

THE SHRINE *of* WISDOM

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“SCIENCE AND WISDOM”*

From *The Metaphysics of Aristotle* by Thomas Taylor

But, since we investigate this science, we should consider from the speculation of what causes and principles science is wisdom. If any one, therefore, shall apprehend the opinions which we entertain respecting a wise man, perhaps from this the thing proposed will become more evident.

In the first place then we are of opinion that a wise man in the most evident degree knows scientifically all that can be known; not possessing a science of things according to that which is particular, but according to that which is universal. In the next place, we consider him as a wise man, who is able to know things difficult, and which it is not easy for man to know. For, to perceive according to sense is common to all men; on which account this is easy, and he who thus energizes is by no means wise. In the third place, we are of opinion that he who is more accurate, and more capable of teaching the causes of things, is more wise respecting every science. Further still, that of sciences, that which is eligible for its own sake and for the sake of knowing, partakes more of wisdom than that which is eligible for the sake of things which are contingent; and that the more principal science partakes more of wisdom than that which is subservient. For it is not proper that the wise man should be commanded, but that he should command; nor ought he to be persuaded by another, but one less wise ought to be persuaded by him. And such and so many are the opinions which we entertain respecting wisdom and wise men.

* The science of beings, so far as they are beings, is the most universal science; and he who possesses this science, in a certain respect knows all things: for he sees particulars comprehended in universals, and effects in their causes.

But, among these, to know all things necessarily belongs to him who in the most eminent degree possesses universal science. For such a one in a certain respect knows all subjects. But things most eminently universal are nearly the most difficult, too, for man to know. For they are most remote from the senses. But the most accurate of the sciences are those which especially relate to things first. For those sciences which consist from fewer things, are more accurate than those which are denominated from addition; as arithmetic than geometry. But, indeed, that science is more doctrinal which speculates the causes of things. For those teach others, who about every thing relate the causes. But to know, and to know scientifically for the sake of such knowledge, especially belongs to the science of that which is most eminently the object of scientific knowledge. For he who chooses to know scientifically for the sake of such knowledge, especially chooses that which is most eminently science. But such is the science of that which is most eminently the object of scientific knowledge. And objects of this kind are things first and causes. For, through and from these, other things are known, but these are not known through things in subjection to them. But the most principal of sciences, and which is more a principle than the science which is in subjection, is that which knows on what account every thing is to be done. But this is the good of every thing; and universally that which is best in every nature. From all, therefore, that has been said, that name which is the object of our investigation falls into the same science. For it is necessary that this should be speculative of first principles and causes. For the good also, and that for the sake of which a thing subsists, is one among the number of causes.

But that this science is not employed in making, is evident from those who first philosophized. For, both now and at first, men began to philosophize through wonder: at first indeed admiring such dubious particulars as were of a more easy solution; but afterwards, proceeding in this manner gradually, they began to doubt about things of greater importance, such as concerning the properties participated by the moon, the sun, and the stars, and the generation of the universe. But he who doubts and wonders is of opinion that he is ignorant: and on this account, a philosopher, in a certain sense, is a lover of

fables.* For a fable is composed from things wonderful. So that if now and at first men philosophized in order to fly from ignorance, it is evident that they pursued scientific knowledge for the sake of knowing, and not for the sake of any use. But the truth of this is also testified by that which has happened. For nearly all such things as are necessary being present, and which contribute both to ease and the conduct of life, prudence of this kind began to be investigated.

It is evident therefore, that we seek after scientific knowledge for the sake of no other utility than that which arises from itself; and that as we call him a free man who exists for his own sake, and not for the sake of another, so this alone among the sciences is liberal: for this alone subsists for its own sake.

On this account too, the possession of it may justly be considered as not human. For in many respects human nature is servile; so that according to Simonides, Divinity alone possesses this honour; but it is unbecoming that man should only investigate the science which pertains to himself. But if the poets say anything to the purpose, and a Divine nature is naturally envious, it is likely that it would especially happen in this particular, and that all those would be unhappy who surpass the rest of mankind. But neither does a Divine nature admit of envy; and poets, according to the proverb, speak falsely in many things.

Nor is it proper to think that any other science is more honourable than a science of this kind. For that which is divine is also most honourable. But a thing of this kind will alone subsist twofold. For the science which Divinity possesses is especially divine; and this will likewise be the case with the science of things divine, if there be such a science. But the science of which we are speaking alone possesses both these prerogatives. For Divinity appears to be a cause and a certain principle to all things; and either alone, or in the most eminent degree, Divinity possesses such a science as this. All other sciences therefore are more necessary, but no one is better than this. But it is requisite in a certain respect to establish this science in an order contrary to that of the inquiries which men

* A philosopher may be said to be a lover of fables, because he studies to learn things which from being unknown are admirable, for fables are composed of things admirable and incredible.

made from the beginning. For all men, as we have said, begin from wonder to investigate the manner in which a thing subsists; just as it happens to those who have not yet contemplated the cause of those wonderful figures that move spontaneously, or the cause of the revolutions of the sun, or the reason of the incommensurability of the diameter of a square to the side. For it seems admirable to all men that a thing which is not the least of things should not be measured. But it is requisite they should end in the contrary, and in that which is better, according to the proverb, as is the case in these things when they learn them. For there is not any thing which would appear more wonderful to a geometrician than if the diameter should become commensurable to the side. And thus we have declared what the nature is of that science which is the object of our investigation, and what the mark to which the inquiry and the whole method ought to be directed.

SAYINGS OF CHWANG TSZE

Our natural life has a limit, but knowledge is limitless.

With the limited, to pursue the limitless is fraught with peril. By succumbing to this peril man is engulfed in almost incurable intellectual pride.*

The man of virtue does not strive for fame. The self-seeking man strives to avoid disgrace. The middle course is best and results in a sound body, a sound mind, duties fulfilled, and a life of the allotted span.

Duke Ai once asked: "What is meant by a man of perfect powers?"

