

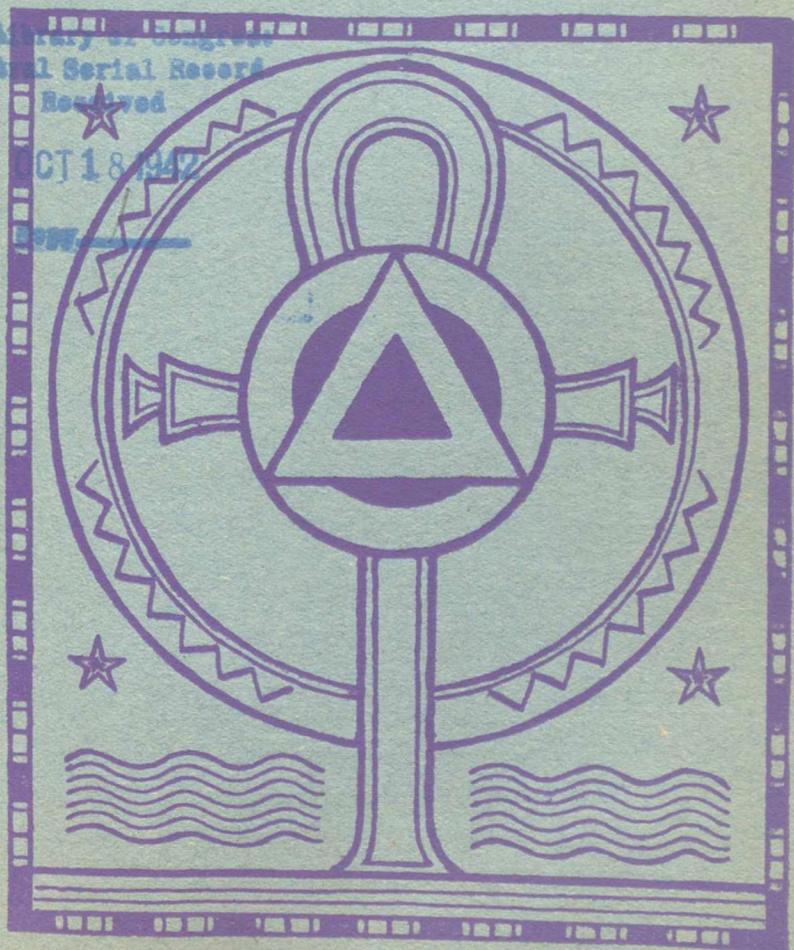
THE SHRINE OF WISDOM

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THE SHRINE OF WISDOM

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THE SHRINE OF WISDOM

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OBJECTS:—

- (1) To assist all who are endeavouring to follow, by any means or any system of religion, philosophy, or mysticism, the Mystical Path leading to union with the Divine, as the Good, the True, and the Beautiful.
- (2) To enshrine the most essential and vital aspects of Truth which have been presented by the great religious, philosophical, and mystical systems of the world, and by the known great Teachers of mankind, and which are most capable of elevating, enriching, and expanding the human consciousness.
- (3) To contribute towards the synthesis and harmonious integration of all presentations of the wisdom of the ages by relating all particular expressions to the universal first principles from which all are derived.
- (4) To preserve at the same time the peculiar beauty and appeal which each particular expression possesses as a unique and distinctive facet of the One Integral Truth.

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THE SHRINE *of* WISDOM

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THE YIN FU KING*

SECTION III

1. *The blind have intensified hearing; the deaf have intensified sight; Concentration in a single source is ten times more beneficial than the employment of a scattered host. Concentration thrice repeated in the day and night is better a myriad times.*

This is an exemplification of the advantage of concentration and centralization, and of unwearying persistence.

Tao is the heart and centre of all things. It is the source of Its own activity, and Its power is limitless. In It, Actor, Action, and Act are self-contained.

In so far as human acts are the results of a unific spiritual purpose they become increasingly efficient; while many diverse activities disperse man's energies and lead away from the Goal.

The thrice-repeated concentration is valuable in impressing the memory in a threefold manner with spiritual truths.

The persistent daily practice of the dominance of man's heavenly nature over his earthly nature leads to the highest efficiency.

2. *The mind is stimulated by manifested things, but is deadened through overmuch identification with them. The fountain of the mind's operation is in the eyes.*

This passage deals exclusively with external perception and its results. The mind is stimulated to thought by the sight of natural things, but if it identifies itself too vehemently with them its higher powers are deadened.

* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, 89 to 91.

The eyes, as one of the chief of the senses, are used to typify the portals by means of which external perceptions stimulate the mind.

3. *Though Heaven has no particular feeling of benignity, the most gracious consequences are the result of its activities; even the crash of thunder and the blustering wind may have a vitalizing effect.*

The operations of Providence are impartial, and although man may not always find the results of these operations pleasing to him, they are essentially beneficent and for the ultimate good of all beings; for Providence is rooted in Tao and all things are under Its benign care.

Even the dissonances of nature have their part in the universal harmony and contribute to the perfection of the whole. Man, too, gains moral strength through the endurance of calamities.

4. *Perfect enjoyment consists in the abundant satisfaction of the nature. Perfect tranquillity consists in being satisfied with little.*

Enjoyment is here contrasted with tranquillity. Enjoyment may be said to be of Yang, the Principle of Activity; and tranquillity to be of Yin, the Principle of Passivity.

