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THE PHILOSOPHY OF PLOTINUS

Representative Books from the *Enneads*
Selected and Translated with an Introduction by

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INTRODUCTION

The philosophy of Plotinus has always exerted a peculiar fascination upon those whose discontent with things as they are has led them to seek for true realities beyond what they took to be merely the appearances of sense. The third century A. D., which is that of Plotinus who lived from c. 205 to 270, was such as to amply justify discontent with things as they were. The world state that was still governed from Rome was shaken by constant wars accompanied by the rapid succession of emperors to the throne. Twenty-nine emperors succeeded each other in less than seventy years and their elimination by murder had become a common practice. The unity of the empire thus was constantly menaced by the antagonisms within and the barbarians which exerted an ever increasing pressure from without. Stoic philosophers had for centuries already exhorted men to bear things and to achieve that equanimity which would make them invulnerable to the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune. But it seems that this advice was losing the appeal it once had had and we find philosophy no longer submissive but in search of a life in which the human soul would be free from that prison and tomb which ordinary life so often is.

In the third century such a program did not take for philosophers the form of a plan towards remodeling things as they are into what they could be. The release of the soul from its prison is not to be accomplished in the sense world, but by an ascent from this into more ideal worlds. The life of politics and the ordinary occupations of society are

written off as something which perhaps we should make as agreeable as we can as long as we need to bother with them but which surely do not constitute the plane on which our ultimate aspirations are to be satisfied. Thus we do find a sublime unconcern in Plotinus for matters social and political, even for the violence and destructions they imply. In fact this unconcern for and almost complete silence about them is almost the only tribute which Plotinus ever pays to the turbulences which after all must have been an insistent enough fact in people's lives—but a formidable tribute it is, as it signifies the philosopher's sense of powerlessness in regard to the ordinary world.

Plotinus' adult life, as it appears in the short biography of his disciple Porphyry, seems to have been dominated by the intellectual desire to map out that world which exists beyond sense reality and to live as fully in it as was possible to a soul not entirely free from the bonds that tie it to the body. He seems to have found his intellectual anchorage when in his late twenties he discovered Ammonius Saccas among the teachers at the University of Alexandria. When eleven years later we find him with the army of the emperor Gordianus it is, according to Porphyry, only for the purpose of getting to know the philosophies of Persia and India. But the imperial expedition failed before it had reached its goal and Plotinus barely escaped with his life. After this venture we find Plotinus in Rome where a large group of students gather around him and where he will stay and teach till the end of his life. Among his listeners are senators and other highly placed persons. He is a friend of the emperor Gallienus who enjoyed a relatively long span of rule before he too was murdered, not long before Plotinus' own death. It is perhaps not difficult to guess what attracted these people who apparently at least for a while prospered

in the world as it was to Plotinus. They too must have found relief in his teachings from the tensions which inevitably must have beset their careers. Porphyry even reports a "psychosomatic" cure which the teaching of Plotinus worked upon the senator Rogatianus who was cured from the gout by turning from his former way of life. It is not surprising therefore that many such high-placed persons upon their death entrusted their children to Plotinus and part of the household of Plotinus' school was thus constituted by such wards. Plotinus seems to have taken particular care to preserve the property of his wards and he used to justify such meticulousness for worldly goods by saying that these children would need the money as long as they did not choose the philosophic life. It is such detachment which must have made Plotinus an ideal arbitrator and his services in this capacity were often sought without, as Porphyry reports, his making a single enemy among the men in public affairs.

It was in Rome that Plotinus first committed his philosophy to writing. These writings mirror his oral instructions. Plotinus' was the seminar method. The session would begin with someone reading a philosophic text, particularly from one of the commentators on the writings of either Plato or Aristotle of which a large number had just sprung up. Plotinus would then develop his own views in dealing with these texts. Often also the questions and objections of his listeners seem to have provided him with the basis on which to proceed to the presentation of his own philosophy. But divorced from this oral context as we are, it is rather regrettable that in his written text Plotinus hardly ever mentioned by name the books and even the philosophers he was dealing with. Thus in the big polemic against the Gnostics (p. 69 ff. of this volume), the men Plotinus had in mind are not once referred to by name and only such words as "they"

indicate that their views are referred to. An even greater difficulty is that Plotinus wrote in an extremely condensed style, occasionally to the point that his intent can only be guessed. One reason for this may have been that his eyesight was so weak that according to Porphyry he never rewrote or even reread what he had written. One can certainly agree with Porphyry's judgment that Plotinus' style is richer in thoughts than in words. But it should also be borne in mind that part of the initial difficulty in reading Plotinus is due to the fact that he almost always wrote from the center of his philosophy, approaching the same basic points in a variety of ways. Apart from a few details there is little that remains obscure in Plotinus after the initial difficulties are overcome. Porphyry reports that Plotinus assigned to him the editing of his writings. It is to Porphyry that we owe that peculiar grouping of Plotinus' essays into six main parts of nine essays or "books" each (the scheme of 6 x 9 satisfying Porphyry's numerological fancy) and it is from this arrangement that Plotinus' writings derive their name, "Enneads" meaning "sets of nine."

The very way in which Plotinus started out his seminars is indicative of his relation to preceding philosophy. It is out of the debates current in Hellenistic philosophy that his own philosophy grew. Plotinus himself in his essay against the Gnostics emphasized that his own place is within the *Hellenic* tradition. (Claims of Asiatic or Egyptian influence upon Plotinus have been made by scholars, but there is nothing in Plotinus which, to this writer, cannot be derived from the context of Greek philosophy.) But if the philosophy of Plotinus is continuous with the philosophies that preceded him, it is also in many respects new, to the point that since about the nineteenth century scholars have been dating the beginning of Neoplatonism with Plotinus. It

should be realized that this name *Neoplatonism* is a product of modern scholarship. To Plotinus it appeared that he himself was only elaborating that ancient wisdom that he believed he found in Plato. Plato indeed enjoys a peculiar position in Plotinus' writings. While all the other philosophers were subjected to criticism, sometimes severe criticism, Plato alone is exempt from it—except for a recognition that Plato does not seem to say the same everywhere and hence is difficult to interpret. It is in Plato that Plotinus found a text for almost any of his major doctrines. Nevertheless those who applied the name *Neoplatonism* to distinguish the philosophy of such thinkers as Plotinus from that of Plato (as well as from those ancient philosophers classified as *Middle Platonists*), were perhaps even more right than they imagined. The contrast between Plato and Plotinus is important. It is already flagrantly exhibited in their method. Plotinus taught a doctrine. Plato wrote dialogues in which philosophies are set against each other in living argument. The gap between the two widens if one does not base oneself on an interpretation of Plato still current, which tends to overlook the peculiar way, practically unique in the history of philosophy, in which Plato expressed himself. Such an interpretation, not unlike that which Plotinus gives of Plato, in its attempt to distill a doctrine from the writings of Plato tends to neglect the context in which certain views are expressed and often naïvely tends to ascribe to Plato the views expressed by *one* of the speakers or in some argument of the dialogues—an approach analogous perhaps to an attempt to distill a philosophy of Shakespeare out of the speeches of, say, Polonius.

While a great difference in method thus separates Plato from Plotinus, the two philosophers are not less separated by the problems with which they were concerned. A good

many of Plato's discussions grew out of his concern with remodeling the Athenian society in which he found himself. However the interpretations of certain aspects of Plato's philosophy may vary, nobody will deny that questions of social and political reform were taken seriously by Plato and given a major share of his attention. That the focus of Plotinus' philosophy is quite different has already been indicated. How much Plato shared in the world-transcending tendencies of Plotinus is still being debated vigorously among scholars. But in evaluating this debate it ought to be realized that the tradition in which Plotinus is a major figure is itself responsible for an interpretation of Plato which makes Plato much more of a Neoplatonist than the "Aristotelian" that he really was. We still have not entirely dropped the habit of seeing Plato through the eyes of Plotinus,—a habit which once made it possible for the Renaissance philosopher Ficino to declare that Plato was speaking through the mouth of Plotinus.

Being part of the Hellenic tradition implied commitment to the method of reason, sometimes stubbornly so; for certain aspects of Plotinus' philosophy constitute an attempt to prove by argument conceptions that are essentially poetic and imaginative in character. Yet, to assert Plotinus' commitment to the method of reason seems at variance with the fact that he is often spoken of as a mystic. Now if mysticism means the assumption of levels of existence transcending the sense world, then Plotinus is unquestionably a mystic. He even claimed in his writings to have himself occasionally risen from the world of sense to an experience of the realities beyond. But the great difference between Plotinus and many of those that are called mystics is that he not only did not dwell long on a description of the nature of his experience of the highest reality, but also did not

rely upon it as his main claim to authority over the minds of those who have not risen as far as he. Plotinus' intent rather is to *prove* to those who have not had this kind of experience that there exist realities beyond the sense world. He did not assume in his readers such an experience and hence realized that reference to it would not in itself be of evidential value for most of his listeners. It is thus with the methods of Aristotelian and Stoic logic that Plotinus patiently attempted to demonstrate his assertions. It is from the evidence available to everyone that Plotinus tried to derive both the fact of the existence of transcendent realities and their nature.

What is the evidence for the existence of realities beyond the sense world? Plotinus found it in the very transitoriness of sense existence in which no form nor configuration remains. He claimed that the forms imperfectly realized in sense things derive from and express for a moment the eternal forms of the intelligible world. The three most important transcendent realities or "hypostases" distinguished by him are the One, Intelligence, and soul. It is three outstanding characteristics in sense existence that imply these realities. Oneness is implied in sense things because each thing is what it is by virtue only of having integrated a variety of discrete factors into a unified whole. Intelligence is implied in the rational structure that characterizes the sense world. According to Plotinus all activities aspire towards the achievement of rational form (whereby awareness and contemplation, not mere possession, are the ultimate aim of the activity not only of men but also of nature at large, as he attempted to show in the essay entitled "Nature, Contemplation, and the One," pp. 42 ff.). Soul is implied in the all-pervasive life that characterizes the sense world. (The Greek word for soul, *psyche*, is often best

translated as *life*.) Oneness, intelligence, soul are thus characteristics of the sense world. But to Plotinus they are more than ingredients in or aspects of it. For when we isolate unity, intelligence, and soul as such in discourse (expressed by the very fact of having separate terms for them), this linguistic distinction for Plotinus rests itself on an ontological one. The existence of pure oneness, intelligence, and life does not depend on any of the particular objects which exhibit them (for does not every one of them come into being and pass away again?). They are the eternal exemplars which find their transitory embodiment in sense objects. Plotinus' thus is an ontology in which attributes derive their existence from a nature which is substantially and eternally what they only are attributively and transitorily. Thus he declared that whatever is moved is moved by virtue of Movement as such whereby Movement as such is not again itself moved but rests in eternal sameness. The attributes of life, rationality, integration which characterize sense objects have their source in the eternal hypostases of the One, Intelligence, soul. (In the following translation "Intelligence" has been almost always capitalized, in order to suggest the hypostatized function which the word *νοῦς* has in Plotinus. However, the meaning of these three terms often shifts back and forth from a more hypostatized to a more operational character and Plotinus becomes more plausible if this kind of ambiguity is recognized. Whatever one may think of their independent existence, unity, intelligence, and life are certainly factors *in* the world.)

But Plotinus did not stop at merely establishing the existence of supersensible realities. For the existence of such realities poses the problem of their relation to the sense world. One of the central theories therefore of Plotinus' philosophy is the assertion that the sense world is generated

by and depends for its existence on the realities above it. Such an answer suggests itself to Plotinus for two main reasons: First, to him the One is the supreme reality, perfect in all respects. Such perfection must include to him the highest degree of productivity, too. Thus everything must ultimately derive from the unbounded productivity of the One. For if there were any existence whose generative power were independent of that of the One, it would to the extent of its own productivity limit the power of the One. There would be some effect not due to the power of the One and hence deprive the One of the fullest kind of perfection possible to it. The other main reason, to which reference has already been made, is that Plotinus held that the sense world is not self-sufficient, that it cannot maintain itself in existence by virtue of its own power alone. The spectacle of becoming, the growth and decay of sensible things, shows to him that no thing of sense can keep itself in existence by itself alone. A system of natural causes and effects did not therefore seem to Plotinus sufficient to account even for the events in the sense world. Beside such "horizontal" causation Plotinus made central a conception of what might be called "vertical" causation, the derivation of the lower from the higher levels of reality. It is a view of causation which has recently been vividly called to attention under its ancient metaphor of a "chain of being."

There are obvious difficulties to Plotinus' conception of the One as the source of all existence. If there is to be no rival power to the One, the question arises whether this would not mean the extinction of all individuality, the submergence of all existence in an Absolute which is like the night in which all cats are grey. Moreover, how can the One, itself supremely perfect, give rise to existences less perfect than it? Here indeed Plotinus runs into a difficulty

that is more familiar to us from a similar problem in theology which poses the question why God, being perfect and self-sufficient, created the world, and in what way the world can be distinguished from God as there is no limit to God's extension. Plotinus took great pains to show that there is no rival power to the One. How then can he reconcile with this assertion a system of increasingly inferior levels of reality? This difficulty is never fully solved by Plotinus, perhaps because two conflicting assumptions were necessary to express the intent of his philosophy. He needed a transcendent One to have an unchanging, perfect exemplar removed from the instability of the sense world. But if he wanted to maintain the perfection of this exemplar, he could set no limit to its power. The perfection of the One thus seems to be belied by the fact of the existence of the sense world. Yet it is to the desire of transcending the sense world that we owe this vision of perfection. To reconcile this conflict Plotinus resorted, without being himself aware of it, to metaphors. He likened the procession of realities from the One to the emission of light from the sun, of heat from fire and coldness from snow. Such emission does not imply any diminution of the original substance, no lessening of its perfection, particularly as the One is not a divisible material substance. The One, he asserts again and again, remains what it is, undiminished, while these realities radiate from it. The One is thus both transcendent and immanent. It is, as Plotinus so often said, both everywhere and nowhere.

The conflict between an emphasis on the One as the source of all existence and an emphasis on the deficiency of everything that is not the supreme existence arises in many different ways. Plotinus tried further to bridge it by asserting that the One on account of its perfection necessarily produces, but that what it produces is necessarily inferior

to its source. (Within "vertical" causation it always holds that the cause is *superior* to the effect.) The chain of realities is thus a necessary consequence of the power of the One. In terms of this approach Plotinus frequently and emphatically insisted on the excellence of even the sense world which mirrors in its beauty the perfection of its model. (See the essay against the Gnostics on pp. 69 ff.) On the other hand, such an approach would seem to assign to the soul a fixed, eternal place in an inferior region of the intelligible world. Plotinus indeed often spoke of the soul primarily in such cosmological terms. The soul then is the mediating agency which endows the sense world with life by means of the power and patterns which it derives from Intelligence. But his cosmological emphasis is in conflict with the strivings of the soul towards a better existence. Whenever Plotinus had these strivings in mind, he more fully emphasized the evil that is found in the sense world and spoke of the soul, not as one of several levels of reality in the chain of existences but as an agent that can itself rise and fall to different levels of reality. Hence it is that the descent of the soul is sometimes represented as a cosmological necessity due to the overflowing abundance of the supreme existence and then again as due to the "arrogant" desire of the soul to assert her own individuality by cutting herself loose from the reality above her. (In different terms, the conflict that we are here speaking of would seem to indicate a wavering between a rather selfless acceptance of an inferior position for the soul, provided only that she have a place in a scheme that supports excellence at its top, and a desire to have the soul achieve that very excellence herself. Somewhat similarly men have often said with regard to God "Though He slay me, yet I will trust in Him" and in the next moment have proceeded to ask some benefit of Him.)

Last, it should be mentioned that the conflicting functions which the One has in Plotinus' philosophy are mirrored even down to his conception of matter. It is matter which, as Plotinus often asserted, provides the obstacle to the perfect realization of form. Yet, if the One is to be the source of all being, no power of opposition can be granted to matter. Matter in this respect tends to be spoken of as something privative. It becomes a name for the deficiency of a thing when compared to more perfect existences, but is not itself a force responsible for the deficiency. Matter itself is non-being (that which a thing is not). But such an approach, carried to its conclusions, would make the One responsible for evil. Plotinus to some extent admitted this when, as we already saw, he asserted that the products of the activity of the One are necessarily inferior to it. Still, when he had in mind not the limitless power of the One but the obstacles things meet with in their development, matter tends to become a more positive entity, a "mirror," as he often said, in which the forms are reflected in a distorted way. Matter becomes *real* non-being. (See the essay on "Actuality and Potentiality," pp. 127 ff., in which Plotinus discussed the question in what sense matter can be said to *exist*.)

The question which still remains open is the order of the succession of the various hypostases. Why did Plotinus put the One first and from it derive Intelligence, soul, and the sense world? The reason for the priority of the One can well be shown by stating why to Plotinus the One must be superior even to the world of intelligible Forms and Ideas (the supreme reality for many Platonists). The world of Intelligence cannot be the supreme reality because it still is characterized by multiplicity. But multiplicity to Plotinus implies unity; for without some unifying bond the existence that is multiple would constitute a disintegrated mass of

unrelated particulars. Without unity the manifold cannot exist. Hence that which is most fully one is also most fully existing. (The One of Plotinus is therefore at the opposite pole of the "One" or unit of the atomists.) If the supreme existence were not completely one, this would be an indication that it had not fully reconciled the differences within itself and thus would constitute a duality and require a superior unity by virtue of which it is *two*. The supreme existence is one, beyond the possibility of any conflict within it, and it is self-sufficient, beyond any need of anything that it does not already contain.

It is the world of Intelligence which directly proceeds from the One. It is closest to the One because Intelligence eternally contemplates the One. But it is an inferior reality because it is not completely unified and self-sufficient. Subject and object of contemplation and the variety of intelligible beings are distinguishable entities on this level of existence even though they are not separated from each other like spatial objects or like subject and object in discursive reasoning. Moreover, the very activity of knowing betrays a deficiency; for to know is not to possess, and one contemplates only as long as one does not possess the object of one's contemplation.

The next level of reality is constituted by the soul which proceeds from Intelligence and has the cosmological function to animate and administer the sense world in accordance with the patterns of the Intelligible world. Within the realm of soul the chief distinction is between the world *soul* which governs the entire body of the world and the individual souls which rule particular bodies. The notion of a world soul tends to support certain animistic tendencies. Plotinus followed an old tradition according to which the universe is an organism or "animal" and he tended to conceive of

processes like the creation of minerals as processes of biological growth. There is thus an anti-mechanistic tendency in his writings. (See the essay on "Nature, Contemplation, and the One," pp. 42 ff.)

It should be noted that Plotinus did not rigidly adhere to the scheme of the four realities (the One, Intelligence, soul, body) here distinguished. There is a certain fluidity in the way in which these distinctions are made and occasionally additional hypostases are introduced, such as "nature" (see the essay on "Nature, Contemplation, and the One," pp. 42 ff.). It should further be noted that, as, according to Plotinus, each hypostasis is complete in its own way, the scale of realities repeats the totality of things several times over. To have several totalities is an awkward "architectonic" device. Yet the alternative would have been to deny to the intelligible world certain things that are found in the sense world. But to Plotinus there must be in the intelligible world exemplars of everything that is in the sense world if the intelligible world is not to be denied the perfection of being as full as the sense world. Each level of reality therefore is as "full" as the other, but it contains the totality of things in a weaker form than the one above it. Thus it is only in temporal succession that the sense world can imitate what exists eternally together in the intelligible world. (See the essay "Are there Ideal Archetypes of Particulars?" on pp. 134 ff.)

There is a further important difficulty in the "architecture" of Plotinus' system. As we have seen, he maintained that there is, between Intelligence and the sense world, a level of soul. Now in terms of their structure there seems to be a good deal more similarity between the world of Intelligence and the world of sense objects than between either of the two and the soul. The objects contained within the level

of Intelligence tend to be a timeless, immutable, and immaterial version of the things of sense. The soul, however, does not seem, like them, to be a world of objects, but an agency which administers one of these levels of objects in accordance with the other. Now as Intelligence, too, according to Plotinus, is endowed with life, the question arises why he does not have the sense world proceed immediately from Intelligence. The answer suggests itself that it is not so much for cosmological reasons as for ethical ones that Plotinus introduced this further hypostasis of soul. His cosmological system could have been erected without the hypostasis of soul, but the notion of ascent, which is central in his ethics, required some agent like the soul. Plotinus had to locate this moral agent somewhere in his chain of realities; and the mediating rank he assigned to the soul was a convenient device, supported in certain respects by a long tradition. He nevertheless implicitly contradicted this cosmological conception of the soul when, in speaking of the ascent and descent of the soul, he gave to the soul—in cosmological terms, a level of reality herself—a mobility which enables her to rise to other levels of reality. Plotinus, as often, was implicitly aware of this conflict and he tried frequently to bridge it by distinguishing levels of reality *within* the soul itself. He then asserted that one part of the soul remains forever united with the higher realities. But this device comes close to making the soul a redundant notion by turning it into a duplicate of the chain of realities.

It similarly seems that it is for ethical reasons that Plotinus did not entirely reject the notion of transmigration. The notion of transmigration implies rewards and punishments beyond death and continuing opportunity for purification. (To Plotinus it is purification, not death, that raises the soul to a higher state.) Yet both the mobility and the evil

ascribed to the soul in the notion of transmigration are incompatible with her cosmological function and Plotinus tried to bridge this conflict by asserting that it is not the soul herself but an image that descends, commits wrong, and undergoes punishment. (See particularly the concluding sections of the essay on "The Nature of the Organism and the Self," p. 114 ff. for a discussion of this point.) However, it should again be pointed out that the discrepancies here indicated seem also to flow from a varying attitude toward the human. There is a fine shifting in Plotinus' presentation which sometimes suggests that union with the One means the extinction of the individual and sometimes that it is the fullest realization of his potentialities. There is a shifting evaluation of individuality and loneliness. (It is important to realize the "non-humanistic" aspects of Plotinus' thought. They appear quite clearly in the fact that the kind of "immortality" that he assigned to the human soul excludes all memory of her career in the sense world.)

A full understanding of Plotinus' philosophy requires a grasp of its ethical intent. There were in the philosophies before Plotinus two major ways of dealing with reality, of conceiving, in Plato's image, the march of men out of the cave into the sun. The first way, that of Plato and Aristotle, consisted in exploring the possibilities of transforming existing reality into one that was more adequate. The second way, that of the Stoics and Epicureans particularly, consisted in accepting what was inevitable and in abstaining when possible. Detachment, moderation, tranquility became the key words of this approach. Plotinus' is neither of these two ways. He does not consider the possibility of remolding this world nearer to the heart's desire. But neither is he led into Stoic resignation, including some of the tortuous justifica-

tions of the world by which the Stoics tried to make evil a little bit more palatable by attempting to prove that evil was good if viewed as a necessary ingredient in the economy of the whole. Plotinus did not need to do violence to experience by understressing the evil of this world. But neither did he need to despair on account of this. For to him there are other worlds. We have already seen how Plotinus in terms of his metaphysics arrived at asserting the existence of such worlds and what nature he ascribed to them. It remains to explore more fully the ethical side of his transcendentalism.

To understand what is meant by the ascent of the soul one might turn to certain experiences of transcending the immediate that are familiar to all. For any sort of intellectual activity frees man from an animal-like confinement to his immediate sensations, environment, and practical urgencies. In thinking, man can transcend far beyond the point of his immediate location to have the distant become part of his present thought. This process can be carried on by everyone till more and more objects become part of one's comprehension. The kind of intellectual vision which Plotinus had in mind differs from ordinary intellectual activity in two important points. First, he believed that thought could be carried to the point of embracing the totality of existence. Second, the true objects of thought are to him not the things of sense but their ideal exemplars, the "forms" or "intelligibles" of whose unchanging beauty we sometimes get a glimpse in some beautiful sense object. But Plotinus did not stop at the point of even total intellectual comprehension. Intelligence is not the supreme reality because, as Plotinus pointed out in an argument which sounds rather modern and to which reference has already been made, knowledge implies a want. To know is not to possess, but to look to something

one does not have. In the words of a contemporary philosopher, "knowledge is a salute, not an embrace."

Hence there still is a higher experience in store for the soul. It is the experience of the One. In it all distinctions are eliminated. The human soul becomes completely identified with the most powerful existence, an existence that is completely self-sufficient, completely beyond the strife of opposites, the destructive march of time, the limitations of finiteness. In the sense world with its temporal character, one thing can be realized only after another, so that the realization of one good means the exclusion of many others. This fact and the limitation of our capacities confine us, in the sense world, to particular occupations and careers in the pursuit of which the other longings and aspirations of our souls must remain unfulfilled. We cannot be perfect scientists, musicians, and lovers at once, and certainly not at the same time. We moreover depend on the coöperation of other persons and things, which are not in our control. But there is no part of our nature that remains unfulfilled, once we have reached the One. Hence we do no longer even know; for we *are*. It is an experience the splendor of which Plotinus likened to the exuberant brilliance of the sun's light. In comparison with this experience, he declared, all previous pleasures, such as those of office, power, riches, beauty, even of science, are as nothing. The soul always longs for this kind of experience. But the way up goes only over a series of "purifications." We must train ourselves to see the excellence of the life beyond, first in beautiful bodies, then in virtuous actions, finally in the intelligible realm, before we rise to the unification itself.

In this ascent of the soul the method of reason has a central place. Man can lift himself beyond his present condition only by an intellectual training which leads to increasing

abstraction, that is, abstraction from *sense* objects. For the intelligible Forms are to Plotinus not empty generalities, but realities more full and complete than sense objects. (See the essay on "Dialectic," p. 1 ff.) It is this emphasis on reason that was to bring the school of Plotinus into conflict with Christianity. For Christianity did not place as high a value on the wisdom of the Greeks for the attainment of salvation and consequently could hold out the hope of redemption to the ordinary man, while Plotinus' direct appeal could not extend beyond the limits of philosophical audiences.

The use of the method of reason is perhaps also largely responsible for the fact that Plotinus' conception of the universe is an impersonal one. One must be sure not to confuse Plotinus' One with a personal God. The One is the supreme existence and whatever is good flows from its goodness. But it is not an agency to which one can pray, or which bestows any grace on us, or has a will that is motivated by mercy or acts arbitrarily. Neither does the One make any demands on us other than we make upon ourselves in the face of the existence of its formidable excellence which could be ours. St. Augustine himself sensed this contrast very well when he did not find in the pages of the Platonists the co-eternal son, "the tears of confession, Thy sacrifice, a troubled spirit, a broken and contrite heart, the salvation of the people . . . the cup of redemption."

Nevertheless, this use of reason to develop a world view that is, in spite of its opposition to all myth-making (see the essay against the Gnostics on pp. 69 ff.), perhaps essentially irrational, had its important consequences. As Greek metaphysics and the Neoplatonic system in particular became part of Christian theology, the method of reason, the most distinctive contribution of Greek civilization, became itself

part of Western culture and prepared the way for modern science. In the writings of Plotinus still glows the logos which gave its greatness to Greek philosophy.

The preceding considerations were introduced by the remark that an understanding of Plotinus' ethical intent is essential for an understanding of his philosophy. To grasp the ethical motivations of Plotinus' thought provides perhaps the key to what to many may seem a quite bad metaphysics. The One, the source of all things, is also the Good, the goal of all things. The superior words of which Plotinus spoke can thus easily be seen to be transparent symbols for human goals. The supreme existence is called the One from a desire not only to make it simple, but also to make it harmonious. Harmony, absence of strife, stability, permanence are the rewards which he may expect who has risen to complete unification with the One. Plotinus' One in this respect seems a reflection of the universal desire for *peace* that characterized his times and of which the imperial coins of the time, for instance, still bear eloquent testimony. Again it does not seem accidental that Intelligence is assigned the second-highest rank in Plotinus' system of realities. *Theoria*, intellectual comprehension, had indeed been highly valued throughout the history of ancient philosophy; and even when philosophers differed to the extent that one group made virtue and another made pleasure the supreme good, it turned out that the one group thought that virtue, and the other that pleasure consisted in the life of intelligence.

But further still, the very assumption of transcendent levels of reality has a strong moral motivation. For it lifts human possibilities beyond this life. Moderation and acceptance had to be the key words for the Stoic and Epicurean philosophers who preceded Plotinus because they confined

the sphere of human action to the sense world and had a low evaluation of the possibilities of human action (just as the Skeptics had a low evaluation of human thought). But to Plotinus this world needs not so much to be borne and suffered as it needs to be transcended. Hence it is that the tone of his writings is positive. There are unspeakable possibilities of happiness in store for the human soul.

The soul achieves its ascent by turning *inward*, away from the world of politics, society, and sense. It is *within* the soul that we encounter realities far richer than these external ones. Plotinus here is part of a long tradition of men who felt that while heard melodies are sweet, those unheard, beyond the ear of sense, are sweeter still. In a certain way, though there are many significant differences, even a figure like Thoreau, who sought a richer world in isolation, belongs in this tradition. Turning *inward* means isolation. But it is an isolation which to Plotinus implies entrance into the society of intelligible beings, quite different from the other kind of isolation which the soul experiences when from an arrogant desire for independence she descends to the level of the sense world.

In her inward retreat the soul thus finds in a transfigured form the values she supposedly left behind. Only apparently are the values of human society, of pleasure and love given a low estimation; for they are unawares reintroduced in a different form. Society reappears transfigured as the society of intelligibles, a society that carries certain human desires to perfection because it is much more fully integrated than human society and, in it, each individual shares in the being of all others. While Plotinus usually scorns "pleasure," with a different word he celebrates the "joy" which attends the union with the One. Eros and Aphrodite too have their

counterparts in the intelligible world. All this suggests that the unused earthly passions sought at least in imagination what they could not attain in reality.