Confucius replied: "Life and death, existence and non-existence, success and failure, wealth and poverty, worth and worthlessness, praise and blame, hunger and thirst, heat and cold,—these all revolve upon the changing wheel of life. Day

*Like can only be known by like. Therefore it is futile to expect the lower faculties or principles to fulfil the purposes proper only to those which are higher. It is perilous because it leads to partitive concepts by circumscribing the mental outlook within the limits of the lower mind, resulting either in agnosticism or in the illusion that truth has been or can be attained within this limited sphere.

and night follow one another and the wisest man cannot say exactly to what they owe their origination. This, however, should not be allowed to disturb our poise, or enter the treasury of our intelligence.

To dwell ever in harmony and calm contentment of mind, without intermission day by day, so that it is always as spring-time, and with no inlet for discontent : such it is to be a man of perfect powers."

The true Sage deems that which is regarded as necessary as unnecessary, and therefore he is never at war with himself.

Men untrained in wisdom regard that which is unnecessary as necessary, and are therefore often disturbed by inner strife.

Those who are at war within themselves, fly to arms at every provocation, and to trust to arms is to perish.

The intelligence of the trivial man does not rise above bribery and favouritism. His mind is beclouded with petty things, even though he would penetrate to the comprehension of Tao and participate in the mystery of the Great Unity. It follows that he becomes entangled in time and space, and the fetters of materiality restrain him from knowing the Great Origin.

The true Sage, however, turns his thoughts to that which was before the beginning, eternity, and finding joy in the mysterious region of timelessness, flows as water into the clear depths of the Infinite.

Alas, men's knowledge reaches to the hair on a hair, but not to the Eternal Tranquillity.

FROM THE PIVOT OF JADE

The Heaven-honoured One says : "Sincerity is the first step towards the knowledge of Tao ; it is by silence that knowledge is maintained ; it is with gentleness that Tao is employed. The employment of sincerity looks like stupidity ; the employment of silence looks like difficulty of utterance ; the employment of gentleness looks like want of ability. But having attained to this, you may forget all bodily form ; you may forget your personality ; you may forget that you are forgetting."

GEORGE FOX

*“As to the man, he was original, being no man’s copy.” (William Penn).
 “This man, the first of the Quakers, and by trade a shoemaker, was one of those to whom, under ruder or purer form, the Divine Idea of the Universe is pleased to manifest itself; and across all the hulls of Ignorance and earthly Degradation, shone through in unspeakable Awfulness, unspeakable Beauty, on their souls. Who therefore are rightly accounted Prophets, God-possessed, or even Gods, as in some periods it has chanced. Sitting in his stall, working on tanned hides, amid pincers, paste-borns and rosin, this youth had nevertheless, a Living Spirit belonging to him; also an Antique Inspired Volume, through which, as through a window, he could look upwards, and discern its celestial Home.” (Carlyle).*

To appreciate the significance of the work and life of George Fox, it is necessary to take into consideration the conditions of the religious world of his time. During the first twenty years of his life religious toleration was unknown officially, and it was rare to find it among individuals. When the ecclesiastical power passed from Episcopacy to Presbyterianism, there was little relief for those who were still unable to conform to the views of the prevailing sect, and persecution continued. Added to the absence of toleration, there was in general, a tendency to a literal interpretation of the Scriptures, the letter rather than the spirit being given importance and a precise acceptance of doctrine expected. Public religious disputation and doctrinal controversies were also a feature of the time. Such was the religious atmosphere in which the young George Fox came to manhood.

Of humble parentage, he was born in Leicestershire in July 1624. Of his father Christopher Fox, the son says discerningly, “There was the seed of God in him”, and we learn that he earned the nickname of Righteous Christer. George records that his mother was “of the stock of martyrs”, and for both parents he appears to have had a high regard.

“From a child he appears of another frame of mind than the rest of his brethren; being more religious, inward still, solid and observing beyond his years.”*

He was indeed an unusual child with no desire for the normal recreations of others of his age. By the time he was eleven, he had formulated for himself a standard of conduct, which included, “to act faithfully in two ways, viz. inwardly to God and outwardly to man; and to keep to Yea and Nay in all things”. † He could not take life lightly as is usual with youth, but would retire to the hollow of a tree, Bible in hand, to grapple with the troubles of his heart and mind. Perhaps it was the boy’s unusual gravity which caused his parents to consider making him a priest—at that time the name given to anyone who received payment for preaching, irrespective of sect. But it was later decided to apprentice him to a shoemaker, who, as it happened, also traded in wool and kept a few sheep.

George was often shepherd to the flock and his appreciation of the solitude and contact with nature which this subsidiary work gave him, is evident from entries in his now famous *Journal*. “Alone in the field, I was much given to wondering. I sat still with my mind retired in the Lord.” ‡ An inner urge compelled him to pursue the light in his soul—a flickering unreliable light, it seemed, at that time, but one that he was to find proof against the relentless winds of doubt and cynicism.

At nineteen he left his home and his work, to journey about the country, earning enough to keep himself, living very simply and sleeping in the open in all weathers. These years of hard living must have done much to give him the resistance to the harsh conditions he was, later in life, so often called upon to endure. For the next five years, his life was devoted to the quest for Truth. He visited many priests to get aid, but found them unhelpful and insincere. “I thought them miserable comforters and saw they were all as nothing to me, for they could not reach my conditions.” § Of one he says: “He was nothing but a notioner, and not in possession of what he talked of”, a discriminating criticism for so youthful an inquirer. These years were a time of severe conflict of mind and darkening of soul, but they were to lead him finally to an inner conviction.

* Penn.

† *Journal*.‡ *Journal*.§ *Journal*.

Carlyle says of this period "Fox returned from them (the priests) with tears and a sacred scorn, back to his leather parings and his Bible. Mountains of encumbrance higher than Aetna had been heaped over that Spirit, but it was a Spirit, and would not lie buried there. Through long days and nights of silent agony, it struggled and wrestled, with a man's force, to be free; how its prison mountains heaved and swayed tumultuously, as the giant spirit shook them . . . and emerged into the light of Heaven!"

