

THE SHRINE OF WISDOM

VOL. V., No. 17.

AUTUMN EQUINOX, 1923

THE DIVINE PYMANDER OF HERMES TRISMEGISTUS

*(An Endeavour to Systematize and Elucidate the
Trismegistic Writings.)*

(4) REGENERATION.

That which has its operation and energy in Time and Space is subject, like all Nature, to augmentation and diminution, increase and decrease, generation and corruption.

If Time and Space could never be transcended, then the so-called evolution and progress of man would resolve itself into a never-ending series of revolutions of the wheel of birth and death, from which there would be no ultimate escape.

But although the natural part of man is subject to the conditions of generation in Time and Space, nevertheless the Essence of his Soul, being immortal, is, in potentiality, superior to temporal and spatial limitations. Hence, when his Soul becomes truly self-conscious, he realizes his inherent immortality, rises above the laws of natural generation, and enters upon his supernatural Regeneration.

If the final destiny of the human soul were merely the attainment of a perpetual state of natural happiness, then Regeneration would be meaningless and unnecessary. But "man is a mighty wonder," possessing latent powers which unending Time can never exhaust.

Therefore, man must transcend Time for the full unfoldment and realization of his own innate greatness. Thus his destiny is a supernatural one, to which Regeneration introduces or initiates him.

Throughout the Trismegistic Writings there is much concerning the subject of Regeneration. It is the Great

Ascent or Resurrection to which humanity has constantly been called by all the Great Ones in all ages. The principle of this regenerational process remains unchanged by the march of Time, although its mode has been variously expressed by different Teachers; but since human nature does not alter in its essentiality the Trismegistic mode of Regeneration is still applicable.

THE ASCENT OF HERMES-TRISMEGISTUS.

Hermes : "Thou hast most excellently taught me, O Nous, all that I desired to know; but now reveal the Way of the Ascent that is to be accomplished."

Pymander : "Firstly, when thy material body is to be dissolved, the body is surrendered by itself to the work of Transmutation; thus, the form which thou hadst, becomes invisible, and thou surrenderest thy habit of life, void of energy, to the Guardian Angel. The senses of the body then return to their respective sources, become separate, and are again resurrected as energies; while thumos and epithumia (the vegetal and animal principles) withdraw into the irrational nature, and thus the part of man which remains doth speed upwards through the Harmony (*i.e.*, the seven zones or spheres of Nature).

To the first sphere he giveth up the energy of augmentation and diminution; to the second, the tendency to evil, now purged; and unto the third, the deception of incontinence, now impotent; to the fourth, pride and ambition are surrendered and nullified; and to the fifth, profane boldness and unseemly rashness; to the sixth, evil covetousness and avarice are given up, now mortified; and to the seventh zone, insidious falsehood.

And then, denuded of all the energies of the seven spheres, clad in his proper Power, he cometh to that nature which belongeth to the Eighth Sphere, and hymneth the Father, together with those who are there.

They who are there rejoice at his coming, and he, being made like unto them, hears the Powers of the Ogdoad (*i.e.*, Eighth Sphere, which is above the seven natural zones) who are above Nature, hymning unto God in the sweet voice that is their own."—(i, 24, 25, 26.)

In the process of Regeneration the grossness of the physical body is to be dissolved and etherialized by transmutation; the natural habits or tendencies of the hereditary life, which have served their purpose, are surrendered to the keeping of the Guardian Angel so that they no longer hinder individual progress; the purely sensible life becomes intelligible by the resurrection of its energies; the irrational nature is withdrawn in order to give free play to the rational and spiritual nature. Then man, by the aid of the higher principles, ascends through the seven zones, giving back, so to speak, his natural energies to Nature, so that he may be introduced to the Powers who are Above, and through whom he may attain to union and to the knowledge of God.

The Pymander to Hermes : "After this manner, therefore, contemplate God, as having within Himself the entire Cosmos—all thoughts or intellections.

If thou dost not make thyself God-like, thou canst not know God; for like is intelligible only to like.

Expand thyself unto the immeasurable greatness, passing beyond all body, and transcending Time, enter Eternity, thus thou shalt know God.

Conceive that nothing is impossible unto thee; think thyself immortal and able to know all,—all sciences, all arts, the nature and way of life of every creature.

Become higher than all height, lower than all depth; comprehend in thyself the qualities of all creatures, of fire and water, the dry and moist; and likewise conceive thyself to be in every place,—in earth, in sea, in heaven, in the unbegotten, in the womb, in the young, the old, in the dead, and in the after-death state.

And if thou canst know all these things simultaneously,—all times, places, deeds, qualities, and quantities—thou canst then know God."—(xi, 20.)

The Thrice-Greatest Hermes, who accomplishes his glorious ascent through the aid of the Divine Pymander, unfolds the process of Regeneration to his spiritual Son and disciple, Tat, whom he conducts, stage by stage, up the Sacred Mountain which symbolizes the Soul's ascension out of the realms of Time and Space into the Bosom of Eternity.

THE SECRET SERMON ON THE MOUNT

Concerning Regeneration
of Hermes-Trismegistus to his Son Tat.

Tat : In the General Sermons, O Father, thou hast spoken enigmatically, when discoursing on Deity, and hast not revealed thyself fully, saying that no man could be saved before Regeneration.

Further, when I became thy suppliant at the Ascent of the Mountain, and thou hadst conversed with me, and when I yearned to learn the Word concerning Regeneration because I longed to know this beyond all things, thou didst promise to impart this unto me, saying : "when thou shalt have alienated thyself from the world."

Wherefore, I became prepared, having alienated my thoughts from the illusion of the world ; and now, do thou fulfil my deficiencies with thy promised Tradition of Regeneration, either by word of mouth, or by the secret way. For I know not, O Thrice-Greatest One, from what substance, or what womb, or what seed, Man is thus born.

Hermes : O Son, this Wisdom is to be understood in Silence, and the True Good is the Seed.

Tat : Who is the Sower, O Father, for I am wholly ignorant ?

Hermes : The Will of God, O Son.

Tat : Of what manner of man is he who is thus engendered, O Father ? For I am destitute of that Essence, above the Senses, which understandeth in me.

Hermes : The one who is begotten will be another Son of God, out of all Powers engendered,—the All in all.

Tat : Thou speakest to me in enigma, O Father, and dost not converse as father with son.

Hermes : A thing of this kind is not taught, my son, but when He willeth, it is brought to the remembrance by God.

Tat : Thou speakest of things strained, that are beyond me, when I would respond to them aright. Am I, a son, stranger to my father's race ? Withhold it not from me, O Father : I am a genuine son, impart to me the mode of the Regeneration.

Hermes : What shall I say, O my Son? I can but tell thee this.

I see within myself a Simple Vision, produced by the mercy of God: I have gone forth from myself into an Immortal Body and am not what formerly I was; I am born in Nous. This mode is not to be taught; nor is it to be seen in this composite element which thou seest, because my first compounded form has been dismembered and I am now separated from it. I am no longer touched: yet have I touch. I have no dimension: yet have I measure. Thou seest me with thine eyes, O Son, but although thou lookest with fullest strain of body and bodily sight, I am not to be seen, neither is what I am, to be understood.

Tat : Thou hast plunged me, O Father, into an agitation and distraction of mind, for now I no longer see myself.

Hermes : I would, my son, that thou hadst gone forth out of thyself, as they do who in sleep perceive dreams apart from their slumber.

Tat : Then tell me this, O Father, who is the Producer of Regeneration?