Thus it is that Plotinus is an important and influential figure in that tradition which sets an inner world apart from the outer. In spite of all his emphasis upon unity, his philosophy is marked by a profound dualism between what might summarily be called nature and spirit. One should remain open to the contributions which this tradition has made in developing the possibilities of inner experience and in keeping alive a sense of the latent ideality of existence. But we must ultimately consider the separation of spirit and nature an inadequate division. The antithesis of spirit and nature is false if it is only in nature that the spirit can be actual and if, without embodiment, it is only a ghost. The spiritualization of nature, not escape from it, seems man's ever-renewed endeavor. For it is only *in* and *through* the flesh that the spirit can perform its miracles and achieve its glories.

The following selections are intended to present the major aspects of Plotinus' philosophy. All the "books" or essays which are here given are given *complete*. They are perhaps best read in the order in which they are here arranged. But some readers might find it helpful to turn to the essay on "The Good and the One" (p. 138 ff.) first. It had originally been planned to present the selections in a somewhat revised version of the translation of K. S. Guthrie and grateful acknowledgment is made to Miss Sylva C. Guthrie for her permission to use her father's translation. However, in the course of several revisions, the original text has been so completely altered that the translation is now the present writer's own, though marks of its history will be discernible

here and there. In preparing this new version I have based myself, with a few exceptions, on Bréhier's Greek text. I have often puzzled long over certain passages of the text. Plotinus' condensed style requires more than surface reading and frequently it is only a prolonged attention which transforms a seemingly inane phrase into a meaningful statement. In this "detective" work two very excellent recent translations have often been very helpful, the French translation of Bréhier and the German translation of Harder.

As this volume goes to press, the writer is preparing for publication a book on Plotinus entitled *Plotinus' Search for the Good—A Study of the Moral Motivations of His Metaphysics*. There he will make full acknowledgments to those who have guided and sponsored him in his Plotinic studies. But also on this occasion he wishes to record his great indebtedness to Professors Irwin Edman, Paul O. Kristeller, and John Herman Randall, Jr., all of Columbia University, whose intellectual example and friendship have guided him in this as in many ventures. The editor of this series, Professor Sterling P. Lamprecht of Amherst College, has read the entire book in manuscript. To his keen sense of language the translation owes many improvements. One of the chief joys of preparing this volume has been the further opportunity it brought for association with the mind and the person of Professor Lamprecht.

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1

THE METHOD OF PHILOSOPHY

DIALECTIC (*Ennead* I iii)

1. What art, method, or study will lead us to the goal we are to attain? That this goal is the Good, the first principle, has been agreed upon and demonstrated in many ways—the demonstrations themselves serving to raise the soul to the superior world. He who is to be promoted to that world should have seen everything, or most things. He should at his first birth have entered the seed of a future philosopher, a friend of beauty, a musician, or a lover, as Plato says. These are the kinds of men whose nature makes them most suitable to be raised to the intelligible world. But how are they going to be raised to it? Does a single method suffice for all, or does each of them need a special method? There is a double way for all, the one for those who rise to the intelligible world from here below, and the other for those who have already reached and taken root there and who must proceed from there till they have reached the summit, the highest point in the world of Intelligence, which is the goal of their travels. But this second road of progress must here be left aside to discuss the first and to explain the operation of the ascent of the soul to the intelligible world. The several kinds of men just mentioned offer themselves to our detailed examination. We will begin with the musician.

The musician is easily moved and charmed by beauty and admires it greatly. But he is not as easily able to be moved from within his own self. He is subject to the stimulation of accidental impressions. Just as a timid person is affected by

noise, the musician is sensitive to tones and their beauty. He avoids all that is contrary to harmony and unity in song and rhythm and pursues rhythm and the harmonious. But after these purely sensuous intonations, rhythms, and figures, he must come to separate the beauty residing in these proportions and ratios from the matter in which they exist. He will have to be taught that what excites his admiration in these things is their intelligible harmony, the beauty contained in this harmony, and, in short, Beauty itself, and not some particular beautiful thing. He will have to be introduced to philosophy by arguments that will lead him to be convinced of truths which he possessed in himself without knowing. What these arguments are will be specified later.

2. The musician can rise to the rank of the lover, and either remain there or rise still higher. The lover has some reminiscence of the Beautiful; but as here below he is separated from it, he is incapable of clearly knowing what it is. It is the beautiful objects which meet his view that arouse his excitement. He must therefore be taught not to content himself with admiring a single body, but, by reason, to embrace all bodies which all share in an identical nature. He must be told that what is identical in them is something different from the bodies themselves and comes from elsewhere and exists in an even higher degree in other things, such as noble occupations and beautiful laws—for he is now accustomed to seeking the objects of his love in incorporeal things. He will further be shown the beauty that is found in the arts, the sciences, the virtues. He will then be made to see the unity of these things and from what source they derive. From the virtues he must progress to Intelligence and Being, and from there to the supreme goal.

3. The philosopher is naturally disposed to rise to the intelligible world. Being, as it were, endowed with wings, he rushes to it without still needing to disengage himself from sense objects, as do the preceding kinds of men. His only uncertainty will concern the road to be followed and all he will need is a guide. He must therefore be shown the road, possessing as he does the desire by his nature and being already detached from sense objects. For this purpose he will be asked to apply himself to mathematics, so as to accustom himself to think of incorporeal things and to believe in their existence. Being eager for instruction, he will learn easily. As by nature he is virtuous, he should be led to the perfection of his virtues. After mathematics he should be taught dialectic and be made a dialectician.

4. What then is this dialectic which ultimately must be imparted also to the musician and the lover? It is an art of reasoning which makes us capable to say about each thing what it is, in what it differs from other things, in what it resembles them, what its context is and proper function in this context, and whether existence belongs to it. It enables us to say into how many kinds Being falls and to distinguish Being from that which is not Being. It treats also of that which is good and that which is not, that which is subordinate to the good and that which is subordinate to its opposite, of the nature of the eternal and that which is not. It treats of each matter scientifically and not according to mere opinion. It sets an end to the error attendant upon dealing with sense objects, and it establishes itself in the intelligible world. It concentrates its whole attention there; and after having left deception behind, it lets the soul, in the words of Plato, feed in the meadow of truth. It uses the Platonic method of division to discern the Ideas, to define

each object, to distinguish the supreme genera of being. It alternates between synthesis and analysis until it has gone through the whole domain of the intelligible and arrives at the principle. Stopping there, because it is only there that it can pause, no longer busying itself with a multitude of objects, because it has arrived at unity, it contemplates. The so-called logical inquiry which treats of propositions and syllogisms, just as the art of writing, it leaves to be the subject-matter of another art. Dialectic recognizes that some of these ways of reasoning are fixed by necessity and precede any art. It subjects them, along with the others, to its examination and judges one part of them useful, the other part superfluous and to be inquired into by those who are interested in this sort of things.

5. Whence does this science derive its principles? It is Intelligence that furnishes clear principles if only the soul is capable of grasping them. Thus dialectic resorts to synthesis, combination, and division, until it has arrived at perfect intelligence; for, according to Plato, dialectic is the purest part of intelligence and wisdom. Hence as dialectic is our most valuable faculty, it must be directed to Being and to the most valuable existence; that is, wisdom to Being and Intelligence to that which is beyond Being. But is not philosophy that which is most valuable? Yes, but there is no conflict between philosophy and dialectic because dialectic is the highest part of philosophy. Dialectic is not merely an instrument for philosophy; it is not made up of abstract theorems and rules. It studies things themselves and its subject-matter is the real beings. It reaches them by following a method through which it possesses, together with the statements about them, also the objects themselves. Only indirectly does dialectic know error and fallacious argument. When

error is committed by someone, when something contrary to the rules of truth is advanced, dialectic recognizes it, judging the error as alien to itself by the light of the truths it contains. Dialectic, however, does not care for the theories that deal with propositions which to it are as letters to words. Nevertheless, because it knows the truth, dialectic also knows the nature of propositions and in general the operations of the soul. Dialectic knows what it is to affirm and to deny, whether that is denied which is asserted or something else, and it distinguishes identity from difference. It grasps these things as immediately as sensation grasps its objects, but it leaves to another science that enjoys these details the care of treating them with exactness.

6. Dialectic therefore is only one part of philosophy, though the most valuable. Philosophy has other branches. It studies nature, employing the aid of dialectic as other arts employ arithmetic, but deriving a much greater benefit from dialectic. Philosophy further treats of conduct and here again it is aided by dialectic. This branch includes the study of habit and the exercises that produce good habits. The rational habits derive their characteristics from dialectic and preserve much of it even in their interaction with material things. The other virtues also imply the application of reason to their respective passions and actions. Insight, moreover, being concerned with the universal, applies reason in a still superior manner, and considers whether actions are consistent, whether an action should be engaged in now or be deferred, or whether there is a better action to take its place. Dialectic and wisdom in a universal and immaterial form furnish insight with all the principles it needs.

Could the lower virtues exist without dialectic or wisdom? Yes, but they would remain imperfect and deficient. On the

other hand, is it possible to be a wise man and dialectician without these inferior virtues? No, for a man would never have become such without them. They must either precede, or increase with, the progress made in dialectic. The natural virtues that one possesses will with the assistance of wisdom become perfect virtues. Wisdom is posterior to the natural virtues and perfects our habits. The natural virtues either grow and are perfected along with wisdom or wisdom enters at one point and perfects them. In general, natural virtue implies only imperfect vision and conduct and we owe our perfection primarily to both natural virtue and wisdom.

2

THE CHAIN OF REALITIES

THE THREE RULING HYPOSTASES (*Ennead* V i)

1. How does it happen that souls forget the paternal divinity? Having a divine nature, and having originated from the divinity, how can they ever forget the divinity themselves? The origin of the evil that befalls them stems from an act of recklessness on their part, the fact of birth, their becoming different, and a desire to be independent. As soon as they have enjoyed the pleasure of an independent life, they use this power of self-determination to go into a direction that leads them away from their origin, and when they have arrived at a very great distance from it, they even forget that their life is derived from it. They are like children that were separated from their family since birth and educated away from home, and thus lose knowledge of their parents and of themselves. When our souls no longer recognize either their origin or themselves, but despise themselves because they have forgotten their origin, they admire and honor anything rather than themselves and bestow their esteem, love, and interest on anything rather than themselves, breaking away as much as possible from the things above and forgetting their worth. Their ignorance of their origin is therefore caused by an excessive valuation of sense objects and by their disdain for themselves. To pursue and admire a thing implies the acknowledgment of one's inferiority to the thing pursued. As soon as a soul thinks that she is worth less than the things which are subject to birth and destruction and considers herself most despicable and perish-

able, she can no longer grasp the nature and power of the divinity. A soul in such conditions can be turned around and led back to the world above and the supreme existence, the One or First, by two kinds of argument. The one consists in showing her the low value of the things she at present esteems. The other consists in instructing and reminding her of her nature and worth. The second argument precedes the first and once it has been made clear will support the first (which we treat elsewhere more fully).

It is the second argument to which we must now turn, particularly as it is a prerequisite for the study of that supreme object we desire to know. As it is the soul that desires to know that object, she must first examine her own nature in order to know herself and to determine whether she possesses the ability of making such an investigation, whether she has an eye capable of such a vision, and whether such a search is her function. For if the things the soul seeks are foreign to her, what good will her search do? But if she is of a kindred nature with them, she both may seek them and is able to find them.

2. Each soul should first remember that it was she who by an infusion of the spirit of life produced all the animals on earth, in the air, and in the sea as well as the divine stars, the sun, and the immense heaven. It was she that introduced order into the heaven and produces its regular revolutions. She does all that, while yet remaining distinct from the things to whom she communicates form, movement, and life. She is necessarily far superior to them. While they are born or die in the measure that she imparts to them or withdraws from them their life, she herself exists eternally because she remains identical with herself. To understand how life is imparted to the universe and to each individual, the

soul must rise to the contemplation of the great soul, the world soul. The individual soul, though different from the world soul, is herself no small being; but she must become worthy of this contemplation and, by attaining a state of tranquility, be free from the errors and seductions to which other souls are subject. Let us assume the same tranquility not only for the body that enfolds her and its agitations, but also for all that surrounds her, earth, air, sea, and even heaven. Then let soul from all sides "flow" into this tranquil mass, stream into and spread in it, and illuminate it. As the rays of the sun light up and gild a dark cloud, so the soul by entering the body of the universe gives it life and immortality and awakens it from inertia. The universe, eternally moved by an intelligent soul, becomes a living being full of happiness. The presence of the soul gives the universe its value while before it was no more than an inert corpse, water and earth, or rather dark matter and non-being, an "object of horror to the gods," as someone has said. The soul's nature and power reveal themselves still more clearly in the way she embraces and governs the world in accordance with her will. She is present in every point of its immense mass, she animates all its parts, great and small. While two bodies cannot be in the same place and are separated from each other both spatially and otherwise, the soul is not similarly extended. She does not need to divide herself in order to give life to each particular individual. Though she animates things, she remains whole and is present in her totality, resembling the Intelligence, from which she was begotten, in her indivisibility and omnipresence. It is through her power that this world of plurality and variety is contained within the bonds of unity. It is through her presence that this world is divine. The sun, too, is divine because it has a soul, and likewise the other stars.

We, too, possess some divinity on account of her; for "a corpse is viler than a dunghill." But the cause to which the deities owe their divinity must necessarily be superior to them. Our soul is of the same kind as the world soul which animates the deities. Strip our soul of all the things that have infested her, consider her in her pristine purity, and you will see that she is of equal rank with the world soul and superior to everything that is body. Without the soul, body is nothing but earth. Or, if one makes fire the basic element, one still needs a principle that animates its flames. Even if one combines earth and fire, or even adds water and air to them, these elements by themselves still do not constitute life or soul. If then it is the soul that attracts our attention in the various beings, why do people seek her in others and not in themselves? If it is the soul that you love in another being, love yourself, then.

3. Since the soul is such a divine and precious thing, be assured that you will be able to reach the divinity with the help of such a power and begin your ascent. You will not need to search far nor are there many steps that separate you from your goal. Take as guide the most divine part of the soul which borders on that superior world from which she proceeds. Indeed, in spite of the qualities that we have shown her to have, the soul is no more than an image of Intelligence. As the spoken word is the image of the word in the soul, so the soul herself is the image of the word or reason in Intelligence and is that phase of the activity of Intelligence by which is produced the life of a further level of existence. (The activity of Intelligence has this further phase, just as fire contains heat as part of its essence but also gives off heat to the outside.) Nevertheless the soul does not become completely separated from Intelligence. She does partly remain

in it, though she also forms a nature distinct from it. As the soul stems from Intelligence, she is herself an intellectual existence. The manifestation of this intellectual power is discursive reason. From Intelligence the soul derives her perfection. Intelligence nourishes her like a father but, in comparison with itself, has not produced her perfect. The soul thus is the hypostasis that proceeds from Intelligence and her reason finds its actualization when she contemplates Intelligence. When the soul contemplates Intelligence, she possesses the objects of her contemplation within herself and as her own, and she is fully active. These intellectual and inner activities alone are the soul's characteristic activities. Those of an inferior nature are due to a foreign principle and they are passive rather than active experiences for the soul. Intelligence makes the soul more divine, because Intelligence like a father begets the soul and grants its presence to her. Nothing separates them but the difference of their natures. The soul stands to Intelligence in the same relation of succession as matter to form. But this "matter" of Intelligence is beautiful because it has an intellectual form and is not composed of parts. But how great then must Intelligence be, if it is still greater than the soul?

4. The greatness of Intelligence may be seen also in the following way. We admire the magnitude and beauty of the sense world, the eternal regularity of its movement, the visible and invisible divinities it contains, its demons, animals, and plants. Let us then rise to its model, the superior reality from which this world derives and there contemplate the whole array of intelligibles which eternally possess their inalienable intelligence and life. Over them preside pure Intelligence and incredible wisdom. That world is the true realm of Cronos, a god whose name means both satiety and

Intelligence. This realm embraces all immortal beings, all Intelligence, all divinity, and all soul. Everything there is eternal and immutable. Since it is in a state of bliss, why should it seek change? Since it contains everything, why should it aspire to anything? Since it is perfect, what need of development does it have? The things it contains are perfect, too, so as to have its perfection lack nothing. It contains nothing that is not of the nature of thought, but this thought is not a seeking but a having. The felicity of Intelligence is not contingent on something else. It is eternally all things, that eternity of which time which abandons one moment for the next is only a moving image on the level of soul. Indeed, the soul's action is successive and is divided by the different objects that attract her attention. Now it is Socrates and then a horse; but always some particular thing. But Intelligence embraces all things. It possesses all things in unchanging identity. It is and it always has this character of presentness. It has no future, for it already is all it could ever later become. It has no past, for no intelligible entity ever passes away. All the things it contains exist in an eternal present because they remain identical with themselves, satisfied, so to say, with their present condition. Each of them is both Intelligence and Being. Together they form the totality of Intelligence and the totality of Being. Intelligence gives existence to Being in thinking it. Being, by being object of thought, gives to Intelligence its thinking and its existence. But there must still exist something else which makes Intelligence think and Being be and which consequently is their common cause. It is true that Intelligence and Being exist simultaneously and together and do not leave each other. But their oneness which is simultaneously Intelligence and Being, thinking and object of thought, consists of two factors, Intelligence inasmuch as

it thinks, and Being inasmuch as it is object of thought. The activity of thought implies difference as well as identity. The leading terms therefore are Intelligence, Being, Identity, Difference; and we must add Movement and Rest to them. Movement is implied in the thinking activity of the intelligible realm; Rest, in its sameness. Difference is required for the distinction between the thinking subject and the object thought; for without Difference they are reduced to unity and hence silence. The objects of thought also require Difference, in order to be distinguished from each other. Identity is implied in the self-sufficient unity of Intelligence and in the common nature in which all intelligible beings share, just as Difference is implied in the fact of their being distinguishable. The multiplicity of these terms creates number and quantity. The proper character of each of them constitutes quality. From these terms taken as originating principles everything else proceeds.

5. The realm of divine Intelligence is thus a multiple one and the soul lives in this realm if only she is intent upon not seceding from it. Now, when the soul has come close to Intelligence and as it were, become one with it, she seeks to know that which has begotten Intelligence, the simple existence which is prior to Intelligence and which is the cause of its existence and manifoldness, and the cause of Number. Number is not something primitive; for unity is prior to the dyad. The latter ranks only second, being begotten and made determinate by unity; by itself it is indefinite. When it becomes determinate, Number arises, a number that is a substance. Thus the soul also is Number. For the things of the first rank are not masses or extended quantities. The gross objects which sensation considers true beings must be ranked as inferior. It is not the moist mass of a seed that gives it its

value, but its invisible principle, that is, Number and the seminal reason. The "Number" and "dyad" ascribed to the intelligible world are rational forms and Intelligence. The dyad is indeterminate so far as it plays the part of substrate. The Number that is derived from the dyad and the One is of the nature of form and all things derive their character from the forms which arise in Number and thus derive it in one respect from the One and in another respect from Number. Intelligence is like the activity of seeing. It is an active vision and the unity of Intelligence comprises two factors.

6. In what way does Intelligence see and what does it see? In what way does it exist and issue from the First? What gives it the power of vision? We now understand why the intelligible world must necessarily exist. But we seek to solve the problem often raised by the ancient philosophers, how from the One there proceed manifoldness, duality, and Number. Why did the One not remain within itself, why did it emit that manifoldness that we find to characterize Being and which we seek to trace back to the One? In answering this question let us first invoke the divinity, not by the utterance of words, but by raising our souls to it, as in this way we can pray alone to the alone. To see the One which rests in itself as if in an inner sanctuary and remains there undisturbed and removed from all things, we must observe the things which are like the statues in the temple or rather that which is like the statue that appears as the very first and appears to have this message: All that is moved must have a goal towards which it is moved. But as the One has no goal towards which it is directed, we must not assume it to be moved. When things proceed from it, it must not cease being turned towards itself. (We must

remove from our minds the idea that this is a process like generation in time; for we are here treating of eternal things. We speak of eternal things metaphorically, in terms of generation, to indicate their causal relations and their systematic order.) What is begotten by the One must be said to be begotten without any motion on the part of the One, for if the One were moved, that which was begotten would because of this movement have to be ranked third, as the movement would be the second term. The One therefore produces the hypostasis which is ranked second without an act of inclination, or volition, or any kind of movement. What conception are we then to form of this sort of generation and its relation to its immovable cause? It must be conceived as a radiation which though it proceeds from it, leaves undisturbed its self-sameness, as the brilliant light which surrounds and emanates perpetually from the sun does not affect its self-same and unchanging existence. In fact, all things, as long as they exist, necessarily produce and emit out of their own substance some further existence, that depends on their power and is the image of the existence out of which it grew. Hence fire radiates heat and snow spreads cold. Perfumes furnish a particularly striking example; for, as long as they last, they emit exhalations in which everything that surrounds them participates. Everything that has arrived at its point of perfection becomes productive. That which is eternally perfect is eternally productive. That which it produces is eternal, too, though inferior to the generating principle. With regard to the existence then that is supremely perfect, we must say that it only produces the very greatest of the things that are found below it. But that which after it is the most perfect, the second principle, is Intelligence. Intelligence contemplates the One and needs nothing but it. But the One has no need of Intelligence. The One which is

superior to Intelligence produces Intelligence which is the best existence after the One since it is superior to all other beings. The soul is the Word and a phase of the activity of Intelligence just as Intelligence is the word and a phase of the activity of the One. But the word of the soul is obscure being only an image of Intelligence. The soul therefore directs herself to Intelligence, just as the latter, to be Intelligence, must contemplate the One. Intelligence contemplates the One without being separated from it, because there is no further existence between the One and Intelligence, just as there is none between Intelligence and the soul. Every begotten being longs for the being that begot it and loves it, especially when the begetter and the begotten are alone. But when the begetter is the highest good, the begotten must be so close to it as to be separated from it only in that it is distinct from it.

7. We call Intelligence the image of the One. Let us explain this. It is its image because that which is begotten by the One must possess many of its characteristics and resemble it, as light resembles the sun. But the One is not Intelligence. How then can it produce Intelligence? By its turning towards itself the One has vision. It is this vision which constitutes Intelligence. For awareness is either a matter of sensation or of intelligence; but as in the present case it cannot be sensation because sensation cannot grasp the One, this vision is Intelligence. But in contrast to the One, Intelligence is divisible. Intelligence too is one, but it is a oneness which is all things. The activity of Intelligence consists in contemplating the things contained in the power of the One and thereby "un-rolls" them; otherwise, it would not be Intelligence. Intelligence has in itself consciousness of the power to produce and to define Being out of itself by means of the power it

derives from the One. It sees that Being is a part of that which belongs to the One and proceeds from it, that it owes all its force to the One, and that it achieves Being because of the One. Intelligence sees that, because it becomes multiple when proceeding from the One, it derives from the One, which is indivisible, all the entities it possesses, such as life and thought, while the One is not any of these things. The totality of things must come after the One, because the One itself has no determinate form. It simply is one, while Intelligence is what in the realm of Being constitutes the totality of things. Consequently the One is not any of the things that Intelligence contains. It is only the source from which all of them are derived. That is why they are "beings," for they are already determined and each of them has a kind of shape. A being cannot be something indeterminate, but must have definition and stability. Such stability for intelligible entities consists in the determination and form by which they have their existence.

The Intelligence of which we speak is worthy to be of the purest origin and to stem from no other source than the first existence. It must from its birth have begotten the whole world of Being, all the beauty of ideas, all the intelligible deities. Being full of the things it has begotten, it "devours" them in the sense that it retains all of them, that it does not allow them to fall into matter or to fall under the rule of Rhea. This is what the mysteries and myths about the gods suggest darkly when they say that Cronos, the wisest of the gods, was born before Zeus and devoured his children. Here Cronos represents Intelligence big with its conceptions and in a state of satisfaction. They add that he out of his fullness begat Zeus. This refers to the fact that Intelligence out of its perfection begets the soul. It must beget because it is perfect and being so great a power, it cannot remain sterile.

Here again the begotten being had to be inferior, had to be an image, had likewise, since it was indeterminate by itself, to be determined and formed by the principle that begat it. What Intelligence begets is reason, discursive reason. This reason moves around Intelligence, is the light of Intelligence, the ray that springs from it. On the one hand, it is bound to Intelligence, fills itself with it, enjoys its presence, participates in it, and is itself an intellectual existence. On the other hand, it is in contact with inferior things, or rather it too begets things inferior to it. Being thus begotten by the soul, these things are necessarily less good than the soul, as we shall further explain. The sphere of divine things ends with the soul.

8. This is why Plato establishes three levels in the hierarchy of Being. He says that "all things are with the king of all, who is the first reality. That which is of second rank exists on the second level, and that which is of third rank, on the third level." Plato further speaks of the "father of the cause." By cause he means Intelligence; for to Plato Intelligence is the demiurge. Plato adds that it is this power "that forms the soul in the cup." As the cause is Intelligence, Plato applies the name of father to the Good, the existence superior to Intelligence and "superior to Being." In several places he says that the Idea is Being and Intelligence. He therefore realized that Intelligence proceeds from the Good, and the soul from Intelligence. These doctrines indeed are not new. They have been taught from the most ancient times, though without being made fully explicit. We claim to be no more than the interpreters of these earlier doctrines whose antiquity is reliably shown to us by the testimony of Plato's writings. The first philosopher who taught this doctrine was Parmenides when he identified Being and Intelligence and

did not place Being among sense objects. He said that "thought is the same thing as being," and that being is immovable. Although he adds thought to being, he denies that being, if it is to remain always the same, has any corporeal movement. He compares being to a spherical mass because it contains everything and does not draw thought from without but has it within itself. When Parmenides in his writings called Being the One he was criticized because this unity was found to be manifold. But the Parmenides of Plato speaks with greater accuracy and distinguishes between (1) the first One which is one in the proper sense, (2) the manifold one, and (3) the one and the manifold. This latter Parmenides therefore also distinguished the three levels here discussed.

9. Anaxagoras in teaching the simplicity of pure and unmingled Intelligence also asserted that the One is first and separate. But, as he lived in times too ancient, he did not treat this matter in sufficient detail. Heraclitus also taught of a One that is eternal and intelligible; for he held that bodies are in a perpetual process of becoming and flux. According to Empedocles, Strife is the principle of division but Love is the One. This principle to him is incorporeal, while the elements play the part of matter.

Aristotle says that the first existence is separated from sense objects and is an intelligible existence. But when he says that "it thinks itself," he takes the first rank away from it. He also asserts the existence of a plurality of other intelligible entities in a number equal to the celestial spheres, so that each of them might have its principle of motion. About the intelligible entities, therefore, Aristotle advances a doctrine different from that of Plato, and as he has no good reason for this change, he brings in necessity. Even if he had

good reasons, one might well object that it seems more reasonable to suppose that the spheres as they are coördinated in a single system are directed towards the one end, the supreme existence. The question also might be raised whether for Aristotle the intelligible entities derive from one first originating principle or whether there are several originating principles for the intelligible entities. If the intelligible entities proceed from one principle, their condition will be analogous to that of the sense spheres where each contains and dominates all the others. In this case, the first existence will contain all intelligible entities and be the intelligible world. Just as the spheres in the world of sense are not empty,—for the first is full of stars and each of the others has its stars,—so their movers in the intelligible world will contain many entities, beings that are more real than sense things. On the other hand, if each of the movers is an independent principle, their interrelation will be subject to chance. How then will they unite their actions and agree in producing that single effect which is the harmony of the heaven? What also is the reason for the assertion that the sense objects that are in the heaven equal in number their intelligible movers? Further, why is there a plurality of movers since they are incorporeal and since no matter separates them from one another?

Thus those among the ancient philosophers who faithfully followed the doctrines of Pythagoras, of his disciples, and of Pherecydes, have maintained the existence of the intelligible world. Some of them have recorded their views in their written works. Others have set them forth in their seminars. There are others who have left us nothing on the subject.

10. That beyond Being there exists the One we have attempted to prove as far as such a thesis admits of proof. In

the second rank are Being and Intelligence; in the third, the soul. Now it must be held that as these three realities exist in nature, they also exist in us. (I do not mean that these three realities exist in the sense part of our self. For the intelligible exists separate from sense, that is, it exists outside the sense part of our nature in the same way in which we say that it exists outside the celestial spheres.) Thus is constituted what Plato calls "the inner man." Our soul, too, then is something divine. It has a nature different from sense nature. It is like in nature to the world soul, and the soul that possesses Intelligence is perfect. (But we must still distinguish between the intellectual activity that consists in reasoning discursively and that which furnishes the principles to discursive reason.) The soul's discursive reasoning has no need of any bodily organ. In its operations it remains separate from the body in order to be capable of reasoning purely. As it is separated from the body, it must without any hesitation be ranked with the highest intellectual entities. There is no need of seeking to locate it in space as it exists outside any space. Such then is the condition of the immaterial entities that are separable from the body, when they are alone by themselves and are not affected by the body. That is why Plato says, with regard to the world, that the demiurge "has the soul envelop the world from outside." What he here indicates is that a part of the soul remains in the intelligible world. Thus, in speaking of our soul, he says that "her head touches heaven." When he advises us to separate the soul from the body, he does not mean any local separation (that is, the sort of separation that is established by nature). He means that the soul must not incline towards the body and towards thoughts concerned with sense objects, but must become alienated from the body. We achieve this separation when we elevate to the intelligible world the lower part of

the soul which is established in the sense world and which is the sole agent which produces and fashions the body and busies itself about it.