Gradually through these testing years he began to realise that he would get an answer to his need, and in his *Journal* he writes of the experiences of Divine Guidance and Illumination he received, which he always called "openings". These usually consisted of his hearing "a true voice" within him; but more rarely the help was visual. Throughout his life he accepted these "openings" as Divine teachings or commands, and preached and acted upon them. They were very varied as will be seen from the following examples, taken from the *Journal*.

"At another time I saw the great love of God, and I was filled with admiration at the infiniteness of it." (1647)

"Now was I come up in the Spirit through the flaming sword into the paradise of God. All things were new and all creation gave another smell unto me than before, beyond which words can utter. I knew nothing but pureness and innocence and righteousness, being renewed up into the image of God. . . . The creation was opened unto me; and it was shewed me how all things had names given them according to their nature and virtue." (1649)

"Another time it was opened to me that God who made the world, did not dwell in temples made with hands. The Lord showed me, so that I did see clearly, that He did not dwell in these temples which man had commanded and set up, but in people's hearts . . . that His people were His temple and He dwelt in them."

"In 1652, his being in his usual retirement to the Lord upon a very high mountain in some of the higher parts of Yorkshire, . . . his mind exercised towards the Lord, he had a vision of the great work of God in the earth, and the way he was to go forth to begin it."*

* Penn.

As Fox recounts of this same matter "the Lord commanded me to go abroad in the world, which was like a briary thorny wilderness. I was sent to turn people from darkness to the light. . . . I was to direct them to the Spirit that gave forth the scriptures and was commanded to turn people to that inward light, Spirit and grace, by which all might know their salvation and way to God; even that divine Spirit which would lead them unto all Truth, which I infallibly knew would never deceive any."

"It was thought a strange thing then to preach in houses and not to go to the church as they called it. But their steeple-houses and pulpits were offensive to my mind, because both priests and people called them the house of God and idolised them; reckoning that God dwelt there in the outward house. Whereas they should have looked for God in their hearts and their bodies to be made the temple of God. I declared God's everlasting truth and word of life, freely and largely, directing them to the Spirit of God in themselves, that they might be turned from darkness to light . . . and by the spirit of truth be led to all Truth." (1653)

It will be seen that the core of Fox's message was that truth is to be sought and found by listening to the voice of God in the soul. "This principle contained a moral revolution as it established absolute freedom of mind. But Fox circumscribed this freedom by complete obedience to Truth."*

Emphasis has purposely been given to Fox's mental and emotional struggle and eventual spiritual growth, a brief reference to his beliefs and the objects of his "mission". But mention should be made of the strenuous and hard life he led, his many and often long terms of imprisonment under terrible conditions, his travels to America and Holland, and over and above these, the founding of the Society of Friends and the drawing up of the essential rules for its working, as well as the setting up of several schools. It is not merely accidental that George Fox the man is less well-known than the Society he founded, often referred to as the "Quakers". Perhaps no sect has achieved a more widespread and deserved reputation for integrity of belief, added to practical loving service to mankind. The Founder himself would have rejoiced that it was his life's

* Rufus Jones.

work and not himself personally which had gained such general recognition.

“He died as he lived, a lamb, minding the things of God and His Church to the last, in an Universal Spirit.”

His death occurred in January, 1691, at the age of sixty-seven.

SEED THOUGHTS

FROM THE JOURNAL

“God is love, and they that dwell in love dwell in God.”

“If a man be a dwarf, let him eat God’s bread that he may grow.”

“Love the truth more than all and go on in the mighty power of God.”

“Therefore be still a while from thy own thoughts and desires”. . . “Be stayed in the principle of God in thee, that it may raise thy Mind up to God and stay it upon God.”

—*George Fox.*

JEWEL

All the scattered rags of beauty and loveliness which we behold spread up and down over all the world, are only the emanations of that inexhausted Light which is above; therefore should we love them all in that, and climb up always by those sunbeams unto the eternal Father of Lights—and always eyeing Him should polish and shape our souls into the clearest resemblance of Him.

—*John Smith.*

THE TEACHING OF ZOROASTER*

The Zoroastrian teachings can be considered according to the three fundamental Principles of God, the Cosmos, and Man.

THE DIVINE HEAD

Ahura Mazda is the one all-inclusive Source, than Whom there is none more primary, to Whom there is no equal. His primal characteristics of Rulership and Wisdom are denoted by His name Ahura Mazda (Lord, Wise). As the Wise Lord He is the absolute Ruler of all creation and the ultimate Goal of man's aspirations and efforts. The recognition of this truth gives the keynote to Zoroastrianism, which emphasizes the importance of Mind as the ruling factor of existence and attainment, and stresses the wisdom of the supreme rulership of the One Lord.

The absolute unity and transcendence of Ahura Mazda make Him incomprehensible to the human mind unless considered through His Divine Emanations, the Ameshospends who, since they reveal the Divine nature and lead to union with the One, are essential to a knowledge of the Supreme.

The Ameshospends are six in number. They are frequently referred to as the Bountiful Immortals. In Western teachings they correspond closely with the Archangels, and are thus linked up with Jewish and Christian theology.

Being fundamental aspects of Ahura Mazda, they are personalized as distinct sources of Divine activity and are therefore objects of worship: nevertheless they do not imply a multiplicity of Godheads, for although with Ahura Mazda they constitute a heptad and are therefore referred to as "the Six" or "the Seven," yet they are aspects of the One God.

The Ameshospends may also be considered as Divine Principles operating within and upon the Cosmos, and, as such, a certain hierarchical order is necessarily evident in the manifestation of their characteristic natures, some of them being more directly related to the subjective and others to the objective worlds. But all of them are essentially subjective and spiritual, and all are represented in objectivity. As mutual aspects of one

* For previous article see *Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 109.

Unity, all are essentially of equal dignity. Zoroaster did not specifically indicate any hierarchical order of precedence among them, but his recognition of the importance of Intellect led to Vohu Manah being placed at the head of the others.

