

THE SHRINE OF WISDOM

VOL. VIII. No. 32

SUMMER SOLSTICE, 1927

THE ST. PAUL TRIADS

THERE has been preserved in ancient Welsh manuscripts which in all probability carry on a still older tradition a body of teaching known as the St. Paul Triads. These form a significant link between Druidism and Christianity.

The inhabitants of the Isle of Britain unhesitatingly and in large numbers accepted the doctrine of Christianity at its first coming, because many of its tenets harmonized perfectly with their own ancient Druidical teachings. They had a trinity or threefold aspect of God, one of the names of which was *Yesu*, and so when the new gospel was preached amongst them they used their own word *Yesu* for the "Son of God and the Son of Man."

There are three theories concerning the origin of the St. Paul Triads.

(1) That St. Paul himself preached them in Britain, is more than a probability or a pious hope. It is historically recorded that he travelled in many countries including "the islands surrounded by the sea," in the last six years of his life.

St. Paul, as an initiate, is said to have possessed the gift of tongues, and it is therefore not improbable that he delivered his utterances in Britain in the language of the people, and in the form in which they would be the more readily comprehended and remembered, namely that of the Triads, for he taught, as he prayed, "with the understanding" as well as "with the spirit."

(2) That they were given by him in Rome to a British convert to Christianity, is also a possibility. It is based on the fact that in one of his Epistles St. Paul mentions Claudia wife of Pudens who was a British lady of noble birth and literary attainments. She is known to have journeyed to Rome and to have been one of his converts, and it is quite reasonable to suppose that she, or one of her Bardic

followers, may have memorized the Triads from the dictation of St. Paul and that they may have returned with them to their native land where these Triads have ever since been reverently preserved.

(3) That they were composed by an inspired Christian Bard is a theory which some scholars maintain. If this be so, he must have been one of those nameless Great Ones who attained to Truth, but who looked for no reward save only the gratitude of his fellow men to his unknown genius.

But whatever the source of the St. Paul Triads their intrinsic value lies in the reality and dignity of the teachings themselves. They are in the usual Bardic form and their substance is in perfect conformity with the gospels of the greatest exponent of the teachings of Jesus the Christ, and there is a profundity and beauty about them which can be appropriately associated with the writer of the Epistles.

There are several different manuscripts of the St. Paul Triads, three of which are given in that inexhaustible treasure house "Barddas," and from which have been selected thirty-three of the most important and illuminating.

The Triads chosen have been divided into three groups in conformity with what is termed in Bardism "The three dignities of meditation," that is to say: "The good will of God; the benefit of Man; and the quality of Nature or the Cosmos."

I. GOD

1. God consists of three things: the most powerful of all that can be comprehended; the most just of all that can be comprehended; and the most merciful of all that can be comprehended.

2. Three things which God has given for the instruction of man: natural instinct; the judgment of conscience; and the Gospel of Christ.

3. There are three things belonging to God, the magnitude of which cannot be comprehended: His power; His justice; and His mercy.

4. There are three things, which, in virtue of the attributes and nature of God, cannot but exist: all justice; all love; and all beauty.

5. There are three views of God: what is greatest of all things; what is best of all things; and what is most beautiful of all things.

6. Three things spoken to Paul from heaven: love thy God above all things; love thy truth as thy own Soul; and love thy neighbour as thy self.

7. The three manifestations of God: Fatherhood creating the world; Sonship teaching the world; and Spirituality supporting and governing the world.

8. Three places where will be the most of God: where He is mostly loved; where He is mostly sought; and where there is the least of self.

9. The three teachers appointed by God for man: one is contingency, which instructs one by seeing and hearing; the second is consideration, which instructs by reason and understanding; the third is the grace of God, which instructs by intuition and inspiration.

10. There are three reasons why God should be loved and honoured; because He made us; because we are under an obligation to Him for maintaining us; and as a return for the felicity of His Spiritual friendship.

11. In three ways may the will of God be known: in resigning one's self to His will and commandments; in judging rightly and thoroughly what is possible to God, in respect to His godliness, and what is derived from God; and in judging what is due to God, in respect of His justice, power, and love. By reviewing these things may the will of God be understood and seen.

II. MAN

12. Three things without which a man cannot be a Christian: holiness of life; divine counsels; and suffering without complaint.

13. The three principal duties of a Christian: belief in Christ; hope in God; and love to man.

14. The three co-destinies of all men: the same beginning; the same course; and the same end.

15. Three men that will please God: he who loves every living being with all his heart; he who accomplishes every thing that is handsome with all his strength; and he who seeks every knowledge with all his understanding.

16. A conscientious man will be three things: wise; amiable; and merry.

17. The three souls of worship: truth; goodness; and beauty.

18. Three things that a man will have from believing in God: what is needful of worldly matters; peace of conscience; and communion with the celestials.

19. The three cares of a Christian: not to offend God; not to be a stumbling-block to man; and not to become enfeebled in love.

20. Three things beyond all the research of man's sciences: the extreme limits of space; the beginning and end of time; and the works of God.

21. The three luxuries of a Christian: what is possible from the predestination of God; what is possible from justice to all; and what can be practised in love towards all.

22. There are three reasons and obligations for loving man: because he is in the image of God; because he is of the same essence and nature with ourselves; and because of the pleasure and advantage that accrue to love from the act of loving.

III. THE COSMOS

23. There are three primary elements: water, which was the beginning; after that earth; and it ended with fire; and hence ensued imperishableness.

24. There are three grades of animation: God in Ceugant (or Infinity), where there is nothing but Himself; Spiritual Beings in Gwynvyd, that is, heaven; and corporeal Beings in Abred, that is, in water and earth.

25. The three foundations of law and habit: beautiful order; justice; and mercy.

26. There are three things, of which one will be like another: the nature of agency in what is acted upon, as the nature of fire in what is heated; the nature of motion in what is moved; and so will be the nature of God, Who made them, in the soul and life of man. And as is coldness where fire is quenched, and stationariness where motion is resisted, so will be death, where there is no God.

27. There are three things, and as the two former are, so will be the third: water flowing into the sea whence it came; the line of a circle ending where it began; and the soul of a living being returning to God whence it emanated.

28. Three things, the magnitude of which cannot be known: the circle of Ceugant (or Infinity); the length of eternity; and the love of God.

29. There are three things from God: peace; truth; and knowledge; and knowing them, it is the duty of all to communicate them to others.

30. The three unions that support everything: the union of love with justice; the union of truth with imagination; and the union of God with contingency.

31. There are three things, and no spot or place can be found where they are not: God; truth; and the circle of Gwynvyd, which is felicity; and to know this is to be united with them, and the same will deliver from Abred, which is the world of change.

32. The three stabilities of Oneness, that is to say: the first is Universality, for there can be no two kinds of one universality; Infinity, for there can be no limits to one whole, nor can anything be whole which is not universal or omnipresent, for that is not one whole which is not all-comprehensive; Immutability, for it is impossible that there should be one conjunctive, universal, entire and all-existent, otherwise than it is; therefore, there can be no God but from fundamental Universal Oneness.

