Man in Temporal Estate*, are all definitely assigned to him. It is worth noting that these works were addressed respectively to an anchoress, a fellow Religious, and a Worldly Lord. Such personal dedications are characteristic of the author, for whom it would seem, personal contacts meant much. Perhaps but for

* So called.

the individual needs of these three unknown persons, Hilton would not have realized the urge to express himself in writing at all.

In the space available, a detailed consideration of all three publications is not possible. It is interesting to notice his considered individual handling of the three people to whom he addressed himself. The Anchoress is warned not to resent interruption in her own "ghostly duties", to attend to callers who come for help and advice; nor is she to be impatient of such as come with their troubles, and "fall into idle tales or vanities of other men's deeds". "Answer him but little, nor feed not his speech", Hilton advises, "and he shall soon be irked and soon take his leave".

The Religious is given the acid test for those who hope to or think they see visions. "Now, then, methinketh that there may no soul, could feel verily angels' song nor heavenly sound, but he be in perfect charity."

The Worldly Lord is adjured to fulfil his temporal duties well, for "the sort of spirituality that neglects practical tasks and immerses itself in prayer, is bluntly described as 'tending God's Head and neglecting His Feet'."*

All three pupils are led to see the value of essentials, and are reminded that prayer and contemplation and all such religious practices are means to an end, and must not be confused with the Goal itself. Thus, sincerity of intention, meekness and patience are shown to be of vital importance. Nor is Hilton wholly in sympathy with the attitude towards physical austerities prevalent at the time, but preserves a balanced sanity about such matters, "for wit thou well, a bodily turning to God without the heart following is but a figure and a likeness of virtues and no soothfastness".

And again, "It is no mastery for to wake and fast till thine head ache and thy body weaken, nor for to go to Rome and Jerusalem upon thy bare feet. . . . But it is a great mastery for a man to be able to love his even Christian in charity, and wisely hate the sin of him, and love the man. . . . But for to love his even Christian in charity and hate his sin, may there no man do but good men only."

He did not formulate set rules of life, or advocate strict

* Evelyn Underhill.

adherence to such methods of procedure as he propounds. These latter can be but guides and aids; the important factor is the individual's attitude towards the spiritual life, the one-pointedness of his desire to approach God, and the purity of his love for his Maker.

"I have said thee of the beginning, what thee needeth for to have, is meekness, sure trowth, and an whole intent to God, upon which thou shalt set thy ghostly house by prayer and meditation, and other ghostly virtues."

The *Scale of Perfection* is of some length and is fully worth careful study and reflection. Detailed treatment of it here is impracticable, but a few comments and quotations may give the reader some idea of the scope and manner of the book. In her Introduction to it Evelyn Underhill says: "It is not a storehouse of esoteric wisdom, but a way-book for the soul travelling in spirit to Jerusalem, . . . and has more to tell us of the difficulties of the road than the consummation at the journey's end."

The title is probably derived from the story of Jacob's ladder, which is symbolical both of the link between earth and Heaven, and of the means afforded to man for his ascent from the one to the other. "But from the lowest to the highest may not a soul suddenly start, no more than a man that will climb upon a high ladder and setteth his foot upon the lowest stave may at the next fly up to the highest; but him behoveth go by process one after another, till he may come to the overest. Right so is it ghostly; no man is made suddenly sovereign in grace, but through long exercise and sly working, a soul may come thereto."

The book deals with four subjects: contemplation, prayer, the nature of the soul and the union of the soul with God (or Jesu). The first two are considered as means to accomplishing the last, as the following extract may help to show:

"Him behoveth to have mickle cleanness of soul, in meekness and all other virtues, and to be half-dead to the noise of worldly jangling, that should wisely perceive these sweet ghostly whisperings."

"It needeth the soul that would have knowing of ghostly things, for to have first knowing of itself. For it may not have knowing of a kind above itself, but if it have knowing of itself; and that is when the soul is so gathered into itself and departed

from beholding of all earthly things and from the use of bodily wits, that it feeleth itself as it is in the own kind without a body."

There are many chapters too about the nature of the soul, all amplifying the following ideas: "For thy soul and my soul and ilk a reasonable soul is an image and that a worthy image, for it is the image of God, . . . made to the likeness of Him, not in bodily shape without, but in the might of it within."

