

The First Ennead

Plotinus



IMG: Marble head attributed to Plotinus (c. 204–270 AD), from Ostia Antica.

First Tractate.

The Animate and the Man.

Pleasure and distress, fear and courage, desire and aversion, where have these affections and experiences their seat?

Clearly, either in the Soul alone, or in the Soul as employing the body, or in some third entity deriving from both. And for this third entity, again, there are two possible modes: it might be either a blend or a distinct form due to the blending.

And what applies to the affections applies also to whatsoever acts, physical or mental, spring from them.

We have, therefore, to examine discursive-reason and the ordinary mental action upon objects of sense, and enquire whether these have the one seat with the affections and experiences, or perhaps sometimes the one seat, sometimes another.

And we must consider also our acts of Intellection, their mode and their seat.

And this very examining principle, which investigates and decides in these matters, must be brought to light.

Firstly, what is the seat of Sense-Perception? This is the obvious beginning since the affections and experiences either are sensations of some kind or at least never occur apart from sensation.

This first enquiry obliges us to consider at the outset the nature of the Soul — that is whether a distinction is to be made between Soul and Essential Soul [between an individual Soul and the Soul-Kind in itself].

[All matter shown in brackets is added by the translator for clearness' sake and, therefore, is not canonical. S.M.]

If such a distinction holds, then the Soul [in man] is some sort of a composite and at once we may agree that it is a recipient and — if only reason allows — that all the affections and experiences really have their seat in the Soul, and with the affections every state and mood, good and bad alike.

But if Soul [in man] and Essential Soul are one and the same, then the Soul will be an Ideal-Form unreceptive of all those activities which it imparts to another Kind but possessing within itself that native Act of its own which Reason manifests.

If this be so, then, indeed, we may think of the Soul as an immortal — if the immortal, the imperishable, must be impassive, giving out something of itself but itself taking nothing from without except for what it receives from the Existents prior to itself from which Existents, in that they are the nobler, it cannot be sundered.

Now what could bring fear to a nature thus unreceptive of all the outer? Fear demands feeling. Nor is there place for courage: courage implies the presence of danger. And such desires as are satisfied by the filling or voiding of the body, must be proper to something very different from the Soul, to that only which admits of replenishment and voidance.

And how could the Soul lend itself to any admixture? An essential is not mixed. Or of the intrusion of anything alien? If it did, it would be seeking the destruction of its own nature. Pain must be equally far from it. And Grief — how or for what could it grieve? Whatever possesses Existence is supremely free, dwelling, unchangeable, within its own peculiar nature. And can any increase bring joy, where nothing, not even anything good, can accrue? What such an Existent is, it is unchangeably.

Thus assuredly Sense-Perception, Discursive-Reasoning; and all our ordinary mentation are foreign to the Soul: for sensation is a receiving — whether of an Ideal-Form or of an impassive body — and reasoning and all ordinary mental action deal with sensation.

The question still remains to be examined in the matter of the intellections — whether these are to be assigned to the Soul — and as to Pure-Pleasure, whether this belongs to the Soul in its solitary state.

We may treat of the Soul as in the body — whether it be set above it or actually within it — since the association of the two constitutes the one thing called the living organism, the Animate.

Now from this relation, from the Soul using the body as an instrument, it does not follow that the Soul must share the body's experiences: a man does not himself feel all the experiences of the tools with which he is working.

It may be objected that the Soul must however, have Sense-Perception since its use of its instrument must acquaint it with the external conditions, and such knowledge comes by way of sense. Thus, it will be argued, the eyes are the instrument of seeing, and seeing may bring distress to the soul: hence the Soul may feel sorrow and pain and every other affection that belongs to the body; and from this again will spring desire, the Soul seeking the mending of its instrument.

But, we ask, how, possibly, can these affections pass from body to Soul? Body may communicate qualities or conditions to another body: but — body to Soul? Something happens to A; does that make it happen to B? As long as we have agent and instrument, there are two distinct entities; if the Soul uses the body it is separate from it.

But apart from the philosophical separation how does Soul stand to body?

Clearly there is a combination. And for this several modes are possible. There might be a complete coalescence: Soul might be interwoven through the body: or it might be an Ideal-Form detached or an Ideal-Form in governing contact like a pilot: or there might be part of the Soul detached and another part in contact, the disjoined part being the agent or user, the conjoined part ranking with the instrument or thing used.

In this last case it will be the double task of philosophy to direct this lower Soul towards the higher, the agent, and except in so far as the conjunction is absolutely necessary, to sever the agent from the instrument, the body, so that it need not forever have its Act upon or through this inferior.

Let us consider, then, the hypothesis of a coalescence.

Now if there is a coalescence, the lower is ennobled, the nobler degraded; the body is raised in the scale of being as made participant in life; the Soul, as associated with death and unreason, is brought lower. How can a lessening of the life-quality produce an increase such as Sense-Perception?

No: the body has acquired life, it is the body that will acquire, with life, sensation and the affections coming by sensation. Desire, then, will belong to the body, as the objects of desire are to be enjoyed by the body. And fear, too, will belong to the body alone; for it is the body's doom to fail of its joys and to perish.

Then again we should have to examine how such a coalescence could be conceived: we might find it impossible: perhaps all this is like announcing the coalescence of things utterly incongruous in kind, let us say of a line and whiteness.

Next for the suggestion that the Soul is interwoven through the body: such a relation would not give woof and warp community of sensation: the interwoven element might very well suffer no change: the permeating soul might remain entirely untouched by what affects the body — as light goes always free of all it floods — and all the more so, since, precisely, we are asked to consider it as diffused throughout the entire frame.

Under such an interweaving, then, the Soul would not be subjected to the body's affections and experiences: it would be present rather as Ideal-Form in Matter.

Let us then suppose Soul to be in body as Ideal-Form in Matter. Now if — the first possibility — the Soul is an essence, a self-existent, it can be present only as separable form and will therefore all the more decidedly be the Using-Principle [and therefore unaffected].

Suppose, next, the Soul to be present like axe-form on iron: here, no doubt, the form is all important but it is still the axe, the complement of iron and form, that effects whatever is effected by the iron thus modified: on this analogy, therefore, we are even more strictly compelled to assign all the experiences of the combination to the body: their natural seat is the material member, the instrument, the potential recipient of life.

Compare the passage where we read that “it is absurd to suppose that the Soul weaves”; equally absurd to think of it as desiring, grieving. All this is rather in the province of something which we may call the Animate.

[“We read” translates “he says” of the text, and always indicates a reference to Plato, whose name does not appear in the translation except where it was written by Plotinus. S.M.]

Now this Animate might be merely the body as having life: it might be the Couplement of Soul and body: it might be a third and different entity formed from both.