There is an abundant satisfaction in the nature which is tranquil, and a contentment with little which gives a richly flavoured enjoyment.

Even as Yang and Yin are united in Tao, so perfect enjoyment and perfect tranquillity are united in the Middle Path travelled by the servant of Tao.

5. *When Heaven seems most indrawn, its activities are most universal in their nature.*

Within and behind even the simplest things of life are great and profound mysteries. The physical eyes of man behold only the external effects, but the causes are hidden in the Laws of Heaven. The higher the cause the more hidden it is, yet the more universal is its sphere of operation.

Behind and above the Laws of Heaven is the Supreme Law of Tao, which is even more profoundly hidden.

As it is written in the *Tao Teh King*. "Tao appears quiescent; Its activity is all within, yet there is nothing It does not do."

6. *The laws affecting the animal creation reside in Ch'i.*

The Chinese word *ch'i* cannot be adequately translated by any single term, for it has a variety of meanings dependent upon the context.

The character *ch'i* is a composite of the characters "vapour" and "rice," and the literal meaning is: Vapour ascending from heat acting on moisture. It is sometimes translated as breath, air, and even as matter.

Philosophically, however, it has deeper meanings, and is said to be the source or primary agent for producing or modifying motion, and in this sense may be termed Vital Breath.

Suzuki, in his *History of Chinese Philosophy*, calls it the nervous system of the macrocosm, and says that the word can be freely translated as universal energy, or the impulse that awakens, stimulates, and accelerates activity. He gives as an example a quotation from Kwan-yin-tsze: "All things change, but their *ch'i* is always one. The wise know this oneness of things and are never disturbed by outward signs."

Giles defines *ch'i* as "The vivifying principle of Chinese Cosmology."

In yet another aspect *ch'i* may be considered as pre-elemental or primordial matter, and even as the subjective life from which all animation springs.

Thus *ch'i* is both physical and super-physical. As unmanifested it is not subject to modification: as manifested it modifies all existing things.

The creation of a universe is said to begin with the rotation or vortex of *ch'i*, by which the two modes of Energy and Inertia are produced.

The Dual Powers, Yang and Yin, are termed the *Two Ch'i*.

The philosopher Chu Hsi states that "Natural formae are not separate things: they manifest at the centre of matter (*ch'i*), and if matter (*ch'i*) did not exist they would have no place of attachment."^{*}

7. *Life is the root of death; death is the root of life. Beneficence springs from injury; injury from beneficence.*

This implies that in the realms of duality opposites are rooted in each other, producing one another in a continually alter-

* See *Ideas and Matter, Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 38, page 47.

nating sequence, according to the successive dominance of the two modes of procession and return, by which all natural existences are subject to birth and death, injury and healing.

A consideration of the limitations of these processes kindles in man a desire to escape from the restrictions, pain, and sorrow which these conditions bring. He cannot, however, find release in going from one extreme to the other; he must rise above the pairs of opposites into that realm where duality and discord are unified and resolved into harmony.

This may be accomplished through union with Tao; and, as is written in the *Tao Teh King*: "To find the Ancient Tao is to control the affairs of the present day; to know the Ancient Beginning is to have found the Path to Tao."

8. *If stupid men study the Laws of Heaven and Earth they may become wise; I, by studying the science of seasons and things, become enlightened. Those who fear stupidity become stupid; I, because I do not fear stupidity, am wise. Others regard their knowledge as wisdom; I do not regard mine as such. Wherefore it may be said that those who drown themselves in water in order to extinguish a fire, bring about their own destruction.*

These sayings indicate the outlook of the Taoist Sage in his approach to life. His attitude is an exemplification of the practice of *Wu-Wei*, mystical non-striving. By refraining from excessive outward action and dwelling in Tao, all things are noiselessly accomplished, and wisdom is attained because external hindrances are transcended.

One of the Chinese comments on this passage is as follows: "The minute investigation of the science of Heaven and Earth suffices to confer a knowledge of height and depth; the minute investigation of the science of seasons and things suffices to confer a knowledge of what is subtle and diminutive. Though others always pursue their researches among the distant, I pursue mine amid the near. This is quite sufficient, the near being the necessary condition of the distant. Wherefore, those whom others may call wise, I regard as stupid. In cases where the extreme summit of all doctrine has been reached, the epithets 'wise' and 'stupid' should both be abjured. Thus there are among men those who follow stupidity and those who aim at wisdom; but I neither pursue the one nor seek the other. Abiding neither in stupidity nor wisdom, I also rest not in mere cleverness. The place where my mind is at ease is outside both

stupidity and wisdom; it is in the contemplation of time and things that I penetrate the mysteries of the Sublime. How, then, can I run counter to those mainsprings of action which exist in the world around me? Let the superficial manifestation of wisdom and stupidity be once seen and the injury inherent in both will be experienced. The one will plunge men into water and the other throw them into fire, so that in either case they will come to an untimely end."

9. *The Tao of Spontaneity unfolds Itself in stillness, and it is after this manner that Heaven and Earth and all things are produced.*

The Tao of Spontaneity is the Providential Energy within and above the natural activities of creation. It proceeds in stillness, acting subjectively and without process of any kind; yet It is the cause and sustaining life of all things.