33. Three things that will never end: life; intellect; and light; but they will improve and increase for ever and ever.

PRAYERS OF THE MYSTICS

O Lord our God teach us, we beseech Thee, to ask Thee aright for the right blessings. Steer Thou the vessel of our life toward Thyself, Thou tranquil Haven of all storm-tossed souls. Show us the course wherein we should go. Renew a willing spirit within us. Let Thy spirit curb our wayward senses, and guide and enable us unto that which is our true good, to keep Thy laws, and in all our works evermore to rejoice in Thy glorious and gladdening Presence. For Thine is the glory and praise from all Thy saints for ever and ever. —*St. Basil*

Oh give me light to see, a heart to close with, and power to do Thy will O God. —*Thomas Wilson*

Lord take my lips and speak through them, take my mind and think through it, take my heart and set it on fire.

—*W. H. H. Aitken*

O God Who chastisest us in Thy love, and refreshest us amid Thy chastening; grant that we may ever be able to give Thee thanks for both. —*Leonine Sacramentary, 440 A.D.*

MYSTIC VERSE

I say that man was made to grow, not stop;
 That help, he needed once, and needs no more,
 Having grown but an inch by, is withdrawn:
 For he hath new needs, and new helps to these.
 This imports solely, man should mount on each
 New height in view; the help whereby he mounts,
 The ladder-rung his foot has left, may fall,
 Since all things suffer change save God the Truth.
 Man apprehends Him newly at each stage
 Whereat earth's ladder drops, its service done;
 And nothing shall prove twice what once was proved.

* * *

All that is, at all,
 Lasts ever past recall;
 Earth changes, but thy soul and God stand sure:
 What entered into thee,
 That was, is, and shall be.

* * *

Therefore to whom turn I but to Thee, the ineffable Name?
 Builder and maker, Thou, of houses not made with hands!
 What, have fear of change from Thee who art ever the same?
 Doubt that Thy power can fill the heart that Thy power expands?
 There shall never be one lost good! What was, shall live as before;
 The evil is null, is naught, is silence implying sound;
 What was good shall be good, with, for evil, so much good more;
 On the earth the broken arcs; in the heaven, a perfect round.
 All we have willed or hoped or dreamed of good shall exist;
 Not its semblance, but itself; no beauty, nor good, nor power
 Whose voice has gone forth, but each survives for the melodist
 When eternity affirms the conception of an hour.
 The high that proved too high, the heroic for earth too hard.
 The passion that left the ground to lose itself in the sky,
 Are music sent up to God by the lover and the bard;
 Enough that He heard it once: we shall hear it by-and-by.

—Robert Browning.

* * *

Deep and broad, where none may see,
 Spring the foundations of the shadowy throne
 Where man's one Nature, queen-like, sits alone,
 Centred in a majestic unity.
 And rays her powers, like sister islands, seen
 Linking their coral arms under the sea:
 Or cluster'd peaks, with plunging gulfs between
 Spanned by aerial arches, all of gold;
 Where o'er the chariot wheels of Life are rolled
 In cloudy circles, to eternity.

—Matthew Arnold.

THE TRIUMPH OF THE WISE MAN OVER FORTUNE

(From Thomas Taylor's "Miscellanies")

IN this essay Thomas Taylor sets forth the reasons which make the true philosopher superior to the injuries of fortune. His writings on this subject are no mere theorizings on his part, for he had himself suffered most of the so-called misfortunes which he enumerates. He had known want, poverty, ill-health, the undeserved ridicule of his contemporaries, and the neglect of his writings, by all but a discerning few, yet had remained unconquered and undaunted by them all. As he says in his Preface to the *Miscellanies*, "If, also, the author of the following pages be permitted to add his own testimony of the great advantages which may be derived in adversity from such sentiments and such examples; suffice it to say, that in a state of general bodily debility, which at present prevents him from any continued exertion, he has found them to be a source of the most solid consolation, and an incentive to disinterested endurance. They have taught him to submit patiently to the will of Heaven, to follow intrepidly the order of the universe, and to abandon private advantage for the general good."

The first section of the present article shows forth the point of view which was more particularly that of the Stoics, who, as Thomas Taylor says, practised the political and ethical virtues rather than the theoretic and mystical. The second section gives the Platonic standpoint.

Possessing virtue the Stoics knew themselves to be secure from all real harm and could resolutely endure the severest trials. The Platonists on the other hand aimed not only at the practices of virtue but at becoming one with that Mystical Unity in which Goodness, Truth, and Beauty are blended. Ecstasy rather than endurance is the key-note of their writings. To the philosopher who has attained that vision in which the knower and the known are one, the trials and mischances to which the mortal and irrational nature is heir are of no more account than are the molestations of midges to one who gazes upon the full beauty of the sun.

I. THE DOCTRINE OF THE STOICS

The doctrine of the genuine Stoics and Platonists, concerning the constancy of the wise man, is no less paradoxical to the vulgar, though perfectly scientific, than the examples which they have given of the endurance of calamity are magnanimous and sublime; for what to the apprehension of the multitude can be more incredible than the dogma that a wise man can neither receive an injury nor contumely? That he may be a servant, and deprived of all the necessaries of life, and yet not be poor; that he may be insane, and yet his intellect remain uninjured? For the vulgar conceive that the wise man is not to be adorned with an imaginary honour of words, for such, in their opinion, are these assertions, but that he is to be situated in that place where no injury is permitted. Will there, however, we ask, be no one who will revile, no one who will attempt to injure him? But there is not anything so sacred which sacrilegious hands will not attempt to violate. Divine natures, however, are not less elevated, because there are those who will attack a magnitude placed far beyond their reach. The invulnerable is not that which may not be assaulted, but that which cannot be injured. And this is the mark by which a wise man may be known. Can it indeed be doubted, but that the power is more certainly strong which cannot be conquered, than that which cannot be attacked; for strength untried is dubious; but the force is deservedly considered as most sure which baffles all attacks. Hence the wise man is of a more excellent nature, if no injury can hurt him, than if he is beyond the reach of injurious attempts. As a wise man, therefore, of this kind, is obnoxious to no injury, it is of no consequence how many darts are hurled against him, since he is not penetrable by any. Just as the hardness of certain stones is unconquerable by iron; and just as some things cannot be consumed by fire, but preserve their rigour and mode of subsistence amidst surrounding flames. Thus too rocks swelling on high break the sea, and do not exhibit any vestiges of its rage, though for so many ages they have been lashed by its waves.

But it may be said, will there not be someone who will try to do an injury to the wise man? Some one may attempt it indeed, but the attempt will be ineffectual; for he is removed from the contact of inferior natures by so great an interval, as to be beyond the reach of all noxious force.

Hence when potentates, kings, and men powerful by the consent of their vassals, attempt to hurt him, all their attacks fall as far short of the wise man, as the arrows discharged by the Thracians fall short of the Olympian Gods. Or is it to be supposed, that when that foolish king obscured the day by the multitude of his darts, that any arrow struck against the sun? Or that the chains which he threw into the deep could reach Neptune? As celestial natures escape human hands, and divinity is not hurt by those who plunder temples, or destroy statues, in like manner, whatever is done against the wise man, insolently, petulantly, and proudly, is done in vain. But it may be said, it would be better that there should be no one who would wish to act in this manner. He who says this, wishes for a thing very difficult to the human race—innocence. It is their concern, however, who are about to do an injury to the wise man, that it should not be done, and not his, who cannot suffer indeed, not even though it should be done. Perhaps, too, wisdom more exhibits its strength by being tranquil amidst attacks; just as the security of an emperor in the land of his enemies is the greatest proof of his strength and the flourishing condition of his arms.