The Soul in turn — apart from the nature of the Animate — must be either impassive, merely causing Sense-Perception in its yoke-fellow, or sympathetic; and, if sympathetic, it may have identical experiences with its fellow or merely correspondent experiences: desire for example in the Animate may be something quite distinct from the accompanying movement or state in the desiring faculty.

The body, the live-body as we know it, we will consider later.

Let us take first the Couplement of body and Soul. How could suffering, for example, be seated in this Couplement?

It may be suggested that some unwelcome state of the body produces a distress which reaches to a Sensitive-Faculty which in turn merges into Soul. But this account still leaves the origin of the sensation unexplained.

Another suggestion might be that all is due to an opinion or judgement: some evil seems to have befallen the man or his belongings and this conviction sets up a state of trouble in the body and in the entire Animate. But this account leaves still a question as to the source and seat of the judgement: does it belong to the Soul or to the Couplement? Besides, the judgement that evil is present does not involve the feeling of grief: the judgement might very well arise and the grief by no means follow: one may think oneself slighted and yet not be angry; and the appetite is not necessarily excited by the thought of a pleasure. We are, thus, no nearer than before to any warrant for assigning these affections to the Couplement.

Is it any explanation to say that desire is vested in a Faculty-of-desire and anger in the Irascible-Faculty and, collectively, that all tendency is seated in the Appetitive-Faculty? Such a statement of the facts does not help towards making the affections common to the Couplement; they might still be seated either in the Soul alone or in the body alone. On the one hand if the appetite is to be stirred, as in the carnal passion, there must be a heating of the blood and the bile, a well-defined state of the body; on the other hand, the impulse towards The Good cannot be a joint affection, but, like certain others too, it would belong necessarily to the Soul alone.

Reason, then, does not permit us to assign all the affections to the Couplement.

In the case of carnal desire, it will certainly be the Man that desires, and yet, on the other hand, there must be desire in the Desiring-Faculty as well. How can this be? Are we to suppose that, when the man originates the desire, the Desiring-Faculty moves to the order? How could the Man have come to desire at all unless through a prior activity in the Desiring-Faculty? Then it is the Desiring-Faculty that takes the lead? Yet how, unless the body be first in the appropriate condition?

It may seem reasonable to lay down as a law that when any powers are contained by a recipient, every action or state expressive of them must be the action or state of that recipient, they themselves remaining unaffected as merely furnishing efficiency.

But if this were so, then, since the Animate is the recipient of the Causing-Principle [i.e., the Soul] which brings life to the Couplement, this Cause must itself remain unaffected, all the experiences and expressive activities of the life being vested in the recipient, the Animate.

But this would mean that life itself belongs not to the Soul but to the Couplement; or at least the life of the Couplement would not be the life of the Soul; Sense-Perception would belong not to the Sensitive-Faculty but to the container of the faculty.

But if sensation is a movement traversing the body and culminating in Soul, how the soul lack sensation? The very presence of the Sensitive-Faculty must assure sensation to the Soul.

Once again, where is Sense-Perception seated?

In the Couplement.

Yet how can the Couplement have sensation independently of action in the Sensitive-Faculty, the Soul left out of count and the Soul-Faculty?

The truth lies in the Consideration that the Couplement subsists by virtue of the Soul's presence.

This, however, is not to say that the Soul gives itself as it is in itself to form either the Couplement or the body.

No; from the organized body and something else, let us say a light, which the Soul gives forth from itself, it forms a distinct Principle, the Animate; and in this Principle are vested Sense-Perception and all the other experiences found

to belong to the Animate.

But the “We”? How have We Sense-Perception?

By the fact that We are not separate from the Animate so constituted, even though certainly other and nobler elements go to make up the entire many-sided nature of Man.

The faculty of perception in the Soul cannot act by the immediate grasping of sensible objects, but only by the discerning of impressions printed upon the Animate by sensation: these impressions are already Intelligibles while the outer sensation is a mere phantom of the other [of that in the Soul] which is nearer to Authentic-Existence as being an impassive reading of Ideal-Forms.

And by means of these Ideal-Forms, by which the Soul wields single lordship over the Animate, we have Discursive-Reasoning, Sense-Knowledge and Intellection. From this moment we have peculiarly the We: before this there was only the “Ours”; but at this stage stands the WE [the authentic Human-Principle] loftily presiding over the Animate.

There is no reason why the entire compound entity should not be described as the Animate or Living-Being — mingled in a lower phase, but above that point the beginning of the veritable man, distinct from all that is kin to the lion, all that is of the order of the multiple brute. And since The Man, so understood, is essentially the associate of the reasoning Soul, in our reasoning it is this “We” that reasons, in that the use and act of reason is a characteristic Act of the Soul.

And towards the Intellectual-Principle what is our relation? By this I mean, not that faculty in the soul which is one of the emanations from the Intellectual-Principle, but The Intellectual-Principle itself [Divine-Mind].

This also we possess as the summit of our being. And we have It either as common to all or as our own immediate possession: or again we may possess It in both degrees, that is in common, since It is indivisible — one, everywhere and always Its entire self — and severally in that each personality possesses It entire in the First-Soul [i.e. in the Intellectual as distinguished from the lower phase of the Soul].

Hence we possess the Ideal-Forms also after two modes: in the Soul, as it were unrolled and separate; in the Intellectual-Principle, concentrated, one.

And how do we possess the Divinity?

In that the Divinity is contained in the Intellectual-Principle and Authentic-Existence; and We come third in order after these two, for the We is constituted by a union of the supreme, the undivided Soul — we read — and that Soul which is divided among [living] bodies. For, note, we inevitably think of the Soul, though one undivided in the All, as being present to bodies in division: in so far as any bodies are Animates, the Soul has given itself to each of the separate material masses; or rather it appears to be present in the bodies by the fact that it shines into them: it makes them living beings not by merging into body but by giving forth, without any change in itself, images or likenesses of itself like one face caught by many mirrors.

The first of these images is Sense-Perception seated in the Couplement; and from this downwards all the successive images are to be recognized as phases of the Soul in lessening succession from one another, until the series ends in the faculties of generation and growth and of all production of offspring — offspring efficient in its turn, in contradistinction to the engendering Soul which [has no direct action within matter but] produces by mere inclination towards what it fashions.

That Soul, then, in us, will in its nature stand apart from all that can cause any of the evils which man does or suffers; for all such evil, as we have seen, belongs only to the Animate, the Couplement.

But there is a difficulty in understanding how the Soul can go guiltless if our mentation and reasoning are vested in it: for all this lower kind of knowledge is delusion and is the cause of much of what is evil.

When we have done evil it is because we have been worsted by our baser side — for a man is many — by desire or rage or some evil image: the misnamed reasoning that takes up with the false, in reality fancy, has not stayed for the judgement of the Reasoning-Principle: we have acted at the call of the less worthy, just as in matters of the sense-sphere we sometimes see falsely because we credit only the lower perception, that of the Couplement, without applying the tests of the Reasoning-Faculty.