11. Since discursive reason inquires about what is just or beautiful, and decides whether a certain object is beautiful and whether a certain action is just, there must exist an immutable Justice and an immutable Beauty from which discursive reason draws its principles. Otherwise, how could such reasonings take place? Moreover, since the soul only intermittently reasons about such topics, it cannot be discursive reason, rather it must be Intelligence, that in us always possesses the immutable exemplars. We must also within us possess the source and the cause of Intelligence, the divinity, which is not divisible and exists not in any place, but in itself. Even though it is in no place, it is found in the multitude of beings that are capable to receive it, as if it were divisible, just as the center of the circle remains within itself, while yet all the radii have a point in it, and owe their individuality to their being different lines. Thus we ourselves, by one of the parts of ourselves, touch the supreme existence, unite ourselves with it and are suspended from it. We establish ourselves in it when we turn towards it.

12. How does it happen that, while we possess in us such great things, we are not aware of them, but some of us often, and some always, do not activate those capacities? These realities themselves, Intelligence and the self-sufficient existence superior to Intelligence, are always active. The soul, too, is always in motion. But the operations that go on within her are not always perceived. They reach us only when they become objects of perception. When anything that is active within us does not transmit its action to the part that per-

ceives, this action is not communicated to the entire soul. Hence we are not conscious of it; for the faculty of perception is part of us and it is the whole soul, with all its parts, which constitutes the man. Each part of the soul is always alive and always exercises its proper function, but we know it only when it is communicated and perceived. In order to perceive the things within us we must turn our perceptive faculties inward and have them apply their whole attention there. Just as the person that desires to hear a certain sound must neglect all others, and keep his ears tuned to the approach of the sound he prefers to those he hears, so we too must here close our senses to all the noises that besiege us (with the exception of what necessity prescribes) and preserve the perceptive power of the soul pure and ready to listen to the tones that come from above.

THE NATURE OF SOUL (*Ennead* IV ii)

I. In our examinations of the nature of the soul, we have shown that she is not a body, and that, while incorporeal, she is not the "harmony" of the parts of the body. We have also shown that she is not an "entelechy" because this term, as it is used, does not express a true idea and reveals nothing about the nature of the soul. To say that the soul is an intelligible being and is part of the divine realm is to say something true about her nature; but it will be better if we further develop this thesis. We have formerly established the distinction between intelligible and sense objects, placing the soul among intelligible objects. Assuming then that the soul forms part of the intelligible world, we wish now in another way to approach the study of her nature.

To begin with, there are things which are by nature divisible and extensible. No part of them is identical with any other part nor with the whole; each part necessarily is smaller

than the whole. Of this nature are physical magnitudes and masses; each occupies a place apart without being able to be simultaneously in several places. On the other hand, there exists another kind of nature which admits of no division and is neither divided nor divisible. It has no extension, not even in thought. It does not need any place and is not, either in part or whole, contained in any particular thing. All beings are, so to say, its vehicle, not because it needs them for support, but because they neither can nor wish to exist without it. This nature is always identical with itself and yet shared by all things that come after it, just as in the circle the radii drawn from the center to the circumference leave the center undisturbed though they derive from it and though it is the cause of their existence; the radii thus participate in the center and have their origin in the indivisible, and while they separate in every direction, they yet remain attached to it.

Now between the supreme indivisible existence which occupies the first rank in the world of Intelligence and Being and that sense existence which is entirely divisible, there exists above the sense world, near it, even within it, a being of another nature which is not, like bodies, divisible as such, but which nevertheless becomes divisible in the bodies. Now when you divide bodies, the form in them is also divided, but in such a way that it remains entire in each part. It remains identical with itself; but because it is completely divisible, it turns into a manifold whose parts are separated from one another. Such is the case with colors and all qualities and forms which can remain identical in several things that are separate, but whereby no part is affected in the same way as another. We must therefore consider also this sort of nature completely divisible. Still there exists beneath the completely indivisible

nature another that derives from it and participates in the indivisibility of its source. But as it descends towards another nature, it comes to occupy a position intermediate between that which is indivisible and primary and that which is divisible on and in bodies. It is not of the same nature as color and the other qualities; for though the same quality may exist in several bodies, the quality in one body is nevertheless as completely separate from that in another as the one body is separate from the other. Even when the quality is found in one and the same body, the fact that the quality is identical in each part does not bind the various segments of the quality into a unit of common experience because, in spite of this identity, each segment is a separate thing. This identical quality is an attribute, not an independent substance. But the nature of which we said that it is close to the indivisible being is an independent substance. It enters the bodies and consequently is divided with regard to them. But before this being, which is the soul, gives herself to the bodies, it is not divided. Yet, even when the soul enters the body, even the greatest and most extended of them, she does not cease to be one, although she is extended over the whole length of the body. For in no way does her unity resemble that of the body. The unity of the body consists in the continuity of its parts; but each part is different from the others and occupies a different place. That nature, simultaneously divisible and indivisible, which we call soul, is not one in the sense of being continuous and thus possessing different parts. No, it is divisible because it is in every part of the body it occupies, but it is also indivisible because it is present in its entirety in each and any part of its body. If we grasp this, we will recognize the magnitude and power of the soul and see that she is an admirable and divine thing, and that she belongs to a superior world. Without being herself

extended the soul is present throughout the whole of extension. She is present in many places, but it is always the same soul that is present. She is simultaneously divided and undivided, or rather, she never is really divided or can be divided; for she remains entire within herself. She is divided only in regard to the bodies which by virtue of their own dividedness cannot receive her indivisibly. Thus division is undergone by the body, not by the soul.

2. That the nature of the soul had to be such that she could not be either purely indivisible or purely divisible, but necessarily had to be both in the manner indicated, will also be clear from the following consideration. If the soul, like the body had several parts differing from one another, the sensation of one part would not convey itself to another part. Each part, for instance a finger, would have its own soul which would have her individual affections and remain foreign, in her isolation, to all the rest. In short, each one of us would be managed by several souls, and likewise this universe would be managed, not by one single soul, but by an infinite number of souls separated from one another. To invoke the continuity of these parts does not help unless this continuity is brought to the level of unity. For we cannot admit, as do certain philosophers who deceive themselves, that sensations travel by means of transmission to the governing part of the soul. To begin with, they speak without careful consideration when they assume a governing part of the soul. For how would they divide the soul and distinguish several parts in her? By what quantitative or qualitative measure are they going to make distinctions within a single continuous mass? Further, which part, under this hypothesis, is going to have sensation? Will it be the governing part exclusively or the other parts too? If the governing

part exclusively, will it be located in a definite place and there have its sensation? Then if some sensation impinges on some other part of the soul which is incapable of sensation, this part will not be able to transmit the impression to the governing part and there will be no sensation. Granting even that the impression does reach the governing part, it will be received either by a part which, having perceived the sensation, will not transmit it to the other parts, or there will be many or even infinite sensations which will all differ from each other. One part, then, will say: it is I who first received the impression; and another part will say: I received the impression received by another. And none, except the first, will know the location of the impression; or each part will make the mistake of thinking that the impression occurred where it itself is. If on the other hand one assumes that every part of the soul, and not the governing part alone, has sensation, what will make one part a governing part and another one not? Why will sensation have to be transmitted to it? How, moreover, will it know when the reports of various senses, such as sight and hearing, refer to one and the same object?

On the other hand, if the soul were absolutely one, completely indivisible and unity as such, if her nature were incompatible with manifoldness and division, she would not, when entering a body, ensoul it in its entirety. Placed in the body, she would leave the entire mass of the animal unensouled. The soul therefore must be simultaneously one and manifold, divided and undivided, and we must not doubt that the soul, though one, can be in several parts of the body simultaneously. To deny this is to deny that there is a nature that contains and administers everything, which embraces everything at once and directs everything with wisdom, a nature that is both manifold, because things are

manifold, and one, because the principle that comprehends all things must be one. It is by her being a manifold unity that she gives life to all parts of the universe, while it is by her being an indivisible unity that she directs everything with wisdom. In things that are not ruled by wisdom, the governing part imitates this superior unity. That is what Plato wishes to indicate allegorically by these divine words: "From the being that is indivisible and ever unchanging and from the being which becomes divisible in the bodies, the demiurge formed a mixture, a third kind of being." The soul thus is primarily one and secondarily manifold. The forms that are found in the bodies are primarily manifold and secondarily one. Bodies are only manifold; while the supreme existence is only one.

INTELLIGENCE, IDEAS, AND BEING (*Ennead* V ix)

1. From their birth men exercise their senses earlier than their intelligence and they are by necessity forced to direct their attention to sense objects. Some stop there and spend their life without progressing further. Good and evil to them are the pleasures and pains of sense-life; and they think it is sufficient to spend their lives by pursuing the one and avoiding the other. This is considered wisdom even by those among them that lay claim to being men of reason. They are like those heavy birds who, having weighted themselves down by picking up too much from the earth, cannot take flight, though by nature provided with wings. There are others who have raised themselves a little above earthly objects because the better part of their soul moves them from pleasure to something higher. But as they are not capable of achieving the vision of the things above, and as they do not have another place where to lodge, they sink back, with a corresponding conception of virtue, to those inferior actions

and choices which they had at first attempted to leave behind. Finally there is a third kind of men, that of divine men, who are endowed with a greater power and sharper vision, whose penetrating eye contemplates the splendor of the intelligible world, and who finally take their flight, as it were, beyond the clouds and the darkness of this world. Then, full of scorn for terrestrial things, they remain up there and reside in their true and proper place with the bliss of the man who after long wandering has at last returned to his well-governed fatherland.

2. Which is this higher region? What must be done to reach it? One must be naturally disposed to love and be really from the start a philosopher. In the presence of beauty such a lover feels something similar to the pangs of childbirth; but far from halting at bodily beauty, he rises to the beautiful that is in the soul, in virtue, science, noble occupations, and laws. Then he ascends from there to the cause of this beauty and stops only when he has reached the existence which occupies the first rank, that which is beautiful in and by itself. Then only, and not before, is he free from his pangs. But how will he rise to this level? How does he have the power to do so? How does he learn to love in this way? Here is our answer: The beauty seen in bodies is a derived beauty. It consists in the shapes of which the bodies are the matter. This matter changes and a beautiful body is seen changing into an ugly one. The body is beautiful only by participation. What imparted that beauty to the body? In one sense, Beauty by its presence; in another sense, the soul by fashioning the body and giving it the shape it possesses. But is the soul, by herself, beautiful? No; for though some souls are wise and beautiful, others are foolish and ugly. It is therefore only by wisdom that the soul is beautiful. But

from what is her wisdom derived? Necessarily from Intelligence, not from an intelligence that is only intermittently active, but from the genuine Intelligence which is beautiful by itself and not in a derived way. Shall we stop at Intelligence or must we still rise above it? We must rise above it; for though to us Intelligence presents itself first, yet it is, so to speak, located in the antechamber of the Good, and is not the highest reality. Intelligence bears within itself the totality of things displaying the imprint of the Good in its manifoldness, while the Good itself remains in complete unity.

3. Let us now examine Intelligence which is said to be true Being and substance and whose existence we have already established in another investigation. It might perhaps seem ridiculous to inquire whether there is such a thing as Intelligence. But there are men who doubt even this. Still, there is even more debate as to whether Intelligence possesses the nature we ascribe to it, whether it is separated from the world of sense, whether it is identical with Being, and whether it contains the Ideas. To these questions we must now turn. We see that all things that are said to exist are composites. None of them is simple, whether produced by art or by nature. Works of art contain such things as metal, wood, stone, and are derived from these materials only by the labor of the artist, whose art provides the forms in the making of a statue or bed or house. Among the products of nature those that are multiple composites and compounds can be analyzed in terms either of their form or of their elements. So we may, for instance, distinguish, in a man, soul and body, or in his body, four elements. But the elements themselves will be found to be composed of matter and of some principle that gives it form; for the matter of

the elements itself is formless. Thus we are led to ask whence matter derives its form, and to seek whether the soul itself is one of the simple beings. Now the soul too is composite, one part of her is analogous to matter and another to form. Intelligence is in the soul in part analogously to the way in which form is in the bronze of a statue, and in part analogously to the way in which the artist produces this form. With regard to the universe at large we will find Intelligence the true maker and demiurge of the world. Thus matter becomes water, air, earth, and fire only by receiving forms. These forms come to it through the mediation of another principle, the soul. The soul gives the four elements their cosmic form, but it is Intelligence that provides her with her forms, just as an artisan receives his instructions from his master as it is handed to him. Intelligence thus in one respect is the "form" of the soul. In another respect it is that which imparts form, like the sculptor who gives the statue all its qualities. Now that which it imparts to the soul is close to the reality, but what the body receives are only images and imitations.

4. Why must we go beyond the soul and not consider her the first principle? We must do so, because there exists a power different from the soul and better than the soul, and that which is better must by nature be prior. Those are wrong who think that it is the soul which on reaching perfection gets Intelligence. How could that which is potential pass to actualization unless there were some cause that effected the actualization? If it were due to chance, it was possible that it not to have occurred at all. That which comes first must therefore be actual, perfect, and in want of nothing. The things that are imperfect come after the perfect and may be perfected by the principles that begat them, which

principles, in respect to them, play a paternal part, perfecting what they had originally produced imperfect. What is thus produced is matter with regard to the creating principles; it becomes determinate on receiving its form. Now as the soul is subject to various affections, there must be some thing that is impassive (otherwise everything would be dissolved by time), and there thus must exist some principle higher than the soul. Moreover, as the soul is in the world, and as there must be something that resides outside of the world, there must be something that is superior to the soul. (For that which is in the world resides in body and matter in which nothing remains what it is, and which do not support a realm of eternal and immutable exemplars.) The result of these considerations as well as of many others is the assertion of the existence of Intelligence beyond the soul.

5. Intelligence in the true sense of the word is not a potential existence nor does it arrive at being intelligent after having been unintelligent (for otherwise we would be forced to seek out a further Intelligence that is prior to it) but is an actual and eternal existence. As it is intelligent not by derivation, it is out of its own self that it thinks what it thinks and possesses what it possesses. Now since it thinks out of and by itself, it itself is what it thinks. If we could distinguish between its being and its thought, its being would as such not be object of thought and thus would be potential, not actual. The two therefore must not be separated, although, from the example of sense objects, we have become accustomed to conceive of intelligible entities as distinct from each other. What objects then does Intelligence think to justify the assertion that it is what it thinks? Evidently Intelligence which is true Being thinks Being, causes Being to exist, and is Being. For Being will either exist out-

side of it or within it and be identical with it. That it should exist outside of Intelligence is impossible. For where would it be located? It must therefore exist within it and be identical with it. Being is not found in the sense world, as certain people believe. For what is found in sense objects is derived from elsewhere. Their forms are conjoined to matter; and any form which exists in anything other than itself comes to it from a different entity and is its image. Moreover, if Intelligence is the power that produces this universe it cannot, as it is prior to the sense world, think beings that do not yet exist. Intelligible entities therefore must exist before the world and cannot be derived from sense objects, being on the contrary their archetypes and constituting the being of Intelligence. It might be objected that the assumption of seminal reasons is sufficient for our purpose. We grant this if these reasons are assumed to be eternal; for if they are eternal and impassive, they must exist within Intelligence as we have described it. Intelligence is prior to habit, nature, and soul, because these entities are potential.

Intelligence therefore constitutes the world of true Being which does not exist outside of it, prior, or posterior to it. Intelligence is to Being like a first legislator, or rather like the very law itself. It was rightly said therefore that "thought is identical with being," that "the science of immaterial things is identical with its object." The statement "I have sought myself," that is, have sought myself as one of the true beings, and the theory of reminiscence are rightly asserted too. Indeed none of the true beings is outside of Intelligence or resides in any spatial location. They remain in themselves, suffering neither change nor destruction. That is why they are true beings. If they were born or perished, they would possess only a borrowed being, they would no longer be true beings, but that from which they borrowed

their being would be true being. It is only by participation that sense things are what they are. They are made of matter that derives its form from elsewhere, just as bronze receives its form from the sculptor and wood from the carpenter. The effect of the art is visible in the products; but the art itself remains outside of matter in its self-identity and possesses the true statue and the true bed. That is how the bodies and the sense world, by participating in images that are different from the true beings, give evidence for their existence. But while sense objects are subject to change, true beings are immutable. They are in want of nothing, not even of space, since they have no extension, but are immaterial and self-sufficient entities. The existence of the bodies depends on some other principle, while Intelligence, which by a marvellous power sustains the existence of objects in themselves perishable, has need of nothing outside of it to maintain its existence.

6. Thus Intelligence actually constitutes the realm of Being. It contains all true beings, not in the way in which extended things contain one another, but in the sense of being identical with them. But though all entities are simultaneously contained within it, they nevertheless remain distinct. Analogously, many sciences simultaneously exist within the soul without becoming indistinct or keeping any particular science when needed, from fulfilling its proper function, and without dragging in all the others, but each thought has its activity independent of the other thoughts. In an even stronger way does Intelligence exhibit the togetherness of the beings it contains and their distinctiveness as each is a special power. Considered in its totality Intelligence contains all entities, as the genus contains all species and as the whole contains all parts. The powers contained

in seeds provide an illustration. Each seed, considered in its totality, is a center which contains all the parts of the organism in an undivided form. Nevertheless in this seed the seminal reason of the eye differs from that of the hands, and this diversity is manifested in the organs begotten through the seminal reasons. The powers that are contained in seeds thus constitute each a unified seminal form with the parts implied in it. What in the seed is corporeal, its humidity, for instance, contains matter; but the seminal reason is entirely form. It is identical with the generative kind of soul, a soul which herself is the image of a superior soul. This generative power contained in the seeds is sometimes called nature. Proceeding from the superior powers as light radiates from the fire, it alters and fashions matter by imparting to matter its seminal reasons, without mechanical pushes and without using those much talked about levers.

7. The sciences that the rational soul develops of sense objects (if one must call them sciences; for the name "opinions" seems more appropriate) are posterior to the objects they deal with and consequently are no more than images of them. But the sciences dealing with intelligibles, the true sciences, which the rational soul derives from Intelligence, do not contain the conceptions of anything sensuous. As far as they are true knowledge, they are the very things of which they are the conception, and achieve the union of intelligible object and thought. For Intelligence is self-contained and identical with Being. It resides within itself eternally and is pure activity. It does not direct its activity outside of itself as if it did not possess everything within itself and needed to acquire and run discursively through objects which it has not present. These latter operations are characteristic of the soul. But Intelligence remains unmoved within itself and is

all things simultaneously. It is not by thinking things that Intelligence brings them into existence. It is not when Intelligence thinks the divinity or movement that divinity or movement comes into being. When it is said that the Forms are thoughts, one is mistaken if thereby one means that the intelligible comes into being or exists only because Intelligence thinks it. On the contrary the intelligible object must exist before Intelligence can think it. Otherwise, how would Intelligence come to think the intelligible? It cannot be due to chance or random encounter.

8. Intelligence thus thinks the objects contained in it. These objects are the Forms or Ideas. What are these Forms or Ideas? They are Intelligence and the intellectual realm. No Idea is different from Intelligence, but each is Intelligence. The whole Intelligence is the totality of Forms and each particular Form is a particular Intelligence, just as a science, taken in its totality, is all the theorems it embraces, whereby each theorem is a part of the total science being a part, not in the spatial sense of the word, but in the sense that it has its meaning only with regard to the whole science. Intelligence resides within itself in the peace of self-sufficiency and thus is eternal fullness. If we conceived it as prior to Being, we would have to say that it was the action and thought of Intelligence which produced and begat Being. But as we must think of Being before Intelligence, we must put Being within the thinking principle and say that the activity of Intelligence is as closely related to Being as the activity of fire is to fire itself, so that Intelligence is the proper activity of Being. Now as Being is active too, Being and Intelligence will have the same activity, or rather the activity of both is one and the same. Intelligence and Being thus form but a single nature; hence also all true beings,

the activity of Being, and Intelligence. The thoughts of Intelligence are the form and the activity of Being. Our thought, however, separates Being from Intelligence and subordinates one to the other. Our intelligence which makes these separations is indeed different from that indivisible Intelligence which does not separate either Being or anything.

9. What then are the things contained within the unity of Intelligence which we separate in thinking of them? They must be expressed discursively while they themselves remain at rest, just as we discursively express the theorems of a science that is itself undivided. Since the sense world is an animal which embraces all animals, since it derives both its existence and its manner of existence from a reality different from itself, a reality which in turn is derived from Intelligence, it is Intelligence that must contain all archetypes and be that intelligible world which Plato calls "the truly real animal." Just as the simultaneous presence of the seminal reason of an animal and of matter fit to receive it, must necessarily result in the birth of a new animal, the mere existence of a nature that is rational, all-powerful, and not hindered by any obstacle, must, since nothing can interpose between it and that which is capable of receiving its influence, necessarily result in its giving form to that which is below it. But that which thus is fashioned contains form in only a divided way, so that, for instance, it exhibits here the form of a man, and there the form of the sun, while Intelligence possesses everything in unity.

10. Therefore, in the sense world, all the things that are forms proceed from Intelligence, but those which are not forms do not proceed from it. In the intelligible world there-

fore we do not find any of the things that are contrary to nature, any more than we find what is contrary to the arts in the arts themselves or lameness in the seed itself. (Lameness, if congenital, is due to the failure of the seminal reason to dominate matter, while lameness from accident is due to later mutilation of the form.) Qualities and quantities, numbers and magnitudes, processes and configurations, doings and undergoings in accordance with nature, movements and states of rest, either general or particular, if they are of the kind appropriate to it, are among the contents of the intelligible world. Time is replaced by eternity. Space is replaced by the telescoping of intelligible entities within each other. As all entities are undivided in the intelligible world, whatever entity you select will be an intellectual being and participate in life; it will be both identity and difference, movement and rest, that which is moved and that which is at rest, substance and quality, in short, everything that is of the nature of Being. Further, as each being is fully actualized, instead of merely being potential, its quality is not separated from its substance.

Does the intelligible world contain only what is found in the sense world or does it contain additional objects? Let us consider first whether it contains all of the sort of things that are found in the sense world. Now the intelligible world does not contain evil. For evil, which is found in the sense world, is due to want, privation, and deficiency. It characterizes matter, or anything similar to matter, which fails to achieve completion.

II. Let us next consider the arts. The arts of imitation cannot well be expected in the intelligible world (except of course in human reason). Painting, sculpture, dancing, or acting are born here below and take sense objects as models,

representing and rearranging their forms, motions, and visible proportions. The faculty however which from studying the symmetry found in animals rises to a study of the general characteristics of this symmetry forms parts of the intellectual power which in the world above contemplates universal symmetry. Music also, inasmuch as it studies rhythm and harmony, is analogous to that music that deals with intelligible rhythm. The arts which produce sense objects, such as architecture and carpentry, so far as they make use of symmetry, have their principles in the intelligible world and participate in its wisdom. But as they also involve sense objects, they cannot be wholly found in the intelligible world, unless in so far as they are contained within human reason. The case is similar with agriculture which assists the growth of plants, with medicine which is concerned with health in this life and cares for the strength and well-being of the body (for in the world above there is another power, another health, through which all living beings achieve stability and self-sufficiency). Whenever the sciences of rhetoric, strategy, private and public rule, cause actions to participate in beauty, and whenever they direct their attention to what is above, they impart to their science a contribution from the science that exists in the intelligible world. The science of geometry however which deals with intelligible entities must be assigned to the intelligible world. The same holds for the science of wisdom which occupies the first rank among the sciences because it studies Being. That much let us say about the arts and their products.

12. If the intelligible world contains the Idea of man, of the rational man and of the artistic man, it must also contain the Ideas of the various arts of these men. It is granted that the intelligible world contains the Ideas of universals, the

Idea of Man as distinguished from that of Socrates. Still we shall have to see whether the intelligible world does not also contain the Ideas of individual men. There must be Ideas of individual men because the traits of one differ from those of another, as when the one has a snub nose and the other a hook nose. These differences are differences in Form or Idea, just as the differences between the various species of animals. But the differences between the kinds of hook or snub noses are derived from matter. Of the differences among colors some are due to the rational form, while others are due to matter and physical location.

13. It remains for us to study whether the intelligible world contains only what is in the sense world. Or should we assign further entities to it, such as, similar to the distinction between man and Man himself, a Soul itself beside soul, and an Intelligence itself beside Intelligence? To answer this let us first say that we should not consider all things here below as images of archetypes, the soul, for instance, as the image of a Soul itself. One soul is indeed differentiated from another by her degree of excellence; but each soul is, even here below, the genuine soul itself, though of course not in the particular function implied in her residence here below. As all genuine souls possess justice and wisdom and as also our souls possess such true wisdom, our souls are not sense images or reflections of intelligible souls but are these very intelligible souls, being characterized here below by a different manner of existence. For the intelligible is not confined to any particular space. Hence whenever the soul emerges from the body, there she finds the intelligible. The sense world exists only in a determinate place, but the intelligible world exists everywhere. Therefore all that such a soul contains here below is also in the intelligible world.

Thus if by sense objects we mean visible things, then indeed the intelligible world contains entities not present in this sense world. But if we include within the sense world the soul and all she implies, then all things that are above are present here below also.

14. Must we then assert that the intelligible world is the supreme reality? No, because the supreme principle must be truly one and entirely simple, while the intelligible world is constituted by a multitude of beings. We must explain the existence of this multitude, given the existence of perfect Oneness, and the manner of their existence. Why are they intellectual entities, and whence do they proceed? These questions we shall have to study elsewhere.

It may further be asked whether the intelligible world contains Ideas of objects which are derived from decay or are otherwise repugnant, such as Ideas of mud or excreta. We answer that all the things that Intelligence receives from the supreme reality are excellent. Among them are not found the objects just mentioned. Intelligence does not contain them either. But the soul, though she derives certain things from Intelligence, receives other things from matter, among which are found the above mentioned objects. (A more thorough answer to this question will be given when we return to the problem of how the multiple proceeds from the One.) The accidental composites which are formed not by Intelligence but by the conjunctions of sense objects have no Ideas corresponding to them in the intelligible world. Things that proceed from decay are produced only because the soul is unable to produce anything better; for otherwise she would rather have produced some object agreeing with nature as she does when she can. All the arts concerned with things in accordance with nature are contained within Man

himself. Above the soul that enters the universe, resides the soul herself, that is, the life that is in Intelligence before becoming soul.

NATURE, CONTEMPLATION, AND THE ONE
(*Ennead* III viii)

1. If as a preliminary jest, before we seriously start with our inquiry, we said that all beings, rational but also irrational animals, plants and the earth that begets them, aspire to contemplation and are directed towards that end and that due to their differing capacities some really achieve contemplation while others only accomplish a reflection or image of it, we should no doubt be told that this was an absurd statement. But as we are among ourselves, there is no danger in a playful treatment of our own doctrines. While thus jesting are we ourselves not actually engaging in contemplation? Yes, not only we but anyone who jests aspires to contemplation. A joking child as well as a seriously thinking man both aim at reaching contemplation when the one jokes and the other meditates. Indeed, all action aspires towards contemplation. Compulsory action draws contemplation more towards external objects, voluntary action less so. In any case its ultimate aim is contemplation. But more of this later.

Let us say now what is the nature of the contemplation that we attribute to the earth, to trees and plants in general, how the things produced and begotten by the earth can be ascribed to the activity of contemplation, and how nature, that is usually considered to lack reason and sensation, nevertheless possesses contemplation and produces all its works through that contemplation which it supposedly does not possess.

2. It is evident that nature uses neither hands, nor feet, nor any natural or artificial instrument. But it needs matter on which to work and to which to give form. The works of nature exclude all mechanical operations. What sort of push, or what application of levers, would produce the variety of colors and forms? Even the manufacturers of wax figures, to whose work the operations of nature are often compared, cannot endue objects with colors without taking them from elsewhere. We must understand that even these artisans possess a power which remains immutable and by means of which they produce their works with their hands. Likewise nature possesses a power which remains immutable in its entirety and which does not produce with hands. It has no need to consist of certain parts that remain immutable while others change. It is matter alone that undergoes movement. The forming power is in no way moved. Were the forming power moved, it would no longer be the first mover. It may be objected that reason is unmoved but that nature is different from reason and is moved. But if one means the totality of nature, then reason will move too. If, however, one says that a part of nature is unmoved, this part will also be reason. For nature must be a form and not a composite of matter and form. What need would it have of a matter that, for instance, is cold or hot, since the particular matter, the substratum on which it acts, either already possesses these qualities or receives them through the influence of reason. For it is not by fire that matter becomes fire, but by reason. Consequently in animals and plants it is the reasons that produce, and nature is a reason that produces another reason which imparts something of itself to the substratum while remaining unmoved itself. The reason that manifests itself in things of a visible shape occupies the last rank. It is dead

and produces no further reason. The living reason however, being brother to the reason that produces the visible forms and possessing the same power, exerts its productivity within the begotten being.

