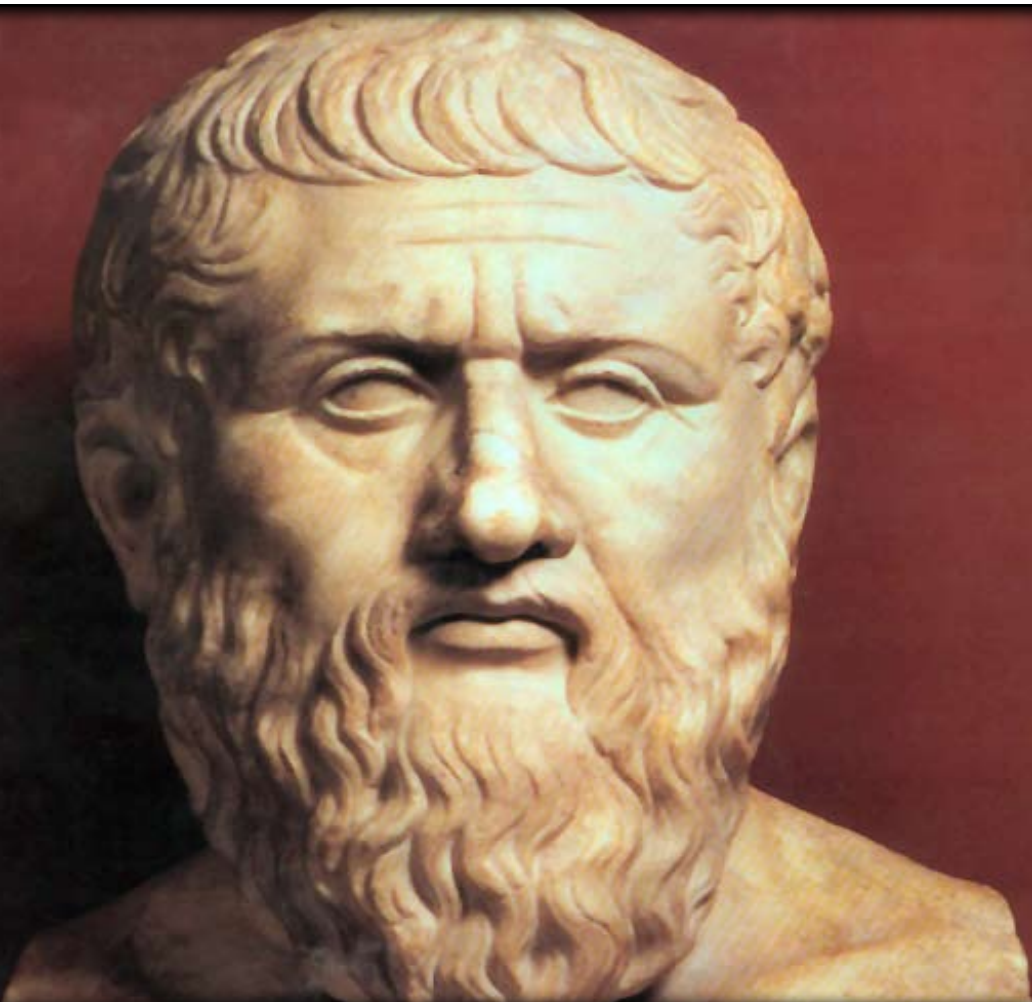


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# NEOPLATONISM

THEOLOGY FOR WANDERERS IN  
THE NEW MILLENNIUM



MANLY PALMER HALL  
INTRODUCTION BY RICHARD G. GELDARD, PHD

# MANLY P. HALL'S NEOPLATONISM



**N**EOPLATONISM SEEMS TO HAVE BEEN ONE of Manly P. Hall's favorite subjects, he spoke and wrote about it frequently during his long career. In the foreword to his book "LECTURES ON ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY," Manly Hall declared that Neoplatonism was the basis of his own *personal* philosophy. After years of study and reflection he had come to believe that the doctrines of Neoplatonism had descended to us in a purer form than nearly any other philosophical system — a system that seemed more suitable to the active, extroverted Western cultural mindset. This book is based upon the five-part lecture seminar *Doctrines of Neoplatonism*, originally delivered in 1983 by Manly Hall to students at the Philosophical Research Society. Manly Hall believed Neoplatonism's simple precepts could enable *anyone* to live a more philosophic life.

**ABOUT THE AUTHOR** | Manly P. Hall (1901-1990) founded the Philosophical Research Society, Inc. as a non-profit organization in 1935, dedicated to the dissemination of useful knowledge in the fields of philosophy, comparative religion, and psychology. In his long career, spanning more than 70 years of dynamic public activity, Mr. Hall delivered over 8000 lectures in the United States and abroad, authored over 150 books and essays, and wrote countless magazine articles.



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## NEOPLATONISM: Theology for Wanderers in the New Millennium

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## Foreword

CLARKE E. JOHNSTON, COL. USAF, RET.

THE FIVE-PART ARCHIVAL AUDIO TAPE SERIES ON THE *Doctrines of Neoplatonism*, upon which this book is based, was given by Manly P. Hall in 1983 to students who were interested in learning more about the Ancient Wisdom. It seemed to have been one of his favorite subjects down through the years, for he spoke and wrote about it frequently during his long career. In fact, in the foreword of his second book, *Lectures on Ancient Philosophy*, which he said was his basic book on the subject, he declared that the basis of it *was* Neoplatonism.

In the last few years of his life, Mr. Hall said that after years of study and reflection, he had come to believe that the doctrines of Neoplatonism had descended to us in a purer form than nearly any other philosophical system. He also concluded that this system seemed more suitable to we active, extroverted Western people. He believed this was true because though it was as deep and thorough as any other approach to enlightenment, its precepts were more easily understood and their relative simplicity tended to impel an interested person to put them into practice by beginning to learn to live a more philosophic life.

The material in this book provides such an excellent overview of Neoplatonism that we hope those who read it may be

## *Neoplatonism*

inspired to study the subject themselves. As anyone who has spent much time in such study and learned its value will tell you, it is worth all the time you can give it, with its maximum value coming from the disciplined application of its precepts to your daily life. Neoplatonism puts great emphasis upon disciplining ourselves outwardly in our daily lives in order to gradually make our way inward to our Divine Self by enlightened living according to its moral and ethical precepts. In effect, *nothing ventured, nothing gained.*

May this book impel you to begin the venturing.

CLARKE E. JOHNSTON, *Colonel USAF, Ret.*



## Introduction

RICHARD G. GELDARD, PHD

MANLY P. HALL'S *NEOPLATONISM* IS THAT RARE THING, a masterpiece of living philosophy. Presented as five lectures in 1983 to students at the Philosophical Research Society in Los Angeles, and now transcribed and edited, this 2011 edition is offered to the general public with the conviction that within its pages are summarized for all serious seekers a viable source of invaluable knowledge and wisdom.

One might suppose that anyone offering a course of lectures in Neoplatonism would logically treat it as an historical artifact, a system of theological beliefs and influences born of Platonic philosophy and infused with pagan myth and mystical practices, a system born in the Third Century C.E. and wiped out two hundred years later. To suggest otherwise, that it might be a viable system of thought for today, presented alongside or as an alternative to the major systems of Christian, Jewish, Islamic and Buddhist theologies, for example, would attract both criticism and even scorn.

To be sure, Manly Hall attracted both in a long distinguished career. He first came to the attention of the world at age twenty-eight with the publication of his magnum opus, *The Secret Teachings of All Ages*, a book so beautifully presented and

so influential that it has remained in print since its publication in 1928. Throughout his long career Hall advanced the core truths of this teaching as a viable path for seekers of all stripes. And today, millions have come to understand the validity and practicality of much of this teaching. They have applied principles illustrated in the core teachings of Neoplatonism as guideposts for their lives and work.

Before going further, though, allow a personal note. This introduction was begun on February 17, which for a few devoted followers, is Giordano Bruno Day, the day that another great teacher and mystical genius was burned at the stake in the year 1600 for preaching and writing, among other heresies, of an infinite universe and a heliocentric solar system. On this day each year, the Mayor of Rome places a wreath at the foot of Bruno's brooding statue in the Campo di Fiore and speakers from around the world gather to celebrate Bruno's life and work and to proclaim their belief in freedom of expression and exploration of new ideas. On this day in particular as no other, the eyes of Bruno stare out in the direction of the Vatican with an expression that seems to say, as a young Manly Hall wrote in a book entitled *Initiates of the Flame*, "He who lives the Life shall know the Doctrine." It is a caution for those who follow tradition without living its principles and who deny with violence what nature and human genius reveal to be the truth.

Nearly a millennium earlier Neoplatonism itself suffered a fate similar to Bruno's. It was in March of 415 CE that Hypatia, the brilliant mathematician, astronomer and philosopher, was dragged from her chariot by a Christian mob, stripped naked and killed in the streets of Alexandria, thus silencing, for a thousand years, this remarkable teaching. It would take Marilio Ficino and the de Medici family to resurrect it, which they did, thus preserving its teaching for the rest of us.

As Hall understood, when ancient world views collapse, as we saw when Greek, Roman and Egyptian mythologies ran



their course, new ideas are allowed to flourish and last for a time until they too crystalize into fixed dogma and then are replaced by the next new idea. What has made Neoplatonism somewhat different is that its spiritual essence was absorbed by Western Idealism and has survived as an alternative to materialism. As Hall points out in these lectures, Neoplatonism in America survives through Emerson in the form of New England Transcendentalism.

Like the philosophers of the original period of this theology, Hall makes it clear from the content of the lectures that here was a philosophy meant to be lived. Hall himself lived within the body of this material and had his being there. In fact, what he does in these pages is to share this life freely with us, not as biographical events but as intellectual and spiritual experience. It is, in ancient terms, a theurgy, which is a term meaning the direct intervention of divinity into the individual as a force or energy. Here, for example, is a powerful segment, a theurgic revelation, in the lecture on Plotinus:

*We go on from these to other things as Plotinus takes us to what he calls the beauties of the mind, the beauties of human thought. He explains to us how the extension of the mind in its own inward action may be beautiful, how an individual in the cultivation of virtue discovers a great beauty; how the artist and musician experience the beauty within themselves long before they can confer it upon the outward world. He also goes on to explain graces of the Soul, those natural concords that fellowship, friendliness, and sharing of common opportunity and responsibility with those two working side by side in the cause of something that is greater than either of them. These things too are strangely, deeply and movingly beautiful. He also mentions the beauty of pure knowledge, the beauty of reason, the beauty of that strength of mind which, cutting through all chaff and fallacy, achieves one of the great beauties of the Soul, namely, honesty.*

Powerfully and unexpectedly this passage ends with the word 'honesty,' described as one of the great beauties of the Soul. And so it is. When the individual reaches the elevated platform of such revelation, a place where truth itself is within reach, honesty is the virtue that emerges as the greatest beauty of pure knowledge. When we hear someone speaking to us honestly from personal experience and knowledge, our attention is drawn to the substance and soul of what is offered.

Hall understood the importance of the sequence of growth as the individual progresses through the stages of spiritual work. First, we are confined through much of our lives by opinion, that lowest form of attitude, mood and speech. Then we may be fortunate to progress to sense, or *common* sense, as we master the facts of the world around us. The next step is knowledge, the moment when Intellect elevates common sense and applies it to subjective life. From knowledge if we are fortunate, may come wisdom, a high platform indeed exceeded only by Reality, or as Hall explains, Theurgy. This is the stage of Enlightenment or what in Hinduism is termed Samadhi.

Those who criticize spiritual work on the ground that it creates an egocentric or self-involved view of life have a valid point if that is where the individual stagnates in the process of his or her growth. Such separation from what Hall terms the World Soul is tragic indeed and leaves the seeker lost and without transcendent direction. Hall's emphasis on kinship with other seekers pulls the seeker out of that separation and brings the journey alive again to find what Emerson termed a place to stand and a genuine stature that he called the erect position.

The reader may notice in the following sections just such a progression as Hall takes us through the work of these thinkers. In Part Two we follow Porphyry through all of the stages in order to show the overall development. Then in subsequent parts we move from the profound Knowledge of Plotinus to

## Introduction

the acquisition of Wisdom in the Porphyry chapter to the Enlightenment of the Emperor Julian as he merges his soul to the Earth Mother and the World Soul. Thus, what we see in the whole sequence is a guided teaching in the symbolism of these Archetypal forms.

Also in Part Five, Hall speaks in more mystical and arcane terms of the rituals and themes of ancient initiation rites. The reader should bear with Hall through these details and have faith that he will come soon enough to what we can take away as useful and personal. As he tells us, at some point we will no longer have to sift through the strange rituals of the gods but will encounter a series of pictures which will emanate from our own hearts and minds.

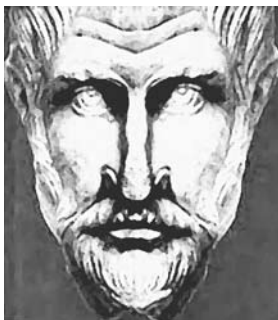
As this text nears its conclusion we are given the image of the seeker of wisdom and truth entering into the sacred house of the Mysteries where the Soul of the World resides as the process of “going home.” This process offers us a way to establish what he calls kinship.

*The Soul in man finds Its kinship, discovers Its identity, realizes that It has long been in exile and that It has found Its way to Reality. Then from here on and for all eternity according to the rites, this ritual can be revived and the child coming into the world is born with the subjective realization of Its own destiny somehow strangely, gently, tenderly, wonderfully bound to the Soul of the World.*



RICHARD GELDARD is a faculty member of the University of Philosophical Research and is the author of books on Heraclitus, Parmenides, Anaxagoras, the sacred places of Ancient Greece, and the philosophy of Ralph Waldo Emerson.





## Part One

### PROCLUS ON THE THEOLOGY OF PLATO

*What is the essential difference between the teachings of Plato and the NEW PLATONISM or NEOPLATONISM? Old ways were not felt sufficient to meet the neuroses of the dying classical dynasties. Neoplatonism is primarily to be defined as a MOTION of Platonism toward theology. In other words, it is the rise of Platonism as a RELIGION.*

THERE IS PROBABLY NO SCHOOL in the history of Western civilization that has more profoundly affected the course of human life for the last nineteen centuries than the School of Neoplatonism. I realize that this might be challenged but I think as we proceed, the facts will be clear.

As you know, a sentence taken out of a book has slight meaning when divided from its context. There is no way of estimating Neoplatonism without first orienting it in the world

of its time and condition, so we must first prepare our ground work by a general survey of the circumstances which made Neoplatonism not only possible, but necessary.

We know that two thousand years ago, civilization was centered in the Mediterranean and Aegean areas. In this region three great cultures flourished: the Egyptian, the Greek, and the Latin or Roman. If we examine history at about the time of the rise of Neoplatonism, we observe that all three of these great dominant cultures were beginning to show signs of internal weakness or had already fallen. We know that the glory of Egypt was past and the Egyptians were little better than a colony of Rome. Greece was in the same predicament. The old days of the great Academy had vanished. Greek culture, Greek philosophy, Greek religion was declining. The last stronghold of the old way of the world was Rome—Rome under the Caesars. Rome was already beginning to feel the inroads of the Barbarian hordes from the North and it was tottering upon the brink of its own collapse.

Three great cultures, three great dominant civilizations cannot collapse, fail or gradually disintegrate without producing a profound effect upon human beings. We live within systems. We live within patterns. We know today what it means to experience insecurity in the patterns which are familiar to us. How much more then, were these older peoples insecure when their entire system of culture was collapsing, when their religion was slowly failing, their sciences declining, their arts failing, their literature and philosophies, their ethics and morality, all these which are the foundation of enduring security, were slipping away from these great ancient cultures. In this period of tremendous internal uncertainty, it is inevitable that men's minds gradually turned toward a different perspective on life, a perspective that was best revealed through the three schools that rose in this period. Christianity, Gnosticism and Neoplatonism. All three appeared at a critical time in the life of the

people of the region where they flourished. All three are marked deeply and profoundly with the prevailing sense of insecurity. Therefore, we have some understanding of the psychology of that time.

Neoplatonism or the *New Platonism* claimed its original inspiration and descent from the writings of Plato and his legitimate successors and disciples. Let us then pause for a moment and consider the relationship of philosophy to Greek logic. To a very great degree, philosophy had divided Greek life very strongly. The Greek was more impressed by the value of his philosophy than by the importance of the State religion. Part of this was due to such magnificent dialogues as those attributed to Socrates, part was due to the natural instinct of philosophy in comparison to the elaborate pageantry of theology. The philosophers were mostly moderate human beings. They did not believe in ostentation. They had very little time or consideration for elaborate rituals and rites, nor were they much addicted to the prevailing superstitions of their time.

Although these men lived and flourished in the great golden era of Pythagoras sometimes called *The Age Of Pericles*, as individuals and collectively, they never accepted or subscribed to the prevailing state of theology. They were discrete. They were respectful for the most part. They felt that these systems of state religion were themselves becoming gradually encrusted with superstitions and were falling inevitably into the hands of the privileged classes to be used as ways and means to further enslave and dominate the individual; restrict his liberty, his freedom and his right to think.

Thus the philosophical systems of Greece, whether they be the doctrines of Plato and Aristotle or the more rationalistic of the Stoics, all emphasized a reasonable, rational, natural world. Even when the deities are introduced, they are introduced in a very matter of fact manner. They are not introduced with great

solemnity. They are accepted, interpreted, organized and arranged to become part of a very natural, proper kind of world, a world in which for the Greeks, there was very little emphasis upon what we would term today mysticism. It is true that the Orphics were addicted (to the prevailing superstitions), but by the time Orphic doctrine had passed through Pythagoras and Plato, its mystical content had very largely been redirected into fields of philosophy. The Greeks considered the human being and his salvation a very serious business. They considered it something that would call upon the greatest resources of the individual and the greatest learning possible to man. They had no concept of an easy salvation. They had no concept of an individual praying his way into grace. To them, to live well was hard work demanding tremendous strength of character, dedication and resolution.

The Greek philosophers also turned against the patrician system of their time. They had very little time or consideration for the power of wealth, family tradition or hereditary authority. Like Confucius, they held the individual to be the important equation. It was not where he came from, not where he went, not what he had, not what he lost, but what he was that was important. Their entire philosophy was built upon the problem of improving and increasing the content of man and releasing into expression those potentials which they held to be eternal within man. It is obvious from this approach that division existed in the Greek State on the level of philosophy and religion at a comparatively ancient time. This division was not mended during the golden age of Greek philosophy; the interval widened.

Plato's approach was again a natural, systematic and understandable one. He sought to use the gods of his people as a means of advancing their own knowledge. He used them as the elements of a great symbolical or allegorical system. He caused these gods to become elements in a great epic, a great concept



of life. Therefore, we realize that he gradually impersonalized the Olympian Deities. He transformed them into what he affirmed to be their natural and proper state, namely, names or persons attributed by men to Principles. Behind each deity as a symbol was a Reality, a Principle. These Principles he called *Intelligibles* because he affirmed and maintained that these Principles had to be known by a process of conception. Intelligibles were conceptions in consciousness, Archetypal Beings that were the true gods.

From these, man had created a descent of symbols by which these Intelligible Beings were caused to appear under forms or in guises and shapes which were called Intellectual. The Intellectual Deities were those which man could rationally contemplate and which he could conceive within his mind to a degree of understanding. The Intelligible Deities could not be essentially understood. The Intellectual Deities could be. Thus, we see the traces of an important psychological doctrine. We see the gradual rise of ideas concerning the essential nature of the universe itself.

During his long career, Plato passed through three distinct periods. The first of these must be termed his political career. This led to the final disillusionment in which he decided that public office was not the best way in which he could serve his fellow Grecians. He retired from politics, created his school and became a teacher. He found it was wiser to be a teacher of men than a leader of men. His school continued for a number of years through his long and active life. Perhaps the most outstanding episode in the development of the school was the contact with Aristotle who was brought to him as a young man and placed under his care. Aristotle became his most critical, and at the same time the most brilliant, disciple. The Athenian School is recognized for its having produced these two extraordinarily different but enlightened men.

In the third period of his life, Plato began to drift away from philosophy. He began with the inevitable end of philosophic contemplation, namely, the individual who becomes more and more aware of the great Intelligibles or Eternals subsisting forever in *nature*, in *time* and in *eternity*. He began to contemplate them, to feel himself more and more akin to these vast principles which he had first discovered *Intellectually* and later meditated upon *Intelligibly*.

This led toward the third part of Plato's career which has been termed the theological. We know that in the last years of his life, perhaps the last ten or fifteen years, he wrote extensively upon what we would term today mystical subjects. Unfortunately, so far as is known, none of these writings has survived, or if they have, they have not been revealed to modern scholarship. We know however, that it was this change in Plato which caused the division between Plato and Aristotle. It finally resulted in Plato's bringing his nephew Leusippus to become head of his school and Aristotle departed to the cinder tracks to create the school which has since been named the Peripatetic (or Walking) Philosophy, because they held discourse while walking on the cinder track.

Aristotle was unable to accompany Plato on his excursion into abstraction but we know from the general tone of his late dialogues that Plato was moving more and more toward a very reverent attitude in relation to the great principles which lay at the roots of things. Philosophy with him had born its natural fruit. It had released his intuitive and apperceptive powers and these drew him toward the experience of the Reality about which he had both reasoned and thought. He intimates something of this in the Socratic Dialogues where he causes Socrates to point out that man is drawn inevitably toward the grave or toward the transition to another life in which either there will be darkness or else the person surviving as a Spiritual Being will find union with those principles and truths which

he has sought and served. He will know through factual experience that which previously has been only theory, speculation or judgment. Plato moved precisely in this direction. The motion of Platonism itself, therefore, established a pattern, a pattern which we have more or less ignored but was alive and vital in the opening years of the Christian Era.

With this background relating to Platonism, we must come then, to the transition to the Neoplatonic School of thought. Neoplatonism was rooted in the three cultures which were passing into history at that time. Neoplatonism, perhaps, had its original seat in Alexandria. If so, it had a secondary seat in Rome and a third in Athens. These three centers became the legs of the Neoplatonic tripod. It was from this tripod that the oracles of this particular sect or group were pronounced. The principal leader of the Alexandrian Neoplatonists was Plotinus although the sect was said to have been created by Ammonius Saccus, a slave, a carrier of burdens, a man of no known scholastic attainments but a great intuitionist. This original foundation led gradually toward the establishment of Neoplatonism in Rome through, again, the migrations of Plotinus and his establishment of a school in the eternal city. Neoplatonism flourished in Rome and Alexandria for some time and it was not until the early part of the sixth century that the foundations were established in Greece.

This foundation, the important one, was set into motion by Proclus who was one of the students of the older Platonic writings also of earlier less known Neoplatonists and who had sometimes been referred to as the Platonic successor—Proclus was born in Constantinople, then called Byzantium. He moved to Athens where he spent most of his time in teaching. Finally, as a result of the religious differences of the time, particularly the intervention of Christianity, he was in exile for a short time in the Near East but later returned and finally died in Athens.

Proclus was a man of exceptional ability and he may be regarded as the last of the great lights of Neoplatonism. So we see the development of this school itself over a period of some two hundred and fifty years. From Ammonius Saccus and Plotinus, who were the originators or creators of the basic concepts, to Proclus of Athens who was the last great representative and finally to Boethius who is sometimes called the *Last of the Pagans*, these were the last of the great line of philosopher mystics who clung to the ancient Greco-Latin religious philosophy of life. These disciples of the old days were gradually exterminated and the last of the Pagan Academies in the Roman Empire were closed by the Emperor Justinian.

So by degrees, Neoplatonism disappeared from the realm of human action but its disappearance has sometimes been said to be the beginning of its existence. For nothing that it accomplished during the two hundred and fifty years in which it flourished can compare with what it has accomplished in the last fifteen or more centuries since it perished. Thus, we say that the effect of these beliefs was vastly in excess of its temporal authority during the periods of its flourishing and survival.

What is the essential difference, let us say, between the teaching of Plato and the New Platonism or Neoplatonism of Plotinus? It is the difference which is undoubtedly rooted in the points which we have previously made namely, that these civilizations had since the time of Plato, fallen into decline and the entire world of the learned was suffering from a profound nostalgia. The old ways were not sufficient to meet the neurosis of the dying dynasties. The change is exemplified in the motion of the philosophic system. Neoplatonism is then primarily to be defined as a motion of Platonism toward theology. In other words, it is the rise of Platonism as a religion.

In Plato, we have most of the elements necessary for a theological system. Augustine of Hippo points out the weaknesses and these weaknesses were the cause of the ultimate failure of

Neoplatonism as a motion in society. Augustine tells us, for example, Neoplatonism had no martyr. It had no one at the beginning of it who was a super human Divine figure, a tremendous catalyzing agent to draw and hold the imagination of people. It lacked the understandable dramatic person. Plato was not suitable to fulfill this need because of his tremendously rationalistic attitude toward life, the profundity and breadth of his knowledge and the comparative simplicity and naturalness of his ways. He was not surrounded by miracles. He was not an individual who made any claim to Divine heritage. He did not advance himself as being in any way the peculiar mouth-piece of Deity or Truth. He was simply what he claimed to be, a philosopher, a truth speaker. Augustine points out that this is not enough to hold and capture the fancies of multitudes of persons. The second thing according to Augustine that was deficient in Neoplatonism was a simple and natural program for the achievement of salvation. The process of Platonic improvement, the individual bestowing all of his energy, concentrating all of his resources upon the tremendous substance of the search for Reality, a search in which the student had to give all, Augustine said could not and would not hold popular belief. Popular belief does not want to sacrifice. It does not want to give up, it wants to have and be saved at the same time. It wants to keep its faults and have these forgiven. There is nothing in Platonism to substantiate this concept.

The third point that Augustine brought to bear upon the subject was that in all and in substance, the doctrines of Neoplatonists were not understandable by those who had not devoted many years to scholarship and that the thoughts were too abstract to gain any large or popular following. For these reasons, Augustine correctly predicted the sect as a sect could not survive, that it could not produce from itself a permanent enduring church or an institution which could win and hold the imaginations of future generations.

Augustine himself had many complementary things to say about Neoplatonism and even though he claimed to have separated from it, all of his writings are dominated by it. One authority stated not long ago that it was impossible to detect the belief of the author of a book whether he be a Neoplatonist or a Christian unless he makes specific reference to Christ, otherwise the works are so similar, so comparatively identical that it is impossible with certainty to distinguish to which sect the author belonged. This, perhaps, is even more complicated by the fact that many of the thinkers of that time belonged to both sects and considered it in no way heretical or unreasonable. The Bishop Synesius of Alexandria accepted the ordination as a Bishop in the Christian Church under the proviso that he could remain a Platonic philosopher in his private life. The church accepted and ordained him.

Now that we have had this general representation of the difficulties, let us take a little time to examine some of the essential doctrines of Neoplatonism particularly the compilation that was prepared by Proclus in Athens in the fifth century and which survives to us as the books of *"Proclus On The Theology of Plato."* These books are no longer, as we say, known to exist but it is possible that Proclus had access to manuscripts that have since been destroyed, buried or hidden where they have not been re-found. In any event, Proclus appears to have known or have made a very shrewd estimation of the dominant religious convictions of Plato during the closing years of his life. We remember also that this work of Proclus represents the school in the closing cycle of its own brief and very spectacular existence. Deriving however, much from Plotinus and other legitimate members of the Neoplatonic community, Proclus unfolds what he regards as the true key to Greek theology. He roots it of course in the mythology and in the religious beliefs of the ancient Greeks but he follows first Plato and then Plotinus in gradually reducing the essential elements of this mythology

to a scientific system, to a philosophical pattern of conceivable Principles.

The first thing then we must approach is the combined view of Proclus, Plato and Plotinus on the essential nature of Being in that all else suspends from this essential concept. In a way of course, Plato differs strongly from Aristotle. Aristotle begins with what might be termed the phenomenal existence and ascends gradually toward a contemplation. Plato, as a Neoplatonist, begins with the positing of a conceivable abstract under the general concept of this Intelligible Being, a Being beyond the mind. This simple statement perhaps is the most important in all of Neoplatonism, the existence of a Being beyond the mind. This was perhaps the first break between Neoplatonism and the teaching of Plato, that is, that part of the teaching which we now know. It is very possible that this was the important change that Plato himself made but we have no documentary proof of this. Certainly however, the Neoplatonists lived much nearer his time and might well have had access to a knowledge and tradition which we no longer possess.

Neoplatonism thus postulates a Being beyond the mind. Being beyond mind implies not only that It is beyond the mind of man but that this Being Itself exists in a state superior to mind. Therefore, this Being is not mind nor can It be conceived by mind. Therefore, Plotinus insists that this Being can be only stated as an existent Reality or Fact, a Fact of Being Itself but may not be subjected to any definition or interpretation. Plotinus insisted that this Being subsists forever in Itself, of Itself and by Itself, that It is without limitation or we would assume lack of limitation because even this term implies some kind of restriction. It is neither the extreme of one or the other, plus or minus but remains forever enclosing within Its own Eternity the concept of both plus and minus. Therefore, It is Being capable of being conceived as containing both Being and not Being and yet in no way being deficient in any of Its own

parts. Because it is beyond mind, because Its primary nature is not mental, the Neoplatonists affirmed that the universe is not primarily a rational sphere.

Now this becomes extremely important as we study this system. This caused a tremendous hue and cry against Neoplatonism, a hue and cry which has continued all the way down to nineteenth century England and early twentieth century America. It has been affirmed that by this concept, Neoplatonism attacked science even the sciences of the Greeks. It was believed that Neoplatonism attacked philosophy because of its primary statement that Reality is beyond mind. All sciences are seeking for Truth and Truth is a term to cover at least the concept of Reality. Science is completely frustrated if Truth is beyond mind. Philosophy is frustrated with it because if philosophy is the instrument of reason and Truth is beyond mind, then reason cannot attain its Truth. This in itself is apparently a simple point but it becomes pivotal and a great deal of other thinking is suspended from it. The Socratic School, and to a degree Plato, had created a triad, the One, the Beautiful and the Good to explain the nature of Deity. Neoplatonism accepts the possibility of the return to virtue as being negatively applicable to Being, not as a definition but merely as a convenient term for interchange between persons discussing such a subject. They maintain Being transcends virtue to the same degree that It transcends mind. Therefore Being, *per se*, transcends, period. It cannot relate to, be similar to or identical with anything less than Itself.

This procedure of thinking isolates the Supreme Being factor at the root of existence in a pure state, unqualified and unconditioned by even such terms as spiritual and mystical. It further points out that all attempts on the part of man to approach the nature of Infinite Being must to a large degree fail for the reason that man has no attributes available to him as a conditioned creature by which he can actually apperceive the



total nature of unconditioned and unlimited existence. Time and Eternity fall into the abyss together. Spirit and matter as opposites fade into something superior to themselves. Creation, objective and subjective merges into something that is objective, subjective plus and for which no term is conceivable. Even the Chaldean statement of the Thrice Deep Darkness at the root of life is not sufficient because the Neoplatonists affirmed definitely that Being was not darkness nor is Being light and therefore cannot be described in terms of sound or silence. It is simply, utterly, conceivably Transcendent.

Because It is totally unconditioned and because It possesses within Itself no Intellectual nature intrinsic to Its own existence, It is, as they say, Infinite cause of Infinite. No being, no creature, no manifestation can any more circumscribe the potential of Being than he can plumb the depths of Being. Therefore, in a sense, the concept that with Being all things are possible comes to have meaning. All things implying not only all known things but all things known and unknown plus. Little by little, the concept of Deity is elevated to such a complete abstraction that as Augustine pointed out, the mind of man in his own limited way not only cannot follow the thinking but cannot visualize the end of the quest. He cannot conceive either of peace or motion, of rest or Infinity, immortality or mortality. All of these things disappear into an infinite mystery, a mystery that is Totality. This Totality is very reminiscent of the most abstract concepts of Brahmanic Theology in which Brahma, the Infinite, the Unconditioned becomes known only by Its productions but remains Itself forever, the invisible Root, the unknown Cause of all Causation.

Obviously, this concept in itself challenged not only Greek Theology, but Egyptian and Roman. It further challenged Christian Theology because it stood with such tremendous force of complete aloofness that it found very little immediate association with the beliefs of other groups. Yet, it may well be

with this concept that Plotinus, Iamblicus, Porphyry, and Proclus were close to some abstract formula derived from Plato. In the Neoplatonic system, it is from this Inevitable Intelligence that exists only as a conjectural or conceptual entity that the universe emerges.