The Intellectual-Principle has held aloof from the act and so is guiltless; or, as we may state it, all depends on whether we ourselves have or have not put ourselves in touch with the Intellectual-Realm either in the

Intellectual-Principle or within ourselves; for it is possible at once to possess and not to use.

Thus we have marked off what belongs to the Couplement from what stands by itself: the one group has the character of body and never exists apart from body, while all that has no need of body for its manifestation belongs peculiarly to Soul: and the Understanding, as passing judgement upon Sense-Impressions, is at the point of the vision of Ideal-Forms, seeing them as it were with an answering sensation (i.e. with consciousness) this last is at any rate true of the Understanding in the Veritable Soul. For Understanding, the true, is the Act of the Intellections: in many of its manifestations it is the assimilation and reconciliation of the outer to the inner.

Thus in spite of all, the Soul is at peace as to itself and within itself: all the changes and all the turmoil we experience are the issue of what is subjoined to the Soul, and are, as have said, the states and experiences of this elusive “Couplement.”

It will be objected, that if the Soul constitutes the We [the personality] and We are subject to these states then the Soul must be subject to them, and similarly that what We do must be done by the Soul.

But it has been observed that the Couplement, too — especially before our emancipation — is a member of this total We, and in fact what the body experiences we say We experience. This then covers two distinct notions; sometimes it includes the brute-part, sometimes it transcends the brute. The body is brute touched to life; the true man is the other, going pure of the body, natively endowed with the virtues which belong to the Intellectual-Activity, virtues whose seat is the Separate Soul, the Soul which even in its dwelling here may be kept apart. [This Soul constitutes the human being] for when it has wholly withdrawn, that other Soul which is a radiation [or emanation] from it withdraws also, drawn after it.

Those virtues, on the other hand, which spring not from contemplative wisdom but from custom or practical discipline belong to the Couplement: to the Couplement, too, belong the vices; they are its repugnances, desires, sympathies.

And Friendship?

This emotion belongs sometimes to the lower part, sometimes to the interior man.

In childhood the main activity is in the Couplement and there is but little irradiation from the higher principles of our being: but when these higher principles act but feebly or rarely upon us their action is directed towards the Supreme; they work upon us only when they stand at the mid-point.

But does not the include that phase of our being which stands above the mid-point?

It does, but on condition that we lay hold of it: our entire nature is not ours at all times but only as we direct the mid-point upwards or downwards, or lead some particular phase of our nature from potentiality or native character into act.

And the animals, in what way or degree do they possess the Animate?

If there be in them, as the opinion goes, human Souls that have sinned, then the Animating-Principle in its separable phase does not enter directly into the brute; it is there but not there to them; they are aware only of the image of the Soul [only of the lower Soul] and of that only by being aware of the body organised and determined by that image.

If there be no human Soul in them, the Animate is constituted for them by a radiation from the All-Soul.

But if Soul is sinless, how come the expiations? Here surely is a contradiction; on the one side the Soul is above all guilt; on the other, we hear of its sin, its purification, its expiation; it is doomed to the lower world, it passes from body to body.

We may take either view at will: they are easily reconciled.

When we tell of the sinless Soul, we make Soul and Essential-Soul one and the same: it is the simple unbroken Unity.

By the Soul subject to sin we indicate a groupment, we include that other, that phase of the Soul which knows all the states and passions: the Soul in this sense is compound, all-inclusive: it falls under the conditions of the entire living experience: this compound it is that sins; it is this, and not the other, that pays penalty.

It is in this sense that we read of the Soul: "We saw it as those others saw the sea-god Glaukos." "And," reading on, "if we mean to discern the nature of the Soul we must strip it free of all that has gathered about it, must see into the philosophy of it, examine with what Existences it has touch and by kinship to what Existences it is what it is."

Thus the Life is one thing, the Act is another and the Expiator yet another. The retreat and sundering, then, must be not from this body only, but from every alien accrument. Such accrument takes place at birth; or rather birth is the coming-into-being of that other [lower] phase of the Soul. For the meaning of birth has been indicated elsewhere; it is brought about by a descent of the Soul, something being given off by the Soul other than that actually coming down in the declension.

Then the Soul has let this image fall? And this declension is it not certainly sin? If the declension is no more than the illuminating of an object beneath, it constitutes no sin: the shadow is to be attributed not to the luminary but to the object illuminated; if the object were not there, the light could cause no shadow.

And the Soul is said to go down, to decline, only in that the object it illuminates lives by its life. And it lets the image fall only if there be nothing near to take it up; and it lets it fall, not as a thing cut off, but as a thing that ceases to be: the image has no further being when the whole Soul is looking toward the Supreme.

The poet, too, in the story of Hercules, seems to give this image separate existence; he puts the shade of Hercules in the lower world and Hercules himself among the gods: treating the hero as existing in the two realms at once, he gives us a twofold Hercules.

It is not difficult to explain this distinction. Hercules was a hero of practical virtue. By his noble serviceableness he was worthy to be a God. On the other hand, his merit was action and not the Contemplation which would place him unreservedly in the higher realm. Therefore while he has place above, something of him remains below.

And the principle that reasons out these matters? Is it We or the Soul?

We, but by the Soul.

But how “by the Soul”? Does this mean that the Soul reasons by possession [by contact with the matters of enquiry]?

No; by the fact of being Soul. Its Act subsists without movement; or any movement that can be ascribed to it must be utterly distinct from all corporal movement and be simply the Soul’s own life.

And Intellection in us is twofold: since the Soul is intellective, and Intellection is the highest phase of life, we have Intellection both by the characteristic Act of our Soul and by the Act of the Intellectual-Principle upon us — for this Intellectual-Principle is part of us no less than the Soul, and towards it we are ever rising.

Second Tractate.

On Virtue.

Since Evil is here, “haunting this world by necessary law,” and it is the Soul’s design to escape from Evil, we must escape hence.

But what is this escape?

“In attaining Likeness to God,” we read. And this is explained as “becoming just and holy, living by wisdom,” the entire nature grounded in Virtue.

But does not Likeness by way of Virtue imply Likeness to some being that has Virtue? To what Divine Being, then, would our Likeness be? To the Being — must we not think? — in Which, above all, such excellence seems to inhere, that is to the Soul of the Kosmos and to the Principle ruling within it, the Principle endowed with a wisdom most wonderful. What could be more fitting than that we, living in this world, should become Like to its ruler?

But, at the beginning, we are met by the doubt whether even in this Divine-Being all the virtues find place — Moral-Balance [Sophrosyne], for example; or Fortitude where there can be no danger since nothing is alien; where there can be nothing alluring whose lack could induce the desire of possession.

If, indeed, that aspiration towards the Intelligible which is in our nature exists also in this Ruling-Power, then need not look elsewhere for the source of order and of the virtues in ourselves.