Hermes : The Son of God,—the One Essential Man—by the Will of God.

Tat : Now, O Father, thou hast brought me to Silence, and all my previous thoughts have forsaken me. I behold the magnitude and distinctiveness of things below, and nothing but falsehood is in them all.

Hermes : And even in this thou art deceived, for the form of mortals changes day by day; for by Time it is turned to augmentation or diminution, as an untrue thing.

Tat : What then is true, O Trismegistus?

Hermes : That which is serene, O Son, which cannot be defined: that which is not bounded, nor coloured, nor figured, nor changed; that which is naked, luminous, and comprehensible to itself alone; the Unalterable, the Good, which no body can contain.

Tat : Now, indeed, I have lost my power of reasoning, Father, when I seemed to have become wise through thee, these thoughts have dulled and closed up my senses.

Hermes : Yet it is, O Son.

He that looketh only upon that which is borne upward

like fire, which is borne downward like earth, which is moist like water, which bloweth like air, how can he understand by the senses that which is neither solid, nor moist, which is neither bound nor dissolved, and which can be understood alone in power and energy?

Nous, alone, thou needest, which is able to perceive the mode of the Birth in God.

Tat: Then I, myself, am incapable of this, O Father?

Hermes: Nay, God forbid, my Son!

Withdraw into thyself and it will come to pass. Ardently desire to know Him, and He will come. Still all the senses of the body, purge thyself of the irrational torments of Hyle, and thy divinity shall come to birth.

Tat: Have I tormentors in me, then, O Father?

Hermes: Yea, and these not a few, but fearful and manifold.

Tat: I know them not, Father.

Hermes: The first torment is Ignorance, O Son; the second is Grief; the third is Intemperance; the fourth, Incontinence; the fifth, Injustice; the sixth, Avarice; the seventh, Falsehood; the eighth, Envy; the ninth, Guile; the tenth, Anger; the eleventh, Rashness; the twelfth, Malice.

They are twelve in number, but under these are many others, some of which, through the prison of the body, compel the man dwelling therein to suffer in his senses. But they depart (although not immediately) from him who hath obtained the Mercy (or Grace) of God; and herein consist both the mode and the reason of Regeneration.

For the rest, O Son, hold thy peace and praise God in silence. Thus shall the Mercy of God not cease, or be wanting unto us.

Henceforth rejoice, my Son, being purified by the Power of God, unto a knowledge of the Logos. For the Divine Knowledge hath come to us, and when that comes, Ignorance is cast out.

The knowledge of Joy, also, hath come to us, and on its coming, O Son, Grief flies away to those who give a place to it. I invoke Temperance, the Power which follows Joy; a power whose virtue is most sweet; let us gladly receive it, for at its coming Intemperance is expelled.

But the fourth I invoke is Continnence, the power adverse to concupiscence. This step, O Son, is the stable and firm foundation of Justice; for see how, without labour, she hath banished unrighteousness, and we are justified, O Son, when Injustice departs.

The sixth power I call unto us is Sharing-with-all or Communion, which is contrary to covetousness; and when Avarice is gone, I call upon Truth, and when She cometh, Falsehood and Deceit vanish.

Behold, O Son, how the Good is completed by the access of Truth, for by this means Envy has gone from us, and unto Truth is joined the Good together with Life and Light.

And now, no more doth any Torment of the Darkness supervene, but being vanquished, all have fled away.

Thou hast learnt, O Son, the manner of Regeneration; for upon the coming of these ten—which drive away the twelve—the Intellectual (Spiritual) Birth is consummated, and we are made contemplators (of God) by the Birth.

Therefore, whosoever by His Mercy hath gained the Birth in God, having relinquished the body's senses, knoweth himself to be of Life and Light, is made stable and immutable by God, and is filled with Bliss.

Tat: Being made stable by God, O Father, I conceive and understand, not with the vision of mine eyes, but with the Intellectual Energy given me through the Powers.

I am in heaven, in the earth, in the water, in the air; I am in every living creature, in the plants; I am in the womb, before the womb, and after the womb; I am everywhere!

But Father, tell me this, how the Torments of Darkness, being twelve in number, are driven out by the Ten Powers: what is the manner of this, O Trismegistus?

Hermes: This Tabernacle (of the human Soul), O Son, through which we have passed, consists of the Zodiacal Circle, composed of elements of types-of-life (or animal natures), twelve in number, but one in nature as an omniform Idea.

For through Error in man, there are distinctions in them, but in their action they are one. For instance, Rashness is closely allied to Anger, and they can hardly be distinguished.

According to right Reason, then, they are eliminated by the Ten Powers, that is by the Decad as One Idea.

For the Decad, O Son, is the Begetter of Souls, for therein Life and Light are united, where unity is born of the Spirit. Hence, according to right Reason, the One contains the Decad, and the Decad the One.

Tat : Father ! I see the All : I see myself in Nous.

Hermes : This is Regeneration, my Son, no more to imagine, from the body, that we are triply divided.

But, according to this Sermon, upon which we have commented, may we never be calumniators (or profaners) of the All to the multitude, to whom, indeed, God Himself doth not will to reveal it.

Tat : Tell me, O Father, is this Body which is constituted by the Powers, subject to dissolution ?

Hermes : Speak well, O Son : speak not of things impossible, lest thou shalt sin and the eye of thy Nous be quenched.

The sensible Body of Nature is far removed from the Essential Birth ; for that is dissoluble, but this is not ; that is mortal, but this is immortal.

Dost thou not know that thou hast been born of God,—Son of the One, even as I am ?

Tat : O Father, I would hear that Hymn of Praise-giving, which thou didst hear when thou wert at the Ogdoad of the Powers.

Hermes : As the Pymander foretold in the Ogdoad, thou dost well, my Son, to hasten to loosen thy tabernacle, for thou art purified.

The Pymander, the Nous of the Supreme, hath delivered to me no more than hath been written, knowing that from myself I should be able to learn all things, and hear and see all that I should desire.

And he charged me to produce things which are beautiful and good ; wherefore all the Powers that are in me—as they are in all—break forth into sacred song.

Tat : I wish to hear, O Father ; I long to know these things.

Hermes : Be still, my Son, hearken to the Harmonious Hymn of Praise-giving, the Hymn of Regeneration ; a hymn which I would not tell readily hadst thou not reached the end (of the first stage) ; whence this is not taught but is kept hid in silence.

Thus, then, O Son, stand in a place open to the sky, face

the western wind, about the down-going of the setting sun, bend the knee, and make thy worship; so, in like manner, when the sun riseth, turn towards the eastern wind.

And now, my Son, be silent!

THE SECRET HYMNODY.

Let all Nature of the Cosmos receive the hearing of this hymn!

Be opened, O earth; let every deep of the abyss be opened for me.

Tremble not, ye trees, for I would hymn unto the Lord of Creation, to the All and to the One.

Be opened, ye heavens: stand still, ye winds: let the deathless sphere of God receive my words.

For I will sing praise unto Him who founded all, who fixed the earth, who suspended the heavens;

Who commanded the sweet water to come out of the ocean into the earth, to those parts inhabited and those that are not, for the use and nourishment of all men;

Who commanded the fire to shine for every action of Gods and men.

Let us together give praise unto Him, the Sublime One, Who rideth upon the heavens and is the Lord of all Nature.

He, Who is the Eye of Nous, may He accept the praise of my Powers.

O, all ye Powers within me, praise ye the One and the All. Sing with my Will, all ye Powers that are in me.