3. How does nature, being a productive agent and productive in this particular way, arrive at contemplation? Since she produces while remaining unmoved and within herself, and since she is a reason, she is a contemplation also. For every action is produced according to a reason and consequently differs from it. Reason assists and presides over action and consequently is not an action. Since it is not an action, but is reason, it is a contemplation. With all reason, that which holds the lowest rank proceeds from contemplation and is contemplation in the sense of being object of contemplation, but that which is of superior rank is divided into two kinds: the one which changes with the beings and is not nature but soul, and the other which is in nature and is nature. Does the latter also derive from contemplation? Yes, it too contemplates itself in a certain way. It is produced by a contemplation and a principle which contemplates. But what kind of contemplation does it itself possess? It does not possess the kind of contemplation which results from discursive reason (by discursive reason I mean that procedure which consists in the investigation of what one has in oneself). But as it is living reason and a productive power, why does it fail to inquire into what it contains? Because one inquires only when one does not yet possess. Now nature possesses and she produces by the mere fact that she possesses. To be what she is is to her the same thing as to produce. She simultaneously is contemplation and contemplated object because she is reason. As she is all three, contemplation, contemplated object, and reason, she produces through the

mere fact that she is these things. We have shown then that production is a sort of contemplation; for it is the result of contemplation, of a contemplation that remains immutable and does not act on an object different from itself but produces because it is contemplation.

4. If anybody were to ask nature why she produces, nature if at all willing to listen and answer would say: "You should not have questioned me, but should have tried to understand silently as I am silent and not in the habit of speaking. What were you to understand? You were to understand that what is born is the object of my contemplation and is it by my nature; for as I myself am born of contemplation, mine is a contemplative nature. That in me which contemplates produces the object of contemplation, as geometers while contemplating draw their figures. But it is not in drawing figures, but in contemplating, that I, so to say, let drop from within me the lines which constitute the forms of the bodies. I preserve within me the disposition of my mother and of the principles that begot me. They too are born of contemplation and gave birth to me without any action on their part; but they are more powerful reasons than myself, they contemplated themselves, and thus I was born."

These words signify that nature is a soul begotten by a superior soul that possesses a more potent life and contains her contemplation silently within herself without inclining towards that which is higher or lower. Abiding within her own realm in her own immobility and self-awareness she sees due to this knowledge and self-awareness the things that are below her, so far as it is possible for her, without further search, and produces the object of her contemplation with its splendor and charm. If one desires to attribute some sort of cognition or sensation to nature, these resemble the usual

cognition and sensation only as those of a man who is asleep resemble those of a man who is awake. For nature remains at rest while contemplating her object which was born in her because she abides within and with herself and because she is an object of contemplation herself, a silent, if weak, contemplation. There is indeed another power that contemplates more clearly but nature is only the image of another contemplation. Consequently what nature produces is very weak, because a weak contemplation can beget a weak object only. Likewise it is men too weak for contemplation who seek a shadow of contemplation and reason in action. Being incapable of rising to contemplation and weak in soul, they are not sufficiently able to grasp the object of contemplation and thus to fill themselves. But they desire to see it and seek by action to achieve that which they could not obtain by thought. When they produce an object, they wish to see it, contemplate and perceive it, and they wish the same for other men. Thus we find everywhere that production and action are either weak contemplation or accompaniment of contemplation. It is the former, when beyond having acted we possess nothing further; it is the latter, when we can contemplate something better than the thing we have produced. What man indeed who could contemplate that which is true would prefer its image? This is also proved by the fact that the more simple-minded children who have no capacity for learning and science are given over to the mechanical and manual arts.

5. After having spoken of nature and having explained how generation is a sort of contemplation, let us pass to the soul that occupies a rank superior to nature. Let us say how the soul by her contemplation, by her love for science and discovery, by her pregnancy with knowledge and fullness

thereof, having herself become entirely object of contemplation, gave birth to another object of contemplation. In a similar way each art upon reaching fullness begets a lesser art in the young disciple who then possesses the images of all its contents. But his objects of contemplation and theories are weak and not capable of supporting each other. The highest part of the soul always dwells in the upper region which illuminates and fills it while the other part participates in what the superior part has received and proceeds eternally from what is above it as life from life; for the activity of true reality extends to everything and is present everywhere. In her procession the soul has her superior part remain in the upper world; for if she detached herself from the superior part, she would no longer be present everywhere but only at that place where her procession ends. But the part of the soul that thus proceeds is not equal to what remains within it. Therefore if the soul must be present and must exert her activity everywhere, and if that which occupies the superior rank differs from that which occupies the inferior, if, besides, activity proceeds either from contemplation or action and there is no action as yet on this level (because contemplation precedes action), it follows with necessity that each succeeding activity is weaker than the preceding one. Nonetheless, each activity is a contemplation. What seems to be action guided by contemplation is only the weakest contemplation; for that which is begotten must always remain of the same kind with its generating principle, though it is weaker because it is of lower rank. All things proceed silently from the soul because she stands in no need of any visible or external object for contemplation and because she does not engage in action. Thus the soul contemplates; and the contemplating part of the soul, since it is different from what is superior and is more directed

towards what is outside, produces what is below it. Thus one contemplation begets another contemplation. There is no boundary for contemplation or its object. It extends here below because it extends everywhere. Where is it not? It is itself in every soul. It is not confined to a certain space. But it does not inhere in all beings in the same way. Consequently it is not present in the same way to all parts of the soul. That is why Plato says that the charioteer communicates to his horses what he has seen. The latter receive it from him and clearly desire to possess what they have seen, though they have not received it in its entirety. When they act upon this desire, they act in view of the object of their desire, that is, in view of contemplation and of its object.

6. The purpose of action is to contemplate and to have an object of contemplation. The end of activity therefore is contemplation. It seeks to achieve indirectly what it is unable to accomplish directly. When one has achieved the object of one's desires, it is evident that one's real desire is not to possess the desired object without knowing it, but to know it and have it present to the sight of the soul as it is embedded in her as an object of contemplation. Indeed activity always has in view some good. One does not desire to have this good outside of oneself, or not to possess it. Rather one desires to possess it as the result of one's action. It is in the soul that this good is found, and activity once more brings us back to contemplation. Since the soul is a rational object, what else does she grasp if not an unspoken rational object? The soul grasps this object better the more rational it is. Then the soul remains at rest and seeks nothing further. Her contemplation rests within her and she is sure of the possession of her object. The greater this assurance, the more peaceful is the contemplation and the more does it unify the soul.

There is identity between knowing subject and known object—we mean this seriously. If they were two, they would be different, lying, at it were, side by side without being in their duality assimilated by the soul, just as certain rational forms exist in the soul without producing any effect. Theory therefore must not remain outside of the soul of the learner, but must become united with her until it becomes part of her own being. When the soul has appropriated theory and assumed a corresponding disposition, she, as it were, draws the theory out and manipulates it. She thus gets to know the thing that she already possessed. By examining it she becomes, as it were, different from herself, and by thinking it discursively she sees it as something foreign to her. Nevertheless, the soul herself is a rational principle and a kind of intelligence, but an intelligence that sees an object different from herself. For she does not possess fullness and is defective in respect to what precedes her. But it is without moving that she observes what she has brought forth; for she does not bring forth things which she has not first seen. But she brings them forth because she is defective and needs investigation to know what she contains. (In the case of practical activity the soul adapts the notions she possesses to the external objects.) As the soul is richer in content than is nature, she is more at rest and more contemplative. But as her possessions are not complete, she desires to increase the knowledge of her object and the contemplation which stems from inquiry. Even while she is withdrawn from her own higher parts and has entered the variety of things and only returns to herself later, she contemplates with her remaining higher part. But the soul that abides within herself does this less. Consequently the wise man is penetrated by reason and within himself possesses what he manifests to others. He contemplates himself. He achieves unity and immobility not

only in respect to external objects but also in respect to the things within himself and finds all things within himself.

7. Thus everything derives from contemplation and everything is contemplation. This holds for the truly real beings as well as for the existences which they beget by their contemplation and which are objects of contemplation either for sensation, or for knowledge and opinion. Actions, and also desire, aim at knowledge. Begetting originates in contemplation and ends in the production of a form, that is, a new object of contemplation. In general, all things as they are images of their generating principles produce forms and objects of contemplation. The begotten existences, being imitations of truly real beings, show that the purpose of generation is neither generation nor action, but the production of works which are to be contemplated. Contemplation is aimed at by discursive thought and, below it, by sensation the end of which is knowledge. Further, below discursive thought and sensation is nature which, bearing within herself an object of contemplation and rational form, produces another rational form. Such are the arguments that developed in the course of this inquiry or that we recalled from elsewhere—they ought to be clear now. Besides it is clear that since the supreme realities devote themselves to contemplation, all other beings must aspire to it; for the origin of all things is also their end. Moreover, animals generate due to the activity within them of seminal reasons. Generation is a contemplation. It results from the longing of pregnancy to produce a multiplicity of forms and objects of contemplation, to fill everything with reason, and never to cease from contemplation. Begetting means to produce some form; and this means to spread contemplation everywhere. All the faults met with in begotten things or in actions are due to

the fact that one did stray from the object of one's contemplation. The poor workman resembles the producer of bad forms. Also lovers must be counted among those who contemplate and pursue forms. But enough of this.

8. Since contemplation rises from nature to the soul, from the soul to Intelligence and becomes more and more characteristic of, and more and more united to the being that contemplates and since in the soul of the wise man the things known are identical with the knower, it follows that the knower, because he aspires to Intelligence, must then within Intelligence be identical with what is known. This identity is more than a close association such as we find in the perfect soul; for "being and thinking are the same thing." Within Intelligence we no longer have on one side the object of contemplation and on the other that which contemplates; otherwise we would need another principle where this difference no longer exists. Within Intelligence the two things are one. This means that it is a living contemplation, and not an object of contemplation, which inheres in something else. For that which lives within a living being is not living by itself alone. Therefore if the object of contemplation and of thought is to be alive, it must not have the life of plants, animals, or any other animate existence. Those beings too are various kinds of thought, the vegetative, sensuous, and psychic ways of thought. They are thoughts because they are rational forms. All life is some sort of thought which, like life itself, shows various degrees of strength. The clearest thought is also the highest life, and the highest life is identical with the highest intelligence. The supreme life is also the supreme thought, the life of the second rank is also thought of the second rank, and the last rank of life is also the last rank of thought. Every life is of this kind and is

thought. Men readily distinguish the different kinds of life but do not do the same in the case of thought. They call some things thought, but others not; for they do not seek to find out what life really is. We should also observe that this discussion again shows us that all beings are contemplations. If the truest life is life through thought and is identical with the truest thought, then the truest thought must be alive. Then contemplation and the object of this contemplation are alive and are life, and both form but one thing.

Since the two are identical, how does it happen that their unity becomes manifold? It becomes manifold because it does not contemplate unity, or, when it does so, does not contemplate unity as unity; otherwise there would be no Intelligence. It begins by being one, but does not remain so. Unconsciously it becomes manifold as if pressed down by its own weight. It unrolls itself, desiring to become all things, though it would have been better for it not to have desired this and thus to have put itself into the second rank. In a similar way a circle unrolls into figure and surface, circumference, center, radii, upper and lower points. The origin is better than the goal. The origin is not equivalent to both origin and goal, and that which is both origin and goal is not equivalent to that which is no more than origin. In other words, Intelligence is not the intelligence of a single thing, but universal intelligence. Being universal, it is the intelligence of all things. If Intelligence is universal intelligence, and the intelligence of all things, each of its parts must also be universal intelligence and intelligence of all things. Otherwise Intelligence would contain a part that was not intelligence. It would then be composed of non-intelligences and be a conglomeration of things which were awaiting completion to become Intelligence. Intelligence therefore is infinite. When something proceeds from it, it

is not itself diminished. This holds both for that which proceeds from it (because it is also all things) and for the intelligence from which it proceeds (because it is not put together of parts).

9. Such is the nature of Intelligence. That is why it does not occupy the first rank. Above it there must be a principle the discovery of which is the ultimate object of all our previous discussion. The manifold must be posterior to unity. Intelligence is number, but the origin of number and like things is the truly one. Intelligence is at once intelligence and the intelligible, and is therefore two things at once. As it is two things, we must seek what is higher to this duality. Could this principle be Intelligence alone? But Intelligence is always bound to the intelligible. If it is not bound to the intelligible, it cannot be Intelligence. If then this principle is not Intelligence but transcends duality, it must be superior to this duality and thus be above Intelligence. Could it be the intelligible alone? But we have already seen that the intelligible is inseparable from Intelligence. If this principle can be neither Intelligence nor the intelligible, what can it be? It must be the principle from which are derived Intelligence and, with it, the intelligible.

But what is this principle and how are we to conceive it? It must be either a thinking being or not. If it is a thinking being, it will be Intelligence. If it is not, it will be ignorant of itself and will not be in any way venerable. To say that it is the Good or the most Simple—as long as we do not have something on which we can base our thought when we use these phrases—would be true, but would not be clear or perspicuous. The knowledge of other objects came about through Intelligence, even the knowledge of a thinking thing. But by what immediate apprehension can we grasp

this principle that is superior to Intelligence? We may answer that we apprehend it by that part of us which resembles it. For there is in us something of it; or, rather, there is no place where it is not for those that can participate in it. As it is everywhere, we can at any place receive something of it by directing to it that part of us which is capable of receiving it. Take the illustration of a sound in a desert and imagine a man located at any spot in that desert. Wherever it is that he listens to this sound, we will in one sense hear all of it and in another sense not. What then do we grasp by directing our intelligence towards this principle? In order to see what it seeks, Intelligence must, so to speak, turn backwards and, in spite of its duality, must deliver itself to what is behind itself, and must cease to be entirely Intelligence. Indeed, Intelligence is the first life and activity which comprehends all things, not by a movement which still is in progress, but by a movement which already is accomplished. Intelligence is life, comprehends all things, and possesses all things in detail, not just in their general traits; for otherwise it would possess them in an imperfect and vague manner. It must therefore necessarily proceed from a superior principle which, instead of being in the motion by which Intelligence runs through all things, is the origin of this motion, of life, of intelligence, and of all things. The originating principle is not the totality of all things; but from it all things proceed. The originating principle is neither all things nor any one of them. Otherwise it could not beget all things, but would be a multitude and not the origin of that multitude. Indeed, that which begets is always simpler than that which is begotten. Therefore, if this principle begets Intelligence, it necessarily is simpler than Intelligence. On the assumption that the One is also the totality of things, the One is either all things at once or each thing individually. Now if it origi-

nated from an assembling of all things, it would be posterior to all things. If the One coexisted with all things, the One would not be an origin. But if it is prior to all things, it will be different from all things. The One must be an originating principle and must exist before all things if all things are to originate from it. If we assume that the One is each particular thing, then any one thing would be identical with any other thing and all things would be together and there would be no differentiation. Thus the One is none of the totality of things, but prior to all things.

10. What then is the One? It is that which makes all things possible. Without it nothing would exist, not even Intelligence, the primary and universal life. What is above life is the cause of life. The activity of life, being all things, is not the first principle. It flows from this principle as from a spring. Imagine a spring which has no further origin, which pours itself into all rivers without becoming exhausted by what it yields, and remains what it is, undisturbed. The streams that issue from it, before flowing away each in its own direction, mingle together for a while, but each already knows where it will take its floods. Or think of the life that circulates in a great tree. The originating principle of this life remains at rest and does not spread through the tree; for it has, as it were, its seat in the root. This principle gives to the plant all its life in its manifoldness, but remains itself at rest. It is not a plurality but the source of plurality. This is not surprising. Why should it be surprising that the manifoldness of life issues from that which is not manifold, and that the manifold would not exist without the prior existence of that which is not manifold? The principle is not distributed through the universe; if it were, the universe would be annihilated and could not

be born again unless the principle remained within itself in its otherness.

That is why everywhere things are reduced to unity. There is for each thing a unity to which it may be reduced; and there is for each unity that which is superior to it but is not unity as such. This continues until one reaches Unity as such which cannot be reduced to any other. To grasp the oneness in a tree, that is, its stable principle, or in an animal, or in a soul, or in the universe, is to grasp, in each of these cases, that which is most powerful and precious. If at last we try to grasp the oneness that is found in the true realities and is their principle, source, and productive power, how can we, all of a sudden, become doubtful and believe that this principle amounts to nothing? Certainly this principle is none of the things of which it is the principle. It is such that nothing can be predicated of it, neither being, substance, nor life, because it is superior to all these things. But if you grasp it by abstracting from it even being, you will experience wonder. By directing your glance towards it, by reaching it, and resting in it, you will achieve a deep and immediate awareness of it and will at the same time see its greatness in the things which come after it and exist through it.

II. Consider also the following. Since Intelligence is a sort of seeing, that is, a seeing that is active, it really is a potentiality that passes into actualization. One will therefore have to distinguish in it form and matter. For the act of vision implies a duality; while before its actualization it was unity. Thus unity has become duality and duality has become unity. Ordinary vision achieves the goal and attains its kind of perfection through sense objects. But the vision of Intelligence achieves its goal through the Good. For if Intelli-

gence were the Good itself, why would it need to seek or engage in any other activity? The activity of all things is oriented towards the Good and is due to it. But the Good itself does not need anything and therefore possesses nothing but itself. After one has pronounced this name "Good," one should ascribe nothing further to it. For what you add to it, of that you suppose it to be in need. Not even Intelligence should be attributed to it. That would be introducing a difference into it, distinguishing in it two things, Intelligence and the Good. Intelligence needs the Good, but the Good does not need Intelligence. On achieving the Good, Intelligence becomes like the Good; for it derives its form from the Good and is perfected by the Good. The model should be conceived by the trace it leaves in Intelligence; the true Good, by the imprint it leaves. It is this trace of the Good which Intelligence possesses in its vision. That is why Intelligence aspires. Intelligence always aspires and always achieves its goal. The Good itself, however, never aspires to anything. For what could it desire? Nor does it achieve anything, since it desires nothing. Therefore it is not the same as Intelligence which does desire and does aspire to its form.

No doubt Intelligence is beautiful. It is the most beautiful of things. It is illuminated by a pure light and shines with a pure splendor; it contains the intelligible beings of which our world, in spite of its beauty, is but a shadow and an image. It lies in full resplendence because it contains nothing unintelligent or obscure or indefinite. It enjoys a blissful life. Wonder seizes him who sees it and who enters it properly and becomes one with it. Just as the view of heaven and the splendor of the stars lead one to seek and think of their author, so the contemplation of the intelligible world and the admiration it induces lead one to seek its

author and to ask who has given existence to the intelligible world, where this author is, and how this author produced that world. Who is it that begot such a beautiful son as Intelligence which derives all of its fullness from it author? This supreme principle itself is neither Intelligence, nor plentitude, but is superior to them. They come after it because they need both to think and to be filled. They are close to the principle which wants nothing and does not even need to think. Nevertheless Intelligence possesses true plentitude and thought because it immediately participates in the Good. But that which is above Intelligence does not need or possess these things. Otherwise it would not be the Good.

3

COSMIC ORDER AND FREEDOM

THE NATURE OF FATE (*Ennead* III i)

1. Both the things that become and the things that always are either (1) do, or (2) do not have causes; or (3) in both groups some do and some do not have causes; or (4) those that become do have causes while of those that always are either some or none have causes; or (5) all things that always are do have causes while of those that become either some or none have causes.

In the case of eternal things, those that are supreme cannot be derived from other causes just because they are supreme. But those that depend on the supreme entities do indeed thence derive their being. To each thing we should also attribute its particular actions; for a thing's being is constituted by the activity it displays.

Now with regard to the things that become and with regard to those which, though eternal, do not always exercise the same activity, it must be asserted that they all have causes. We should not admit the contention, with regard to them, that something happens without a cause, nor accept the thesis of the arbitrary deviations of the atoms, nor believe that any body initiates a movement suddenly and without a precipitating event, nor suppose that the soul undertakes some action by a blind impulse, without any motive. Thus to suppose that the soul has no control over herself, that one could be carried away by involuntary movement and act without motive, would mean to subject her to the most crushing determinism. But the will and the desire

must be excited by some internal or external stimulus. No movement is possible without a motive factor.

As everything that happens has a cause, it is easy to discover the proximate causes of each thing and to trace it from them. For example, people go downtown because they think it necessary to see a person or collect a bill. In general it is because they have made such and such a choice and gone after this or that, that they deem it good to do so and so. The arts too enter into this causal nexus. The cause of health, for instance, can be traced to the art of medicine and the physician. Again, when a man has become rich, this is due to his finding some treasure, or receiving some donation, to hard work, or the practice of some art. The birth of a child is conditioned by its father and whatever external circumstances there are that coöperate towards procreation, such as a certain kind of food, or, to mention a more remote cause, the fertility of the mother, or, more generally, the agency of nature.

2. To stop on arriving at these proximate causes and to refuse to go further is to show superficiality and not to heed the advice of those who have ascended to the first causes. For why, during the same full moon, does one man steal and another not? Given the same envioning circumstances, why does one man become sick and another not? Why, by use of the same means, does one man become rich and another poor? The differences of dispositions, characters, and fortunes demand that we seek their ulterior causes. Hence no philosopher has made halt at proximate causes. (1) Some thinkers assume that the basic entities are material in character, such as those who explain everything in terms of the motions of atoms, their collisions and combinations and ascribe all things and events, including human desires

and dispositions, to the particular ways in which these atoms are arranged and act or are acted upon. Ultimate necessity is thus conceived by them in terms of atoms. Those who make other physical units their ultimate principles and deduce everything therefrom have a similar conception of the necessity to which things are ultimately subject. (2) Others derive everything from a supreme principle of the universe of which they say that it penetrates everything and not only moves but also produces everything. This principle they say constitutes fate and the supreme cause. From its motions they derive all events and even our thought, just as the limbs of an animal do not move themselves but are moved by the governing principle within it. (3) Others explain everything by the motion of the heaven, by the relative positions of the planets and fixed stars and the resulting configurations. Convinced by the predictions based on these phenomena, they hold that all events are determined by them. (4) Still others define fate as the concatenation of causes, a hierarchy of causes in which each cause is the consequence of a prior cause, would not exist without it, and is subject to it. Those who hold this view seem to fall into two groups; those that derive everything from one single principle and those that do not. We shall study their views later. But we will begin with the views that we mentioned first.

3. To derive everything from physical causes, whether atoms or elements, and to assume that their unregulated motion will create order, reason, and the motive power of the soul, is absurd and impossible. To deduce everything from atoms is, if one may so speak, even more impossible than to deduce it from elements. Many valid objections have indeed been raised against this theory. To begin with, even

if we admit such principles, their existence does not in any way inevitably imply either necessity or fate. Let us then grant the existence of atoms. In this case, some will move downwards (if there be a down in the universe); others, sideways wherever chance will carry them. As these atoms are not subject to any principle of order there will be no orderly movement. (Only what is born from them will be determinate.) It will therefore be impossible to predict or prophesy events, whether by science (how could there be any science with regard to things that follow no pattern?) or by divination and inspiration; for prediction implies that the future is determined. True, bodies will necessarily obey the impulses that govern the atoms. But how could one explain the operations and experiences of the soul by movements of atoms? Which push, moving the soul either downward or in any other direction, could produce in the soul any particular act of reasoning or any particular desire? Or which could produce reasoning, desire, thought in general, whether due to necessity or not? What explanation could this theory give of the soul's resistance to the passions of the body? By what concourse of atoms will one man of necessity become a geometrician, or study arithmetic and astronomy, or become a philosopher? In general, this theory denies us our proper function, our very character as living beings, since it makes us undergo the impulsion of bodies that push us around just as if we were inanimate things. The same objections apply to those also who explain everything in terms of other physical causes. Physical causes might indeed be able to explain such processes as those that warm and cool us, or those that make the weaker part of us decay; but they cannot explain any of the operations of the soul. These require an entirely different principle of explanation.

4. Does it then hold that a single soul pervades the universe and produces everything whereby each part is moved in accordance with the whole? Is there then a chain of causes which derives from this primary cause in continuity and interdependence—a chain which these philosophers call fate? This view is analogous to one which would define the “fate” of a plant in terms of a system of causes and effects that is unified by a principle which, starting from the root, pervades all parts. But to this view we must first object that the extreme way in which it conceives of necessity and Fate destroys these very notions of fate and of the chain and concatenation of causes. Thus it would be unreasonable to speak of fate in connection with the governing principle that is said to move our limbs, if the part which imparts motion is not different from the part which receives and utilizes it. Likewise, if in the universe there exists but a single principle that constitutes all causes and effects, if things do not derive from a series of causes that are different from one another, it will not be correct to say that things arise from causes; for the totality of things will constitute a single being. In that case we would no longer possess any individuality, nor could an action be called “ours.” It would no longer be *we* who reason, but our deliberations would be the reasonings of another being. Our actions would not be ours, just as it is not our feet that walk but it is we who walk by the agency of our feet. Nevertheless, every person lives, acts, and thinks as and by himself, his good and evil actions stem from himself, and his evil actions must not be charged to the universe.

5. But perhaps this is not the way things happen. Perhaps, instead, their career depends upon the all-governing move-

ment of the heaven, on the course of the stars and their positions with regard to one another at the time of their rising and setting, their zenith and their conjunction. These phenomena serve as signs for prognostications of what is to happen, not only in the universe but also to each individual (with regard to both his fortunes and his thoughts). It is said that animals and plants are seen to wax and wane and otherwise to be affected according to the bond of sympathy that ties them to the stars, that the various regions of the earth derive their differences from their respective positions with regard to the universe and especially the sun, and that from the various characters of these regions derive not only the natures of plants and animals, but also the shapes, sizes, colors, emotions, desires, occupations, and customs of men. The course of the stars therefore is said to be the supreme cause of everything.

To this view we object that it too in its way attributes to the stars that which is ours, namely, will, emotion, vice, and desire. It allows to men no rôle other than to be passively thrown like stones, instead of treating their actions as arising from themselves and in accordance with their own nature. But we should not be denied our individuality, even when it is recognized that our individualities are subject to the influences which come from the universe. One should distinguish then those acts which are due to us from those in which we are subject to necessity. One should not deduce everything from the stars. The differences of place and climate exert, indeed, an influence over us, creating, for instance, coldness or warmth in the mixture which constitutes us. Heredity also should be considered; for children usually resemble their parents in their features and in certain irrational affections of the soul. But people may resemble each other in their features because they are born in the

same place, and still differ in habits and thoughts, because these things depend on an entirely different cause. We can well adduce here the resistance which the soul offers to the body's temperaments and to the appetites. To claim that the stars are the causes of everything, because one can predict what is to happen from an inspection of their positions, would be just as reasonable as to assert that the birds and the other signs which the augurs consult produce the events of which they are the signs.

This leads us to consider more in detail the kind of predictions that are based on an inspection of the positions occupied by the stars at the time of the birth of a man. It is asserted that the various constellations not only indicate a man's future, but also produce it. But if some person's horoscope indicates birth from noble parents on the mother's or the father's side, how can this nobility of birth be attributed to the stars? For this nobility existed already in the parent before the constellation arose on which the horoscope is based. Sometimes the notion is held that one can discover the parents' fortune from the horoscope of their children, and from the horoscope of the parents the disposition and fate of the unborn offspring. Some people seek to predict from a child's horoscope, a brother's death, or, from a woman's horoscope, the fortunes of her husband, and conversely. But how can one's own constellation be the cause of what has been a consequence of the parental constellation? For the cause lies either in these antecedent constellations or, if not, then certainly not in the present ones. The resemblance which children bear to their parents shows, however, that beauty and ugliness derive, not from the movements of the stars, but from the parents. Moreover, since at any one moment there are born more than one human being and all kinds of animals, they ought, as they are born under

the same constellation, all to have the same nature. For how can the stars in the same position simultaneously produce the different sorts of men and other beings?

6. Each being comes into existence in accordance with its nature. One being is a horse because it is born from a horse, another is human, because born from a human being. Each being is what it is because born from such and such a being. No doubt, the course of the stars is an influence. It is on the bodies that the stars act, by physical means, imparting to them heat, cold, and the ensuing variety of bodily temperaments. But how could they determine a man's habits and occupations, particularly those which do not seem to depend on the bodily temperaments, such as the occupations of grammarian, geometrician, gambler, or inventor?

Moreover, nobody would admit that perversity could come from beings who are divinities, and the stars are divinities. How could one believe that they are the authors of the evils charged to them and themselves become evil because they set or pass under the earth? The stars can not possibly be affected by the fact that, from our point of view, they seem to set; for they continue to travel on the heavenly spheres and remain in the same relation to the earth. Besides, it must not be said that, because a star is in such and such a position in respect to another star, it becomes better or worse, and that it affects us with goodness when it is in a good state and with evil when in a contrary one. It must rather be said that by their movement the stars make their particular contributions towards the maintenance of the universe, and that they have moreover an additional function. They serve as letters for those who are skilled in deciphering this kind of writing and who, by the observation of the configurations formed by the stars, read in them future events. These skilled

persons may investigate the meaning of constellations methodically by the use of analogy (as others might say, for instance, that a bird flying high signifies high deeds).

7. There remains to be considered the view which asserts the concatenation and interrelation of all things, and the derivation of everything from an originating principle through seminal reasons. This doctrine is similar to that which deduces from the activity of the world soul the constitution and movements of the individuals and the universe; but it intends to grant us some freedom and independence. This doctrine nevertheless implicitly subjects everything to a thoroughgoing necessity; for it implies that, from the whole series of causes, each particular event must come about with necessity. If all causes are included in fate, there is nothing which could prevent the occurrence of a certain event or could alter it. If everything obeys the impulsion of a single principle, nothing is left to us but to obey its pushes. Our imagination would be determined by previous causes and would in turn determine our will. Our liberty would then become a mere word. Neither could we be called free, even though it is *we* who experience the desire; for our desires would themselves be determined by anterior causes. We would have no more liberty than animals or babies, who follow blind impulse, or than the insane, who obey their impulses too, or than, by Zeus, even fire and all things whose activities are determined by their construction. These assertions are evident and will be granted by all. It is necessary therefore to seek causes beyond the impulses just discussed.