Let us pause with these persons for a moment before we go further because there is another fine point we have to try and clarify. Obviously in the brief survey that we can make, we aren't going to be able to clarify all of these points adequately. We can only touch upon them and hope that the picture leads to a constructive general summation of these subjects. These Neoplatonists were concerned undoubtedly with the essential nature of the Unknowable. We find them breaking somewhat among themselves into two groups relating to this particular mystery. One group assumed that the conceptual or Intelligible Being had a total and complete existence, eternal and forever in the vastness of the universe itself. The second group had already begun to isolate a psychological concept namely, that Total Being as a concept exists only within man. Therefore, we have two systems. One states that man exists within Total Being which is the Reality. The other that Total Being exists only in man and is therefore a conceptual creature of Being which can be eternally affirmed but only exists because of the conceptual power of man himself. This could and did break to form two great systems that are still fighting in the world today but they were aware of this possible interpretation and did everything they could to clarify their original meaning.

In the Neoplatonic system, this eternal unconditioned existence by Its own inevitably produces from Itself that which is inferior to Itself. This emanation or perhaps more completely and correctly, this power that oozed from It, that descended out of Its own nature simultaneously from all of Its parts the Neoplatonists called Nous. This was the World Mind. The

World Mind has by virtue of Its own nature a complete and entire dependence upon Being. Being, on the other hand, had no actual dependence upon Mind. Mind was a condition and in order for Being to assume Mind, Being must first deny Itself.

Now we get very close to Buddhism here where Intellect or Mind Itself is the first delusion for It is the first restriction or limitation of that which of Itself is eternal and inevitable. Pythagoras referred to Mind as the second power or the power at the root of division. According to the Neoplatonists, Being, having caused to emanate from Its own nature Nous or Mind, becomes captured or held within the net of the vast extent of Its own Mental or Intellectual power. Thus, the Conceptual power gave birth to thought and thought was a product of Conception. This Conception is superior to the thought therefore, there exists a faculty of Conception in man's consciousness which is a creating power superior to mind. This all becomes a little difficult but it will clear somewhat as we proceed.

Nous or the World Mind is also identical in Its essential substance with the World Soul. Why did the Neoplatonists conceive the Mind and the Soul to be identical and in this almost anticipating modern psychology? They replied It is identical because Mind is the inevitable root of reflection. It is the inevitable coordinator of conduct, the perpetuator of records, the distinguisher of parts and therefore is essentially the power by which man can reflect upon his own conduct. He thereby becomes capable of the concept of good and evil, the concept of life and death, the concept of beginning and end. These things all being conceptual within man inevitably result in the arising in man himself of the compound of his Energies and their testimonies or things done and their consequences. From this Alchemy therefore, arises the Soul power. The Soul power in man, in Its turn, creates from Itself by the extension of Its own Energy what we call the body. The body bears the same relation to the Soul that Nous or Universal Mind bears to Being.

The one point that the Neoplatonists particularly stressed was that the Soul was a movable equation. Here again they are drifting very closely toward Eastern mysticism with which they may have had contact through Alexandria and the caravan routes. The Soul, therefore, has of Its own nature three potential places or conditions of existence. The Human Individual Soul may remain identical with the World Soul. This is intimated in the story of the "Prodigal Son" by the elder brother who did not leave his father's house but remained at home. The Soul may become identical with Itself, that is, the individual Soul may individualize becoming therefore a living Soul having a separate existence. To borrow a line from Faust "...twixt Heaven and Earth dominion wielding." It may exist in a state of suspension between the World Soul and the body below which It has engendered. The Human Soul may verge toward body, become immersed in it and as a result of that, lose Its own identity by being submerged in or absorbed by the mystery of matter. This is the burden of the great Gnostic hymn, "*The Hymn Of The Robe Of Glory*," which is a variation again upon the theme of "The Prodigal Son" and this in turn is another variation upon the great theme of the wanderings of Odysseus.

Therefore, the Soul may remain with the World Soul or It may become a separate Being having Its own existence or It may sacrifice Its own existence and become absorbed into matter. The last is the story of Narcissus who upon seeing his reflection in the water, plunged into the pool to embrace his own reflection and was drowned. The famous fable of Cupid and Psyche carries part of this story also. The fable first was originated and devised by Apuleius and in it is pointed out that after Psyche, the Soul, had descended into the lower world, It ran about in a stumbling and erratic manner unable to follow a true course. Thus represented, of course, the Soul was involved in the complexity of personal existence.

Here we have something also that we do not have in the older writings of Plato or in the most of the teachings of that time namely, the gradual emergence of the concept of the human Soul. It was not merely as a part of a compound, the Soul no longer being merely the Rational part of man but now beginning to take on Its own true psychic content and to have a sympathetic relationship with body below and with Universal Soul above. The adventures of Soul in Neoplatonism definitely indicate that what we call man's Soul Light is really the unconscious. The mineral is journeying home the moment it forms its crystals. The plant is journeying home the moment it sends down its roots or causes its first small shoot to rise through the Earth. All things start home when they start releasing. The release of Psychic Energy in the formation of the body is the beginning of this long way back to *our own far distant native land*.

Thus, Neoplatonism is essentially a doctrine of the redemption of the human Soul but it differs from Christianity in the fact that it did not include any Messianic dispensation or any power outside of man as contributing to the release of the Soul. Neoplatonism did not believe in a fallen humanity, therefore did not believe in a redeemer anymore than it would have accepted a redeemer for the wheat cast into the Earth that will bear its harvest tenfold. That the natural growth of life is inevitable is an assumption by which their entire concept was motivated. This assumption was rooted in very abstract conceptual ideas concerning the nature of Primordial Being which we cannot attempt to go into because they involve not only many mystical speculations but a great deal of advanced mathematical formulas. We must content ourselves with the simple thought that Neoplatonism is therefore a story of man's growth and as a story of growth it's also a discipline of growth.

Proclus points out certain elements of the Platonic philosophy which led to a further division between Neoplatonism

and other systems growing up in the society around it. One of these was that the entire emphasis in Neoplatonism was upon the release of the Soul through and from body and with the complete purpose of life vested in growth alone. Neoplatonism had very little time for expounding and spreading of economic, sociological or industrial ideas. It was not concerned to any great measure with the extent of man's terrestrial domain. It would never have inspired exploration. It never would have led to this rise of modern nations such as we know with their intensive competition, their vast mortal projects. It would have never produced a civilization of individuals highly conscious of the wealth factor. It would not have produced these things because these people were not of this mind. Here again is one of the reasons they did not survive. They were imbued with the most natural instinct with which man at that time and in future time also has been invested.

In Neoplatonism, the entire process deals with the actual release of the individual. When accused of selfishness and being self centered, they replied that to their mind, their policy was by far the greater good inasmuch as the only security that man can know in the material world is the security based upon an enlightened civilization in which each individual is doing right. In this condition, wrong cannot exist. Therefore, the individual who devotes his life to the restoration of his own essential nature, if he increases in number, multiplies and becomes the dominant class in society, nearly all of the false ambitions of men gradually will be overcome. They can be only overcome when they are conquered within the individual and not by legislation or by the collective growth of society because there can be no growth of society that is not sustained by the growth of the individual. They held a very strong and definite attitude on this matter.

It would follow from their thinking that they derived much comfort from other philosophies, including certain phases of

Persian mysticism, Hindu philosophy, Buddhism, Greek and Egyptian metaphysics. All of these subjects contributed to the broad pattern of the Neoplatonic concept. In this concept, we gradually see emerging what they might term their way of life, their way of Truth. Perhaps this way of truth was stronger than Augustine expected and not nearly so uncertain as he is inclined to imply. Neoplatonism definitely did have a systematic order for growth. This order for growth was based upon the great Laws of Analogy which they held to be very important, the relations between man and the universe and between individual Soul and Universal Soul, individual body and Universal Body. All these analogies became involved in their discipline.

They began by assuming and affirming that men lived together at this time in a state of common benightedness and that exceptions to this benightedness are rare and most unique and only a few exceptions occur in a century. They held that the exception should be the rule. The only reason why an exception existed was because some individuals, for one reason or another, came into a greater sincerity of intent and purpose. Any exception to the general ignorance was clear indication that any and all other individuals could also be exceptions if a man possessed within himself the potential which could be redeemed and regenerated. Until man recognizes that this is the primary task, he will never secure permanent peace, security or enlightenment.

For this common state in which men live together, the Neoplatonists had a term, opinion. They considered opinion to be the lowest form of man's psychic life and that by opinion, all men are commonly burdened either by their own opinions or by the opinions of others. What are opinions? Opinions are para psychical growths. They are concepts which have no validity having no source in reason or in judgment, arising not from knowledge but from lack of knowledge. This is called opinion. A certainty arising from lack of knowledge can be the most

certain of all certainties. There is no individual who is going to defend Reality more industriously than the opinionated when they defend their opinion.

Why is opinion wrong? What is there about an opinion? An opinion is as judgment passed without due examination. An opinion is a conclusion based upon appearances and not upon substances. An opinion is an immature, ill-defined situation. It is also a product of an individual, a degree of non-intelligence, which does not justify an individual arriving at a conclusion. If everyone had to pay five dollars a year for a license for the privilege of having an opinion we wouldn't have so many of them, but opinions are free and we are very free with them. Yet, it requires just as much wisdom to have a worthwhile opinion as it does to make an adequate diagnosis of an ailment.

Therefore, we should go to school before we are entitled to have an opinion. We are not entitled to have an opinion on any subject in which we have not specialized. When they made fun of Luther Burbank when he stated his opinions on theology because he was a great horticulturist, we have a tragedy. Just because a man is famous in one area does not make his opinions in other areas equally important. He has no valid opinion outside of knowledge. Most of our troubles arise from this condition which Heraclitus so well called "the falling down sickness of reason, opinion."

*Opinion* to the Neoplatonists meant more than this. It meant a level. It meant a world living only upon superficial observation of phenomena. An opinion may cause a man to say that the Sun sets in the West because it appears to. Opinion is again to be measured in the terms of Plato's "Allegory of the Cave" where all the men down below who had never looked over the edge were quite certain of what existed there and proceeded to persecute the only man who went and looked and then came back and told them. Because his findings were different than their opinion, he was wrong.



Opinion therefore, represents always a majority attitude because according to Plotinus, on such levels, the majority must always be wrong. The opinions of the majority however, must not be confused with the intuitions of the majority because that is something quite different. Opinion is this superficial type of attitude or approach by which, as they expressed it, all things are held in common by opinion but not by factual knowledge. Therefore, when we say something and affirm it because we have heard it, read it and or seen it, we are passing on an opinion. An opinion usually in Neoplatonism does not apply to a phenomenon that is generally shared by men. Men do not have too many opinions about the fact that water is wet nor do they give too many opinions about day and night. Opinions therefore, are most dangerous where facts are least available. Consequently, most of our most complicated opinions are on levels where we do not share an adequate factual knowledge. The moment we attempt to come to a conclusion beyond our knowledge we fall into opinion unless we are trained and by training have learned how to extend the known reasonably and rationally.

Above opinion, and superior to it, is sense. Sense to the Neoplatonist, conveys what we might call common sense, a very rare commodity but one which is invaluable. Common sense has been held to be certain apperceptive realizations that we share. Common sense is the expression of subjective experience. Anything that we have gone through ourselves, anything we have done ourselves or anything we have thoroughly digested ourselves may become available to us from the subconscious under the general form of sense. It therefore, is a faculty by which primitive people are able to achieve an amazing validity in conduct or in the solution of problems. Sense is the individual solving or approaching an issue on the level of his own intelligence but with all available observable elements considered. Sense may not infer greatness of reflecting but it

does infer breadth of observation and the ability to estimate the relationship of things seen to other things which may not at that moment be apparent. Therefore, it is association. It is the continuity by which we learn from moving one stone how to move many stones. From hollowing out a log to make a boat, we can gradually and inevitably move until we can create a great ocean liner.

These motions are the gradual extensions of common sense. They are the individuals building upon the foundations of the achieved and moving toward that which must yet be achieved. This also however, lies very largely upon the level of matter and material things. Common sense also becomes the second level of philosophy because common sense produces the homey, practical, natural philosopher who though unschooled and unskilled, very often becomes capable of tremendous integrity of penetration. We think, for instance, of a slave like Aesop whose fables show an uncanny penetration and yet all of these fables represent things which the average person would know, could understand, could experience what he did. There is nothing that is beyond what is known by a slave but many slaves would not know it. Common sense represented this then, that Aesop was able to call upon this experience and find in it the common link with the experiences of innumerable other creatures like himself—some in slavery to a physical master and others in slavery to an ambition, a passion or a concept.

Above the level of sense comes then, the level of knowledge. Knowledge is more than sense because a sense is a probability based upon experience. Knowledge goes beyond this. Knowledge implies a combination of actual attainments and a measure of experimentation. Therefore, we can say that knowledge could very well Neoplatonically be built upon the Baconian foundation. We know that Bacon followed Neoplatonism from his well known statement that “knowledge is built upon tradition, observation and experimentation.” Tradition has made

available to us material that may or may not be knowledge but supplies us with the raw materials relating to fields of endeavor that have been conquered or achieved by others. Therefore, tradition is actually the historical record of the experiences of other persons. This becomes a valid source of knowledge. It is not itself knowledge. Therefore, through tradition we have observation. Observation causes the individual to observe the application of tradition through the contemporary events of living. He can see with his own eyes and feel upon his own skin the operation of certain laws, certain facts and learn more and more to censor tradition as to its validity or its lack of validity.

Then he adds the third element, experimentation. Experimentation is the process of putting a belief into action and observing its consequences. For no other form of knowledge is their equal substitute because no matter how much we may believe or we may hope, we may fear or we may aspire, all things are subjected to the final test of application. It is only when we have taken a tradition, observed the world around us in the operation of these traditional factors then subjected them to the laboratory techniques of experimentation either in our lives or on a scientific level that we can then affirm that we are in the possession of knowledge.

Such knowledge as belongs to physical things can be usually tested by laws of physical matter. Knowledge relating to intellectual, moral or Spiritual matters must be tested by the laws of these levels which may have various kinds of applications to our own living. If we follow our own advice, we will know whether or not we will fall into the ditch. We can continue to hold a poor idea forever and never know it is wrong unless we put it to work and watch it fail. That is why so many people with so many ideas seldom if ever apply them. They have a secret suspicion that they are not going to work and they will not expose themselves to this situation.

Above knowledge we gradually approach to the highest levels of learning and we come to that which is superior to knowledge and that is wisdom. In Neoplatonism, the term wisdom applies primarily to those who have as a motivation or a moving springboard to conduct a well developed contemplative internal life. Wisdom arises from the contemplation of knowledge for knowledge in itself always tells more than itself if it is valid. All things known have imponderable overtones. The moment we establish the fact of anything we come into a vast field of implication relating to that fact, antecedent causes which must be presumed to exist, subsequent effects which must be assumed will follow. So the aura of knowledge extends from itself into the contemplation of Principles. The moment, for example, that we become aware of the operation of a Law, we are confronted with the necessity for the acceptance of a lawful universe. If water flows down hill, it is a fact which we can transform into knowledge and through knowledge we can vitalize into utility by using this water to turn a wheel or something of that nature. The moment we begin to contemplate this knowledge, it opens us to another world, a world of imponderables which must exist in order to support the known facts because no fact stands alone, no knowledge is complete as a fragment.

Therefore, the contemplation of law and order, the study of a snowflake or a crystal in a rock, the moment we contemplate knowledge and arrive at the inevitable conclusions that knowledge forces upon us, we verge toward wisdom. Wisdom is the creation of a set in our understanding great enough to encircle all knowledge, for knowledge is suspended from Principle and these Principles are its inevitable causes.

Wisdom stands as a crowning power. In wisdom, we achieve that degree of development by means of which we are urged or moved toward the life of wisdom. For having observed, having rationally experienced, having reasonably demonstrated we are

inevitably impelled to a personal standard of conduct conformable with the level of wisdom which we have attained. Conduct on a level inferior to wisdom cannot be tolerated. Therefore, the attainment of wisdom is really the beginning of an internal dominance over externals. Wisdom causes the mind to move gradually and inevitably from an acceptance of a fact to a recognition of cause. This causes us to gradually transfer our allegiance from particulars to Principles.

Thus from understanding and wisdom, we come gradually to perceive the outline of the Intelligible Deities, the conceivable Realities that lay beyond the mind. We have now ascended through the levels of body and the Soul's three polarizations. Its association with body, Its association with Itself and Its association with the World Soul. We have come to that point in the disciplines of Neoplatonism in which we stand on the threshold of a universe which has gradually enlarged for Plato as it enlarged for Plotinus until at last we stand, as it were, upon the edge of a cliff looking out into an Infinity and our road ends at the edge of the cliff.

There are only three choices possible to us—to retrace our steps, remain on the cliff, or jump into Space. Any one of these three courses may be followed but in all probability, as wisdom cannot be less than itself, we cannot go back. As wisdom will never be content to remain as it is, we cannot stay where we are. Therefore, the very demand of the pressure itself moves us inevitably toward this mysterious step into Infinity. This step was the final exercise of Neoplatonism and was that division which is called Theurgy. Theurgy is the individual coming face to face with the impossibility of the objective or philosophic or even contemplative attainment beyond wisdom.

We have bridges and Neoplatonism plays these bridges out. While man is in ignorance, a glimmer of sense is within him. While he is sensible, a glimmer of knowledge is within him.

When he goes beyond knowledge and beyond wisdom, a glimmer of something else shines in him. This glimmer of something else is by means of a bridge or a kind of magnetic or auric field which surrounds the fact itself and which the Neoplatonists called inspiration or in some cases intuition.

In other words, man begins to recognize beyond wisdom a new standard of knowledge, a standard of knowledge which is rooted in the substances of Reality themselves, in the conceptual form which he has called Principle and which the ancient Greeks called the gods. In the great hierarchies of Conceptual Beings the individual having attained wisdom, becomes dimly aware of the magnificent blossoms that are floating in Eternal Being like the lotus upon the surface of the water. He realizes as we all realize, finally, that the answer to every question that is vital and is real lies in this profundity, in this mysterious “something” that is forever beyond the grasp of reason, that is forever beyond the power of the intellect to ordain or integrate.

We come now to the final step in the Neoplatonic concept namely, that man, having exhausted the potential of the Soul and these having been exhausted because he has exhausted the potential of the World Soul, because the World Soul is not identical with Being but is subordinate to it therefore, as Being produces Soul—Soul is deficient in something because the superior is always greater than the inferior and the creator must always exceed its creation. When we reach the ultimate of the Rational Soul through the cultivation of the highest aspects of contemplative wisdom, we have exhausted the power of the World Soul to carry us further. We then stand as Moses stood overlooking the Promised Land but he could not enter. Therefore, he laid down and died upon the lonely hills of Moab.

In Neoplatonism, there comes the same crises that Buddhism approaches in the mystery of the Nirvana namely, the transition between conditioned and unconditioned existence.

The only solution to every conditioned existence lies in the Unconditioned because only the Unconditioned moving above the level of Mind on the level of Conceptual Reality possesses the absolute authority of creation. This authority does not lay in the Mind of Deity but in the Will of Deity. Therefore in a strange way, the Will produces the Mind and man having exhausted the Mind, must therefore return to the contemplation of the Will, the power of Universal Will which does things because of inevitability. All things created are right because they are inevitable, not because they are moral or immoral.

The Neoplatonists then contemplated the possibility of man bridging this interval. They came to two conclusions one essentially Egyptian and the other essentially the Greek. These two conclusions were, first, that man by the supreme exercise of his own wisdom, could jump into the unknown as a possible action of self-extermination. The individual could destroy his individual existence. He cannot do it until he has exhausted this requirement. In other words, he cannot do it anywhere until he has transcended that existence totally. Having transcended it, he can choose to cast it aside. Essentially, there is a possibility that these Neoplatonists contemplate that the final act of wisdom is to cast oneself into the Infinite. The second conclusion is a little less extreme and gradually gained favor especially as we find it in the writings of Dionysius and the Pseudo Dionysius. In these writings we find there is the recognition that Total Being or Totality Itself, Being in Itself as the only Infinite and the only completeness that is conceivable, that Totality can possess the individual even though the individual can never possess Totality.

Therefore, the Ultimate State is the condition of absolute accepting or absolute receptivity to Being. Receptivity to Being presupposes the complete extension of not being with the Self. Therefore, if the individual can outgrow his body, outgrow his emotions, outgrow his mind so that he is no longer dependent

upon them, so that they can no longer dominate his character, when the individual is no longer under the limitation of thought he has therefore exhausted the power of thought over him.

The Neoplatonists contemplated this problem. When the individual has outgrown thought, what is left? When you have exhausted mind until mind ceases because it can no longer contribute anything what then? Mind has to have constant motion for its survival. It only lives because it seeks the unknown. It lives upon the unknown stretching and consuming it, transforming the unknown into mental food. When the mind has devoured all of the unknown, when the mind would be forced to reach a stasis and remain the same forever, then the mind is at rest. So the mystical school assumes that the individual who has outgrown the mind and cast it aside as he cast the body aside is then capable of the Total Experience of Being. Neoplatonism does not assume that this Total Experience of Being is going to be bestowed upon individuals in daily living, it assumes that this Total Experience is going to be bestowed at the end of the entire process of growth.

The Neoplatonists did have a particular and definite doctrine namely, that at various stages in the transition period particularly through those transitions which relate to wisdom and moved toward intuition for man is reaching the rim of wisdom and his intuitive and apperceptive powers are beginning to grow, he may and does receive an occasional flash, an illumination, an apperception of that which lies beyond.

In other words, they originated the concept of what we call the mystical experience. They recognized it as flashes of complete integrity, not constantly available but possible to man under certain conditions. By these intuitive or inspirational occurrences which Plotinus declared he had experienced six times during his life, the individual becomes for a moment aware of some phase or attribute of Being, not Being in Total



but something superior to his present condition. Because each superiority transcends that which is normally experienced, it may be mistaken for an Ultimate but it is not an Ultimate. In the mystical experiences related by Plotinus and other Neoplatonists, one particular and interesting element is always present namely, that these experiences present an effulgent revelation of something that is in, around, about and an essential part of everything that exists. These experiences did not relate to motion. They did not answer any questions. In a strange way beyond our concept of dimension, they simply answered question as it is. Not a question but the entire mystery of question. It bestowed the feel of certitude, a tremendous authority blazing through the things intellectually or intelligibly comprehended or apperceived so that suddenly an Eternal Value, an Eternal Quality burst through the universe.

Man, incapable of sustaining the tremendous pressure of this upon himself has only a moment of this experience. Plotinus was convinced that if it was extended for any length of time it would consume the individual completely. It would destroy all of the sensitive cores of contact between the various parts of man's psychic nature because it is too powerful. It is like Zeus appearing in the full panoply of power. It was too much but through it dimly the Neoplatonists perceived the Reality, Being as an indescribable ocean of fullness in which all things were absolutely and completely sufficient. Everything in some mysterious way was permeated with this sufficiency, this ultimate so that out of the flower of the field, out of the bird in the air there was suddenly released a sense of absolute Integrity, of the Ultimate. The complete certitude of that bird's flight became a dynamic truth in itself.

In the same way, the certitude of man's immortality was impressed upon his own inner life. The certitude or the feel, as Jacob Boehme calls it, of the inevitability of all things by nature good and inevitable suddenly with complete assumption

of authority forced upon the awareness of man, bursting upon him so that all he could actually do is to inwardly accept unconditionally the fullness of this implication. To this, Plotinus gave the name illumination. This illumination was the ultimate reward of Theurgy. It was the individual having practiced and perfected those Divine disciplines by which the individual consciousness with its entire psychic life is moved from a crude and barbarous state gradually moving toward the human destiny, elevated to a Heroic estate and finally restored in effulgency to the gods. All the gods themselves returning to the Father Fountains of things.

Thus, the ascent of the Soul is by a kind of ladder, a ladder of attainment. Neoplatonism pointed out that this was not a theological ladder primarily but a ladder of merited attainment every step of the way. This ladder of merited attainment was man's justification. It was his witnessing of his own resolution to grow. He proves his merit by his consecration to the proper and sequential steps of growth, step by step by step to the ultimate end to be attained.

I said earlier that this concept had a very profound effect. It had a very profound effect for the simple reason that in its final contact with the rising church of Christendom, Neoplatonism was officially destroyed. With the martyr's death of Hypatia, the School in Alexandria ceased. With the final edict of the Emperor Justinian, the Greek Schools were closed but the early church took into itself practically the entire language of Neoplatonism and utilized the philosophical categories of Neoplatonic thought for the next twelve hundred years. It became the philosophy of Augustine. It did the one thing that no one expected it to do, it turned men's minds ultimately from theology to economics. In the seventeenth century under the great revival of the Cambridge Platonists, this very Neoplatonism which had seemingly led to the renunciation of the world set the foundation for what we call the scientific method of life.

As we go through this series, I will be able to explain more and more how this operated. Until today, the average American citizen thinking on almost any subject in which that thinking is reasonably correct, that thinking is ninety percent Neoplatonic. As Emerson pointed out, all philosophy is Plato restated and to a great degree it is true of Neoplatonism rather than direct Platonism because our entire contact with Plato in Europe and the Near East was through Neoplatonism. Thus, the very fact that we have a democratic form of government, that we have a common law, that we have law and equity, these things are based largely upon Neoplatonism. The fact that we have empiric medicine, we have laboratories to carry on scientific research in infantile paralysis and heart problems, these things are the indirect outgrowth of the conditioning of the European mind during the Medieval period by Neoplatonism.

So while the system itself seemingly disappeared, it prepared the way for the concatenation of knowledge which gave us the public school. Comenius, the father of the public school system, was a Neoplatonist. It began the concept of a grade school, a high school, colleges and special institutions. It prepared also for both the atomic and physical research of the present time because the Platonic and Neoplatonic concept of Deity as Life and Energy were based, of course, upon the atomism of Democritus and Epicurus and the atomic speculations of Socrates.

All these things moved together. Neoplatonism carried them, spread them and diffused them. Our modern world, in those parts in which it is more or less civilized and in those parts in which it has more or less good spirit and is seeking to grow, is largely a Neoplatonic world. Most of the morality and ethics of Christendom is Neoplatonic. So the diffusion of this subject has been immense.





## Part Two

### IAMBLICUS ON THE MYSTERIES

*Iamblicus was by no means the most brilliant of the Neoplatonists. But he handled everything with a peculiar, wonderful mystical reverence. He was never satisfied merely to approach things on an intellectual level. He had to go beyond this.*

IN PART ONE OF THIS BOOK, *Proclus on the Theology of Plato*, we called to your attention the peculiar circumstances which contributed to the rise of Neoplatonism in North Africa, Athens and Rome. To very briefly summarize this situation in order that we may use it as a further springboard, we must remember that this sect came into existence almost at the very time of the decline and decay of three great empires. We are inclined to think of these changes as affecting only political units but as H.G. Wells so well pointed out, there is no great political change that does not profoundly affect the status of the individual. Although we do not always have an adequate account

of reaction upon private citizens, this reaction must be regarded as profound.

So we have a great school of philosophy, essentially mystical, arising out of the ashes of the three great empires. As has always been observed in the descent of human institutions, there is an inevitable revulsion away from materialism whenever we have a marked decline in political conditions. As uncertainties increase, wars multiply, private problems mount, the individual turns to the consolation of his Spiritual convictions. As many historians and the literature of the time points out, the decline of empires did not mean the total extinction of idealism. It did not mean that all Romans were corrupt, all Grecians decadent or all Egyptians reactionaries. These large generalities cannot safely be applied to any group of human beings because each individual has a nature of his own and may be an exception to any rule by which we seek to capture or define him.

We have ample evidence at this time, for example, of the rise of a group of powerful idealistic institutions representing a desperate effort on the part of human beings themselves to meet the emergency in which they found themselves. Prominent among these groups were those in Syria and in Lebanon, the Essenes, the 'John-ites,' the Therapeutae and the groups of Semitic schools and colonies in Egypt under the leadership of men like Philo Judeus. We also have the tremendous rise of Gnosticism in Syria under Simon Magus and in Egypt under Basilides. We find the rise of a great restoration of learning in Greece under the ample leadership of Proclus who has been called the Platonic successor. In Rome, we have Plotinus, probably one of the most outstanding men of his time.

I have told you many things about Plotinus and I think you all know the story which best typifies his life. He lived in a decadent period of Roman History. He lived as a tutor and teacher of children. Whatever we may think of the Romans in those days of the debauched Caesars, we must recognize that they

also seemed to have realized the importance of honest men, for many Roman families left their entire estates under the trusteeship of Plotinus. At one time, he was said to have held most of the wealth of the patrician class of Rome in his hands. It was not for his own use but because he was the executor of estates. In those days when men's lives were uncertain, many approached him and asked him to accept the guardianship of their children if any evil befell them and it often did.

During the closing years of his life it was said that Plotinus lived in the atmosphere of a kindergarten. There were hundreds of young people under his care and he worked with each one of them. He assisted young women to proper marriage and homes, established the young men in business and through his busy life was never for a moment hesitant in turning his attention to the needs of a nursing infant. Yet, this man has survived to us as probably one of the most stupendous intellects of his time. He was known in his own day as one of the kindest and simplest persons who ever lived.

Even in those discordant and difficult periods, there was much true greatness and much of it centered in the great rise of Neoplatonism. Neoplatonism, let us remember, was separated from the historical school of Plato by over four hundred years. It was also deeply concerned with the Pythagorean problem by which it was separated by better than six hundred years. Thus, Neoplatonism was an interpretation based certainly upon Platonic principles but adapted to the needs of a different type of world from one that Plato ever knew. It was a world that had a great deal of sadness in it, a world despondent with the weight of its own worldliness, a disillusioned almost neurotic world, a world that had lost its security, a world in which the private citizen was no longer able to count his blessings or to determine with reasonable certainty his own daily future.

Thus, in these times, the great descent of the Platonic tradition served as a powerful instrument as has been pointed out

by many historians, in preserving a certain measure of calm, a certain measure of detached thoughtfulness toward life which might otherwise have almost totally ceased in the pandemonium which finally ended in the great invasion of the Goths, Visigoths and the tremendous campaigns of Attila.

Neoplatonism was more than just a philosophy, it was the heart and soul of a people in great sorrow reaching out for the best solution that they knew and taking that solution and interpreting it according to their immediate pressing spiritual, moral and ethical needs. As one of the writers of the period points out, it was the doctrine which for many sincere persons kept dream and hope alive. It made possible to face a universe which seemed terrible but which had to be understood and through that understanding man again restored his faith in both God and his fellow man. As we have also said, the Neoplatonic School flourished in three general areas,. Athens, Rome and Alexandria. It also, to a certain degree, spread through the entire Mediterranean area and through a good part of the Aegean area.

In the course of its unfolding, it gives to us another interesting name in connection with the descent of philosophy and that is Iamblicus. He was a Syrian born in what we would term today the Holy Land. He was clearly under the influence of Porphyry, Plotinus and other members of the Neoplatonic School. We do not know the exact date of the birth of Iamblicus but he died in A.D. 330. Thus, he belongs in the latter part of the third and the first part of the fourth century. He preceded Proclus who mentions him in his own writings and follows after the great masters of the first Neoplatonic revival. Of Iamblicus himself, we have very little information. Probably the most we can ever know of a person of this kind is to be derived from the tone and quality of his work. As a person, he is indistinct. As a character, as a temperament, as an individual he is rather powerfully delineated.

Iamblicus was by no means the most brilliant of the Neoplatonists. That he was a serious and sober scholar we know. That he was a man of great personal piety we can also rather quickly apperceive from his works. While it was natural in those days in which there was no essential division between religion and philosophy there is not a clear line of demarcation in his thinking, we can see that everything he touched he handled with a peculiar, wonderful mystical reverence. He was never satisfied merely to approach things on an intellectual level. He had to go beyond this. Therefore, his name is particularly associated with one step or degree of the Neoplatonic ladder of development.

As we have discussed before in general, this ladder of Soul development rises from opinion through all the different degrees of intellect and finally culminating at the upper end in Theurgy. Iamblicus was one of the principal exponents of this mystery of Theurgy which has been likened by some Westerners to Grecian Yoga but this is not actually a proper definition. It indicated a lack of critical consideration because while both of these disciplines seek a certain kind of Spiritual exaltation, the concepts of Yoga and of the Neoplatonic Theurgy are essentially different.

Of course there is one point, however, that I think we have to recognize in both schools. That point is that when we use the term either in India or Greece of Spiritual exaltation or the elevation of a Spiritual condition, it is not to be interpreted in meaning or in any sense of the word personal aggrandizement. To them, all elevation both in the East and West was departure from personality toward universality. Therefore, no individual who attained to a high state could possibly establish the concept of personal possession of wisdom or knowledge. The entire concept both of Yoga and Theurgy is that the more the individual ascends the more completely he recognizes the identity of life, the identity of the human need and his own exceedingly humble place as a servant of the common good.



Therefore, the ascent does not mean vainglory or self aggrandizement. Ascent means the actual attainment of a level of internal realization in which the self is no longer important. This is clearly pointed out in no uncertain words by the Neoplatonists and also is to be found in practically every ancient Oriental work dealing with the Yogic or Vedantic discipline.

Theurgy became so important to Iamblicus that he devoted a very great part of his writing to this consideration. He had a school which was reasonably strong but did not survive very long because all of Neoplatonism was gradually entering into a period of fierce persecution from which it did not survive as a sect. It did survive in many respects for it came to dominate practically every system of idealistic thinking from its own time to Ralph Waldo Emerson.