"Tao is tranquil and still, yet the source of never-ending activity."

"Tao is the Plenum and yet also the Void."

From Heaven and Earth all things in the manifested universe are produced, yet in the Mother-Deep they abide serene and changeless.

10. *The Tao of Heaven and Earth operates with gentleness and with measured continuity. When Yin and Yang alternate with each other the pulsations of the universe manifest in an evenly measured rhythm. The Sage, therefore, knows that the Tao of Spontaneity cannot be overthrown, and by acting in accordance with It he advances in the inner life.*

When man ponders upon the Tao of Heaven and Earth he is increasingly impressed by the marvellous order expressed in the regularity and perpetuity of all cosmic activities.

Although Yin and Yang are opposites, yet their interactions are always complementary and never contradictory.

As a Chinese commentary says: "The Yin appears to be antagonistic to the Yang, but if the principles of gradualness be brought into play the opposition of the two will be forgotten. The Yang is entered from the Yin, and the Yin from the Yang, yet both are one in Tao. And how is this? It results from the circularity to which Heaven conforms its external shape. Heaven is circular: circularity is the condition of its

stability. All things thus revolving in a circle, each gets nearer to the other the further each one goes."

The wisdom of the Sage consists in the discovery of the Way of the Tao of Spontaneity, the Universal Rhythm, which is above all opposites, and in which they equiponderate. Having found this precious treasure, he knows the folly of opposing it, and so acts in perfect harmony with its way.

11. *The Way of Perfect Stillness cannot be measured by numerical calculations. Yet there must be a mysterious super-cosmic power from which have sprung the Myriad Simulacra, the Eight Diagrams, the Sexagenary Cycle, the Natural Springs of Power, and the hidden Astralia. The mysterious operations of the Yin and Yang in the victories of the one over the other, manifest in brilliant visibility.*

The Way of Perfect Stillness, the Way of Tao, is limitless, and thus immeasurable; yet from it are reflected into the kingdoms of nature the five components of manifestation: the Myriad Simulacra, or Types, or Patterns, according to which all things are fashioned; the Eight Diagrams or subdivisions of the Yin and Yang,* with their relationships to the points of the compass and the vast sweep of space; the Sexagenary Cycle, or division into sixty, in the measures of time; the Natural Springs of Power, governing the motion of all things; and lastly the hidden Astralia, beneath and interpenetrating all natural existences, passively recording the activities of all above it.

"We may call this wonderful," says the Chinese commentary, "but the word wonderful is insufficient." Ultimately words fail to describe the indescribable; they can only signify certain of its attributes.

In the realization of the Way of Perfect Stillness the soul rests serenely on the bosom of the Tao of Heaven, where the two parts of the Great Seal are eternally united. Abiding in that state of bliss, she perpetually manifests all her heavenly powers in spontaneous and harmonious activity.

"When a certain destination has been reached, and the person so reaching it then passes beyond it: this is termed truly advancing."

* See *Shrine of Wisdom*, No. 60, pages 325-6.

THE TEACHINGS OF MADAME GUYON

The chief writings of Madame Guyon are her *Autobiography*, *Commentaries on the Scriptures*, *A Method of Prayer*, *Spiritual Torrents*, *Poems and Spiritual Songs*, and *Letters on the Interior Life and the Spirit of True Christianity*.

Her *Autobiography*, written at the command of Father la Combe and not intended for the general reader, reveals the beauty and simplicity of her character and her understanding of the needs of the soul. She tells the story of her work for God and of her own mystical experiences, explaining the differences between the various stages through which she had passed, and turning aside from the narrative from time to time to instruct or to exhort.

The *Commentaries on the Scriptures* explain passages of the Old and New Testaments in terms of the interior life. The story of Abraham, for example, becomes the story of the soul's journey through self-renunciation or "annihilation" towards Divine union. All the personalities and events of the Old Testament are similarly represented in terms of states of consciousness and activities of the soul and their results.

A Method of Prayer is a short treatise intended only to give instruction in the art of prayer: "without setting our opinion above that of others, we set forth sincerely the experience we have had, both in our own case and in that of others."

Prayer, she says, "is no other thing but the application of the heart to God and the inward exercise of love." "Prayer is the key of perfection and of supreme well-being."

The first stage of prayer is called "meditative prayer." This leads to something beyond meditation. It is "not a prayer of thought only, but it is the prayer of the heart which is not at all interrupted by the occupations of the mind." The thoughts should be gathered inwards to centre upon the God within, "without effort and with some little silence interposed so that the silence may be mixed with action, by degrees increasing the silence and lessening the discourse until in the end, by yielding gradually to the operation of God, He may get the ascendant in us." In this way the soul gradually becomes able

to recollect itself and place itself by faith in the Divine Presence.

This prayer of recollection or simplicity forms the second stage of prayer, the object of which should not be to receive anything from God—not even joy—but to be as He pleases. “This will preserve in you an evenness of spirit alike in the time of abundance and in the time of dryness.”