Again the intention of an injury is to bring an evil on some one; but wisdom leaves no place for evil; for the only evil to wisdom is baseness, which cannot enter where virtue and worth reside. Injury, therefore, cannot reach the wise man; for if an injury is the being passive to some evil, but a wise man suffers no ill, no injury can reach the wise man. Again every injury is a diminution of him who is injured, nor can anyone receive an injury, without some detriment either of dignity, or body, or of external concerns; but a wise man can lose nothing; he has deposited everything in himself; he trusts nothing to fortune, but solidly possesses his own good; content with virtue which is not indigent of things fortuitous. Hence it can neither be increased nor diminished: for things which have arrived at the summit afford no place for increase. Fortune takes away nothing except that which she gave; but she does not give virtue, and therefore does not take it away. Virtue is free, inviolable, unmoved, unshaken, and so hardened against casualties, that she cannot even be made to incline, much less can she be vanquished. At the apparatus of things of a terrible nature, she looks with

a direct eye, and suffers no change in her countenance, whether calamity or prosperity is presented to her view. Hence the wise man loses nothing of which he will perceive the loss; for he is in the possession of virtue, from which he can never be driven; and he uses everything else as something different from his proper good. But who would be moved with the loss of that which is foreign to his concerns? If then an injury cannot hurt any of those things which are the property of a wise man, because they are safe through virtue, an injury cannot be done to a wise man."

Thomas Taylor then quotes the example of the philosopher Stilpo of Megara, who when his city was taken by siege, his daughters carried away into captivity and his possessions plundered replied, when asked by the conqueror whether he had lost anything:—"Nothing; for all that is mine is with me."

"Such a character (he goes on) is indeed rare, and is only to be found in great intervals of ages; for neither is that frequently produced which surpasses the accustomed and vulgar mode. In short that which injures ought to be more powerful than that which is injured; but vice is not stronger than virtue. The wise man therefore cannot be injured. An injury cannot be attempted against the good except by the bad; for among the good there is peace. But if he only who is more infirm, can be injured; and the bad man is more infirm than the good; and an injury cannot be done to the good man except by one unequal to him, injury cannot happen to the wise man. For it is unnecessary to observe, that no man is good but a wise man. But it may be said that Socrates was unjustly condemned, and that he received an injury. Here however it is necessary to understand that a man may be a noxious character himself though he has not injured another. He is no less an assassin, whose dagger is eluded by the opposing garment. All wickedness, even prior to its existence in energy, is perfect, so far as is sufficient to the crime. Some things are of that condition, and are so conjoined, that one cannot be, and, on the contrary, others so subsist, that the one may be, without the other. Thus, a man may move his feet, and yet not run; but he cannot run without moving his feet. A man may be in water, and yet not swim; but he cannot swim without being in water. The condition of what is now discussed is of this

kind. If a man receives an injury, it is necessary the injury should be done; but if the injury is done it is not necessary that he should receive it; for many things may happen which may remove the injury. Thus, chance may throw down an outstretched hand, and cause a dart when hurled to deviate in its course. Thus some particular thing may repel injuries of whatever kind they may be, and may intercept them in the midst, so as that they may be done, and yet not be received.

Besides justice can suffer nothing unjust because contraries do not coalesce; but it is impossible for an injury to be done without being done unjustly. An injury therefore cannot be done to a wise man. Nor is it wonderful that no one can do an injury to him; for neither can anyone profit him, nor is anything wanting to the wise man which he can receive in the place of a gift. For he who gives ought to have before he gives; but he has nothing with which, when transferred to himself, the wise man will be delighted. No one, therefore, can either injure or profit the wise man; just as divine natures neither desire to be assisted, nor can be injured; and the wise man is allied to, and similar to divinity. Hence the wise man, ardently tending to divine natures, which are sublime, secure, benignant, and which possess an invariable sameness of subsistence, born for the public good, and salutary both to himself and others, he will desire nothing grovelling, weep for nothing, but, leaning on reason, he will walk through human casualties with a divinely elevated mind. He is not only indeed incapable of being injured by man, but also by fortune, who as often as she engages with virtue never departs on equal terms. If we receive with an equal and placid mind that greatest of all events, beyond which angry laws, and the most cruel masters have nothing to threaten, and in which fortune terminates her empire, and if we are convinced that death is not an evil, and therefore no injury, we shall much more easily endure other things, such as losses, pain, ignominy, change of place, and in short whatever is considered as calamitous, all which though they should surround, yet will not overwhelm the wise man, much less will a single attack of any one of these plunge him in sorrow. And if he bears the injuries of fortune moderately, how much more will he bear those of powerful men, whom he knows to be the hands of fortune.

He will therefore endure every thing, in the same manner as he endures the rigour of winter, the inclemency of the heavens, immoderate heats, diseases, and other casualties of a similar kind. Nor will he judge so favourably of anyone, as to conceive that he does anything from the dictates of intellect, which belongs to the wise man alone. The actions of all others are not the result of wise deliberation, but are frauds and stratagems, and rude motions of the mind, which he con-numerates with casualties. Add, too, that no one receives an injury with an unmoved mind, but is disturbed by the consciousness of having received it; but the erect man is void of perturbation, is the moderator of himself and is of a profound and placid quiet. For if an injury could reach him it would both move and impede him. But the wise man is void of anger, which injury excites. Hence he is so erect, so elated with continual joy. So far is he from receiving any detriment from the hostile attacks of men and things, that even injury itself is of use to him, through which he derives experience of himself, and tries his virtue. Let not the multitude be indignant that the wise man is excepted from the number of those that are injured; nor let anything on this account be detracted from their petulance, their rapacious desires or their temerity and pride. Their vices remaining, let this liberty be given to the wise man. While they are still permitted to do an injury, let it be granted that the wise man gives all injuries to the winds, and defends himself by patience and magnitude of mind. Thus, in sacred contests, many conquered through wearying by obstinate patience the slaughtering hands of their antagonists. Conceive, therefore, that the wise man ranks in the number of those, who by long and faithful exercise have acquired the strength of enduring and fatiguing all hostile power.

With respect to the wise man's endurance of contumely, it must be observed that he cannot be despised by any one; for he knows his own dignity and confidently announces to himself that it is not in the power of any one to accomplish a thing of such magnitude. Hence with respect to all those trifling casualties which may be called not the miseries, but the molestations of the mind, he is so far from trying to vanquish that he does not even perceive them. He does not therefore employ against these his accustomed virtue of endurance, but either does not notice them or considers them

worthy of laughter. Besides since a great part of contumelies are caused by the proud and insolent, and by those who bear prosperity badly, the wise man possesses that most beautiful of human goods, by which he is able to reject with scorn that inflated affection—sanity and magnitude of mind: for these rapidly pass by everything of this kind, as delusive dreams, and nocturnal visions, which contain nothing solid, nothing true.

And such is the doctrine of the Stoics concerning the wise man's endurance of calamity, who, as they placed felicity in an active life, and consequently did not ascend so high as to the theoretic or contemplative virtues, derived all their arguments for the constancy of the wise man from his possession of the political virtues in consummate perfection.