In the Neoplatonic group founded by Iamblicus there were a number of fairly brilliant scholars and there is still some question today as to which of these or all of them together united to produce this text we are interested in. Its ancient title as it first appeared in known manuscripts and in the first *inacubula* printing is "Iamblicus On the Mysteries of The Egyptians." This title would imply, apparently, that the work was by Iamblicus. Here again, however, there seems to be a certain amount of historical doubt. Whether it was his own work or whether it was compiled like the so-called "Golden Verses Of Pythagoras" we do not know but certainly we do know from his other writings that it represents the attitudes, opinions and beliefs he held. As it takes form and develops before us, it becomes impersonalized almost on the title page of it.

We have here the first edition of the work in English from the translation of Thomas Taylor who probably was one of the outstanding translators and commentators of Greek and classical thought of his time. In this, we find a great deal of interesting information at the beginning of the work. We find, for example, that the book is held to be the result of the correspondence

between a Greek philosopher and an Egyptian scholar. We have the following prescription below the title: "*The Answer Of The Preceptor Abamon To The Epistle of Porphyry To Anebo Resolving Certain Doubts.*" These doubts evidently relate as the work unfolds to the theory of Theurgy, of the mystery of the union of human consciousness with the Divine. The entire work, then, is related directly or indirectly to the Egyptian system as it was after the collapse of the Greco-Egyptian religious culture and after Egypt had become a vassal state of the Roman Empire.

We must pause for just a moment here to introduce another movement that was discernible at the time. Somewhere, perhaps as early as the first century certainly not later than the fourth or fifth A.D. there arose in Egypt a school which is called the Hermetic. The Hermetists claimed, of course, a great antiquity to their doctrine and belief but no text or no work dealing with the Hermetic mystery is known prior to the early centuries of the Christian era. Like many other mysterious organizations it seems to assume an antiquity or to have been based upon older records, beliefs or traditions. But as a formal group, it seems to have arisen about the same time as the Gnostics, the Cabalists, the Neoplatonists, the Essenes and other mystical sects.

The Hermetist represents, therefore, the last statement and to a degree a purification or attempt to regenerate and redeem the great gradually vanishing system of Egyptian religion. We know, for example, that the Egyptian religion flourished almost undiminished in grandeur and glory for nearly five thousand years. From the earliest texts that we have, many of which go back four thousand years before the beginning of the Christian era, the system was already highly evolved and highly institutionalized.

We must also realize that in the early period of the Egyptian religion the faith was an extremely democratic system. In other words, there was no such thing as a formal religion of Egypt. We have to use a term Egyptian religion but it actually carried a

consideration for probably thirty or forty different faiths united into a grand pattern. These faiths were each an individual and distinct structure. The great common denominator of these faiths was in the person of the Pharaoh who as Priest-King presided over all the *Nomes* or Provinces of Egypt and was, to a measure, the Hierophant of all their mysteries.

With this general overshadowing concept, the religions of the provinces and states of Egypt were very largely local. During a comparative period of this development, deities began to take shape in the Nomes or Provinces. At one time, for example, Ammon Ra who later became the supreme solar deity of Egypt was merely the god of a very small province. The rise of the Osirian cult was comparatively late in the Egyptian religion and in its early development, Osiris was also a local community deity not known outside of a very restricted area. The same was true of the mysterious deity Thoth. Thoth, the god of the writing table, seems to have been partially derived from the earlier Assyrian, Chaldean and Babylonian concept which was summarized in the deity Nebo. Nebo, whose statue is in the British Museum on the base of which are these words: "What has been will be. I am Nebo, Lord of the Writing Table." Nebo was the keeper of the records. He was the wise historian, chronicler, scribe of the gods. He was also an intellectual deity ruling over mind and thought. He was the one who recorded all of the wisdom and wonder of the universe.

Gradually, with the rise of the Assyrian-Chaldean complex, Nebo became identified with the principle of mind because he was the mind of the gods. He was their friend but he also took upon himself various attributes. As the Divine Mind, he descended to Earth, took form and taught men. Therefore, he brought the wisdom of the gods to men thus gaining the great distinction as the messenger or manifestor of the Divine Will. He was the beloved son of The Father, God. He was therefore

an intercessor between gods and men. We find this in the ancient cuneiform tablets in the British Museum and in other ancient monuments and repositories.

Nebo, in some of his attributes, gradually moved toward one of the lesser known provinces of Egypt on the Chaldean side of the country and by degrees insinuated himself through his worship into many other areas. Gradually, after the rise of a more or less codified religion, he emerged in the full glory of Thoth, the Ibis Headed or the deity who was the scribe and the recorder of the gods represented with a stylus and a waxen tablet. Thoth was therefore, in turn, identified with the principles of wisdom.

As wisdom and as the scribe of the gods, as their messenger, as the ambassador of the deities to various parts of the world, he gradually came to the notice of the Greeks who found him exceedingly similar to one of their own divinities. When the Greek hierarchies of Pharaohs took over in Egypt under the Ptolemies and under the court of Ptolemy Philadelphius, the Greco-Egyptian complex of religion began to emerge and take particular form.

In this period there arose several deities that had previously been comparatively local but because of their similarities or parallels with Greek gods became more and more intriguing to the Greek hierarchy and the Greek principalities that arose in Egypt. These deities were more or less in order of importance Thoth, Osiris, Isis and Serapis. All of these deities show a very strong later Grecian influence. Of course all of them were worshiped earlier but usually not in the same way, with the same legends or with the same interpretations. The nearest thing to being an exception to this would be Isis who was worshiped in a much larger area at an earlier date but the great Osirian Isis and the cycle of legends which surrounded her in connection with Hermes and Serapis were of a comparatively

late date. However, she flourished greatly in the last centuries of the Egyptian religion.

In the transition from Greece to Egypt of certain philosophical doctrines, possibly post-Pythagorean, there is the transition between Thoth and Thoth-Hermes. Little by little, the Egyptian Thoth came to be known even in Egypt as Hermes. As Hermes, he was still essentially the Scribe of the Book of the Dead. He was still the messenger and writer of the gods. He was still the mediator between the gods and mankind. However, by the time we come to the cycle covered by Iamblicus and his work on the mysteries, Hermes had come forward and had eclipsed Isis, Osiris and Serapis. Hermes had become the principal patron of the late Egyptian restoration.

Gradually from this circumstance, there rose a new sect which was called Hermetists. Many persons think that the Hermetic philosophers were essentially Alchemists. In the chemical sense of the term this is not so. The original Hermetic teachings were very much closer to the Gnostics and the Essenes. "The Divine Pymander, The Shepherd of Men" and the great dialogues and discourses of Hermes constitute a literature highly mystical with a considerable amount of Gnostic and Neoplatonic influence, some from the Cabala and quite possibly from the Far East.

The Hermetic Mysteries, as we recognize them at this point, were highly philosophical, highly mystical. They related primarily to the regeneration of man and approached the subject very much on the same level as the Neoplatonists. The Neoplatonists mingled considerably with the Hermetic philosophers. It is interesting to note that in the rise of the Christian church which followed within two or three centuries of this date that the only early Pagans or Neopagans that have been held in high esteem by the church and were never publicly attacked or defamed by the church but were regarded as legitimate predecessors of the church philosophy were Plato, Hermes and the small

original group of Neoplatonists. These individuals were given particular consideration, perhaps, because Augustine of Hippo, who was one of the first codifiers of Roman law under the Holy Roman Empire, was himself strongly addicted to these sects.

Therefore, the Hermetic teachings drifted into the early works of the Nicene and Post-Nicene Fathers. There was little conflict. In fact, these and the Platonic works were accepted almost without question and contributed very largely to the modifications of structure of the early church. The Ante-Nicene Fathers themselves explicitly state that this is so and in writing in the first and second centuries, they should be in a position to know.

This point then brings us to the involvement of Hermes in which the Preceptor Aabamon the Egyptian explains that the wisdom which is herein contained, and now he is following the Hermetic story almost exactly, was traceable to Hermes, the god who presided over language and was formerly very properly considered as common to all the priests. He explains, for example, that the wisdom which he is going to unfold in this study of the mysteries is based upon the Hermetic Pillars which probably were buried or hidden under the Temple at Said. This was where Solon claimed to have seen them as a result of a trip through a subterranean lake to an island under the Earth where the two Pillars of Hermes or, as they were alternately called by the non-Hermetist group, the Pillars of Enoch. They were said to have been standing since antediluvian times. Our priest in this particular work says that these pillars had been seen and studied by Pythagoras when he was in Egypt and that this knowledge which was upon these pillars was known to both Pythagoras and Plato and that it was through them that it descended to the Greek side of Neoplatonism. It was through the Egyptian side of the subject that it descended through the Hermetic Mysteries. Therefore, in a sense, the two had a great kinship with each other.

The general tone of this book reminds us of the opinion that was presented by Solon after his return from Egypt. Solon was one of the first great lawgivers of Greece and the man who reformed the great land ownership and boundary laws and was the first to make impossible the enslavement of man in Greece for debt. He was a great liberal and a great leader. Solon, returning from Egypt after he had sought among the Egyptians the information necessary to reform Athenian law, spoke of an incident in Egypt that had happened to him. He had been asking a question of one of the Egyptian priests and suddenly the priest turned to him and shook his head very sadly and said, "Oh you Greeks! Why will you forever remain children?" Perhaps it was a bit of sophistry on the part of the Egyptians, we don't know because of course every ancient nation believed its own culture was the best. They were never willing to acknowledge that the Greeks quite equaled them in penetration into the mysteries of life. In this particular work, Iamblicus, if he is following a particular document as is indicated, certainly picks up this particular problem. The letter which is being answered by the priest was written by one of the Greek philosophers, and the priest in answering it, in nearly every section, corrects the Greek. In other words, he does not agree with the Greek approach to the entire subject.

One of the interesting things about the work is the section which deals with the subject of Theurgy. The book itself carries through on the subject of divination. In other words, the work deals theoretically and practically with the possibility of man receiving from the gods or from superior beings answers to mystery, guidance or instruction. It deals with whether it is possible for man through the aid of God or a power or a mystery or a secret to foretell the future, to know that which is to come and most of all, how to advance the state of Theurgy which in this work is said to be able to foretell Everlastingness. In other words to foretell, as the priest explains, not *what* will

happen but what *you will be when* it happens. The Egyptian priest points out that this is the most important mystery because anything that will ever happen in the future to you can only happen because of *what you are*. Therefore, to merely project the future upon the basis of our present state is to prophesy uncertainly because we are not able to know what we may desire at a remote time.

So a man saying “will I fulfill my desire at a certain future time” and the oracle says “yes,” the man knows not what his future desire will be. Therefore, he cannot tell in what detail or particular fulfillment will be attained. The individual by virtue of the fact that he is growing, his destiny and his fate is not due, the Egyptian priest says, to the mutations of the world but rather to the state of the individual in the world because if he changes, ten thousand may fall upon the right hand and ten thousand upon the left hand but the just man shall not be moved. Therefore, the degree of his own justice determines his own survival.

It is on this ground that the Egyptian Theurgic priest says that the great mystery of prophecy or divination is to divine our own core consciousness at any time but at this moment because this core is forever changing. These problems concern a considerable part of this work. The work also explains the Neoplatonic concept of Theurgy as a kind of divination by which man is able to invoke the knowledge of the mystery of Truth as Isis by her conjuration invoked the power of Ra and from him the secret word of Divine authority.

In order to understand these works, I want to read just one or two paragraphs to give you who may not read the book something of the spirit of it because as has been noted in the case of Iamblicus there is a tremendous overtone in the Spirit of the man himself. This Spirit also shines through the entire concept of Neoplatonism. Therefore, from the introduction of the



book itself I'd like to call attention not particularly to Iamblicus but to the strange, wonderful, mystical and yet profoundly significant way in which these statements were made. They are almost unique. Now this is the definition in Neoplatonism of creation. I shall read about a paragraph to give you some idea of the strangely subtle way in which they expressed it.

According to this theology therefore, "From the immense Principle of Principles in which all things causal subsist and exist absorbed in super essential Light and involved in unfathomable depth, a beauteous progeny of Principles proceeds all largely partaking of the Ineffable, all stamped with the occult character of Deity, all possessing an overflowing fullness of Good. From these dazzling summits, these Ineffable blossoms, these Divine propagations Being, Life, Intellect, Soul, Nature and Body depend. Monads suspended from Unity, Deified natures proceeding from Deity. Each of these Monads too is the leader of a series which extends from Itself to the last of things and which while it proceeds from and at the same time abides in and returns to Its leader. And all these Principles and their progeny are finally centered and rooted by their summits in the first great all comprehending One. Thus, all Beings proceed from and are comprehended in the First Being. All intellects emanate from one First Intellect. All Souls emanate from the One First Soul. All natures blossom from One First Nature. All bodies proceed from the vital and luminous Body of the World. And lastly, all these great Monads are comprehended in the First One from which they and all their dependent series are unfolded into Life. Hence, this First One is truly the Unity of Unities, the Monad of Monads, the Principle of Principles, the God of Gods, One in all things yet One which is prior to all." I think that is the most complete summary of the doctrine we can find in Neoplatonic literature. It also gives us something now of the Spirit of this particular doctrine.

Iamblicus claims very definitely that a great part of this material is derived from the remnants and fragments of the surviving instruments of the old Pythagorean system. He points out very definitely in this concept what he calls the concept of Unity which is more or less unfolded in this definition. These Unities are seen as unfolding or descending blossoms suspended from Unity. Iamblicus explains to the Egyptian priest or perhaps it is the Egyptian priest himself explaining, we probably will never know, that all things proceeding from Unity must forever bear within themselves the seed of Unity, that Unity Itself bears what Jacob Boehme calls the "*Signatura Rerum*," the great field of likeness, that nothing can proceed from Unity that is not Itself a Unity. Therefore according to this system, All Beings proceeding from Primordial Being partake inwardly and eternally of Unity and likewise subsist in and forever remain within the body of all circumscribing essential Units. Iamblicus also tells us that the most proper and least erroneous definition of the Unity of Unities, Principle of Principles is that It is the One and the Good. It is the One because by Unity man bestows the supreme sense of his own power to bestow honor. As his own consciousness and his own nature instinctively perceives the Oneness to be the most honorable, to be the most ancient, to be the most inevitable, he bestows the attribute or title of Totality. Therefore, Totality as One is the Supreme Being.

The Egyptian then says that the term Good is peculiarly appropriate also inasmuch as it is the inevitable and natural instinct of all creatures to desire the Good, to seek the Good. Gradually through the unfolding faculties and powers which they gradually come to possess to serve the Good, to demand or require the light of virtue and to honor the gods by the performance of that which is Good. Therefore, by the One is expressed by the nature and root of Being and by the eternal, everlasting, never ceasing yearning of all Life for the experience of that which is Its own Ultimate, the eternal subsistence

within the substance of the Good. That all things that may be Good, that man may be in himself Good and through his own Goodness make Good the world.

When he achieves these ends, he is at the same time achieving his highest religious conviction concerning the One because he instinctively assumes that the great desire of the One as expressed through creation is for the realization, manifestation and total fullness of the Good. Therefore, the One moving into activity in any form moves by virtue. All the works of the One are Good. Therefore, the gradual revelation of Good is the final revealing of the One in all states of human society.

This brings us to another example of that situation I mentioned earlier, namely, that the Egyptians were a little inclined to regard the Greeks as inadequate in their philosophical approach to things. In a book of this kind, it is quite possible that the author intentionally enters into a mistaken concept in order to sustain the explanation. In other words, he may cause the student in the writing to ask a comparatively foolish question in order that the scholar, the wise man, the sage, may have an opportunity to unfold the correct answer. It is a method in dialogue which is frequently used in classical writing because if the question is always complete and perfect, there is usually no need for the answer. A complete and perfect question is the complete answer of itself. Therefore, there has to be something wrong in the statement or it does not lead to a discourse when the dialectic and dialogue is formed. This is common.

In the Egyptian priest answering the Greek, we have an interesting point which also sustains one of the abstractions of this concept.

*"In the first place, therefore, you say (for the Egyptian is not answering the question presumably of Porphyry) it must be granted that there are gods."*

The Egyptian answers briefly: *"Thus to speak, however, is not right on this subject for an innate knowledge of the gods is*

*coexistent with our very Essence. This knowledge is superior to all judgment and deliberate choice and subsists prior to reason and demonstration. It is also co-united from the beginning with its proper cause and is co-subsistent with the essential tendency of the Soul to the Good. If indeed a prerequisite to speak the Truth, the contrast with debility is not knowledge for knowledge is in a certain respect separated from its object by a state of otherness."*

This is a very subtle point. *"But prior to the knowledge which as one thing knows another is the uniform connection with Divinity and which is suspended from the gods, is spontaneous and inseparable from them. Hence, it is not proper to grant this as it might not be granted nor to admit it as ambiguous (for it is always Unity established in energy). Nor are we worthy to explore it as if we had sufficient authority to approve or reject it, for we are comprehended in it or rather we are filled by it. We possess that very thing which we are or by which our Essence is characterized in the knowing the gods."*

Therefore, he tells us in this which is part of his introduction to Theurgy that the Theurgical art is the transcendence by the Truth seeker of that knowledge by which he affirms or rejects any matters relating to the Divine. In other words, I don't mean that he conforms necessarily to an opinion but rather, that he does not approach the nature of the Eternal or Being, as Iamblicus calls it, as something worthy of contemplation or something which can be contemplated by another thing separate from Itself.

The Egyptian here is pointing out that in this subject, therefore, man depends upon the use of a power within himself which is not his own power but the Power of Unity, the Divine Cause eternally subsistent within Its own nature. Therefore, man can only apperceive the true nature of Being by virtue of the quality or power of that Being in him and not by any nature, power or attribute of his own. This is the foundation of Theurgy as it is taught in Neoplatonism, that the individual

can never produce a vehicle of consciousness by which he is capable of transcending the limitations of this otherness which is the state of his own approach to, estimation of, reflection upon Reality or Truth as something separate or distinct. He is therefore warned in the beginning of the Theurgical art which were the highest levels of the Neoplatonic Mystery that to contemplate is to proceed to the point to which we may see things as pictures, as likenesses or as representations. These likenesses or representations like the great art, great music or any other magnificent esthetic expression may stimulate us, may enthrall us, may give great joy and beauty to us, may ennoble and may give us the strength and security for further achievement.

In themselves, they cannot be considered as the direct manifestation of the Supreme Power inasmuch as that which can be contemplated apart from man implies the existence within the experience of man a state of disunity. Man and the object of his quest are two and Truth is One. Therefore, the Neoplatonists maintained that as long as the observer observes, as long as the Knower knows, as long as the Thinker thinks, there must be otherness. Therefore, the supreme work which they believe to have been the original doctrine or concept of the Greek mysteries was that man must first overcome otherness or, as they would have said it more wisely, that this overcoming of otherness is not the first but the last. It is the most difficult and the most abstract and mysterious of the Theurgical practices.

This, of course, consummated the entire Neoplatonic system and all of their other disciplines as Porphyry and Plotinus also tell us that all other disciplines were to prepare the individual to approach the mysterious base of non otherness. Here, of course, we have had reason to liken certain of these concepts to the Eastern systems, to Buddhism with its Nirvana and Vedanta or Yoga with their Samadhi were similar states. In the Neoplatonic systems however, it is a little bit different. The Neoplatonists did not seek identification with Eternity through

the rejection of life. They did not seek to destroy the individual. They did not seek to prevent the natural growth of the intellect or the unfoldment of any attribute which man may have inherited from what our Egyptian would call the secondary gods. Other than that, the Neoplatonists laid a great emphasis upon the individual achieving what they would term the philosophic life through the gradual sequential transcendence of limitation.

In other words, the initiation rite was growth itself. Growth represented the individual achieving and transcending, never evading or avoiding or seeking to escape. There was no way beyond any problem in the long course of human experience except straight through. The individual had to always have victory or failing in victory, he failed to release. Any problem that is not completely solved must remain a terrible uncertainty in the consciousness of the individual and he will therefore face it again and again not because the problem necessarily is so great but because his own strength is not great enough.

Thus, in the Neoplatonic system man grows by exhausting the limitations of every level of existence. This is precisely the burden of *"The Divine Pymander Or The Shepherd Of Hermes"* in which the individual, the Initiate, seeking the mystery ascends through the orbits of the seven planets. At each of these orbits he transcends or solves the mystery of that orbit until finally, he attains to the Empyrean. Here he passes through the mysterious little door in Heaven and comes before the Throne of the Great One above the great crystalline sea as described in the *Book of Revelation*. A very large part of that magnificent scene in *Revelation* is almost word for word from the Hermetic books.

In the Neoplatonic concept therefore, we have the gradual experience of the individual moving from the sense of separateness toward the sense of identity. To the Egyptian who writes this book, aloneness is the acknowledgement of the acceptance of diversity. The more completely the individual believes in the

many, the more completely he is capable of isolation. If he believes in ten or a hundred or a thousand, he is one of them. They may all exist around him and they may all press in upon him. Therefore, aloneness is the statement of the acceptance of the even or the divided number. It is the representation of the individuals ability to recognize Unity.

The Egyptian also points out that from the earliest points of man's existence, he has been moving from a savage isolation toward a gradual integration of a social structure in which he no longer experiences aloneness. Thus, in the Archetype or in the Divine Pattern even as the gods in their own motions move again toward the victory of re-identification, so man in his great migration through life is forever moving away from separateness and toward the increasing recognition of wholeness. Iamblicus tells us that these Unities which represent the roots or seeds which descend from Primordial Unity are enumerable and that man conquering diversity always does so with the discovery of some kind of Unity. Later, Proclus points out to us that every experience of Unity is an illumination. In other words, the moment the individual sees the bridges between separate things, he begins to have the Theurgic vision to some degree because Theurgy is not merely a conformation in itself, it is a gradually unfolding of a growing power of apperception by which certain things not now obvious become more and more continually apparent to the consciousness.

Therefore, the experience of the discovery of Monad or Entirety may exist on any level. One of the philosophers pointed out the fact that if one takes a piece of wood, puts three legs under it and makes a stool that this individual has made a unity out of diversity. He has built a unity and that all building is the bringing of things together even as all destruction is the separation of things.

The Neoplatonists did not believe in a principle of destruction. They believed that disintegration always occurs so that

integration may follow on a higher level. They did not recognize that things may fall apart. They also considered that things which fall apart pass from a state of growth into a state of decay. Something that becomes decadent, that falls apart, that no longer hangs together, that no longer has integration and purpose inevitably leads to decay and final disintegration of parts. Unity may be experienced in man in levels of Unity for example, in art where we may have a unity with a small group of artists with a single purpose, perhaps half a dozen of them come together for some particular project thus forming an entity or an entirety.

Following, as he expresses it, one of the older doctrines of Pythagoras, Iamblicus points out that the moment a group of divided elements are restored to a unity, they are ensouled by a power and that this ensouling power is derived from the Numerical Archetype of the universe. Every number that is conceivable to man consists of two things, a monadal number or a numeration and an ordinary number or the sequences that we know. Therefore, for instance, the number sixty is either a unit, sixty, or else it is sixty one, the infinite diversity of its own number. In the grouping as he explains it, therefore, the experience of unification releases Archetype which exists in Space, for every numeration or compound composed of the potential of number abides also in its own space as a unity. The recognition of the ten parts is not the experience of ten. The experience of the oneness of ten is achieved in the life of man, according to Iamblicus, through the voluntary cooperation of human beings who discover the old adage "In union there is strength." These unions create a oneness. When six men are of one mind, there is a oneness. This oneness is an Archetypal entity and according to the Chaldeans, these Archetypal numerical entities are God. Or, if we wish to look at it otherwise, they enable through a new body compound to achieve a release of the common strength of the group.



So in the story as Iamblicus expressed it, there are two ways of expressing this mystery. One is to recognize the possibility of achieving union in the otherwise or in the otherness. In other words, we may take blocks on a table and arrange them or we may take ten tubes of paint and paint one picture with them. This picture is a unity and this unity is really the instrument of an idea. In that instance, man himself as the painter is the Archetype of pressure that is released only through the necessary media or instruments. The Greeks and the Neoplatonists emphasized that these unities which are so important may be intellectually known in the otherness but can never be experienced in the otherness. The only experience of them occurs when this entire process of coordinating the parts or the restoring of these divergent numerations all occur within the individual not within the world around him. He must experience the Unity and the primary experience arises from the unification of the diversity of his own parts.

Just as surely as evolution must bring him to the gradual unfoldment of his potential, this new Law operates through the restoration of Unity throughout his body, throughout his mind, throughout his emotions, throughout his Soul, throughout his consciousness. The Egyptian in this work says that the individual is dissimilar in his present state due principally to the fact that he is disunited within his own nature. That which is in itself divided cannot in that state have the experience of being united. It must attain to this experience. It must achieve it. In the ancient ritual, "The Story Of Initiation," to which the old priest referred was a series of pageantries, dramas or symbols to impress this upon the neophyte or candidate. It was not so much by counsel but by mood, by the tremendous stimulation of some internal release of the individual, a release which is made possible by experience.

Therefore, the initiation ritual was totally different from instruction because in the initiation there was an experience

of participation, there was not this mysterious interval of otherness. The candidate was actually doing these things himself not hearing *about* them. This also involved the mudras of the Indian religion because the hand postures although they are symbolical and in themselves apparently trivial, represent the tremendous difference between learning, listening or reading. Here, even the simplest gesture of the hand in the actual act of doing is the transformation of a symbol into a living circumstance by the bestowal of an internal Energy.

In this story in their development of their level of Theurgy, the Neoplatonists emphasized that the great art, the mysterious wisdom revelation which they sought was not one thing, not one attainable mystery but was a series of reversals of the evolutionary processes by which greater and greater separateness became the burden of human life. By reversing this process, man gradually unites the various elements and powers of his own nature. As Porphyry and to a degree the Roman Emperor Julian points out that there is as yet no unity in man's sensory perceptions themselves. The eye sees with one purpose, the ear hears with another. Man cannot control his own faculties, cannot focus them upon a one purpose. Therefore, it is perhaps a difficult but necessary thing for him to learn that all of these sensory perceptions are the servant and instruments of apperceptive powers superior to themselves.

For as Plotinus points out, Unity is always achieved upon a level superior to the diversity. In order to bring things together, in order to circumscribe or place things within patterns, the individual must transcend their separateness and from a superior state of awareness gather it in. He cannot gather it in directly upon the level of the confusion in which they are separated. This power to gather them in depends, therefore, upon a degree of Theurgical insight that is greater than the diversity at any given moment.

To achieve this Theurgical insight rationality is not invoked nor is knowledge regarded as the solution. The solution is always through the experience of the superior. Consequently, the contemplative or the mystical discipline is, to use our simpler words, to relax into the acceptance of the Real recognizing that diversity is essentially a state of not knowing, that diversity for man is a condition arising from his own lack of insight. In other words, it is not so much that he grows that he ceases to resist growing. It is not so much that he knows more but rather, that he begins to experience that which is eternally available in knowing. These terms even as the old books themselves tell us very soon become exceedingly complicated inasmuch as the appropriate name for experience cannot be found. Once it is experienced, it needs no name and when it is not experienced, it is useless to name it.

Consequently, the problem of the true degree of experience can only be approximated intellectually. The intellectual approximation is not the attainment of it. The attainment of it lies in the Theurgical concept that it must be lived; it must completely and totally possess *Being*. The power of man to possess this insight lies not essentially in himself but in the Archetypal Eternity of Oneness which is at the root of him and within which he exists. Therefore, man's eternal pattern of growth arises from the inevitable impulse of diversity toward its own reunion. Man is on a flowing universal stream moving inevitably in this direction.

If man resists this motion, he is miserable, he is sick, he is disordered. The great collective parts of mankind resist this motion and they are inevitably destroyed or at least frustrated and injured. It is therefore the resistance to that which is True or Real which is regarded as the greatest handicap. In the Theurgical part of this mystery the disciple is taught that if he does not prevent Unity, he will experience It. Perhaps that is the nearest way that I can put it into the words of the original content.

If the individual does not stand in the way of experience but is simply quietly accepting of Reality the Archetypes move through him. He experiences them and he knows them because they are of himself. As in the paragraph which I read, we no longer take certain things for granted or presumptions, assumptions or beliefs. These things move through him when he does not prevent their motion. In our world however, we are inclined to prevent motion. It was not, so different in the days of Socrates because the individual in order to not prevent motion, has to have a certain attitude toward the problem of growth. This attitude lies in the recognition that there is no obstacle but the self. All other so-called obstacles are excuses. The motion of the individual toward Totality is a completely internal and eternal motion. It need not be conferred by one upon another because it is equally present in all things.

As the Egyptian tells us a little later, the stamp of Universal or Divine Being as Totality is present in everything from the greatest to the least throughout Space. There is no being, creature, no existence which in its essential nature does not possess Unity and in possessing Unity possesses the potential of experience in Total existence. Therefore, the obstacle lies not in the inability of the individual to receive in substance or the ineptitude of the time of the inconsistency of surrounding circumstances because it is present in the total seal and stamp in everything that exists from the greatest Sun in Space to the most minute molecule or ion dancing in a ray of light or Energy. These are all Totalities and the Totality of each is God. The Totality of the Sun is God. God is the Totality of Totalities, as the Chaldean Oracles are supposed to have said.

In this concept then, the Neoplatonists held that Theurgy was the attainment of that which is the inevitable state of man. Some achieve it through vigorous attempts; others, through absolute self forgetfulness in the service of other human beings; others less thoughtful have it slowly thrust upon them by the

inevitable vicissitudes of existence. But whether by intent or circumstance, whether through a tremendous adoration of the Divine or an eternal and complete dedication to the human need, the individual moves constantly toward Totality through every moment and instant of self forgetfulness. The moment he is not aware of himself he begins to depress the otherness because he cannot be aware of self unless he believes there is something else besides himself. Self is a division, to not be One and Total in equal degrees at the same time. So in the Neoplatonic concept, the purpose of self forgetfulness is represented as a simple means of removing active attitudes which deprive the individual of the immediate apperception of the Light moving through him and the Archetype within him.

These teachers also fully realized that there is a difference between the attainable degree of this Total Experience of Unity possible to the individual at a given time. This book states without equivocation that they believed firmly that this Total Experience of Unity is ultimately available to every creature that exists and is its proper destiny but the Neoplatonists affirmed that this Total Experience would not be possible on the same level at a given time in an imperfect and incomplete world to all persons. This is in itself of no importance, they affirmed, inasmuch as each person of an uncultured attainment who discovers the next superior state of Unity in himself has a great and thrilling experience just as the great Sage who may experience a much vaster consciousness of this subject.

Just as there are young children who must be taught one thing and older children who must be taught something else, so there are in the world persons all of whom must react according to their potentials as they are now manifested. Each of these is capable daily, yearly and through life of having a series of unfoldings of Unity according to his capacity and knowledge. The carpenter, the ship builder, the clerk, the professional man all of

these individuals are capable of gradually unfolding a sense of Oneness, of Identity.

Perhaps the physician may first of all begin to recognize a certain unity between himself and the great need of a suffering mankind. He then approaches his subject no longer as a physician making a living but the experience of the great Unity, the concept of identity, a oneness which may be termed health which may also be termed the service of a Principle under the Law. If the physician actually is sincere and is devoted to his cause, the practice of his profession and his faithful service of others will give him an experience of Divine Unity through the god Asclepius, the Monad of God as healing and of health. Therefore, he discovered the healing power of the Archetypal Law through his own ministry.

What ever we do, we leave some indication of the pattern or the great mathematical radiant blossoms described by Plotinus suspended in Being, their wonderful inflexible snow flakes of inevitable Laws which are forever impressing themselves upon creation. To experience these Laws, to know them not by the mind but through living with them, a gradual possession by them so that the Unity becomes the Total or Fullness of a person, so we have Plotinus saying also that each individual as he grows presents a sequence of Totality which is himself. It is this thing he calls himself that bears witness to the Totality he has attained because whatever real growth he achieves is not upon himself for himself but is himself as part of the Unity of the Divine Power or Monad which is at the root of his own existence. Thus, in all of these procedures, Theurgy, as it was called by the Neoplatonists, comprehends the gradual elimination of otherness and the gradual acceptance of an identity with this gradual unfolding Reality.

Now these people lived in a time and under circumstances in which the world and the world situation were both contrary to their deepest and dearest convictions. Thus, perhaps we may

see the reason for the tremendous emphasis they placed upon certain of these Principles, an emphasis which we find again in "*Salust On The Gods Of The World*" and in "*Hymn of the Emperor Julian To the Mother Of The Gods.*" In these great works these Neoplatonists pointed out conclusively the transcendent importance of this Theurgical mystery inasmuch as no tyranny of a decadent state could in this way touch the person who possessed the true understanding and true motive. It did not require any assistance other than the complete and abiding faith of the individual in the total aspect of Universal Good. It was a complete faith in the immutability and inevitability of Archetype that was the final and complete defender and sustainer of the inward Light. Either the inward Light is sustained by Absolute Law or it is not. The Neoplatonists insisted that it was.