Accompanying this prayer there must be resignation and the surrender of the self—“the forgetting of ourselves in a great measure and thinking upon God only: by this means the heart remains always free, contented and disengaged. It consists in a continual forsaking and losing all self-will in the will of God.” Suffering should be accepted at the hand of God, but “none ought to make mortification their chief exercise nor tie themselves to certain austerities, for by following the inward attraction and employing themselves in the Divine Presence, God does make them to undergo all sorts of discipline. God doth it effectively; we need only to follow His Spirit.” The only work the soul has to do here is “to make a strong endeavour to turn and gather itself inwards.”

Sometimes during the prayer of simplicity the soul “may feel some little sense of the Divine Presence, being placed in a sweet peace. Let it hold what is given it so long as it lasteth.” Often there is the absence of God from consciousness which must be patiently borne.

From the rest in God brought about by the prayer of simplicity springs the third stage of prayer in which the Presence of God begins to be intuitive and continual. This is the “Prayer of the simple Presence of God, or of an active contemplation” in which the soul may seem to be doing nothing, since it cannot feel, know, or distinguish its operations. But in truth “the swiftness of its motion hindereth it from perceiving its steps, and God’s operation, becoming more abounding, swalloweth up that of the creature.” When the soul “acteth by itself, it acteth with hurry and fatigue,” but “so soon as the soul hath got into its central bent and tendency, that is to say, returned within itself by recollection, from that instant it begins to run its course towards its centre, the attractions of which give it at once the greatest vigour and the swiftest motion, for no swiftness is equal to that of the central tendency. This, then, is an action, but it is so great, so noble and so peaceable that it seemeth to the soul

as though it doth not act at all, because its operation is so natural."

In the prayer of the Presence of God "the virtues flow sweetly into the soul, which likewise practises them in so easy a manner that they become natural to her." With this there must be a progressive "giving way to the action of God in place of that of the creature, which cannot be done without the consent of the creature, and the creature cannot consent but by moderating its own activity, giving way, little by little, that God's operation may succeed in its stead."

Self-examination must be practised by laying the soul open before God "Who will not be wanting in enlightening her and making her to know the nature of her faults. . . . God maketh an inquiry in which He doth not suffer anything to escape; and then the soul has but to turn itself simply towards God and to suffer the pain and correction which He inflicts."

The fourth stage is called "a way of harmony, preparatory to the Divine union, in which the wisdom and justice of God work a passive and vigorous purification of the soul which only co-operates in this, that it maintains a passive consent by which the soul conforms itself to God and is united to Him."

This purification "can never be done by the industry of the creature: on the contrary, the creature suffereth it even with regret; because man loveth so strongly his own egotism and dreadeth so much its destruction that if God did not do it Himself and with authority, man would never consent to it." This does not mean that the will is destroyed or man's liberty taken away, for "the freedom of the will implies the right to surrender it. It is used in its highest exercise when it is given up to God."

Then God gives Himself to the soul "for the soul is so noble and so great that all the gifts of God, even the greatest, could not render it happy if God do not give Himself to it."

This fourth stage is the highest described in the *Method of Prayer*.

Spiritual Torrents follows out, in more detail and in a greater number of stages, the path of mystical experience. Three main kinds of mystical progress are described under the figure of streams and rivers flowing to the sea; some shallow and slow-moving, some rapid and deep, and some of very great swiftness

—torrents which nothing can impede. Within each class are many subdivisions.

In the first class are those souls who give themselves to meditation or good works, perform penances, and try to free themselves from the greater and voluntary lesser sins. These have little depth of spiritual life and can impart to others little that is of value except physical necessities. In order to be used these must join with others in religious observances and good works. Souls may be sanctified in this stage and yet never go beyond it in this life. "They have a vigorous activity and desire to be always doing more to promote their perfection. They may be subject to great variation, because the greater part of their religious life is in their natural sensibilities. They are always ready to struggle against or complain about distractions and cannot endure them calmly."

Such souls, says Madame Guyon, "must not be directed to passive devotion, for if you take away their works which are their feet, they can never advance."

In the second class are souls in "the passive way of sight." "Their strength is very abundant. They are laden with gifts and graces and celestial favours; they are the admiration of their generation, and numbers of saints who shine as stars in the church have never passed beyond this limit."

Although such souls have been drawn to passive contemplation, they have not been brought to a state of total annihilation of self. In this path there are various degrees of perfection and there is always the danger that the soul may fix its thought on what God has done for it, thus stopping at the gifts instead of being led through them to the Giver. "Thus these souls, though passive in some measure, for they do die in their own way, have light and love and strength in themselves; they like to retain something of their own, it may be even their virtues, but in so delicate a way that only the Divine eye can detect it."

The souls in the third class are described as torrents. "They rush on with a rapidity that alarms even the most confident; now losing themselves, now breaking upon the rocks, now dashing down into dark abysses, until at last they reach the sea."

The theme of the torrent is the most fully developed of the three, for it is the story of the writer's own experience. The

beginning is by seeking God with inward prayer and faith until the treasure within is found and enjoyed. This is the first stage of the passive way of faith. "They are now all ardour and love, for what they possess within themselves is infinitely sweeter than all the joys of earth. But they must be led beyond this to the way of pure faith, and thus they become conscious of God's correction and reproof for their imperfections, as well as of His goodness. They are so full of their own feelings that they want to impart them to others. Their sentiments towards Him are so deep, pure and disinterested that those who hear them speak, if they are not divinely enlightened, believe them to have attained the height of perfection. They are fruitful in good works; there is no reasoning here, nothing but a deep and burning love."