O Holy Knowledge, by Thee illumined, I magnify the Intelligible Light that Nous alone can see, and rejoice in the Joy of the Logos.

All ye Powers, sing praises with me.

Hymn with me, O my Temperance, and my Continnence; hymn through me, O my Justice, the praises of the Righteous.

Hymn thou, O my Communion, the praises of the All.

Sing through me, O Truth, the praises of the True; and sing thou O Goodness, the hymn of the Good.

O Life and Light, from us to you our praises flow.

I render thanks to Thee, O Father, Energy of all my Powers: I give thanks to Thee, O God, Thou Power of all my Energies.

Thy Logos, through me, sings praises unto Thee; take back through me the All into the Word, this Oblation of the Logos.

Thus is the pæan of the Powers in me; they praise Thee, Thou All, they do Thy will.

From Thee is Thy Will: to Thee is the All; receive the reasonable Oblation of the All.

O Life, preserve the All that is in us; O Light, enlighten it; O God in-spirit it.

For Thy Nous is the Shepherd to Thy Word, O Thou Creative Bestower of the Spirit.

Thou art God,—Thy (Essential) Man thus calls to Thee through fire, through air, through earth, through water, through Spirit, and through all Thy creatures.

From Thy Eternity I have found how to praise Thee, and in Thy Will I have found the object of my quest.

I have found my Rest! ”—(xii, 1-20.)

And thus, as Hermes declares: “Nous enters the pious Soul and leads it into the Light of Divine Knowledge.

And such a Soul never tires of hymning praises unto God, and of pouring blessings upon all men, both in words and deeds,—in imitation of its own divine Father.

Therefore, O Son, let us give thanks unto God, and pray that we may indeed receive the Radiant Nous.”—(x.)

THE GNOSIS OF NOUS.

“It is no small thing—this Gnosis of ten-thousand-times-great Hermes, as Zosimus, in an ecstasy of enthusiasm, calls him; for it has as its foundation the Single Love of God, it endeavours to base itself upon the True Philosophy and Pure Science of Nature and of Man, and is indeed one of the fairest forms of the Gnosis of the Ages. It is replete with Wisdom (Theosophia) and Worship (Theosebeia) in harmony—the Religion of the Mind (Nous). It is in its beginning, religion, true devotion, and piety, and worship, based on the right activity and passivity of the mind, and its end is the Gnosis of things-that-are and the Path of the Good, that leads man unto God.”—(G. R. S. Mead, in “*The Gnosis of the Mind.*”)

MYSTICS AT PRAYER

“ O God, where was I wandering to seek Thee? O most infinite Beauty, I sought Thee without, and Thou wast in the midst of my heart.”—St. Augustine.

* * * * *

“ O Loving-kindness so old and still so new, I have been too late of loving Thee.

O Lord, enlarge the chambers of my heart that I may find room for Thy love.

Sustain me by Thy Power, lest the fire of Thy love consume me.”—Brother Lawrence.

* * * * *

“ O sweetest Love of God, too little known; he who has found Thee is at rest.

Everywhere with Thee, O my God. O my Love, all for Thee, nothing for me.

O my God, how sweet to me Thy presence, Who art the Sovereign Good. O Lord, I beseech Thee, leave me not for a moment, because I know not the value of my Soul.”—St. John of the Cross.

* * * * *

“ O Thou who art my Soul’s comfort in the season of sorrow,
O Thou who art my Spirit’s treasure in the bitterness of
dearth!

That which the imagination hath not conceived;

That which the understanding hath not seen;

Visited my Soul from Thee.

Hence, in worship, I turn towards Thee.”

—JalálúD-Dīn Rūmī.

* * * * *

“ All that I ought to have thought and have not thought;
All that I ought to have said and have not said;
All that I ought to have done and have not done;
All that I ought not to have thought and yet have thought;
All that I ought not to have spoken and yet have spoken;
All that I ought not to have done and yet have done;
For thoughts, words, and works, pray I for forgiveness,
and repent of with penance.”

—Prayers of Zoroaster.

“God, of Thy Goodness, give me Thyself, for Thou art enough to me, and may I nothing ask that is less, that may be full worship to Thee; and if I ask anything that is less, ever me wanteth,—but only in Thee I have all.”—Lady Julian of Norwich.

* * * * *

“O give me grace to see Thy face and be a constant mirror of Eternity.”—T. Traherne.

* * * * *

“O Lord, if only my will may remain right and firm towards Thee, do with me whatsoever it shall please Thee. For it cannot be anything but good, whatsoever Thou shalt do with me.

If Thou willest me to be in darkness, be Thou blessed; and if Thou willest me to be in light, be Thou again blessed.

If Thou vouchsafe to comfort me, be Thou blessed; and if Thou willest me to be afflicted, be Thou ever equally blessed.”—Thomas à Kempis.

* * * * *

“Grant me, O Lord, heavenly wisdom, that I may learn above all things to seek and to find Thee; above all things to relish and to love Thee; and to think of all other things as being what indeed they are, at the disposal of Thy wisdom.”—Ibid.

* * * * *

“Thou Sun of Righteousness with healing under Thy wings, arise in my heart; make Thy light there to shine in darkness, and a perfect day in the dead of night.”—Henry Vaughan.

* * * * *

“In what blaze of Glory dost Thou rise, O Sun of Righteousness, from the heart of the earth, after Thy setting!

In what resplendent Vesture, O King of Glory, dost Thou enter again the highest heaven!

At the sight of all these marvels, how can I do otherwise than cry, ‘All my bones shall say, Lord, who is like unto Thee?’”—St. Bernard.

* * * * *

“O God, how admirable is that which we see; but, O God, how much more so is that which we cannot see.”—St. Francis de Sales.

THE MYSTICAL THEOLOGY OF DIONYSIUS THE AREOPAGITE

PROEMIAL.*

Who was "Dionysius"?

Modern scholarship has settled the fact that Dionysius the Areopagite, although confused with him, has no historical connection with St. Dionysius, or St. Denis, the martyr and patron saint of Paris. It has, too, settled the fact that "The Mystical Theology" and the other Dionysian writings did not come into existence until centuries after St. Paul's Athenian convert slept the long sleep. In fact, it is almost certain that the writer was either a pupil of Proclus or, as is more probable, of Damascius, the second in succession from Proclus, and one of the last teachers of the Athenian school. It was natural that, when he became a Christian writer, he should assume a name which had sacred memories of Athenian faith, and which was also a link with Greek culture.

But whatever his origin, the writings of this master mind early became the form and type of mystical religion within the Church, and their influence is discernible in every mystical sect of Christendom. This anonymous, mysterious, monastic genius taught the foremost Christians for ten centuries both in the East and West. Nearly every great mediæval scholar made use of his writings, and his authority came to be almost *final*. A modern writer says that even the "Summa Theologiæ" of St. Thomas Aquinas—the angelic doctor—is but "a hive in whose varied cells he duly stored the honey which he gathered" from the writings of Dionysius, and he became the bee-bread on which all the great mystics fed. He kindled in multitudes of souls a pure passion for God, and taught very dark ages that the *one thing* worth seeking with the entire being is God. He iterated and reiterated that God Himself is the ground of the soul, and that there is an inward way to Him open to all men. He insisted on personal experience as the primary thing in religion, and so became the father of a great family of devout and saintly mystics who advanced true

* So much has been written in modern days concerning "Dionysius" that it is difficult to say much about him in a few words. But there is a very able chapter dealing with him and his writings in "Studies of Mystical Religion," by Professor Rufus M. Jones, D.Litt., of Haverford College, Pennsylvania, U.S.A. (Macmillan, London), and of which a very brief digest is here given.

religion. And he did well in maintaining that there is an experience of Reality which transcends mere head-knowledge—a finding of God in which the whole being, heart, will, and mind, are expanded and satisfied, even though language cannot formulate what is being experienced.