Therefore, those who break the Law nationally or individually must ultimately meet the compensation suitable to their needs. There is punishment which is itself a lesson and therefore contributes to the ultimate release of the Reality through time. The decadence of the world and the collapse of culture could not touch the great Archetype because the Archetypes do not depend upon any human institution for their manifestation. They depend only upon the absolute release, like the blinding flash of Eternal Radiance, the absolute release of Total Being through Total Creation. This total Creation is gradually achieving this end.

After reading one of the dialogues of Julian, I happened to go to a motion picture show where they had speeded up the growth of a flower through time-lapse photography where this process appeared to transform the plant into an animate thing. I couldn't help but think of Julian's meditation relating to the problem of the world in which he points out that at any given time, under any given circumstance there appears to be a motion toward this Wholeness, that there is no appreciable time in which we can say "*this is the day of great rejoicing.*" It seems

that each generation, each day seems to pass and the Great Plan is neglected and ignored and the otherness prevails. Julian also points out that in the great other dimensions of human consciousness this is not true. Like the changing rate of the camera in time lapse photography which suddenly transforms a very slow process into an immediate apparent process, so this tremendous motion is going on but it is so slow that we do not notice it. Like the great unfoldment of the Blaze of Eternity Itself, this motion in Reality is far more rapid than we realize. This bursting through as Totality, the complete conquest of otherness by Reality Itself was to these philosophers the condition most greatly to be desired.

In the practice of Theurgy, as we have said, they taught certain cathartic disciplines—disciplines of instruction. They believed in teacher student relationships not because the teacher was wise or the student was foolish but because of an experience, the experience of relationship. The individual who could learn to follow the teacher could sometime learn to obey God. The teacher did not claim to be God or to hold any ancient or sacred prerogatives. The individual who cannot obey can never lead successfully or securely.

All through their disciplines they set up patterns not for the sake of forms but for the sake of enriching or strengthening the inner character or attributes of the individual. They went on from these disciplines of purification to disciplines of meditation and enlightenment seeking always the highest good as it was attainable to them. One modern writer who was not particularly favorable to these older philosophers, as is often the case, did summarize one statement not long ago when he said, "Whatever we may say or think we cannot question the magnificent ethics promulgated and taught by these people. In ethics, it was probably one of the highest in the history of philosophy because these people made so much of the fact that their whole philosophy was suspended from the one fact that



philosophy was not a way of thinking. Philosophy was not an accumulation of knowledge, philosophy was an experience of life." As the quotation *make philosophy thy life* goes, it should not be the subject of analysis, concentration or something of that kind alone.

In the ethical structure of the Neoplatonists therefore, it is of some advantage to us to know exactly how they proceeded in their general contemplation. They held on the religious level that the greatest good was to discover the Oneness, the complete indivisible Wholeness of all human religion. They held that all religions great or lesser, lightened or unenlightened represented degrees of the human quest for Totality, for Wholeness, for escape from otherness into the sphere of Reality. Therefore, they had absolute patience with all religions and at the same time had the very sincere and definite desire to assist the release of the highest ethical and social principles within these different religious groups. Plotinus says they held philosophy to be the great discipline of the mind by which the mind could be brought to that realization of the reality of Universals, that the mind itself might then abide in perfect childlike faith in the Realities of Eternity. Like Socrates and Plato therefore, the mind prepared the individual for the perfect faith, hope and love because it proved to him the kind of a world in which he lived and enabled him to trust his eternal destiny without doubt, without hesitation, without reservation, without mental limitation to the Infinite keeping of the Infinite Good.

Of morality, their doctrines would be as high as any that we have today. For their general code, they were greatly indebted to the great Egyptian "Negative Confession of Faith" which they were presumably able to contact through the Hermetic Mysteries. The Egyptian "Negative Confession of Faith" is probably the greatest moral document on Earth. It was a document so incredible that we wonder that the Egyptian could adopt it or even formulate it under oath because it is the type of

thing that would be almost impossible for modern man to live up to. Yet, it was inscribed in the mortuary rites, and because these rites were of the highest significance, the individual, in order to escape the implications, would have to be prepared to perjure himself in the afterlife before God. It is a little difficult to imagine that he would dare under the existing state of his religion to assume such a thing. It is not often that we see a complete statement of this code as we find it in the early Hermetic works for the original contains over three hundred sections and constitutes an incredible moral law. I remember three or four thoughts in connection with it which will move into Neoplatonism and become the basis of what they call the philosophic life.

I believe it was Proclus who said "Philosophy is nothing more than doing good," and then he adds, "To do good exhausts the power of philosophy because everyone in the world desires to do good but very few know how." Therefore, the Negative Confession of Faith included such statements as: "The person standing before the great God and with all the Gods of the Balance before him surrounded by the rulers of the quick and the dead in the Great Hall of Amentet and the Soul of the deceased possessing Osiris of the Double Empire crowned and robed" and the Soul says, "Never in my Earthly life did I say an unkind word to any person. Never in my life did I raise my voice against my friend or my enemy."

Now if you go through three hundred clauses of that caliber, it must have been a little difficult to get into Amen Tet. Of course we can say that no one ever lived that way and such a code is inconceivable. Granted that the Egyptian did not, but Plotinus and the Neoplatonists would point out a very simple thing. It was that power which was without otherness that made him dream and hope that he could. In other words, this code came from the Eternal Root. It came from something perhaps so great within himself that he could not even live it. He could

never really transcend his own frailties to that degree but it was this Root beyond otherness that made him dream and hope that such virtue could be or even to recognize such conduct as a virtue because all men have not. It was also this Root within him which made him dream of a time when this code could be real and men could live this way.

So it was, as Plotinus points out, proof that the Supreme Preceptor, the Grand Hierophant of All Mysteries, the Teacher of Teachers lies in the Total Being of the individual himself. It lies in the proper need, proper humility, in proper grace of Spirit and man becoming still and learning through stillness to know he could break the mysterious otherness and find the Eternal Root and Core of all Good, all Beauty and all Truth locked in his own Soul. This great road past the others was the road of contrition, dedication, of devotion, service and love. These things were greatly known by these people.

I suppose there is no school of philosophy in the Western world that made as heavy an emphasis upon human regard, friendship, affection, love and service as the Neoplatonic. To them, it was one of the essential disciplines of their religion. It was something not to be discussed, something necessarily to be advised, not ever to be applied but simply, naturally and without reservation to be applied. It was not to be considered a virtue for Plotinus says definitely that man's growth is not to be considered as a virtue but as the simple expression of eternal necessity within himself. Man is not to be complimented because he grows, because growth is his natural way. It is when he does not grow that he should be distinguished as in some way different and inferior to the group to which he belongs. Therefore, his growth is his fulfillment, his natural and reasonable course of action and on this ground he is here to fulfill, to develop and to perfect himself.

Plotinus says that during his lifetime he was on six occasions elevated to Theurgic identity with his Being. He tells us

that this particular mystery is not to be explained but that during these exaltations of consciousness he was able to experience fully the complete meaninglessness of himself. He was able to discover and experience that truly, he was a Word spoken by an Infinite Power, that in himself he was nothing but the Great God in him that did the work. In this relationship he was not only the willing hand, the willing servant but that it was not even a servitude because it was the realization of an identity that was so transcendent, so complete and so immeasurable that he was nothing and All, that he was not superior to the least nor inferior to the greatest, that he was totally alike and that there was no longer an interval between himself and that which was infinitely less and infinitely great.

The degree of the exact enlightenment we do not know but we do know that it became the foundation of the entire Theurgical Art which was to achieve the experience so that nothing is great nor small but all things are true. In their being true, they are not Truth in the sense of fact, they are Truth in the sense of radiant, living Being. For to all the ancients of this school, the True Reality was a radiant, living Archetype, not the fact but a magnificent, blazing Entity, a tremendous mathematical formula ensouled by a Divine Power. The perfection of the formula called that power by an enchantment. That which is built in a certain pattern calls unto itself the Soul that is to inhabit it like the urns that were fashioned by Omar the Tent-Maker each of which spoke with a voice according to its own nature.

So in the Neoplatonic concept we find this sense of illumination as being Identity with the least interval or difference. Plotinus pointed out that these experiences for the average man can last only a for a few seconds because beyond that point, the tremendous and incredible bewilderment, the incredible radiance would be more that the human personality can endure. Therefore for a second, this tremendous blaze is released like Jacob Boehme's lightning flash and then the curtain falls again

and the individual lives once more in the peculiar uncertainties of the mortal sphere. These experiences are That which is beyond otherness which results in the sudden recognition that we are Everything and Everything is us. There is no interval, there is no difference, there is no time. There is simply the incredible ability to experience the entire impact of creation as a Mystery of the Eternal Will and Eternal Love.

These things then made the peculiar school that flourished in this sad and dismal transition period. That it brought with it a tremendous strength of inner conviction we know. That it had a short span of existence we also know for we know that after the death of Theon of Alexandria, Hypatia took the Chair of Philosophy in the Neoplatonic Academy and was later assassinated. The murder of Hypatia closed the Alexandrian School. The death of Proclus approximately terminated the school in Athens because after that time, his disciples were scattered and forced to flee into other lands. In Rome, the school practically ended with the death of Plotinus. The Neoplatonic school did not live long in its strange mysterious effort to explain chaos, the chaos of the Roman Empire, the chaos of Egypt and of Greece by discovering by a variant extension of inward life the immense Reality which would justify chaos and would make it ultimately the instrument and servant of the great ordering power of an Eternal Good.

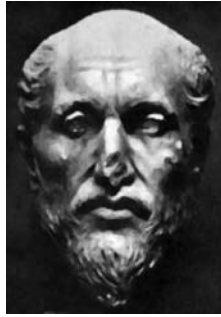
These philosophers left their mark upon history. Their school of thought descended and has survived. We know, for example, the important part that they played in the great statutes of Augustine. We know furthermore that they were tremendously powerful in shaping the whole great theological system of Thomas Aquinas. We know that they came on down to our own Emerson. Nearly all mystics of the medieval Christian period, Catholic and Protestant, were by nature and by many cases by pronouncement Neoplatonists. They were able to be this because the church did not deny them the right. It

did not hold up this one system to ridicule or general denigration. It was acknowledged and occurs again and again. In the Eastern church, the mystical Divinity of Dionysius Areopogitus dominated the entire Eastern church and became part of the tradition which descended with Christostom. In the West, we have other equal mystics. Some of the most famous, of course, is Buenaventura, Francis of Assisi and others all of whom carried the same mystical Divinity concept with them. It is still essentially a part of church dogma.

Thus, the influence of the situation is reflected, perhaps, in the Orders of Penance in some of the monastic orders of early Christianity because of the effort to escape otherness and to lay a foundation for crossing the interval between human limitation and Universal and Eternal Life. All of these systems are related in this transition. We know, for instance, that Aquinas specifically and definitely mentioned these other authors and is indebted to them. It is not theory, it is factually there. We have a tremendous moral descent of Neoplatonism and I think perhaps it can be also summarized in the approved definition of mysticism as it is known in the classical world and the modern worlds of mature philosophical thinking.

Mysticism is the belief or the conviction of the availability of the presence of the Divine. The individual seeking within himself and unselfishly and impersonally desirous and solicitous of inner instruction will receive it. This instruction is possible because of the Omnipotent, Omnipresent, and Omni-activity of the Divine Power. It is without boundary or limitation and is the Supreme or tremendous Unity and the Archetypal impulse behind all creatures seeking Wholeness and seeking to return again like Ulysses to "their own far distant native land."





### Part Three

## PLOTINUS ON THE BEAUTIFUL

*In the beginning, Neoplatonists considered BEAUTY an alternative to the word “good.” GOOD with a capital ‘G’ was the Neoplatonic equivalent of our word GOD, the object of the Soul’s desire. All things in themselves naturally aspire to the Good.*

WE HAVE TALKED ABOUT PLOTINUS and I have told you something about the character and disposition of this remarkable man. As I pointed out, although he lived a solitary life with no family of his own, he was surrounded for the greater part of his life by children and young people. He was the guardian of many distinguished Roman families and through many years served very close to the needs of practical people. At the same time, he was a very deep and mystical person perhaps one of the deepest and most profoundly mystical of all the great Pagan thinkers. He had greater depth than Marcus Aurelius, a more

obvious mysticism than Plato and a greater strange internal humility than nearly any of the other Neoplatonists.

Born in Egypt, he flourished principally in Rome and lived through the greater part of the third century A.D. He lived in this critical period when a great world order was gradually vanishing. He united in his own life not only the consolation that wisdom had brought to him but a dutiful and heroic effort to give this consolation to others. Most of his writings are burdened with the gentle acceptance of the human need. As we try to unfold one of his shortest but best known works, I think you can see something of the spirit of the man. Perhaps you can get the spirit from his own works rather than from the discussion or analysis of his character after all this time.

We know that Plotinus was one of the few of these philosophers who frankly and openly admitted that he had passed through certain experiences himself. The validity of his statements on these subjects is sustained by the quality of his work. There are many statements even in this little fragment which could scarcely come from a person who had not personally experienced something of the larger mystery of life. His *"Essay Concerning The Beautiful"* perhaps summarizes some of the choicest of his doctrines. It is one of those small gems that sometimes fall from a brilliant pen and are remembered even after greater and deeper works are forgotten. Like Boethius' *"On The Consolation Of Philosophy"* and *"The Meditations Of Marcus Aurelius Antoninus,"* the *"Essay On The Beautiful"* has become a classic. It is regrettable that it is not more readily available to students today. We use for our discussion of it the Thomas Taylor translation which was published in 1792 in London. The work is scarce but not rare. With time and effort, it can be generally discovered.

*"The Essay On The Beautiful"* is best introduced by study of the Neoplatonic concept of beauty. In this study, we know that



much more is inferred than in our common usage. The Neoplatonists in the beginning considered Beauty as an alternative to the word *Good*. Good with a capital 'G' was the Neoplatonic equivalent to our word *God* and perhaps this word God can be traced to this same derivation, *the Idea of the Good*. Certainly we hear the term 'Good God.' This concept of Good presents Deity in Neoplatonism as the object of the Soul's desire. All things in themselves naturally aspire to the Good. Any condition which arises by which this natural aspiration is thwarted, blocked or retarded results in an infirmity to the psychic life of the person. "*The Essay On The Beautiful*" therefore, is very important to the psychological level and should be given a lot of thought today when we are beginning once more to contemplate the powers resident in the human Soul.

Good, as the object of man's eternal quest is a substance in Itself beyond definition because we must approach Good on several levels. There are things which we commonly and daily regard as Good. These for the most part are the gratifications of desire. When things go according to our pleasure, it is good. When things go contrary to our pleasure, it is bad. Then there are other levels of good. There are good laws which we may grudgingly accept yet commonly acknowledge. There are good lives in relative terms for that which constitutes goodness of living on one level may not upon another. There are good books about which there can be no common agreement. There are good days in which our affairs run smoothly. Then there are good things that can happen to us—for the sick, for the restoration of health, for the burdened, rest and repose, for the sad, the return of joy.

Thus, good in our temporal way of consideration, means an end to the condition which is the opposite of itself. For evil to end is good. For good to end is evil. Thus, we measure these things by a relative yardstick and any improvement in our fortunes is a common good as far as we are concerned. We have a

larger concept of the common good of working together, building together, of sharing. We have these things which come under the heading of virtue. We have moral good which is virtue. We have Spiritual Good which in Itself is righteousness or a state of acceptability before God and our own conscience. We have a good bestowed by knowledge of arts and sciences.

All these things may confuse us, As Plotinus points out, for is there a Good that is apart from goodness and superior to it? Is there a Principle or *Essence* of Good? Does it operate through things? Is Its manifestation the source of Goodness or is Goodness merely a series of accidents arising in the mixtures and mingling of life? Is there a Principle of Good? If there is an Eternal Good, why can one person see good in a thing and another person cannot see that good? Why does the rain that we receive in gratitude cause consternation and distress to those in flooded areas? Our term Good therefore, must be explored more deeply for we must search for that kind of Good which is innate in the Body of God. We must search for a Goodness apart from things, an Essential Goodness or, as Plotinus might have called it, an *Intelligible Good*.

The mind contemplating the mysteries of life, is able to create a series of qualities which are Mental Goodness. Mental Goodness may also search from Itself toward the world around it seeking for proof and evidence that other things are Good. Therefore, the mind may be termed good if it is an ordered and useful mind but it cannot be termed good if it is an ill ordered and useless mind. All good things which exist in this world are subject to alternation. Too much of good becomes itself a surfeit and we are not longer happy. Therefore also, can we say that Good is associated with anything?

So we come to the Neoplatonic speculation—*is good a relationship of things?* Are things in a certain order good and in another order not good? This is a very important consideration

because if this is true, then all good is a compound. Good is something composed of parts all dissimilar to their totality.

This, in turn, leads to another speculation and from this thinking comes the consideration that good is not necessarily a compound because a thing itself good may be composed of other things in themselves also good. Plotinus gives the example of the great building. The architect, when the building is finished, looks at the whole structure and says it is magnificent. It is correct. It is in law and order. It is a work of great beauty and symmetry. It is everything that a building of that purpose and that kind should be. So the building is a common good composed of many parts. Yet, this same architect, looking at a single column in this building and considering thoughtfully and observing that its proportions are proper and symmetrical, that it fulfills exactly the purpose for which it was intended may also likely say that the single column is good. Therefore, good does not have to be a compound. The parts in themselves can also be good. A greater good may therefore be a combination of parts in themselves good. Therefore, good is not necessarily a compound.

On the other hand, certain things apparently worthless in themselves such as crude and uncut stones when worked upon, perfected by art and rendered beautiful may become equivalent to or worthy of the term good. Yet, in their rough and unconditioned state, they are not obviously good. Yet, the possibility of goodness lies in them and is released through the work of the stone cutter. Therefore, the stone cutter bestows good and good may not necessarily be inherent. We can continue this discussion for a long time at various levels and in various ways always seeking to determine the location of good, the fact of it divided from all the secondary considerations. It is in these lines of thought and approaches to the subject that we observe one of the magnificent facets of the mind of Plotinus. Even his most

mystical, most emotional and fervent thoughts are always approached carefully, cautiously and unfolded in orderly sequence with each reasonable doubt resolved before the mind passes to a further consideration. Never is a statement made unless it is supported by the necessary commentaried thinking.

Thus, we have a mystic who is a highly ordered thinker and yet all this thinking is used not to prove the correctness of his mind but to prove the sublimity of the Divine Plan. In this we have the use of mind, the use of words. Plotinus in one of his discussions weeps a little over the sorrow of words, how little words can tell, how poor they are in the search for terms suitable to clear the doubts and misgivings of the human Soul. Yet, perhaps there was no one in antiquity who used words more lovingly, more beautifully and more exactly than this man who would have been an inspiration to the best part of modern semantic thinking.

In Plotinus' "Essay On The Beautiful" therefore, we are just going to read a few of the opening lines to sort of set the pattern for you and then we will go into the problem that he presents. He begins thus:

*Beauty for the most part consists in objects of sight but it is also received through the ears by the skillful composition of words and the delicate proportions of sound. For in every species of harmony, beauty is to be found. If we rise from the senses into the regions of the Soul, we shall therefore perceive studies and offices, actions and habits, sciences and virtues invested with a much larger portion of beauty. But whether there is a still higher beauty will appear as we advance in this investigation.*

That is his opening statement of the purpose of his work. From that, we can begin to summarize the thinking of this man

on a subject which is very close to us and is probably much closer as we understand what he meant by *the Beautiful*.

As a springboard for his discussion, Plotinus compares the Beautiful and the Good because he affirms and assumes that there is a valid relation between these two terms, valid perhaps first in the fact that neither can be arbitrarily defined. This in itself is important, for that which cannot be captured in a definition may very likely be superior to definition and therefore belong in a different world, a higher sphere of human contemplation. He further held to be true that the Principle of Beauty, if It has a separate and natural existence, if It is an Archetype, if It is an Eternal Being resident in Space, It must be apperceived apart from Its productions or those things which we call beautiful. Therefore, he recommends us to consider the possibility that things *so-called* beautiful are a long shadow of Beauty cast upon matter and that the beauty of physical things lies not in themselves but is bestowed upon them by the operation of a superior power. We may go so far as to see that Plotinus is identifying the term Beauty with the Christian concept of Grace because Beauty is a power for goodness, a power for healing, a power for health and well being eternally and everywhere available and suitable to the perceptive faculties of various orders of living creatures.

He then points out that for each species its own kind is beautiful. Therefore, beauty has in its material sense a relation to acceptances. That which is strange, distant, improbable and difficult of comprehension is not immediately recognized as beautiful. In art, this means that the artist, seeking to capture a concept of beauty, will find this concept changing and elusive. That which satisfied his instincts at one period of his life will not satisfy him at another period of life. The objects themselves have not changed. The energies moving through them have not changed. What then has changed? He has changed and the secret lies in himself.

When the conqueror Cambeses is said to have approached the great temple of the Olympian Zeus for the purpose of destroying the building, he entered first into the great structure and there gazed for some time upon the magnificent ivory carving of the face of Zeus—this gigantic structure, this statue with flesh of ivory and robes of gold seated upon its Olympian throne. After he had gazed upon it for some time, Cambeses slowly fell to his knees and the sword fell from his hand and he took an oath that he would not destroy that building or injure the god who sat there. Yet, no one had spoken. Only ivory and gold had glittered before his eyes. What then had moved the conqueror? He himself said he could not withstand the nobility of this splendid face that looked down upon him.

In this then, can we say that the Olympian Zeus was dead or that it was merely a form? Can we say that forms of this kind, statues, paintings, works of art have no life in themselves? They have some kind of a radiant power, a symbolic, magical influence for Cambeses bent to a symbol of incredible nobility, a strange regality in the great statue by Phidias which looked down and he could not withstand this strange expression. The answer, according to Plotinus, would have rested in the sublimity of the depiction. This beauty like a light shown through it and yet it shown through only the works of man, an inanimate substance that would soon return to the dust. Yet, this beauty lived.

Is this beauty then captured only in the works of man? No, Plotinus believed that it was captured most in the works of the Infinite Itself. No man could equal the sublimity of the sunset or touch the grandeur of the midnight sky spangled with stars. Plotinus felt that man could not see these things, could not look upon them without being influenced in some subtle way and recognize an incredible beauty flowing in upon them. Yet beauty is not in the stars. Beauty is not in the Earth or the air. Beauty is not even in the fire, the most incorporeal of all the

elements which deems itself both bodied and un-embodied. It is something that blazes and vanishes again yet every motion, every flicker of it has some strange and wonderful fascination for the human mind. So beauty is none of these things. Beauty also is not corporeal and yet the human body, the human face, the human mind all these things may be beautiful but they are not beauty. Yet, we may rejoice in the symbols and similitude of beauty.

Plotinus says, let us behold a handsome man or a beautiful woman and let us say why do we say this man is handsome or this woman beautiful. His answer was that in most probability we will say so because of the most conformity of natural parts. We will say that the eyes are properly set; the nose is of due size; the face is well shaped; there is no violent asymmetry of parts and proportions. The whole form and structure corresponds with a norm, with that most stylish, most acceptable, most understandable by us. When things are in their due proportions and there is no deformity, no distortion or asymmetry in the compound, then we say that this compound is handsome or beautiful. If however, there be disproportion, we will not say this.

Homer was a blind, aged and crippled man and those who knew him called him beautiful. Socrates, probably the homeliest of the Athenians with his bandy legs, his short, awkward, heavy body, his bulbous nose and his strange bulging eyes declared himself to be so imperfectly formed that dogs, seeing him upon the street, howled and fled with their tails between their legs. Yet the disciples of Socrates called him beautiful. Therefore, beauty must have some other existence.

Those who are satisfied only with proportions, dimensions and arrangements of outward parts see beauty, accept it and hasten on their way. Others concerned with something else, some other value may cling for a moment to the outer symbol of beauty, find it empty and pass on to something else wherein

they find a greater beauty. They find the beauty of greatness of character, beauty of nobility of spirit, beauty of gentleness and humility of service. All these things likewise are beautiful.

As has been pointed out, there is also a strange subtle beauty in common ruin. We will find the broken pillars of an ancient temple or an old arch vined with creepers and artists will come from all over the world to paint the beauty of this wreckage. Even these things can be beautiful because there is a nostalgia in the human Soul that rejoices also in that kind of beauty which the Neoplatonists called the beauty of sadness. Things do not always have to be beautiful and happy. Some things can be beautiful and sad.

Why do these things that are sad seem beautiful to us? Usually because we release something. They cause some narrow reflection in our own lives. They revive old thoughts. They surround us with memories some pleasant perhaps, some painful but all rich like the involved tapestry of some ancient loom. So we also find beauty in these things. As Blake pointed out, you will find the beauty of infancy in a bodily proportion which we reject in maturity. As we find the beauty in great age in those gentle, feeble and infirm ways we would reject in manhood, each thing in its own season and its own time is beautiful.

The answer lies in the tree, in the shrub or in the vegetable in the garden. The tree that bears leaves is beautiful. The tree that bears fruit is beautiful. In these different periods, the beauty of the summer foliage, the beauty of the bare lines of the tree in winter against the whiteness of the snow all these things are beautiful. So beauty is not summer nor is it winter nor is it youth nor age, beauty is something else.

Plotinus naturally proceeds to search more inwardly for beauty. He comes upon a number of excellent things to bring to attention. Beauty inwardly extends from those most simple of practices. The beauty of the mother meditating upon her newborn child; the beauty of young lovers; the beauty of strength



performing works of virtue; the beauty of the man working in the field, all these things have inspired the poets, the artist, the musician to great compositions because each has recognized in some menial and common thing the mysterious sense of a satisfying beauty.

We go on from these to other things as Plotinus takes us to what he calls the beauties of the mind, the beauties of human thought. He explains to us how the extension of the mind in its own inward action may be beautiful, how an individual in the cultivation of virtue discovers a great beauty; how the artist and musician experience the beauty within themselves long before they can confer it upon the outward world. He also goes on to explain those graces of the Soul, those natural concords that fellowship, that friendliness, that sharing of common opportunity and responsibility with those two working side by side in the cause of something that is greater than either of them. These things too are strangely, deeply and movingly beautiful. He also mentions the beauty of pure knowledge, the beauty of reason, the beauty of that strength of mind which, cutting through all chaff and fallacy, achieves one of the great beauties of the Soul, namely, honesty.

Therefore, our philosopher gives quite a lot of thought to the glory, the beauty, the sublimity of good old fashioned honesty. Here is something that is as wonderful as a sunrise and glorious as the Moon hovering over a wonderful moonlit scene. Honesty, integrity, stamps a beauty upon the mind. It also radiates from its own center and is felt benevolently by the whole world or by all who come within the reach of its light and warmth. The beauty of the poet. The great dreams of Homer. The wonderful Theogenic vision of Hesiod. The magnificent word symbolism of Virgil. All of these things coming out bear witness to some wonderful world order and dispensation of mind. For the mind that can produce beauty must in some strange way be beautiful.

This leads to other thoughts. Man is a compound creature with many members, dimensions and parts. In all these, he may not be beautiful but in something he may have an excellence that is significant. A man may not in all things be temperate, but he may achieve some outstanding work. As Plotinus points out in other essays, the achievements of men by the beauty within themselves can be divided into two orders. If beauty arises in an imperfect temperament, then that beauty must move outwardly and produce effects upon the objective life. The man who is not great in morality may clear the weeds out of a field and restore it for the harvest. A man whose life is intemperate and disordered may, like Richard Wagner, compose great music.

Yet, all the things which he does belong to the objective world because without balance of temperament, man can carve and cut and hew, he can fashion and mold and design according to the laws of the sciences with which he is informed but these productions which are the result of an imperfect knowledge of beauty have within them the impermanence which is the mark of this incompleteness. As the Oriental philosopher might say, only when man is perfect can he produce perfect beauty and when he produces this perfect beauty it is immortal and can never perish. Everything which is the production of imperfect and immature beauty is fragile and must have a temporary endurance and then vanish away.

Thus also in the compound of the Soul, what constitutes then the evidence that beauty can be created by man and what is opposed to this concept? Man can create the beautiful because within himself resides the imagination, the internal visualization necessary for this work but when the individual accomplishes the beautiful, is he able to explain his own accomplishments? Does he know what he has done? Is he able to distinguish the very facts or principles that transform the thing he did into beauty? He will say yes, within a measure with this

measure being the laws of order. The painter knows the principle of dynamic symmetry. He knows exactly where to center the picture. He knows that he must not center it in the center. If he does, it is dead. So by degrees, he learns also the proportions of the human body, the laws of perspective and becomes skillful in the mingling of his colors. Thus, he can explain how he had created beauty or created that which is acceptable and termed beautiful by those who see it.

Therefore, Plotinus might add, did you fashion this beauty from all these laws that you kept to make this thing? Were they the repositories of the beautiful? Was it the Law that ordained the beauty and all you were was a servant of that Law, keeping it and achieving an end, breaking it and destroying that end? Is that beauty part of Law? If we keep all Laws are we beautiful? If so, why are those Laws so important?

Here we have another very interesting point. Laws in Nature particularly the Laws in the creative arts where beauty has its peculiar throne and where the muses dwell, these Laws all work from one tremendous Principle, *Unity*. The tremendous impulse of all artistic canon is to bring various elements of composition and technique into oneness. They must be brought together. Low and woe to the artist whose only unity for his picture is the frame. Yet, that now is often the case.

The Laws of Order operating in art and music must transform the single notes of a composition into a composition. In art, they must transform drawings, color, visualization and design all these must lose their own identity in what might be termed the picture. No one will buy a picture merely because of perspective nor a picture of line or a picture of color although some have been talked into some of these things in these periods of modernity. Actually, we are buying not the elements of a picture, the separate parts of it, we are buying a totality. We are buying a totality that through its unity has become the instrument of a visualization, something meaningful in some

way has been produced by uniting means and agencies and allowing each to die in a compound that the compound itself might live. If the color is too strong, then the color has lived at the expense of the line. If the foreground is too heavy, the background perishes. If the lights are too bright, the shadows die. Therefore in all things to maintain balance, we cannot have the dominance of a single part over totality. All these Laws of harmonic design—proportion, harmony, rhythm and motion—tell us that the purpose by which we achieve our end must be to attain unity, to take fragments and parts and fashion them into a wholeness.

Is this wholeness then or the Unity Principle which considers all things in relation to their parts the Unity, the Principle of Beauty? This would solve the problem of the building of the pillar architecturally mentioned previously because the building is a unity made up of parts but each of the pillars is also a unity, a complete pillar. If the pillar has a pilaster at the summit of it, this can be separated from the rest and still be a complete unit because a good pilaster is a unit. It is a thing, a totality in itself. Several of these totalities combine to make another and this in turn is blended with any others. Each stone of a building is a unity. In the old days of the cathedral builders, each was cut lovingly and with due consideration for great art and ingenuity so that when the stone was finished, the master mason placed his mark upon it that all the ages might know that he had trued the stone and he was proud of it. So each stone was a unity, a complete work.

This would follow the Pythagorean concept that all things are Unity and that a unit therefore, can be united with others to form greater unity. In that way therefore, does a unit, being a totality of some kind, differ from what conceivably is not a unity? This brings a rather important problem. Can you think of anything that is not a unity? Can we say that bodies are

made of cells and therefore the body is a unit but so is each cell? Every part of Nature is therefore a part of Infinite Unity.

This, perhaps, gives us a clue to something. Is Beauty then Unity? Is it therefore present in all things either in larger or smaller units? As everything must be the totality of itself, is this totality then inevitable? Is this totality beauty? If such is the case, then Beauty, Archetypally, lies at the root of every existing thing which by existence has an identity and every existing identity is a unit of Beauty.

Plotinus however, is not quite certain of this point because while he identifies *Platonically* and *Neoplatonically* Beauty and the Good, he declares that while these as far as man's consciousness is concerned cannot be distinguished one from another. He says that there is a priority in Reality Itself and that actually, the Good is prior to the Beautiful. Therefore, the Good may be considered to be the Fountain of Beauty. The reason why the Good is regarded as the Fountain of Beauty is that the Good contains completely in Itself and *in abscondita* (hidden) the Law which is Beauty. In other words, Plotinus now advances the possibility that the Universal Law emanating from the Good and therefore of Itself an Eternal Good flowing from a "Father Fountain," produces forever and continuously a re-statement of Itself in the processes of creation.

Law is essential to Good. It is the witness of That which is forever Rightness. So we come to one of the great arguments of Aquinas and we must finally conclude that a thing *is* because it is Good. Therefore at the root of Being, the Creating Power inevitably decrees the Good.