"The faults of those in this degree are a certain self-esteem, more hidden and deeply rooted than it was before they received these gifts and graces from God; a certain secret contempt for others whom they see so far behind themselves and a certain hardness for sin and sinners, a certain confidence in their own safety and virtue, a secret pride which causes them to grieve specially over the faults they commit in public: they appropriate the gifts of God and treat them as though they were their own: they forget weakness and poverty in the strength which they possess; so that they lose all self-distrust. These faults are purified by a loss of the graces they had clung to and a re-awakening of the passions they had thought annihilated, but which were only asleep.

"When the soul is stripped firstly, of its own possession of gifts, graces, favours; next, of its readiness in the exterior practice of virtues and of satisfaction in this; and thirdly, of its beauty and the perceptible action of divine virtues, it is at the same time stripped of all self-consideration." These operations lead to a mystical death—a death to one's "own." This annihilation of self does not mean the cessation of all suffering, but there is release from the anxiety and bitterness of suffering. The three powers of the soul, memory, understanding, will, by degrees "lose their life," that is, as to the sentiment of that life. This is followed by further degrees of purification called by Madame Guyon "burial" and "decay," which establish the soul in the path of "naked faith."

At this stage the soul, reduced to nothingness, must remain in it, without wishing to change its condition, and it is here that the torrent becomes one with the sea. Then it is that the soul feels without feeling that it is gradually re-animated and assumes a new life; but this is done so imperceptibly that it seems like a dream.

Now the soul has reached the beginning of the last degree—that of the divine and truly inner life which includes numberless lesser degrees and in which the progress is infinite.

A description is given of the life in which the soul is and possesses all things by being and having nothing.

“Its faithfulness does not consist in ceasing from all activity like one who is dead, but in doing nothing except by the Principle which animates it. It cannot speak of its state, for it does not see it. As nothing belongs to it, it can make no reserves; and if it can say nothing of a state so divine, it is rather because what it has, while possessing nothing, passes all description by its extreme simplicity and purity.

“O! if we had sufficient fidelity never to look at ourselves, what progress might we not make! The defects of this state are certain light emotions or sights of self which are born and die in a moment—certain winds of self which pass over the calm sea and cause ripples, but these faults are taken from us little by little.”

“At the entering of the way of naked faith the soul, on leaving the tomb, finds itself, without knowing how, clothed with the inclinations of Christ; not by distinct and natural views of Him, but by its natural condition, finding these inclinations just when they are needed, without thinking of them. These dispositions are lowliness, meekness, submission, and the other virtues which He possesses. And henceforth it is He who acts, speaks, moves in the soul, being its moving Principle.

“This is where true liberty begins—a liberty which does all things easily which God would have done.”

In this spiritual resurrection everything is restored with a wonderful power to use it without being defiled by it, to have it without appropriating it as before. All is done in God and things are used as though they were not used.

“The outward appearance of these persons is quite ordinary

and nothing unusual is observed in them except by those who are capable of understanding.

“All is seen in God and in its true light; therefore this state is not subject to deception. There are no visions, ecstasies, ravishments or translations. This state is above them all. This way is simple, pure and naked, seeing nothing out of God; and thus seeing all things with His eyes.”

In a few words Madame Guyon gives a picture of the soul's journey in God—an ever-expanding life in the Infinite: “All souls in this degree have God and are filled with His fullness according to their receptive capacity which God continually enlarges. But this growing capacity can only be received in a state of nothingness. This capacity is the capacity to lose and extend itself in God. The more it is lost in Him, the more it develops and becomes immense, participating in His perfections and being transformed in Him.”

SEED THOUGHTS

“The Pythagoreans called God the ONE as the cause of union to the universe and on account of His superiority to every being, to all life, and to all-perfect intellect. But they denominated Him the measure of all things, on account of His conferring on all things through illumination, essence and bound; and containing and bounding all things by the ineffable supereminence of His nature, which is extended beyond every bound.”

—*Syrianus.*

“That which is the ONE and the measure of all things is not only entirely exempt from bodies and mundane concerns, but likewise from intelligibles themselves, since He is the venerable Principle of beings, the measure of intelligibles, ingenerable, eternal, and alone possessing absolute dominion, and Himself manifesting Himself.”

—*Ibid.*

“As all things proceed from the ONE, so all yearn for their Principle and return to It, to the extent of their power.”

—*T. M. Johnson.*

THE SUPREME ONE AND ITS PRINCIPLES*

If the doctrine of polytheism consisted in admitting that there is a multitude of principles equal in dignity and power to the great and Ineffable Principle of things, the censure which has been repeatedly passed on this doctrine with so much zeal by modern theologians would be highly just, since it is an hypothesis no less false in its principles than dire in its consequences. This, however, was far from being true of the polytheism of the ancient world as must be obvious to everyone who reads with attention the remains of Grecian and Roman literature.

But, on the other hand, to censure the doctrine that producing causes of things subsist concentrated and rooted in one First Producing Cause but with due subordination to their comprehending Principle, is to oppose one of the most sublime conceptions of the human mind, endeavour to subvert the heaven-built fabric of intellectual philosophy and, in mythological language, to war on the Olympian Gods.