THE MYSTICAL THEOLOGY.

Caput I.—What is the Divine Darkness?

Supernal Triad, Deity above all Essence, Knowledge, and Goodness; Guide of Christians to Divine Wisdom; direct our path to the ultimate summit of Thy Mystical Lore, most incomprehensible, most luminous, and most exalted, where the pure, absolute, and immutable mysteries of theology are veiled in the dazzling obscurity of the secret Silence, outshining all brilliance with the intensity of their Darkness, and surcharging our blinded intellects with the utterly impalpable and invisible fairness of glories surpassing all beauty.

Let this be my prayer; but do thou, dear Timothy, in the diligent exercise of mystical contemplation, leave behind the senses and the operations of the intellect, and all things sensible and intellectual, and all things in the world of being and non-being, that thou mayest arise, by Unknowing (Comment 1) towards the union, as far as is attainable, with Him Who transcends all being and all knowledge. For by the unceasing and absolute renunciation of thyself and of all things, thou mayest be borne on high, through pure and entire self-abnegation, into the superessential Radiance of the Divine Darkness (Comment 2).

Comment 1. "Unknowing" or Agnosia, is not ignorance or nescience as ordinarily understood, but rather the realization that no finite knowledge can fully know the Infinite One, and that therefore He is only truly to be approached by Agnosia, or by that which is beyond and above knowledge. There are two main kinds of darkness: the sub-darkness and the super-darkness, between which lies, as it were, an octave of light. But the nether-darkness and the Divine darkness are not the same darkness, for the former is absence of light, while the latter is excess of light. The one symbolizes mere Ignorance, and the other a transcendent "Unknowing"—a super-knowledge not obtained by means of the discursive reason.

Comment 2. "Of the First Principle," says Damascius, "the ancient Egyptians said nothing, but celebrated Him as a Darkness beyond all intellectual or spiritual perception,—a Thrice-Unknown Darkness." This is for ever about the Pavilions of that great "Light Unapproachable." It is caused by the superabundance of Light and not by the absence of lumination,—it is "a deep but dazzling Darkness" (Henry Vaughan). "The Light shineth in the darkness" (St. John, 1. 5). "In Thy light we shall see Light" (Psalm, 36, 9).

But these things are not to be disclosed to the uninitiated, by whom I mean those attached to the objects of human thought, and who believe there is no Superessential Reality beyond, and who imagine that by their own understanding they know Him Who has made Darkness His secret place. And if the principles of the Divine Mysteries are beyond the understanding of these, what is to be said of others still more incapable thereof, who describe the Transcendental First Cause of all by characteristics drawn from the lowest order of beings, while they deny that He is in any way above the images which they fashion after various designs; whereas, they should affirm that, while He possesses all the positive attributes of the Universe (being the Universal Cause), yet, in a more strict sense, He does not possess them, since He transcends them all; wherefore there is no contradiction between the affirmations and the negations, inasmuch as He infinitely precedes all conceptions of deprivation, being beyond all positive and negative distinctions (Comment 3).

Thus, the blessed Bartholomew asserts that the Divine Science is both vast and minute, and that the Gospel is great and broad, yet concise and short; signifying by this, that the Beneficent Cause of all is most eloquent, yet utters few words, or rather, is altogether silent, as having neither (human) speech nor (human) understanding, because He is super-essentially exalted above created things, and reveals Himself in His naked Truth to those alone who pass beyond all that is pure or impure, and ascend above the topmost altitudes of holy things, and, who leaving behind them all divine light and sound and heavenly utterances, plunge into the Darkness where truly dwells, as the Oracles declare, that ONE Who is beyond all (Comment 4).

It was not without reason that the blessed Moses was commanded first to undergo purification himself and then to separate himself from those who had not undergone it; and,

Comment 3. In one sense the Infinite is most truly described by what He is; whereas all finite existences are most properly described by what they are not in relation to Him Who is; yet, inasmuch as all affirmations are necessarily drawn from that which is finite, it follows that God must transcend them all, and, therefore, without contradiction, it is true paradoxically to affirm that He possesses and does not possess both positive and negative attributes.

Comment 4. The Mystics speak of other kinds of Darkness; for example, the darkness of the Night of Purgation, and the Dark Night of the Soul, but the Divine Darkness is in a different category to these.

after the entire purification, heard many-voiced trumpets and saw many lights streaming forth with pure and manifold rays; and that he was thereafter separated from the multitude, with the elect priests, and pressed forward to the summit of the Divine Ascent (Comment 5). Nevertheless, he did not attain to the Presence of God Himself; he saw not Him (for He cannot be looked upon), but the Place where He dwells. And this I take to signify that the divinest and highest things seen by the eyes or contemplated by the mind are but the symbolical expressions of those that are immediately beneath Him Who is above all. Through these, His incomprehensible Presence is manifested upon those heights of His Holy Places; that then It breaks forth, even from that which is seen and that which sees, and plunges the Mystic into the Darkness of Unknowing, whence all perfection of understanding is excluded, and he is enwrapped in that which is altogether intangible and noumenal, being wholly absorbed in Him Who is beyond all, and in none else (whether himself or another); and through the inactivity of all his reasoning powers is united by his highest faculty to Him Who is wholly Unknowable; thus by knowing nothing he knows That Which is beyond his knowledge (Comment 6).

Caput II.—The Necessity of being United with and of rendering Praise to Him Who is the Cause of all and above all.

We pray that we may come unto this Darkness which is beyond Light, and, without seeing and without knowing, to see and to know that which is above vision and knowledge

Comment 5. The Triple Mystic Path is outlined here:—the Purgative, the Illuminative, and the Unitive, which have a parallel in the Karma Marga, Jnana Marga, and Bhakti Marga of Oriental Mysticism.

Comment 6. Since it is absolutely impossible for the finite reason to receive a pure knowledge of God save through processes which divide and limit His Infinite Nature, the Mystic at last with absolute Faith must plunge into the Darkness of Unknowing, which he can only do when he has reached the loftiest point to which the highest human faculty will raise him.

The ascending Stages or Degrees of Prayer and Contemplation delineated by the Mystics constitute a ladder by which the aspiring Soul mounts from finitude into infinitude. Thus:—

1. The Prayer of Simplicity (vocal).
2. The Prayer of the Mind (voiceless).
3. The Prayer of Recollection (The Perfume or 'Answer' of Prayer).
4. The Prayer of Quiet (beyond thoughts).
5. The Prayer of Union; of various degrees of Rapture, Ecstasy and "Glorious Nothingness."

through the realization that by not-seeing and by unknowing we attain to true vision and knowledge; and thus praise, superessentially, Him Who is Superessential, by the abstraction of the essence of all things; even as those who, carving a statue out of marble, abstract or remove all the surrounding material that hinders the vision which the marble conceals, and, by that abstraction, bring to light the hidden beauty (Comment 7).

It is necessary to distinguish this negative method of abstraction from the positive method of affirmation, in which we deal with the Divine Attributes. For with these latter we begin with the universal and primary, and pass through the intermediate and secondary to the particular and ultimate attributes; but now we ascend from the particular to the universal conceptions, abstracting all attributes in order that, without veil, we may know that Unknowing, which is enshrouded under all that is known, and all that can be known, and that we may begin to contemplate the Superessential Darkness which is hidden by all the light that is in existing things (Comment 8).