The Good, moving into operation, moves by Laws in conformity with Itself. The motion of the Good must always be the Beautiful because the Beautiful is now a dynamic. Beauty therefore, would correspond to the Christian concept of the Trinity and would correspond to the Second Person, the Son. As the Son bears witness to the Father, so Beauty everywhere

bears witness to Good—Good which is man's moral statement of Oneness or the Eternal. In this same course by analogy to the Trinity, Beauty is also the Redeemer for that which is created by Law is perfected by Beauty. All motion in Nature according to Law is Beautiful and when it is contrary to Law, it is not Beautiful.

In order to go further, we must go a little aside into other works of Plotinus to decide why something is not Beautiful. Plotinus, following Plato and the other Greeks declared that man, like Narcissus gazing downward from a state of Spiritual security and beheld form or body in his own reflection in a pool, fell in and drowned trying to embrace his own shadow. Man, descending into the obscurity of matter taking upon himself a form or body, is inwardly obscured and outwardly caused to hesitate. His inner impulses do not come through the body easily or, as you often hear of the musician with his famous trombone, he blew it in so sweet and it came out to sour. The individual, lacking the ability to express or reveal the Beauty within himself, makes partial or imperfect expressions. Also, he is inwardly obscured in knowledge, in understanding and in Spirituality. Therefore, under the weight of this obscuring, he falls upon evil ways, evil times. He is capable of acting contrary to Law so that the asymmetry or deformity or lack of Beauty is in some way the result of the obscuring of the natural motion of Law and Life.

In this sense then, to return to our other thinking, that which is not so beautiful may exist. By the same explanation men may describe as beautiful that which is only beautiful to him because of the obscuring of his own senses. As each person has a different degree of this obscuring, there will inevitably be enumerable standards of acceptance and rejection of the level of Beauty. That which is beautiful to the primitive human being is not satisfying to the highly sensitive human being. Thus

Beauty however, has been identified as a motion, as a Principle emanating from the "*Father Fountain Of Eternal Good*."

Here we come to another important step. Having established in our own thinking, at least in part, some skeletal outline of the theory of Plotinus on Nature and the Beautiful, we come early in his writings to the question that naturally arises. Why do we recognize beauty? How do we recognize beauty? What makes us pause, change our mood and become affected by the subtle symmetry of things? He says it is because in each human being there is a Soul although he only mentions it in this essay. He goes much more into detail in many of his other works but we'll have to borrow from other essays and can't note each one as we pass due to time limitations but everything we are saying is derived from some writing of Plotinus.

Plotinus explains that the Soul of man, following Plato's concept, is a mathematical formula. Now this does not mean that it is a living formula. It is an Archetype. It is a magnificent geometric entirety, a unity like some strange perfectly formed snow crystal. The Soul may therefore be mathematically defined, analyzed and may be proved upon analysis to be of its own substance and nature balanced and equal in all its parts having no deformity or deficiency and suffering from no privation of excellence in any of its qualities. This Soul then, is like the Diamond Soul of Tibetan Buddhism. It is a radiant manifestation of Eternal Law, a full revelation of the Power of the One flowing through the Beautiful into the Good. The Soul is therefore Unity. In man, it is a superior Unity, the most complete Unity of which he is capable in his personal and immediate experience.

Plotinus implies, as the poet says, that the eyes are the windows of the Soul but he also tells us that the ears may also bring messages. The hand may bring reactions from rough to smooth textures of things. The Chinese go so far as to say that the tongue and even the taste buds can bring us the most Spiritual

enjoyment simply because all of these are reflectors of pleasantness and law and order, of propriety and symphony even going into the preparation of a dish of Chinese food. All these things are part of a pattern and a plan. The Chinese say a man digests his food better if the texture, the color, the flavor, the degree of temperature and the size and shape of the individual morsel is carefully considered.

Thus through these windows, the sensory perceptions, the Soul gazing outward is forever fulfilling or seeking to fulfill its own expectancy. Let us say for a moment that you spent twenty years in the study of art and as a result of all that very serious and conscientious endeavor you become what might be termed sensitive to art. Wherever you look in your daily wanderings you will see art because you have trained yourself to see it. You have an appreciation of it. Furthermore, you will naturally decide that some things are more artistic than others. You will look at a landscape of beautiful trees against the sky and you will say that would be perfect if one tree was not there. Something has broken the pattern. Therefore if you paint that picture, you will leave that tree out to meet the esthetic standard of your own appreciation. Going into an art gallery you would with greater discrimination turn inevitably to better pictures. You would say with a simple Oriental artist who would explain nothing, describe nothing, would comment on nothing but would stand in front of the picture and simply say, it pleases me. This was because it satisfied.

If then we can train one small part of a Soul through discipline to have this selectivity and also to gain a new and unexpected pleasure for the observance of that which fulfills its own inward conviction of itself then, says Plotinus, we accept the beautiful because the Soul in us, being in Itself Beautiful, rejoices in beholding Its own likeness in other things. Always, therefore, that which brings to us the feelings of beauty and the joy, the thrill, the great contentment of Spirit that comes from



the satisfaction given by the Beautiful, all of this is merely a reflex from the Soul telling us that It has found that which is like Itself.

In another essay, Plotinus explains in almost identical terms the meaning of love. He says that love is that longing for completeness or for Unity within the Soul which is ever seeking for completeness or fragments of Its own nature and finds in the world someone who seems to bring more completeness to Its own life. So Beauty as experienced as a giving of pleasure was under the criticism of that great critic the Soul Itself, that which determines proportion that, which accepts only according to Its own pleasure. If this Soul therefore is awake, has been strongly cultivated, has a greater and nobler concept of Beauty even in its most imperfect and deprived state, some ray or fragment of It is still powerful enough to seek fulfillment. The primitive artist finds fulfillment in the crude figure that he has carved. For him, it is beautiful. Always that which is fulfillment, that upon which our own consciousness has turned with acceptances bring to us joy, brings to us the satisfaction of beauty.

As we then go further, we observe these standards of beauty changing with our maturing so that by degrees we become more refined. At this point in his discussion, Plotinus also draws on an allegory in lines from Ulysses. He describes the wanderer returning to his own shores after being long away in the terrible tragedy of the Trojan War. Then, in those long and harrowing years of adventure in which at last, though shipwrecked many times, subject to the most terrible labors, exertions and deprivations Ulysses at last comes home. As he nears his own land, the wanderer pauses. All of his life, all through these years he has waited and dreamed of this homecoming but as he approaches it, he does not even recognize the shore. Something has changed. Things are not where he thought they were because in all those lonely years, he had built another land. He

had built an inner vision of his homeland that was totally un-geographical. By degrees, he had strengthened minor errors in his thinking and he had misplaced the cities and the houses. They were much bigger and more beautiful in his dream than they were in reality. As he came home, he did not know where he was. Finally of course, he realized and was united with his own waking Soul, Penelope, who had been making the tapestry that was never finished. All of these legends and allegories deal with this same problem, the struggle of Life to return to Its own proper and natural state.

Then Plotinus goes on to contemplate how man in his own thinking and living can advance himself in beauty and he examines beauty on the level of order, of that Golden Mean which is summarized in the statement of Socrates: "In all things, not too much." Plotinus comes to the conclusion that somewhere in the Mystery of Beauty is the factor of moderation, that in every respect, things run to deformity. The moment our thoughts, our emotions or our actions become excessive, something goes wrong. Excessive attitudes afflict, distort and disease the inward perceptions of the individual. They cause him to fall under the influence of excess and therefore to create habits which destroy beauty. It deforms natural character. So Plotinus turns from all extremes to find that moderation which is beauty. Moderation affirms beauty to be a kind of balance. It is like a pair of scales. Both pans at the end of the scales by their tipping destroy beauty which is suspended at the center beam. All things move around the sovereignty of the Eternal Sun and the Sun is the most beautiful of all forms because it is Life Itself.

Thinking therefore of moderation, Plotinus thinks of light. In thinking of light, he points out that it reveals beauty because if these things are dark, we cannot even see them but light brings them into a strange and wonderful relief. Light itself can destroy beauty just as easily as it can produce it. There is very

little beauty if the light is too strong or the shadows too deep. It can also blaze forth with too much evident light upon some fragile or sensitive subject and deform it. For there are some things that are most beautiful at night under the stars and the Moon and other things that are beautiful when the Sun goes behind a cloud.

So light plays a very important part for light is ever revealing beauty but light itself traces strange forms in beauty and all who have stood on the edge of the Grand Canyon at different hours of the day will know what I mean. The light alone changes every shape and yet nothing itself is changed. Light comes from within man. Light as absolute materialistic realism can blaze upon a thing and kill every sensitive line that it contains. Shadows can make the new building look old. Light clouded, can muffle the surface of the world. Light eclipsed can change all things into greenish, grayish darkness. So light can make things look alive and make them appear dead according to its usage. There is nothing that is a more wonderful sculptor or molder of forces than light itself.

If light therefore, can by these processes change things, then light can also empirically release, reveal or conceal the beauties of things as they are. This light in man can also do these things. The light of cold reason is one kind. The light of love that can see no defect is another. The light of friendship which accepts defects and remains as friend. All these things show the light within the individual can mold and change the subjects and substances of the world around him. This light can be likened to the mind. Things then, may not be good or bad but thinking can make them so. The mind therefore, can with the sweep of its own power destroy beauty or create it, redeem it or reveal it, subdue it, conquer it, annihilate it and yet the object scenes are themselves always the same.

We have another problem. Is Beauty then only light and shadow? Is Beauty in some way changing like the seasons?

Therefore, it is One, forever changing. It is forever the Unity of Its own nature. In the ancient Greek systems upon which the doctrines of Neoplatonism are built, the whole of existence came out of the Mysteries of Un-Aging Time, the Eternal Power resident at the root of things. Being Total and Absolute, the Principle of Principles, from this Eternal Being by the mingling of Its Power came into existence as Chaos, Creating and the Created. When these whirl together, they move in a vast nebular world until finally out of their striving was formed the *Egg of Phanes*. This was the strange mysterious Egg with Its upper hemisphere of gold and Its lower hemisphere of silver.

Finally, the Egg burst open and a great Light came out and the radiant Power of Phanes emerged with many heads and arms and the bodies and faces of all creatures. This blazing protagonist brought Life to the whole world. From this Life came all orders of life. Life means knowing, means the power to observe, the power to see, the power to be. The darkness also came from this in which was generated those things which may be known, those things which may be seen, those things which can be the objects of the Power. Therefore, the Power and Its objects like Ormuzd and Ahriman came forth out of the Great Egg of Eternity. Therefore in man's Soul also, there is this power to see and there is also the ever present shadow of the thing seen.

This Beauty now like music demands some other values. A magnificent orchestration requires not only a composer and a wonderful orchestra, it requires a proper audience. It can be totally lost if the audience is unable to appreciate it. Strangely, an unappreciative audience will gradually corrupt the orchestra. They cannot function properly. Something strangely communicated means that the pattern is wrong. The situation is not right. Therefore, the harmony is not fully and completely transmitted from the composition to the audience. Thus in beauty,

we have this problem not only of the seer but the powers and principles of the things seen or the things experienced inwardly and outwardly, all these elements that must go into this great search for substance of the Beautiful Itself.

Perhaps to summarize some points, Plotinus comes to the ultimate conclusion that Beauty exists apart from the beautiful, that Beauty *is* and that It can be bestowed but then It can also be taken back. It can be separated from and re-joined to not because It can ever be completely deprived but because It is forever in itself changing. The beauty of life is taken from the dead but the beauty of the dead remains and it too is beautiful. Yet, these beauties are not the same, therefore they cannot merely arise within an organism. They are the adaptations of organism to a Principle and each change in that organism reveals another aspect of something superior to itself, a Principle of Beauty. Thus many musical compositions may all be beautiful, but they are not the same.

Therefore, Beauty is not locked in any one of them or it could not be conferred equally upon another. Beauty is not locked in sound nor is it locked in light. Therefore, Beauty has an existence apart from these things because It is superior to them. It must be superior to them or It could not be diffused through them variously. If It was identical with them or co-eternal in them, It would be restricted by them and some things could not possess It at all. There is nothing that cannot potentially possess beauty or in which the potential of beauty is not present. We may not see the beauty of the horse in the gangly colt but it is there coming into manifestation. We cannot see the beauty of the oak tree in the acorn but it is there.

Therefore, Beauty has a subsistence apart from form. The second proof is, It can exist where forms do not exist. Therefore, it can exist entirely free from such symbolic shapes and shadows as we associate with form. Beauty can exist in the pure substance of idea. Idea is without shape but it has a nature. It is

therefore Archetypal. An idea is without shape, form or dimension as far as we can recognize the thing. An idea may be symmetrical but without a body. Because Beauty can exist in both the form and the formless, It must be superior to both form and formlessness because no thing can exist in two separate states unless in its own nature it is superior to both states. If It is not superior to both, It will be locked in one.

Thus, we go back to the problem of the priority of knowledge in the Pythagorean Theory. Pythagoras bestowed priority upon mathematics and considered mathematics the symbol of Absolute Beauty. He made a triad of mathematics, astronomy and music but he pointed out both astronomy and music require mathematics and that it can flow into either and must. If you remove either astronomy or music, you do not destroy mathematics because of it being capable of being defused through both as well as other sciences and arts. If you destroy mathematics, you destroy both astronomy and music with it. So that which by its destruction does not destroy that which is superior to itself in this concatenation is by this virtue inferior.

Thus, any beautiful thing can be destroyed. War has shown us that. Yet Beauty is indestructible and cannot be identified with the things. Beauty exists in every art and science therefore, It cannot be identified with any one of these in particular. Having a separate existence in a state of morality, It is therefore resident in the Soul but It is not morality although morality is reflection of a specialization of It.

The sublimity of the intellect may also be manifestation of Beauty from the perfect mind thinking the thought of God is supremely Beautiful. Yet Beauty is not mind. Beauty is not merely thought because if beauty was thought, It could not exist in the mindless but does. It exists most magnificently in the crystalline structure in a rock. Beauty is therefore superior also because beauty was here before mind came therefore, we can have no doubt. We also have the thoughtless beauty

of children which arises from their natural instincts and not their thoughts. We have the magnificent beauty of the flight of a bird or the leap of a deer yet these things rise not from philosophy nor morality nor ethics but from the instinctive nature of these creatures. Therefore, Beauty lies in instinct also, not mind alone.

We can go on beyond the Mystery of Mind and we can find that the mind, when deeply and gravely perturbed, cannot achieve Beauty because of its own disturbance. In its extremity, the mind turns itself to faith and there finds Beauty. Therefore, in the stillness of the mind and the simple acceptance of good, we find the eternal presence of Beauty. Perhaps there is nothing more Beautiful than man's simple and complete acceptance of the reality of the Divinity of things unseen.

Thus, man reaching toward his Creator builds convictions, patterns, dreams within himself some mental and some surpassing mind. Socrates shortly before his death thinking of the conditions of the state into which he was to pass, declared that factually he had no knowledge of the state, that to him, it had always simply been an unexplored country he longed to visit. He knew that to visit that country by drinking the hemlock he must leave not only his body but perhaps his mind also, specifically his physical brain. He might, as he says, be going into an infinite sleep from which there is not awakening or he might be going to this better land than he had ever known. He might be going to this world where the gods dwell and where all the answers were to the questions to which he could find no answers in his world as he knew it.

So at the end, not with great thought but with the face of peace, Socrates went forth to the great adventure completely at peace. His disciples knew that this peace was also a kind of beauty for there is a great relaxation of the mind in the presence of something vaster than itself. The beauty of prayer comes not from thought but from faith because man cannot even clearly

envision in his mind the substance of that to which he prays. Yet in his faith, he finds a great peace and this peace is order and this order is the internal experience of Law in the sense that all things are inevitably right. The realization of this rightness is in itself an effulgent Beauty within man.

So we quest onward to the Beauty to that which is essentially the Principle of Beauty. It vanishes, as Plotinus tells us, in the effulgent nature of the One, the Eternal God in whose heart and Soul the roots of Beauty are hidden. Man cannot in substance or immediate apperception know this beauty.

Plotinus was a man of very practical thinking and to him, the concept of Beauty implied man's quest of It or the power of man to increase in Beauty, to increase in his own internal apperception of this quality. Therefore, I'm just going to repeat a few more lines from the more mature part of this essay in which it is gradually reaching this climax of utility:

*But you will ask after what manner is this Beauty of the worthy Soul to be perceived. It is thus, recall your thoughts inward and if while contemplating yourself you do not perceive yourself Beautiful, then imitate the sculptor who when he desires a beautiful statue, cuts away what is superfluous, smooths and polishes what is left, and never desists until he has given it all the Beauty his art is able to effect. In this manner must you proceed, by lopping what is luxurious, directing what is oblique and by purgation illustrating what is obscure. Thus, you continue to polish and beautify your statue until the Divine splendor of virtue shines upon you and seated in pure and holy majesty, rises to your view.*

*If you thus become purified, residing in yourself and having nothing any longer to impede this unity of mind and no further mixture to be found therein but*



*perceiving your whole self to be a true light and light alone, light which though immense is not measured by a magnitude nor limited by any circumscribed figure but is everywhere immeasurable as being greater than every measure and more excellent than every quality.*

*If perceiving yourself thus improved and trusting solely to yourself as no longer requiring a guide, fixed so steadfastly your mental view for with the Intellectual eye alone can such immense beauty be perceived; if your eyes are infected with sordid concerns and not thoroughly refined while it is being stretched to behold the most exciting spectacles, it will be immediately darkened and be incapable of intuition though someone should declare the spectacle pleasant which it might otherwise be able to discern.*

This point is developed gradually through the text but on the Theurgic level this being an important part of the Neoplatonic discipline, Plotinus gives us certain instructions. He says first of all that no Soul or psychic entity such as man can perceive a Beauty superior to itself. Between man's inward power to perceive and the outward objects of his perception is imposed the nature of himself with its limitations, its shortcomings and most of all, the lack of discipline. Therefore man, seeking to solve the Mystery of the Beautiful may first be satisfied only with external forms as the first rungs of the ladder leading upward to the Inevitable. Outward forms by their symmetry may satisfy him because he is not yet aware of the internal or eternal qualities. But as the sculptor making his statue must reveal beauty or release it through his own psychic life through the tool of the stone (an allegory incidentally derived from Socrates), so the human being discovers Beauty in himself by releasing It from the deformity of imperfection. Each individual therefore, becomes a sculptor. He accomplishes his end not by

creating Beauty but by releasing It. The allegory is so subtle and so mysteriously true that you have to think of it twice.

Someone once congratulated Socrates because he had made a very beautiful statue. He, with his usual modesty, disclaimed the credit which he said belonged to the gods and the muses who had inspired him because the statue had always been in this piece of marble. It was always beautiful. No one could subtract anything from that Beauty except by destroying the statue. All he, Socrates, had done was to take away those parts of the stone that were not supposed to be there and what was left was Beauty. He had released, he had not created.

Thus, in the perfection of the human Soul by the correction of its vices, by the moderations of its successes, by the maintenance of its temperances man does not create Beauty, he permits It to manifest according to Its own nature. Thus, man does not become Beauty, he becomes beautiful because Beauty is released through him by the Laws of his own kind.

As Plotinus proceeds in this essay we can understand immediately that by Beauty he means also something else. He regards Beauty in Its ultimate form as an apatheistic state by which man is capable of the experience, the sovereign Beauty of Reality. Thus Beauty now becomes the mystical experience, It becomes illumination. It becomes the state of man's "*at-onement*" with the sublime substance of Total Being. Plotinus describes that on such an occasion this beatific state had been accorded to him and that for a moment, he had dwelt in a state of measureless, timeless identity with Being.

This identity was the Supreme Beauty, the absolute perfect release and expression of Beauty upon and through the human Soul for he beheld in that moment all things beautiful and this was the mystical experience. It was not that he could behold the secrets of all things nor could he speak with the voice of men and Angels, not that he should have all knowledge or all skills or that wisdom should reveal and unfold through him of all its

mysteries and its works. These are not the things that happened in those magnificent moments of the perfection of the Theurgic mystery. All that Plotinus had known was Infinite Being in Its Infinite Beauty. It was not a sensible Beauty to the mind or a corporeal Beauty to the body but a transcendent ecstasy of magnificent, complete and total participation in the infinite satisfaction of Infinite Beauty. He then tells in other works that he became aware of the Body of God and that Body was Beauty walking alone, that in some mysterious way in aloneness, we all achieve a unity, a freedom from parts, from the concept of division, from the discords and dissonances. So Beauty, as the Blessed Demoiselle, walks alone even as in the dawn of time, according to the story in Genesis, the Lord walked in the garden in the cool of the evening.

This experience of the imminence beyond the presence of Deity as the exquisite expression of Perfect Beauty is not merely the experience of an artist. Plotinus was not an artist as a painter or a sculptor nor a musician as we know it, yet all these beauties were in it also.

The wonderful sensitivity of his Soul knew these things but it was an even greater and more sublime Beauty for in It, his own Soul rushed forth not in gladness but in that absolute Love, that complete and entire self-forgetfulness. It rushed toward the embracing of the Beloved which is, or course, in the mystic allegory of reunion or identification with God.

Thus, Soul in Itself, disciplined to the apperception of Truth, beheld It blazing forth from the universe and in that instant, in that tremendous experience, the great sage, the great mystic was born for now, the Being walked forever in the Beauty of the garden and the whole world revealed its numerous and manifold manifestations of Beauty. Each Beauty was seen as Lawful. Plotinus describes this Lawfulness of the "*Manyness of Beauty*" saying that the Soul that has found the Beautiful no longer needs to say, this is beautiful and this is not beautiful for

all things are Beauty coming of age. All things are this infinite magnificence unfolding, releasing, growing, blossoming and bearing its fruit.

This, to Plotinus, could come only to the human being who had cultivated the noblest of Beauty in himself. This cultivation meant the gradual renunciation step by step of every attitude, every thought, every motion and emotion that was not gracious, that was not kind, that was not loving, that did not in itself possess some quality of Beauty more obviously revealed than in these negative, destructive modes of expression. Thus through the cultivation of Beauty, man comes to re-fathom the Mystery of the Beautiful because all Beauty leads to the Beautiful which is none of these things but abides in the midst of them and IS all of them.

Thus by degrees, Plotinus tells us that religion is man's search for the Beautiful. It is a search for that Power of God which causes rejoicing and in this there is a point that perhaps represents one of the reasons for a conflict between Plotinus and the early church. Plotinus could not conceive of a religion of fear. He could not conceive of men being good because they were afraid to be bad. He could not conceive of universe in which a principle of sin could gain even a passing dominion over Good nor could he conceive of men born in sin and conceived in iniquity. There was no part of that in his way of life. He could not think of millions of human beings praying to be forgiven or all the strange doubts that infect the deathbeds of the conscience stricken.

To Plotinus, religion was a gracious, glorious motion, a worship of the Eternal Beauty by simply being Beautiful. Not outwardly but inwardly, not in body alone (though this need not be neglected) but in so living that the inward life was radiant with Grace, with calm, with thoughtfulness and gentleness, kindness and consideration and perhaps most of all, with a great joy. As he tells us, it is with joy that the Soul comes forth

to embrace the Beautiful. We do not go timidly and miserably to give our hearts to those whom we love in this world. Young lovers do not go in tears and mourning to each other nor should man's Soul, the Eternal Child of the Eternal, fear to go radiantly home to Its Father. Therefore in this concept of Plotinus, all things grow graciously, beautifully. So Beauty is an endless rejoicing in the doing of those things which are True and Beautiful.

In this then, we see the Philosophy of Beauty spreading Itself over many departments and ways of life. Finally, because of his own mystical apperceptions and because of the amazing Beauty and sensitiveness of his own Soul, Plotinus begins to contemplate the Nature of God as Beauty. It is not in this essay but it is in other works of his. He begins to think of God as Law. He is rather thinking of God as Love. He is assuming that there can be no beauty in the relationship of creatures to each other or to their Creator except through Beauty. Love therefore, rejoices in the service of the Beloved. Love gives of itself and finds its wholeness. Love moves always graciously and with gentleness of Spirit finding in these a gentle fulfillment, a strange over-artistry that is the sovereign Beauty of Creation.

So in Plotinus, the contemplation upon the Infinite as Loving revealed essentially that to know God is to love God. In knowing God, the first grand vision that we have of the eternal shape or substance is an incredible blaze of Ineffable Beauty beyond definition, description. This Beauty therefore, brings a sense of security. Man is not afraid of the beautiful. He is hardly aware of his own instincts as he rushes forth to it. He loves it because it is Beautiful. He learns to love God because God is Beautiful, to love the world because the world is Beautiful, and to love the Soul of his neighbor because he finds the darkness which obscures the body within the radiant prismatic Soul forever Beautiful.

In the discovery of Beauty in himself, man discovers the Beauty in others. He can no longer have an enemy. In discovering the Beauty in himself, man gains an incredible patience because he sees how difficult it is when he disciplines his own nature to release and redeem this subtle quality of Beauty within himself. Therefore, he no longer wonders why others are not better. He knows that in their hearts they, are growing and that this same Beauty that sustains him will flow through them and bring them to the fullness of their own purposes. As prejudice ceases, conceit ceases, worldliness ceases because where a man's treasure is, there his heart is. When his treasure is Ineffable Beauty, there also his heart and his mind are united.

Out of a life of Beauty comes a great discipline of theology and mysticism, a mysticism that appeals to the sensitive, emotional portions of the Soul. The mind seeks for the beautiful, the heart finds it. The heart and mind in this partnership serve a wonderful purpose, for what the mind discovers, the heart experiences. Through these mingling of their purposes again a unity is formed from diversity and a heart-mind power united gains the singleness of eye which conceives of the Beauty of Unity, and he is capable of perceiving Unity which is true Beauty. As long as there are two faculties in his own mind, there will be two factions in his world. As long as he himself thinks of nine parts of his character, he will find nine men outside of himself. He will find nine kinds of life if he lives nine kinds of life but when in himself he lives but one kind of life, he will then find in the world only one kind because he has discovered it. When man through his growth has gradually overcome all division until finally he can find and establish One Life in himself, in that instant, the universe blazes forth the mystery of that One Life.

Only the one who has brought his own parts into a greater unit can ever experience God, the Supreme Unity, because the things that God and man have most in common is the union

in themselves. Any being that achieves complete possession of its own parts and organizes them into a purposed pattern, by that Unity partakes of All Unity existing in Time and Space. This Unity again is another name for Sovereign Beauty and so the story goes.

Out of it then comes wisdom, a most simple medication, a purifying of life and the simple summary of all the Plotinus disciplines namely, man approaches Truth, achieves peace, attains eternal security by restoring the Oneness in himself. In this restoration his most wonderful, acceptable and useful instrument is his appreciation of Beauty. For whatever It is, It is a little, living thing growing, perhaps, on the shadow of the dead. Wherever the green branch of Beauty is to be found within man there is Life and while that Life remains, it can grow and achieve Its own immortality. Man's love of Beauty is the final proof therefore, of his possible attainment of all good things. Because he has Beauty in himself, It decrees his ultimate identity with Deity, the Supreme and Complete Power of Beauty in the universe.





## Part Four

### PORPHYRY ON THE WANDERINGS OF ULYSSES

*The Neoplatonists found mysticism in all things, convinced of a common denominator in human knowledge. As early as the time of Plato an effort had been made to understand the inner meaning of the writings of Homer, and favored the idea that Homer's blindness was symbolic. It indicated not his inability to see on the objective level, but that he had turned his sight inward to the contemplation of things normally invisible.*

THE STORY OF THE "ODYSSEY" AND "ILIAD" with which we are concerned is too long to permit a detailed analysis of all of the elements. Therefore, we hope that we can give certain basic keys by which the meaning of this ancient and ingenious fable may be brought more clearly to our understanding.

The "*Illiad*" was probably compiled or reduced to some type of order by the poet Homer, a person of uncertain date, who



is believed to have flourished in the ninth century before the Christian Era. This was at least three hundred or more years before the beginning of that great age of Greek learning led by Pythagoras and followed by the great Pythagorean successors, Plato, Socrates, Aristotle and the Neoplatonists

Thus, we have our knowledge or opinion of Greek religion from the writings of Homer and one or two other early fragments. This apparently was doubted however, as early as the time of Plato for already an effort had been made to understand the inner meaning of this account. The philosophers of the Platonic and Neoplatonic school favored the idea that Homer's blindness was symbolical. It indicated not his inability to see on the objective level but that he had voluntarily turned his sight inward to the contemplation of those things normally invisible. His blindness, like the later story of the blinding of the Cyclops, should not be accepted as a literal infirmity. What seems to be implied in this account is that he had transcended the normal state of man's sight and sense. We also know that we deal with idiom, with policies and prevailing opinions of a generation and time too remote for our analysis, therefore we cannot be dogmatic. We can only speculate on this subject.

This speculation is reason to believe that the great Orphic tradition of Greece had developed and was beginning to take dominance as early as the day of Homer. We know that at that time, these rites or ceremonies now called Orphic were particularly sacred and secret and that the general mass of the people had no knowledge of what went on in these initiation ceremonies. It is conceivable therefore, that Homer could have been one of the earliest to attempt a revelation of these mysteries through a highly allegorical and symbolical poem. Olympidorus, in his story on Plato, already points out that the fable of Homer should be considered as having a secret and mystical meaning.

Here again we must pause for we have two possible solutions to this mystery. One is that Homer was in possession of a knowledge not generally accessible to the Greeks of his time, a knowledge however, which was in itself not in all things perfect inasmuch as Homer seemed to be without awareness of many of the great later teachings of the Greek philosophers. For example, he was not aware of the rising doctrine of immortality as it came to be a dominant in the classical period of Greek thought. It is also possible that the later Greeks interpreted it into the writings of Homer by a fortuitous method of reasoning and interpretation. There is always a twofold solution to this enigma. In the first place, the legends and fables of the "*Odyssey*" and the "*Illiad*" may have been in circulation as folklore long before the time of Homer. Folklore, as we realize, is a kind of waking dreaming of the folk or of popular collective consciousness. Psychologically therefore, nearly all ancient legends arise from the internal experience of the individual. Therefore whether he knows it or not, whether he is aware of this fact or not his story telling, particularly when it is derived from the earlier sources, is very likely to be highly psychological.

The second possibility is that these poems and writings drew out of their interpreters certain secret knowledge locked within the mind and hearts of the interpreters rather than in the original work. I have observed this on many occasions in more modern studies namely, that the meanings of things become brighter and greater according to the light within ourselves. Thus, poems which were not consciously intended to have a message, may release a message from the psychic life of the reader of the poem.

Therefore, the poems of Homer gradually came to be considered part of the esoteric literature of the Greeks. By degrees, these poems were interpreted and unfolded to come to their final and most complete interpretation in the works of the Neoplatonists. These men, by their own natural and mystical

inclination, found mysticism in all things because they were convinced that there was a common denominator to human knowledge, they sought this in all the writings of ancient people. They were able to give lucid and reasonable interpretation to those old stories.

In the study of the works of Homer, we must work largely from fragments even in the Neoplatonic literature. Occasionally, the subject is drawn in perhaps most fully and completely but still in an exceedingly fragmentary state in the writings of Porphyry. Here we have "*The Cave Of The Nymphs*" which is a study in one small symbol derived from the Homeric Cycle. Here also we have him calling upon the works of others of his own group and school in building a general survey of the basic meaning of the Homeric story. We cannot however say that he exhausts it or even gives us an adequate working text but we can use from him certain material adding to it other extracts from Plotinus and some material from "*Iamblicus On The Mysteries*" and a considerable amount from the legitimate disciples of the original Platonic school of Plato and his nephew Eusippus.

All these together give us some general picture. I do not think it practical to seek to isolate the sources of the story. It would burden us with constant cross references so out of the general picture, we have tried to draw a broad pattern the elements of which can be variously sustained in different works. The general combination will be consistent with the known beliefs and opinions of the Platonists and Neoplatonists.

We have some terms and problems which arise and have a great interest to us at this time because there is perhaps no group of fables to which a more completely psychological explanation has been offered. From the writings of these early interpreters, we are fully aware that they had a broad and deep concept concerning the nature of the human Soul, a concept perhaps more adequate than that which we have today. Because it is obscured in myth and legend, it remains yet to be revealed to the general

knowledge of mankind. Sometime this must be done because it is going to give us answers to a number of problems particularly in the structure of man's mental and emotional life, problems which have yet to be adequately approached.

We introduce, first of all, the character of Ulysses himself or Odysseus, as he is known in the Greek. We will try to understand something about him and his place in the great cycle of legend in which he is the principle heroic figure. We know that this entire work, much as other great classical poems, Sagas and Eddas of the world is essentially a hero cycle. As Carlyle points out, we are dealing basically with the heroic myth. Yet, the word hero to us can be applied to almost anyone from an outstanding football player to an outstanding popular singer. The term hero is very broad. It covers almost anything by which we are distinguished or extinguished from the rest but in the Greek use of the word as it was in classical times, a very strict and definite definition is implied. This definition is probably without general usage at all today.