"The soul of man is a life, made in three might, mind, reason, and will; to the image and the likeness of the Blessed Trinity, whole, perfect, and righteous . . . the mind was made mighty and stedfast, . . . reason was made clean and bright without error or murkiness . . . and the love and the will was made clean, burning unto God . . . this is the dignity, the state and worship of a man's soul, by kind of the first making."

"For thy soul is no body, but a life unseeable; not hid nor holden within thy body as a less thing is hid or holden within a more, but it is a holding and quickening of the body, mickle more than thy body is in might and in virtue."

"Right so, think that a soul is a life deathless and unseeable, and hath might in itself for to see and to know the sovereign soothfastness, and for to love the sovereign goodness, that is God."

"And because man's task is to return to his celestial heritage, he must learn how to recover the soul's first shaping. Love and knowledge of God are the first essentials, and as St. Austin said, "By the knowing of myself I shall get the knowing of God."

"The more thou seekest for to find and to feel thy soul, as thou wouldest feel a bodily thing, the farther thou art therefrom." . . . "The more fully and the more clearly that thou mayest think of the kind and the worthiness of a reasonable soul, what it is, and what is the kindly working of it, the better see'st thou thyself. . . . For all ghostly things are seen and known by understanding of the soul, not by imagination."

The chapters on contemplation and prayer with which the book opens consider these two subjects generally, but also in their relation to the unfoldment of the soul as a means to the attainment of spiritual growth.

The *Song of Angels* is a short treatise of ten pages but it is a jewel of mystical writing. A few extracts from it will give the

scaffolding, so to speak, but a complete reading of it is strongly recommended.

The opening paragraph shows how it came to be written.

"Dear brother in Christ, I have understanding by thine own speech that thou yearnest for to have more knowledge and understanding than thou hast of angel's song and heavenly sound; what it is, and on what wise it is perceived and felt in a man's soul, and how a man may be siker that it is true and not feigned; . . . but, soothly, I cannot tell thee for a surety the soothfastness of this matter; nevertheless somewhat, as methinketh, I shall show thee in a short word."

Then follows a seeming digression upon divine union, which is shown later to be essential to the subject.

"Weet thou well that the end and the sovereignty of perfection standeth in very onehead of God." . . . "This onehead is verily made when the mights of the soul are reformed by grace to the dignity and the state of the first condition; when the mind is stabled sadly, without changing and vagation, in God and ghostly things, and when the reason is cleared from all worldly beholdings and from all bodily imaginations and fantasies." . . . "This wonderful onehead may not be fulfilled perfectly, continually, and wholly in this life, but only in the bliss of heaven. Nevertheless, the nearer that a soul in this present life may come to this onehead, the more perfect it is." . . . "For a soul that hath by bodily and ghostly exercise, overcome passion and unskilful stirrings within itself, is clothed all in virtues." . . . "Much comfort it receiveth of our Lord, not only inwardly in its own privy substance, but also many sweetnesses and wonderful feelings on sundry manners." . . . "Some soul, by virtue of charity that God giveth it, feeleth only God in all creatures. On this manner of wise, a soul is made ghostly in the substance of the soul. Also our Lord comforteth a soul by angel's song, which may be felt and perceived in the soul but may not be showed." . . . "Then is the soul able because of cleanness to feel the touching, the speaking of good angels." But "the sovereign and the essential joy is in the love of God by Himself and for Himself, and the secondary is in communing and beholding of angels and ghostly creatures." . . . "When a soul is purified by the love of God, illumined by wisdom, stabled by the might of God, then is the eye of the

soul opened to behold ghostly things, as virtues and angels, and holy souls, and heavenly things." . . . "Our Lord wotteth where that soul is that, for abundance of brenning love, is worthy to hear angel's song."

Such is an outline of his general point of view, but he is also aware that men are deceived by their own imaginations, or by the illusions of the "Enemy". Yet if a man is of 'stable intention' and steadfastly works for union with God before all else, then such angelic ministrations as come to him are likely to be genuine.

Self-deception is sometimes due to physical conditions. "Indiscreet travailling turneth the brains in his head and for-breaketh* the mights and wits of the soul and of the body." Furthermore, if the supposed illuminations lead a man to be presumptuous and overbearing, given to blasphemy or false prophecy, it is certain "that he never felt nor heard angel's song nor heavenly sound".