Caput III.—What are the Affirmations and the Negations concerning God.

In the *Theological Outlines* (Comment 9) we have set forth the principal affirmative expressions concerning God, and have shown in what sense God's Holy Nature is One, and in

Comment 7. Compare the well-known analogy of Plotinus:—

“Withdraw into yourself, and if you do not find yourself beautiful as yet, do as does the sculptor of a statue . . . cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is shadowed . . . do not cease until there shall shine out on you the Godlike Splendour, until you see the Final Goodness surely established in the stainless Shrine.—(Ennead, I, 6, 9.)

Comment 8. These are the two modes of Divine Contemplation—*Via Affirmativa* and *Via Negativa*—which mark the equilibrating Pulse of true Mystical Life.

In the former case, beginning from on high, there is an out-flowing and a down-flowing of the consciousness, which passes from universals to particulars and sees God in all things, in the lowest as well as the highest.

But in the latter case, there is an up-drawing and in-drawing of the consciousness, passing from particulars to universals, which sees that God is not any of the things contemplated, and therefore, by abstraction, it arrives at the Superessential Darkness which out-shines and obliterates the light of all sensible things. Or, in other words, an approach is made to the Light Unapproachable.

Comment 9. Dionysius refers to several of his treatises, but besides the *Mystical Theology*, the only other extant works of his are, *Divine Names*, *the Celestial and the Ecclesiastical Hierarchies*, and various epistles.

what sense Three; what is within It which is called Paternity, and what Filiation, and what is signified by the name Spirit; how from the uncreated and indivisible Good, the blessed and perfect Rays of Its Goodness proceed, and yet abide immutably one both within their origin and within themselves and each other, co-eternal with the act by which they spring from It (Comment 10); how the superessential Jesus enters an essential state in which the truths of human nature meet; and other matters made known by the Oracles are expounded in the same place.

Again, in the treatise on *Divine Names*, we have considered the meaning, as concerning God, of the titles of Good, of Being, of Life, of Wisdom, of Power, and of such other names as are applied to Him; further, in *Symbolical Theology*, we have considered what are the metaphorical titles drawn from the world of Sense and applied to the nature of God; what is meant by the material and intellectual images we form of Him, or the functions and instruments of activity attributed to Him; what are the places where He dwells and the raiments in which He is adorned; what is meant by God's anger, grief, and indignation, or the divine inebriation; what is meant by God's oaths and threats, by His slumber and waking; and all sacred and symbolical representations (Comment 11). And it will be observed how far more copious and diffused are the last terms than the first, for the theological doctrine and the exposition of the Divine Names are necessarily more brief than the Symbolical Theology.

For the higher we soar in contemplation the more limited become our expressions of that which is purely intelligible; even as now, when plunging into the Darkness which is above the intellect, we pass not merely into brevity of speech, but even into absolute Silence, of thoughts as well as of words.

Comment 10. These correspond to the Abiding, Proceeding, and Returning Principles of Proclus.

By Divine Paternity all things abide in God, and God abides in all things; by Divine Filiation all things proceed, and God proceeds into all things; by Divine Spiration God returns, and all things return into God. Each of the Divine Principles or Persons abide in their origin, in themselves, and in each other.

Comment 11. Although anthropomorphic and other figurative expressions applied to God are not true in the absolute sense, nevertheless they have a proper and almost indispensable place in the worship and reverence which man endeavours to pay to the Supreme through the media of finite faculties and symbols.

Thus, in the former discourse, our contemplations descended from the highest to the lowest, embracing an ever-widening number of conceptions, which increased at each stage of the descent; but in the present discourse we mount upwards from below to that which is the highest, and, according to the degree of transcendence, so our speech is restrained, until, the entire ascent being accomplished, we become wholly voiceless, inasmuch as we are absorbed in Him Who is totally Ineffable (Comment 12). But why, you will ask, does the affirmative method begin from the highest attributions, and the negative method with the lowest abstractions. The reason is because, when affirming the subsistence of That Which transcends all affirmation, we necessarily start from the attributes most closely related to It and upon which the remaining affirmations depend; but when pursuing the negative method to reach That Which is beyond all abstraction, we must begin by applying our negations to things which are most remote from It (Comment 13).

For is it not more true to affirm that God is Life and Goodness than that He is air or stone; and must we not deny to Him more emphatically the attributes of inebriation and wrath than the applications of human speech and thought?

Caput IV.—That He Who is the Pre-eminent Cause of all things sensibly perceived is not Himself any of those things.

We therefore maintain that the Universal and Transcendent Cause of all things is neither without being nor without life, nor without reason or intelligence; nor is He a body, nor has He form or shape, or quality, or quantity, or weight; nor has He any localized, visible, or tangible existence; He is not sensible or perceptible; nor is He subject to any disorder or

Comment 12. God is in a more real and positive sense than any finite reason can ever understand; hence, the most prolonged and elaborated process of positing His Supernal Attributes inevitably fails to describe Him.

Therefore, when by negative processes it is sometimes affirmed paradoxically that God is *not*, this is only because of the utter inadequacy of finite terms truly to speak of the Infinite Ineffability.

Comment 13. That the Negative Path is not really negative in essence is demonstrated by the fact that the negation of negation is equivalent to an affirmation; and so the negation of non-being is consequently the positing of being.

inordination or influenced by any earthly passion; neither is He rendered impotent through the effects of material causes and events; He needs no light; He suffers no change, or corruption, or division, or privation, or flux; none of these things can either be identified with or attributed unto Him (Comment 14).

Caput V. That He Who is the Pre-eminent Cause of all things intelligibly perceived is not Himself any of those things.

Again, ascending yet higher, we maintain, that He is neither Soul nor Intellect; nor has He imagination, opinion, reason, or understanding; nor can He be expressed or conceived, since He is neither number, nor order; nor greatness, nor smallness; nor equality, nor inequality; nor similarity, nor dissimilarity; neither is He standing, nor moving, nor at rest; neither has He power, nor is power, nor is light; neither does He live, nor is He life; neither is He essence, nor eternity, nor time; nor is He subject to intelligible contact; nor is He science, nor truth, nor kingship, nor wisdom; neither one, nor oneness; nor god-head, nor goodness; nor is He Spirit according to our understanding, nor Filiation, nor Paternity; nor anything else known to us or to any other beings, of the things that are or the things that are not; neither does anything that is, know Him as He is; nor does He know existing things according to existing knowledge; neither can the reason attain to Him, nor name Him, nor know Him; neither is He darkness nor light, nor the false, nor the true; nor can any affirmation or negation be applied to Him, for although we may affirm or deny the things below Him, we can neither affirm nor deny Him, inasmuch as the all-perfect and unique Cause of all things transcends all affirmation, and the simple pre-eminence of His absolute nature is outside of every negation,—free from every limitation and beyond them all.

Comment 14. Although by Negation we deny all sensible attributes to God, and thus so to speak, place Him outside of Time and Space, yet, paradoxically, He must be in Time and Space, for it is certain that sempiternally He is more present at any particular moment in Time than is temporality itself, and likewise He is more present in any particular place than any finite spatial principle can ever be.

He is not sensible, yet He comprehends all the sensations which the senses of His creatures can ever experience throughout all duration.

St. John of the Cross : on the Superessential Radiance of the Divine Darkness.*

I entered, but I knew not where,
And there I stood nought knowing,
All science transcending.