The word *hero* was bestowed by Greeks as a name for an order of Souls having a complete and distinct identity separate from other Souls. Thus, we have in their concept of the orders of Nature three particular orders of interest to mankind. These are the *human* allotment, as it was called, the *heroic* allotment and the *Divine* allotment. The human allotment had to do with ordinary and general humanity. The human allotment consisted of individuals who in their various activities were living and dying without a driving, natural or inherent purpose. The hero was a combination of the demigod and the superman but the hero was regarded as a race or kind completely apart from man, a different kind of being. It was not merely a man who had accomplished some outstanding example of bravery or courage. He was a creature so that you could say of him that he was either human or heroic. You had two distinct types of creature, types of being.

Yet in Greek mythology and symbolical philosophy, the race or order of heroes was like unto human beings in most conditions. Like certain demigods, they possessed both Divine and human attributes. Thus, the hero might appear in society and might live an apparently normal life but he belonged to a different "*wholety*," as the Greeks called it, that the inclination of the pole of his psychic axis was different from that of humanity. That is one of the ways in which they expressed it. This meant, actually, that as the temperature, flora and fauna of a planet is determined by the inclination of its axis, so a different inclination would cause a different planetary environment and a different kind of life would flourish upon it. This is basic thinking.

Above the heroic order was the Divine order. The Divine order again was an allotment which in this case had no relation directly with humanity in the sense of any common origin or destiny. The heroic allotment was a race of beings inhabiting a middle distance between Heaven and Earth or, as one of the Rosicrucian mystics of the seventeenth century referring to the heroes or the adepts said, "They live in the suburbs of Heaven." In other words they have their peculiar fiat. You can almost think of it in the terms of Dante where we have the lower sphere, the inferno and the higher sphere, the "*Paradiso*." In the "*Purgatorio*" would abide the heroic order between Heaven and Earth, between a Divine and a mortal state. The word "*Purgatorio*" would give us the clue to it because it means purging and purging represented the cathartic discipline of the Greek rites, of mysteries and of purification.

The heroic Soul having been established then, as a kind of life apart, what distinguishes them from ordinary human beings as far as motivation and basic Energy is concerned? According to the Greek concept, the hero is a human being who has at some time, either in the present life or a preceding life,

made the final commitment of his consciousness to the process of growth. In other words, it was a dedicated person who had already seen the "star" and set his course toward it. This course might be slow and be of great difficulty and time but in the hero, the wheels of life have reversed their motion. Whether he has gone far or only a little way, he is returning to his "Father's House," he has consciously consecrated himself to growth. He is no longer merely living for the gratification of the whims and passing fancies of external life. He has a motion, a pressure, a dynamic within himself by which he is being moved throughout all the ensuing cycles of his existence in a direct and positive motion toward the fulfillment of his essential destiny. This would be the simplest definition of the heroic state.

Now as we approach the story of Ulysses, we come to another division that has to be immediately recognized, namely, that the Greeks recognized three levels in the heroic department of existence. They therefore classified their heroes as pertaining to *Jupiterian*, *Neptunian*, or *Plutonian* allotment. In other words, there were three kinds of heroes. We learn from the opening part of the "*Odyssey*" that Ulysses was a hero of the Neptunian allotment. His great adventure, struggle, everything practically concerned with him has to do with the sea. He is making a long water journey and when it seems that he is almost going to be victorious, then Neptune, the god of the sea, turns upon him and attempts to destroy him. Ulysses then, is said to belong to the Neptunian allotment for the actual description of the heroic state.

The Plutonian hero was one whose achievements relate only to excellence on the material level of life. In other words, the conscientious, the dedicated, the truly well-intentioned statesman or warrior, the great general who is fighting for a cause he believes in and for the good of his people but must necessarily use destructive means, which may account for a certain lower level of heroic effort. This is true because he is a hero as far as

his own understanding permits and he is certainly divided from the mass of human beings who will fight and run. He is not going to fail in his purpose. He may give his life for his country. He is giving everything that he has and knows therefore, he is entitled under certain conditions and on certain levels of attainment to be considered as belonging to the Plutonian order of heroes. This is the lowest order of heroes, the lowest order of allotments.

The Neptunian hero is the second allotment and this allotment, according to Olympadorus, included those who in their heroism save themselves. Now this is a rather interesting and rather complicated pattern which gradually evolves. You will remember in the story of Ulysses, he alone finally reaches home. He is unable to save his companions. Therefore, he achieves in himself a certain heroic destiny but in this destiny he has the gravest difficulties in accomplishing his own salvation and he is unable to contribute to the salvation of others. This causes him to be considered of the Neptunian allotment for other reasons which we will also mention.

The highest or Jupiterian allotment of heroes, the highest order of heroic Souls, is composed of those who by their heroism contribute to the preservation, redemption and illumination of others. This was the highest order of the heroes. Plato and his commentators ascribing this allotment to such persons as Hercules to the higher order of heroes, also assigned Pythagoras and many of the great scholars, leaders, sages and teachers because they had achieved not only their own enlightenment but contributed to the general enlightenment of others. They caused other Souls to enter into the path of heroism. Therefore, the great world teachers, sages, saints, prophets and patriarchs who not only helped themselves but led their peoples to a higher level of integrity, these would be considered of the greater order of heroes.

These were the three allotments which were recognized at that particular time. These allotments again bring into consideration three levels which are also related to the heroic state. We've already mentioned in Neoplatonism a ladder of ascending powers, values, virtues and things of that nature. The Greeks assigned to the three orders of heroes also three orders of powers of which the lowest of the Plutonian order were moved by the power of opinion. Those of the Jupiterian order were moved by imagination. So we have three powers peculiar to these orders of heroes and we learn from this assignment that Ulysses was a hero on the level of the power of sense. Therefore, we begin to see that the entire story of his journey has to do with the problem of sensation and with the development of the sensory perceptions and internal psychic instincts.

Thus, we have, to a degree, given you an orientation on Ulysses. What he actually represents in the fable is the Soul that has already been dedicated to the path of progress, that he belongs on the level of the dark Neptune. Therefore, his problem carries with it a level of sense and that this level of sense implies generation. In other words, Neptune or the Principle of Water is the Principle of Generation. Heraclitus declares that Souls that do not wish to become involved in generation must remain dry because the moment the Soul is involved in humidity, it drinks of the *Waters of Lethe* and falls into illusion or the element of water which the ancients recognized as a reflector. By its constant inconstancy, its eternal motion and its being caused to appear as storms and as various ripples upon the surface yet the depths were always mysterious and unchangeable; the Greeks decided it was a symbol of sensation and a symbol of the emotional sphere of man. It could be so easily roiled upon its surface and yet the depths of which could not even be explored. So we have this orientation of Ulysses.

The second point that is probably important to us is to consider the land of Troy. The land of Troy which was the home



of the Trojans was originally the land of Ilium over which ruled an old King Priam and in his glories and powers. The word Ilium comes from *ilus* which means 'slime' or 'muck.' It is the primordial ooze, the mysterious substance from which life originated in the beginning as we find in the Phoenician history of *Shanchonianthon*. It is therefore the primitive matter, the *ilium*. In the story as it is told, you naturally expect the Grecians who invented the fable to be favorable to themselves in the interpretation of its meaning. Therefore the Grecians, representing their country as a philosophic state or as a great intellectual world, regarded their expedition against Troy as being the proper symbolism of the expedition of the mind against matter. They held that it was the conflict between Intelligibles or internal *knowables* represented on the intuitive level and the material or external life of the individual. Thus, the struggle was that between mental Energy and form, the struggle of Life and matter, Spirit and matter. It was the struggle of Soul and body or whatever polarity you wish to consider.

The subject of this little difficulty that occurred in the time of Homer was Helen or Helena, the Moon, a Lunar divinity who was said to be of the order of Venus. Now Venus and Helen, who was her more or less objectification, is described by the Neoplatonists as a symbol of *Intelligible Beauty*. We have previously covered something of Plotinus' "*On The Beautiful*" so we begin to understand the concept of Beauty as it was understood by these philosophers. Helen therefore, does not represent moral beauty but the Archetype or the pattern of the Beautiful. This is the pattern which is captured by matter and rescued by mind, the two armies which struggle for control in the story the Trojan War. Therefore, Helen is *Archetypal Order* or *Archetypal Natural Manifestation*, the Geometry of the Universe. She is the symbol of the inevitable harmony of the essential Laws of the universe. These Laws are taken away, abducted or

placed in a material situation in which their Beauty, their wonders, their integrity and their justice are no longer noticeable or acceptable. Therefore, an expedition of the mind is sent forth to rescue an understanding of these Principles.

Plato points out a very good analysis in the simple fact that through understanding, man discovers the Beauty of God. Therefore, understanding or the Intelligible power represented by the Greeks must rescue Helen, *Essential Beauty*, from captivity to matter or to materialism and the concept that all things are to be measured by their external or apparent parts rather than by their qualities. After the war is over, the various expeditions or powers or faculties return by various courses to their own lands having accomplished their ends.

You will remember that as a result of the war, the Greeks themselves began to quarrel over Helen. Having rescued Beauty, they began to argue and struggle over it, divide it, variously interpret it and in one way or another to destroy the very power which they had originally rescued. Thus we see that the mind, by its critical attitude, gradually destroying the very Truth or Beauty which it seeks to discover. The analogies are very apt and whether Homer so designed it or not is of little difference. The fact that it can be rationally deduced from these circumstances cannot be denied.

We must also bear in mind that Ulysses was under the patronage of powers with one of them more or less regularly assisting him and the other appearing or cooperating only in matters of great emergency. His natal or essential protecting god was Mercury, who as the messenger of the gods and as the symbol of intellect, was constantly assisting him to extricate himself from difficult or even tragic circumstances. When intercession of a superior nature was necessary in some great emergency that arose, then Minerva appeared as Pallas Athena and as a superior deity representing the positive polarities of Intuitional Understanding, the higher type of intellect, higher

than mind. Therefore, Minerva or Inspiration, the Power of the Divine Mind was available to him in emergency.

From the time of the end of the war itself to the return of Ulysses to his "own far distant native land," we have a story which is the odyssey of man himself. It is the great story, the great tragedy of man. In estimating the various elements of it, we try to point out a few of the outstanding symbols because these symbols become increasingly luminous as we proceed. Our hero is one who has achieved to the middle order of things. He has achieved to the power of the sensory universe and his entire adventure or experience relates to the gradual dominion over sense and the release and directing of the next higher faculty which is creative imagination or as the ancients considered it, the beginning of the intuitive or inspirational power. He would not achieve fully to this but when he reached his native land where he would find the sign or symbol of his aged father, he would then be ready to be elevated toward unity with the higher order of heroes, the Jupiterian allotment which was concerned primarily with the highest form of intuitive inspiration. He was returning to claim a larger destiny which he had to earn through victory over the limitations of his own nature.

The sensory world, as it was understood by the Greek philosophers, was a world which resulted in the polarization of the psychic nature in a middle distance between a Spiritual and a material state. In other words in the strangely symbolical meaning the Greeks, they recognized that the hero was almost the true human being but that man as he knows himself now cannot be truly human until he is born again through the mystery of heroic attainment.

Thus, the hero represents the integrated human person in whom the psychic nature is in equilibrium. To attain this equilibrium, the psychic nature must resolve its conflicts and achieve a moderation within itself. This moderation is achieved

through discipline and these disciplines are either cathartic disciplines or those disciplines for complete and positive possession of the internal nature itself. Ulysses, having achieved the potential power of attaining psychic equilibrium must then find himself suspended like the line in the story of *Faust*—"twixt Heaven and Earth dominion wielding." Sense, according to the ancient fable, is that which draws man downward into an objectivity or causes him to be bound by matter. Sense therefore, is the flowing of Energy or of the libido toward objectivity and toward the embracing of the objective world just as Narcissus seeing his own shadow in the pool sought to embrace it, fell and was drowned. That power by which the psychic nature is caused to ascend or rise toward the gods is the Theurgic Power of the Soul. It is that power which causes it to verge away from matter and toward Divine things. To achieve this, the internal faculties of consciousness must be awakened. Between these two extremes or inclinations toward motion is the equilibrium of the Soul Itself in Its proper state or in Its most natural and suitable state for man, *i.e.*, in a middle distance in which It still may have some association with matter but also have a certain association with the Divine World.

Here we introduce another group of characters out of mythology who become very interesting to us and they are called the Sirens. Now poor Ulysses had a great deal of trouble with them before he got through with his strange and wonderful journey but according to this theology, the sirens are also divisible into three orders because each one represents the call of Energy to a level. The human being, living on a psychic level of integration, is tempted by one order of Sirens and falls into materiality. These Siren powers therefore represent a peculiar gravitational pull toward matter present in the psychic life of the individual. They are the allurements of the senses. They are not separate beings but they are Psychic Energy within man by which the senses are stimulated and are caused to gravitate

toward objectivity. The second order of Sirens release a similar Energy on the physical plane itself causing the being to pull toward psychic integration, to be pulled toward normalcy by another series of stimulations to faculties and powers of his own nature. The third order is that which lures him toward the Divine state. This again is the result of the excitation of certain faculties and powers of his own nature. The Energies by which these excitations on various levels are caused and maintained were called Sirens by the Greeks.

We can also tell, for example, something that has to do with other Principles, Nymphs which appear particularly in the train of Circe. These Nymphs represent Elemental factors or forces particularly related to the body building activity of Psychic Energy. Therefore, in *"The Cave Of The Nymphs,"* we find them weaving a magnificent brocaded garment in royal purple upon a loom of stone and using all of their skill in a most curious and remarkable way. They are doing this within a cave which has two entrances or an entrance and an exit and this cave is polarized to the North and South rather than to the East and West. The entrances are under the constellations of Cancer and Capricorn signifying birth and death. In this cave which was Porphyry's *"Cave Of The Nymphs"* and according to his own interpretation which is based upon other Platonic sources, he says that it is known to these people that these Nymphs represented the agencies which weave or spin the intricate structure of the human body upon the loom of bones. The purple vestment represents the arterial and fleshy system which is woven by the Elemental Powers to cover and adorn the basic Body Principle of man and that this partly takes place within a cave, a womb. Other parts take place in that larger cave, the Typhonian den, represented by the material life of man. For as Plato points out, human beings live in a cave and are afraid to look out and see what is outside.

Therefore, the material world itself is regarded as a cavern and of course, as we have already seen from its Plutonian allotment was the underworld—the underworld actually being the Spirit existence in which we live until we make the heroic decision and begin to escape from the mysterious web of circumstance or the mysterious power of body woven in the threads of red and purple upon the loom of stone. All of these things have their special and particular meaning to Ulysses, who to escape the evils of various enchantments, carries an acacia branch in his hand, a little plant or leaf anciently used in initiation rites and signifying by its own meaning and its own substance the power of enlightened faith. For where faith abides, the individual has the strength and inspiration to rescue himself from difficult and tragic circumstances.

We have two other points that we want to cover and this is to discuss briefly something that is also in *"Iamblicus On The Mysteries"* but which we could not and did not attempt to cover in the original discussion on that but we need some of it now in connection with Ulysses. The point is that as the Ancient Egyptian says, "Each human being that comes into the world brings with him two powers, two natures which are called the Essential and the Natural Daemon." Now our word *demon* comes from *daemon* but it does not have the same meaning. A Daemon is actually a Spirit. We remember of course the Daemon of Socrates, the mysterious Being that accompanied him, gave him warnings and saved him on numerous occasions. Socrates referred to the Daemon as his god.

It was a common practice of the early church to take practically every name that was used in the religions of the Pagan peoples and change them into some demoniac attribute. It was part of this general effort to discredit the ancient religions that has resulted in many of our present terms involved in the Medieval demonism especially the term daemon but there are others. For instance, in Medieval times, the prince of devils was

called Beelzebub. The word is simply Beelzebub which means in Babylonian, "My lord who sings" and was the name of the god Baal. It was closely associated with the two figures in the Egyptian desert which were called the "Singing Memnon." They had to do with the sweet voice of the god Baal in the ancient Babylonian mythology.

Pandemonium which is another word we did ill to, means the dominion of the god Pan. Pan was not by any means a devil spirit but a Nature god, a shepherd and one who had to do with the natural problems of husbandry, of life in general, of marriage, fertility and things of that nature. Thus Pan became the prototype of our modern devil but had no such meaning in ancient times. In the same way, Lucifer, Lux Ferro, the Light Bearer, was part of the original story, of Prometheus. All of these stories and fables have changed with our belief and daemon is one of the words that have gotten into trouble but in the original meaning it simply meant an attending Spirit. It was not some evil being like the Mephistopheles of "*Faust*."

The *Natal Daemon*, according to the Egyptians and the Neoplatonists, was much like what the church later called the Guardian Angel. We know by our study of the church theology that the doctrine of the Guardian Angel is not canonical but it has certain preference and privileges because it is said to be of the "mind of the church." In other words, it is acceptable but not a compulsory doctrine. The Guardian Angel or the idea of a protecting Spirit that comes into the world with us was, of course, known and believed by ancient people.

The *Essential Daemon* is distinguished from the *Natal Daemon*. Plotinus and other Neoplatonists describe the *Natal Daemon* as that part of the Soul that extends into incarnation. The *Essential Daemon*, the Oversoul of Emerson or the *Anthropos* is the part which does not become involved in body. In the interpretation of Ulysses, it is stated that in the advanced stages of the heroic state, the *Essential Daemon* and the *Natal*

Daemon are reunited and become one. They are no longer separate because those parts of the Soul which extend into body retain their awareness of their own essential origin and are once more conscious of the Essential Daemon or the Oversoul.

In the story of Ulysses, we come upon an interesting example of the study of the Natal Daemon on the heroic level. The Soul, flowing into corporeal existence, "staggering" according to the description given by Apuleius in his fable of "*Cupid and Psyche*," loses Its natural and beautiful motion and becomes, as it were, intoxicated. It has taken upon Itself the "Waters of Lethe" and the Soul has entered into body as into a prison. The body, as Plato says, becomes the sepulcher of the Soul or, as the same philosopher describes in another place, the Soul is locked within the body as the oyster is locked within its shell. It was therefore the belief that Soul, verging toward body and mingling Its essences with objectivity, becomes in this manner intoxicated or loses the awareness of Its own essential nature and It becomes *Soul In Body*.

Now Soul In Body, intoxicated and deprived of Its essential substance or essence, not only becomes the slave of the body but becomes to a certain degree in a mysterious way, the tormentor of body. The Soul, seeking restoration of Its own superiority, becomes a tyrant over body and from those parts of the Soul which are embodied, emerge the sensory perceptions in the Greek systems. The sensory perceptions are all maintained, sustained and supported by the Psychic Energy within the individual. These sensory perceptions therefore convey objectivity to the psychic embodied center. This psychic embodied center, deprived of its own Light, deprived of its own realization of its own source or root, blinded and distorted by matter sets up an isolated kingdom of desire so that the embodied Soul becomes the servant of desire. From desire and the testimony of the sense perceptions arises the chemistry of selfishness, hate, fear, lust, greed, passion and finally death.



Thus, the psychic part embodied within form becomes in the life of the individual an eternal source of temptation. Yet, because the Energy of the Soul is tremendously more powerful than that of the body, it wracks the body, It tears the body, It is uncontrollable by the body. It apparently is forever seeking the discomforting and destruction of the body. This is not primarily because It wishes to destroy but because It wishes to be free and the only way It can be free is by in some way destroying the house in which it lives. We can take this thinking and carry it into abnormal psychology and do a number of interesting things with it.

So what do we have? We have this tyrannical Soul centered through the tremendous power of the sensory perceptions and we have this attempting to bar the progress of Ulysses in his journey home. So this embodied Soul or the so-called Natal Daemon becomes the Cyclops, the one-eyed giant. It is this one-eyed giant because the Soul's function through the body is by means of the endocrine ganglia system particularly the third eye in the brain by means of which the Psychic Energy both receives and distributes the testimony of the sensory perceptions.

Thus, the one-eyed giant symbolized by the Cyclops was sometimes represented in the ancient drawings as inverted with its feet upward and so placed that it had the eye of the Cyclops corresponding with the location of the third eye in the human body. In other words, representing a being existing in another world or in another nature or kind walking on air instead of Earth but joined to man by the mysterious power of this psychic center or eye.

Now man, living in the world of sense in order to escape the power of the Cyclops, drives a stake into its eye. In other words, it blinds or removes that power of the sensory perceptions to control the Psychic Energy. This is presumably the same thought that was used in reference to Homer himself, that this

blinding of the Cyclops represented the individual breaking the tie by means of which his internal life is left to the machinations and testimonies of the outer or external sense perceptions. It is part then, of the overcoming of the sphere of sense. Perhaps in another way, perhaps not in the same symbols but involving the use of the third eye in a contrary manner, we have the story in the Bible of "when thine eye be single, thy body is filled with light" attempting to describe the necessity for overcoming the polarity of sight. In other words, the concept of good or bad. The Greeks however, represented this by a cathartic discipline by means of which they purged the body of its dependence upon the testimony of the senses represented by the eye.

This thought leads us again to another very interesting problem. We are told that the Essential Daemon in the hero or the higher estate as man proceeds is restored to Unity, and man has an *overlife*, an internal life which is above sense and which he must call upon when he has certain extreme needs. Therefore, the Oversoul or the Psychic Overself undoubtedly does have an order or allotment belonging to Minerva, the symbol of the total or complete apperceptive intuitional powers of man.

The next point that we particularly want to bring out is to enlarge upon this problem of the relation of sensory perceptions to the project at hand. We must do something more elaborate to make it clear. We are again in the same symbolical situation exactly as we have in Buddhism. In Buddhism where we have the problem of illusion and Reality, the Cyclopean eye that is put out is the eye of illusion which is darkened. The individual therefore, rescues consciousness from objectivity and illusionary attachment. We learn from the general story that Ulysses is still torn by the sensory perceptions and that under certain temptations when all else fails, he binds himself to the central mast of his ship in order that he cannot be lured away or cannot fail. This is the same mast of the ship of Dionysius around

which the grape vine grew in the older legends of the Dionysian Rites. This represents stability, the central polarization, the establishment of the life in moderation and in security, what would be the equivalent in the Eastern system to seating oneself in meditation and remaining in the Center to prevent the scattering of the forces and resources of consciousness. In other words, drawing all available power to a center and becoming immovable. This mast of the ship, of course, represents the pole of the world and represents the axis of consciousness itself. So Ulysses binds himself to this ship.

Now the ship itself has many interesting meanings. It is the "Ship Of The Doctrine" of Buddhism and it is the ancient "Ship of Christianity," the little vessel which is still shown upon the Papal Ring of Peter. This ship is not only the doctrine but in the old system, it represented the Mysteries, the institution, the Sacred Doctrine Itself by which all Souls are carried home. It is therefore, the purity of the revealed rite, the ancient institutions by means of which the preservation and security of man is guaranteed. Binding himself absolutely to the laws and teachings of philosophy which he was living, he gains the strength to withstand the various temptations and allurements.

At one time in his wanderings, Ulysses comes to the *Land of the Lotus Eaters* and there he has one of his most interesting experiences. This Land Of The Lotus Eaters is a place where there is almost complete forgetfulness and the individual lives forever in a state of continuous happiness. It represents the tendency of men to forget by taking the mysterious nectar of the strange trees that grow in this area and in so doing, become oblivious to all the mysteries of life. We have the Soul accepting into Itself all of the allurements of the senses and becoming intoxicated by them. In this case, we are dealing again with the psychological problem of individuals who attempt to drown the purposes of their psychic life by means of ignoring the better part of their own nature and the Principles for which they

stand. Ulysses was in great difficulty in rescuing his companions from this condition but he is able himself to escape and to continue his long voyage home.

In the course of this voyage, he comes to many interesting things. The ship has to pass between a great rock and a whirlpool and the whirlpool represents desire and anger. Desire in this case means attachment to the past, attachment to a state inferior to himself or unreasonable ambitions concerning his own future conditions. These desires are also bound by anger and in the achievement of psychic polarity, the individual must guide the ship of his Soul between the extremes of mortal love and hate. Without overcoming these extremes, he is unable to preserve his course.

Each of the journeying adventures of Ulysses has to do with the gradual regeneration of his powers and his motion, little by little, away from darkness and ignorance and toward the achievement of his heroic destiny, the destiny to which he had dedicated himself. The most dramatic, pictorial and probably the most outstanding episode in the entire story is the adventure of Ulysses with Circe, the Enchantress. Circe the Enchantress is a delightful problem and is right in line with our most immediate concern and the destiny of man today because now the sense powers have come head on into imagination represented by the sorceress. Imagination is man's instinctive tendency while working with the early structure of the psychic life to exchange, accept as an escape mechanism physically with imagination as an escape mechanism emotionally or psychically. By imagination, Circe is able to transform all of the attendants of Ulysses into beasts. Ulysses himself has a very difficult and terrible time to escape from the snares which Circe builds.

The Neoplatonists point out this very important thing that until the Soul is stabilized, imagination cannot be directed or controlled. Therefore, imagination uncontrolled is responsible for the larger part of the errors which exist in man's world of

affairs. Imagination causes the individual to deceive himself. In the level of sense, he is deceived by others perhaps. On the level of imagination, he deceives himself for he takes a world and transforms it according to the hazy and uncertain impulses of his own desires. Imagination enables him to make anything the way he wants it to be regardless of whether it is that way or not. Imagination causes him to fill his world with false doctrines and beliefs, to pursue will-of-the-wisps, to mistake passing pleasures for immortal verities and to mistake always the pleasant for the truthful. It permits him to wander about in long circuitous passages without being able to rescue himself.

Once he is captured in the snare of imagination, it is very difficult for him to restore a philosophical equilibrium. The French transcendentalist Eliphas Levi in one of his works refers to this sphere of imagination as the Astral Light. He says it is a beautiful garden and around the stem of each flower a deadly serpent twines. This is the Magic Garden of Klingsor in the Wagnerian opera "*Parsifal*." This is the mysterious world of things that are not so and those worlds in which nothing is good or bad but thinking and seeing makes it so. This is the world that gave us the Inquisition. It is the world that gives us tyranny, cruelty and heartlessness. It gives hate, fear and terror. This is the world of ignorance, superstition and fear ruled over by a strange intangible goddess of success. This is Circe the Enchantress which is nothing more or less than man's undirected use of the imaginative power of his own Soul. This imaginative power is under the ancient guardianship of the Lunar Principle. Therefore, it ebbs and flows, waxes and wanes like the Moon. It passes into eclipse and casts a strange mysterious light upon the world. It transforms the objective realities of the day into the strange, subtle, intangible often confusing shadows of night. It rules with a strange silver light over all things.

Circe the Enchantress is therefore that part of man's own nature which is forever crying for the fulfillment of desire

against the demands of character. In this case, there is a greater illusion added, for man can convince himself that what he wants is good for him. He can be very foolish and convince himself that he is kind. He can convince himself that he is very learned. He can be very selfish and convince himself that he is selfless. He can be filled with hate and convince himself that it is love. All of these illusions arise from his inability to estimate the basic values of his own existence.

Now also in this fable, Circe takes on the appearance and similitude of another character. This particular circumstance causes the delusion of Ulysses toward Circe. He feels that sometimes she takes on the appearance of his true wife, Penelope. Thus, imagination comes to him in the form of truth and takes on the likenesses of Reality. Later when we study Penelope a little, I think you'll be able to see why Circe takes this form. We are definitely dealing with a whole world of pseudo psychological phenomena which are the bases of all neuroses, frustrations, and phobias. For all these things arise from some kind of ignorance. Primarily they arise from man's unwillingness to face facts naturally and reasonably and his inevitable instincts to clothe them, dramatize them and color them with false values from his own emotional life.

Thus, Circe can turn human beings into beasts causing them finally to be completely absorbed in the selfishness and in false activity of one kind or another. Not only do these other companions of Ulysses represent other wayfarers seeking home, they can also be interpreted as the various separate faculties and powers of his own mind and nature. The fact that he cannot save them and that they must all perish along the way indicates also that the various attributes and aspects of his own mind cannot survive truth. Only the One, the master faculty of all can reach the destination. All others must die along the way being a race of opinions, attitudes, convictions, concepts which have not their foundation in the heroic destiny, therefore they

cannot survive. We could go on considerably further with the problem of Circe but I think it gives us some general pattern with which we are to work for the time being.

Let us bear in mind that we said that Neptune who is the guardian of the sea and under whose aquatic allotment Ulysses belongs is himself a strange and mysterious power governing the middle diffusion of the objective universe. Neptune is peculiarly the patron over the psychic life of man. Therefore, if his Spirit belongs to Jupiter, his Soul belongs to Neptune and his body belongs to Pluto or Hades. Each of these has its own laws and it is the duty of each of these gods, according to the gravitational power of his Nymphs or the spirits that pull for him in one way or another, to hold life to these levels over which these deities have dominion.

Therefore Neptune, representing the psychic field, does not wish Ulysses to escape and in the long journey through this fluidic element, the psychic life, when it sees that Ulysses is about to escape, Neptune brings the great tempest to bear upon him. This gives him terrible evils and injury and causes him the greatest doubt and misgiving. Of course this is exactly the psychic field, doubt and misgiving. Under the great stress of temptation, trial, hardship and frustration, the individual becomes doubtful. His certainties are weakened. He is no longer sure of his own course. He does not know as yet that there is a True Land or True Home which he is going to be able to attain. Thus, along the great journey of life, the individual is beset with hardships, the storm of life threatens to close over him and the psychic stress threatens to engulf him. In this emergency that he must fare, Minerva appears giving him the internal experience of security. She bestows upon him the vision or the internal participation in Reality. Minerva therefore brings with her, so to say, the mystical experience, the sign, the proof, the evidence that the powers of darkness shall not prevail. Thus

strengthened, Ulysses is able to escape the wrath of Neptune and to continue on his journey home.

The great secret of his journey home is the journey across the middle distance between matter and Spirit. Now if you will remember your concepts from ancient philosophy as we have discussed them so many times, I think you can reconstruct the picture that the three worlds of Heaven, Earth and Hell. Spirit, Soul and body were represented by the ancients as three elements: Fire, Water and Earth. Therefore the physical world was Earth, the psychic world was Water and the Spiritual world was Fire. These were in the form of almost concentric orbits with the Earth represented in the center surrounded by the zone of Water and that surrounded in turn by a zone of clouds and Fire. This threefold division of the world represented by Fire, the Causal Sphere, the source of Life, by matter, the world of effect or the body by Water, the intermediate distance.

Plato said that Souls descended from the Milky Way and fell into humidity and finally into the bodily form of the Earth. The Earth itself floated in Water and we have the theories of Anaxagoras and Anaximander concerning these elements. There was also the old doctrine of Thales who said the Earth was like a little ship floating in water and earthquakes were caused by someone rocking the boat. This concept however, was not water as we know it but the Humidic Field of Energy that modern science calls Ether but which also represents the Magnetic Field of the Earth, the psychic envelope of both man and the world in which he lives. The Greeks understood this as a river or as a great zone of Water. They said therefore, that the world of the living was divided from the world of the dead or the world of forms from the world of Spirit by a river. We remember of course, the River Styx across which the blind boatman Charon rowed the hosts of Souls. Remember the River Jordan and that dear old hymn, "One More River To Cross" and that one more river to cross was the ocean that Ulysses was trying to cross to get home. The



same good old thoughts from the old hymns tell that we shall gather on the farther shore, that we shall all be together after we cross the river.

We recognize also the mysterious Sea which surrounds the Midgard of the ancient Norse and in this great ocean slept the great serpent, the Midgard Snake and storms were caused by the motions of this snake on the bed of the great sea. We also have many more accounts. Remember the great heroes of antiquity, the Sea Men? Remember that it is believed that man himself came out of water as a material creature crawling out of the sea in some prehistoric age. Man still has rudimentary organs within his body to indicate that once he was a creature of the sea.

So Life crawling out of the sea was form crawling out of the psychic field which enveloped the Earth. The sea, primarily, became the symbol of the interval between the land of Ilium where the Trojan War was fought and what Homer calls "Our Own Far Distant Land" which is upon another shore, upon the far side of the great sea. We remember in the Buddhist system the "Ship Of The Doctrine" which carries Souls across from this world to the better land beyond where the "Blessed Land Doctrine" means security. We see on this "Ship Of The Doctrine" all types of human beings involved in various activities while being taken across the Sea Of Souls into the land beyond, the land of Northern Buddhist teachings. One man in the ship is standing on the back deck fishing. The journey of the Soul is not always done consciously.

This great Sea of Energy which is the Mother of the Mysteries, the source of Life also, is strangely enough this strange sea of psychic phenomena which man must cross in order to reach security from the pressures and intensities of his own nature. So we must cross the great sea, this great water and in doing this, establish freedom and discernment from the illusion of it for it is this psychic sea that feeds generations. Once Souls have

fallen asleep in the "Waters of Humidity," they float downward like seeds in the Earth, they germinate, are born materially and are locked within the world of form.