(To be continued)

JEWELS

With the wind of Tribulation God separates on the threshing floor of the Soul, the Chaff from the Corn. —*Molinos*

* * *

What you regard as misfortune and affliction is but the bridle of My love by which I draw those whom I love to a spirit of holy submission and to My Paradise.—*Al Ghazzali*.

* * *

When, therefore, in our highest faculties we are united with our Lord, we go forth through His grace towards all things along with Him. For what He alloweth, we allow, what He giveth, we give, walking in a certain way independent of the bodily senses.

—*Gerlac Petersen*

* * *

No one can be made perfect in a day. A man must begin by denying himself, and willingly forsaking all things for God's sake, and must give up his own will, and all his natural inclinations.

What is true Obedience? I answer, that a man should so stand free, being quit of himself, that is, of his "I," and "Me," and "Self," and "Mine," and the like, that in all things he should no more seek or regard himself than if he did not exist, and should take as little account of himself as if he were not, and another had done his works.

Man is created for true Obedience, and is bound of right to render it to God.

From Theologia Germanica

JEWELS FROM THE PERSIAN MYSTICS

Every form you see has its archetype in the placeless world;
 If the form perished, no matter, since its Original is everlasting.
 Every fair shape you have seen, every deep saying you have heard,
 Be not cast down that it perishes; for that is not so.
 Whereas the spring-head is undying, its branch gives water
 continually;

Since neither can cease, why are you lamenting?
 Conceive the Soul as a fountain, and these created things as rivers:
 While the Fountain flows, the rivers run from it.
 Put grief out of your head and keep quaffing this River-water;
 Do not think of the Water failing, for this Water is without end.

—*Shamsi Tabriz*

* * *

Keep God in remembrance till self is forgotten. —*ibid*

* * *

If thou commit me to the grave, say not "Farewell, farewell!"
 For the grave is a curtain hiding the communion of Paradise,
 After beholding descent, consider resurrection;
 Why should setting be injurious to the sun and moon?
 To thee it seems a setting but 'tis a rising;
 Though the vault seems a prison, 'tis the release of the soul.
 Shut thy mouth on this side and open it beyond,
 For in placeless air will be thy triumphal song. —*ibid*

* * *

Whoso recognises and confesses his own defects
 Is hastening in the way that leads to Perfection!
 But he advances not towards the Almighty
 Who fancies himself to be perfect.

—*Jalálud'dín Rámi.*

* * *

I am as intellect and reason within thy bosom
 At the time of joy and gladness, at the time of sorrow and distress.
 In the hour when the intellectual lamp is lighted,
 What a pean goes up from the dead men in the tombs!

—*Shamsi Tabriz*

* * *

Pain is a treasure, for it contains mercies;
 The kernel is soft when the rind is scraped off.
 O Brother, the place of darkness and cold
 Is the fountain of Life and the cup of ecstasy.
 So also is endurance of pain and sickness and disease.
 For from abasement proceeds exaltation.
 The spring seasons are hidden in the autumns,
 And the autumns are charged with springs.

—*Jalálud'dín Rámi*

(From "The Persian Mystics" in *The Wisdom of the East Series* by
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THE HUMAN SOUL IN THE MYTHS OF PLATO

FOREWORD

A myth or mythos is a narrative or fable having a meaning attached to it other than that which is obvious when it is taken literally. The term itself is a Greek one meaning 'word,' and hence tale or story. It is related to the root *mu-*, derived from the sound made by murmuring through the closed lips, and with which the words mystery and mystical are connected.

Mystical aspects of truth, when presented in literal and concrete language, are liable to be misunderstood, and therefore all great religions and philosophies have made use of myth and allegory for veiling, and at the same time revealing to those who have eyes to see, their profoundest truths.

The soul's intuitive faculty responds immediately to the mystical truth expressed in a myth, and even when the reasoning mind cannot explain and analyse the aspects of truth which are presented, yet the soul feels them to be true because the wonder and beauty of these ancient myths and fables touches the very depths of her being and reminds her in subtle and mysterious ways of all that she has known long ago and has apparently lost in her wanderings in the realms of generation.

The exegesis of mythoi is a valuable exercise for the intuitive faculty; because although the first appeal of a myth is to the intuition yet the analysis and exposition of its meaning by means of the dialectic and intuitive reason will reveal new and profounder depths in its meaning and enhance the significance of its beauty.

Plato is one of the greatest masters of the art of myth-making, and deliberately employs myth and allegory in his dialogues for imparting the knowledge of the deeper mysteries of life. For a long while, perhaps, the dialogue will proceed along the orderly pathways of dialectic, building principle upon principle, establishing with most scrupulous care the foundations of the edifice of truth, so that there shall be no room anywhere for doubt or falsehood to creep in; and then

suddenly and without warning the argument will, as it were, leave the ground, the carefully built up edifice will be transfigured by the light of an unimagined glory, and the mind of the reader will be lifted up clean above the earth to catch a glimpse of the overpowering radiance of Intelligible Beauty.

But in these flights he is always careful not to put forward the doctrines they contain as exact and dogmatic expressions of truth. When Socrates, or some other character in the dialogues, exchanges the dialectic for the mystical method of expression, the myth or allegory is generally introduced in a tentative and almost hesitating manner, as if the speaker were about to tread on holy ground.

We must beware of interpreting the myths of Plato too literally, for their real meaning lies far deeper than the surface. For example, when Plato speaks of the souls of men changing into the souls of animals, this must not be taken to mean that the human soul can become literally the soul of an animal, but rather that it lives in a purely natural manner, content only with the things of the body, and without energizing its more divine faculties. For as Thomas Taylor says in his Introduction to the *Timaeus* "Again, when our souls are represented after falling into the present body as suffering a transmutation into brutes, this, as Proclus beautifully observes, must not be understood as if our souls ever became the animating principles of brutal bodies, but that by a certain sympathy they are bound to the souls of brutes."

For, as the Chaldean Oracles declare—

"This is a law from the Blessed Ones that naught can break", that the human soul "completes its life again in men and not in beasts."

In order to penetrate to the inner meaning of the myths it is necessary to develop the power of apperception, that is of seeing within and behind the symbol the inner idea which it expresses. It is necessary, too, to approach them with the receptive attitude of childhood rather than with one of cold and destructive criticism. As the Eleatic Guest remarks in introducing the myth in the *Politicus*—

"Listen, like children, with all your attention to my tale."

The present series of articles deals with some of the conceptions which Plato mystically reveals in his dialogues concerning the human soul. The soul is a principle so highly abstract and paradoxical that finite and concrete language

cannot express fully its true nature. Hence Plato makes use of symbols and images in order to lead the consciousness upwards to the reality behind them. The language he uses is often extremely figurative and his thoughts on the nature of the soul have sometimes been regarded as the fantasies of a dreamer. Yet when the symbology which he employs is rightly interpreted these allegorical and mystical expositions will be found to be perfectly consistent not only with all the rest of his philosophy but with the basic teachings of the Egyptian, Chaldean, Orphic, and Pythagorean systems also.