8. What other cause, besides the preceding, will we have to adduce which will permit us to let nothing occur without a cause, to maintain the sequence and order of things, to

grant individual freedom, and to preserve the possibility of predictions and prophesies? We shall have to introduce among the number of beings another principle, the soul, and not only the world soul, but also the individual soul. The soul is a principle of no little importance. She is the force that binds all things together. Unlike the other things she is not born of some seed, but is a primary cause. When she is outside the body, she remains absolute mistress of herself, free and independent even of the cause which administers the world. As soon as she has descended into a body, she is no longer fully independent, for she then forms part of an order with other things. She yields in part to the influence of the accidental circumstances into which she fell, but also dominates and directs them in accordance with her wishes. This power of domination depends on the degree of her excellence. When she yields to temperaments of the body, she is necessarily subjected to desire or anger, is discouraged in poverty, is proud in prosperity, and is tyrannical in the exercise of power. But when she resists all these evil tendencies and her nature is a good one, she changes her surroundings more than she is changed by them. Then she alters some things, while she tolerates others without herself falling into vice.

9. Necessity, therefore, is of two sorts; the one is a product of choice, the other of chance. From the totality of causes (including among the external causes the influence exercised by the course of the stars) all things are determined. When the soul, under the influence of external things, acts on a blind impulse, we should not consider her action and disposition to be free. The soul is not free when by her own doing she does not follow the right impulses, namely, those that enable her to retain control. But when she follows the

guide she possesses in herself, pure reason unaffected by the passions, then she can be called free and independent. Then the act she performs is really her own and not the consequence of something outside. It derives from within the soul, from the soul as such, from a primary sovereign, and controlling principle. Such an act is not a blind one due to ignorance. It is not subjected to the power of appetites; for when the appetites invade the soul, they subdue her, they drag her with them by their violence and make us passive rather than active in what we do.

10. The conclusion of our discussion is that all things are indicated by signs and that all things are produced by causes. But there are two kinds of causes,—the human soul and external circumstances. When the soul acts conformably to right reason, she acts freely. Otherwise she is passive rather than active. Hence, whenever she lacks wisdom, external circumstances are the causes of her actions. One then has good reason to say that she obeys fate, especially if fate is considered an external cause. But our best actions are derived from ourselves. When we are free from encumbrances it is natural for us to produce good actions. Good men have it in their power to produce good actions. Others, when they are allowed to catch their breath, perform good actions too; and they receive their insight, not from some other source, but from within themselves, as soon as the obstacles to such insight are removed.

AGAINST THE Gnostics or AGAINST THOSE WHO SAY THAT
THE MAKER OF THE WORLD AND THE WORLD ARE EVIL
(*Ennead* II ix)

1. We have already seen that the nature of the Good is simple and primary, for nothing that is not primary can be

simple. We have also demonstrated that the Good contains nothing, but is something unitary and is identical with what is called the One. For the One is not something to which unity is *added* any more than the Good is something to which goodness is *added*. Consequently when we speak of the One and the Good, these two words express but one and the same nature. They attribute no predicates to it but represent it to us as far as is possible. This nature is called the First because it is very simple. It is considered self-sufficient because it is not composite; if it were, it would depend on the things of which it was composed. Neither is it part of another thing; for all that is in another thing depends on this thing. If then this nature is not in anything else nor derived from anything else, and if it contains nothing composite, it must not have anything above it. Consequently it is not necessary to seek further principles. The first rank will have to be assigned to the One, the second to Intelligence, the first thinking principle, and the third to the soul. Such indeed is the natural order and we must not admit either more or fewer principles in the intelligible world. If fewer are claimed, it is because of an identification of soul and Intelligence, or Intelligence and the First. But we have often pointed out their respective differences. The only thing left is to examine if there might not be more than these three principles. But what kind of realities could there still be beside them?

There can be no reality simpler or higher than the originating principle of all things such as we have described it. One would be wrong in separating it into a potential and an actual existence; for it would be ridiculous, merely in order to increase the number of realities, to seek to apply that distinction of actuality and potentiality to principles that are immaterial and are actualities. Neither can we,

below the supreme principle, distinguish two intelligences, one at rest, and the other in motion. What would we mean by the resting and what by the movement or utterance of Intelligence? For Intelligence remains always identical with itself and is characterized by its immobile activity. Movement towards Intelligence and around it is the proper function of the soul. Reason, descending from Intelligence into the soul, intellectualizes her—the soul—not some nature which is distinct from her and Intelligence and is intermediate between them.

Nor should we admit the existence of several intelligences, merely because we distinguish knowing from awareness of knowing. Even if there is a difference between knowing and knowing that one knows, these two nevertheless constitute, in the realm of Intelligence, a single act immediately aware of its own activity. It would be ridiculous to divide that which is genuinely Intelligence. It is therefore the same Intelligence that knows and that knows that it knows. Otherwise there would be two principles of which the one would have thought and the other awareness of thought; but neither would itself be the real thinking principle. A mere logical distinction between thought and consciousness of thought would not mean a multiplication of realities. But we shall have to consider whether it is possible to admit, even by logical separation, an Intelligence that only thinks without an accompanying consciousness of its thought. Such a separation would be a sign of lack of thought; for even we pay attention, even when we are only moderately reflective, to our impulses and reasonings. But true Intelligence thinks itself in its thoughts; and the intelligible, far from being outside of Intelligence, is identical with it. Therefore, Intelligence, by thinking, necessarily possesses and sees itself. When Intelligence sees itself, it does not see itself as not

thinking, but as thinking. Therefore in the highest form of thought, Intelligence contains also consciousness of thought. These two things form but a single one and are, in the intelligible world, not even logically two. If Intelligence always thinks that which it is, is there any reason to separate, even by a simple logical distinction, thought and the consciousness of thought? The absurdity of the doctrine we are controverting will be still more evident if we suppose that a third intelligence is conscious that the second intelligence is conscious of the thought of the first. We might thus go on to infinity. Finally, if we suppose that reason is derived from Intelligence, and then from reason derive another reason, which is in the soul, so as to constitute a principle intermediate between Intelligence and soul, the soul would be deprived of real intelligence. For instead of receiving reason from Intelligence, she would receive reason from an intermediate principle. Instead of possessing reason itself, the soul would possess only an image of reason. The soul would not have knowledge of Intelligence and would not be able to think in the real sense of the word.

2. In the intelligible world therefore we shall not recognize more than three principles, and shall reject any further entities as fictitious. We shall insist that there is a single Intelligence that is immutable, does not swerve, and imitates its father as much as it can. Then there is our soul of which one part always remains among the things above, while another part descends to sense objects, and another abides in an intermediate region. As our soul, though one nature, is characterized by several powers, she may at times in her entirety rise to the level of her best part and thus to the level of Being. At other times the soul's lower part allows itself to be dragged down and carries with it the intermediate

portion. But the soul cannot be entirely dragged down. She undergoes these experiences because she does not abide in the region of the highest Beauty in which dwells that soul which is not a part and of which we are not a part and which gives to the body of the universe all that it is capable of receiving. This soul governs while remaining at rest, without need of reasoning, without having to correct anything. With wonderful power she administers the universe by the contemplation of the intelligible world. The more the soul attaches herself to contemplation, the more powerful and beautiful she is. What she receives from above she communicates to the sense world. She illuminates the sense world as she herself is always illuminated from above.

3. Thus the soul, which is herself always illuminated, in turn illuminates the lower things that exist only through her light and so participate in life, each according to its capacity. In a similar way a fire heats the objects that surround it, each in proportion to its nature. If such is the effect of fire whose power is limited, how would it be possible for those beings whose powers are unlimited to exist without causing the things around them to participate in their nature? Each of them must therefore communicate some degree of its perfection to other beings. The Good would no longer be the good, Intelligence would no longer be intelligence, the soul would no longer be soul, if, beneath that which possesses the first degree of life, there was not some other thing which possessed the second degree of life and which existed as long as that which occupies the first rank exists. It is therefore necessary that all things always exist in hierarchical dependence. The things that are begotten derive their existence from a source other than themselves. They were not just begotten at a definite moment. But they always were and will

be begotten. Nor will they be dissolved, except into the elements of which they are composed. That which is indissoluble will not perish. It may be asked why, as these objects can be resolved into matter, matter also should not be liable to dissolution? But if matter also were liable to destruction, why was its existence necessary in the first place? But if it is said that the existence of matter necessarily results from the existence of other principles, then this necessity still exists. Further, if matter is considered as isolated from the intelligible world, then the divine principles, instead of being present everywhere, will, as it were, be walled up in a limited place. But if this is impossible, matter must be illuminated by the intelligible world.

4. They will say the soul produced the things beneath her because she had lost her wings. The universal soul, however, could not have been subject to such a loss. Those who claim that she produced the things below her because of a fall should explain the nature of that fall. When did this fall occur? If she fell from all eternity, she must always remain in that state. If she fell at a determinate time, why not earlier? We however believe that the soul produced the world, not in inclining downward, but rather in not doing so. To incline downward would obviously have meant to forget the intelligible world. But if she had forgotten it, she could not have fashioned the world. From what other models can the soul make the world than from those she has seen there? If she remembered them while creating, she had not at all inclined downward. She did not have an obscure vision of the intelligibles but she rather inclined upward to get a clear vision of the intelligible. As long as she kept some memory of the intelligible world, why would she not have wished to reascend to it? Besides, what ad-

vantage could she have imagined she was gaining by creating the world? That she did so in order to be honored is a ridiculous assertion which means to conceive of her as analogous to a human sculptor. If she created the world by way of deliberation, if the act and power of creation did not inhere in her nature, how could she have produced this world? Moreover, when will she then destroy it? If she repents of her creation, what is she waiting for? If, however, she has not yet repented, she will not repent; for time and habit have accustomed her to her work and made her more kindly disposed towards it. If however she is waiting for the return of the individual souls, the latter should no longer enter into generation, since in their former careers they have already experienced the evils here below and hence should have ceased to descend down here.

Nor should the world be considered badly made merely because there are so many unpleasant things in it. This idea results from entertaining unjustifiable expectations of its perfections and from confusing it with the intelligible world, while it is only an image of it. Could a more beautiful image indeed be imagined? After the celestial fire, could we imagine a better fire than our own? After the intelligible earth, could we imagine a better earth than ours? After the self-sufficient plenitude of the intelligible world, could we imagine a sphere more perfect or better ordered in its movements? After the intelligible sun, how could we imagine any sun superior to the one we see?

5. There are people who, like other men, have a body, desires, pains and wraths, and who still hold a high enough idea of their own powers to believe themselves capable of attaining the intelligible. Yet these very people—absurdly enough—deny that the sun possesses a power less subject to

passions and more ordered and immutable than themselves. They deny—absurdly enough—that the sun has a wisdom superior to that which we have who were born only yesterday and who find so many obstacles in our search after truth. We certainly are surprised to find them asserting that the souls of both themselves and of the vilest men are immortal and divine, while they at the same time refuse immortality to the entire heaven and all the stars. Yet the heaven and the stars are composed of elements more beautiful and pure and manifest a marvelous harmony and order, while they themselves complain much about disorder here below. This is as if the immortal soul would pick out the worse part of the world for herself, while giving up the better part to mortal souls.

It is also absurd to see them introduce into the world this other soul which they say is composed of elements. How could a composite of elements possess life? A mixture of elements does produce heat or cold, humidity or dryness, or any combination thereof. But how could this soul hold the four elements together if she herself were composed of them and therefore posterior to them? What shall one say when they ascribe in addition perception, will, and many other things to this soul?

Besides, as they have no appreciation of this creation, or of this earth, they insist that a new earth has been created for them which is destined to receive them when they shall have left here below and which is the reason-exemplar of the world. But why do they care to inhabit the model of a world that they hate? Further, whence does this model come? According to them this model was created only when its author inclined towards the things here below. But what was the use of a further model, if its creator was concerned with creating a world already inferior to the intelligible

world which he already possessed? If the model was created before the world, what could have been its use? Was it to serve as a reminder to the souls? Why then did the souls not heed this warning? As they did not, the creation of the model, on this hypothesis, was useless. If the model, however, was created after this world, and its author derived it from this world by abstracting the form from matter, the experience of this world should already have constituted a sufficient warning to the souls. Lastly, if they only mean that model of the universe that is found in the souls, what is new about their assertion?

6. We hardly know what to say of the other new things they have introduced into the universe, such as their exiles, imprints, and repentances. If they mean certain affections of the soul, when she yields to repentance, or certain images of the intelligible beings that the soul contemplates instead of the intelligible beings themselves, they are using meaningless words invented merely for the sake of having a sect of their own. They imagine such fictions because they have failed to understand the ancient wisdom of the Greeks. The Greeks had clear ideas about these matters and spoke without turgidity of the ascent from the cave which gradually leads to a truer contemplation. In general, their doctrines are partly taken from Plato, while the remainder, which were invented merely to form a new system of their own, are contrary to truth. It is from Plato that they borrowed their tribunals, the rivers of Hades, and the transmigrations. They speak of several intelligible principles, Being, Intelligence, a second demiruge, and the soul. But all that comes from Plato's *Timaeus* where he says: "As the Ideas contained in the truly real Animal were seen by Intelligence, so many the maker of the world thought should be contained in this

world." But not clearly understanding Plato, they here imagine an intelligence at rest which contains all beings, a second intelligence that contemplates them, and a third intelligence that thinks discursively (they often replace this discursive intelligence with the creating soul), and they believe this to be Plato's demiurgic creator, being themselves ignorant of the true nature of this demiurgic creator. They falsely ascribe to him a certain doctrine of creation as well as many other doctrines and make them out to be of inferior value. They imagine that they alone have rightly conceived of intelligible nature, while Plato and many other blessed men have not. By introducing a large number of intelligible principles, they think that they seem to possess an exact knowledge of them, while really they degrade them, assimilating them to lower and sensuous beings by increasing their number. They ought to reduce the principles that exist in the realm above to the smallest number possible, and to eliminate duplications. To do this, they must ascribe to the principle below the First the totality of beings; for this level contains all beings and is the supreme Intelligence, Being, and all else that is beautiful beneath the First. They must assign the soul to the third rank. The differences obtaining between souls they must explain by the differences of their experiences or natures. Instead of besmirching the reputation of divine men, they should receive their doctrines in recognition of their age in a friendly way, taking from them what they rightly assert, such as the immortality of the soul, the existence of the intelligible world, the first divinity, the necessity for the soul to flee from intercourse with the body, and the separation of the soul from the body, the flight from generation to Being. They do well to borrow these ideas from Plato if they understand them clearly. They are even at liberty to express diverging views. But they should not

seek to establish their own doctrines in the minds of their followers by affronting and insulting the Greeks. They should demonstrate the correctness of their own tenets whenever they differ from those of the ancient philosophers, should expound their tenets in a philosophical manner and with good will, and should be just even when they controvert an opposing view. They should seek nothing but the truth, without any attempt at self-glorification by attacking men whose teachings have long since been approved by not unworthy men. They should do so without claiming superiority to the latter. For that which the ancients taught on the subject of the intelligible world will always be considered as the best and wisest by all who do not permit themselves to be misled by the errors that today mislead so many. If from their doctrines we remove what they have borrowed from the teachings of the ancients, the remaining additions will be seen to be very inappropriate. In order to contradict the ancients they introduce a great number of births and destructions, complain of this universe, blame the soul for its association with the body, criticize the administration of the universe, identify the demiurgic creator with the universal soul and attribute to her the same affections as to the particular souls.

7. That this world never began and will never end, and that it must last as long as the world above, has been said already. That the soul's intercourse with the body is not advantageous to the soul has been asserted even before them. But to judge the universal soul according to ours is akin to condemning the whole of a well governed city after an examination limited to its workers in earth or matter. The differences between the universal soul and our souls are very important. The universal soul does not govern the world in

the same manner in which our soul governs the body; for she governs the world without being bound to it. In addition to the many points of difference elsewhere noted, it should be realized that we are chained to a body that has become a fetter. The body which is chained to the universal soul itself enchains all that it embraces. But the universal soul herself is not bound by the things she binds. She rules them and therefore cannot be affected by them, while we ourselves do not rule our bodies. That part of the universal soul which rises to the divine world remains pure and independent. That part which communicates life to the body receives nothing from the body. In general, that which is affected by another being necessarily receives something of the character of that being, but does not in turn give to that which has its own individual life something of its own. That is why when one grafts something on a plant, the graft participates in the life of the plant; but if the graft itself should wither it would leave the life of the plant untouched. Likewise if the fire within yourself is extinguished, the universal fire is not extinguished thereby. Even if all fire were extinguished, not the soul above, but only the body of the world would be affected by it; for the soul would not be concerned as long as a world composed of the remaining elements is possible. The world does not have a constitution similar to that of each of the particular organisms. On the world as a whole the universal soul which is above the world imposes a sort of permanence; but the constituent parts of the world which, as it were, are in flux, are maintained in their place by a second bond. The world as a whole has no place into which it might flee. There is no need of containing it within nor of pressing it from without to force it back within. It remains in the place where the soul wished to put it from the beginning. Those things which are moved in

natural motion dominate those which are not. They carry out well ordered motions because they conform to the whole. But other things perish because they cannot conform to the universal order. This might be illustrated by the fate of a tortoise which happened to be caught in the midst of a choric ballet that was dancing in perfect order. The tortoise would be trampled down because it could not escape the effects of the order that regulates the feet of the dancers. If, on the contrary, it conformed to that order, it would suffer no harm.

8. To ask why the world was created, is the same as to ask why there is a soul, and why the demiurge creates. To ask such questions is characteristic of men who first assume a beginning of that which is eternal and who then believe that the demiurge became the creating force only as a result of a change or alteration. If they are at all willing to listen to us fairly, we shall have to teach them the nature of these principles. Thus we may end their habit of so easily slandering these venerable beings instead of speaking of them with the proper caution. No one has the right to find fault with the constitution of the world for it reveals the greatness of intelligible nature. We must recognize that the world is the visible and beautiful image of the intelligible divinities from the fact that the world achieves existence in a life that is not disorganized, as is that of the smaller organisms it contains which the productiveness of universal life never ceases to bring forth by day or by night. On the contrary, its life is continuous, perspicuous, manifold; it extends everywhere, and exhibits a marvelous wisdom. It is no more than natural that the world does not equal the model it imitates or it would no longer be an imitation. It is an error, however, to think that the world imitates its model badly. It

lacks none of the things that characterize a beautiful and natural image. It is by necessity, not by reasoning or deliberation, that this image exists. For Intelligence could not be the lowest level of reality. It had to develop a double activity, one within itself and another directed towards other beings. It necessarily had to produce beings after it; for only the most impotent being fails to produce something. Intelligence possesses a wonderful power and hence could not help creating.

What would be the nature of a world better than the present one if such were possible? The present one is already a faithful image of the intelligible world. It exists necessarily and there is no better world. The whole earth is peopled with all sorts of animals and even immortal beings. From here below up to the heaven, the world is full of them. Why should the stars in the highest region and those in the lower spheres not be divinities, in view of their regular motion and their orderly circular paths? Why should they not possess virtue? What obstacle could hinder them from acquiring it? Up there are not found the things which here below make for evil beings or the evil nature of the body which both is itself troubled and causes troubles. With their perpetual leisure, why should they not possess intelligence and thus grasp the supreme divinity and all the other intelligible deities? Why, however, should we possess a wisdom greater than theirs? Only a foolish man would entertain such thoughts. How could our souls be superior when at the hand of the universal soul they undergo the constraint of descending here below? For the soul that commands is the better one. If, on the contrary, it is assumed that souls descend here below voluntarily, how can one find fault with a world whither one came voluntarily and from which one can depart if it does not suit oneself? That this universe is

attached to the things above is proved by the fact that this world is such that during this life we are able to acquire wisdom and live in accordance with the beings above.

9. No one would complain of poverty and the unequal distribution of wealth if he realized that the sage does not seek equality in such things because he does not think that the rich man possesses any more than the poor man, the political ruler more than the subjects. The sage leaves such pursuits to other people; for he knows that there are two kinds of lives here, that of the sage and that of the multitude. The sage aims for the supreme good and the things above. The life of ordinary men is of two kinds, that of those who do not forget virtue and participate somewhat in the good, and that of the common crowd whose function is like servants to satisfy the necessary wants of the more virtuous. There is no reason to be surprised if men commit murder or, through weakness, yield to their passions; for such acts are due, not to intelligence, but to souls that are like immature children. If this life is like a struggle in which one is either victor or vanquished, is not this also a proof of good arrangement? If you are wronged, what harm does it do to your immortal part? If you are killed, you achieve the fate that you desired. If you complain of your world, you are not forced to retain citizenship. Besides, even here below, there evidently are rewards and punishments. Why then complain of a society where distributive justice is exercised, where virtue is honored, and where vice meets its deserved punishment? Not only are there here below statues of the divinities; but the divinities themselves, who are, as is said, beyond reproach, look on us and direct everything in an orderly manner from beginning to end, apportioning to everyone the fate that is appropriate for him and consistent

with his career in his previous lives. This is unknown only to persons who are most vulgarly ignorant of divine things.

One must try to become as good as one can. But one must not on that account imagine that one alone is capable of becoming good; for then one is not yet as good as possible. One must know that other men are perfect too, that the demons and even more the deities (who, while inhabiting this world, contemplate the world above) and, further still, the blissful soul that manages the universe are among the good. Above them one must honor the intelligible divinities and, above all, the great King of the beings in the world above whose greatness is especially manifested in the very multitude of the divinities. It is not by reducing the divine to unity, but by setting forth the manifoldness exhibited by the divine that one manifests one's knowledge of the power of the divinity which, though remaining what it is, produces many divinities which depend on it, proceed from and exist by it. In the same way this world derives existence from it and contemplates it along with all the celestial divinities which reveal to men the things beyond and act as an oracle of what is cherished in the world above. If these divinities are not what the supreme divinity is, this is in accordance with the nature of things. But if you wish to scorn these divinities and hold yourself in high esteem as being not inferior to them, learn first that the better a man is the more he is well disposed to all beings and men. In the second place, learn that one's self-esteem should be subject to an adequate evaluation, be free from insolence, and take into account the bounds of human possibilities. One must not believe that there is no place by the side of the divinity for these other beings, but only for oneself. Such a belief is like a flight in a dream; it results in depriving one of the possibility, to the extent to which the human soul is capable

f it, of becoming divine. The soul is capable of becoming divine to the degree to which she is guided by Intelligence. But to be beyond Intelligence means to fall outside of it. There are people unintelligent enough to believe without reflection claims such as the following: "You will be better than everybody, men as well as deities." These people are swollen with presumptuousness and even those who before were humble, moderate, and without station become conceited on hearing: "You are god's child; the others that you used to honor are not his children, not even the stars whose worship had been handed down by tradition. You yourself, without a special effort, are better than the starry heaven itself." To this the people around shout their approval. A person of this kind resembles a man who, though not knowing how to count, should in the midst of a crowd of men equally ignorant with himself hear it said and believe that he was a thousand feet tall, while the others were only five feet tall. He would not realize what was meant by a thousand feet, but he would suppose it to be some very great number.

The people we are discussing say further that the divinity certifies a special providence on their behalf. How then could the divinity neglect the world that contains them? If this were due to the divinity's having no leisure or no right to look at the world, how would it not transgress its own realm and look at the universe when it directs its glance downward to them who after all are found in this universe?

If the divinity does not direct its look beyond itself but remains unconcerned with the universe, it will not be concerned with these men either.

There is the objection that men have no need that the divinity should care for the world. But the world does need the care of the divinity. The divinity knows the place of the

world in the order of things and the way in which the inhabitants of the world are part of this world and the way in which they are part of the world above. Those that are beloved by god know this too. They accept with equanimity all those events that result by necessity from the course of the universe. For one should have regard, not for what is agreeable to the individual, but for the whole. In honoring everyone according to his merit and directing oneself towards the goal to which all beings aspire according to their ability (many are those that have this aspiration; those that realize it are blessed, the other attain their proper share in proportion to their capacity), one will not ascribe to oneself alone this power of achieving the goal. Mere assertion of possession is not the same as real possession. There are many men who, though conscious that they do not have such a possession, nevertheless boast of having it, or who believe they have it when the opposite is true, or that they exclusively possess it when they are not the only ones to possess it.

10. On examining all the assertions of our opponents, we would find copious material to correct their doctrines one by one. But we are restrained, out of consideration for some of our friends who had come across their doctrines before becoming friends of ours and who, I do not know how, still persevere in their doctrines. Our opponents, however, have no such inhibitions; they either try to give to their doctrine the appearance of trustworthiness and truth or believe that things really are as they say they are. But we are here addressing our friends, not them; for them it would be vain for us to try to persuade. We ask our friends not to let themselves be confused by men who furnish no proof—how could they indeed?—but who only impose on others by their

oldness. We would have followed a different procedure had we wanted to write a refutation of these men who are impudent enough to slander the teachings of those divine men of old who spoke well and in accordance with truth. We shall not, however, embark on this examination. For whoever well understands what we have already said will soon be able to judge of the remainder.

But before we dismiss this argument we must discuss one point which tops all others in absurdity—if absurdity is still the right word. They say that the soul and a certain Wisdom inclined downward towards things here below, either because the soul first inclined downward, or because she was led by Wisdom, or because in their view, soul and Wisdom are identical. The other souls, they say, then descended here below too and, as the members of Wisdom, entered into bodies such as those of men. Nevertheless, that soul on account of which the other souls descended here below, they say, did not herself descend and did not incline downward, but only illuminated the darkness. From this illumination was born in matter an image. After that, they assume, an image of the image was formed by means of matter or materiality (or whatever name they wish to give to it; for they differentiate the two and they make use of many other names to increase the obscurity of their utterances). Thus they derive their demiurgic creator. They also suppose that this demiurgic creator separated himself from his mother; and from him they deduced the whole world to the last image of the image. The perpetration of such assertions amounts to a bitter sarcasm concerning the power that created the world.

II. To begin with, if the soul did not descend, if she limited herself to illuminating the darkness, by what right

could it be asserted that the soul inclined downward? If indeed something like life issued from the soul, this does not justify one in speaking of an inclination of the soul, unless we admit the existence of something beneath her that she approached by a local movement and illuminated on arriving by it. If, on the contrary, the soul gave forth this illumination while remaining within herself, without doing anything to promote that illumination, why is the soul alone the source of the illumination and not the other more powerful existences in the realm of Being? Further, if this radiation occurred when the soul conceived the notion of the universe and, indeed, by virtue of this conception, why did her radiation not create the world at the same time, instead of waiting for the generation of "images"? Moreover, why did this notion of the world which they call the "foreign earth" and which was produced by the superior powers, as they say, not move its authors to a downward inclination? Further, why does this illuminated matter produce psychic images and not bodies? An image of the soul can have no use for darkness or matter; but after it has come into existence, if indeed it comes into existence, it follows that which made it and is bound to it. Further, what is this image? Is it a real entity, or is it, as they say, a conception? (1) If it is a real entity what difference is there between it and its source? If it is some kind of a soul, it must be a soul of growth and generation, if its source is a rational soul. If so, how could she be said to have created for the purpose of being honored or because of presumption and audacity? Still less would we have the right to say that this creation was due to imagination or rational conception. Besides, what necessity was there to introduce a creator formed of matter and of an image? (2) If it is a conception, it would be necessary to explain the origin of this term. Then, unless

a creative force is predicated of a conception, it would be necessary to show how it exists. But apart from the fact that this term is a fiction, how is creation to be explained? They say at will that this was produced first and that afterwards; but they permit themselves to assert it without any proof. For instance, how can it be said that fire was produced first?

12. How could this newly formed image have undertaken to create by remembering the things it knew? As it did not exist before, it could not have known anything, nor could the mother which is ascribed to it. Besides, it is quite surprising that, though the people here discussed descended into this world, not as images of souls, but as veritable, genuine souls, hardly one or two of them succeed in detaching themselves from the sense world and, by gathering together their memories, succeed in remembering things they previously knew, but that this material image which was just born as well as its mother, which is a material image too, are capable of conceiving intelligible entities (though in a feeble manner, as they say). It not only does conceive intelligible things and forms an idea of the sense world from the intelligible world, but it also learns what elements constitute the sense world. Why did it first create fire? Why did it believe that fire must come first? Why not some other element? If it was able to produce fire because it had the conception of it, why as it had the conception of the world (the whole must be conceived before the parts), did it not create the whole at one single stroke? Its conception of the world embraced the whole and the parts. Its creation would have to have been more like that of nature, not like that of the arts. For all the arts are posterior to nature and to the creation of the world. Even now we do not see that in things produced through natural processes fire is produced first,

then the other elements successively, and finally their mixture. On the contrary, the outline and organization of the entire organism are formed already in the germ born at the monthly periods in the animal. Why then, in creation, should there not have been imprinted in matter a plan of the world that also contained fire, earth, and so forth? The people here discussed might perhaps have made the world in this way because they possess a genuine soul. But the creating principle they assume, a principle which is inferior to the genuine soul, could not have proceeded in this way.