To such, indeed, as have not regularly studied the scientific writings of Plato and Aristotle it will doubtless in the first place seem absurd to introduce a multitude of principles in order to the production of the universe. To these, one principle appears sufficient for the purpose; and the hypothesis of a multitude subsisting in conjunction and co-operating with Him, is considered as useless, and as tending to diminish the power and sully the dignity of the Parent of things. They will likewise deem it impossible to conceive how a multitude of principles can have a distinct energy of their own at the same time that they are comprehended in, and energize together with, a higher cause.

The first of these objections may be easily removed by considering that the most perfect mode of production is the essential, or, in other words, when a being produces by its very nature or essence. Instances of this essential mode are seen in fire and snow, the former imparting heat, and the latter cold. This mode is more perfect than that which is attended with deliberation,

* From a comment by Thomas Taylor in his translation of Aristotle's *Metaphysics*.

because more extended. Thus, all such beings as produce deliberately, as is the case with rational souls like ours, are at the same time connected with the essential operation, as is the energy of nature in generation, nutrition, and increase. But the energy of nature is present with beings to whom the power of deliberation is unknown: hence the essential is more extended than the deliberative energy. The essential energy, therefore, must be the prerogative of the highest producing cause, because it is more powerful than the deliberative energy; for superiority of power is always the characteristic of a superior cause.

If, therefore, the great Principle of things operated from His very nature in producing all things, and this without the conjunction of subordinate causes, and if He is the One Itself (since nothing is more excellent than Unity), all things would have been profoundly one, without any apparent distinction and separation, for in productions of this kind the effect is always secondarily what the cause is according to a primary mode of subsistence. The existence, therefore, of the corporeal world necessarily proves the existence of lesser producing causes, co-operating with the one Father of all in the production of things.

The second objection, respecting the distinct energy of subordinate causes or principles, may be removed by diligently attending to the different powers of the human soul: for in these powers, as images, we shall conspicuously see how a multitude of divine natures may possess a distinct energy of their own, at the same time that they are comprehended in, and energize together with, a superior nature. If we survey then the gnostic powers of the soul we shall find that they are five in number, namely, intellect, the dianoetic power, opinion, phantasy, and sense.

Intellect is that power by which we understand simple self-evident truths, called axioms, and are able to pass into contact with intellectual forms separated from connexion with matter.

By the dianoetic power we reason scientifically.

Opinion is that which knows the universal in sensible particulars, as that every man is a biped; and the conclusion of the dianoetic power, as that every rational soul is immortal: but it only knows that a thing is, but is entirely ignorant of why it is.

The phantasy is that power which apprehends things clothed with figure, and may be called a figured intelligence.

Lastly, sense is that power which is distributed about the organs of sensation, which is mingled with passion in its judgement of things and only apprehends that by which it is externally agitated.

Now it is evident, since the energies of these powers are perfectly distinct from each other, that the powers themselves, which are the sources of these energies, must also be distinct.

Again, it is evident that desire, which tends to one thing, anger, which aspires after another thing, and free-will—or that deliberative tendency to things in our power, which the Greeks call *proairesis*—are so many distinct vital powers of the soul. But above both the gnostic and vital powers is the one or the summit of the soul, by means of which we are enabled to say: I perceive, I opine, I desire, I deliberate—which summit follows all these energies and energizes together with them: for we should not be able to know all these, and to apprehend in what they differ from each other, unless we contained a certain indivisible nature which subsists above the common sense, and which, prior to opinion, desire, and will, knows all that these know and desire according to an indivisible mode of apprehension.

It must, however, be carefully observed with respect to these mighty powers which subsist in unproceeding union with the Ineffable Principle of things, that, as their union with this Principle is infinitely more transcendent, their characteristic properties are likewise infinitely more distinct from each other, and from the one Cause of all, than the union and distinction between the human soul and its different powers.

But as this is a subject of all others the most important it is requisite to be more explicit. If then it is necessary that the progression of beings should be continued and that no vacuum should intervene either in corporeal natures or in bodies themselves, it is also necessary that every thing which has a natural progression should proceed through similitude; since it is by no means lawful that the thing caused should be the same with its cause: for if that which is second were the same with that which is first, each would be similarly the same, and the one would not be the cause and the other the thing caused. But if

they are only different, they can never be conjoined with each other, nor can the one participate of the others: for conjunction and participation are a communion and sympathy of participants and the natures they participate. And if they are at the same time both same and different, since in this case there is identity, defect, and something which is vanquished by a power contrary to sameness, the One Itself will no longer be the Principle of the progression of being, nor will every generative cause have a subsistence in the order of the Good prior to secondary causes: for the One is not the cause of division but of friendship; and the Good converts generated natures to their causes. But the conversion and friendship of secondary towards prior natures subsists through similitude, and not through a dissimilar nature. If, therefore, the One is the cause of the universality of things, and if the Good is the object of vehement desire to all things, It will everywhere constitute through similitude the progeny of antecedent causes; so that the progression of things will subsist according to the One, and the conversion of these progressions will be directed to the Good. For neither is conversion without similitude, nor can the generation of effects which return to their kindred principles ever subsist without this.