The Platonic myths in which the nature of the human soul is dealt with are principally those of the *Timaeus* and the *Phaedrus*; while her choice, her journey in the realms of generation and her estate after the death of the body form the subject of the three eschatological myths contained in the *Gorgias*, the *Phaedo*, and the *Republic* (The Vision of Er). Love in relation to the soul is dealt with in two of the discourses of the *Symposium*, that of Aristophanes and the speech of Diotima related by Socrates, while her final conquest and restoration to her true home is set forth in the *Phaedrus*.

I. THE NATURE OF THE SOUL

"Plato," says Thomas Taylor, "in the *Timaeus* exhibits through images the order of the universe, for it is usual with the Pythagoreans previous to the tradition of a scientific doctrine to present the reader with a manifestation of the proposed doctrine through similitudes and images."

This venerable dialogue does indeed set forth in one vast composition the basic principles of the knowledge of God, the Cosmos, and Man.

It describes in mystical language how the Artificer of the Universe produced It, Soul and Body, with all its self-motive, self-vital, and self-subsistent principles. Since man is a little cosmos, repeating in terms of his own nature the principles of the Great Cosmos, and since the perfection of human society depends upon the perfection of the individuals which compose it, the knowledge of God and of the Cosmos, and of the relation to Man to these two is above all things necessary to those who are to order and watch over the Ideal Republic which is Plato's symbol for the perfected state of human society.

The *Timaeus* follows on logically from the *Republic*, for Socrates expresses a desire to behold the ideal state, which has been therein outlined, in action. Critias, who with Timaeus, Hermocrates, and Socrates is present when the dialogue is supposed to take place, has been reminded by the previous discussion related in the *Republic* of an ancient tale told to him by his grandfather, Critias, who had himself received it when a boy of ten years from an old man of ninety, who in turn had had it from Solon to whom it was communicated by the Egyptian priests of the city of Sais in the Delta.

This tradition tells of how before the Great Deluge there existed at Athens a noble city and a race of men of whom the present Athenians are the descendants. These ancestors were men distinguished both by their wisdom and their fortitude, and their city was adorned by the most excellent political institutions and laws. At that time a great warlike power was spreading from the Atlantic over all Europe and Asia, and had subdued Libya as far as Egypt and Europe as far as the Tyrrhene Sea, when it was resisted and checked by the conspicuous valour of the ancient Athenians. Shortly afterwards a violent earthquake took place and the Atlanteans with their continent were submerged beneath the sea.

These ancient Athenians, says Critias, are the very citizens we require to make our ideal state alive. But first let Timaeus, who is the one of us who knows most about astronomy, speak, "beginning his discourse from the generation of the world, and ending in the nature of men." Then let me take the men that he has created in his mind, and which you, Socrates, have so excellently educated, and introduce them to your consideration as the inhabitants of our city so that we can discourse about them as citizens and Athenians.

Timaeus agrees, and, having invoked the assistance of Divinity, begins his discourse.

It is first of all necessary, he says, to distinguish between that which for ever is and is without generation, and that which is ever becoming but never is. The former is to be grasped by intelligence (noesis) in conjunction with reason, being always in the same condition; but the latter is perceived by opinion (doxa) in conjunction with irrational sense-perception (aesthesia), for it is always being generated

and corrupted but never really is. But whatever is generated is necessarily generated from a certain cause; for it is utterly impossible for it to have generation without a cause.

When, therefore, an artificer looks towards that which eternally subsists the same, and employing a paradigm (or pattern) of this kind expresses its idea and power in his work, he must of necessity thus bring all to the perfection of beauty. But when he looks to that which is in generation and uses a generated paradigm, his work will not be beautiful. Let us then call the universe Heaven—or the Cosmos or by whatever other name it usually receives—and let us consider first of all in regard to it that which it is necessary to investigate in the very beginning of our enquiry about the universe—whether it always was and has no beginning in generation or whether it was generated and began from a certain cause.

He goes on to prove that since the sensible universe is manifestly generated it must necessarily have some cause.

“ To discover, therefore, the Artificer and Father of this, the All, is difficult, and having discovered Him it is impossible to speak of Him to all men. Again, this must be considered with regard to Him: towards which of the two paradigms did He look when He fashioned it, towards that which is eternally the same and in the same condition or towards that which is generated? But, indeed, if this world is beautiful and its Artificer (Demiurgus) is good, it is clear that he looked to that which is eternal. For the world is the most beautiful of generated natures and He is the best of causes.”

Timaeus establishes from this that the Demiurgus in creating the sensible universe “ looked to ” that which is comprehended by reason and intelligence, that is to say, He fashioned the material universe after the pattern of a spiritual archetype or idea. As the Chaldean Oracles declare:

“ For the King set before the multiform Cosmos an incorruptible intellectual type.”

Socrates having expressed his entire approval of this introduction, Timaeus goes on:—

“ Let us declare then the reason for which the Artificer established generation together with this universe. He indeed was good, and never in the good is there envy for any being. And since He is entirely devoid of envy He wished all things to be generated like as possible to himself.”

He therefore reduced the primeval chaos to order. And because it was necessary that there should be some medium between the intelligible and sensible, between that which is for ever the same and that which is generated He "introduced" Soul into the universe, giving her demiurgic powers whereby she comprehends all that is prior to herself and imparts perfection to that which is below herself.

"Placing Intellect in Soul, but Soul in Body, He fabricated the All. . . ."

Although Plato here speaks of the ordination of primeval chaos and the creation of the Body of the universe prior to the infusing of it with Soul, he does not signify by this that the creations of the Demiurgus are according to Time. "The world, indeed, always had a subsistence, but discourse divides the thing generated from the maker, and produces according to time things which subsist at once together."—*Thomas Taylor*. And as the dialogue explains later on: "But indeed God did not produce Soul, as we just now began to say, later than Body—for He who joined them would never have permitted the more ancient nature to be governed by the younger."

The universe is likened to an all-perfect animal, endued with reason and containing within itself all other animated natures that are allied to it. The composition of the Body of the Universe from Earth, Water, Air, and Fire, is thus described. Its shape was made spherical as this is the most perfect of all figures. Since it was perfect and self-sufficient it had no need of food or of organs of nutriment. Its motion was circular in imitation of the motion appertaining principally to intellect and intelligence.

"Placing Soul in the midst He extended it throughout the whole world and likewise surrounded with it its entire body."

The Soul He constituted "both in birth and in virtue prior to and more ancient than the body, and as the proper mistress and ruler of its subject nature, from the following principles and in this manner:

From the essence indivisible and eternally subsisting the same, and from that which becomes divisible about bodies He mingled from both a third form of essence midway between the two—and, again, between that which is indivisible and that which is divisible about bodies He placed the nature of the *same* and the *different*. And taking these three he mingled them all into one idea."

The dialogue then describes the proportions in which this Soul-mixture, subsisting midway between the eternal and the temporal, was divided by the Demiurgus, thus symbolizing the various principles of the soul by virtue of which she is enabled to form a connecting link between the Above and the Below. The whole composition He then divided through its total length into two parts and crossed these in the middle in the form of the letter X. These parts he bent into a circle so that their extremities met directly opposite their point of intersection; and these two circles He caused to revolve in opposite directions, the motion of the exterior one being that of the *same* but that of the interior one that of the *different*, the circle of the *same* which was undivided having dominion over that of the *different* which He divided into seven unequal circles of fitting proportions.