But does this Power possess the Virtues?

We cannot expect to find There what are called the Civic Virtues, the Prudence which belongs to the reasoning faculty; the Fortitude which conducts the emotional and passionate nature; the Sophrosyne which consists in a certain pact, in a concord between the passionate faculty and the reason; or Rectitude which is the due application of all the other virtues as each in turn should command or obey.

Is Likeness, then, attained, perhaps, not by these virtues of the social order but by those greater qualities known by the same general name? And if so do the Civic Virtues give us no help at all?

It is against reason, utterly to deny Likeness by these while admitting it by the greater: tradition at least recognizes certain men of the civic excellence as divine, and we must believe that these too had in some sort attained Likeness: on both levels there is virtue for us, though not the same virtue.

Now, if it be admitted that Likeness is possible, though by a varying use of different virtues and though the civic virtues do not suffice, there is no reason why we should not, by virtues peculiar to our state, attain Likeness to a model in which virtue has no place.

But is that conceivable?

When warmth comes in to make anything warm, must there needs be something to warm the source of the warmth?

If a fire is to warm something else, must there be a fire to warm that fire?

Against the first illustration it may be retorted that the source of the warmth does already contain warmth, not by an infusion but as an essential phase of its nature, so that, if the analogy is to hold, the argument would make Virtue something communicated to the Soul but an essential constituent of the Principle from which the Soul attaining Likeness absorbs it.

Against the illustration drawn from the fire, it may be urged that the analogy would make that Principle identical with virtue, whereas we hold it to be something higher.

The objection would be valid if what the soul takes in were one and the same with the source, but in fact virtue is one thing, the source of virtue quite another. The material house is not identical with the house conceived in the

intellect, and yet stands in its likeness: the material house has distribution and order while the pure idea is not constituted by any such elements; distribution, order, symmetry are not parts of an idea.

So with us: it is from the Supreme that we derive order and distribution and harmony, which are virtues in this sphere: the Existences There, having no need of harmony, order or distribution, have nothing to do with virtue; and, none the less, it is by our possession of virtue that we become like to Them.

Thus much to show that the principle that we attain Likeness by virtue in no way involves the existence of virtue in the Supreme. But we have not merely to make a formal demonstration: we must persuade as well as demonstrate.

First, then, let us examine those good qualities by which we hold Likeness comes, and seek to establish what is this thing which, as we possess it, in transcription, is virtue but as the Supreme possesses it, is in the nature of an exemplar or archetype and is not virtue.

We must first distinguish two modes of Likeness.

There is the likeness demanding an identical nature in the objects which, further, must draw their likeness from a common principle: and there is the case in which B resembles A, but A is a Primal, not concerned about B and not said to resemble B. In this second case, likeness is understood in a distinct sense: we no longer look for identity of nature, but, on the contrary, for divergence since the likeness has come about by the mode of difference.

What, then, precisely is Virtue, collectively and in the particular? The clearer method will be to begin with the particular, for so the common element by which all the forms hold the general name will readily appear.

The Civic Virtues, on which we have touched above, are a principle of order and beauty in us as long as we remain passing our life here: they ennoble us by setting bound and measure to our desires and to our entire sensibility, and dispelling false judgement — and this by sheer efficacy of the better, by the very setting of the bounds, by the fact that the measured is lifted outside of the sphere of the unmeasured and lawless.

And, further, these Civic Virtues — measured and ordered themselves and acting as a principle of measure to the Soul which is as Matter to their forming — are like to the measure reigning in the over-world, and they carry a trace of

that Highest Good in the Supreme; for, while utter measurelessness is brute Matter and wholly outside of Likeness, any participation in Ideal-Form produces some corresponding degree of Likeness to the formless Being There. And participation goes by nearness: the Soul nearer than the body, therefore closer akin, participates more fully and shows a godlike presence, almost cheating us into the delusion that in the Soul we see God entire.

This is the way in which men of the Civic Virtues attain Likeness.

We come now to that other mode of Likeness which, we read, is the fruit of the loftier virtues: discussing this we shall penetrate more deeply into the essence of the Civic Virtue and be able to define the nature of the higher kind whose existence we shall establish beyond doubt.

To Plato, unmistakably, there are two distinct orders of virtue, and the civic does not suffice for Likeness: “Likeness to God,” he says, “is a flight from this world’s ways and things”: in dealing with the qualities of good citizenship he does not use the simple term Virtue but adds the distinguishing word civic: and elsewhere he declares all the virtues without exception to be purifications.

But in what sense can we call the virtues purifications, and how does purification issue in Likeness?

As the Soul is evil by being interfused with the body, and by coming to share the body’s states and to think the body’s thoughts, so it would be good, it would be possessed of virtue, if it threw off the body’s moods and devoted itself to its own Act — the state of Intellection and Wisdom — never allowed the passions of the body to affect it — the virtue of Sophrosyne — knew no fear at the parting from the body — the virtue of Fortitude — and if reason and the Intellectual-Principle ruled — in which state is Righteousness. Such a disposition in the Soul, become thus intellective and immune to passion, it would not be wrong to call Likeness to God; for the Divine, too, is pure and the Divine-Act is such that Likeness to it is Wisdom.

But would not this make virtue a state of the Divine also?

No: the Divine has no states; the state is in the Soul. The Act of Intellection in the Soul is not the same as in the Divine: of things in the Supreme, Soul grasps some after a mode of its own, some not at all.

Then yet again, the one word Intellection covers two distinct Acts?

Rather there is primal Intellection and there is Intellection deriving from the Primal and of other scope.

As speech is the echo of the thought in the Soul, so thought in the Soul is an echo from elsewhere: that is to say, as the uttered thought is an image of the soul-thought, so the soul-thought images a thought above itself and is the interpreter of the higher sphere.

Virtue, in the same way, is a thing of the Soul: it does not belong to the Intellectual-Principle or to the Transcendence.

We come, so, to the question whether Purification is the whole of this human quality, virtue, or merely the forerunner upon which virtue follows? Does virtue imply the achieved state of purification or does the mere process suffice to it, Virtue being something of less perfection than the accomplished pureness which is almost the Term?

To have been purified is to have cleansed away everything alien: but Goodness is something more.

If before the impurity entered there was Goodness, the Goodness suffices; but even so, not the act of cleansing but the cleansed thing that emerges will be The Good. And it remains to establish what this emergent is.

It can scarcely prove to be The Good: The Absolute Good cannot be thought to have taken up its abode with Evil. We can think of it only as something of the nature of good but paying a double allegiance and unable to rest in the Authentic Good.

The Soul's true Good is in devotion to the Intellectual-Principle, its kin; evil to the Soul lies in frequenting strangers. There is no other way for it than to purify itself and so enter into relation with its own; the new phase begins by a new orientation.