But that which immediately follows and is demonstrated from this, is that it is necessary every monad should produce a number of the same order with itself: Nature, a natural number; Soul, one that is animastic, and Intellect an intellectual number. For if whatever possesses a power of generating generates similars prior to dissimilars, as we have already demonstrated, every cause must deliver its own form and idiom to its progeny, and before it generates that which gives subsistence to progressions far distant and separate from its nature it must constitute things proximate to itself according to essence and conjoined with it through similitude. Every monad therefore constitutes a multitude as generating something posterior to itself, and dividing the powers which had a prior occult subsistence in itself. For things which subsisted uniformly and conjointly in the monad appear separately in the progeny of the monad. And the truth of this, indeed, universal Nature herself declares, comprehending in one the productive principles of all things contained in the heavens and in the sublunary

regions; but distributing her own powers to the natures which, proceeding from her monad, are divided about the fluctuating empire of bodies. For the natures of fire, earth and the moon, possess their idioms and forms from universal nature, with which they energize, and contain its peculiar distributions. But this also the monad of mathematics and numbers evinces: for since this is primarily all numbers, and since it spermatically constitutes the forms of numbers in itself, it distributes different powers to numbers externally proceeding from its nature. For it is impossible that a generated nature should at once receive the whole abundance of its generating cause: and it is necessary that the cause of all things, having a prior subsistence, should appear as a prolific power. Multitude therefore subsists about the monad and number, distributing the properties which abide collectively in the monad. Because, therefore, as we have before observed, that which is similar is more conjoined with its cause than that which is dissimilar; one progression will be a multitude similar to the monad from which it proceeds, but the other will be a multitude of dissimilars. But the multitude which is similar to the monad will be that in a divided manner which the monad is indivisibly. For if the monad possesses power and a peculiar hyperaxis, the multitude proceeding from it will likewise contain the same form of hyperaxis with a remission as to the whole.

(To be continued)

JEWEL

The highest of characters, in my estimation, is his who is as ready to pardon the moral errors of mankind as if he were every day guilty of some himself; and at the same time as cautious of committing a fault as if he never forgave one.

—*Pliny the Younger.*

THE ELEMENTS OF THEOLOGY

PROCLUS*

Proposition CXLVII

The summits of all Divine Orders are assimilated to the ends of the natures (proximately) situated above them

For if it is necessary that there should be an uninterrupted connexion of the Divine progression, and that each order should be bound together by appropriate media, it is necessary that the summits of secondary should be conjoined with the terminations of first orders. But this contact is through similitude. Hence there will be a similitude of the principles of an inferior, to the ends of a proximately superior order.

Proposition CXLVIII

Every Divine Order is interiorly united in a threefold manner, from its summit, from its middle, and from its end

For the summit, possessing a power which is most unitary, transmits union to all the series, and unites the whole of it supernally abiding in itself. But the middle, extending to both the extremes, binds together the whole order about itself; transmitting indeed the gifts of primary Divine natures, but extending the powers of such as are last, and inserting communion in all of them, and a conjunction with each other. For thus the whole Order becomes one, from natures that replenish and those that are filled, converging to the middle as to a certain centre. And the end, again returning to the beginning, and recalling the proceeding powers, imparts similitude and convergency to the whole Order. Thus the whole Order is one through the unific power of primary natures, through the connexion existing in the middle, and through the conversion of the end to the principle of progressions.

* For previous sections see *Shrine of Wisdom*, Nos. 56 to 91.

Proposition CXLIX

Every multitude of the Divine Unities is bounded according to number

For if this multitude is most near to The One it will not be infinite. For the infinite* is not connascent with, but foreign from The One. Indeed, if multitude is, in its own nature, separated from The One, it is evident that infinite multitude is completely destitute of It. Hence it is powerless and inefficacious. The multitude of the Gods therefore is not infinite. Hence it has the form of The One and is bounded, and is more bounded than every other multitude. For it is nearer to The One than all other multitude. If therefore the principle of things were multitude, it would be necessary that what is nearer to the principle should be a greater multitude than what is more remote from it: for that which is nearer to any thing is more similar to it. Since however, that which is first is The One, the multitude which is conjoined with it, is a less multitude than that which is more remote from it. But the infinite (multitude) is not a less, but the greatest possible multitude.

Proposition CL

Every thing which proceeds in the Divine Orders is not naturally adapted to receive all the powers of its producing cause. Nor, in short, are secondary natures able to receive all the powers of the natures prior to themselves, but the latter have certain powers exempt from things in an inferior order, and incomprehensible by the beings posterior to themselves

For if the peculiarities of the Gods differ from each other, those of the subordinate pre-exist in the superior Divinities; but those of the superior being more total, are not in the subordinate. Since more excellent natures impart, indeed, some things to their progeny, but antecedently assume others in themselves, in an exempt manner. For it has been demonstrated that those Gods who are nearer to The One are more total; and those more remote from It more partial. But if the more total have powers comprehensive of the more partial, those

* The term "infinite" here refers to number and not to power.

that have a secondary and more partial order will not comprehend the power of the more total Gods. In the superior, therefore, there is something incomprehensible and un-circumscribed by the inferior orders: for each of the Divine Orders is truly infinite. Nor is that which is infinite, as has been demonstrated, infinite to itself, nor much less to things above itself, but to all the natures posterior to itself. But infinity in these last is in capacity. The infinite, however, is incomprehensible by those natures to which it is infinite. Subordinate natures, therefore, do not participate of all the powers which more excellent natures antecedently comprehend in themselves: for the latter are incomprehensible by the former. Hence things of a secondary nature, from their more partial subsistence, will neither possess all the powers of more excellent beings, nor will they possess the powers which they do contain after the same manner as superior natures, on account of that infinity through which the latter transcend the former.