Nevertheless, to provide for the greatness, and especially the exact dimension of the heavens, the inclination of the zodiac, the course of the stars, and to do all this so as to furnish a rational cause for each of these things, could have been the work, not of an image, but only of the power that proceeded from the best existences. Our opponents, in spite of themselves, acknowledge this. For if they examine attentively the meaning of this "illumination of the darkness," they will be led to a recognition of the true principles of the world. Why had there to be this illumination of the darkness, unless it was absolutely necessary? This necessity was either in conformity with, or in opposition to nature. If the former, it must have been so from all time. If the latter, something contrary to nature would be found also in the world above, and evil would be prior to this world. Then it would no longer be this world that is the cause of evil, but the world above. The sense world would not be the cause of evil to the soul, but the soul to the world, and evil would even be introduced into the first existences. If, further, matter is said to be the cause of evil, where did it originate? For the darkness, they say, existed already when the soul in inclining downward saw and illuminated it. Whence then comes matter? If they say that the soul herself created it

by inclining downward, then evidently matter did not exist before the inclination of the soul. Darkness therefore is not the cause of this inclination; the cause is in the nature of the soul. The cause is thus found in the necessary existences which precede matter, hence in the supreme existences.

13. Those who complain of the nature of this world do not know what they are doing nor the extent of their audacity. Many men are ignorant of the orderly concatenation which unites the entities of the first, second, and third ranks, and the ensuing ones down to the very lowest. Instead of criticizing those entities that are inferior to the first principles, they should gently accept the laws of the universe, rise to the first principles, and stop their tragic recitals of the terrors which they believe are found in the spheres (which really only exert a beneficent influence on them). What is so terrible about the spheres to frighten men unschooled in argument and, without good education and sound knowledge? Though these spheres have bodies made of fire, these bodies should not inspire any fear in us, because they are in harmony with the universe and with the earth. We should besides look to their souls. (It is on account of the souls in themselves that the men here discussed consider themselves so valuable.) Still also the bodies of the spheres are superior in size and beauty, and effectively coöperate in the production of the things of nature which must be produced as long as the first principles exist. They complete the universe and are important members of it. If men are superior to the other animals, there is a still much greater superiority in the stars which exist, not to exert a tyrannical influence on the universe, but to establish beauty and order in it. Concerning the assertion that events are caused by the stars, it must be held that they are signs rather

than causes of future events. Differences among things come about through chance (it is not possible that the same thing should happen to each individual, even to those born simultaneously), the circumstances of their births, the differences of the regions they inhabit, and the dispositions of their souls. One should also not expect all men to be good, nor, because of the impossibility of this should one at once complain and demand that sense objects should be similar to intelligible objects. One must see evil as something which shows only a lesser degree of participation in wisdom, which is only a lesser good on a scale of less and ever lesser goods. To do otherwise would be like calling vegetative nature evil because it is not sensation or like calling sensation evil because it is not reason. If one reasoned thus, one would be forced to say that there is evil also in the intelligible world, because the soul is inferior to Intelligence and Intelligence to the One.

14. Our opponents impair very severely the purity of the world above. They do so particularly in the following way. When they compose magic incantations and address them to the beings above, not only to the soul, but to the principles superior to her, what are they trying to do except to bewitch, to charm, and to influence them? They therefore believe that these beings listen to and obey the voices of those who skillfully emit these songs, cries, breathings, and whistles, and all the other devices to which they ascribe magic power. If they do not really wish to assert this, how can they claim that that which is incorporeal obeys the sound of words? These very things by which they try to make their doctrines worthy of respect rob them without their knowing it of all claim to respect.

They also pride themselves on ridding themselves of dis-

es. If they claimed to do this through temperance and a well regulated life, as do the philosophers, they would be correct. But they insist that diseases are demons which they exorcise by their words. And they boast of this in order to achieve reputation among the common people who are always inclined to stand in awe of magic. They will not persuade intelligent people that diseases do not have their causes in such things as fatigue, too much or too little food, cold, or, in general, some change in some internal or external factor. This is proved in therapy. Diseases are driven away and expelled by purging the bowels or by the administration of some potion. Diet and bleeding are also often resorted to. Is this kind of treatment successful because the person is hungry or the potion makes him vanish, so that when a person is cured the demon departs? Or does the demon remain? If he remains, how does his presence not prevent recovery? If he departs, why does he? What has happened to him? Was he fed by the disease? If so, the disease was an entity distinct from the demon. If he entered without any cause, why does the individual into whose body he enters not always remain sick? If he enters into a body which has already a cause for its disease, what does he contribute to the disease? That cause is sufficient to produce fever. It would be ridiculous to suppose that the disease has a cause, but that, as soon as this cause is active, there is a demon ready to come and assist it.

It will now be clear what kind of doctrine is taught by the opponents and for what purpose. This is the reason why I have also brought up here their teachings about demons. My other views I leave to be judged by you when you read my books. Remember always that the kind of philosophy I pursue, beside all its other values, leads to simplicity of life and purity of thought. It aims at dignity, not super-

ciliousness. The confidence it inspires is based on reason, much verification and caution, and the utmost circumspection. The views of the people here discussed are everywhere most opposite to ours and it would not be appropriate to say still more about them.

15. We should, however, observe the effect produced in the souls of those who listen to the speeches of these men and who are persuaded to have contempt for the world and what it contains. About man's highest good there are two principal doctrines. The one makes physical pleasure the supreme goal; the other, nobility and virtue, the desire of which comes from the divinity and leads back to the divinity (as will have to be shown elsewhere). Epicurus, denying providence, advises us to seek the only thing that remains, the enjoyment of pleasure. But the doctrine here discussed is still more bold. It finds fault with the lord of providence and with providence itself. It refuses respect to the laws established here below and the virtue which has been honored by all centuries. It ridicules rational self-control. To annihilate the last vestiges of nobility in this universe, it destroys temperance and justice which are inborn in the human character and perfected by reason and exercise. In one word, it destroys everything that could lead to virtue. Hence nothing remains for its advocates but to seek pleasure, to pursue a selfish path, to renounce the community, to think only of personal interest—unless this or that one of them possesses a nature which is better than his doctrines. The things that we regard as good are not esteemed by them, but something else which they will at some later point pursue. Nevertheless, if they are already in the possession of knowledge, they should start from here with their pursuit and first correct earthly things by applying their divine nature to them. The

divine nature, disdaining physical pleasure, understands what nobility is. Those who have no virtue can never rise to the intelligible world. But their indifference with regard to these matters is further confirmed by the fact that they have no doctrine about virtue, but have omitted this subject entirely, give no definition of virtue, do not say how many virtues there are, and ignore the many beautiful discussions on this topic left to us by the ancients. They do not discuss how one can acquire and preserve virtue, how one can heal and purify the soul. Their precept, "Look to the divinity!" is useless if they do not also teach how this is to be achieved. One might ask them whether such contemplation of the divinity is not compatible with lust or anger. What would hinder one from repeating the name of the divinity while remaining under the domination of the passions and doing nothing to remove them? Virtue, when it becomes perfected in the soul, accompanied by wisdom, shows us the divinity. Without real virtue god is no more than a name.

16. One does not become a good man merely by scorning the world, the divinities, and the other beautiful things. Scorn of the divinities characterizes those that are evil. If a man is not otherwise evil, this vice is sufficient to make him such. The respect which the people here discussed pretend to have for the intelligible beings is not in accordance with their other feelings. For when one loves something, he loves all that is related to it. He extends to the children the affection for the parent. Now every soul is a daughter of the father above. The souls that preside over the stars are intellectual, good, and closer to the world above than ours. For how could this sense world and the divinities it contains exist if separated from the intelligible world? We have already spoken of this. Here we wish to say that when one scorns beings akin to

those that hold the front rank, it can only be that one knows them by name only.

How could it ever be considered pious to claim that providence does not extend to sense objects and everywhere? Is such an assertion consistent with even their own views? For they claim that providence interests itself in them, though only in them. Is this the case while they are living in the world above or while they live here below? If the first, why did they descend to this earth? If the second, why do they remain here below? Why should the divinity not be present here below? For how could he otherwise know that they are here below, that they, being here below, have not forgotten him and have not become evil? If he knows those that have not become evil, he must also know those who have become so, in order to be able to distinguish the former from the latter. He must therefore be present to all men and be in this world in some manner or other, and thus the world must participate in the divinity. If the divinity deprived the world of his presence, he would deprive *them* also of it, and they could not say anything of him or of the beings that come after him. The world certainly derives its existence from the existences above, whether providence extends to *them* or whatever else they may wish to say. The world never was deprived of the divinity and never will be. Providence is much more concerned with the whole than with the parts, and the universal soul participates in it more than do the others. This is proved by the existence and wise arrangement of the world. Which of those individuals who from lack of intelligence overestimate their intelligence is as well constructed and as rational as the universe and could even enter into such a comparison without ridicule or absurdity? Indeed, unless made merely in the course of a discussion, such a comparison is really an impiety. To ask such

questions is really the characteristic of a blind man without sense or reason who is far removed from knowledge of the intelligible world because he does not even know the sense world. Would any musician who had once heard the intelligible harmonies not also be moved by those of sense? What skillful geometrician or arithmetician will fail also to enjoy the symmetry, order, and proportion that he finds in the objects of sense? Though people look at the same objects in a painting, they see in them different things. Some recognize in the sense objects an image of the intelligible, they are thrown into an uproar and recall the memory of true reality. This is the origin of love. One person rises to the intelligible by seeing a good image of true beauty in a human face. Another is lethargic in his thought and is not carried beyond the immediate, so that he contemplates the physical beauties, the harmony and imposing order of this world, the grand view furnished by the stars in spite of their distance, without being stirred to enthusiasm and admiration of this splendor and that which produced it. He who reacts thus has failed to understand sense objects and has not seen the intelligible world.

17. If their hate for the body stems from the fact that Plato complains much of it as being an obstacle to the soul and far inferior to her, they should, going beyond the corporeal, consider the rest, the intelligible sphere which contains within it the form of the world and the souls in their order. Though themselves incorporeal, the souls give physical magnitude to the world by extending it in space according to the intelligible model in order that what is begotten might, as far as possible, through its magnitude, equal the indivisible nature of its model. For the magnitude of *mass* here below corresponds to the magnitude of *power*

in the world above. Whether they think of this sphere in motion (which is caused by the divine power that contains its beginning, middle, and end), or at rest, before it exerts its rule over other things, they must in both cases hold a proper conception of this soul that presides over this universe. When one conceives of this soul as united to a body, one must conceive of her as remaining unaffected by it, but giving it as much as it is capable to receive (for the divine is incapable of jealousy). One will form a proper idea of the world when one recognizes in the world soul the power by which she makes the body which is not beautiful by itself participate in her beauty as much as possible. This beauty moves the souls because they are divine.

If they should say that they have no appreciation for all this and that they feel no difference when they see beautiful or ugly bodies, they will also not distinguish good from bad actions, nor recognize beauty in the sciences, in contemplation, or in the divinity itself. Sense beings possess beauty only because of the first existences. But if they were not beautiful, the first existences would not be beautiful either. Sense beings show in a lower degree the beauty found in intelligible beings. The scorn professed by our opponents for sense beauty might be praiseworthy enough if it referred to the beauty of women and of young boys, so as to gain a victory over incontinence. But you may be sure that they do not boast of scorning what is ugly. They boast of scorning only what they first declare to be beautiful. We must further observe that it is not the same beauty that is seen in the parts and in the whole (in individuals and in the universe). But there are beauties great enough in sense objects and in particular beings, in demons, for instance, to lead us to admire their creator, and to convince us that they stem from above. In this way we may attain a conception of the im-

mense beauty of the world above and may rise, without attaching ourselves to sense objects and yet without slandering them, to the intelligible world. If the interior of a sense being is also beautiful, we shall have a harmony of inner and outer beauty. If it is ugly inside, it is inferior to its principle. But it is impossible for a being really to be beautiful in its exterior while ugly within; for the outer is beautiful only in so far as it is dominated by the inner. Those who are called beautiful but are ugly within seem to be externally beautiful only by deception. If someone claims that he has seen men who possess beautiful bodies but are ugly within their soul, I believe that he has not really seen beautiful men but falsely takes certain people to be such. Or, if he is right, their ugliness is acquired and they are by nature beautiful; for many are the obstacles here below which hinder us from reaching our goal. But the universe cannot by any obstacle be hindered from possessing inner beauty in the same way that it possesses outer beauty. The beings to whom nature has not from the beginning given perfection may indeed not attain their goal and consequently may become perverted. But the universe never was, like a child, in an incomplete state. It did not develop nor receive physical increase. Such a development would have been impossible, because it already possessed everything. Neither can it be admitted that its soul ever in the course of time gained any increase. But even if this were granted, it could not have been an addition of something evil.

18. They might perhaps object that their doctrines inspire revulsion from and hate for the body, while ours attach the soul to the body. But this is hardly so. We may illustrate the difference of the two positions by the example of two guests who dwell together in a beautiful house. The first

guest criticizes the construction of the house and its architect, though he still remains in it. The other guest does not criticize but praises the great skill of the architect and waits for the time when he can leave for a place where he no longer even needs a house. Should the first guest be thought wiser and better prepared for his eventual departure because he has learned to say that his present walls are composed of lifeless stones and beams and that the present house is far removed from the kind of habitation found in the world of true reality? He is not aware that the difference between him and his companion is that he does not know how to accept necessary things. Unless he stops grumbling and appreciates the beauty of the stones, he will not be thought wiser or better prepared. As long as we have bodies, we have to abide in the houses constructed by the soul which is sister to ours and good and which has the power to produce these things effortlessly. While *they* do not hesitate to call the lowest of men their brothers, do they wish to be so mad as to refuse this name to the sun, the other celestial beings, and the world soul? Doubtless, to admit those who are bad to kinship with the things above is not right. To be kin to them one must have become good and, instead of being a body, be a soul in a body, and one must be able to dwell in the body in a manner which approximates most closely the way in which the universal soul dwells in the body of the universe. For this purpose one must be firm and must not allow oneself to be charmed by the pleasures and sights that come from outside nor to be confused by adversity. The soul of the world is not troubled by anything, because there is nothing which can cause trouble for her. We, however, who here below are exposed to such blows must repel them by our virtue, lessening the effects of some by the power of our wisdom, and foiling others by developing our strength.

en we shall thus have come closer to achieving this
 er of not being subject to blows from outside, we shall
 nble the soul of the universe and the souls of the stars.
 e increase this resemblance still further, then, through
 re and exercise, we also will rush towards the same thing
 will contemplate what these souls have been contem-
 ng since the beginning. When *they* say that they alone
 : the ability to contemplate, they do not achieve a richer
 n thereby, nor when they say that they can leave their
 es after death, while this is impossible to the souls which
 ys fill the same function in heaven. They speak in this
 only because they do not know in what way the soul
 outside" the body nor in what way the universal soul
 rns all that is inanimate. It is possible not to love the
 , to become pure, to scorn death, and both to know and
 ursue the things that are superior to earthly things,
 out jealously denying this power to others who not only
 capable of pursuing the same goal but who eternally
 ue it. Let us not fall into the error of those who deny
 the stars move because their senses show them to be at
 It is for such a reason that the people here discussed
 ot believe that the stars see what is outside of them; it
 cause these people do not see the souls of the stars in
 nal things.

DESCENT OF THE SOUL INTO THE BODY

(read IV viii)

Sometimes I wake from the slumber of the body to re-
 to myself; and turning my attention from external
 gs to what is within me, I behold the most marvelous
 ty. I then fully believe that I have a superior destiny.
 e the highest life and am at one with the divinity.
 blished there, my activity raises me above all the other

intelligible beings. But if, after this rest in the divine, I descend from Intelligence to discursive reasoning, I do not understand the manner of and reason for my descent, how my soul ever could have entered into a body, being what I have seen her to be herself, even when she still is associated with a body.

Heraclitus who exhorts us to this research asserts that contraries necessarily change into each other; he speaks of "the way up and the way down," saying that "in change is rest" and that "it is troublesome to continue in the same kind of work." But he seems to speak in metaphors and neglects to explain himself clearly, perhaps thinking that we should seek for ourselves as he found for himself the answers to his questions. Empedocles says that it is a law for souls that have done wrong to fall down here below, and that he himself was a "fugitive from the divine" and came here "slave to the madness of Strife." His revelations, I believe, are the same as those of Pythagoras; and his disciples have given an allegorical interpretation of this and many other of his statements. But Empedocles is obscure because he uses the language of poetry. Lastly, we have the divine Plato who said many beautiful things about the soul. In his discussions he often speaks of the arrival of the soul in this world. He makes us hope that he will have something clear to say on this matter. But unfortunately he does not everywhere say the same thing and so does not enable one easily to know his intent. Still he everywhere holds corporeal things in low esteem, deplors the association of the soul with the body, and says that the body is to the soul a chain and a tomb, thinking very important the assertion of the mysteries that the soul here below is in a prison. What Plato calls the cave, like Empedocles' "grotto," seems to me to signify the sense world. To break the chains and to ascend

from the cave is for the soul, as Plato says, to rise to the intelligible world. In the *Phaedrus* the cause of the fall of the soul is the loss of her wings. According to Plato, cycles of periodic recurrence bring the soul back here below, and it is also by judgments, lots, chance, and necessity that souls are sent down into this world. In all these cases he deplors the association of the soul with the body. But, speaking of the sense world in the *Timaeus*, he praises the world and calls it a happy divinity. He states that the demiurge, being good, gave it a soul to make it a rational universe which without the soul it could not have been. That is the reason why the divinity sent the world soul into the world and similarly the soul into each of us. If the sense world is to be complete, it is necessary that it contain as many kinds of organisms as the intelligible world.

2. Thus, as we seek in Plato an answer to our questions about the human soul, we are necessarily led to ask about the soul in general: How has she been led into association with the body? What is the nature of this world in which the soul lives, whether voluntarily or necessarily or in any other way? Further questions are whether the demiurge acted rightly or not in making this universe, and whether it is right that our souls associate with the body? It would seem that our souls, charged with the administration of bodies less perfect than they, had to plunge into them deeply if they were really to manage them. For bodies tend to disintegrate and their elements to return to their natural place (in the universe all things have their natural places). Moreover, bodies need to be ruled by an agency capable of great foresight, because they are always exposed to the attacks of other bodies that are alien to their nature, and are always pressed by wants, and require continual aid in the many

adversities that beset them. But the body of the world is complete, perfect, self-sufficient, not subject to any influences that prevent it from expressing its own nature. Hence it requires only a light rule. That is why the world soul can remain free from care and molestations, and can keep her natural disposition intact without loss or entanglement. Hence it is that Plato says that our soul, when she dwells with this perfect soul, becomes herself perfect, resides in the celestial region, and governs the whole world. So long as the soul does not withdraw from the world soul to enter into a body and be attached to some individual, she administers the world together with the world soul, and in the same effortless manner. It is not necessarily evil for the soul to give to the body the power to exist; for the providential care exercised with regard to an inferior nature does not necessarily hinder the agency which exercises it from remaining itself in a state of perfection.

In the universe there are indeed two kinds of providence. The first providence is directed to the whole and regulates everything in the manner of kings by giving orders to be executed by others. The second is concerned with the details and engages in direct action, adapting the agent and that which is acted upon to each other. Now the divine soul always administers the whole world in the first way, enthroning herself above the world by virtue of her superior part, while she injects into the world only her lowest power. We cannot therefore accuse the divinity of having assigned an inferior place to the world soul. Indeed, the world soul was never deprived of the things which are in accordance with her nature. She possesses from all eternity and will always possess that which cannot be in opposition to her nature. Plato further says that the relation of the souls of the stars to their bodies is the same as that of the world

soul to the world (for to him the bodies of the stars too are ruled by souls). Thus he grants also to the stars their appropriate happiness. Neither of the usual two objections to the intercourse of the soul with the body ((1) that it hinders the soul in her intellectual pursuits and (2) that it fills her with pleasures, lusts, and fears) holds for the kind of soul that has not plunged deeply into the body and does not depend on some particular individual. She rules the body, rather than is ruled by it. Her body neither needs nor lacks anything. Hence the soul is free from both desires and fears. Since her body is what it is, she has no cause to fear any disturbance on account of it. Nothing will interrupt her leisure and make her incline downward, thus taking away the superior happiness of her contemplation. She is always with the things in the world above and governs the sense world while remaining herself undisturbed.

3. Let us now consider the human soul which is subject to ills and suffering while in the body, a prey to griefs, lusts, fears, and evils of all kinds, for which the body is a chain and a tomb, and the sense world a "cave" or "grotto." The different assertions about the world soul and the human soul are not contradictory; for the causes of the descent of these two souls are not the same. Intelligence dwells entire in that intellectual region which we call the intelligible world, but comprises within itself the variety of intellectual powers and particular Intelligences (for Intelligence is not merely one, but both one and many). Hence there are both many souls and one; and from the one soul proceed the multiplicity of different souls as from one and the same genus proceed species of various ranks, some of which are more and others, at least in their actual existence, less rational in form. In the intelligible world there thus is on the one

hand the Intelligence which, like some great animal, potentially contains the other Intelligences, and on the other hand there are the individual Intelligences, each of which is an actuality. We may illustrate this by speaking of the soul of a city that contains the souls of its inhabitants. The soul of the city would be more perfect and powerful, but nothing would hinder the other souls from being of the same nature with her. Or we might take the analogy of universal Fire from which proceed the particular fires, big and little. They all are included in the total substance of Fire (a substance inferior to substance as such). The function of the rational soul is to think, but is not limited to thinking alone. Otherwise there would be no difference between her and Intelligence. Beside her intellectual characteristics the soul has further characteristics by virtue of which she does not remain mere Intelligence. These too define her particular existence. The soul, like every other being, has her specific function. In directing herself to what is superior to her, she thinks; in directing herself to herself, she preserves herself; in directing herself to what is inferior to her, she orders, administers, and governs it. It is not possible that existence should come to an end with the intelligible world as long as a succession of further existences is possible which, though less perfect, nevertheless necessarily exists as long as that from which it proceeds exists.

4. The individual souls follow their intellectual aspirations in turning again towards the existence from which they proceeded. But they also possess a power that is directed towards the sense world, just as light, though attached to the sun on high, does not begrudge its rays to the things below. The souls that dwell with the world soul in the intelligible world are free from suffering. Dwelling in the celestial

region with the world soul they share with her the administration of the world. They are like kings who live with the supreme King, share the government with him, and, like him, do not descend from their royal abode. The souls in this state are all assembled in the same region. But they pass from this state of universal to one of particular existence. They wish to be independent; they are weary, as it were, of dwelling with somebody else. Each of them withdraws into what is her own individuality. When a soul does that for a long while, withdraws from the whole and separates herself from it, and does not keep her attention fixed on the intelligible world, then, having become a fragment, she is isolated and weakened. Her activity lacks concentration and she directs her attention to the particular. She separates herself from the whole, and attaches herself to some particular object. Withdrawing from all others, she concentrates on some single object which is subject to the destructive actions of the other beings. Thus she is removed from the whole. She governs the particular with difficulty, the care of which forces her to busy herself with external things, to be present to and to plunge deeply into the body. Thus there comes about what is called "the loss of wings" or the soul's imprisonment in the body, when she fails to preserve the innocent existence she enjoyed when, with the world soul, she shared the administration of superior things. When she was in the world above, she spent a much better life. The fallen soul is chained and imprisoned, obliged to have recourse to sensation because she cannot make use of Intelligence. She is said to be buried in a tomb or cave. But by turning towards intellectual activity she breaks her bonds and returns upwards. This happens when, starting from the intimations of reminiscence, she rises to the contemplation of Being; for even when the soul falls, she retains within her-

self a superior part. The souls lead necessarily a double life. They live, in part, in the intelligible world and, in part, in the sense world. They live more fully in the intelligible world when they can achieve a fuller association with Intelligence. They are more immersed in the sense world when nature or chance imposes on them a contrary fate. This is what Plato subtly wishes to indicate when he has the souls separated out of the second mixture in the cup. He says that after they have been thus divided, they must necessarily enter into generation. Plato's statement that the divinity "sows" the souls must be understood in the same way as when he makes out of the divinity a sort of orator by having him "speak." For the purposes of his argument, he metaphorically describes the things contained in the universe as begotten and created. Thus by successive description he presents things that in truth exist in an eternal state of becoming or being.

5. There is no contradiction between the assertions that the souls are "sowed" into generation and that they descend here below for the sake of making the universe complete, that they merit punishment and that they are shut up in a cave, that their descent is due to necessity and that it is an effect of their will (as necessity does not exclude voluntariness), that they share in evil as long as they are in bodies and that, as Empedocles says, they have withdrawn from the divinity and lost their way, that they have committed some wrong which they are expiating and that, as Heraclitus says, their rest consists in their flight. In general, there is no contradiction between asserting that the descent of the souls is voluntary and that it is subject to necessity. No one ever falls voluntarily into what is worse. But as it is by one's own momentum that one descends to lower things and suffers the

onsequences, it may be said that one bears the punishment for what oneself has done. Besides, as it is by eternal law of nature that one acts and is acted upon in this manner, one may assert, without contradicting either oneself or the truth, that the being who descends from the world above for the sake of assisting some lower being is sent by the divinity. The effects of any originating principle, however far they are removed from it by intermediate effects, can always be referred back to it. There are two wrongs which the soul commits. The first consists of her descent itself; the second, in the evil she commits after having arrived here below. The first wrong is punished by the very condition of her descent. The punishment of the latter wrong is to pass again into other bodies and to remain there more or less long according to the judgment of her deserts (the word "judgment" indicates that this happens in consequence of divine law). If, however, the perversity of the soul passes all measure, she undergoes, under the charge of avenging guardians, an even more severe punishment according to her deserts. Thus, although the soul has a divine nature and stems from the intelligible world, she enters into a body. Being one of the lower divinities, she descends here below by a voluntary inclination to express her potentialities and to administer what is below her. If she soon flees from here below, she suffers no harm for having become acquainted with evil and the nature of it, for having brought her potentialities into the open and manifested the consequent activities and deeds. Indeed, these capacities would be useless if they slumbered in the incorporeal world without ever becoming actualized. The soul herself would not know what she possesses if these potentialities did not manifest themselves by proceeding from her. For everywhere it is the actual that manifests the potential which is hidden and invisible and does not as such

really exist. As it is, everyone marvels at the inner greatness of the soul, the beauty of which is manifested in the richness of the external effects.

6. The One must not exist alone; for then all things would have remained unrealized, because in the One there is no differentiation of forms. No beings would exist if the One remained fixed in itself. Further, the multitude of beings that proceed from the One would not be what it is, if, from the beings that proceed from the One, there did not issue those beings that are in the rank of souls. Likewise, it was not enough that souls should exist without bringing forth what they are capable of begetting. For each thing by nature produces something and develops from a seedlike indivisible principle into a visible effect. The principle remains always in its proper place, while that which springs from it is the product of the inexpressible power that resides in it. It must not stop this power and, as if jealous, limit its effects. But it must continuously proceed until all things, to the very last, have, within the limits of the possible, come forth as a result of this inexhaustible power which communicates its gifts to all things and which cannot let any of them remain without a share in it. There is nothing which hinders any of them from participating in the Good in the measure that each is capable of doing so. The same holds even with regard to matter. For if, on the one hand, it is assumed to have existed from all eternity, it is impossible that since it exists, it should not participate in that which communicates goodness to all things according to their capacity of receiving it. If, on the other hand, matter is assumed to be due to an act of generation that is the necessary consequence of superior causes, it still will not be separated from the supreme reality, as if that which by a sort of grace gives it its very existence

ked the power to extend to matter. The excellence, power, and goodness of the intelligible world is revealed in what is most excellent in sense objects. There is an eternal nexus between intelligible and sense objects. The former exist by their own power. The latter eternally derive their existence from the former by participation, and imitate the intelligible world to the extent of their ability.

7. As there are these two worlds, the intelligible and the sense world, it is better for the soul to live in the intelligible world. But as a result of her nature, it is necessary for her to participate in the life of sense. Since she occupies only an intermediate rank, one must not complain that she is not superior in all respects. Though her nature is divine, she is located at the lowest point of the intelligible world and descends on the sense world. She gives to the sense world nothing of her own power. But she in turn is affected by it when, instead of managing the body without endangering her own security, she permits herself to be carried away by too much ardor and plunges deeply into the body and desires to be completely united with the world soul. But the soul can again rise above this condition and can, because of the experience of the things she has seen and suffered here below, better appreciate the life above and know more fully the better by its contrast to its opposite. Indeed the knowledge of the good becomes clearer by the experience of evil for those who are not capable enough to know evil by science instead of by experience. Discursive reason is a descent to the lowest level of Intelligence. Intelligence cannot rise to the level of the existence beyond. But as it is not able to remain within itself and necessarily produces, it proceeds by the necessity and law of its nature to the level of the soul. There it stops; and leaving the care of lower realities

to the soul, it again returns to the intelligible world. It is similar with the soul. What comes after her are the things of sense. What is above her is the contemplation of Being. For many souls this contemplation is fragmentary and divided by time; their ascent therefore starts from an inferior condition. But the world soul is never involved in the activities of the inferior world. She is impassive to evil. She comprehends what is below her intellectually, but she is always attached to what is above her. She therefore is able simultaneously to receive from what is above her and to give to the things below. Since she is a soul, it would be absurd if she were not concerned with the objects of sense.