“When therefore the whole composition of the soul was completed according to His mind, He next fabricated within it the whole of that which is corporeal, and uniting middle with middle He fitted them together. But soul, being interwoven everywhere to the uttermost bound of the universe, and enfolded round it externally in a circle, and herself revolving within herself, gave rise to the divine beginning of an unceasing and wise life throughout all time. And, indeed, the body of the universe was created visible; but she (the soul) invisible, participating in reason and harmony, and the most excellent of the created things, being made by Him Who is of Intelligible and Eternal Beings the most excellent.”

The soul therefore has affinity both with the sensible and the intelligible and by means of her various principles and gnostic powers may contact both realms and gain the knowledge of them.

The dialogue goes on to deal with the adornment of the sensible universe with the instruments of time so that it might be a flowing image of its eternal archetype. The beings which were to dwell in the universe were then created: the “lesser” or “junior” Gods—Gods of Gods, whose providential wisdom was to watch over the rest of creation, and the various species of living creatures which were to live in the air and the water and upon the earth. When all these things were accomplished He that created the Universe thus addressed the Gods:

“ ‘ Gods of Gods, of Whom I am the Demiurgus and Father, all that is made by me is indissoluble, such being my will. All that is bound, therefore, can be dissolved; but to dissolve that which is harmonious, beautiful, and happy is the wish of an evil nature. . . Now therefore learn what I declare unto you. Three kinds of mortal beings remain to be created; and unless these are created the Universe will be imperfect.’

“ ‘ That there may therefore be mortal natures and that this universe may be truly the All, convert yourselves, according to your nature, to the fabrication of living beings, imitating the power which I employed in your creation. And whatever in these is worthy to have the name of immortal and to be called divine, and that which has the leadership in them and willingly follows justice and reverences you—of this I will myself deliver the seeds and the beginning; but for the rest do ye weave together the mortal with the immortal, fashioning and generating living beings and giving them nourishment for their increase and receiving them back again when they perish’.

Thus He spake; and again into the same mixing-bowl in which He had compounded and mingled the soul of the All He poured the remainder of the former mixture, mingling it in a certain respect in the same manner as before, yet not now of a purity perfectly equal to that of the former, but second and third in quality.”

Plato here sets forth the relationship between the human soul and the All-Soul.

These “ partial ” or human souls He caused to ascend as it were into a chariot (i.e., the vehicles whereby they manifest themselves), showed them the nature of the Universe and announced to them the Laws of Fate and that their first birth should be alike for all. And because of the changing nature of bodies He declared to them that it was necessary for them to have firstly one connate sense produced by violent passions (*aesthesis*—sense-perception resulting from contact with exterior objects); secondly desire mingled with pleasure and grief; and thirdly fear and anger, together with all the consequences and natural opposites of these. And that if they should subdue these they should live justly, but if they were subdued by them, unjustly. He instructed the souls in these matters that He might not be the cause of the future wickedness of each and thereafter sent them to their appointed habitations.

Plato, says Proclus, here omits all the problems pertaining to the descent of the soul, and shows her immediately conjoined with body. These matters are dealt with in other myths, notably in the Vision of Er in the *Republic*; but the design of the *Timaeus* being mainly the setting forth of the nature of things, he here admits whatever is physical in the theory respecting the soul.

The souls, however, merged as it were in a deep river, were at first almost helpless and profoundly disturbed by its flow, for the violence of external sensations and the tide of nutriment hindered and disordered the revolutions of the two circles belonging to the rational and irrational natures of the soul. As Hermeas says: "The soul, by descending into the realms of generation, resembles a thing broken and relaxed. And the circle of *the same*, or the intellectual part of it, is fettered; but the circle of *the different*, or the doxastic part, sustains many fractures and burnings. Hence the soul energizes partially, and not according to the whole of itself."

"Sense," says Proclus, "excites souls in the present time, and this in conjunction with the nutritive power, which by influxions applies a remedy to the perpetual effluxions of the body, and again composes what is dissolved, after the manner of Penelope's web. For this is the perpetually flowing river which is properly so called as being a part of the whole river of generation. Hence in conjunction with this it agitates and disturbs the periods of the immortal soul, and *fetters* indeed the circle of sameness but *agitates* the circle of difference. For, as there are twofold circles in the soul in imitation of divine souls, the dianoetic circle, which contemplates intelligibles, is only restrained in its energy, but sustains no distortion, but the doxastic circle is distorted; and this very properly, since it is possible to opine not rightly, but it is not possible to know scientifically falsely."

Thus the disturbance which the soul suffers by her descent into generation obscures her vision of truth and reality so that she mistakes the *same* for the *different* and *vice versa*, seeing things not as they are but as they appear to be.

"And because of all these passions the soul, when she is bound to a mortal body, becomes even now, as in the beginning, devoid of intelligence. But when the stream of growth and nutrition flows with abated strength, the circles, once more regaining their tranquillity proceed in their proper path and

become steadier as time goes on, till at length the orbits of both the circles correspond perfectly to the natural form of each, and they announce rightly that which is same and that which is different, rendering wise him by whom they are possessed. If anyone therefore receives the proper nourishment of education he will become perfectly sound and healthy and escape the most grievous of diseases. But if he neglects it he will both walk lame along the path of life, and come again to the house of Hades imperfect and without intelligence."

In the dialogue *Phaedrus* the nature of the soul is set forth in a different image, for there Plato likens the "form" of the soul to a charioteer driving a pair of winged steeds the one "erect, well-proportioned with a high neck and arched nose, in colour white, with black eyes, a lover of honour together with temperance and modesty, a friend of true glory, needing not the whip, but guided only by encouragement and reason. But the other is crooked, gross, uncertain in its movements, stiff-necked, with a short throat, flat-nosed, black in colour with grey eyes, full-blooded, a friend of arrogance and bragging, hairy about the ears, deaf, hardly submitting to the whip and the spur."

The two horses symbolize the tendencies of the soul's two-fold nature when joined to the body; and her task is to master the unruly horse so that she may guide her chariot rightly and "follow in the procession of the Gods."

"The one safety of the soul herself," says Proclus, "which is extended by the Demiurgus, and which liberates her from the circle of generation, from abundant wandering, and an inefficacious life, is her return to the intellectual form, and a flight from everything which naturally adheres to us from generation. For it is necessary that the soul, which is hurled like seed into the realms of generation, should lay aside the stubble and the bark, as it were, which she obtained by being disseminated into these fluctuating realms; and that purifying herself from everything circumjacent, she should become an intellectual flower and fruit, delighting in an intellectual life instead of the nutriment of opinion, and pursuing the uniform and simple energy of the circle of sameness, instead of the abundantly wandering motion of the circle which is characterized by difference. For she contains each of these circles and twofold powers. And of her

horses, one is good and the other the contrary: and one of these leads her to generation, but the other from generation to true being; the one also leads her round the circle of sense, but the other round an intellectual essence. For the circle of the same and the similar elevates to intellect, and an intelligible nature, and to the first and most excellent habit. But this habit is that according to which the soul being winged governs the whole world, becoming assimilated to the Gods themselves. And this is the universal form of life in the soul, just as that is the partial form when she falls into the last body, and becomes something belonging to an individual instead of to the universe."