Again, concentration upon a divine name, such as Jesu, may lead a man to think he hears the name spoken or even sung. From this he gains a joy similar to that experienced by himself singing hymns and psalms. This is a feeling "of the soul" and may be turned to comfort and help so long as a man remains meek in spirit.

He ends the treatise in the same strain as it was begun, with the words: "Lo, I have told thee in this matter, a little as me-thinketh, not affirming that this sufficeth, nor that this is a soothfastness in the matter."

No more fitting postscript to Hilton's writing could be found than the final words of the *Scale of Perfection*: "These are the ghostly things that I spake of before, and they may be called new gracious feelings. And I do but touch them a little, for wissing of thy soul. For a soul that is clean, stirred by grace to use of this working, may see more in an hour of such ghostly matter, than might be written in a great book."

* Overtaxes.

TRIADS OF WISDOM*

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

103. Three chief duties of man which should accompany him in all he sees: to gain treasures by sincerity and innocence, to serve country and nation to the limit of power and knowledge, and to enforce the laws of God and man, as far as possible, upon all met upon this earth.

104. Three things which oftenest end in evil, wherefore it is best to leave and avoid them: disputes, carousals, and a craving to know the business and actions of another.

105. Three things which a wise man seeks and follows as long as he lives: the good and sustenance of his family, the good and success of his land and nation, and the enjoyment of knowledge and truth.

106. Three things there are, and he who does one of them does the others: to belittle another's property, to covet greatly another's property, and to take by stealth another's property.

107. Three things without which nothing lawful and divine can be achieved: forgiving a wrong and an enemy, to be charitable in mind and conduct, and to be true and just to all the living.

108. Three chief motions of mortals: perception, consideration, and effort.

109. Three things, namely: revelling, lust, and laziness, give rise to three others, namely: waste of possessions, darkness of perception, and the restricting of the life.

110. Three signs of ignorance: uncivil conduct, unjust speech, and prying into the secrets of others.

111. Three signs of nobility: generosity, amiable salutation, and lawful knowledge.

112. Three signs of *Awen*: a keen eye, a loving appearance, and just speech.

* For previous Triads of this Series see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 75, 94, 95, 96, 97 and 98.

(To be continued)

THE DIVINE NAMES

BY DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE*

CHAPTER IV—(*Continued*)

For in the simple and supra-natural essence of the wholeness of Beauty, all beauty and all that is beautiful pre-subsisted unitively in a causal manner. From this Beautiful all things have their being, each kind being beautiful according to its own reason.

And the Beautiful is the Cause of the harmonies and sympathies and inter-communion of all things; by the Beautiful all things are united, and the Beautiful is the Principle of all things as being the Productive Cause Which moves the whole and binds all things together by their desire for Its own unique Beauty; and It is the Goal of all things and beloved by all as their Final Cause—for all things are brought into being for the sake of the Beautiful—and It is the Paradigm from which all things receive their forms. Therefore the Beautiful is the same as the Good, because all things for every reason desire the Beautiful and the Good, and there is not anything which does not participate in the Beautiful and the Good. Moreover, our reason will dare to say even this; that even the non-existent participates in the Beautiful and the Good, for non-existence is beautiful and good when it is predicated super-essentially of God by the negation of all attributes.

This One Good and Beautiful is in Its Unity the Cause of the multitude of good and beautiful things. From It are all the principles of all beings, the unions and distinctions, the sameness and difference, the similarities and dissimilarities, the communions of contrary things and the unconfused mingling in things unified, the providences of those above, the interdependence of those of the same order, the conversions of those below, the guarded and immutable stability of their identity; and on the other hand, the intercommunion of all things, each in its own measure, their unconfused adaptations

* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 96 to 98.

and harmonies and sympathies, and the comminglings of all things in the whole, the indestructible bonds between all things, the unfailing succession of generations, all rest and motion in intellects, souls and bodies; for all things have their rest and motion through That Which, established above rest and motion, moves each one according to the laws of its nature in its own proper movement.