8. If one must have the courage to say in opposition to current beliefs what seems to be more true to oneself, let us state that no soul, not even ours, enters into the body completely. By her higher part the soul always remains united to the intelligible world. But if the part that is in the sense world dominates or rather is dominated and troubled, it keeps us from being conscious of what the higher part of the soul contemplates. Indeed that which the soul contemplates reaches *us* only if it descends to our awareness. For we do not know what goes on in some part of the soul before it is grasped by the entire soul. For instance, an appetite, as long as it remains in the faculty of desire, does not become known to us. It does so only when we perceive it by the faculty of inner sense, or by the faculty of discursive reason, or by both. Every soul has a lower part turned towards the body, and a higher part turned towards Intelligence. The world soul, without effort, manages the universe by that part of her that is directed towards the body. For she governs her body, not, as we do, by discursive reasoning, but by

intelligence, in a manner entirely different from that found in the practice of the arts. The individual souls, each of which administers a part of the universe, also have a superior part. But they are distracted by sensations and impressions. They perceive many things which are contrary to nature and which cause them trouble and confusion. This is so, because the body of which they take care is defective, is surrounded by alien objects, many of which it nevertheless needs, and is deceived by the pleasures it experiences. But the higher part of the soul is insensible to the attraction of these transitory pleasures and leads an undisturbed life.

4

REASON, SENSE, AND EMOTION

THE NATURE OF THE ORGANISM AND OF THE SELF (*Ennead I i*)

1. To what part of our nature do pleasure and pain, fear and boldness, desire and aversion, and suffering belong? Is it to the soul, or to the soul when she uses the body as an instrument, or to some combination of both? This last possibility is twofold, being either the mixture of the soul and the body, or some new product resulting from it. The same uncertainty exists with regard to the actions and opinions that result from the emotions. We must ask whether discursive reason and opinion belong to the same part of our nature as the emotions, or whether only some of them do. We must also inquire about the nature of non-discursive thought and to what part it belongs. Lastly we must study the agency in us that undertakes this inquiry, puts and resolves these questions. But, first of all, to which part of us belongs the activity of sensation? This is the proper starting point of our inquiry; for the emotions are either sensations or at least do not exist without them.

2. Let us first examine whether there is any difference between the actual soul and that which is purely soul? If there is, the soul is a composite; and it would no longer be a matter of surprise if she received forms and, as far as reason permits, experienced emotions such as those just mentioned, and in general habits and dispositions that are either good or bad. But if the actual soul is purely soul, then she is a

Form and does not herself engage in any of the activities which she can produce in other things, but possesses in herself her own proper activity which reason reveals to us. In this case we must acknowledge that she is immortal, for it is an immortal and imperishable being that is not subject to the passions. Such a being gives of itself to others without receiving anything in return from them. It receives only from the beings that are above it and better than it and from which it is never separated. A being that is so unreceptive to anything external has no ground to fear; for fear is natural to a being that is subject to the influence of external things. Neither is it characterized by boldness, for this emotion implies the presence of objects of fear. Further, in the case of such desires as are satisfied by the emptying or filling of the body, it is not the soul that is emptied or filled. How could she desire to mix with other things, inasmuch as that which is of the nature of Being is not subject to composition? She could not wish to have anything added to her; for thus she would strive to destroy what she is. She is also far removed from suffering. How could she be in pain, and about what? For the being that is simple is self-sufficient and rests in its own being. Neither will she experience pleasure because of any supposed expansion. Nothing, not even the good, comes to her by way of addition. For she always is what she is. Neither can we attribute to her sensation, discursive reason, or opinion. For sensation consists in the reception of physical forms or feelings, while discursive reason and opinion depend on sensation. But we shall have to examine what the nature of non-discursive thought is, if we would determine whether we must attribute this kind of thought to the soul. We shall also have to inquire whether pure pleasure is to be attributed to the soul as such (rather than to the composite of soul and body).

3. The soul that is in the body, whether she exists directly in the body or remains above it, forms with the body the whole called the organism. Now, if the soul uses the body like a tool, she is not forced to undergo its experiences, any more than workmen undergo the experiences of their tools. But it would seem that the soul must have perception, because, in order to use her instruments, she would by means of perception have to know that which the body experiences, just as it is in using the eyes that seeing consists. But then the soul will also feel any harm which may affect the sight and thus will undergo pains, suffering, and whatever else happens to the body. She will thus also experience want in seeking to minister to some affected organ. But in what sense do these affections from the body get to the soul? A body can communicate its properties to another body, but how can it communicate them to the soul? In this latter case one thing would undergo the experiences of another thing. But as long as the body is instrument and the soul its user, soul and body are separate, and whoever makes the soul a power that uses the body like a tool admits this separation. There still is the question what the condition of the soul is before she is again separated from the body by philosophy. The answer is that she forms some sort of association with it. But such an association will consist in some sort of fusion, in mutual juxtaposition or in that the soul is the form of the body and is not separated from it, or in that she is a form that only governs the body as a pilot governs the ship. It is further to be considered whether it is not a part only of the soul that forms this association, while the other part remains separated from the body. I mean by the separate part that which uses the body like a tool, while the other part is itself lowered to the rank of instrument. Philosophy raises the latter part to the rank of

the former and turns, as far as our needs allow, the separate part away from the body it uses, so that it may not continuously occupy itself with the body.

4. When the soul is assumed fused with the body, the worse part will gain and the better part will lose. The body will gain by this participation in life and the soul will lose by this association with death and irrationality. How then can the soul which thus loses part of her life gain the accession of sensation? For it would seem that it is the body which by its participation in life acquires the power of sensation and the emotions which derive from sensation. It would be the body then which will have desires and wants, and which will experience pleasure upon the acquisition of the desired objects. The body also will feel fear for itself, as it will be it which will fail to achieve pleasure and which will experience destruction. Let us then inquire whether this union of body and soul is not as impossible as the union of two incommensurables, such as a geometrical line and a color like white. If soul and body are mutually juxtaposed, the soul does not necessarily share the body's experiences. It is possible for juxtaposed things to remain unaffected by each other and the soul may extend through the body and not be affected by it. She may be like light in this respect, particularly if hers is only a relation of juxtaposition to the body. Thus the soul would remain a stranger to the body's experiences and be in the body as form is in matter. If she really is a substance by herself, she will be a form that is separate from the body and will use the body only like a tool. If, however, the soul is like the form which, when imposed on the iron, constitutes the ax, whereby only the combination of iron and form (the iron provides the material, but the form determines the function) constitutes

the functioning unit, we will have all the more reason to attribute the affections of the composite of soul and body to the body, to a body, however, that is a "natural, organized existence that possesses life potentially." For just as "it is absurd to suppose that it is the soul that weaves," it is not any more reasonable to attribute desire and pain to the soul instead of to the living organism.

5. This living organism must either be the body as just defined, or the composite of soul and body, or some third thing which proceeds from the two. In any of these cases, the soul will either have to remain impassive while being the cause of the affections of the body, or she will have to share the body's affections. In this latter case, she will have to experience affections either identical or similar to those of the body, similar in the way in which the act of desire of the whole organism is similar to, though also distinct from, the activity engaged in or undergone by its faculty of desire.

We shall later consider the organized body. Here we must examine how the composite of soul and body experiences affections, such as that of pain. The theory that these experiences have their origin in a certain state of the body, are then transmitted to the senses, and from there to the soul, leaves the nature of sensation itself unexplained. There is the further theory that pain is due to the opinion or judgment that something bad is happening either to ourselves or someone close to us and that from this result disagreeable emotions in the body and in the whole organism. Nevertheless, it is as yet uncertain whether opinion belongs to the soul or to the composite of soul and body. Besides, the opinion that something evil is present does not entail the experiences of pain. It is possible that, in spite of holding

such an opinion, one might feel no pain, just as one may not become angry though one believes oneself slighted, or might not be moved by desire even though one believes some good to be present.

In what sense then are these experiences common to the soul and the body? Are they common to both because desire arises in the faculty of desire, or because spiritedness and, in short, all impulses arise in their corresponding faculties? But then they will not be common to soul and body but will belong exclusively to the soul. No, they will also belong to the body, because the excitation of desire, for instance of sexual desire, depends on the temperature of blood and bile and the particular condition of the body. But the desire of the good and several others should not be ascribed to the composite, but to the soul alone. Reason does not allow us to consider all impulses as common to soul and body. Is it possible, however, that for example in sexual love the whole man experiences the desire in one sense, and the faculty of desire in another? In this case, if we assume that the man has the desire first while the faculty follows, how can the man experience the desire while the faculty of desire is not active? If on the contrary we assume that it is the faculty of desire that begins the process, how could it be excited, unless a certain disposition of the body preceded it?

6. It would probably be better, however, to say that, by their presence alone, the faculties of the soul determine the activity of that which participates in them and that, while they themselves remain unmoved, they furnish the power of movement. But in this case when the living organism experiences its affections, the cause which imparts life to the composite must itself remain unaffected by that which

the being which receives life does or undergoes. In this case, therefore, life will not belong to the soul, but to the composite of soul and body. Or, at least, the life of the composite will not be that of the soul; nor will that which senses be the faculty of sensation, but the being in whom that faculty inheres. But if sensation is a corporeal motion that culminates in the soul, how will the soul not possess sensation? It is true that sensation is due to the *presence* of the faculty of sensation and that it is the composite of soul and body that has the sensation. Nevertheless, if the faculty of sensation remains unmoved, how can we still speak of a composite if we exclude from it both the soul and her faculties?

7. The composite results from the presence of the soul, but not in the sense that the soul enters as she is into the composite or into any one of its elements. But she produces, out of the organized body and out of a kind of "illumination" furnished by herself, a new being, the animal organism to which belong sensation and the other affections attributed to it.

If now we should be asked how it happens that it is *we* who have sensation, we answer that *we* do not exist apart from the living organism, though there are other things of a higher nature in us, for man is a being that consists of many parts. The faculty of sensation which is in the soul does not perceive sense objects themselves, but only their counterparts that arise in the living being due to sensation; for these are already of the order of the realm of Intelligence. Sensation of external objects is only the image of the sensation peculiar to the soul which is truer and more real and consists in the unperturbed contemplation of forms. It is because of these forms, to which the soul owes her exclusive rule over the organism, that arise discursive reason, opinion,

and non-discursive thought. This sort of activity primarily constitutes our *self*. No doubt, that which is superior to this kind of activity belongs to our self, too; but on a lower level, our *self* is that which from above directs the organism. Nothing prevents us from calling "animal organism" that whole which includes an inferior part, mingled with the body, and a superior part. The latter really is the human self, while the former is like a lion or an insatiable beast. As man is identified with the rational soul when there is reasoning, it is *we* who reason because reasoning is an activity of the soul.

8. What is our relation with the world of Intelligence? I mean by Intelligence not the intellectual power in the soul which derives from Intelligence, but Intelligence itself. We possess indeed that Intelligence which is above us. But do we all share in the same Intelligence, or does each individual have his own? Both are the case. Intelligence is held by all in common because it is indivisible, one, and everywhere the same. It is particular because everyone possesses it in its entirety in the supreme part of his soul. Of it we may speak as we speak of the Ideas which we possess in a double manner, too. In the soul the Ideas are as if divided by extension and separate from one another. In Intelligence they all exist indivisibly together. Next, what is our relation to the divinity? The divinity resides above the world of Intelligence and Being, while we are in the third rank.

The soul, Plato says, is made "of an indivisible element that stems from above and another that is divisible with regard to the bodies." She is divisible with regard to the bodies in the sense that she permeates all bodies throughout the length of each animal, though there still is only one soul for the whole universe. She may also be said to be divis-

ible in the sense of being present to the bodies and illuminating them. She makes living beings, not by mixing herself and body, but by emitting, while she remains unchanged herself, reflections of herself, just as a single face is reflected in several mirrors. Of these reflections the first is sensation which resides in the composite. After sensation come all the other characteristics of the soul. These successively derive, each from the other, down to the faculties of generation and vegetation, and, in general, to the power which produces and executes something that is different from itself and which turns in doing so towards the object it executes.

9. It would seem that the soul as we conceive it is free from responsibility for the evils which man does and suffers. These evils seem to be due to the organism, the composite of soul and body, in accordance with what was said before. But as opinions are deceiving and make us commit much evil, and as opinion and discursive reason belong to the soul, how is the soul guiltless? She is guiltless because evil is due to the fact that we are mastered by the worse part of our nature. For man is a being of many parts, of appetite, anger, or evil imagery. False reasoning is due to an uncritical imagination that does not await the judgment of reason. We yield to the lower part of ourselves, just as in the case of sensation we have illusions because we rely on the sensation without having subjected it to critical reflection. But Intelligence was not involved in this process, and therefore it is not Intelligence that is responsible for evil. We, too, are guiltless to the extent to which we grasp the intelligible object that is in Intelligence, or rather in us. But it is possible to possess such an object without actually utilizing it.

We thus distinguish things common to soul and body

and those peculiar to soul. The former are corporeal or at least cannot exist without body. The activity of the latter is independent of body and belongs to the soul. Among the latter is discursive reason. It critically examines the notions that are due to sensation and it, too, contemplates the Ideas that it contemplates them in a sort of conjunction with sensation. I speak of discursive reason proper which belongs to the truly functioning soul. Discursive reason proper consists in the activity of understanding by Intelligence and is the agency which frequently assimilates and connects external and internal things. The soul, nevertheless, remains unmoved within and in herself. But the changes and troubles which arise in us derive from the things that have been attached to the soul, from the affections which belong to the composite of soul and body and which we have described above.

10. But if our *self* is identical with the soul, it would seem that, when *we* experience these sensations and emotions, the soul experiences them too, that *our* acts are also acts of the soul. It must therefore be stated that the word *self* also denotes the composite of soul and body, especially before we are in a state of separation from the body. In fact, we even say that "we" suffer when our body suffers. "We" or "self" therefore means two things, either the soul together with the animal part or only the upper part. The animal part is the body endowed with life. The real man differs from the composite and is free from animality. He possesses the virtues that are characteristic of the world of Intelligence, virtues which reside in the soul when she is separated from the body, a separation which can be achieved even in this life; for when the soul withdraws from that part of her which is the product of her illumination, her product follows her in the ascent. But the virtues which are due, not to

wisdom, but to habit and exercise, belong to the composite. To it belong the vices, envy, jealousy, and tearfulness. In the case of love, however, one kind is found in the composite, another in the inner man.

11. In childhood, it is the faculties of the composite that are exercised and these are rarely illuminated from above. But while the superior principle is inactive in regard to us, it remains active in the world above. It is active with regard to us when it advances as far as the middle part of the soul. But it is the *self* not also this superior principle? Yes, but only when the self is conscious of it; for we do not always utilize what we possess. We realize our possessions, however, when we direct this middle part either towards the upper or towards the lower world, and thus activate capacities which before were only potentialities or dispositions.

But in what sense do animals possess soul? If it is true, according to a common view, that the bodies of animals contain human souls that have committed wrong, the separable and superior part of the soul does not properly belong to these bodies but assists these bodies without being actually present in them. Animal awareness then comprises only the image of the soul that is with the body and the body is fashioned by this image of the soul. But if it is not true that human souls enter animal bodies, animal life is due to an illumination issuing from the universal soul.

12. There is a contradiction between the view that the soul is guiltless and any view which holds that the soul commits wrong, straightens herself out, undergoes punishments in Hades, and passes into new bodies. Although we seem to be forced to choose between opposing views, it might be possible to show they are not incompatible. When we attribute

guiltlessness to the soul, we are supposing her to be one and simple, identifying the actual soul with that which is purely soul. When, however, we consider her capable of wrong, we are looking at her as a complex and are adding to her another kind of soul which can experience terrible passions. The soul thus becomes a combination of various elements, and it is not the pure soul, but this combination, which experiences passions, commits wrong, and undergoes punishments. It was this sort of soul Plato was referring to when he said that "we see the soul as we see Glaucus, the sea god," and that, if we wish to know the nature of the soul herself, we must strip her of all that is foreign to her, see her love for truth and to what things she attaches herself and by virtue of which affinities she really is what she is. We must therefore differentiate the life and activities of the soul from those of that part which is punished. The soul's ascent and separation, moreover, consist in her detachment not only from the body but from all alien accretions. Such accretion is made by virtue of birth. Birth is the creation of the other kind of soul. We have elsewhere described this birth. It consists in the soul's descent whereby, when she inclines towards the world below, she produces another thing which then descends. The soul, however, must not be blamed for emitting this image, nor is the soul's inclining towards the world below a wrong. For her inclining is to shed light on what is below her; and this is no more wrong than to produce a shadow. That which is responsible is the illuminated object; for if it did not exist, the soul would have nothing to illuminate. The descent of the soul or her inclining to the world below means only that the illuminated objects live with and through her. She sends forth her image because that which receives it is not close to her. She emits it, not by driving it out of herself, but by

rising from where she was, a state she attains when she gives herself over entirely to contemplation. Homer seems to speak of this separation when he says that the image of Heracles is in Hades while Heracles himself is with the gods. This seems the idea implied in this double assertion that Heracles is in Hades and that he is among the gods. The poet, therefore, distinguished in Heracles two phases. He seems to say that Heracles, because he possessed practical virtue and because of his great qualities, was judged worthy of being a god, but that, as he possessed only practical virtue, but not the contemplative virtue (in which case all of him would have been above), he could not be admitted into the world above entirely and something of him remained below.

13. Is it "we" or the "soul" which makes these present researches? It is *we* by means of the soul. We make these researches "by means of the soul" not in the sense of simply possessing her, but to the extent to which we are soul. Does this imply that the soul is in motion? Yes, if we do not mean physical motion, but the kind of motion which constitutes her life. It is *we*, too, who engage in the activity of Intelligence, because the soul is an intelligible being and the activity of Intelligence constitutes the superior life for her. We engage in this activity when the soul thinks the intelligible objects and when Intelligence is active in regard to us. For Intelligence is both a part of us and something superior to which we ascend.

5

TRADITIONAL CATEGORIES AND PROBLEMS

ACTUALITY AND POTENTIALITY (*Ennead* II v)

1. One speaks of things existing "potentially" and "actually." One also speaks of that which is actuality itself. We shall have to examine what is meant by saying that a thing exists potentially or actually, whether there is pure actuality, and, if there is, whether pure actuality itself also exists actually or not, and whether actuality itself and the thing that is active must not be two different things. It is evident that among sense objects there are things that exist potentially. Are there also such among the intelligibles, or do the intelligibles exist only actually? If among intelligibles some things exist potentially, they will eternally remain so and never become actual, because the intelligible world is outside of time.

Let us first say what potentiality is. The term *potential* must not be understood in an absolute sense; for a thing is potential only in relation to some other thing. For example, bronze is the statue potentially. If nothing could be made out of it or imposed upon it, if it could not become something beyond itself, if no other thing could arise from it, the bronze would simply remain what it always was. But in this case it would have no development and could not change into another thing and hence would contain no potentiality. Consequently, when we say that a thing exists potentially, we mean a thing that can become different from

what it is, whether (1), after having produced this different thing, it continues to exist, or whether (2), on becoming this different thing which it is potentially, it ceases itself to exist. The bronze is potentially a statue in the first sense. Water is potentially snow, or air is potentially fire, in the second sense. Shall we say that what thus exists potentially also has the power to produce what is to be, that, for instance, bronze has the power to produce a statue? Not at all, for the power that produces cannot *qua* such be said to exist potentially. If existing potentially were not only analogous to existing actually but also analogous to actuality, then existing potentially would coincide with productive power. But it is better and clearer to say that existing potentially is analogous to existing actually, and that productive power is analogous to actuality. The thing which exists potentially is the substrate of the affections, shapes, and forms which by its nature it is fitted to receive and to which it aspires for its betterment or deterioration, working the destruction of the actuality which characterizes them originally.

2. As to matter, we shall have to examine whether it constitutes some actual thing beside being in a state of potentiality with regard to the forms it receives, or whether it is never something actual. In general, do the things, of which we say that they are potentially other things and which persist after having received their forms, themselves in this new state constitute something actual? Or is the term *actuality* used to contrast, for instance, an actual statue with a potential one, but is not to apply to that which has been said to be the statue potentially? In this case, one must not say that a potential thing becomes an actual thing, but that, from what was previously one thing, the potential thing, proceeds another, the actual thing. Indeed, when a new being

is produced, as for example, a statue from bronze, the thing called actual is a composite of form and matter, not the matter alone, but also the form added to it. The statue is what it is by virtue of being more than the bronze, by being composed of it and a form. In the case of things that do not survive in those actual things with regard to which they are said to be potential, it is clear that the actual thing is entirely different from the potential.

But when the man who is potentially a grammarian becomes one actually, are, in this case, that which is potential and that which is actual not identical? Is it not the same Socrates that is potentially and actually wise? Does it then hold that the ignorant man, who is potentially learned, is the same as the learned? No, the ignorant man is said to be learned only relatively. For it is not his ignorance that makes him potentially wise. He is ignorant relative to the capacities contained in his soul which make him potentially learned. Does he preserve the potential when he has transformed it into something actual? Is the actual grammarian still also a potential grammarian? Yes, but the manner is different. Before, the man is only a potential grammarian. Now this potentiality has acquired a form.

If what is potential is the substrate, while the actual, as in the statue, is the composite of substrate and form, what then shall we call the form? We might well call the form the active; for it is due to form that things are actual and not merely potential. It is called activity, not in an absolute sense, but in the sense of being the activity of some particular thing. But the name activity would perhaps better be applied to that activity which is superior to the activity which arises from a previous potentiality. That which is potential becomes actual by virtue of another thing. But the superior activity that we are speaking of now operates by virtue of

a power contained in itself. Within this activity the actual and potential are differentiated only in a way similar to the way in which a habit and its corresponding activity, courage and the act of courage, are differentiated. But enough of this.

3. The purpose of the preceding considerations was to determine in what sense one can say that intelligibles are actual, to decide whether they only participate in actuality or whether each or the totality of intelligibles is actuality itself, and whether in the intelligible world there can also exist things that are potential. But in the intelligible world there is no matter in which resides the potential, nothing becomes something which it not yet is, or changes into something else whereby it creates something while remaining what it is, or gives place to another being by going out of existence itself. Hence there is no room for the potential in that world of eternal beings outside of time. But what would one say if one still would like to speak of the existence of matter in the intelligible world? Would this imply the introduction of potentiality into the intelligible world? (Even if the word matter is here used in a different sense, one still would have in the case of every intelligible to distinguish matter, form, and the composite.) The answer is that what in the intelligible world plays the part of matter is really form, just as the soul which is a form, is "matter" relative to some other form. Is it then potential in respect of some other thing? No, for intelligible form is constitutive, not acquired. The distinction between form and matter is only a logical one. The terms *form* and *matter* applied to intelligible things present a reality that is undivided. Hence it is that Aristotle said that the fifth kind of body is immaterial. But what shall we say about the soul? For she seems to be potentially the

living being when she is not united to her prospective body. She seems to be potentially musical, and all the other things that she becomes but not always is. Do we then have to admit potentiality into the intelligible world? No, these things do not exist potentially there. Rather the soul is the power which produces these things.

In what sense does one ascribe actuality to intelligible things? Is it in the sense in which a statue, the composite of form and matter, is said to be actual? That is, is it in the sense of having an acquired form? No, because each intelligible is pure form and because its being is completely realized. The activity of Intelligence does not consist in passing from a state of potential thought to a state of actual thought (that would require a prior Intelligence that would always be active); for Intelligence comprehends everything at once. A potential being depends on the activity of another being to be brought to actuality. But a being that always is what it is by itself is an actuality. Therefore the supreme existences are all actualities; for they possess in themselves all they need and possess it eternally. Such is the state of the soul which is not in matter, but in the intelligible world. Yet also the soul which is in matter, as for instance the vegetative soul, is an actuality; for she is what she is because she is active.

Does it then follow that, because all truly real beings are always actual, they are identical with actuality itself? If it has rightly been said that the intelligible world is "always awake," that it is life itself and the best life, then the highest degree of activity must be found in the intelligible world. Then all things are actual and are actuality itself in the intelligible world, all beings are alive and the intelligible region is the region of life and truly the principle and source of soul and Intelligence.

4. All the objects which are something potentially are actually something else. They are things that exist actually but are said to be potential in regard to some other thing. But can matter, which we call that which is potentially all beings, be said to be an actually existing being? If it were, it would no longer be all beings potentially. But if matter is none of the beings, it must be non-being. How then can it be an actuality? Still, even if matter is none of the beings which arise in it, nothing prevents it from being something else, as there are also existences beyond those that arise in it. Hence if matter is none of the beings that are in it, then at first it is only in reference to them that it is non-being. Nevertheless, since matter is considered to be formless, it cannot be a Form and thus be included in the realm of Forms. Hence it will also in this sense be non-being. As matter thus is not being in respect to both sensible and intelligible objects, it is non-being preëminently. But if matter does not possess the nature of true Being, and if it cannot even claim a place among the objects to which Being is falsely ascribed (for not even, like sense objects, is matter at least an image of reason), what kind of existence can be ascribed to it? If no kind of existence can be ascribed to it, what sort of actuality can it possess?

5. What conception then shall we form of matter? In what sense does matter exist? Its existence consists in potentiality. It *is* in the sense that it *is* potential. It exists inasmuch as it is a substrate of existence. "Existence" with regard to it signifies possibility of existence. The being of matter is only what is to be. Matter is potentially not just some particular thing, but all things. Being nothing by itself and being what it is, matter is nothing actually. If it were something actually, it would no longer be matter, that is, it would no longer be

matter in the absolute sense of the term, but only in the sense in which bronze is matter.

Matter is not non-being in the sense in which movement is different from being. Movement is dependent on being because it is always some being that moves or is moved. But matter is outside and apart from being. It cannot change, and so it remains forever what it always was; that is, it is forever non-being. It never was or became an actual being because it is separate from all beings. It never was able to keep even a reflection of the beings whose form it aspires to assume. Its eternal condition is to be potentially the things that will be. It appears at the end of the world of intelligible beings, is occupied by the sense beings which are begotten after it, and is the lowest limit also of these sense beings. Being found both in intelligible and sense things, it is neither of them. Only potentiality is left to it. It is a sort of feeble and obscure image which cannot assume any form. Matter thus has the actuality of a shadow, the actuality of an illusion. It is illusion in the absolute sense of the term and thus that which really is not real. If matter then is actual non-being, non-being preëminently, that which really is not real, it is far removed from being any actual thing; for non-being is its real nature. If it exists at all, it must not be an actual thing, but, far from real being, must have its being in not being. Just as to remove the illusory from illusions is to destroy whatever existence they had, so to introduce actuality into beings whose being and substance consist in being potential is to annihilate the principle of their existence, because their existence consists in existing potentially. Therefore, if matter is to be imperishable, it is first necessary to preserve its proper character. It seems then that to be matter is necessarily to be potential existence. The only alternative is to refute the arguments we have advanced.

ARE THERE IDEAL ARCHETYPES OF PARTICULARS?
(*Ennead* V vii)

1. Are there Ideas of particular things? Yes; if I and each individual can be traced back to the intelligible world, we must find there the originating principle of each individual. If Socrates and the soul of Socrates always exist together, then there is an Idea of Socrates in the intelligible world, as souls exist in the intelligible world. But if they do not always exist together; if the same soul can successively belong to several individuals, first to Socrates, then to Pythagoras or some other person, then there are not Ideas of each individual in the intelligible world. Nevertheless, if the soul, though she successively belongs to different individuals, always contains the seminal reasons of all the individuals she belongs to, then there are Ideas of all individuals in the intelligible world, particularly as we hold that each individual soul contains as many seminal reasons as the entire world. Thus, if the world contains not only the reasons of men but also those of all animals, the same holds for the soul. The number of these reasons would be infinite if the world did not traverse identical series of existence in cycles of eternal recurrence and thus set a limit to the number of reasons because the same things eternally return. But in terms of such recurrence the number of sense objects is larger than that of their ideal archetypes. Why then must, in each particular cycle, the number of sense objects be the same as that of their reasons or archetypes? It would seem that one archetype would be sufficient for all men, just as a limited number of souls animate an infinite number of men in the cycles of recurrence. But this cannot be the case; for it is impossible for different things to have the same rational exemplars, that is, one Idea of man does not suffice as a model for

several men who differ from each other not only by their matter, but also by a thousand differences of form. They do not differ from each other in the way in which the statues of Socrates differ from their model. Their difference results from the difference of their rational exemplars. Each cycle manifests the totality of rational forms. In the next cycle the same things will arise again because of the same rational exemplars. We need not fear that as a consequence a discrete infinity would be introduced into the intelligible world. For intelligible infinity is indivisible and becomes discrete only in the act of proceeding from Intelligence to another level of existence.

2. It might be objected that it is the mixture of the rational forms in the male and the female which produces the diversity of individuals, and that thus there is not a special rational exemplar for each individual. The generating principle, the male, for example, will then not propagate according to one of a variety of rational exemplars possessed by it, but only according to a single rational form, its own or that of its father. To this we answer that nothing prevents it from begetting according to a variety of rational forms for it contains the totality of rational forms in itself but acts according to those that are prevalent. Differing individuals are born from the same parents because of the uneven prevalence of the rational forms. The offspring does not take its characteristics from a mixture of the male and the female forms whereby either the one or the other dominates (however external appearances may favor this view). Both parties make an equal contribution. They both furnish the totality of rational forms; and the totality of rational forms thus dominates in the new birth the matter furnished by either of the two parties or by one of them. Further, if the dif-

ferences between animals born at the same time were due to their differing positions in the womb and hence to an unequal domination of the matter by form, none of the individuals, except one, would be in accordance with nature. But if these beings, in spite of their differences, can each be beautiful, there is not just one ideal form for them. Only ugliness, not beauty, is due to the fact that the forms do not dominate matter sufficiently. These forms are perfect and present in their totality, even though this may not be obvious. In the light of the variety of rational forms, why should there be as many of them as there are individuals which achieve existence in any one cycle? For it is possible that beings which have the same rational forms differ in external appearance. This last statement is true in the sense that each being contains all rational forms and yet differs from the other. But the question is whether in any two individuals it is the same forms that are dominant. Is this possible when, while absolutely the same things recur in the various cycles, within the same cycle there is nothing absolutely identical?