Vohu Manah is the Divine Intellect and the subjective Creator and guiding intelligence of objective existence, which leads all things to their consummation in accordance with Asha, and admits worthy souls to paradise. It has also its human aspect as the spiritual intellect which is actualized in so far as man conforms with Asha. Thus in one sense the following of Asha leads to Vohu Manah; in another, the guidance of the latter brings a realization of Asha. It may also be regarded as the conscience.

Asha represents the eternal paradigm of all creation, the ideal order whereby all things receive that which is their due, and through which they may attain their fruition. It may therefore be considered as Justice and the eternal norm by which all existence may be judged. Objectively it is the order underlying actual existence, which it is man's duty to realize and express. In man, it represents the perpetual urge towards ordination and the inner standard of right activity.

It will be seen that Vohu Manah and Asha are closely inter-linked, especially as guiding principles for mankind, and they are frequently associated together in the Gathas.

Kshathra represents dominion and sovereignty, the Good Kingdom implied by Vohu Manah and Asha. Subjectively, therefore, it is inviolable, but it also has an objective aspect as the mundane world and material wealth. Humanly it may be considered as man's potential rulership of the material world which may be achieved by a life in accordance with Vohu Manah and Asha.

Aramaiti is complementary to Kshathra, for as Devotion it represents receptivity and service, without which Kshathra would be meaningless. In man it stands for obedience to Ahura Mazda, as a basis for the good life, and cosmically it is held to represent the principle of the earth, the foundation upon which the objective kingdom is built.

Ameretad and Haurvatad are usually associated together, and represent Immortality and Perfection, respectively, which logically follow from the devotion of Aramaiti and the rulership of Kshathra. In man they are considered especially as the per-

petual felicity which is the reward of the true follower of Ahura Mazda.

THE COSMIC HEAD

The Cosmos may be considered mystically as the body of Ahura Mazda. Zoroaster clearly recognized the universe as a unity emanating from one Source, for while acknowledging the distinction between the "two worlds"—the Ideal and the Actual, or the Spiritual and the Material—he regarded them as interrelated and complementary aspects of one whole.

Since the manifested universe is in many ways dual, comprising pairs of opposites, Zoroaster taught that it was the result of the activities of two Principles; Spenta Mainyu (The Holy Spirit), the unitive embodiment of the Ameshospends, and Angra Mainyu (the materializing principle) which represents their opposites. The resultant cosmos he named Geush (ox or kine—as representing the sustenance upon which the agricultural community among which Zoroaster lived chiefly depended), and this was further differentiated into Geush Tashan, the creator of kine, and Geush Urvan, the soul of the kine.

These "two worlds" or dual aspects of the cosmos Zoroaster in no wise regarded as mutually opposed, in the sense of the material world being essentially evil and the spiritual world, with its rewards of virtue, being reserved solely for a future life. But since these two worlds are related together as cause and effect, he taught that material prosperity should result from a virtuous life, and that the objective universe, as the work of Ahura Mazda, was worthy of veneration.

THE HUMAN HEAD

The Prototype of man, according to the Gathas, is Yima, the good shepherd and son of Vivahvant, who is mystically said to have sinned by giving his people the flesh of Geush to eat. But man is endowed with the Divine nature in terms of himself, for all the Ameshospends are said to have "come to him" at his creation. Later scriptures disclose that although Yima was in full possession of the truth of the Divine Law he was unable to impart it to man, and the resultant ignorance is the cause of inordinations. Evil consists in the undue turning to matter and

all that is implied by the antitheses of the Ameshospends, and this tendency Zoroaster personified as Druj (lie or deceit). Such activities are harmful to Geush, the cosmos, which is represented in one of the Gathas as appealing to Ahura Mazda for a protector and wise master, and therefore Zoroaster's chief appeal to his followers was to fight for the extermination of the Druj and all his ways, that man might not only achieve the perfection and bliss of Ameretad and Haurvatad, but might also bring joy to the soul of creation.

All religions must provide a solution to the problem of evil, and their integrality can be judged to a great extent by the adequacy of the solution they offer. This great teacher faced this problem courageously and presented an explanation regarding it which is consistent with the other features of his teaching.

Zoroastrian worship centres round the Creative Spirit working in all things, symbolized by the dynamic principle of fire, the source of light, heat and power. This is named Atar, and fire is accordingly considered to be an essential element in all ritual worship. Piety and sanctity, which is the fruit of true worship, is personified as Ashi, whose fruit, felicity, is said to be bestowed at the Seat of Judgment by the Saviour Sraosha, the spirit of active obedience, and mediator between Ahura Mazda and man.

(Conclusion)

FROM THE MAITRAYANA UPANISHAD

Lord of the Universe, glory to Thee!
 Thou art the Self of All, the Maker of All,
 the Enjoyer of All.
 Thou art all life, the Lord of all gladness and joy.
 Glory to Thee, the Tranquil, the deeply hidden,
 The Imperishable, the Immeasurable,
 without beginning and without end.

GREGORY THE GREAT*

Gregory the Great was born in Rome between A.D. 540 and 545 of an old senatorial family famous for its nobility and piety.

His father Gordianus, an official in a responsible administrative position, had large estates in Sicily and a magnificent palace on the Caelian Hill in Rome. His mother Sylvia was a beautiful woman of saintly character.

The greater part of Italy had for more than forty years been under the dominion of the Goths and Rome was a city devastated by war, earthquakes, and neglect, having only the ruins of its former majesty. Gregory's early childhood was shadowed by the disastrous end of the second Gothic war, for in 546 Rome was besieged for nearly a year by the Gothic king Totila until the citizens, reduced in number by disease and starvation to about 500, were betrayed by a few demoralized soldiers.

The conqueror sentenced to slavery most of the captured senators, but was persuaded by the Archdeacon Pelagius to substitute the penalty of imprisonment in Campania. In 549 the senators were allowed to return and in the interval Gregory may have been in Sicily, if his father Gordianus escaped from Rome, or in Campania.