Thus does Plato in profoundly veiled symbols set forth the creation of the Soul, which is not, in the strict sense, created; but, as he tells us in the *Phaedrus*, self-motive uncreate, beginningless, and immortal. The human soul is of a nature analogous to that of the Soul of the Universe for man is a Microcosm of the Macrocosm. When the circle of the same or the intellectual part is thoroughly freed from the hindrances which come to it through the soul's association with the mortal body, the human intellect becomes illuminated by the Divine Intellect and man consciously returns to his Source.

The remaining articles of this series will deal with the choice of the soul and her descent to earth, with her journey after death, and the Judges of the Dead before whom she must account for the deeds of her earthly life; and finally with Love, who gives to her at length the wings whereby she is enabled to take flight from earth and return to her original home.

(To be continued)

JEWELS

The soul is present in the body as light is present in air.

—Plotinus

* * *

Since the soul possesses memory when she is alone, the body with its changeable nature, that is ever subject to a perpetual flow, is a cause of forgetfulness, and not of memory; the body therefore is, for the soul, the stream of Lethe. To the soul alone, therefore, belongs memory.

—*ibid*

THE WISDOM OF PTAH-HOTEP

Ptah-hotep lived in the reign of Assa or Isosi, the last king but one of the Fifth Dynasty in Egypt. He was Governor of his City and Vizier to the King. When old age came upon him he requested permission of his lord to make over his princely authority to his son and to "speak unto him the words of them that hearken to the counsel of the men of old time, those that hearkened unto the Gods." Whereupon the King replied, "Instruct him, then, in the words of old time; may he be a wonder unto the children of princes, that they may enter and hearken with him. Make straight all their hearts; and discourse with him, without causing weariness."

His work, which is called "The Instruction of Ptah-hotep," is one of the world's oldest books; yet the counsels it contains are as fresh and as sound to-day as they were when they were written over five thousand years ago. In them are to be found practical rules of conduct for most of the contingencies of every day life. They pertain more to outer activities than to the inner life and embody the wisdom of Egypt in its exoteric and not its mystical aspect. They are for the ordinary people and contain nothing of a distinctively esoteric nature.

Their eminent sanity and their applicability to-day are a striking testimony to the fact that the essence of human nature is the same in all lands and in all ages and that real wisdom, whether practical or mystical, is expressed not for one period only but for all time. Ptah-hotep's own prophecy has been fulfilled, for he says "Nor shall any word that hath here been set down cease out of this land for ever, but shall be made a pattern whereby princes shall speak well." * * *

In the following extracts the translation used is that of "The Instruction of Ptah-hotep" in *The Wisdom of the East Series*, by permission of the Publishers, Messrs. John Murray.

THE INSTRUCTION

1. Be not proud because thou art learned; but discourse with the ignorant man as with the sage.
2. If thou find an arguer talking, a poor man, that is to say not thine equal, be not scornful toward him because he is lowly. Let him alone; then shall he confound himself. Question him not to please thy heart, neither pour out thy wrath upon him that is before thee; it is shameful to confuse a mean mind. If thou be about to do that which is in thy heart, overcome it as a thing rejected of princes.
3. Great is Truth, appointing a straight path; never hath it been overthrown since the reign of Osiris. One that oversteppeth the laws shall be punished.

4. Cause not fear among men; for (this) the God punisheth likewise. . . . There is a man that saith ' Might is right,' and he saith, ' I seize for myself that which I perceive.' Thus a man speaketh and he is smitten down. It is another that attaineth by giving unto him that hath not; not he that causeth dread. For it happeneth that what the God hath commanded even that thing cometh to pass. Live, therefore, in the house of kindliness, and men shall come and give gifts of themselves.

5. If thou have ploughed, gather thine harvest in the field, and the God shall make it great under thine hand. Fill not thy mouth at thy neighbour's table.

6. If thou be a leader, cause that the rules that thou hast enjoined be carried out; and do all things as one that remembereth the days coming after, when speech availeth not. Be not lavish of favours; it leadeth to servility, producing slackness.

7. If thou be a leader be gracious when thou hearkenest unto the speech of a suppliant. Let him not hesitate to deliver himself of that which he hath thought to tell thee; but be desirous of removing his injury. . . . A well-taught heart hearkeneth readily.

8. If thou desire that thine actions may be good, save thyself from all malice, and beware of the quality of covetousness which is a grievous inner malady. Let it not chance that thou fall thereinto. It setteth at variance fathers-in-law and the kinsmen of the daughter-in-law; it sundereth the wife and the husband. It gathereth unto itself all evils; it is the girdle of all wickedness. But the man that is just flourisheth; truth goeth in his footsteps, and he maketh habitations therein, not in the dwelling of covetousness.

9. If thou wouldest be wise, provide for thine house, and love the wife that is in thine arms.

10. Repeat not extravagant speech neither listen thereto; for it is the utterance of a body heated by wrath. When such speech is repeated to thee, hearken not thereto, look to the ground.

11. If thou wouldest be a wise man, and one sitting in council with his overlord, apply thine heart to perfection. Silence is more profitable to thee than abundance of speech.

12. If thou be powerful, make thyself to be honoured for knowledge and for gentleness. Speak with authority, that is, not as if following injunctions, for he that is diffident (when highly placed) falleth into errors. Be not silent but beware of answering words with heat. Put it far from thee; control thyself. The wrathful heart speaketh fiery words; it darteth out at the man of peace, stopping his path.

One that reckoneth accounts all the day passeth not an happy moment. One that gladdeneth his heart all the day provideth not for his house.

13. The disposal of souls is with the God, and that which He loveth is His creation. Set out, therefore, after a violent quarrel; be at peace with him that is hostile unto (thee) his opponent. It is such souls that make love to grow.

14. If thou be great, after being of none account, and hast gotten riches after squalor, being foremost in these in the city, and hast knowledge in useful matters, so that promotion is come unto thee; then swathe not thine heart in thine hoard, for thou art become the steward of the endowments of the God.

15. Let thy face be bright what time thou livest. That which goeth into the storehouse must come out therefrom; and bread is to be shared. He that is grasping in entertainment shall himself have an empty belly; he that causeth strife cometh himself to sorrow. Take not such an one for thy comparison. It is a man's kindly acts that are remembered of him in the years after his life.

16. A splendid thing is the obedience of an obedient son; he cometh in and listeneth obediently.

Excellent in hearing, excellent in speaking, is every man that obeyeth what is noble; and the obedience of an obeyer is a noble thing.

That which is desired by the God is obedience; disobedience is abhorred of the God.

Verily it is the heart that maketh its master to obey or to disobey; for the safe and sound life of a man are his heart.

It is the obedient man that obeyeth what is said; he that loveth to obey, the same shall carry out commands.

He that obeyeth becometh one obeyed.

17. Let a son receive the word of his father, not being heedless of any rule of his. Instruct thy son; for the obedient man is one that is perfect in the opinion of princes.

18. As for the fool, devoid of obedience, he doeth nothing. Knowledge he regardeth as ignorance, profitable things as hurtful things. He doeth all kinds of errors, so that he is rebuked therefor every day. He liveth in death therewith; it is his food.