Now the Divine Intelligences are said to be moved in a circle when they are united to the beginningless and endless illuminations of the Beautiful and the Good; but in a straight line when they extend their providence to those below themselves, since they direct all things rightly; and in a spiral because even while providentially guiding those below themselves, they abide immutably within their own self-identity, ceaselessly dancing around the Good and Beautiful Cause of all identity.

Again the motion of the soul also is circular—the entering into itself, away from outer things, and the unified concentration of its spiritual powers which as it were establishes it in a circular motion and, turning it inwards from the multitude of external things, collects it first to itself, then, as having become one, unites it to those Powers which are perfectly unified and thus leads it to the Beautiful and the Good Which is above all things that are, One and the Same, without beginning and without end.

But the soul has a spiral motion in so far as it is enlightened, according to its capacity, by the Divine knowledge, not intellectually and immediately, but through detailed discursive reasoning and as it were by a variety of successive processes. And it moves in a straight line when, not entering into itself to be moved by intellectual unity—for this, as I said, is the circular motion—but going forth to the things around it, it is led back from the outer things, as from certain symbols, to simple and unitive contemplations.

Of these three motions, and those we perceive in the universe, and much more than these, the stability and permanence of each, the Beautiful and the Good is the Cause and Bond and End, above all rest and motion. Through It, from, in and towards It, and for the sake of It are all rest and motion. For both from It and through It are the being and life both of spirit and soul, whence in the whole of Nature are the magni-

tudes—the small, the great, the equal, and all the measures and proportions of beings, their harmonies and composites, the wholenesses and the parts, every unity and multitude, the connections of parts, the unions of every multitude, the perfections of the wholes, the qualities, the quantities, the bounds, the infinitude, the compositions and the dissolutions, the whole of infinity and all that is finite, all limits, orders, summits, elements, forms, every essence, every power, all reason, intuition, apprehension, knowledge, union, and in a word, all things are from the Beautiful and the Good, and have their being in the Beautiful and the Good, and turn towards the Beautiful and the Good: indeed, all that is and that comes into existence has its being and is brought into existence through the Beautiful and the Good, and to It all things look, and by It they are moved and held together, and because of It and through It and in It are all archetypes, all final, efficient, formal and material causes and in a word, all beginnings, middles and ends: to sum it up, all things that are have their being from the Beautiful and the Good—and more, the things that are not are super-essentially in the Beautiful and the Good, and It is of all things the transcendent Principle and End and absolute Perfection, for from It and in It and to It are all things, as says the sacred Word.

The Good and the Beautiful therefore is sought and welcomed and loved by all things; and because of It and for the sake of It the lower love the higher through attraction; those of equal rank love one another with co-ordinate fellowship; whilst the higher love the lower providentially; and each turns towards itself continuously, and it is through their desire for the Beautiful and the Good that all things will and perform all that they will and perform.

And it may be said boldly with true reasoning that even the Cause of all things Himself, because of His overflowing Goodness, loves all things, produces all things, perfects, connects, and draws to Himself all things, and that the Divine Love Itself is the desire of the Good for the Good by reason of the Good; for Love Itself, the Creator of good to all that is, pre-subsisting super-abundantly in the Good, did not allow Itself to be unproductive, but energized Itself in accordance with Its own overflowing all-creative Power.

And let no one imagine that we celebrate the Divine Name of Love* without Scriptural authority, for it is, I consider, unreasonable and foolish to pay attention to the letter rather than to the spirit, nor is this the method of those who wish for insight into Divine things, but rather of those who receive empty sounds and prevent them passing beyond their ears, not wishing to know the inner significance, nor how to explain them more clearly in terms of similar meaning, but they confine themselves to meaningless arrangements of letters, uncomprehended syllables and words which do not penetrate into the intelligence of their souls, but buzz outside, around their lips and ears, just as though it were not permitted to explain the number four by calling it twice two, or a straight line by calling it a direct line, or the motherland by calling it the fatherland, or any other name which has the same significance, using many different words.

It is necessary to know, according to right reason, that we use sounds and syllables and phrases on account of our senses, since when our soul is moved by intellectual energies to that which is intelligible, both the senses and that which they perceive are overpassed, just as in turn are the intellectual powers when the soul, having become godlike, casts itself, in the union of unknowing, upon the Rays of the Ineffable Light, in sightless contemplation.