Gordianus took care that Gregory should have the best education possible at the time. He was taught at home to read and write, and learned passages from Virgil and from the Psalms. He went on to the University of Rome which had been closed during the war and which, now that many libraries had been destroyed and little endowment remained (for neither the Emperor nor the Church supported the university), had fallen from its earlier greatness, though it still was famous for medicine and law.

Gregory, it is said, studied grammar, rhetoric and dialectic as well as law. Grammar at this time was the study of certain famous writers with a view to the appreciation of what was best in literature and as examples of good style and composition. Rhetoric was the art of expressing ideas clearly and eloquently

* With acknowledgments to Dudden's *Life of Gregory the Great*.

in public speaking. Dialectic was the study of the system of logic of the ancient world. Plato and Aristotle had not been studied at a European university since Justinian closed the Schools of Athens in A.D. 529. Lectures on Ethics, Arithmetic, Euclid's theorems, and Music formed part of the curriculum, and Gregory seems to have made a special study of Law.

In the home of religious parents he must have had a sound training in the Scriptures upon which he often meditated during his boyhood. He was frequently present at conversations and conferences on important matters in his father's house.

Little is known of events in Rome during Gregory's youth. He grew up with a deep and wide knowledge of the Scriptures and a dislike for pagan literature.

In A.D. 553 the Goths were driven out of Italy. During their rule there had been religious tolerance, but the Catholic Church, since the conquerors had been of the Arian faith, had not exercised supreme religious authority. After Rome was freed, however, the Catholic Church was to become not only a great ecclesiastical power but also a great secular power in the West. The Imperial Court was established at Constantinople and the Emperor Justinian in 544 gave into the care of the Pope and the Senate of Rome the standard weights and measures for commercial transactions and charged the bishops and chief men of each province with the choice of a governor from among the inhabitants. The Pope, who had absolute control over the bishops, thus gained increased secular power in commercial and political spheres.

The Emperor's deputy in Italy lived at Ravenna, far from Rome, and since the power of the Senate had decreased greatly, the Pope held the highest rank in the city. Many large estates were bequeathed to the Church, and came under papal control, adding further to the Pope's secular responsibility and dominion.

In 565 Justinian died and three years later Italy was again invaded, this time by the Lombards, a Teutonic nation who, after gaining much ground in Italy, threatened in 571 to attack Rome. Two years later Gregory was holding the high office of Prefect of Rome. This made him head of the Senate and the highest authority in civil and financial administration. He co-operated with the Pope in buying and selling corn and with the chief military leaders in measures for the defence of Rome.

In 573 the Pope died and Gregory's most skilful and wise military adviser died also, leaving him as chief leader both in civil and military affairs.

For a long time Gregory had longed for "the knowledge of Eternity", which he believed could only be gained fully through an ascetic and contemplative life. Now he found himself, to his dismay, plunged ever more deeply into temporal affairs, and understood that he was faced with a definite choice between the life of a vigorous, popular young leader and administrator in high office, the wealthiest man in Rome, and that of a monk.

In 574 he renounced all worldly possessions, spent the greater part of his fortune on the foundation and endowment of seven monasteries, and divided the remainder among the poor. Then he entered the monastery of St. Andrew which he had founded in the Caelian palace and became a monk under an order similar to that of the Benedictines with its three basic principles of obedience, simplicity, and continual occupation. Since the endowment was adequate there was no need for external work, and much time could be spent in reading and meditation. Perhaps it was here that Gregory laid the foundation for his works of allegorical interpretation and exposition of the Scriptures. In later life he said that his happiest days had been those spent in this monastery.

In 578 he was appointed by Pope Benedict to the office of Seventh Deacon of the Church. In the following year, when Rome was passing through a critical time of siege, famine, and disease, Pope Benedict died and his successor made Gregory Papal Ambassador at the court of the Emperor at Constantinople. His chief mission was to procure troops for the defence of Rome, but this was not accomplished owing to the threat from Persia to the Eastern Empire.

Accompanied by several monks from St. Andrews, Gregory reached that rich and lavishly adorned city where wealth and extravagance were the aim and standard of the majority and where the tone of both private and public morals was correspondingly low. Violent clashes between opposing political parties occasioned much destruction in the city and justice was undermined by bribery and corruption. The Emperor Tiberius "a great and true Christian" according to a contemporary of Gregory, was gentle, compassionate, generous in the extreme

and skilful in military affairs, but was unable to check the prevalent corruption.

Gregory, with his companions from Rome, followed as far as possible the rule of a monastic life. "I see", he wrote at a later time, "that this was ordered for me by Divine Providence so that when I was driven to and fro by the constant buffeting of worldly business, I might by their example be anchored as it were to the firm shore of prayer. To their society I fled as to a harbour of perfect safety, and while I was employed with them in the careful study and discussion of Scripture, the yearnings of penitence daily gave me life."

Gregory was friendly with many influential people in Constantinople, but his closest and most congenial friend was Leander, Archbishop of Seville, who was visiting the city on a political mission. To him Gregory dedicated a work which originated in an important series of lectures given on the Book of Job, and which is entitled *Magna Moralia*. Both lectures and book were in Latin, for Gregory, even in Constantinople where Greek was spoken at the Imperial court and the law courts, by all officers of state, and by the citizens in general, never learned even the rudiments of that language.

After six years he was recalled to Rome, his mission still incomplete but his experience greatly extended through contact with many different types of people, problems and opinions. He had witnessed the persecution of heretical sects, particularly the Arians, but was himself always ready to discuss the points at issue and would willingly admit an error if he found a charge of heresy to be based on misunderstanding.

At Rome in St. Andrew's monastery he edited his work on the Book of Job. The book was enthusiastically received and became a text-book of doctrine. By the twelfth century translations of it were to be found in every good theological library.