I.

I knew not where I entered,
For, when I stood within,
Not knowing where I was,
I heard great things.
What I heard I will not tell :
I was there as one who knew not,
All science transcending.

II.

Of peace and devotion
The knowledge was perfect,
In solitude profound ;
The right way was clear,
But so secret was it,
That I stood babbling,
All science transcending.

III.

I stood enraptured
In ecstasy, beside myself,
And in every sense
No sense remained.
My spirit was endowed
With understanding, understand-
ing nought,
All science transcending.

IV.

The higher I ascended
The less I understood.
It is the dark cloud
Illumining the night.
Therefore he who understands
Knows nothing ever,
All science transcending.

V.

He who really ascends so high
Annihilates himself,
And all his previous knowledge
Seems ever less and less ;
His knowledge so increases
That he knoweth nothing,
All science transcending.

VI.

This knowing that knows nothing
Is so potent in its might
That the prudent in their reason-
ing
Never can defeat it ;
For their wisdom never reaches
To the understanding that under-
standeth nothing,
All science transcending.

VII.

This sovereign wisdom
Is of an excellence so high
That no faculty nor science
Can ever unto it attain.
He who shall overcome himself
By the knowledge which knows
nothing
Will always rise all science trans-
cending.

VIII.

And if you would listen ;
This sovereign wisdom doth con-
sist
In a sense profound
Of the essence of God ;
It is an act of His compassion,
To leave us, nought understanding,
All science transcending.

* This poem, an "Ecstasy of Contemplation," is reprinted by express permission from "The Living Flame of Love," by St. John of the Cross, translated by David Lewis, and edited by Benedict Zimmerman, edition of 1919, and published by Thomas Baker, London. Price 10/6.

JEWELS

Showing the influence of Dionysius on some of the Mystics.

"When St. John says that God is a Spirit and that He must be worshipped in spirit, he means that the mind must be cleared of images. When thou prayest, shut thy door—that is, the door of thy senses. Keep them barred and bolted against all phantasies and images. Nothing pleases God more than a mind free from all occupations and distractions. Such a mind is in a manner transformed into God, for it can think of nothing, and love nothing, except God; other creatures and itself it only sees in God. He who penetrates into himself, and so transcends himself, ascends truly to God. He whom I love and desire is above all that is sensible, and all that is intelligible; sense and imagination cannot bring us to Him, but only the desire of a pure heart. This brings us into the darkness of the mind, whereby we can ascend to the contemplation even of the mystery of the Trinity. Do not think about the world, nor about thy friends, nor about the past, present, or future; but consider thyself to be outside of the world and alone with God, as if thy soul were already separated from the body and had no longer any interest in peace or war, or the state of the world. Leave thy body and fix thy gaze on the uncreated Light. Let nothing come between thee and God. The soul in contemplation views the world from afar off, just as, when we proceed to God by the way of abstraction, we deny to Him, first of all, bodily and sensible attributes, then intelligible qualities, and, lastly, that being (*esse*) which would keep Him among created things."—(Albert the Great, "Albertus Magnus.")

* * * * *

"All that is in the Godhead is *one*. Therefore we can say nothing. He is above all names, above all nature. God works; so doth not the Godhead. Therein they are distinguished—in working and not working. The end of all things is the hidden Darkness of the eternal Godhead, unknown and never to be known."—(Eckhart.)

"In the Naked Godhead there is never form nor idea. He is an absolute, pure, clear *One*—the impenetrable Darkness of the eternal Godhead."—(Ibid.)

* * * * *

"The ultimate Reality is the eternal, uncreated Truth. Here in this eternal uncreated Truth all things have their Source and Eternal Beginning. There is an image of God in the soul which can rise to the Divine Essence, or Source, and which, unhindered by the clouds and veils of created things, may contemplate, in silent darkness, in absolute repose, the marvels of Divinity."—(Suso.)

“It hath been asked whether it be possible for the soul, while it is yet in the body, to reach so high as to cast a glance into eternity, and receive a foretaste of eternal life and eternal blessedness. This is commonly denied; and truly so in a sense. For it indeed cannot be so long as the soul is taking heed to the body, and the things which minister and appertain thereto, and to time and the creature, and is disturbed and troubled and distracted thereby. For if the soul shall rise to such a state, she must be quite pure, wholly stripped and bare of all images, and be entirely separate from all creatures, and, above all, from herself.”—(Theologia Germanica.)

* * * * *

“God is a pure Being, a waste of calm seclusion—as Isaiah says, He is a hidden God—He is much nearer than anything is to itself in the depth of the heart, but He is hidden from all our senses. He is far above every outward thing and every thought, and is found only where thou hidest thyself in the secret place of thy heart, in the quiet solitude where no word is spoken, where is neither creature, nor image, nor fancy. This is the quiet Desert of the Godhead, the Divine Darkness—dark from His own surpassing brightness, as the shining of the sun is darkness to weak eyes, for in the presence of its brightness our eyes are like the eyes of the swallow in the bright sunlight—this Abyss is our salvation.”—(Tauler.)

* * * * *

“They who are uplifted in simple purity of spirit by the love and reverence they bear towards God, stand with their faces open and unveiled before the Presence of His Majesty. And from the Face of the Father there shineth forth a clear light upon the Soul whose thought is bare and stripped of images, uplifted above the senses and above similitudes, beyond and without reason, in high purity of spirit. This Light is not God, but it is an intermediary between the seeing thought and God. And this Light gives to the contemplating spirit a conscious certainty that she seeth God, so far as man may see Him in this mortal life.”—(Ruysbroeck.)

“What we are, that we behold; and what we behold, that we are; for in this pure vision we are one life and one spirit with God.”—(Ibid.)

“The Abyss of God calleth to the abyss in us.”—(Ibid.)

* * * * *

“Reason dies in giving birth to Ecstasy.”—(Richard of St. Victor.)

“The predisposing conditions of Intuition are devotion, admiration, and joy. Let him that thirsts to see God cleanse his mirror.”—(Ibid.)

DIONYSIAN JEWELS—continued.

“ It is needful for thee to bury in a cloud of forgetting all creatures that ever God made, that thou mayest direct thine intent to God Himself. Therefore lift up thine heart unto God with a meek striving of love, and be thou loth to think on aught but Himself; so that naught work in thy wit nor in thy will, but only Himself. When thou dost next begin in this work thou wilt find but a darkness—a cloud of unknowing—between thee and thy Lord, so that thou art able neither to see Him clearly by light of understanding in thy reason, nor feel Him in sweetness of love in thine affection. Yet if ever thou shalt see Him or feel Him—in the measure in which it is possible in this life to do—it behoveth thee always to abide in this cloud and darkness. When thou enterest this cloud, peradventure thou feelest far from God, but thou art nearer Him than formerly; He hath set a darkness between thee and all creatures that ever He made. If any thought, therefore, should come between thee and thy God, then (even though it seem to thee most holy) tread it down with a stirring of love, and say, ‘ It is God whom I covet, whom I seek.’ Take thee a sharp, strong word of prayer; with this word thou shalt beat down all thoughts under thee. Even to think of God’s kindness or worthiness would hinder thee in this work. For though it be good to muse on the perfections of God, and to praise Him therefor, it is far better to think on the native substance of Him, and to love and praise Him for Himself. But now thou askest me, ‘ How should I think on Himself, and what is He?’ Unto this I cannot answer thee. I wot now that thou has brought me into the same cloud of unknowing that I would thou wert in thyself. But this I will say: ‘ By love He may be gotten and holden, but by thought never.’—(The Cloud of Unknowing.)