But when the mind is awakened by sensible things to seek eagerly the contemplation of intelligibles, it values most clearly that which is clearly manifest to the mind, rather than sense-perceptions, and the most certain truths rather than the most clearly seen objects; since whenever objects near at hand are not clearly perceived by sense-perceptions, the senses cannot truly convey to the mind all the beauty which it is possible to perceive.

Yet lest, in speaking thus, we should appear to be setting aside the Word of God, let those who discredit the Name of Love hear this: "Love It, and It will guard thee, rejoice exceedingly in It and It will raise thee on high, honour It that It may embrace thee", and whatever else is sung of It in holy Scripture.

Indeed, to some of our writers on sacred things the name of

* The word here translated "love" is *ἔρωσ*. When the Greek word *ἀγαπᾶ* is used it is translated "loving-kindness", or "affection".

love seemed to be more divine than the name of loving-kindness. For the divine Ignatius writes, "My own Love is crucified", and in the introductions to the Scriptures you will find one saying of the Divine Wisdom, "I became in love with her Beauty".* Therefore let us not be afraid of this name of love or disquieted by anything that any man may say about it. For it seems to me that the sacred writers considered the names love and loving-kindness as having the same meaning, but preferred to assign the name of real love to Divine things because of the unreasonable prejudice of certain men.

For since the name of real love is used, not only by us, but also by the Scriptures themselves, as befitting Deity, the multitude, not perceiving the unitive nature of the Divine Name of Love, fell back, according to their natural tendencies, to the divided and corporeal and separated love which is not the real love, but an image of it, or rather is defection from the real love. For the multitude cannot comprehend the simplicity of the Divine and unitive Love. Therefore this name, because it presents difficulty to the multitude, is assigned to the Divine Wisdom in order to raise and restore them to the knowledge of the real Love and set them free from their difficulties concerning it.

Again, with reference to ourselves, when there was a possibility that the multitude might imagine something unseemly, a name which seems to be more austere is used. It is said by someone, "Thy loving-kindness came upon me like the loving-kindness of women."† To those who have listened rightly to Divine things, the names of love and loving-kindness are both given by the sacred writers in the Divine revelations to the same power: a power which unites and binds together and pre-eminently mingles together in the Beautiful and the Good; which pre-subsists because of the Beautiful and the Good, is for the sake of the Beautiful and the Good, and is poured forth from the Beautiful and the Good, holding together things of the same rank by their mutual communion, moving those above to the providential care of those below, and setting those below in a condition in which they will turn to those above.

Moreover the Divine Love is ecstatic, not allowing any to

* Wisdom viii. 2.

† II Sam. i. 26.

love themselves, but making them lovers of others; and this is manifested in those above through the providence they bestow upon those below them; in co-ordinate natures by the mutual love uniting them; and in those below by their diviner conversion to the first. Wherefore the great Paul, when seized by this Divine Love and participating in Its own ecstatic power, says with inspired words, "I live, yet not I, but Christ liveth in me", as a true lover, and having gone forth, as he says, from himself to God, not living his own life, but the life, so vehemently desired, of the Beloved.

And we must dare to say, for the sake of Truth, that the very Cause of the universe Himself, because of His beautiful and good love of everything, through the exceeding greatness of His loving goodness, becomes as it were transported out of Himself in His Providence for all beings, and persuaded by goodness and affection and love, is drawn from His height above and exempt from all things to dwell within all things through His super-essential and ecstatic power, in which He yet abides within Himself. On this account, men who have knowledge of Divine things call Him jealous because of His exceeding great love and goodness to all beings, and as stirring up a zealous and loving desire for Himself, and as showing Himself to be zealous, since one is zealous towards that which is desired; and He zealously extends His Providence to all things under His care. In short, the lovely is of the Beautiful and the Good, and Love pre-subsisted in the Beautiful and the Good and is and comes into being because of the Beautiful and the Good.