After the Purification, then, there is still this orientation to be made? No: by the purification the true alignment stands accomplished.

The Soul's virtue, then, is this alignment? No: it is what the alignment brings about within.

And this is . . .?

That it sees; that, like sight affected by the thing seen, the soul admits the imprint, graven upon it and working within it, of the vision it has come to.

But was not the Soul possessed of all this always, or had it forgotten?

What it now sees, it certainly always possessed, but as lying away in the dark, not as acting within it: to dispel the darkness, and thus come to knowledge of its inner content, it must thrust towards the light.

Besides, it possessed not the originals but images, pictures; and these it must bring into closer accord with the verities they represent. And, further, if the Intellectual-Principle is said to be a possession of the Soul, this is only in the sense that It is not alien and that the link becomes very close when the Soul's sight is turned towards It: otherwise, ever-present though It be, It remains foreign, just as our knowledge, if it does not determine action, is dead to us.

So we come to the scope of the purification: that understood, the nature of Likeness becomes clear. Likeness to what Principle? Identity with what God?

The question is substantially this: how far does purification dispel the two orders of passion — anger, desire and the like, with grief and its kin — and in what degree the disengagement from the body is possible.

Disengagement means simply that the soul withdraws to its own place.

It will hold itself above all passions and affections. Necessary pleasures and all the activity of the senses it will employ only for medicament and assuagement lest its work be impeded. Pain it may combat, but, failing the cure, it will bear meekly and ease it by refusing assent to it. All passionate action it will check: the suppression will be complete if that be possible, but at worst the Soul will never itself take fire but will keep the involuntary and uncontrolled outside its precincts and rare and weak at that. The Soul has nothing to dread, though no doubt the involuntary has some power here too: fear therefore must cease, except so far as it is purely monitory. What desire there may be can never be for the vile; even the food and drink necessary for restoration will lie outside of the Soul's attention, and not less the sexual appetite: or if such desire there must be, it will turn upon the actual needs of the nature and be entirely under control; or if any uncontrolled motion takes place, it will reach no further than the imagination, be no more than a fleeting fancy.

The Soul itself will be inviolately free and will be working to set the irrational part of the nature above all attack, or if that may not be, then at least to preserve it from violent assault, so that any wound it takes may be slight and be healed at once by virtue of the Soul's presence, just as a man living next door to a Sage would profit by the neighbourhood, either in becoming wise and good himself or, for sheer shame, never venturing any act which the nobler mind would disapprove.

There will be no battling in the Soul: the mere intervention of Reason is enough: the lower nature will stand in such awe of Reason that for any slightest movement it has made it will grieve, and censure its own weakness, in not having kept low and still in the presence of its lord.

In all this there is no sin — there is only matter of discipline — but our concern is not merely to be sinless but to be God.

As long as there is any such involuntary action, the nature is twofold, God and Demi-God, or rather God in association with a nature of a lower power: when all the involuntary is suppressed, there is God unmingled, a Divine Being of those that follow upon The First.

For, at this height, the man is the very being that came from the Supreme. The primal excellence restored, the essential man is There: entering this sphere, he has associated himself with the reasoning phase of his nature and this he will lead up into likeness with his highest self, as far as earthly mind is capable, so that if possible it shall never be inclined to, and at the least never adopt, any course displeasing to its overlord.

What form, then, does virtue take in one so lofty?

It appears as Wisdom, which consists in the contemplation of all that exists in the Intellectual-Principle, and as the immediate presence of the Intellectual-Principle itself.

And each of these has two modes or aspects: there is Wisdom as it is in the Intellectual-Principle and as in the Soul; and there is the Intellectual-Principle as it is present to itself and as it is present to the Soul: this gives what in the Soul is Virtue, in the Supreme not Virtue.

In the Supreme, then, what is it?

Its proper Act and Its Essence.

That Act and Essence of the Supreme, manifested in a new form, constitute the virtue of this sphere. For the Supreme is not self-existent justice, or the Absolute of any defined virtue: it is, so to speak, an exemplar, the source of what in the soul becomes virtue: for virtue is dependent, seated in something not itself; the Supreme is self-standing, independent.

But taking Rectitude to be the due ordering of faculty, does it not always imply the existence of diverse parts?

No: There is a Rectitude of Diversity appropriate to what has parts, but there is another, not less Rectitude than the former though it resides in a Unity. And the authentic Absolute-Rectitude is the Act of a Unity upon itself, of a Unity in which there is no this and that and the other.

On this principle, the supreme Rectitude of the Soul is that it direct its Act towards the Intellectual-Principle: its Restraint (Sophrosyne) is its inward bending towards the Intellectual-Principle; its Fortitude is its being impassive in the likeness of That towards which its gaze is set, Whose nature comports an impassivity which the Soul acquires by virtue and must acquire if it is not to be at the mercy of every state arising in its less noble companion.

The virtues in the Soul run in a sequence correspondent to that existing in the over-world, that is among their exemplars in the Intellectual-Principle.

In the Supreme, Intellection constitutes Knowledge and Wisdom; self-concentration is Sophrosyne; Its proper Act is Its Dutifulness; Its Immateriality, by which It remains inviolate within Itself is the equivalent of Fortitude.

In the Soul, the direction of vision towards the Intellectual-Principle is Wisdom and Prudence, soul-virtues not appropriate to the Supreme where Thinker and Thought are identical. All the other virtues have similar correspondences.

And if the term of purification is the production of a pure being, then the purification of the Soul must produce all the virtues; if any are lacking, then not one of them is perfect.

And to possess the greater is potentially to possess the minor, though the minor need not carry the greater with them.

Thus we have indicated the dominant note in the life of the Sage; but whether his possession of the minor virtues be actual as well as potential, whether even the greater are in Act in him or yield to qualities higher still, must be decided afresh in each several case.

Take, for example, Contemplative-Wisdom. If other guides of conduct must be called in to meet a given need, can this virtue hold its ground even in mere potentiality?

And what happens when the virtues in their very nature differ in scope and province? Where, for example, Sophrosyne would allow certain acts or emotions under due restraint and another virtue would cut them off altogether? And is it not clear that all may have to yield, once Contemplative-Wisdom comes into action?

The solution is in understanding the virtues and what each has to give: thus the man will learn to work with this or that as every several need demands. And as he reaches to loftier principles and other standards these in turn will define his conduct: for example, Restraint in its earlier form will no longer satisfy him; he will work for the final Disengagement; he will live, no longer, the human life of the good man — such as Civic Virtue commends — but, leaving this beneath him, will take up instead another life, that of the Gods.

For it is to the Gods, not to the Good, that our Likeness must look: to model ourselves upon good men is to produce an image of an image: we have to fix our gaze above the image and attain Likeness to the Supreme Exemplar.

Third Tractate.

On Dialectic [The Upward Way].

What art is there, what method, what discipline to bring us there where we must go?