“ God is in thy being, and in Him thou art that thou art; not only by cause and by being, but also, He is in thee both thy cause and thy being.”—(Ibid.)

“ When I say Darkness, I mean a lacking of knowing . . . and for this reason it is not called a cloud of the air, but a cloud of unknowing that is betwixt thee and thy God.”—(Ibid.)

“ He will sometimes peradventure send out a beam of ghostly light, piercing this cloud of unknowing that is betwixt thee and Him; and show thee some of His privy, the which man may not, nor cannot, speak.”—(Ibid.)

“ Not what thou art, nor what thou hast been, beholdeth God with His merciful eyes; but that thou wouldest be.”—(Ibid.)

SACRED MYTHOI OF HEROES

(Epitomized with suggested lines of interpretation)

III.—HERCULES

HERCULES, or Heracles (*Greek*), is the most celebrated of all the heroes of ancient Greece, and although his famous Twelve Labours are more or less familiar to the majority of students, yet probably few have undertaken the work involved in their full interpretation.

It is evident from their nature that they symbolize in some manner the tasks which the Soul must accomplish in order to gain liberation from the entanglements of the mundane realms of Form and Sense.

Hercules passed through many other ordeals, both before and after the Twelve Labours, therefore, these other experiences may be regarded as relating to the circumstances of the Soul's descent into Matter and its ultimate progress through the supermundane realms to the glory of final freedom and conscious immortality.

Heracles, according to his name, signifies "Hera's Greatness and Glory." Since Hera (*Greek*) or Juno (*Roman*) in her highest aspect, is the divine Fount of Souls, Hercules, as her glory, is the symbol of the ultimately triumphant Soul; while the ordeals through which he emerges successfully, are types of the experiences which all souls, consciously or unconsciously, undergo in their struggles for perfection.

Heracles was said to be the son of Zeus, signifying the divine parentage of the Soul and the gift of self-active Reason which for ever distinguishes the human from all the lower kingdoms of Nature.

Alcmena, the human mother of Hercules, denotes power and bodily strength, of which her son is the active personification. Like all human Souls, he is a child of heaven and earth, and inasmuch as his greatness was manifested in his mundane achievements, he is appropriately called "Earth's best blossom," in the Orphic Hymn.

Since the Soul, while energizing on the mundane plane of existence, is necessarily influenced by the Twelve Zodiacal Principles, there is a connection between the Twelve Labours

and the Twelve Signs of the Zodiac, through which the Sun passes in its cyclic journey. In an analogical sense there is also a relation between the Sun itself and Hercules.

“From east to west, endu’d with strength divine,
Twelve glorious labours to absolve is thine.”

—(Orphic Hymn to Hercules).

In the Hermetic Theogony there are Twelve Divinities who rule over the Mundane or Cosmic Realms, and therefore the nature of the Labours is likewise characterized by these.

According to the Mythos, Hercules was given the choice of a life of pleasure and ease, or one of virtue and service, and, like all great Heroes, he unhesitatingly chose the latter. This is the original expression of the Soul’s inherent elective power by which it makes the Great Choice. For every son of God is originally free, although when united with the body in the Mundane World, the memory of this pristine freedom becomes dim.

And since it was to be his to make manifest the inherent strength and greatness of the human Soul, it becomes more explicable why Hera should persistently oppose Hercules rather than assist him in his labours; for the Soul’s own greatness is made manifest in the manner in which it overcomes obstacles by its own latent powers rather than by the way in which it triumphs when co-operating with other powers.

Thus, Hercules is indeed a Hero of heroes.

Eurystheus, the King of Mycenæ, in Arcadia, who imposes the labours, may be regarded according to the meaning of his name, as the abiding inner monitor or interior urge of Hercules (or the Soul), which, like Divine Providence, sees from afar the works that are requisite for the Soul’s progressive redemption.

The twelve divisions of the constellations have their analogies in the mundane regions wherein the Soul labours, therefore, they may be said to qualify the different fields of activities in which the twelve primal tasks are to be accomplished.

The Twelve Cosmic Divinities may be considered as the Providential Energies of the Supreme God operating through

the Zodiac upon the manifested realms. The perverted human will misuses the force of Providence through selfishness, ignorance, or other reasons, and thus produces all manner of abnormalities. These are symbolized by the monsters and inordinations which Hercules has to overcome.

The division of the Zodiacal Signs into four triplicities has a correspondence with the four triads of the Cosmic Deities; thus, in a general sense, the symbolical fiery signs correspond with the Fabricative Triad, which presides over Mundane Form; the airy signs correspond with the Elevative Triad which presides over Mundane Law; the watery signs correspond with the Animating Triad, which presides over Mundane Life; and the earthy signs correspond with the Protective Triad, which presides over Mundane Essence.

Another analogy is that with the angels of the Twelve Gates of the four-square Celestial City, which has its terrestrial reflection.

There is a source of never-ending inspiration in the meditation upon the life and works of Hercules, therefore it is better to give only brief suggestive lines of interpretation rather than to endeavour to deal fully with this wonderful Mythos, which is indeed a veritable system of mythology in itself and requires a whole volume for its adequate treatment.

The order of the Twelve Labours is given differently by different authorities, but the zodiacal order is followed in these articles.

THE TWELVE LABOURS.

1. The Mares of Diomedes.

The Mythos.

Eurystheus bids Hercules capture the uncontrollable mares belonging to Diomedes, a Thracian King, who fed them upon the human flesh of adventurous strangers visiting the land of Thrace.

Hercules captures the mares, leads them away, and leaves them in the keeping of his companion Abderus, while he goes forth to slay Diomedes, but during his absence the mares devour Abderus.

Hercules kills Diomedes and gives his body to the mares,

who upon eating the flesh of their former master, immediately become tame.

Hercules takes the mares to Eurystheus, and they are sacrificed to Zeus on Mount Olympus.

The Clavis.

Zeus or *Jove*, is the Cosmic Deity who presides over the initial production and manifestation of mundane forms.

Diomedes means "Jove-counselled"; he was the son of Mars, the Astrological Lord of Aries.

The Mares, or *Hippai* (*Greek*), are generally regarded as symbolical of the feminine aspect of the mind which gives birth to opinions, theories, and concepts. In the Mythos they are stimulated unnaturally by the passion for human flesh, with all its unrestrained desires and inordinate tendencies.

Thrace means rugged, rough, and unformed. It is an appropriate symbol of the rudimentary, although logical, thoughts of the lower mind. The Mares are typically Thracian.

Abderus means folly, laughter, and stupidity.

Aries is "The Ram," the Zodiacal Sign of initial creative activity. Some of the perverted and undesirable Arietian propensities to be overcome by the Soul are tendencies such as the doxastic or opinionative, the uncontrollable, the unscrupulous, the self-willed, the headstrong, the officious, the roving, the fanatical, the self-deceptive, and the egotistic phases of the human will, mind, and heart.

The pure Arietian volition is impulsive, elective, and purposive, but when not in conformity with the Jovian Will, it tends to become animalized, uncontrolled, blind, and purposeless.

The Exegesis.

The activity or conduct of man in the mundane realms of form and sense is, to a large extent, an outward expression of his innate opinions, beliefs, and concepts of life. Hence, in so far as his views are erroneous, so his resultant conduct tends to become wrong. But the Soul, in its true self, is Jove-counselled; therefore when experience demonstrates that certain modes of life are unwise and inordinate, the Soul, unless prevented by the self-deception and fixed opinions

of the lower mind, naturally endeavours to rectify them. Thus, each Labour of Hercules may be interpreted as a task which every Soul, at some period of existence, receives the inner prompting to accomplish.