It was probably between A.D. 586 and 588 that Gregory encountered the English boy slaves in the Forum at Rome and, struck by their beauty and intelligence, determined to go himself upon a mission to convert the heathen of England. The Pope at first withheld his permission, but at last yielded. On the third day of the journey Gregory with his small band of monks was recalled on account of the citizens' angry demonstrations at his departure from Rome. The missionary project

was given up for the time being, but about ten years later, after his accession to the Papacy, Gregory sent Augustine on a similar mission, and this time it was successfully accomplished.

The Pope frequently consulted Gregory, who may have acted as his secretary, and entrusted to him many delicate and difficult tasks, one of which was to try to restore certain schismatic bishops of Istria to unity with the Church. The point at issue concerned the writings of certain bishops which had been condemned by the Fifth Council although approved by the Fourth Council. Gregory wrote a closely reasoned treatise which was sent to the Istrian bishops.

In the year 590, during a disastrous epidemic of plague, Pope Pelagius died, and the clergy and people of Rome with one accord flocked to the monastery of St. Andrew and demanded that Gregory should be his successor.

Unwilling to undertake this great responsibility, Gregory wrote to the Emperor Maurice, begging him not to confirm the election; but the Prefect of Rome substituted for this letter a formal acceptance of the see in the name of Gregory. Meanwhile a council of four, headed by Gregory, was in charge of affairs.

One of his first acts was to call upon the people to make a public act of contrition in order that the plague might be stayed. In the sermon, which has been preserved, he said, "We ought, my beloved brethren, to have feared the chastisements of God before they came. . . . But now let sorrow open the way for us to conversion. . . . Let us bewail whatever we have done amiss . . . let us lift up our hearts with our hands to God. To lift up our hearts with our hands to God is to heighten the earnestness of our prayers by the merits of good works. Let us change our hearts and let us feel sure that we have already received what we ask for. . . . Therefore, my beloved brethren, with contrite hearts and amended lives, with devout minds and with tears, let us assemble at early dawn on the fourth day of the week in a sevenfold litany."

At the appointed hour, setting out from seven churches, the people of Rome made their way in a sevenfold procession to the Church of the Virgin Mary, where Gregory exhorted them to penitence and prayer.

Six months after the death of Pelagius the Emperor's appoint-

ment of Gregory to the Papacy reached Rome. Gregory, so the legend runs, fled to the forest, lying hidden until, three days later, his retreat was shown to the people by a light from heaven. A contemporary writer, Gregory of Tours, said that on September 3rd, 590, he was seized, carried off and dragged to the Basilica of St. Peter, and there, having been consecrated to the Pontifical Office, was given as a Pope to the city.

In many of the letters written after his consecration, Gregory described the sadness and reluctance which he felt in his new duties. He undertook "the heavy burden of the dignity with a sick heart" and was "oppressed to suffocation with business." To one friend he wrote, "When you hear of my promotion to the Episcopate, weep if you love me, for there are so many temporal occupations here that I find myself by this dignity almost separated from the Love of God." To another he said, "I meditate on all I have suffered and lost. When I think of my former life I seem to look back towards the shore."

He might well seem to have embarked on a troubled sea, for the Lombards were again ravaging the country and famine followed in their wake. To John, Bishop of Constantinople, he wrote, "Since I, weak and unworthy, have received the charge of a ship which is old and sadly shattered—for the waves are pouring in on every side and the rotten planks, daily smitten with the violence of the storm, creak shipwreck—I pray you by Almighty God to stretch out the hand of your prayer to help me in my peril." But his inward resignation and faith are shown in a letter to the Bishop of Corinth: "Feeling myself too weak to reach the height of the Apostolic See, I wished to avoid this burden, lest I should fail in the pastoral rule through my imperfect discharge of its duties. But as it is impossible to resist the ordinance of God, I have obediently followed what the merciful Hand of the Lord has been pleased to work out for me."

Soon after his accession, in answer to the Archbishop of Ravenna who had rebuked him for his reluctance to accept the Papal office, Gregory wrote a treatise *Liber Regulae Pastoralis* in four parts on the duties and responsibilities of a bishop.

The work was highly praised and widely circulated. Its influence prevailed during the following centuries and it has been said that it set the ideal standard which the rulers of the Church ever since have striven to reach.

On taking office, Gregory appointed priests, the majority of them monks, as his household attendants and as administrators of the papal estates, in place of the laymen who formerly held these positions. He gathered round himself many learned theologians among whom was his friend Augustine.

As Pope of Rome Gregory was generally regarded as first of the five patriarchs of the Church—of Rome, Jerusalem, Antioch, Alexandria and Constantinople, although the Patriarch of Constantinople was not always willing to admit the supremacy of Rome. Gregory spoke of the See of Rome as the head of all the churches and of himself as called to govern "the Church"; but he always respected the rights of the other patriarchs.

Gregory himself was a shining example of the ruler depicted in his treatise. His manner of life was very simple and he devoted himself unsparingly to the service of his flock. In spite of increasingly bad health he was "ever engaged in providing for the interests of his people or in writing some composition worthy of the Church or in searching out the secrets of heaven by the grace of contemplation."

In addition to his other duties Gregory concerned himself on occasion with the defence of Rome and the shelter and feeding of the many refugees who were supplied with corn from the papal granaries. Four times a year, according to his custom, the money from the revenues of the papal estates was distributed among the "officials of the churches, the palace, the monasteries, and lesser institutions. On the first day of each month the revenue paid in kind—corn, vegetables, cheese, wine, oil, bacon, meat, fish, according to the season, was distributed." Cooked food was sent daily to the needy sick and aged in Rome. "And this he did", says one of Gregory's biographers, "before he sat down to dine." Many people of all callings and ages who were in want received gifts of money from the church.

On the various festivals Gregory preached to the people who flocked to hear his sermons, which were simple and practical, well adapted to the hearers and enlivened with a wealth of illustrations sometimes drawn from his own experiences, sometimes in the form of stories exemplifying the points emphasized. These were frequently non-scriptural and this practice marked the beginning of a new style of preaching. Gregory was deservedly popular as a preacher, as can be

realized by a study of his *Homilies on the Gospels*, which are eloquently and clearly expressed and contain many apt sayings, such as: "To do penance is to bewail the evil we have done and to do no evil to bewail" and "Patience is the root and guardian of all the virtues."