The Term at which we must arrive we may take as agreed: we have established elsewhere, by many considerations, that our journey is to the Good, to the Primal-Principle; and, indeed, the very reasoning which discovered the Term was itself something like an initiation.

But what order of beings will attain the Term?

Surely, as we read, those that have already seen all or most things, those who at their first birth have entered into the life-germ from which is to spring a metaphysician, a musician or a born lover, the metaphysician taking to the path by instinct, the musician and the nature peculiarly susceptible to love needing outside guidance.

But how lies the course? Is it alike for all, or is there a distinct method for each class of temperament?

For all there are two stages of the path, as they are making upwards or have already gained the upper sphere.

The first degree is the conversion from the lower life; the second — held by those that have already made their way to the sphere of the Intelligibles, have set as it were a footprint there but must still advance within the realm — lasts until they reach the extreme hold of the place, the Term attained when the topmost peak of the Intellectual realm is won.

But this highest degree must bide its time: let us first try to speak of the initial process of conversion.

We must begin by distinguishing the three types. Let us take the musician first and indicate his temperamental equipment for the task.

The musician we may think of as being exceedingly quick to beauty, drawn in a very rapture to it: somewhat slow to stir of his own impulse, he answers at once to the outer stimulus: as the timid are sensitive to noise so he to tones and the beauty they convey; all that offends against unison or harmony in melodies and rhythms repels him; he longs for measure and shapely pattern.

This natural tendency must be made the starting-point to such a man; he must be drawn by the tone, rhythm and design in things of sense: he must learn to distinguish the material forms from the Authentic-Existent which is the source of all these correspondences and of the entire reasoned scheme in the work of art: he must be led to the Beauty that manifests itself through these forms; he must be shown that what ravished him was no other than the Harmony of the Intellectual world and the Beauty in that sphere, not some one shape of beauty but the All-Beauty, the Absolute Beauty; and the truths of philosophy must be implanted in him to lead him to faith in that which, unknowing it, he possesses within himself. What these truths are we will show later.

The born lover, to whose degree the musician also may attain — and then either come to a stand or pass beyond — has a certain memory of beauty but, severed from it now, he no longer comprehends it: spellbound by visible loveliness he clings amazed about that. His lesson must be to fall down no longer in bewildered delight before some, one embodied form; he must be led, under a system of mental discipline, to beauty everywhere and made to discern the One Principle underlying all, a Principle apart from the material forms, springing from another source, and elsewhere more truly present. The beauty, for example, in a noble course of life and in an admirably organized social system may be pointed out to him — a first training this in the loveliness of the immaterial — he must learn to recognise the beauty in the arts, sciences, virtues; then these severed and particular forms must be brought under the one principle by the explanation of their origin. From the virtues he is to be led to the Intellectual-Principle, to the Authentic-Existent; thence onward, he treads the upward way.

The metaphysician, equipped by that very character, winged already and not like those others, in need of disengagement, stirring of himself towards the supernal but doubting of the way, needs only a guide. He must be shown, then, and instructed, a willing wayfarer by his very temperament, all but self-directed.

Mathematics, which as a student by nature he will take very easily, will be prescribed to train him to abstract thought and to faith in the unembodied; a moral being by native disposition, he must be led to make his virtue perfect; after the Mathematics he must be put through a course in Dialectic and made an adept in the science.

But this science, this Dialectic essential to all the three classes alike, what, in sum, is it?

It is the Method, or Discipline, that brings with it the power of pronouncing with final truth upon the nature and relation of things — what each is, how it differs from others, what common quality all have, to what Kind each belongs and in what rank each stands in its Kind and whether its Being is Real-Being, and how many Beings there are, and how many non-Beings to be distinguished from Beings.

Dialectic treats also of the Good and the not-Good, and of the particulars that fall under each, and of what is the Eternal and what the not Eternal — and of these, it must be understood, not by seeming-knowledge [“sense-knowledge”] but with authentic science.

All this accomplished, it gives up its touring of the realm of sense and settles down in the Intellectual Kosmos and there plies its own peculiar Act: it has abandoned all the realm of deceit and falsity, and pastures the Soul in the “Meadows of Truth”: it employs the Platonic division to the discernment of the Ideal-Forms, of the Authentic-Existence and of the First-Kinds [or Categories of Being]: it establishes, in the light of Intellection, the unity there is in all that issues from these Firsts, until it has traversed the entire Intellectual Realm: then, resolving the unity into the particulars once more, it returns to the point from which it starts.

Now rests: instructed and satisfied as to the Being in that sphere, it is no longer busy about many things: it has arrived at Unity and it contemplates: it leaves to another science all that coil of premisses and conclusions called the art of reasoning, much as it leaves the art of writing: some of the matter of logic, no doubt, it considers necessary — to clear the ground — but it makes itself the judge, here as in everything else; where it sees use, it uses; anything it finds superfluous, it leaves to whatever department of learning or practice may turn that matter to account.

But whence does this science derive its own initial laws?

The Intellectual-Principle furnishes standards, the most certain for any soul that is able to apply them. What else is necessary, Dialectic puts together for itself, combining and dividing, until it has reached perfect Intellection. “For,” we read, “it is the purest [perfection] of Intellection and Contemplative-Wisdom.” And, being the noblest method and science that exists it must needs deal with Authentic-Existence, The Highest there is: as Contemplative-Wisdom [or true-knowing] it deals with Being, as Intellection with what transcends Being.

What, then, is Philosophy?

Philosophy is the supremely precious.

Is Dialectic, then, the same as Philosophy?

It is the precious part of Philosophy. We must not think of it as the mere tool of the metaphysician: Dialectic does not consist of bare theories and rules: it deals with verities; Existences are, as it were, Matter to it, or at least it proceeds methodically towards Existences, and possesses itself, at the one step, of the notions and of the realities.

Untruth and sophism it knows, not directly, not of its own nature, but merely as something produced outside itself, something which it recognises to be foreign to the verities laid up in itself; in the falsity presented to it, it perceives a clash with its own canon of truth. Dialectic, that is to say, has no knowledge of propositions — collections of words — but it knows the truth, and, in that knowledge, knows what the schools call their propositions: it knows above all, the operation of the soul, and, by virtue of this knowing, it knows, too, what is affirmed and what is denied, whether the denial is of what was asserted or of something else, and whether propositions agree or differ; all that is submitted to it, it attacks with the directness of sense-perception and it leaves petty precisions of process to what other science may care for such exercises.

Philosophy has other provinces, but Dialectic is its precious part: in its study of the laws of the universe, Philosophy draws on Dialectic much as other studies and crafts use Arithmetic, though, of course, the alliance between Philosophy and Dialectic is closer.

And in Morals, too, Philosophy uses Dialectic: by Dialectic it comes to contemplation, though it originates of itself the moral state or rather the discipline from which the moral state develops.