3. But how can one say that the rational exemplars of twins are different, particularly if one includes the non-human animals, and among them, particularly, those that produce many individuals at one birth? If twins were indistinguishable, there would indeed be only one rational exemplar for them; and, in this case, the number of individuals would not be identical with that of rational forms. But there are as many rational forms as there are individuals whose difference is not due only to a deficiency of realizing their form completely. What prevents us from assuming such rational forms also for beings that show no difference? (We may here leave it open whether there really can be two totally indis-

tinguishable things.) An artisan who produces identical objects nevertheless distinguishes them in his thought, and thus can add one identical object to another and yet distinguish them. In nature the differences do not derive from discursive reasoning, but from differing rational forms, and hence must be found within the forms. But we are not able to discern them.

It would be a different matter if the number of things born were due to chance. But if the number of things born is determinate, this quantity will be limited to the temporal unrollment of all rational forms, so that, when the series is finished, another cycle will begin. The quantity suitable to the world and the number of beings that are to exist in it is determined since the beginning by the being which contains the rational exemplars. Is it then really true that, also in the case of non-human animals which produce several animals at one birth, the number of rational exemplars is identical with the number of the offspring? Yes, one must not, since the soul contains all things, be afraid of an infinity of seeds and rational forms. The infinite exists even in the world of Intelligence, as it exists in the soul due to the incessant activity of the intelligibles.

6

THE ONE AS SOURCE AND GOAL OF EXISTENCE

THE GOOD AND THE ONE (*Ennead VI ix*)

1. All beings, both the supreme beings as well as those who are called beings on any pretext whatsoever, are beings only because of their unity. What indeed would they be without it? Deprived of their unity, they would cease to be what they are. An army cannot exist unless it is one. The same holds for a chorus or a flock. Neither a house nor a ship can exist without unity. By losing unity, they would cease to be what they are. The same is true for continuous quantities which could not exist without unity. On being divided, they lose their unity and simultaneously lose their nature. Consider further the bodies of plants and animals of which each is a unity. On losing their unity by being broken up into several parts, they simultaneously lose their nature. They are no more what they were. They have become new and different beings which in turn exist only as long as each of them is one. Health, too, is due to the fact that the parts of the body are coördinated in unity. Beauty is due to the unity which regulates the parts. Virtue is unification of soul and harmonious integration.

The soul imparts unity to all things when producing them, fashioning them, forming, and arranging them. Should we therefore, after rising to the soul, say that she not only imparts unity, but herself is unity in itself? We should not. For as the soul imparts form and figure to

bodies without being identical therewith, she imparts unity without being unity. She unifies each of her products only by contemplation of the One, just as she produces man only by contemplating Man-in-himself and the unity implied in this ideal archetype. Each of the things that are called "one" has a unity proportionate to its nature. It participates in unity more or less according to the degree of its being. Thus the soul is not the One; but as she possesses a higher degree of being, she also possesses more unity, without being unity itself. She is one, but her unity is contingent. There is a difference between the soul and unity, just as between the body and unity. A discrete quantity such as a chorus is very far from being unity. A continuous quantity is closer to unity. The soul gets still nearer to it and participates in it still more. If this fact that the soul cannot exist without being one leads someone to suggest the identity of the soul and the One, two answers can be given. First, other things too possess individual existence because they possess unity and nevertheless are not the One itself. Thus the body is not identical with unity, but participates in unity. Second, the soul is manifold as well as one, even though she is not composed of parts. She possesses several faculties, such as discursive reason, desire, and perception—all of them faculties joined together in unity as if by a bond. Thus the soul imparts unity because she herself possesses unity. But this unity is received by her from some other source.

2. If being is not identical with unity in each particular thing, is perhaps the totality of being identical with unity? Then on discovering Being, the One also would be discovered, and the two would be identical, so that if Being is Intelligence, the One also must be Intelligence, and Intelligence as the supreme being and supreme unity would

be imparting being and unity to other things in the same degree. What indeed is the One? Is it identical with Being as "man" and "one man" are equivalent? Or is it the number of each thing taken individually? (As one object and another joined to it are spoken of as two, so an object taken singly is referred to as one.) In the latter case, if number belongs to the class of Being, evidently the One will belong so, too; and we shall have to discover what kind of being it is. If, however, unity is not more than a numbering device of the soul, then the One will possess no real existence. But this last possibility is eliminated by our previous observation that each object on losing unity loses existence, too. It remains therefore to investigate whether being and unity are identical either in each individual object or in their totality.

As the being of each thing consists in manifoldness and the One cannot be manifoldness, the One must differ from being. Now man is animal, rational, and many things besides; and this manifoldness is held together by unity as a bond. There is therefore a difference between man and unity. Man is divisible while unity is indivisible. The totality of Being, containing all beings, is still more manifold. Therefore it differs from Unity itself, though it does possess unity by participation. Being possesses life and intelligence, for it is not inert. It must therefore be manifold. Besides, if it is Intelligence, it must in this respect also be manifold and the more so if it contains the ideal Forms. For the Forms, individually and in their totality, are a sort of number, and are one only in the way in which the universe is one.

In sum, the One is the first existence. But Intelligence, the Forms, and Being are not first. Every form is manifold and composite, and consequently something derived; for the parts are prior to the composite they constitute. That Intelligence cannot be primary will also appear from the following

considerations. The activity of Intelligence consists necessarily in thinking. The best intelligence which does not turn to external objects, contemplates what is superior to it; for in turning towards itself it turns towards its origin. But if Intelligence is both thinker and thought, this implies duality and Intelligence is not simple and hence not the One. If, moreover, Intelligence contemplates some object other than itself, then surely there is an object better than and superior to it. Even if Intelligence contemplates itself and simultaneously that which is better than it, it still is only of secondary rank. We must conceive Intelligence as enjoying the presence of the Good, the First, and contemplating it, while it is also present to itself, thinks itself, and thinks itself as being all things. Constituting such a diversity, Intelligence is far from being the One. Thus the One is not all things, for then it would no longer be one. It is not Intelligence either; for since Intelligence is all things, the One, too, would be all things. It is not Being; for Being is all things.

3. What then is the One? What is its nature? It is not surprising that it is difficult to say what it is, when it is difficult to explain even what Being is or Form is. Yet, with the latter, our knowledge still deals with objects that have form. But the more the soul advances towards what is formless, not being able to grasp it because it has no boundaries and having received a confused impression, she skids and fears she will meet nothingness. That is why, in the presence of such things she grows troubled and is glad to descend to the world below. She falls till she arrives in the world of sense objects where she pauses as if on solid ground, just as the eye, fatigued by the contemplation of small objects, gladly turns to large ones. But when the soul wishes

to contemplate in accordance with her nature, then, as she has her vision only because she is with the object of her vision, and as she is one because she is one with this object, she does not believe that she has found the object of her search; for she herself is not distinct from the object that she thinks. Nevertheless, a philosophical study of unity will follow this course. Since it is the One that is sought, since indeed it is the origin of all things, the Good, the First that is inquired after, a man who will wish to reach it must not withdraw from that which is of the first rank to sink to what occupies the last. Rather he must withdraw from sense objects which occupy the last rank in the scale of existence and turn to those entities that occupy the first. Such a man will have to free himself from all evil, since he aspires to rise to the Good. He will then rise to the principle that he possesses within himself. From the manifoldness that he was, he will again become one and thus will contemplate the supreme principle, the One. Having become Intelligence, having trusted his soul to and established her in Intelligence, so that with vigilant attention she may grasp all that Intelligence sees, he will, by Intelligence, contemplate unity, without the use of any senses, without mingling perception with the activity of Intelligence. He will contemplate the purest object through pure intelligence, through that which is supreme in Intelligence. Thus when a man applies himself to the contemplation of such an object and represents it to himself as a physical magnitude, or a figure, or a mass, it is not Intelligence that guides him in his contemplation, because it is not in the nature of Intelligence to see such things. But it is sensation and opinion, the associates of sensation, that are active in him. From Intelligence, however, one must expect the communication of things that belong to its realm.

Now it is the function of Intelligence to contemplate the things that are above it, those which belong to it, and the things that proceed from it. The things that belong to Intelligence are pure. But still more pure and more simple are the things, or rather the single thing, above Intelligence. This existence is not Intelligence but superior to Intelligence. Intelligence is in the class of Being while the existence above it is superior to all things and hence is not even Being. Being has, as it were, the *form* of Being, but the One is formless. It does not even possess the form which the intelligible possesses. As the One begets all things, the One cannot be any one of them. It is therefore neither any particular thing, nor quality, nor quantity, nor Intelligence, nor soul, nor what is moved, nor what is stable. It is neither in place nor in time. But it is the uniform in itself, or rather it is formless, as it is above all forms, above movement and stability which are characteristic of Being and make Being manifold.

But if the One does not move, why does it not possess stability? It does not, because rest or motion, or both together, are characteristic of Being, and because that which possesses stability is stable on account of the existence of stability as such and is not identical with stability as such. The One, consequently, would possess stability only by accident and would no longer remain simple. Let no one object that something contingent is attributed to the One when we call it the first cause. For it is to ourselves that we are thereby attributing contingency, since it is we who are receiving something from the One, while the One remains within itself. When we wish to speak with precision, we should not say that the One is this or that. We must, as we "revolve" around it, try to express what we feel in regard to it. We must do this in the light of the experiences we un-

dergo when at times we approach the One and then again withdraw from it as a result of the difficulties involved.

4. The principal difficulty is due to the fact that our knowledge of the One comes to us neither by science nor by pure thought, as does the knowledge of other intelligible things, but by a presence which is superior to science. When the soul acquires scientific knowledge of something, she withdraws from unity and ceases being fully one; for science implies discursive reason and discursive reason implies manifoldness. She then misses the One and falls into number and multiplicity. We must therefore rise above science and never withdraw from unity. We must renounce science, the objects of science, and every other object, even beauty; for even beauty is posterior to the One and is derived from it as the daylight comes from the sun. That is why Plato says of the One that "it can neither be spoken nor written of." If we nevertheless speak of and write about it, we do so only to give direction, to stimulate towards that vision beyond discourse, as one might point out the road to somebody who desired to see some object. Instruction indeed goes as far as showing the road and guiding in the way; but to obtain the vision is the work of him who desires to obtain it.

If one does not succeed in enjoying this spectacle, if one's soul does not attain the knowledge of that life beyond, if she does not within herself feel a rapture such as that of a lover who sees the beloved object and rests within it, if, because of one's proximity to the One, one receives the true light and has one's whole soul illuminated but still in one's ascent is oppressed by a weight which hinders one's contemplation, if one does not rise in a purified state but retains within oneself something that separates one from the One, if one is not yet unified enough, if one has not

yet risen so far but still is at a distance, either because of the obstacles of which we just spoke or because of the lack of such instruction as would have given one direction and confidence in the existence of things beyond, one has no one to blame but oneself and should try to become pure by detaching oneself from everything. (For the One is not absent from anything, though in another sense it is absent from all things. It is present only to those who are able to receive it and are prepared for it, so as to enter into harmony with it, to "grasp" and to "touch" it by virtue of their similarity to it, by virtue of an inner power analogous to and stemming from the One when this power is in that state in which it was when it originated from the One. Thus they will see it as far as it can become an object of contemplation.) He who still lacks confidence in these arguments should consider the following.

5. Those who believe that the world of Being is governed by luck or chance and that it depends on material causes, are far removed from the divinity and from the conception of unity. It is not such men that we are addressing but such as admit the existence of a world different from the corporeal and at least acknowledge the existence of the soul. These men should then apply themselves to the study of the soul, learning among other things that she proceeds from Intelligence and achieves virtue by participating in that reason which proceeds from Intelligence. After that, they must realize that Intelligence is different from the faculty of reasoning or discursive reason, and that reasoning implies, as it were, separate steps and movement. They must see that scientific knowledge consists in the manifestation of the rational forms that exist in the soul and comes to the soul from Intelligence which is the source of scientific

knowledge. After one has seen Intelligence, which seems like a thing of sense because it is immediately perceived, but which transcends the soul and is her father because it constitutes the intelligible world, one must say that Intelligence in its calm and undisturbed movement contains everything and is everything. In its multiplicity it is both indivisible and divisible. It is not divisible like the contents of discursive reason which are conceived item by item. Still its contents are not indistinctly confused, either. Each of its elements is distinct from the others, just as in a science all the theories form an indivisible whole and yet each theory has its own separate status. This multitude of co-existing beings, the intelligible world, is near to the First. Its existence is necessary, as reason demonstrates, if there is also to be soul. But though the intelligible world is something superior to the soul, it is nevertheless not yet the supreme existence, because it is neither one, nor simple, while the One, the source of all things, is simple.

There is an existence that is superior to even what is highest in the world of Being. There must indeed be an existence above Intelligence; for Intelligence does aspire to become one, but is not one and only resembles the One. It resembles the One because it is not divided but has all its parts co-existing. On account of its proximity to the One, it did not break apart, though it dared to withdraw from it. This marvelous existence above Intelligence is the One itself which is not the same as Being. Its unity is not the attribute of something else, as is the case with the other existences that are one. No name should really be given to it. If, however, it must be named, it may appropriately be called One, but only on the understanding that it is not a substance that possesses unity only as an attribute. Hence

the One is difficult to know and is rather known by its offspring, that is, by Being. It brings Intelligence into being, and its nature is such that it is the source of the most excellent things. It is the power which begets the things while remaining within itself without undergoing any diminution. It does not pass into the things to which it gives birth because it is prior to them. We are necessarily led to call this existence the One in order to designate it to one another, to lead up with this name to an indivisible conception, and to unify our soul. But when we say that this existence is one and indivisible, it is not in the same sense that we say it of the geometrical point or the numerical unit. What is one in this latter sense is a quantitative principle which would not exist unless substance were there first and that which precedes substance and Being. It is not of this kind of unity that we must think. But we should see the analogy of things here with those beyond in regard to simplicity and the absence of manifoldness and division.

6. In what sense do we call the supreme existence one, and how can we conceive of it? We shall have to insist that its unity is much more perfect than that of the numerical unit or the geometrical point. For with regard to these, the soul, abstracting from magnitude and numerical plurality, indeed stops at that which is most minute and comes to rest in something indivisible. This kind of unity is found in something that is divisible and exists in a subject other than itself, but the One is neither in a subject other than itself, nor in anything divisible, nor is it indivisible in the sense in which that which is most minute is indivisible. On the contrary, the One is the greatest of all things, not by physical magnitude, but by power. Hence it is indivisible, not

in regard to physical magnitude but in regard to power. So too the beings that proceed from it, since they are incorporeal, are indivisible and without parts in regard to power, not to mass. We must also insist that the One is infinite, not as extension or the number series is infinite, but because its power has no limits. When you conceive it as Intelligence or divinity, it is still more powerful. When you unify it in your thought, it is still more powerful. Its unity is superior to any that your thought possesses. For it exists by and in itself and has no attributes.

Its unity can also be well understood by its self-sufficiency. For it is necessarily the most powerful, the most self-sufficient existence of all, and that which least needs anything else. Anything that is not one, but manifold, needs something else; its being is in want of unification. But the One is already one; it does not even need itself. The being that is manifold, in order to be what it is, needs the multiplicity of things that it contains; and each of the things contained is what it is only by its union with the others and not by itself and thus needs the others. Therefore such a being is deficient with regard to both its parts and the whole. If then there must be something that is fully self-sufficient, it must be the One which alone needs nothing either of itself or of the other things. It needs nothing outside itself either to exist, or to achieve well-being, or to be sustained in existence. As it is the cause of the other things, it does not owe its existence to them. How could it derive its well-being from outside itself as its well-being is not something contingent but is its very nature? Since it does not occupy any space, it does not need any support or foundation as if it could not sustain itself. That which needs a foundation is inanimate and, without support, is no more

than a mass ready to fall. The One is the foundation of all other things. It gives them existence and at the same time a location. That which needs a location is not self-sufficient.

A principle has no need of the things under it. The principle of all things has no need of anything at all. Every deficient being is deficient because it aspires to its principle. But if the One aspired to anything, it would evidently seek not to be the One, that is, it would aspire to that which destroys it. Everything that is wanting wants well-being and preservation. Hence the One cannot aim at any good or desire anything. It is superior to the good. It is the Good, not for itself, but for the other things, to the extent to which they can participate in it. The One is not a thinking existence. If it were, it would constitute a duality. It is not in motion, because it is prior to motion as much as to thinking. Besides, what would it think? Would it think itself? In this case it would be in a state of ignorance before thinking, and that which is self-sufficient would be in need of thought. Neither should it be thought to be in a state of ignorance on the ground that it does not know itself and does not think itself. Ignorance presupposes a relation between two things and consists in one thing not knowing another. But the One in its aloneness can neither know nor be ignorant of anything. Being with itself, it has no need of knowing itself. We should not even attribute to it presence with itself if we are to preserve its unity. We should exclude from it thinking of itself and thinking of other things. It is not like that which thinks, but rather like the activity of thinking. The activity of thinking itself does not think; it is the cause which makes some other being think and the cause cannot be identical with that which is caused. The cause therefore of all existing things cannot be any one of

these things. This cause therefore must not be thought identical with the good it dispenses. But in another sense it is the Good which is above all other goods.

7. You are in a state of uncertainty because the One is none of the things we mentioned. Start them with these things, and from them proceed with your contemplation. While doing so, do not let yourself be distracted by anything exterior. For the One is not in some definite place, depriving the remainder of its presence, but is present to those who can enter into contact with it and only absent to those who cannot. Just as in the case of other objects one cannot concentrate on one thing by thinking of another and hence should not connect something else with the object that is thought, if one wishes to get hold of it, so one must likewise understand that it is impossible for anyone whose soul contains any alien impression to conceive of the One as long as such an impression occupies the soul's attention. It is equally impossible that the soul, at the moment when she is attentive to other things, should receive the form of what is contrary to them. Just as it is said of matter that it must be absolutely deprived of all qualities in order to be susceptible of receiving all forms, so the soul must likewise, and for a stronger reason, be stripped of all form if she desires to be filled with and illuminated by the supreme existence without any hindrance from within herself. Having thus liberated herself from all exterior things, the soul must entirely turn inward. She will not allow herself to be turned towards the external objects and she must forget all things, first by her attitude and later by the absence of any conception of their forms. She must not even know that it is she who is applying herself to the contemplation of the One. Then, after having sufficiently dwelled with it,

she should, if she can, reveal to others this transcendent communion. It doubtless was enjoyment of this communion that was the basis of calling Minos the confidant of Zeus. In memory of this union he made an image of it in his laws, inspired by his contact with the divine to legislation. But if one looks down on civic pursuits as not worthy of oneself, one should, if one so desires, remain in the world above. This does indeed happen to those who have contemplated much. The divinity, it is said, is not outside of any being but, on the contrary, is present to all beings, though they may be ignorant of it. This happens because they are fugitives from the divine, wandering outside of the divine, or rather outside of themselves. They no longer grasp that from which they are fleeing nor, having lost themselves, can they seek some other being. A son who is mad and beside himself is not likely to recognize his father. But he who has learned to know himself will at the same time discover whence he comes.

8. Self-knowledge reveals to the soul that her natural motion is not in a straight line, unless it is deflected. On the contrary, her natural motion is like a circular motion around some interior object, around a center. The center is that from which proceeds that which is around it. If the soul knows this, she will move around the center from which she proceeds, and she will attach herself to it and commune with it, as indeed all souls should do but only divine souls always do. That is the secret of their divinity. For divinity consists in being attached to the center. Anyone who withdraws much from it becomes an ordinary man or an animal.

Is the "center" of the soul then the principle that we are seeking? No, we must look for some other principle towards which all "centers" converge and to which, only by analogy

to the visible circle, the word "center" is applied. By saying that the soul has a circular motion, we do not mean that she describes a geometrical figure, but that in her and around her exists the primordial nature, that she derives her existence from the first existence, and especially that she is entirely separated from the body. Now, however, as we have a part of our being contained in the body, we resemble a man whose feet are plunged in water while the rest of his body remains above it. Raising ourselves above the body by that part of us which is not immersed, we are, by our own center, attaching ourselves to the "center" of all things; and so we rest, just as we make the centers of the great circles coincide with that of the sphere that surrounds them. If these circles were corporeal, not "circles" described by the soul, the center and circumference would have to occupy certain places. But since the souls are of the order of intelligible beings and the One is still above Intelligence, we shall have to assert that the union of the thinking being with its object proceeds by different means. The thinking object is in the presence of its object by virtue of its similarity and identity, and it is united with its kindred without anything to separate them. Bodies are by their very bodies kept from union. But the incorporeal cannot be arrested by bodies. That which separates incorporeal beings from one another is not local distance, but their difference and diversity. When there is no difference between them, they are present in each other.

As the One does not contain any difference, it is always present, and we are present to it as soon as we contain no more difference. It is not the One which is aspiring to us, so as to move around us. But it is we who are aspiring to it, so as to move around it. Though we always move around it, we do not always keep our glance fixed on it. We resemble

a chorus which surrounds its leader, whose members, nonetheless, do not always sing in time because they allow their attention to be distracted by some exterior object. If, however, they turned towards their leader, they would sing well and really be with him. In a similar way, we too always turn around the One. If not, we should dissolve and cease to exist. But our glance does not remain fixed on the One. When, however, we look to it, we attain the end of our desires and find rest. Then we dance around it, without dissonance, a truly divine dance.

9. In this dance the soul sees the source of life, the source of Intelligence, the origin of Being, the cause of the good, and the root of the soul. All these entities proceed from the One without diminishing it; for it is not a corporeal mass. Otherwise the things that are born of it would be perishable. They are eternal because their originating principle always remains the same and does not divide itself in producing them, but remains entire. They therefore persist too, just as the light persists as long as the sun remains. Neither are we separated from the One or distant from it, even though corporeal nature by intruding itself has drawn us to it. But it is through the One that we breathe and are preserved. It does not bestow its gifts at one moment, only to leave us again; but its giving is perpetual, as long as it remains what it is. As we turn towards it, we exist to a higher degree, while to withdraw from it is to fall. Our soul rests delivered from all evils by rising to that place free from all evil. There she really thinks, there she is impassive, there she really lives. Our present life, in which we are not united with the divinity, is only a trace or copy of real life. The life beyond consists in the activity of Intelligence. It is this activity of Intelligence which, without motion and by its contact with

the One, begets the divinities and beauty, justice, and virtue. These are begotten by the soul that is filled with divinity, and this is her starting point and goal. It is her starting point because it is from the world above that she proceeds. It is her goal because in the world above is the good to which she aspires and by returning to it she regains her proper nature. Life here below in the midst of sense objects is for the soul a degradation, an exile, a loss of wings.

Another proof that our good is found in the world above is the love that is innate in our souls, as is shown in the pictures and myths which couple Eros with Psyche. In fact, since the soul, though different from the divinity, proceeds from it, she must necessarily love it. But when she is in the world above, her love is celestial. Here below her love is only commonplace. It is in the world above that dwells the celestial Aphrodite, while here below resides the vulgar Aphrodite who is similar to a concubine. Now every soul is an Aphrodite as it suggested in the myth of the birth of Aphrodite and the simultaneous birth of Eros. As long as the soul remains faithful to her nature, she loves the divinity and desires to be united with it, as a virgin loves a noble father with a noble love. When, however, the soul has descended into the world of generation, as if deceived by the false promises of an adulterous lover, she has exchanged her divine love for a mortal one. Then, at a distance from her father, she yields to all kinds of excesses. But when she begins to hate these excesses, purifies herself, and returns to her father, she finds true happiness. How great her bliss then is can be conceived, by those who have not tasted it, by thinking of earthly love unions, observing the joy felt by the lover who succeeds in obtaining what he desires. But this love is directed to mortal and harmful objects, to shadows. It soon disappears because they are not the real objects

of our love nor the good we are really seeking. Only in the world beyond is the real object of our love, the only one with which we can unite ourselves, which we can have part of, and which we can intimately possess without being separated by the barrier of flesh. He who has had this experience will know what I am talking about. He will know that the soul lives another life as she advances towards the One, reaches and participates in it, and in this condition recognizes the presence of the dispenser of the true life. Then she needs nothing more. On the contrary, she has to renounce everything else and to remain fixed in it alone, to identify herself with it, and to cut off all the encumbrances that attach themselves to us. We then hasten to leave from here below and regret the chains which bind us to other things, in order so to embrace the real object of our love by our whole being that no part of us is not in contact with it. Then one can see it and oneself, as far as it is permitted to see. One sees oneself shining brilliantly, filled with intelligible light. Or rather one is oneself pure light, that is, subtle and weightless. One has *become* divine, or rather one *is* part of the eternal Being of the divine that is beyond becoming. In this condition one is like a flame; but if later one is weighted down again by the sense world, one is like a light that is extinguished.

10. Why does one who has risen to the world above not stay there? He does not stay there because he has not yet entirely detached himself from things here below. But a time will come when he will uninterruptedly enjoy the vision, when he will no longer be troubled by the body. The part of us that has the vision is not the one that is troubled, but the other part which, even when we cease from our vision, does not cease from its activity, namely, from the

scientific operations of demonstration, proof, and dialectic. But the vision and the agency that has it do not consist in discursive reasoning, but in something greater than, prior, and superior to reason, and the same holds for the object of the vision. When he who sees looks upon himself in the act of vision, he will see himself as like his object or rather as united to himself in the way in which an object of this kind is united to itself. That is, he will experience himself as simple, just as such an object is simple. We should not even say "he will see." That which is seen, in case that it still is possible to distinguish here that which sees from that which is seen, or to assert that these two things do not form a single one—a rash assertion indeed—, is not seen, distinguished or represented as a thing apart. He who has the vision becomes, as it were, another being. He ceases to be himself, he retains nothing of himself. Absorbed in the beyond he is one with it, like a center that coincides with another center. While these centers coincide, they are one; but they become two when they separate. It is in this sense only that we can speak of the One as something separate. Hence it is very difficult to describe this vision. For how can we represent as different from us that which did not seem, while we were contemplating it, other than ourselves but in perfect at-oneness with us?

11. This, no doubt, is the meaning of the injunction of the mystery rites which prohibits their revelation to the uninitiated. As that which is divine is not expressible, the initiate is forbidden to talk of it to anyone who has not had the happiness of beholding it. The vision did not imply a duality, but he who saw was identical with what he saw. Hence he did not "see" it but rather was united with it. If only he could preserve the memory of what he was while

thus absorbed into the One, he would, within himself, possess an image of the One. In that state he had attained unity and contained no difference, in regard either to himself or to other beings. In his ascent there was within him no movement, no anger, desire, reason, nor thought. In sum, he was no longer himself; but, swept away and filled with enthusiasm, he was tranquil, solitary, and unmoved. He did not withdraw from the One nor did he turn towards himself. He was indeed in a state of perfect stability, having, so to say, become stability itself. In this condition he busies himself no longer even with beauty. For he has risen above Beauty and has passed beyond even the choir of virtues, just as he who penetrates into the innermost sanctuary of a temple leaves behind him the statues placed in the rest of the temple. These statues are the first objects that will strike his view on his exit from the sanctuary after he has experienced the vision it offers. The intimate communion, however, is not with an image or statue (which is contemplated only when he comes out), but with that which it represents. That experience was hardly a vision, but a quite different kind of seeing, a self-transcendence, a simplification, a self-abandonment, a striving for contact, a quietude, an intentness on adaptation. This is the way one sees in the sanctuary. Anyone who seeks to see in any other way will see nothing.

By making use of these images the wise among the priests wished to suggest how the divinity might be seen. A wise priest, penetrating behind the image, will, when he has arrived in the world beyond, achieve the true vision of the sanctuary. If he has not yet arrived there, he will, in knowing that the true sanctuary is invisible, also know that it is the source and principle of everything, that only through the principle is the principle seen, and that like only joins like. He will leave aside no divine thing which the soul

is capable of acquiring. If he has not yet completed his vision, he will see to it that it is completed. This completion for him who has risen above all things consists in the existence that is above all things. When the soul descends, she will by her nature never reach complete nothingness. She will fall into evil and, in this sense, into nothingness, but not into complete nothingness. In a similar way, when the soul reverses her direction, she does not arrive at something different, but at herself. She thus is not in anything different from herself, but in herself. But as she is in herself alone and not even in the world of Being, she is in the existence beyond. We too transcend Being by virtue of the soul with which we are united. Now if one sees oneself in this state, one finds oneself an image of the One. If one rises beyond oneself, an image rising to its model, one has reached the goal of one's journey. When one falls from this vision, one will, by arousing the virtue that is within oneself, and by remembering the perfections that one possesses, regain one's lightness and through virtue rise to Intelligence, and through wisdom to the One. Such is the life of gods and of divine and blessed men, detachment from all things here below, scorn of all earthly pleasures, and flight of the alone to the alone.