He was zealous in the reform of abuses in the church and in ecclesiastical affairs generally. In 595 he convened a synod of 23 bishops and 35 priests at which six decrees were made amending various practices in the Church. These decrees became part of the ecclesiastical law.

According to a generally accepted tradition based on a life of Gregory the Great written nearly three hundred years after his death, Gregory is said to have revised the Gelasian Sacramentary, a collection of liturgies named after Pope Gelasius, bringing them together into one book which was then called the Gregorian Sacramentary. But neither Gregory nor his contemporaries mention such a work, nor does the Venerable Bede, a very accurate historian, who does record however certain other changes in the liturgy ordained by Gregory and referred to in his letters. Traditionally, also, Gregory is said to have influenced the development of church music by compiling an antiphonary of the music of the Mass, by revising and re-arranging the system of church music, and by founding a choir school in Rome. But neither Gregory, nor his accurate biographer Paul the Deacon, nor Bede, nor the author of the official Papal Biographies, mentions such a work, and it has been shown that the collection of chants referred to agrees with those of the eighth century and does not follow the calendar and liturgy used in the time of Gregory the Great. The name Gregorian in this connection may have referred to Pope Gregory II, of the early eighth century, or to his successor Gregory III.

It is known that the choir school at Rome was founded before the time of Gregory the Great, but he may well have interested himself in the work of the singers and have made improvements in the school. He had very definite views on the subject of church singing, as is evident from one of his letters in which he directed that the deacons should no longer sing except in the chanting of the Gospel. He also referred to professional singers "who enrage God while they delight the people

with their accents." According to the modern view the four Greek modes said to have been introduced into church music by Ambrose were those in current use at the time, and the other four groups attributed to Gregory were not added until the eighth century.

The great talents of Gregory were employed in many fields, for he was a mystic, priest, ruler and administrator. He was skilled in legal and political matters, a military expert, a practical and far-seeing man of affairs. From his headquarters in Rome he conducted an immense amount of business. He was always ready to hear grievances or complaints of injustice and to remedy them. His letters show the very many occasions when he intervened to right wrongs, whether of peasants labouring in the scattered and extensive papal estates or of agents of the Church in their many different occupations and relations. In benefactions he set a notable example—indeed he was afterwards accused of depleting the treasury of the Church. At a time of crisis he would assume even military authority when necessary—on one critical occasion he appointed a military governor for a weak position on the frontier—a prerogative belonging properly only to the Emperor's deputy at Ravenna.

In 593 Rome was again besieged, but after a few months the enemy retreated—possibly, it is suggested, after receiving a large sum as tribute from the Church.

Through the co-operation of the Lombard Catholic Queen Theudelinda, Gregory in 595 prepared the way for peace-making and, to hasten negotiations, seriously considered the possibility of making a separate peace with or without the Emperor's consent. This came to the notice of the Emperor who sent severe rebuke to the Pope. Gregory's answer was a solemn warning of the consequences of continuing the war unnecessarily. The Emperor made no further move and Gregory dropped the project. The peace negotiations were not completed until 598 and the treaty was signed the following year.

During the long delay in peace negotiations Gregory was busy with many other projects, among them a mission to the heathen of England. In 595 he had directed his deputy in Gaul to buy a number of English slave boys of 17 to 18 years of age and send them to Rome where, no doubt, he intended to have them educated with a view to their return as missionaries to

their own people. But in 596 he decided that the time was ripe for a missionary expedition. King Ethelbert, the most powerful of the rulers of Britain, had married a Christian princess from Gaul. To his court, therefore, Augustine, with a company of forty monks, was sent in the spring of 596.

Augustine, an intimate friend of Gregory, had been Prior of St. Andrew's monastery. He had great powers of leadership, courage, patience, self-discipline and zeal, and was of distinguished appearance. The little band of monks, unused to the trials and great difficulties of such a journey by land and sea, at last reached the south of France where at Aix they heard such alarming tales of the barbarity of the English that the companions of Augustine besought him to turn back. Added to these fears were the difficulties arising from their ignorance of the language and customs of the land and the fact that they carried no letters to King Ethelbert or to anyone who might help them on their way. Augustine yielded so far as to promise to go back to Rome and lay the matter before Gregory.

Gregory, determined that the mission should be carried out, appointed Augustine Abbot over the monks with full authority for their direction. He authorized them to take with them interpreters from Gaul and sent many letters of recommendation to the kings, bishops and persons of authority through whose states they would travel on their way to Paris. In a sympathetic letter to the monks he exhorted them to faith, courage and devotion.

The journey was continued with renewed hope and faith and in the spring of 597 they landed on the Isle of Thanet. The king received them kindly, giving them leave to preach to the people and convert them to the new faith. At Canterbury he placed at their service an endowed house where they followed the monastic rule.

On June 1st, 597, King Ethelbert was baptized and on Christmas Day of that year Augustine baptized more than ten thousand people into the Christian faith. Augustine had been consecrated "Archbishop of the English", journeying to Gaul for the ceremony, and in 598 he sent an account of his work to the Pope. The news of the great success of the mission so dear to him must have given great joy to Gregory. It was in this year also that the peace treaty was signed, a temporarily

successful outcome of his efforts that must have brightened his last years. For a long time he had been a very sick man. Writing in 601, after being unable to leave his bed for nearly three years, he said: "At one time I am tormented with the pains of gout, and at another time a fiery agony spreads throughout my whole body. For me to live is punishment, and I look longingly for death, which I believe to be the only possible remedy for my sufferings."

From 599 to 601 there was another severe outbreak of pestilence in Rome and the surrounding districts and in 601 the Romans raided a Lombard city and captured the king's daughter. Not until 603, after many cities had been destroyed or plundered and the Romans could fight no longer, was the captive restored and a truce made.