Our reasoning faculties employ the data of Dialectic almost as their proper possession for they are mainly concerned about Matter [whose place and worth Dialectic establishes].

And while the other virtues bring the reason to bear upon particular experiences and acts, the virtue of Wisdom [i.e., the virtue peculiarly induced by Dialectic] is a certain super-reasoning much closer to the Universal; for it deals with correspondence and sequence, the choice of time for action and inaction, the adoption of this course, the rejection of that other: Wisdom and Dialectic have the task of presenting all things as Universals and stripped of matter for treatment by the Understanding.

But can these inferior kinds of virtue exist without Dialectic and philosophy?

Yes — but imperfectly, inadequately.

And is it possible to be a Sage, Master in Dialectic, without these lower virtues?

It would not happen: the lower will spring either before or together with the higher. And it is likely that everyone normally possesses the natural virtues from which, when Wisdom steps in, the perfected virtue develops. After the natural virtues, then, Wisdom and, so the perfecting of the moral nature. Once the natural virtues exist, both orders, the natural and the higher, ripen side by side to their final excellence: or as the one advances it carries forward the other towards perfection.

But, ever, the natural virtue is imperfect in vision and in strength — and to both orders of virtue the essential matter is from what principles we derive them.

Fourth Tractate.

On True Happiness.

Are we to make True Happiness one and the same thing with Welfare or Prosperity and therefore within the reach of the other living beings as well as ourselves?

There is certainly no reason to deny well-being to any of them as long as their lot allows them to flourish unhindered after their kind.

Whether we make Welfare consist in pleasant conditions of life, or in the accomplishment of some appropriate task, by either account it may fall to them as to us. For certainly they may at once be pleasantly placed and engaged about some function that lies in their nature: take for an instance such living beings as have the gift of music; finding themselves well-off in other ways, they sing, too, as their nature is, and so their day is pleasant to them.

And if, even, we set Happiness in some ultimate Term pursued by inborn tendency, then on this head, too, we must allow it to animals from the moment of their attaining this Ultimate: the nature in them comes to a halt, having fulfilled its vital course from a beginning to an end.

It may be a distasteful notion, this bringing-down of happiness so low as to the animal world — making it over, as then we must, even to the vilest of them

and not withholding it even from the plants, living they too and having a life unfolding to a Term.

But, to begin with, it is surely unsound to deny that good of life to animals only because they do not appear to man to be of great account. And as for plants, we need not necessarily allow to them what we accord to the other forms of life, since they have no feeling. It is true people might be found to declare prosperity possible to the very plants: they have life, and life may bring good or evil; the plants may thrive or wither, bear or be barren.

No: if Pleasure be the Term, if here be the good of life, it is impossible to deny the good of life to any order of living things; if the Term be inner-peace, equally impossible; impossible, too, if the good of life be to live in accordance with the purpose of nature.

Those that deny the happy life to the plants on the ground that they lack sensation are really denying it to all living things.

By sensation can be meant only perception of state, and the state of well-being must be Good in itself quite apart from the perception: to be a part of the natural plan is good whether knowingly or without knowledge: there is good in the appropriate state even though there be no recognition of its fitness or desirable quality — for it must be in itself desirable.

This Good exists, then; is present: that in which it is present has well-being without more ado: what need then to ask for sensation into the bargain?

Perhaps, however, the theory is that the good of any state consists not in the condition itself but in the knowledge and perception of it.

But at this rate the Good is nothing but the mere sensation, the bare activity of the sentient life. And so it will be possessed by all that feel, no matter what. Perhaps it will be said that two constituents are needed to make up the Good, that there must be both feeling and a given state felt: but how can it be maintained that the bringing together of two neutrals can produce the Good?

They will explain, possibly, that the state must be a state of Good and that such a condition constitutes well-being on the discernment of that present good; but then they invite the question whether the well-being comes by discerning the presence of the Good that is there, or whether there must further be the double recognition that the state is agreeable and that the

agreeable state constitutes the Good.

If well-being demands this recognition, it depends no longer upon sensation but upon another, a higher faculty; and well-being is vested not in a faculty receptive of pleasure but in one competent to discern that pleasure is the Good.

Then the cause of the well-being is no longer pleasure but the faculty competent to pronounce as to pleasure's value. Now a judging entity is nobler than one that merely accepts a state: it is a principle of Reason or of Intellection: pleasure is a state: the reasonless can never be closer to the Good than reason is. How can reason abdicate and declare nearer to good than itself something lying in a contrary order?

No: those denying the good of life to the vegetable world, and those that make it consist in some precise quality of sensation, are in reality seeking a loftier well-being than they are aware of, and setting their highest in a more luminous phase of life.

Perhaps, then, those are in the right who found happiness not on the bare living or even on sensitive life but on the life of Reason?

But they must tell us it should be thus restricted and why precisely they make Reason an essential to the happiness in a living being:

“When you insist on Reason, is it because Reason is resourceful, swift to discern and compass the primal needs of nature; or would you demand it, even though it were powerless in that domain?”

If you call it in as a provider, then the reasonless, equally with the reasoning, may possess happiness after their kind, as long as, without any thought of theirs, nature supplies their wants: Reason becomes a servant; there is no longer any worth in it for itself and no worth in that consummation of reason which, we hold, is virtue.

If you say that reason is to be cherished for its own sake and not as supplying these human needs, you must tell us what other services it renders, what is its proper nature and what makes it the perfect thing it is.

For, on this admission, its perfection cannot reside in any such planning and providing: its perfection will be something quite different, something of quite another class: Reason cannot be itself one of those first needs of nature; it

cannot even be a cause of those first needs of nature or at all belong to that order: it must be nobler than any and all of such things: otherwise it is not easy to see how we can be asked to rate it so highly.

Until these people light upon some nobler principle than any at which they still halt, they must be left where they are and where they choose to be, never understanding what the Good of Life is to those that can make it theirs, never knowing to what kind of beings it is accessible.

What then is happiness? Let us try basing it upon Life.

Now if we draw no distinction as to kinds of life, everything that lives will be capable of happiness, and those will be effectively happy who possess that one common gift of which every living thing is by nature receptive. We could not deny it to the irrational whilst allowing it to the rational. If happiness were inherent in the bare being-alive, the common ground in which the cause of happiness could always take root would be simply life.

Those, then, that set happiness not in the mere living but in the reasoning life seem to overlook the fact that they are not really making it depend upon life at all: they admit that this reasoning faculty, round which they centre happiness, is a property [not the subject of a property]: the subject, to them, must be the Reasoning-Life since it is in this double term that they find the basis of the happiness: so that they are making it consist not in life but in a particular kind of life — not, of course, a species formally opposite but, in terminology, standing as an “earlier” to a “later” in the one Kind.