The conduct-moulding principle of Aries in the Soul (Diomedes), when unbridled and dominated by impulse (Mars) gives birth to false opinions and unrestrained lower mental activities (the Mares), which verge to fleshly sense-life. But this same principle, when controlled by divine counsel (Zeus), is formative of elevative habits and of useful creative modes of life, which bring culture and beauty to that which is rugged and unformed (Thrace).

The divine Impulses of Aries produce the pioneers of new forms of manifestation (the strangers in uncultured Thrace), but egotism and the fanatic self-will (Diomedes), dominated by impulse, destroys these pioneers by the very intellectual faculties (the Mares) through which he should have co-operated with them.

But when Hercules, who is the Pioneer Soul dominated by the will of God (Zeus), enters the domain of the Arietian King Diomedes, he quickly gains control of the Mares (the opinions of the lower mind), although he is in danger of losing this control through the folly of his companion Abderus, who denotes short-lived enthusiasm and excessive mirth,—characteristic Arietian traits.

The slaying of Diomedes by Hercules and the giving of his flesh to the Mares, symbolizes the power of the heroic Soul to turn the counsel of Jove to its lawful and proper use, and thus the opinionative or doxastic principles of the Soul are no longer wild, roving, and ineffective, but are dedicated to their true purpose on the Sacred Mountain of God.

(To be continued.)

JEWEL

“ The path for Souls to ascension lies through the twelve Signs of the Zodiac.

The descending path to birth is the same. After the twelve labours of Hercules the Soul obtains release from the entire world.”—(Clement of Alexandria.)

JEWELS

“Man is the perfection of the universe : mind is the perfection of man : love is that of the mind : and charity, that of love.

Therefore the love of God is the end, perfection, and excellence of the universe.”—(St. Francis de Sales.)

“Love, not finding us equal, equalizes us ; not finding us united, unites us.”—(Ibid.)

“Without Inspiration our Souls would live idle, sluggish, and useless ; but when the divine rays of Inspiration arrive, we feel a light mingled with a quickening heat, which illuminates our understanding, and which awakes and animates our will, giving it the strength to will and do the good which is necessary for eternal salvation.”—(Ibid.)

“A shrub often transplanted can never take root, nor, consequently, come to perfection and bring forth the expected fruit.

He that is on a good road let him step out and advance. It happens sometimes that we quit the good to seek the better, and that having forsaken the one we do not find the other ; a little treasure found is worth more than the expectation of a greater which is not yet found.”—(Ibid.)

* * * * *

“That which costs nothing is worthless.”—(J. Tauler.)

“God gives nothing so willingly as great gifts, for it is natural to Him to give great things.”—(Ibid.)

“He who would receive from Above, must of necessity place himself beneath, in true humility.”—(Ibid.)

“God is a short word which has a long meaning.”—(Ibid.)

* * * * *

“Is it any great thing that I should serve Thee, Whom the whole Creation is bound to serve ? It ought not to seem much to me, to serve Thee ; but rather this doth appear much to me, and wonderful, that thou vouchsafest to receive into Thy service one so poor and unworthy, and to make him one of Thy beloved servants.”—(Thomas à Kempis.)

* * * * *

“Happy he who mounts at length on wings of spirit and gazes on Depth Divine ! It is toilsome to raise oneself on high ; yet, make firm the impulse, and the Sire will be at hand to aid. A ray of light will shine upon thy path, and show the Plain of Spirit.

Come, my Soul, supplicate the Sire, abandon earth, mount up, and—united to God—dance as God thyself !”—(Synesius, pupil of Hypatia).

“ Be gentle, and you can be bold; be frugal, and you can be liberal; avoid putting yourself before others, and you can become a leader among men.”—(Lao Tsze.)

“ There are three precious things which I prize and hold fast.

The first is gentle compassion; the second is economy; the third is humility.

With gentle compassion I can be brave; with economy I can be liberal, with humility I can make myself a vessel fit for the most distinguished services.”—(Ibid.)

* * * * *

“ No man hath believed perfectly until he wish for his brother that which he wisheth for himself.

Kindness is a mark of faith, and whoever hath not kindness hath not faith.”—(Mohammed.)

* * * * *

“ The intuitive faculty is above the reasoning faculty. It is a power of the mind for receiving Truth immediately from God.”—(Gerson, “ the doctor of little children.”)

* * * * *

“ He that would enter the Shrine must be holy, and holiness is to think holy things.”—(Clement of Alexandria.)

* * * * *

“ He unveils the veils from the eyes. He makes me to hear the Unstruck Music.”—Kabir (15th cent. Mystic).

* * * * *

“ When the disciple sees not, yet without seeing he sees; when he understands not, yet without understanding he understands.”—(Upanishads.)

* * * * *

“ The prayer of the lips is good and meritorious only in so far as it is moved and directed by the prayer of the heart.”—(Fénélon.)

“ Prayer, which consisteth in the reference of all deliberate acts to God, can be perpetual in the sense that it can last so long as such acts can last.”—(Ibid.)

* * * * *

EDITORIAL

A SHRINE OF ETERNAL VERITIES.

With this issue we commence our fifth volume, and it is gratifying to note that the number of our Readers has steadily increased since our first Shrine was published. This is especially significant in view of the fact that our Shrine is not considered to be 'easy reading' when it is compared with the great bulk of general literature published every week.

In fact, some Readers, who perhaps have judged the Shrine purely from this general standard, have come to the conclusion that it is beyond their capacity of understanding. On the other hand, those who appreciate more fully the nature of the objects which we have before us, realize that these could not be achieved if the articles were merely of a light and topical nature.

We humbly aspire to make our Quarterly a worthy Shrine of those Eternal Verities which have survived the march of Time and which shine forth with ever-increasing radiance. Thus, in future years, Readers may perhaps be able to return to the earlier issues and find, as they again peruse them, that their contents are still fresh and have become even more illuminative and inspiring; for Eternal Truth never grows old, although, paradoxically, it is the most ancient of all.

THE PYRAMIDS.

The article in the present number completes the first series dealing with the Trismegistic Teachings. It is intended to publish these articles in book form with a stiff cover. The nature and importance of these writings, which are known as the Corpus Hermeticum, are not generally recognized, due probably to the fact that they have not been easily accessible in a manner adapted to the

majority of students of the Ancient Lore. This new Manual may thus supply a real need.

MYSTIC THEOLOGIA.

Considering the far-reaching influence of Dionysius, it is comparatively little known, even to students who are ardent lovers and followers of some of the Great Christian Mystics who were themselves the spiritual children of the pseudo-Areopagite. As far as we are aware there are not many English versions of this work available; therefore the new version published herein may be a means of bringing this real treasure before a wider sphere of mystics; for it contains the very essence and foundation of true mysticism.

We are particularly grateful for the permission to publish the wonderful Poem of St. John of the Cross, which provides such an appropriate and beautiful corollary to the "Mystical Theology."

IMPORTANT NOTICE.

SUBSCRIBERS AND NEW

READERS.

While we are always more anxious to obtain new Readers than simply subscribers, yet naturally we depend upon the latter for the means to continue our work. So we hope our Readers whose Renewals are due, will read as much assistance in this direction as is in their power, and, at the same time, endeavour to secure at least one new Reader for the volume now beginning. Free specimen copies are sent on application.