Gregory died on March 12th, 604. His work and influence had been such that he was most fittingly given his title of "The Great." Perhaps his chief work was to unify the power of the Church under the authority of Rome. Not less valuable was his great contribution to the crystallization as it were of the doctrines of the Church. He was the last of the great Latin Fathers and from the variations of teaching prevalent in his time he collected, simplified, and re-cast in a more definite form for succeeding times, those ideas which he thought were most characteristic of the Christian faith. He could not strictly be called a philosopher in the sense of constructing a system of thought, but was rather a skilful and authoritative selector and transmitter of tradition. He valued, loved, and knew well the works of his great contemporary and friend Augustine, following them in his own writings, and adapting them for reception by minds which could not have appreciated or well understood the doctrines of Augustine. His admiration for this great thinker is shown by his answer to a request for a copy of his own work on the Book of Job: "If you desire to take your fill of delicious food, seek not our chaff in comparison with his fine wheat."

Such were the weight and authority of Gregory's teachings that they became the basic doctrines of the Church through the centuries and thus the chief theological and philosophical principles, with their Neo-Platonic foundation, which underlie the teachings of the Early Fathers and of Dionysius "The

Areopagite" as well as of Augustine, became more firmly woven into the structure of Christian tradition.

Gregory also left his mark upon the monastic system, strengthening it from within by extending the Benedictine principles which he so greatly valued and reforming many abuses. He thus made it a fitter instrument for its high ends—the upliftment of society and the service of the Church. He also clarified the external relations of the monks to the community as a whole, to the authority of the bishops and to the work of the parochial clergy.

By establishing good relations, as far as possible, with the temporal rulers of countries in which the Church had some influence, he was able to bring into closer touch with the supreme ecclesiastical authority the churches in various parts of the world, thus reducing the risk, through isolation, of the introduction of heresies, and facilitating necessary reformations.

The writings of Gregory include the *Morals (Magna Moralia)*, his work on the Book of Job, published after the return from Constantinople in 586, the *Homilies on the Gospels* preached in 590, the *Pastoral Care*, finished in 591, the *Homilies on Ezekiel* preached in 593-4, the *Dialogues* written in 593-4, and numerous *Letters*, which have been collected and published.

The *Morals* expounds in thirty-five books the Book of Job. In the dedication, Gregory wrote: "First we lay the foundation in history, then by pursuing a symbolical sense we erect an intellectual edifice to be a stronghold of faith; lastly by the grace of moral instruction we as it were paint the fabric with fair colours. For the Word of God both exercises the understanding of the wise by its deeper mysteries and also by its superficial lessons nurses the simple minded."

The work embodies Gregory's theological views, and it became a standard authority upon Christian doctrine. He had been strongly urged to write the book, and in the dedication to Leander, Archbishop of Seville, he said: "At first I despaired owing to the difficulty of the work. But then I raised my hopes to Him who made the tongues of them who cannot speak eloquent. . . . So I took courage and though the life of those to whom I was compelled to give my interpretation was far beyond me, yet I thought it no harm that the leaden pipe should supply streams of water for the service of man."

The *Pastoral Care* consisted of four books. In the first was a description of the kind of man who should hold the office of a bishop. Such work should be undertaken only by those with the highest skill in the government of souls and the knowledge and treatment of diseases of souls, which was the summit of the healing science and art. The great dangers accompanying such a calling were pride because of the authority exercised and distraction through a multitude of affairs. True humility was to "Submit himself to the Divine disposals without obstinacy." The ideal bishop was one who, "dying to the affections of the flesh, already liveth after a spiritual sort, who hath left worldly prosperity behind, who feareth no adversity and desireth only inward wealth." He should be free from envy, generous, compassionate, a man of prayer and faith.

The second part gave rules for ordering the life of a bishop. It should be an expression of purity of thought and of the supremacy of reason over the irrational nature. He should be able, by attaining to the height of contemplation, to transcend even himself in his desire for things invisible. As a ruler he should be a leader in action, having dominion "rather over faults than over the brethren." He should be able to discover and discriminate between the various needs of his people and use the right methods of satisfying them, and should be "both as a mother by kindness and a father by discipline." Extremes were to be avoided—he should be neither over-silent nor over-talkative, and should preserve the balance between the wish to be pleasing to men and the "duty of drawing them by sweetness of character to a love of truth." He ought to meditate daily on the Scriptures.

The third part dealt with the teaching to be given by a bishop, and the methods to be used according to the condition of the hearers. The methods were illustrated by examples. When preaching to mixed congregations, there should be care "Not to draw the mind of his hearer beyond his strength lest, so to speak, the string of the soul, being stretched beyond what it can endure, be broken. For all deep things ought to be covered over when there are many hearers, and scarcely opened to a few."

The fourth part was an exhortation to humility and ended with a sincere expression by the writer of his own unworthiness.

The Dialogues consisted of a collection of legends of miracles, prophecies and visions. It also contained a life of St. Benedict and various discussions on points of doctrine.

In virtue of his power, authority and influence, Gregory was an outstanding figure in his age, not only for the great external work he accomplished, but for his personal qualities—his humility, as in signing himself “the servant of the servants of God,” his simplicity and austerity of life, his great zeal for the work of the Divine service, his devotion to the inner life, and his example of unshaken faith and confidence in great ideals at a time when external foundations seemed to be crumbling, but when yet with the vision of faith he could see the Divine Will brought into full expression in the world.

THE WATER OF WATERS

The sea is one thing, the foam another;
Neglect the foam, and regard the sea with your eyes.
Waves of foam rise from the sea night and day.
You look at the foam ripples and not at the mighty sea.
We, like boats, are tossed hither and thither,
We are blind though we are on the bright ocean,
Ah! you who are asleep in the boat of the body,
You see the water; behold the Water of waters!
Under the water you see there is another Water moving it.
Within the spirit is a Spirit that calls it.

* * * * *

When you have accepted the Light, O beloved,
When you behold what is veiled, without a veil,
Like a star you will walk upon the heavens.

—*Jalalu'd-Din Rumi.*