But what do the theologians wish to indicate when they speak of God sometimes as Love and Loving-kindness and sometimes as Beloved and Desired? In the former case He is the Cause and as it were the Producer and Generator, but the latter He Himself is; and by the former He is moved, but according to the latter He moves because He moves and leads back Himself to Himself. Thus they call Him Desired and Beloved (for His Ideal Beauty) as the Beautiful and the Good; and again, Love and Loving-kindness as at once the motive power and the uplifting power of all things to Himself—the Alone, Self-beautiful and good from Himself, and as it were a shining forth of Himself through Himself and a good Emanation

of His transcendent Unity, and a loving movement, simple, self-moved, self-active, pre-substisting in the Good and gushing forth from the Good to all beings and returning towards the Good; and in this the Divine Love especially shows Itself to be without beginning or end, as it were a perpetual circle, revolving because of the Good, from the Good, in the Good, and to the Good in changeless circulation, for ever proceeding from and abiding in and returning to Itself.

These things our renowned initiator in the sacred Mysteries has outlined by Divine inspiration in his *Hymns of Love* from which we may fittingly give extracts and as it were bring to a holy conclusion our discourse concerning love.

The Words of the most holy Hierotheus from the Hymns of Love.

Love, whether it be the Divine or angelic, or intellectual, or psychical, or animal, or natural, of which we speak, must be conceived to be a uniting and commingling power; moving the Above to the providential care of the below; moving equals to communion with one another; and moving the below to turn to that which is more exalted and more excellent than themselves.

Since we have set forth in order the many loves from the One, declaring in turn what are the kinds of knowledge and power of the mundane and supermundane loves, above which, according to the purpose explained in the discourse, the hierarchies of the intellectual and intelligible loves hold government, next above which are the self-intelligible and Divine, where reign those truly beautiful loves which have real being, which have been duly celebrated by us, let us now by retracing our steps and leading all back again to the One All-embracing Love and Father of them all, bring them together and collect them from the many by first gathering them into two universal Loving Powers, over which is the undivided rulership and pre-eminence of that Cause, irresistible in Its universal Love beyond all things, and to which the love of all beings in the universe, each in its own measure, reaches upwards.

And now, while again gathering these into one, let us say that there is one simple Power Which of Itself moves all things to be mingled in unity—beginning from the Good and going

to the lowest of existing things, and thence returning in due order through all ranks of beings to the Good; circling from Itself, through Itself, by Itself and to Itself perpetually after the same manner.*

(To be continued)

PRAYER TO AMITABHA, THE BUDDHA OF INFINITE LIGHT

BY VASUBANDHU

O Exalted One! I trust myself whole-heartedly
To the Tathagata whose light pervades,
Without any impediment, the regions of the ten quarters,
And express my earnest desire to be born into Thy Land.

In realizing in contemplation the appearance of Thy Land,
I know that it surpasses all realms in the threefold existence,
That it is like the sky, embracing all,
Vast and spacious without boundaries.
Thy mercy and compassion in accordance with the righteous way
Is an outgrowth of merits which are beyond all worldly good;
And Thy light permeates everywhere,
Like the mirrors of the Sun and the Moon.
Let me pray that all beings, having been born there,
Shall proclaim the Truth, like Buddha Thyself.

* End of extract from Hierotheus.

THE ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY

PROCLUS*

Proposition CLXXIV

Every intellect gives subsistence to things posterior to itself by intellection, and its fabrication consists in intellection, and its intellection or intelligence, in fabrication

For if intelligible and intellect are the same, the essence also of every intellect will be the same with the intellection in itself. But it produces that which it produces by essence, and produces according to the very being which it is. By intellection, therefore, it will produce the things which are produced: for in intellect, being and intellection are both of them one, since intellect is the same with every being which it contains. If, therefore, it makes by its very being, but its very being is intellection, it makes by intellection. But this is the same with the essence of intellect. And the essence of intellect consists in producing; for that which produces immovably, always possesses its very being in producing. The intelligence of intellect, therefore, consists in fabrication or production.

Proposition CLXXV

Every intellect is primarily participated by those natures which are intellectual, both according to essence, and according to energy

For it is necessary that it should either be participated by these, or by other natures, which possess indeed an intellectual essence, but do not always energize intellectually. It is, however, impossible that it should be participated by the latter of these, for the energy of intellect is immovable. Hence, the natures by which it is participated always participate of intellectual energy, which always causes its participants to be intellectual. For that which possesses its energy in a certain part of time, is unadapted to be conjoined with an eternal energy. But that which has its perfection according to the whole of time is the medium between

* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 56 to 98.

every eternal energy and that which is perfect in a certain time : as well in the mutations of energy, as in essences. For progressions are never effected without a medium, but through kindred and similar natures, both according to hypostases and the perfections of energies. After a similar manner, therefore, every intellect is primarily participated by those beings that are able to perceive intellectually according to the whole of time, and who always energize intellectually, though their intellection is in time, and is not eternally in energy.