The gate of this sea was the Constellation of Crater or the Cup and it was here that the cup of forgetfulness was taken from one of the constellations of the heavens. The deluge myth and all these things had to do with this psychic sea and this tremendous dome of psychic power which man must cross to escape from the illusion which is the sea and reach Reality which lies beyond. So the long journey of Ulysses has to do with the crossing of this sea. The little ship in which he sails is his own nature, his own psychic integration. This ship is called the "Ship of Faith," the "Ship of The Doctrine" or the power of "Essential Will" of his own nature.

In one of his adventures Ulysses would have been lost had he not been able to grasp a ragged fig tree that grew alone on the edge of a cliff. The ancient legends tell us that this fig tree was a symbol of the human will which was called upon in emergency and gave the individual the strength to survive the damages and dangers of this hazardous journey he must take.

Let us pause for a moment and consider the conditions at Ithaca toward which Ulysses was returning. We have a very interesting and remarkable picture of his faithful wife waiting for him at the end of the journey. Here we find Penelope who has a very difficult problem on her hands. It is believed that her husband is dead because no word has been had of him for a great length of time and a number of ambitious suitors are making bid for her hand and favor. They all profess great affection for Penelope but actually, they are all seeking only the authority and power which this little kingdom will bestow if they can marry the widowed queen. Now Penelope is apt in subterfuge herself and is nearly equal to the occasion for she has decided to weave a tapestry and will give no answers until the tapestry is finished. So the tapestry is never done.

This is a very nice symbol especially when Porphyry tells us in simple words that Penelope is Wisdom. Wisdom, of course, is the mysterious thing, the mysterious person, the mysterious Being to whom Ulysses is striving desperately to return. All his adventures and all of his difficulties are due to the fact that he cannot find his way home. He is in an enchanted world, the world of his own psyche. To rescue himself from that and finally penetrate on to his "own native land," he has taken a great and terrible time. Along the way he has some pleasures and many misfortunes. He even found a friendly king, knowledge, who helped him to outfit a ship. He had all kinds of experiences but what he is trying to do is to get back to Wisdom which is the thing that has always been most necessary. Wisdom, represented by Penelope, was not worldly wisdom as we know it but the Neoplatonist term, Essential Wisdom. It is the Wisdom of Theurgy Itself. It is the Wisdom of the Great Power of Attainment which is the perfection of the heroic state. When Ulysses can get back to Penelope, he has completed his journey, he has fulfilled his Neptunian allotment. He has completed his journey on the middle level of heroes, those who must first save themselves. To achieve this, he must first return and find Penelope.

Penelope, as Wisdom, is having a difficult time with a number of ambitious persons who wish to marry her, not for her own sake but for the power she will bestow. Even back in those early times when life was far less complicated than it is now, the Greeks declared that the mysterious, stealthy, hateful, unpleasant and ambitious suitors of Penelope represented worldly knowledge. All of them were trying to be married to Wisdom. Or, more correctly, all of the materialistic arts, sciences, philosophies and religions, everything that for its own good, for its own advancement was seeking for skill, knowledge and power. There Penelope, as Wisdom, was being courted by all who declared or desired to possess her. These "suitors" argued, fought

and debated among themselves as to who was going to have her none of them knowing that she would have none of them.

In order to make the situation safe for herself, Penelope whose weaving of the "Tapestry of Life" was to represent the full story of true inner knowledge, always removed at night what she had woven during the day so that she never completed the work. She said she would not marry until it was finished. In other words, she would not accept any of these "suitors" until her own work was done and she made certain that the work could never be done.

So, in the search for Essential Knowledge in man's experience, no matter how much he knows something at night, something mysterious takes out that learning and he must weave it again the next day. No matter how much we know, we never know it all. No matter how much we woo Wisdom, we cannot attain its completeness and therefore we cannot fulfill the requirement. In order to protect Wisdom's works which are the keys to Its own nature, Wisdom forever conceals or unravels what it has done. Thus it is that Wisdom hides or protects Its own work so that selfish men can never possess these works of Wisdom Itself.

In those days, there were among the Greeks what were called sophists. The original sophists were very great and admirable persons which included some of the great immortals of early Grecian life like Thales, Solon, Plutarcus and Pelian-der. The later sophists were professional teachers who gained no reputation except for selfishness because they commercialized learning. They were associated with false knowledge, that is, man learning for gain rather than for good. The false suitors in the time of the Greek culture therefore, represented all the ulterior motives of men by which they seek to be wise for purposes of injuring each other and for taking hold of knowledge and power and using it against the common good. Skill to kill rather than to create and enlighten.

Thus, Essential Wisdom kept her house and in a strange and wonderful way under the protection of her own guide and allotment Minerva, she was able to confound the suitors until such a time as Ulysses could return because Ulysses, if he returns, is going to be worthy of her. He is her true husband. Here the Neoplatonists point out a very interesting point namely, that Ulysses is not returning to marry, he is returning to the life he had before he left on the journey. That is one of the points that is particularly important. In other words, Ulysses is not attaining new Wisdom but he is restoring his own inner knowledge of that Wisdom which has always been his. He is returning again to his own proper abode where Wisdom waits for him as it has always waited.

When the time comes for Ulysses to at last appear, he comes not in his own proper person but as an ancient beggar. This again is part of the idea. He returns as the mendicant. He returns as the one who has renounced all worldly goods. He returns as a common person coming secretly to his own house. The only one who immediately knows of his coming is his son who is able to recognize him. In Telamarchas, we have a symbol which the Greeks also greatly emphasized namely, the son who represents the achievements of the father, recognized their own cause, their own source but no one else does. Then he is given a bow and arrows which have been held and stored for him since he departed, the bow and arrows which no one but himself can use. With these arrows he slays all the suitors. The Greeks say that in so doing, he actually achieves the final overthrow of all the dissident elements of his own Soul, that he overcomes all the errors and illusions which are within himself and penetrates and scatters all the false concepts concerning Wisdom. He destroys the false suitors of Wisdom.

There is another interesting peculiarity of this fable that must be examined namely, that when Ulysses returns home and even after he has slain the suitors and regained his original

appearance and estate, Penelope does not recognize him immediately. As the poem says, she hopes, she thinks, she wonders. One moment she believes and then the next moment she does not believe. She is not sure that it is Ulysses. The answer to that, according to the Neoplatonic doctrine, is that the Essential Wisdom which resides within the higher psychic life of man has been so separated from the lower personality that when man through experience and trial turns to Wisdom. Wisdom does not at first even recognize the Being who went away. It has so completely altered its nature and appearance that for a time, Wisdom is not sure of Her own psychic nature. She is not sure of the returning hero who represents the redeemed and regenerated powers of the personality. The personality, in other words, returns home as a savior. He returns home as one not easily recognized and it is only after a time that this recognition by Wisdom is accorded.

If we study the Neoplatonic concept of Wisdom, we shall also understand a little more of why this is true. Wisdom, representing the Anthropos or the higher parts of the Oversoul with their intuitive powers, does not and did not extend into matter with the extension of Its psychic nature. Therefore, the Psychic Totality of man is not necessarily informed as to the appearance and nature of the personality descended from it. Therefore, when the objective being returns to Psychic Totality, It may not immediately or evidently be known. It is not that which departed. It is a different and a completely changed Being with which Wisdom has no immediate association or contact but to which Wisdom is finally united in a full and complete understanding. Part of this allegory also occurs in Lawrence's work of the 18th century, *"The Adventures Of Common Sense,"* for Wisdom plays an important personified role in that work also.

In the *"Odyssey"* there is also another intimation that when Ulysses returns to his own homeland, his own Psychic Nature, he also then seeks the shrine and mystery of his ancient Father.

He goes further but there is not too much about this but just an intimation that he is seeking his Father. This ancient King whom he seeks is itself a very wonderful symbol. It is distinctly stated that Ulysses goes alone to visit this lonely King. Here we have the definition given by Plotinus of what constitutes the mystical journey, the journey of the alone to the Alone. We have this almost completely stated in the Homeric version of the "*Odyssey*." By this we mean that Ulysses is not only now completing the heroic cycle of Neptune but is now about to join with the cycle of his old and venerable Father who is above, who rests in a superior state. In other words, he is then ready to progress into what is called the allotment of the Jupiter. Having redeemed and perfected his own nature, he would then pass into the highest order of heroes. These are the ones who live not to save themselves but to save others. When he returns and searches for his Father, he bids in that way for the next step or the next allotment from the gods in the heroic order. It means that at that time he has perfected or completed his own life cycle.

There is also no doubt in the world that the story can be regarded, and perhaps was at some time, as a religious or ceremonial pageant and that it may well have been performed as part of the State Mysteries of Greece during the period of the rise of the Orphic-Dionysian tradition. Under these conditions, Ulysses becomes the eternal candidate seeking initiation into the mysteries. Ulysses passes through twelve distinct adventures which correspond to the Twelve Labors of Hercules. These also represent the passage of the Sun through the twelve signs of the Zodiac. Thus, we have an astronomical mythos which is also repeated in the Arabic fable of "Sinbad the Sailor." The adventures of Sinbad are undoubtedly based upon Arabic impressions of the "*Odyssey*." The story is also rather strongly set forth in the parable of "The Prodigal Son." It is checked and rechecked in the story in the Biblical book of Job.

All of these legends recur among different peoples. In the story of "The Prodigal Son," the son goes down to the fleshpots of Egypt and wastes his substance in riotous living and then he returns home. When he returns home, for him the fatted calf is offered up because the dead is alive, the lost is found. This return to the "Fathers House" which is also contained in the Gnostic hymn "The Robe Of Glory" all represent the journey home on one or another levels of mankind. The Ulysses story is called heroic because it is Archetypal. In other words, the difference now becomes philosophical on another level. The personal story of a person's journey home to the degree that it is personal and human, of which our scriptural writings and the great epical works are examples, are Archetypal. They are not of a person, they are a story of a motion involving all persons. They are a story of a state which must be attained by all human beings. Therefore, they are Archetypal. They represent a path which all must follow. They are no longer stories of individuals but the stories of prototypical human beings therefore, they are called heroic. They are heroic because the key to them is the key to the regeneration of all orders of life. In this case, the key to the regeneration of all humanity.

You will also observe that in these rituals whether it be in the story of Ulysses or any other we do not have any embodiment of the power of evil. We have always the journey home representing the conquest of the psychic polarities of the self. All of the agencies involved even including Minerva, Neptune and Pluto are all within the individual. They are the levels of Being within his own consciousness. It also makes the entire subject highly psychological. It teaches very distinctly that man's conquest of self is the supreme achievement in the light of Nature.

The "*Odyssey*" covers many things. One of them we would like to mention because of its great interest is the story of the descent of Ulysses into the Hades which is part of one of his



adventures. He goes down into the underworld where he perceives certain terrible and sad spectacles. He perceives there the result of psychic pressure. The underworld as described by Ulysses becomes therefore, the proper symbol of a fear of extreme neurotic conflict, a fear of complexes, frustrations and neuroses. All the beings of the underworld are repeating blindly and continually some symbolic action associated with the difficulties or the conditions which caused them to finally come to this sphere of darkness.

Thus, this underworld represents the zone of man's subconscious or unconscious life. Ulysses, descending into it finds these symbolic excesses one of which is a man who is rolling a boulder up a hill and every time he reaches the top, it escapes from him and rolls back down again. So he must go back up and down the hill forever unable to escape the strange load to which he is attached. The entire process of rolling the boulder is nothing but a thinly veiled statement of ambition. It carries the individual's tremendous dedication to some unworthy and unnatural purpose which, having no content in Reality, can never succeed. The individual who rises merely falls and he falls merely to rise again. On and on in a great cycle of pressures the individual becomes the absolute psychic slave of his own impulses.

Thus, the underworld is locked within the human being as the source of habit, of those things that we do again and again and forever without real reason or without real purpose. Ulysses is taken down into this world in order that he may see the psychic consequences of these addictions to inadequate concepts of existence. Each one of his adventures carries the same message on some level of sensory perceptions. Gradually however, he clears these sensory perceptions for when the time comes, he recognizes Penelope although she doesn't recognize him. He knows at all times the purpose of his journey but he is not always sure that he will survive. Here again we can have elements

from the rituals of initiation, the temptations by which the Soul is tried as are set forth in the Egyptian Rituals of the Dead.

Thus, we have several possible levels for the interpretations of the Ulysses story but I think that we are reasonably certain that the general struggle is between Ulysses and the concept of egoism within himself. The various elements of this conflict are embodied and personified in his adventures and hardships. In the end however, he is given to be returned to his lawful wife and will be given power to rule forever after in happiness over the kingdom of Nature which is his proper allotment.

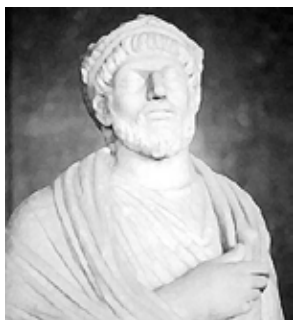
We also know that the distant city toward which he is always seeking to go and whose shoreline he does not even recognize when he sees it is the city of good intentions. This is Utopia. This is the New Jerusalem, the Heavenly City, the city of rest and peace. This is the mysterious Nirvanic City of the East, the abode of everlasting peace and tranquility. He is seeking to reach it because it is the city of peace. It is the city of tranquillity and of joy but it is a city as a state of consciousness which has been infected by these suitors which must be removed. The temple must be cleansed. Ulysses, in destroying the suitors, fulfills the same symbolic act as Jesus casting out the money lenders from the porch of the temple. All these are the restoration of sanctity, the restoration of sacredness. With Ulysses at home, Penelope then finishes her tapestry and in this tapestry she reveals all the operations of Natural Law. Therefore to the one who is enlightened and redeemed, Wisdom gives all Her secrets. But until they are enlightened and redeemed, Nature conceals part of her secrets. Nature even destroys some of her works by night so that men will not be able to fathom her mysteries. Those who are selfish and profane can never become possessors of the Great Wisdom or the Greater Doctrines which are the secrets of Nature's wondrous powers and workings.

So in the story, we have a rather contemporary trend. We have a trend that teaches us that each individual's personal

journey of self control is an odyssey. We are each seeking a homeland and that we find it after strange adventures. These adventures are no longer perhaps so picturesque as those described in the "*Odyssey*" for there are no *man-Cyclops* wandering around today. But within our own living, we pass through all these tragedies and when we pass through them, they are as great as though they involved all the cosmos. The giant of selfishness that we must slay is not less in stature than the giants of ancient times. It is however, a qualitative victory, one in which the strength of the self over circumstance, as Plotinus calls it, is the key to man's internal peace and security. It is ultimate re-identification by purity with the Eternal Wisdom of the Father.

These are the elements of the story and by eight of these keys, I think you could read the entire work with a fair degree of comprehension. In so doing, you would be thinking as the Neoplatonists thought, thinking with Plato and others that this fable is a thinly veiled account of each man's journey to the land which is his True Home.





## Part Five

### JULIAN ON THE MOTHER OF THE GODS

*Descended of Constantine, and himself an Emperor of Rome, Julian was a philosopher and scholar of ability, his writings colored by tremendous emotional intensity. He had a great and sublime sense of the dignity of life and was not inclined to accept anything upon its literal value — he sought a deeper meaning. Thus with the fables of the GREAT MOTHER, Goddess of the Ephesians, Isis the Mother of the Mysteries, he sought to find this meaning.*

WE HAVE CHOSEN A SEMI-DETACHED PERSONALITY TO EXPLAIN certain phases of this Doctrine of Neoplatonism. There are many great disciples of the original Neoplatonic group but the influence of the sect extended beyond the boundaries of its own formal pattern. It touched particularly some of the noblest and most enlightened of the Roman leaders. We have a very general

opinion of the Caesars and for the most part, our opinion is not ill-founded. Probably none of them were quite as bad as they have been painted and very few of them as good as might be hoped. The two exceptions in this group of imperial persons are Marcus Aurelius Antoninus and Flavius Claudius. These two men were both learned and by nature and temperament devout. They were sincere honorable persons. While the circumstances of their time certainly prevented them from the full expression either of their natural inclinations or their potential genius, they have left important monuments—works which have inspired the world far outside the spheres of policy and diplomacy. The *"Meditations of Marcus Aurelius"* is among the noblest of the moral works of man. The writings, various essays and pronouncements of the Emperor Julian must also be included among these great documents. In fact his two orations, *"To the Sovereign Sun"* and *"To the Mother of the Gods"* are outstanding among the great literary works of the world.

We must, for instance, pause and consider the materials and situations of Julianus. He was directly descended from Constantine the Great. His political career reached its height in the year not far removed from the reign of Constantine. You will remember that Constantine gathered the great Christian Council of Nicea. There in about 325 AD, Constantine turned the destiny of the Roman Empire over to Christendom. This policy was not especially altered thereafter except for a few brief interludes. One of the interludes relates to the life of Julian. Julian was born of the imperial line but came early in life under the jealousy of Constantine who was then Emperor and who feared that his descendants might ultimately take away his imperial place and life. Constantine therefore was responsible for the murder of all the descendants that could be traced in the imperial branch of his family with exception of Julian and his brother. These two children were so young and so far removed

from the political scene that it was not considered necessary to eliminate them. Julian spent his early life in exile and in prison. Constantine took no chances with the young man but diverted him from any of the natural privileges of the young, though Julian himself tells us, he was never physically abused.

As a natural result of the seclusion and semi-state of imprisonment in which he lived, the young man early on turned his mind to the deeper problems of life and thought. During the period of his youth and adolescence, he came under the influence of Christian teachers. As a result of the natural mystical sensitivity of his Soul, he was inclined to embrace these teachings. However, he tells us he was profoundly suspicious due to the circumstances involving Constantine and that the entire problem of the great Nicene upheaval was a pretext used by Constantine to advance his own political destiny. But Julian being mystical by temperament, as well as sensitive, retiring, and quiet, he was not completely converted by his Christian associates, although he was impressed by them. The more he considered the matter the more deeply he was impressed until he finally accepted baptism and it was assumed that his life would then follow the pattern of life in the Holy Roman Empire.

Later on, the Empress Eusebia, wife of Constantius had taken a very great interest in young Julian. She saw in him a man growing into manhood with great and unusual capacities and abilities. She was therefore able to convince Constantius that it would be wise for him to turn to this kinsman, a man honorable and sincere and to put his trust in the person he had so grievously wronged. Constantius agreed and in due course of time, Julian was proclaimed Caesar and given a sphere of activity beyond the Alps. This was the beginning of this young man, who gradually, by his own merit and to a degree by the general collapse of the Roman Empire around him, came finally to the imperial purple and was proclaimed Julian Augustus after it became evident that Constantius had lost the Empire.

Julian was born in Constantinople and when the time came for him to be solemnized as Pontificus Maximus at the funeral of Constantius, he ordered the former emperor to be buried as he had wished, with Christian ritual. However, by this time Julian himself had changed his mind on some of these religious questions. It was known that while as Caesar he extended the influence of Rome and protected it very largely, his own mind had been gradually changing. As a result of this change, Julian finally formally renounced Christianity and returned to the faith of his fathers. For this reason, he has been stigmatized in the church as Julian the Apostate, but actually the circumstances leading to the very changes in his thinking were perfectly natural for the kind of man that he was. Julian had a very short career as Emperor. Two years after he had become invested with the full imperial power, he died on the field of battle pursuing a defeated Persian army.

Thus, for only a short time did this man enjoy worldly power and glory. Julian, one of the best Emperors Rome ever had, departed from this world in his thirty-second year. He had little if any time to ripen his philosophy, to produce out of himself the full maturity of his thinking. Most of the works of Julian were done while at war on the battlefield. He wrote at night with the lights of lamps and candles. He had no leisure. He often said that he regretted profoundly that destiny seemingly had demanded of him that he renounce his allegiance to the Athenian Minerva and accept service in the Army of the Roman Zeus. He would much rather remain to the end a scholar but as this was denied him, he did the best he could under the circumstances.

Although he renounced Christianity as his own religion, he then issued his own imperial edict decreeing complete and absolute religious tolerance within the Empire. At no time can it be truthfully said that he persecuted the Christians or did

anything to injure them. It has been noted, perhaps unjustly however, that he preferred to choose those words for himself from among the school of philosophy with which his mind was most totally associated.

Fundamentally, Julian was a Platonist, but during his life he came strongly under the influence of Neoplatonism and this gradually resulted in the maturity of his philosophic thinking. Julian also has the distinction of being one of the few Roman Emperors who was actually an Initiate of the Mysteries. It is known that as Pontifex Maximus, as the Emperor, it was customary for the Roman imperial line to assume deification. It was therefore his duty to preside over the State Mysteries, but as we may suspect from the general state of Rome, the political mysteries of Rome were by no means mature or pure. Very few of the Roman Emperors were ever able to receive admission into the greater and deeper schools of philosophy existing in other regions. Julian was one of the exceptions.

Julian was also an Initiate into the Great Mysteries of Ephesus. He was accepted into the cult of Diana, the great goddess of the Ephesians. He was initiated in the crypts under the city of Ephesus and his Initiator was Maximus, the Neoplatonist. Julian was also initiated into the Mysteries of the Persian Mithras from which mysteries he learned many things including a new meaning for the mysterious baptism of blood—*“by the Blood of the Sun, men’s sins are washed away.”*

Julian was initiated as well in Greece and therefore cast his lot with that great descent of priest philosophers who had made such rich contributions to our common good. He was initiated into the rite of the goddess Cybele sometimes known as the “Mother of the Mysteries,” the “Mater Dorum,” the “Mother Of the Gods.” It is from these circumstances relating to his own initiation and to his own experiences in the sacred rites that Julian prepared his great *“Oration to the Mother of the Gods.”*



As a great literary work the Oration is almost unexcelled, but our principal interest lies not in this literary implication but rather between the lines in the hints arcanelly dropped by one who had passed through the rites and therefore was bound by an obligation neither to expose nor reveal but to hold most sacred those things in themselves most sacred. Thus, we cannot turn to Julian and expect to find an expose' of the great mystery system. We can find, however, through the references which he himself derived from the great Platonic and Neoplatonic sources and from the contemporary records of Julian's own life, the type of mind and the philosophy with which he was familiar. Also in the great orations and his work "Julian Against The Christians" we can find certain indications of the circumstances, the type of mind and the philosophy known to him.

We have said that he died too young to have perfected his system or to have made his own mature contribution upon the level of reflection. He was still a young man groping after many things but that he had found something, we know. With the things that he had found came great patience and consolation of the Spirit so that in his last hours with the arrow of a Persian soldier in his liver, Julian faced the end with the greatest of serenity, his last words being consideration for those around him and not for his own needs. He died, contrary to all legends and fables about him, at peace with himself and the world believing profoundly in the Platonic doctrine that he had an everlasting estate and that in this everlastingness all good things would be fulfilled.

Julian believed himself to be descended from the god Mercury, but this only implies that he was born under the sign ruled by the planet Mercury. This was the common way of distinguishing persons in his time. He believed that the ruling genius of his horoscope was the mysterious and invisible parent from whom he came. Julian also had another strange and rather

profound obsession. He firmly believed in rebirth and was convinced that in a previous life he had been Alexander the Great. The fate of Alexander, who also died as a young man, and the circumstances of his death and many of the incidents in the life of Julian paralleled so closely to that of Alexander that perhaps there might be some truth in his belief. In any event, he held to it very firmly, going so far as attempting to expiate crimes and sins which he believed that he had committed as Alexander.

With this little outline of the character and manner of Julian and with no ability to enter into the strange and wonderful genius of this man who had talents and abilities far above those of the average person, we must consider his approach to religion. Here we have an interesting problem that perhaps is different from that of any of the other Neoplatonists whom we are considering. Here we have a man who devoutly and honestly became a Christian, then turned from his faith and returned to the doctrines of Plato and the Neoplatonists. Yet, he had received his Christian education at a very early and tender period of his life and during those formative and adolescent years, he had been strongly impressed by the sincerity, dedication and devotion of certain Christian priests and teachers he had known. It was not until public life brought him into contact with the political pressure of the new sect that he became disillusioned. As a young man, he believed very devoutly in the essential goodness of these men in whom he confided and who had taught him. So we have a man returning later to a non-Christian position as a philosopher, scholar and thinker. Undoubtedly he brought with him new attitudes which assumed a combination of elements which formed his philosophy and which distinguishes him somewhat from the other late Pagan writers who were preserving the Platonic descent.

Though a philosopher of good parts and a scholar of ability, Julian was essentially in his own personal life a mystic. He was a mystic inasmuch as he was moved most powerfully and

strongly by certain deep sources and roots within himself. His writings are colored by tremendous emotional intensity. He had a great and sublime sense of the dignity of life and like most of the Neoplatonists, his mysticism led him into interpretation. He was not inclined to accept anything upon its literal value, but sought always its meaning. He sought meaning that would satisfy the hunger of his own search for Truth. Julian had already long realized that Truth was not just a word. He had fully come to appreciate that the attainment of internal security was by a kind of exaltation within himself.

On several occasions he had transcendental experiences and some of the church fathers accused him of being a magician. Actually, he did have visions. He did have an inner contact of some kind with a larger world of Reality, a world which flowing through him, as he himself expresses it, drew security from himself and not from his world. It was this security which sustained him through the cabals and conspiracies of the Roman court. It was this same mysterious internal security that left him untouched by his elevation and serene in death.

We have in Julian a man who was ruled and motivated, as far as we can find, to every action, every public pronouncement, every private memoir, a man absolutely dedicated to what he believed to be duty, responsibility, honor, integrity and truth. He admitted himself that he might not know fully the meaning of any of these words but what it was given him to know, that he would do regardless of cost to himself, regardless of whether it brought him success or death. It brought him a death which was not unusual in cases of this kind.

The great *Oration to the Mother of the Gods*," is a veiled unfolding of the great Rituals of the Mysteries. It is therefore important that we use it as a springboard in an effort to understand the mystery system as it then continued to survive and flourish for a few centuries. It was to pass away from the pages of history in the Western motion of civilization. Of course he

will not tell us this directly, for to do so would violate his obligations. He can only intimate to us the sacred facts involved. The Great Mother, Mother of Life, Goddess of the Ephesians also brooded strange and mysterious over her sanctuary. She was but another form of Isis, the Eternal Widow, the Mother of The Mysteries, mourning and pitiful, seeking for the dismembered body of her murdered Lord.

Julian recognizes these fables, refers to them and tells us what they all mean. He therefore partly explains in this oration, and there are other Neoplatonic writers who can further be consulted, that it was the belief of those who had taken the obligations and the vows that in the dawn of time, the Great Wisdom, the Eternal Gods, had set up their sacred institutions among men that Truth might not perish. These sacred institutions were guarded generation after generation. The laws of these institutions, the sacred rites and ceremonies, the secret instructions, the disciplines, the tests and trials were all set forth according to the oracular revelations of the gods themselves. These gods in the beginnings of time had established these rites and appointed their priests in whom all the Hierophants and Masters of the Rites from that time on have descended by ordination, by the same kind of mystic, secret transference of power and authority that we think of in Christianity under the term Apostolic Succession. This succession or rites preserved through the sacraments, through the laying on of hands and through the dedication of lives, meant that the great institutions had come down always as custodians of the Great Work.

Now man is born into this world from the womb of his mother and his days are few and full of troubles. According to both the Pagan and Christian writings, this man who is few of days has only one hope and that is that by some wonderful and sacred Reality beyond his comprehension he may, while still alive, die and be raised again. Therefore, the sacred institutions were the Houses of the Second Birth, the houses from which a

man is born again from the Womb of the Mysteries, from the Heart, Soul and Body of the Great Mother who is forever bearing her Sons and yet to the end, is forever a virgin.

This is the song that Julian sings to us, the Song of the House of Wisdom, for Wisdom has built Her house and here She dwells waiting for Her Sons. This Wisdom is Pallas Athena, the patron goddess of Athens, the crowned city, the Queen of the House of Learning. This is Cybele, Diana, Astarte, all the great Mothers, the Mothers of Right, the Mothers who give birth to the Immortal Sons who never die. The ritual perhaps began in Egypt, for it is certain that there Isis, mourning for her Lord, represents the greatest institution in the Mysteries, not as a person but as the Bride of Heaven.

"The Apocalypse Of John" derives part of its authority from the *Rites of Phrygia*, which were practiced in the area around Patmos where it is said John was so long exiled. In these rites we have a new understanding from the "*Book of Revelation*" of the mystery of the bridegroom and the "marriage of the city of Jerusalem to the land" and "Jerusalem was adorned like a bride." This marriage of Jerusalem to the "Lamb of Heaven" is the story that lies at the root of the great cycle of Isis and Osiris. Actually, Osiris represents the Eternal Wisdom Principle. Isis, his consort, is his house or his institution in the world. Isis, therefore, represents the great Theocratic Order just as surely as the same is perpetuated in Christianity under the symbolism of the Virgin Mary. Isis, Cybele and the great Diana are therefore the magnificent organizations or the institutions built up out of the world for the worship and adoration of the gods.

This is again a very interesting psychological mystery, for the temple is always the symbol of the human Soul. The temple is suspended, like man's Soul, between Spirit and body. As Spirit descends from the invisible and Divine world to possess and ensoul, so the Psychic Itself, the Soul, ascending out of the

complication and mystery of matter rises from Its own mortality and Sphinx-like, guards the gates of Wisdom. This Soul then, redeemed out of body, purified from body is the Holy City, the new Jerusalem of St. Augustine. It is the human Soul that is then the "Bride of the Lamb." The great theocratic and sacerdotal systems of the Pagan world were regarded as these sacred cities that became united eternally to the god who was their patron deity.

In the Isis and Osiris cycle, the great deity was foully murdered by his own brother and Isis, the Mysteries, becomes widowed and barren. She puts upon her head sackcloth and ashes and goes forth weeping for her Lord, seeking always and forever for the mysterious power, the great rite, the secret lost word that must be found or the great arcana cannot be restored. Isis seeking for her Lord is, as we might say it, the concept of knowledge, the concept of education, the great concept of universities and colleges as we know them today. To the ancients, they would have been the widowed Isis weeping for her Lord, searching everywhere but not able to find him. This quest is the quest for knowledge, the eternal search for the eternal verities. In the Isis-Osiris cycle, while Isis is wandering in her "widow's weeds" searching for that which is lost Forever, there appears to her the specter of her own deceased husband. Osiris comes in the form of a Holy Spirit. Osiris comes to announce to her that she shall bear a son and that this son shall be for the salvation of the nations. Therefore, it is said that Isis conceived of the Holy Spirit and of her own deceased husband and she brought forth Horus the Younger, the child that was born after his father was dead. In fact, he was conceived after his father was dead. Therefore, he was born of a Holy Spirit. He was a Widow's Son. He was dedicated to a strange and wonderful destiny. Typhon, the assassin of Osiris and the Widow's brother, discovering that this child had been born, sent forth emissaries to all parts of Egypt to discover the child and slay him.

In this course, there is also reference to the slaughter of innocent children who were mistaken for him. But Isis, guided by Mercury, hid her child where none could find him, hiding him in the reeds by the side of the river Nile. The child was saved and grew up to be a fine and splendid man. When this had occurred and the time came for the child's lock of hair to be cut off, and Horus came into his adolescent period, which is the second period of life in ancient Egypt, then Isis received from the ghost of her husband Osiris the promise that he would be forever present with this child and would guide and lead him. When Horus the Younger reached his thirtieth year, which was the Egyptian age of maturity, a strange and wonderful thing happened. At that time Osiris, the god himself, entered into the body of his own son and was born in him, took over and became the ruler of that body. So in this mystery, as the Ancient Egyptian papyrus tells us, the father and son were identical. Then it was that Osiris proudly cried out, "Who has seen the Father has seen the Son. The Son is in the Father and the Father is in the Son and they are one Being to Eternity." This was pronounced a thousand years before Christ.

This mystery goes into many ramifications but Osiris always represents the Great Mystery Itself, the Eternal Truth, the Living Power. Isis, Widow of her Lord, is the priesthood, the sacerdotal institutions, the schools of the Mysteries. The Son that is born of the invisible Spirit and the Widowed wife is Horus the Younger, the Son of the Hawk, the Redeemer, the Light Bearer, the Intercessor, the one who stands in the Hall of Judgment with every Soul that dies and pleads with the Father for the forgiveness of Its sins. Horus is the one who when the Soul of the dead person seems to be lost, takes upon Itself the sin of the dead and therefore in that way gains Its redemption. These old rites and mysteries go way back. Julian knew these because he had been through the sacred rites. He knew what

their meanings were and what they portended in a world seeking Truth.

Isis is the Great House, the House of God on Earth. Isis was the many roomed chambers of initiation, the dark hidden womb from which flow the Ever Born Ones, the Sons of the Hawk, the Armies of the Redeemed who shall sometime in the last great war, which is the Armageddon, will be locked in a struggle with the powers of darkness. In the end, in those times beyond eternity and time, right shall be victorious and the kingdom shall be returned to Osiris the Father who will come in glory and receive unto himself his beloved Son. All these rites are not the theological stories that we know today. They had a much deeper and more precious meaning to the Initiates of that time.