19. A son that hearkeneth is as a follower of Horus. He is good after he hearkeneth; he groweth old; he reacheth honour and reverence. He repeateth in like manner to his sons and daughters, so renewing the instruction of his father.

Let that which thou speakest implant true things and just in the life of thy children.

20. Be thine heart overflowing; but refrain thy mouth.

21. Forsooth, a good son is of the gift of the God; he doeth more than is enjoined on him, and putteth his heart into all his goings.

JEWELS

If you would speak worthily of God, or understand that which is said of him, leave your body, leave your senses, abandon alike both land and sea, tread the air beneath your feet, leave behind you all that is temporal, all the successiveness of things, all the beauty of this world. Rise above the stars, transcend in spirit all this universe, take your flight above the skies, and, soaring at those sublime heights, let the eyes of your soul rest upon the fairest of all beings; look upon the heavenly armies, the choirs of Angels, consider the might of the Archangels, the glory of the Dominations, the seats whereon the Thrones are established, the Virtues, the Principalities, the Powers. Then, transcending even all angelic natures, raising yourself in thought beyond and above all creation, contemplate the Divine Nature, steadfast and unmovable, exempt from every vicissitude and every emotion, simple and indivisible, Inaccessible Light, Ineffable Power, Limitless Splendour, Incomparable Glory, the sovereign desirable Good, the Perfect Beauty which inflicts upon the enraptured soul an ineffable wound of love, but of which human language is powerless to tell the Majesty.

—*St. Basil.*

* * *

Let all our business be to *know* GOD: the more one *knows* Him the more one *desires to know* Him. And as knowledge is commonly the measure of *love*, the deeper and more extensive *our knowledge* shall be, the greater will be *our love*: and if our love of GOD be great we shall love Him equally in grief and in joy.

—*Brother Lawrence*

FRAGMENTS OF AMMONIUS SACCAS

Ammonius Saccas lived about 162-243 A.D. Although he is one of the greatest philosophers of the Platonic tradition, yet his true greatness is not fully recognised, possibly because, like Socrates, he taught orally, and wrote little or nothing.

He is sometimes described as the founder of Neoplatonism, because he was the teacher of Plotinus. Plotinus, in the early years of his quest for truth, attended the lectures of the most distinguished professors at Alexandria but returned from them disappointed. At last, however, he was brought to Ammonius, and having heard him exclaimed, "This is the man I was looking for."

Ammonius derived his name "Saccas" from his first occupation, which was that of a carrier of goods at the port of Alexandria. But, as Theodoret relates, he abandoned his sacks and became a philosopher, speedily gaining a high reputation at Alexandria for his wisdom. The philosophic thought of the day was characterized by a spirit of contentiousness, and the inner significance of Plato's works was overlooked. Ammonius, by returning to the first principles of philosophy, brought back the mystical element into the thought of his time, thus laying the foundations upon which the edifice of Neoplatonic thought was later to be built, gave a new life and meaning to the Platonic tradition, by purifying it of the incrustations and perversions by which unscrupulous partisan exponents had obscured the purity of the original doctrine, and harmonized the disputations and contending factions in the Alexandrian schools by demonstrating that the fundamental principles of the philosophies of both Plato and Aristotle were the same.

Ammonius was a teacher of remarkable genius, ability, and insight, and some of the most gifted men of the age attended his lectures. He is one of the few who in the history of thought have received the title of "God-taught"; for he derived his wisdom not from any human teacher but from personal illumination and divine inspiration.

The following fragments are from reports of two of his lectures, preserved by Nemesius in his book "On the Nature of Man."

I. ON THE NATURE OF THE SOUL

“Bodies, being by their very nature mutable, wholly dissoluble and infinitely divisible, nothing remaining in them which is immutable, need a principle to bring them together, to join them, to bind and hold them in unity, and this principle we call the soul. Now if the soul is a body of any kind, even if it is the most subtle or refined, what again is that which holds it together? For since every body requires a connecting and binding principle to hold it together, this will be true of every body *ad infinitum*, until we reach an incorporeal principle. If they should say, as the Stoics do, for instance, that there is a certain tense motion in or about bodies, extending at the same time to the internal and external parts of bodies, and that this motion tending outward is the cause of quantities and qualities, and tending inward is the cause of unity and essence, then we must ask them,—since every motion proceeds from some power, what is this power, and in what lies its essence? If this power is a certain matter, we will again use the same arguments. If it is not matter but a material thing—for a material thing is different from matter, since that which participates of matter is called material—what then is that which participates of matter? Is it matter or something immaterial? If it is matter, how can it be material and not matter? If it is not matter, it is therefore immaterial: if it is immaterial, it is not a body, for every body requires matter of some kind. If they should say that bodies have the three dimensions, and that the soul extending through the whole body likewise has the three dimensions, and is therefore necessarily a body, we will reply that every body has the three dimensions, but that everything having the three dimensions is not a body: for quantity and quality, which are incorporeal in their nature, are accidentally capable of increase or diminution, if they are in a thing which has magnitude. And so it is with the soul, which in its essence or nature has no dimensions, but accidentally is considered to have three dimensions by reason of its connection with the body, because *that* has three dimensions. Moreover, every body is moved (acted upon), either from without or from within: but if from without, it will be inanimate; if from within, it will be animate. If the soul is a body, and if it is moved from without, it will be inanimate; if from within, it will be animate. But it is absurd to assert that

the soul is both animate and inanimate, and therefore the soul is not a body. Further, the soul, if it is nurtured, is nurtured by the incorporeal, for the sciences nurture it: no body is nurtured by the incorporeal, therefore the soul is not a body."

By this argument Ammonius annihilates the materialism which would represent man to be a purely corporeal organism with no spiritual or eternal principle. Plotinus in the *Enneads* develops still further the proof that the body depends upon the soul for its very existence, thereby demonstrating that it is possible for the human mind to ascend by dialectic reasoning to a knowledge of the truth concerning the soul and its relation with the Above and the Below.

(To be continued)

JEWELS

And as a piece of iron when completely heated may say, "I burn indeed, but from the fire which is in me, not that I am myself fire," and as the candle may say, "It is true that I shine, but with the light which is in me, not that I am myself light," and as the tool fitted for the work may say, "I work, but by the hand of the workman." So with the soul: it is said to burn, not of itself but from the love that is in it; it is said to shine, not of itself but from the light of wisdom and truth which is in it; it is said to work, but it is God Who worketh all things in it."

And should these qualities, that is to say, love, wisdom, light, depart from the soul, it will remain cold and in darkness: and as an instrument, however suitable it may be, lieth altogether useless and without producing anything unless the hand of the workman laboreth by means of it, so the soul, though it may have been created noble, clever, and intelligent will nevertheless remain altogether empty and fruitless unless God work all its works in it. —Gerlac Petersen

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One way to recall easily the mind in time of prayer, and to preserve it more in rest is not to let it wander too far at other times. You should keep it strictly in *the Presence of GOD*, and being accustomed to think of Him often from time to time, you will find it easy to keep your mind calm in time of prayer, or at least to recall it from its wanderings —Brother Lawrence

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We should serve God in a holy freedom.

—*ibid*

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Of necessity the creature depends each moment upon God, the Supreme Artist, for its existence, preservation, power of action, and all that it possesses. —Albertus Magnus