Proposition CLI

Every thing paternal in the Gods is of a primary nature, and is pre-established in the rank of The Good according to all the Divine Orders

For it produces the hyparxes of secondary natures, and total powers and essences, according to one ineffable transcendency. Hence also it is denominated paternal, in consequence of exhibiting the united and boniform power of The One, and the cause which gives subsistence to secondary natures. In each Order of the Gods, the paternal genus ranks as the leader, producing all things from itself and adorning them, as being arranged analogous to The Good. And of Divine Fathers, some are more total, but others are more partial, just as the Orders themselves of the Gods, differ by the more total, and the more partial, according to the reason of cause. As many therefore as are the progressions of the Gods, so many also are the differences of fathers. For if there is that which is analogous to The Good in every order, it is necessary that there should be the paternal in all the orders, and that each order should proceed from the paternal unity.

Proposition CLII

Every thing generative in the Gods proceeds according to the infinity of Divine Power, multiplying itself, penetrating all things and transcendently exhibiting the never-failing energy in the progressions of secondary natures

For to multiply things which proceed, and to produce progeny from the occult comprehension in causes, of what else is it the prerogative than of the infinite power of the Gods, through which all Divine natures are filled with prolific good? For every thing which is full produces other things from itself according to a superplenary power. The domination of power therefore is the peculiarity of generative Deity which multiplies the powers of the things generated, renders them prolific, and excites them to generate and give subsistence to other things. For if every thing imparts the appropriate peculiarity which it primarily possesses to other things, every thing prolific will impart to posterior natures prolific progressions, and will adumbrate the infinity which is the primary leader of wholes, from which every generative power proceeds, and which in an exempt manner pours forth the ever-flowing progressions of Divine natures.

(To be continued)

JEWEL

There is nothing so charming as the knowledge of literature which enables us to discover the infinity of things, the immensity of nature, the heavens, the earth and the seas. It is this that has rescued the soul from obscurity. To see all things above and below, first and last, and between both, is that which furnishes us wherewith to live well and happily, and guides us to pass our lives without displeasure and without offence.

—Cicero.

SPIRITUAL MAXIMS
ST. JOHN OF THE CROSS

“When the inspirations are from God they are always in the order of the motives of His law, and of the faith, in the perfection of which the soul should ever draw nearer and nearer to God.”

“It being certain that in this life we know God better by what He is not than by what He is, it is necessary, if we are to draw near unto Him, that the soul must deny, to the uttermost, all that may be denied of its apprehensions, both natural and supernatural.”

“All apprehensions and knowledge of supernatural things cannot help us to love God so much as the least act of living faith and hope in detachments from all things.”

“One of the greatest gifts of God to the soul in this life—not permanent but transient—is that deep sense and understanding of God by which it feels and understands clearly, that it can neither understand nor feel Him at all.”

“The wisdom of the saints consists in knowing how to direct the will courageously to God, in the perfect fulfilment of His law and His holy counsels.”

“Have an earnest desire that God may give you all He knows you to be deficient in, for His greater honour and glory.”

“The strength of the soul lies in its faculties, passions, and desires; if these be directed towards God by the will, and withdrawn from all that is not God, the soul then keeps its strength for Him and loves Him with all its might, as our Lord commands us.”

“To restrain the tongue and the thoughts, and to set the affections regularly upon God, quickly sets the soul on fire in a divine way.”

“Herein a man may know whether he really loves God: is he satisfied with anything less than God?”

“The soul that seeks God wholly, must give itself wholly to Him.”

“The passions rule over the soul and assail it in proportion to the weakness of the will in God, and to its dependence on creatures; for then it rejoices so easily in things which do not deserve to be rejoiced in; hopes for that which is of no profit, and grieves over that in which perhaps it ought to rejoice, and fears where there is nothing to be afraid of.”

“The perfect love of God cannot subsist without the knowledge of God and of self.”

“Perfect love naturally seeks nothing, and claims nothing for itself, but all for the beloved; if this be so with earthly love, how much more with the love of God?”

“In all circumstances, however hard they may be, we should rejoice, rather than be cast down, that we may not lose the greatest good, the peace and tranquillity of our soul.”

“To endure all things with an equable and peaceful mind not only brings with it many blessings to the soul, but enables us, in the midst of our difficulties, to have a clear judgement about them, and to minister the fitting remedy for them.”

MYSTIC VERSE

Nature, that framed us of four elements
Warring within our breasts for regiment,
Doth teach us all to love aspiring minds.
Our souls, whose faculties can comprehend
The wondrous architecture of the world,
And measure every planet's wandering course,
Still climbing after knowledge infinite,
And always moving as the restless spheres,
Wills us to wear ourselves, and never rest,
Until we reach the ripest fruit of all,
That perfect bliss and sole felicity.

Christopher Marlowe

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