Corollary

From this, therefore, it is evident that it is impossible for the soul which sometimes perceives intellectually and sometimes does not, to participate proximately of intellect.

Proposition CLXXVI

All intellectual forms are in each other, and each is at the same time separate and distinct from the rest

For if every intellect is impartible, and the multitude which is in it is united through intellectual impartibility, all things in it will be in one, impartibles will be united to each other, and all intellectual forms will pervade through all. But if all intellectual forms subsist immaterially and incorporeally, they are unconfused with each other and separate, and each, preserving its own purity, remains that which it is. The peculiar participation, however, of each participating in a separate manner, manifests the unconfused nature of intellectual forms. For unless the forms which are participated were distinct and separate from each other, the participants of each of them would not participate in a separate manner, but in the subordinate natures (i.e. in the participants) there would be, in a much greater degree, an indistinct confusion, according to their inferior order. For whence would there be a separation of these, if the natures which give subsistence to, and perfect them, were without distinction and confused? Again, the impartible hypostasis and uniform essence of that which contains forms evince their united nature. For things which have their hyparxis in the impartible and the uniform are impartibly in the same thing :

for how can you divide the impartible and *the one*? Hence, they have a simultaneous subsistence, and are in each other, each wholly pervading through the whole of each in a manner unaccompanied with interval. For that which comprehends them is not extended with interval, nor is one of them in this thing but another elsewhere, as in that which has interval; but every thing is at once in the impartible and in one. Thus all intellectual forms are in each other, and are in each other unitedly, and at the same time each is distinctly apart from each.

Corollary

But if some one, in addition to these demonstrations, should require also examples, let him direct his attention to the theorems which exist in one soul. For all these are in the same essence, which is truly without magnitude, and are united to each other: for that which is without magnitude does not locally contain the things which are in it, but the natures which it contains are united and separated, impartibly and without interval. For the soul genuinely produces all things, and each apart from each, attracting nothing from the rest, which, unless they were always separated according to habit, would not be separated by the energy of the soul.

(*To be continued*)

JEWEL

Alas, O man, why is it that thou hast destroyed thyself, leaving the good way to enter steep and dangerous defiles? Thou hast made passion thy master and cast aside the truth. Thou hast become a ravenous beast, with only clothes to show thou art a man. When virtue departs from life it becomes a fiery conflict with destruction as its end. The sins of the mouth and ears, the wicked look of the eyes, the wandering thoughts, become evils that envelop the whole life.

—*Kang Pil-hyo*

EXTRACTS FROM THE DIVANI SHAMSI
TABRIEY

by JALALU'D-DIN RUMI

THE WATER OF IMMORTALITY

Every form you see has its archetype in the Formless World;
If the form perisheth, what matter, since its Idea is everlasting?
Every fair shape you have seen, every deep saying you have heard,
Be not cast down that it perished; for that is not so.
Whereas the Spring-head is undying—its branch gives water
continually;
Since neither can cease, why are you lamenting?
Conceive the Soul as a fountain and these created things as rivers;
While the fountain flows, the rivers run from it.
Put grief out of your mind and keep quaffing this River-water;
Do not think of the water failing, for this Water is without end.

THE JOURNEY TO THE BELOVED

O lovers! O lovers! it is time to leave the world:
The drum of departure reaches the spiritual ear from heaven.
Behold, the driver has risen and made ready his files of camels,
And begged us to acquit him of blame: why, O travellers, are
you asleep?
These sounds before and behind are the din of departure and of
the camel-bells;
With each moment a soul is setting off unto the Goal.
From these inverted candles, from these blue awnings
There has come forth a wonderful people, that the mysteries
may be revealed.
A heavy slumber fell upon thee from the circling spheres:
Alas, for this life so light, beware of this slumber so heavy!
O soul, seek the Beloved! O friend, seek the Friend,
O watchman, be wakeful: it behoves not a watchman to sleep.