The great Diana, Mother of the Ephesians, the brooding power or the Moon hovering over the great Temple of Ephesus was likewise this mysterious story of the psychic content and building of the human Soul and how through the union of an invisible Holy Spirit and a corporeal body, the Mother, there is born the radiant Soul which is the salvation of the world. This in turn causes the Initiate or the Adepts of the ancient rite to be considered as the personification and embodiment of the Principle of Soul.

Here we can pause for just a moment and remind you of the heroic estate we described in our previous session in the "*Wanderings of Ulysses*." The heroes are the Soul Beings, those who have built for themselves this house, this tabernacle within which is to be their habitation. So through the power of the Mysteries, the Breath of Life is breathed into a man and he becomes a living Being. This living Being is the Psychic Entity, the mysterious Energy or Power of the Soul.

Julian points out something that I think is very interesting. He says that these rites whether they be of Samothrace or Ephesus, whether they be among the Phrygians or in the Mysteries



of the Goths and the Gauls, all of these rites were presented in the form of pageantry. The pageants of Eleusis are particularly remembered but they were no more remarkable and important than those practiced in other places. The neophyte, seeking admission into these rites, having passed certain preparative examinations and tests is brought into the ceremony and there he is a witness. He is a beholder. What he was is perhaps defined in a line in Plato because Plato, an Initiate, was asked this question and he replied, "I am a spectator." This means, of course, that he accepted the entire pageantry of life as the drama of initiation although very few modern writers ever realized that fact.

In the ritual, Apuleius, who preceded Julian in these rites, and Adrianus and Marcus Aurelius Antoninus who also were Initiates of Ephesus, all of those who went before joined with Julian in bearing testimony to something which is undoubtedly the secret and the very heart of the Mysteries. They all declared that when they entered this temple as candidates for the Mysteries for initiation, they actually went through an experience. Apollonius of Tyana at a still earlier date than these men testifies to the same thing. He said that when they entered the house of the goddess, of the great House of the Mother, that they returned to the womb for a second birth, that an occurrence or a happening took place which could not be explained in any terms or any words known to man. As the great drama of initiation unfolded from the Soul of the candidate, the story of the Truth behind the picture was restored. So as the ancient Initiate said, the Soul or Psychic Entity within himself stirred in its sleep, awoke and remembered the long road It had come and realized the reason for Its own journey.

Thus in some way, the rituals brought about from the individual the restoration of his own Psychic Memory. There are many answers as to how this could have been. Some of

them from famous and not too happy commentators on the subject have suggested that the candidates were hypnotized or that they were drugged or that something was done to disorder their senses so that they seemed to pass through impossible situations. I doubt if either was true. I think that the answer lies in the ritual itself. Remember, these rites were preserved inviolate without change upon the strongest admonition of the gods and oracles. Not one line, not one motion, not one word could be altered. Man must add nothing and take nothing away. The peculiar power of the rite lay in its own structure and the unfolding which it accomplished. There were those who have written briefly upon these ceremonies, particularly those who had passed through them and could not say much. There also were those who arcanelly concealed them under subterfuge and veiled terms, particularly the Grecian poet Aristophanes who in his "*Frogs*" and his "*Wind*," two of his supposed comedies, gives us part of the rituals.

These rites unfolded according to a peculiar sequence. Plotinus says, "they opened like a flower and bore their fruit." The entire situation was so perfectly and completely ordered that in some mysterious way it brought about some of the Psychic chemistry implied by Plotinus in the "*Essay on the Beautiful*" which we have previously studied. In the rites then as in the approach to the Beautiful, the Soul was said to burst forth in joy to embrace Its own likeness.

Thus, the rituals were a magnificent, integrated psychological structure which could reminisce through recollection, through similarity and through association with the sleeping remembrances that are locked within the Psychic Life of the individual. These rituals then called him forth out of the darkness of his own sleep and caused him to awaken. While the rites were proceeding, he lived them, he experienced them because they were unfolding in tone and order, picture and color and design the very structure of his own Psychic life. He responded

because they were revealing to him an absolute similitude of his own Soul. Man is thus drawn into the presence of himself, and recognizes those patterns and pageantries, responds by ancient instincts, which he cannot even explain or understand. These ritual patterns were mandalas, concentration fields by which the disciple or the candidate was lured from the darkness of his own sleep. In him, the Soul that had slumbered, which had been unable to rouse Itself by Its own vigilance alone was able to be revived, be restored to Its own waking state.

Those who attained this or received this apotheosis within themselves were said to have been like Apuleius, brought forth into the presence of the Great and Glorious God. In this procedure, they were enabled to revive the Divine Memory, the Intuitive Power, the Inspirational faculty which had slept within them since the time of their embodiment in form.

Julian implies all this to us. He then tells us that these things are not just drama, they are something in themselves, ineffable and sublime, worthy of admiration and suitable to cause the one who passes through them to come to the greatest devotion and to the most utter and complete humility. Plato is said to have referred to the Rites of Eleusis in such terms of approbation that the importance of these ceremonies cannot be doubted. He tells us that in the presence of the great rituals, he was as a small child knowing nothing. This, however, was not due to instruction. The rituals did not teach; they released. They caused the individual to see, almost to dream symbolic equivalents of his own Psychic life.

This brings us to a situation which might have considerable bearing upon modern thinking. We are now concerned in analytical psychological research with the problem of the interpretation of symbolic patterns in the subconscious and unconscious of man. We feel that man is moving from within outward through the projection from himself of symbolic forms which bear witness to the geometrical proportions of his

own Psychic life. Therefore, the individual in his dreams, in his waking dreams, in his instinctive likes and dislikes, in the decisions and choices he makes, in the person he may choose to marry, in his attitude toward life and his world, in all these things he is drawing something from himself. He is causing symbolic forms and shadows to come to the surface from the deep sources and fountains of his own existence.

The difference between this and the great *Rituals of the Mother of the Gods* may be worthy of our consideration. For in the rituals, these qualities with which man is most concerned are lured from himself by the presentation of symbols *to* him and not merely released *through* him in a heterogeneous collection of dissonant elements. In other words, if these symbolic forms which come *from* man represent various impersonations of his instincts, then these instincts *have* potential forms or symbolical equivalents. If the most Divine of these instincts are pictured to man, he will experience them and find that these pictures will call upon his own inner remembrances, releasing these symbolic patterns from within himself. In the common ordinary life of man, most of his environmental circumstances do not directly release because they are in themselves asymmetrical. They are themselves compromises, materialistic empathies, and the individual is not in the presence of sheer Beauty, nor is he in the presence of sheer Goodness as far as man is capable of contriving these terms or the elements and Principles for which they stand.

So the neophyte or the candidate for initiation enters the Secret House. He isolates himself from the world. He enters into another kind of world which might be likened to his own inner life. He discovers like the Melchizedek Mystery of old, that in the rebirth of his own inner life, he must be his own father and his own mother. He enters into these rites, to an unworldly state of detachment from all material things, from

all normal or materialistic instincts and appetites. Here in an atmosphere of detached sanctity, in an atmosphere itself redundant with beauty, full of love and nobility, all this in gentleness, peace and dignity, the neophyte advances toward the pageantry by which he is supposed to be so profoundly touched.

Gradually the great spectacles open before him and he beholds not the gods or their strange ways and symbols but a series of pictures which are reflections of his own heart and mind. Each of the things that happen break silences within himself and cause him to become articulate of ideals and principles of belief. As this rushing unfoldment takes him, he may very well pass into a state of enthusiasm which is literally with God. He may find himself suddenly possessed by powers beyond his comprehension, moved by forces that he cannot resist until it seems that an internal world bursts through him and around him. He finds himself a little bit like Apuleius "standing at midnight on the threshold of Persephone with the great radiant glory of the Sun at noon shining under his feet." He beholds himself transported from one world to another. He enters into the abode of the dead which is the dark part of himself. He there faces all of the pressures, evils and symbolic fantasies of his own Psyche. He is victorious over darkness and evil. He is restored again to life. He remains three days in the underworld, in three degrees, then he is resurrected and brought into the presence of the Hierophant of the Mysteries, the Grand Master in robes of blue and gold. Here he is crowned and coronated as a Master of the Inner Life. He is presented with the symbols and powers of his new authority.

But long before these things have happened, as Apuleius points out, the Soul Itself has become so completely enamored of the Transcendental Beauty of the Divine that It is scarcely to be considered in this world at all. It moves strangely as in a walking sleep. It beholds all things in a new order and relationships. It beholds gradually the breaking open of the walls of the

Temple until as one of the Initiates says, "All vanished except time and space and Heaven arid Earth and the whole world became the Eternal Temple." All things that were experienced were strangely and wonderfully psychologically *released* by the great pageantry of the rite.

Because of the tremendous power of these rites with their mantrams [a mantra] with their songs, with their sacred circumambulations, with the mystic dances and the muses amid the grace and all these strange parts of these stories, that when finally ended brought with it a complete and tremendous apotheistic change within the consciousness of the neophyte. He became the Initiate not because his mind had accepted the instruction, not because his emotions had been purified or cleansed, for these cathartic disciplines came first. He was an Initiate because of a complete transcendent experience, an experience which could never be assailed by his own reason, which could never be denied by his own mind because he had been there, because this had happened to him and because in the course of the great ritual, he had come face to face with the gods themselves.

Were these gods truly masked priests? They may have been but also every mask, every robe, every symbol was chosen with a strange and wonderful skill. The gods the man saw may have been masked priests but the gods who came to him from within himself were not. For these various shadows, man-made even with the greatest solemnity and care, became in themselves ensouled. These "Energies of Divine Things," as Plotinus calls them, become strange magical agents drawing to themselves the real Principles for which they stand so that which is in the likeness of the gods is never entirely separate from the gods because the believer can experience the god in the likeness. That which comes to the person who understands or accepts the Mystery is not the symbol but the substance, the Energy which is released through the symbol.

Having received the rite, the Initiate then goes forth upon the porch of the Temple. He finds that the citizens of the villages around have all gathered for the wonderful ceremony of receiving him back again into the world of objective living. For he has been born again of the Great Mother and he has come forth out of his Alma Mater. The form of this is preserved even in our present university system, although the meaning is lost. He comes forth out of the Mother of Learning. He had not been taught by the mind alone; he has been taught by the Soul in a Mystery. He is hailed as he stands between the two pillars of the porch of the Temple, hailed as one twice born, the reborn one. He is then no longer proclaimed as a wise man with students or as a great teacher or something of that kind.

The Initiate of the Mysteries had a strange and unique place which has never been fulfilled since the decline of that system. He was a Being like a god. The king of the country could not be seated in his presence without permission. Every door was open to him. No man would dare to deny him anything that he asked, but for the strangeness of the circumstance, he never asked for anything. He was strangely and completely aloof, and yet he was in this world but not of it. He labored, he served, he taught, he worked. When in the fullness of his years were done, he went to sleep in the Earth like his brothers who had not been initiated, but he lived forever in a state of immortality because within himself he knew that he could not die. He had returned to the gate of death and had come back again. He had passed through this complete internal release of the Psychic nature of his own Soul and as such, he was a *Mahatma*, a Great Soul in the Julian language. This great Illumined Soul, as Julianus tells us, sings the great and glorious hymn to the Mother of the Mysteries because She is the custodian, the faithful guardian, the forever keeper of all that is True, Noble and Good. She is the Soul Itself, the Beloved of all nations, the desire of all peoples.

The Temple being as it was a peculiar emblem of the Soul, the rise of the mysteries was represented in two degrees or stages. For whereas the body of man carries within itself the sanctum sanctorum of the secret part of the heart, so within the heart of man the Temple of the Mysteries is built. Within man's own Psychic life certain things must happen before the Temple Which Is Everlasting can be built. Here we have symbolism which can find easy parallels with the Biblical stories of the Tabernacle in The Wilderness and the building of Solomon's Temple. All of these rites and ceremonies have the same meaning. But "the house that is built without the sound of hammers or the voices of workmen eternal in the Heavens" is, of course, the Everlasting House Of The Soul. The mysterious Temple, the mysterious abode of the great Psychic Mother Sophia Achamoth, the great Mother of the Mysteries, Sophia, or the Virgin of Wisdom, is the House that can never be profaned, the mystery whose veil cannot be lifted but who waits forever for the return of Her Son and like the patient Penelope, weaves forever the mysterious fabric of destiny.

All these things have something to tell us about the religious system of that time and what the secret of it was. We read frequently in various books of men trying to understand in this late time what the power was that maintained the mystery system for four thousand years in the ancient world. What was it that caused the rich, the powerful, the great, the strong, the wise, the learned and the simple all to hold this system in the most extraordinary admiration? What was it that was so strangely and wonderfully powerful that during its flourishing it produced the greatest minds and hearts and Souls the world has ever known? It was in some way this mysterious power of actually releasing through its rituals a symbolic mystical experience.

The early church undoubtedly sensed this because it created in its own form and in its own way the mystical Christian



equivalents of Pagan rites, and that was the mystery of the mass. The mass was originally a mystical ceremony intended to convey certain parts of the old ritual. The mass as we know it, particularly the ceremony of the Eucharist, goes far back in Egypt and into the Dionysian Rites of Greece but in some mysterious way, the mass did not attain the purpose which was exemplified in the Pagan ritual. That the mass produced a very deep and profound sense of sublimity cannot be questioned. That a high mass at St. Peter's in Rome today is one of the most tremendous religious experiences that a man can pass through cannot be doubted. We know these things to be true and yet in some way this ceremonial, this tremendous pageantry does not accomplish what the ancient ritual did accomplish.

What then was the essential difference? Julianus says very simply one thing and this is the basis of his great *"Argument Against the Christians."* Julianus says that the difference lies in the disciplinary rites. In other words, Julian declares in his *"Argument"* that the Criers of the Pagan mysteries or those who called the neophytes to their labors said, "Let only the pure of heart enter here. Let only the dedicated come. Let only those in themselves who achieved and attained be permitted to mingle in this sacred throng." The idea or principle was that in these ancient rites, the religious experience was not bestowed, it was *earned*. This perhaps does have a large bearing on its effect. Because Julian knew and had experienced both was in a better position to say than we are today because we cannot experience both. Julianus definitely believed that before the individual can have this experience occur within himself he must have attained to a certain level of merit. Plato and Pythagoras required certain prerequisites for admission into their sacred schools. Perhaps these prerequisites were to a degree symbolical. We know that Pythagoras initiated his own slaves and it is not likely that these slaves possessed the literal prerequisites which he required. Somewhere in this process was a symbolism

that had to do with the merit or the earning of the right for acceptance into the state religion.

So Julian says that the great difference lay in the fact that the Pagan required that those who sought Truth make in themselves an affirmation of their own merit and sincerity that they might not enter the sanctuary except with clean hands and an upright heart. He says that the God of the Mysteries was not saving the timid but was rewarding the just.

Now this makes a difference in the psychology involved. Julian says he turned away from his Christian baptism essentially by this particular circumstance. He said that he believed firmly that the individual who sought the consolation of God must bring something with him. He could not merely accept, not just pray for what he wants and then continue to live the way he pleases, not to hope for the good thing but be nothing himself, not to continue his common course of profane action and at the same time feel justified in claiming his participation in a religious mystery that is the merit system at the end and source of these things.

Now it is quite possible to believe that the sacraments which are performed in the presence of persons who are themselves not consecrated can have the same type of result as those in which the person is duly and properly prepared for this experience. Another thing that is of great importance is that religion is this same system. The philosophic culture of religion was a decision of the individual himself. Men were not born into faith. They did not join their faith because their friends did or because their relatives were members or because it was particularly suitable to the location within which they lived. These kinds of considerations played no part in the old Mystery Rites. The individual prepared himself for from five to twenty years of study, of self-control and discipline before he could approach the Temple. He must bring from the community in which he lived proper credentials proving that this entire time he had

been an outstanding citizen on the level of ethics; that he had performed no action that was contrary to the public good; that he was honest, intelligent, kind, well integrated and well ordered; that he possessed courage and self-discipline; that he had proceeded in the gymnasium to attain certain scholastic levels; that he was in every way dedicated and had given his whole life to the search for Truth. Only then was he considered eligible for participation in the great orgies of the Blessed God. An orgy of that time had no such meaning as we ascribe to it today. It represented the great, strange, mysterious and intoxicating, pageantry of the Soul in which consciousness was elevated into an incredible exaltation of experience.

These things led Julian to feel and believe that the Mystery of the Great Mother and the Blessed Goddess were reserved for those who were true. They were reserved for the individual who was willing to sacrifice all else in the service of the Great Goddess and until that decision was complete within consciousness, Her Rites could not be experienced because Soul Itself was not ready.

On the modern psychological level, I think we can begin to appreciate some of the possibilities of this and can think of it in terms of a potential problem in psychotherapy. Today we are confronted with the great need of man organizing and purifying his own Psychic content. We know that the average person is burdened with a variety of pressures, intensities and frustrations of all kinds so that he is incapable of the relaxation and integration of a well-ordered life. Book learning will not save him. Allegiance to organizations will not save him. The only thing that can save him is the reduction of his own psychic pressure. In psychotherapy today, we are attempting to exhaust these pressures by certain therapeutic techniques releasing the individual from the delusion or illusion which is causing his condition. It is conceivable however, that society can produce and should produce individuals who by their own action have

prevented a neurotic condition by taking hold of themselves or have had such a neuroses and have had victory over it by the conquest of the thing that caused it. Today on the psychological level, we are working mostly with effects and by the time we get an individual cleared from one complex he is ready to fall into another.

Such is the pressure of our times. As such, it will continue as long as his proclivity to become complicated (his natural instinct to the psychotic) is overcome or changed by some greater instinct taking hold of his consciousness. The Soul, burdened by the pressures of our own psychic delusions is transformed into a chimera or monster of strange and distorted appearance and form. This monster in turn prevents the individual from having the experience of his own Psychic Entity. The troubled Soul cannot find its own heart, Its own integration. For that reason in modern times, we could contemplate very seriously the possibility of bringing the Soul Itself back to normalcy, back to integration by the dedication of the faculties of our minds and the emotions of our hearts to the restoration of Its integrity. This is the discipline of the Mysteries.

This is the one great part of knowledge we have forgotten. It is the failure to remember this discipline that has brought the whole House of Knowledge down about our ears. If that self is inadequate, improperly integrated, he finds not Reality but illusion in the strange dark subterranean passageways of the Secret House. It is therefore the great problem in Wisdom for man to realize that his own confusion creates error, that he can be no more true than he is integrated, that he can be no more wise than he is at peace within himself. Until these elements and factors are recognized, the great rites or the ceremonies are not for him.

Perhaps in earlier days when life was less pressured, the psychic needs of man were not as strenuous as they are today, nor was the demand upon his Psychic Energies so great. Certainly

today we are in desperate need of the restoration of the great Mystery System of education, the education that begins with the integration of self, the education that advances only as rapidly as the individual proves by his own integrated ability that it is safe for him to be in the great adventure. For if he proceeds unqualified, he will ultimately be faced with the Riddle of the Sphinx and will perish along the road of his search.

Julianus tells us these things and we can then say to ourselves, what manner of man was Julianus, who though reaching the end of his life at thirty two, still had achieved a sufficient mysterious ability to have merited initiation in himself. Julianus wasn't perfect. How did he do it? Why did they accept him, a young man who had probably brought inadequate resources and certainly no maturity in his real philosophic life? The answer is that Julianus, like all accepted candidates of the Mysteries, was finally chosen by oracle. In other words, the candidate's final acceptance depended upon some testimony coming from the gods themselves. In other words, he must be accepted. "Many are called but few are chosen." Man may be called out of the world by the instincts of their own natures but they are chosen by the Divine Powers.

What was it that caused or might have caused the acceptance of Julianus? One of the old stories about him tells us that when he came into the presence of Maximus the Neoplatonist while he was waiting for initiation into the Mithraic ceremonies at Ephesus, the Neoplatonist embraced him with great love and said, "My son, you have come back. That which you have already done has come to life in you." He explained to Julian that in his previous embodiment he had accepted the rite and therefore he might receive it again. Because of this, it would be possible for him to restore the rite in his own consciousness. If this was not true, he could not, but because he had already received the Mysteries, then for that reason, learning was a remembering of that which was already known.

Maximus further explained to Julian something that the boy himself knew and which was perhaps the deciding factor; namely, that from his own infancy, Julian had this great pressing desire within himself to know. He was born, as he tells us himself, seeking Truth. Therefore he could well believe, perhaps, that the Soul in him whether it was the Soul of Alexander or some other Spirit in Space, that the Soul in him had already known the road and was longing to find it again.

This then by initiation, was the reviving, the restoring of that knowledge which the Soul already possessed but which had been obscured to It by Its embodiment as a newborn babe. Because Maximus the Neoplatonist recognized in Julian the signs of one who had taken the oath, he was accepted and initiated. From what transpired then and afterward, it seems that Maximus very probably was right because certainly Julian, considering his age and his circumstances, almost immediately revealed a wisdom far beyond his years or far out of harmony with the generation and the condition of the world in which he lived. Julian definitely belonged to the Golden Age of Greece. He belonged to the centuries that had preceded him. He was a great philosopher-mystic coming too late and dying too soon.

So there was this peculiar circumstance involved in his acceptance into the rites. He and other Neoplatonists remind us that where this gift, this power, this strange and inevitable destiny to press on to Truth is strong, clear and bright within the human Soul, then that Soul is telling us that at some previous time It passed through the gates of the House of the Mother; that It received in the past Its sacred name, Its ordinations and is now only seeking to remember that It may go on to learn more of the mystery.

Now we know even in this late time, certainly in the many years of public work that I have gone through, I know that the world is divided into two very general groups of people. There

are those in whom there is this tremendous urge to know, this urge to release a Spiritual destiny locked within themselves. This urge in its proper and natural form is not an urge to achieve greatness, fame, wealth or authority, nor is it an urge to escape burdens, escape responsibility or to advance one's own Spiritual destiny. It is the simple urge to learn in order that we may give. Where this urge is tremendously strong, we cannot but wonder, as Julian wondered, whether it isn't the dim remembrance of the Soul of a destiny to which It has already been called by the sacred rite when It was dedicated to the service of the Great Mother who is the servant of all.

Then there are other Souls in whom this hunger does not seem to exist and who are happy and content to live their normal lives, who find no call, no pressure, no sublimity to disturb their mortal inclinations. These Souls have not been moved, they have not been to the House, they have not tread upon the threshold of the goddess. They have not seen the Great God standing in the light before them. Julian felt this, believed it completely. There is something about our own daily living after this time that seems to intimate that perhaps he was right. At least we have no better explanation.

We see this same phenomenon with the structure of modern religion when we find some who are of such nature so devout that they are led by a goodness in themselves so that it makes no difference to what sect they belong. This difference seems to be something within the Psyche. To the Greeks, it meant the Psyche of the Greeks who had passed through the Mysteries in some previous time with a record waiting to be awakened, that it could be awakened very quickly and very easily under the proper circumstances and pressures. Julian was accepted and apparently received the full benefit of this strange rite and ritual for he tells of his longings, dreams and hopes as he tries to unfold without unveiling the Mysteries of the Great Mother.

Also in the orations of Julian, he divided the universe into two essential parts. He describes to us the Mysteries and Rituals of the Sovereign Sun. The Sovereign Sun to him was the visible symbol of the invisible power of Eternal Life. To him, the Sun was the Father of All Living and the Earth, the Mysteries, was the Mother of All Living. The union of the Sun and the Moon in the mysterious Alchemical experimentation produced the Psychic Homunculus, the mysterious creature of crystal in whom the two great Sets of Energy mingle and produce from themselves the magnificent structure of the living Soul. The Neoplatonists taught, for example, that there was Spirit and body and between these two as a spider spinning its web, the mysterious interchanges of Energies and forces brought into creation a middle distance which was the Psychic Matter rising gradually impregnated with Life and releasing Life from Itself. Herein also was the Womb of the Mysteries, the Great Mother. Her temples were mostly beneath the Earth as symbolic of their proper place and residence. The Mother was impregnated by the power of the Light by the Father Spirit, and between this Heaven and Earth dominion lives that which fashions the subtle fabric of the Soul.

Pythagoras and the others declare that a Soul is properly called a form. Form and matter are not the same. All bodies are forms. All bodies are composed of matter but there are forms of matter which are without body and there are forms that are without Spirit. These mysterious things are described in the mysteries of *"Iamblicus on the Mysteries of the Egyptians and the Chaldeans,"* but what we are told that when matter is impregnated with Life, when substance receives into itself the Archetypal pattern of Universal Law, matter suddenly is brought into magnificent geometric arrangement. Matter is itself a form, yet formless. Life is unformed but potential of form within Itself. Just as matter and Energy unite in the production of a snowflake, so the snowflake becomes a form because a form is a



compound of Life and substance, of mind and matter, of consciousness and the elements. The form therefore, is body that has been fashioned from matter and designed by consciousness. The two, matter and consciousness through their integration produce the radiant specter of the human Soul.

So form and Soul are the same, for all Souls are formal structures and a form is an aggregation of Substances around a pattern, a design or a purpose. So the most minute creatures that we see, the little crustacean and things of that nature are forms like little snowflakes, for wherever Life takes hold of matter, It begins to mold matter into form. Form is a symbolic description or exhibition of Life's process. The human Soul therefore is the symbolic representation of the state of man's growth in relation to his Spiritual core and his material body. This, in turn, means that the Soul or the Psychic parts are responding more subtly and more immediately to consciousness than body does. It is therefore more easily affected, more quickly inspired and more subtly influenced than body.

The Mysteries were the physical symbols of the World Soul. Because they were physical symbols, they were built in certain ways. We can begin to understand why in the Dionysian Rites of Greece the Orders of Architecture were brought in, the five great orders and the polyglot orders that followed them. These orders of architecture were required in the building of temples because the building of temples were dedicated to the various deities, that is, to various Psychic complexes or patterns. Each temple had to be the complete and perfect representation in stone of the Psychic Archetype which belonged to that god or deity. Visiting Egypt, Pythagoras said he found in the temples strange images of the gods because all of the divine beings of the Egyptian hierarchy were represented by symmetrical geometric solids of various shapes and arrangements. In other words, all the gods were reduced to geometric formulas. In Greece, the geometric formula in its turn was amplified and expanded into

the temple which must have its pillars either Doric, Ionian or Corinthian according to the deity who dwelt there. The structures of the temples themselves were based upon basic star patterns as we learn from the Caesarano edition of Vitruvius. We know that every one of these tasks was appointed with the same care.

Assuming that man himself builds his outer body from the very picture and structure of his own Psychic life, so too in building the temple of the gods. It was necessary that each temple should in every part and detail be true to the god which it represented because it was his house. Learning from the Bible, unless we build the temple according to the Law of Order and Proportions, the living god will not dwell therein, for the god, the power, the dynamic, the Psychic reality of the Archetype can only be captured when the structure which houses it is identical with it. In the same way, man is only able to capture the Archetype of the Great Mystery Drama if his own Psychic organism is identical with it.

This strange rapport was of two kinds. Man could not be sure and could not know that his own Psychic nature was identical with that of the god, but through the oracles and the sacred and ancient institutions, the initiated priests were convinced that they in the production of their rites and their temples, in the ordination and of their sacred orders and priesthood that they were fulfilling, dramatizing, revealing, expressing, symbolically setting forth great primary Psychic Archetypes. Therefore, the Mysteries were a geometrical equivalent of the Soul. Just as surely as the Mysteries themselves were the shadows and formats of the Soul of God, so they beckoned and opened to the further shadowed extension of the Principle, the Soul of man.

So we understand the meaning of the term that the neophyte or the Initiate entering the Sacred House is described as "going home." He is going back to the similitude of himself.

He is going back to his own birth. He is going to the place he came from. He is going back to the state or condition that is eternally his, the condition of the great Archetype of Psyche in Space. Thus, he returns to the Ancient House. He comes back again to the womb. He has returned back to his own childhood. He has truly returned to his own infancy. He must come forth again by a new birth in conformity with the Archetype and with complete receptivity to the impression of the "Signatura Rerum," the Great Seal or imprint of the Archetypal purpose. The Initiate therefore is supposed to and believed to carry within himself from the time of the Mysteries the living Archetype of the connection between his own Psychic life and the Psychic life of the universe. There is no longer any disarrangement between these two. They had come together and because his Soul was like the World Soul, it could never be separated from It because things which are alike can never be separate in time and space.

The gradual edification of the initiate through the continuation of his study then becomes of one purpose only; namely, that he could increase in skill, power and means for the expression of that which was his own internal nature. From that time on, he was instinctively and inevitably master of arts and sciences because all these things are merely specializations of his own Psyche. As sure as art, literature, the dance and poetry, sculpture and painting, and all these things manifest man's instinct to express beauty, so when the Psyche is Itself ordered in all matters, this Beauty is immediately and eternally available. It only remains for the Initiate to experience and discover ways in which It can be revealed.

This is in substance the experience of the Blessed Theurgy described by Plotinus. It is this experience of the One returning to the One, the alone Journeying to the Alone. That which is like finds likeness. The Soul imprisoned in man is freed and restored to the Soul of the World of which It is a proper fragment

and inevitable part. Thus, the Soul of the World, the Mysteries and the Soul of man meet in the strange Rites and Rituals of the Mother of the Gods. The Soul in man finds Its kinship, discovers Its identity, realizes that It has long been in exile and that It has found Its way to Reality. Then from here on and for all eternity according to the rites, this ritual can be revived and the child coming into the world is born with the subjective realization of Its own destiny somehow strangely, gently, tenderly, wonderfully bound to the Soul of the World. From these who are thus bound, thus ordered and thus ordained come the teachers and leaders of the race.

This is in substance the Julian position and we can add to it in certain methods and ways but it not only tells us to a large measure the story of Julian but it helps us to summarize the entire concept of Neoplatonism, for this is the same to return to that which it is the Same. For these disciplines like those of the Indian schools are disciplines of union—union through the experience of similitude and then the experience of identity. For man's own Inner Soul is identical in quality and substance to the World Soul. They meet, flow together and become one and can never again be separated. Part of this mystery is explained in the initiation rites, for in this ritual, the Initiate has, at least temporarily, this terrific experience. Later perhaps, it fades somewhat from his mind because his compound nature is not capable of preserving continuously so exalted a state of Spiritual intensity. But even though the experience may not be forever available or immediately accessible to him, the memory of the experience still becomes the most blessed of all memories. It also becomes the memory of Truth or the memory of Wisdom, the memory of help, the great Good that cannot be forgotten and which therefore is greater than the small evils and uncertainties which can be forgotten.

Nothing in the world, nothing can have the effect that the motion of the Soul to the recognition of Its union with the

great Archetype can have. Therefore, in the presence of this all doubts, all fears, all negation has no opportunity of presenting and maintaining themselves. Thus the Initiate can never completely relax. He can never forget. He can never fail to experience. He has known something. He has beheld the universe open around him and within him. He has come to *know* as Reality things that other man can only believe or wonder about.

Having passed through the experience, he receives a strange and wonderful catharsis and this experience of passing through, of actually participating in the rites is the sacrament by which the benediction of the Spirit is bestowed. In the presence of this benediction and under its tremendous influence, something happens in the Psychic chemistry of the individual. The Soul can never be sick again as it was before. It can never forget! It can never stagger away and die again in matter because It has received the greatest impulse, the greatest transference of Energy from the World Soul that it is possible for It to have. It therefore blazes within the Being and causes It to bow before this victorious and triumphant Soul within himself and acknowledge himself to be Its servant.

So Julian closes his wonderful word pictures with this prayer of thankfulness to the Great Mother, to the World Soul which has made it possible for him to come to Her as a child to its parent and find in this security of the great Psychic Mystery of Initiation, that strange and wonderful security that comes to the small child who returns to its parents love and understanding. Julian as a small child goes home to the Mother and in going home, finds peace, security and solemnity. Thus, he contemplates his dream of this great drama and I think we have considerable reason to believe from his thought and from the works of his contemporaries that Julian indeed has had this experience, that it sustained him magnificently through the trials of a short and tragic life. We will hope with Julian that it will

## *Neoplatonism*

cause him to return again in due time with the memory of the greatness of his Soul with the message and journey of the Soul deep within himself, so that perhaps again in his day, he can become enlightened, can receive the Mystery, can continue his dedication to the service of the Mother of the Gods.

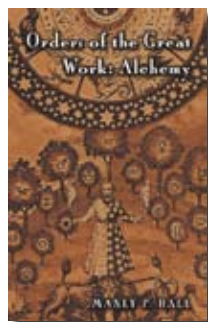


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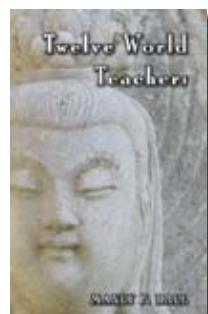
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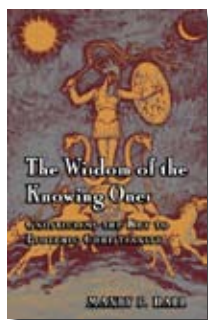
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