Now in common use this word “Life” embraces many forms which shade down from primal to secondary and so on, all massed under the common term — life of plant and life of animal — each phase brighter or dimmer than its next: and so it evidently must be with the Good-of-Life. And if thing is ever the image of thing, so every Good must always be the image of a higher Good.

If mere Being is insufficient, if happiness demands fulness of life, and exists, therefore, where nothing is lacking of all that belongs to the idea of life, then happiness can exist only in a being that lives fully.

And such a one will possess not merely the good, but the Supreme Good if, that is to say, in the realm of existents the Supreme Good can be no other than the authentically living, no other than Life in its greatest plenitude, life in which the good is present as something essential not as something brought

from without, a life needing no foreign substance called in from a foreign realm, to establish it in good.

For what could be added to the fullest life to make it the best life? If anyone should answer, "The nature of Good" [The Good, as a Divine Hypostasis], the reply would certainly be near our thought, but we are not seeking the Cause but the main constituent.

It has been said more than once that the perfect life and the true life, the essential life, is in the Intellectual Nature beyond this sphere, and that all other forms of life are incomplete, are phantoms of life, imperfect, not pure, not more truly life than they are its contrary: here let it be said succinctly that since all living things proceed from the one principle but possess life in different degrees, this principle must be the first life and the most complete.

If, then, the perfect life is within human reach, the man attaining it attains happiness: if not, happiness must be made over to the gods, for the perfect life is for them alone.

But since we hold that happiness is for human beings too, we must consider what this perfect life is. The matter may be stated thus:

It has been shown elsewhere that man, when he commands not merely the life of sensation but also Reason and Authentic Intellection, has realised the perfect life.

But are we to picture this kind of life as something foreign imported into his nature?

No: there exists no single human being that does not either potentially or effectively possess this thing which we hold to constitute happiness.

But are we to think of man as including this form of life, the perfect, after the manner of a partial constituent of his entire nature?

We say, rather, that while in some men it is present as a mere portion of their total being — in those, namely, that have it potentially — there is, too, the man, already in possession of true felicity, who is this perfection realized, who has passed over into actual identification with it. All else is now mere clothing about the man, not to be called part of him since it lies about him unsought, not his because not appropriated to himself by any act of the will.

To the man in this state, what is the Good?

He himself by what he has and is.

And the author and principle of what he is and holds is the Supreme, which within Itself is the Good but manifests Itself within the human being after this other mode.

The sign that this state has been achieved is that the man seeks nothing else.

What indeed could he be seeking? Certainly none of the less worthy things; and the Best he carries always within him.

He that has such a life as this has all he needs in life.

Once the man is a Sage, the means of happiness, the way to good, are within, for nothing is good that lies outside him. Anything he desires further than this he seeks as a necessity, and not for himself but for a subordinate, for the body bound to him, to which since it has life he must minister the needs of life, not needs, however, to the true man of this degree. He knows himself to stand above all such things, and what he gives to the lower he so gives as to leave his true life undiminished.

Adverse fortune does not shake his felicity: the life so founded is stable ever. Suppose death strikes at his household or at his friends; he knows what death is, as the victims, if they are among the wise, know too. And if death taking from him his familiars and intimates does bring grief, it is not to him, not to the true man, but to that in him which stands apart from the Supreme, to that lower man in whose distress he takes no part.

But what of sorrows, illnesses and all else that inhibit the native activity?

What of the suspension of consciousness which drugs or disease may bring about? Could either welfare or happiness be present under such conditions? And this is to say nothing of misery and disgrace, which will certainly be urged against us, with undoubtedly also those never-failing "Miseries of Priam."

"The Sage," we shall be told, "may bear such afflictions and even take them lightly but they could never be his choice, and the happy life must be one that would be chosen. The Sage, that is, cannot be thought of as simply a sage soul, no count being taken of the bodily-principle in the total of the being: he will, no doubt, take all bravely . . . until the body's appeals come up before him, and longings and loathings penetrate through the body to the inner man. And since pleasure must be counted in towards the happy life, how can one that,

thus, knows the misery of ill-fortune or pain be happy, however sage he be? Such a state, of bliss self-contained, is for the Gods; men, because of the less noble part subjoined in them, must needs seek happiness throughout all their being and not merely in some one part; if the one constituent be troubled, the other, answering to its associate's distress, must perforce suffer hindrance in its own activity. There is nothing but to cut away the body or the body's sensitive life and so secure that self-contained unity essential to happiness."

Now if happiness did indeed require freedom from pain, sickness, misfortune, disaster, it would be utterly denied to anyone confronted by such trials: but if it lies in the fruition of the Authentic Good, why turn away from this Term and look to means, imagining that to be happy a man must need a variety of things none of which enter into happiness? If, in fact, felicity were made up by heaping together all that is at once desirable and necessary we must bid for these also. But if the Term must be one and not many; if in other words our quest is of a Term and not of Terms; that only can be elected which is ultimate and noblest, that which calls to the tenderest longings of the soul.

The quest and will of the Soul are not pointed directly towards freedom from this sphere: the reason which disciplines away our concern about this life has no fundamental quarrel with things of this order; it merely resents their interference; sometimes, even, it must seek them; essentially all the aspiration is not so much away from evil as towards the Soul's own highest and noblest: this attained, all is won and there is rest — and this is the veritably willed state of life.

There can be no such thing as "willing" the acquirement of necessities, if Will is to be taken in its strict sense, and not misapplied to the mere recognition of need.

It is certain that we shrink from the unpleasant, and such shrinking is assuredly not what we should have willed; to have no occasion for any such shrinking would be much nearer to our taste; but the things we seek tell the story as soon as they are ours. For instance, health and freedom from pain; which of these has any great charm? As long as we possess them, we set no store upon them.

Anything which, present, has no charm and adds nothing to happiness, which when lacking is desired because of the presence of an annoying opposite, may

reasonably be called a necessity but not a Good.

Such things can never make part of our final object: our Term must be such that though these pleasanter conditions be absent and their contraries present, it shall remain, still, intact.

Then why are these conditions sought and their contraries repelled by the man established in happiness?

Here is our answer:

These more pleasant conditions cannot, it is true, add any particle towards the Sage's felicity: but they do serve towards the integrity of his being, while the presence of the contraries tends against his Being or complicates the Term: it is not that the Sage can be so easily deprived of the Term achieved but simply that he that holds the highest good desires to have that alone, not something else at the same time, something which, though it cannot banish the Good by its incoming, does yet take place by its side.

In any case if the man that has attained felicity meets some turn of fortune that he would not have chosen, there is not the slightest lessening of his happiness for that. If there were, his felicity would be veering or falling from day to day; the death of a child would bring him down, or the loss of some trivial possession. No: a thousand mischances and disappointments may befall him and leave him still in the tranquil possession of the Term.

But, they cry, great disasters, not the petty daily chances!

What human thing, then, is great, so as not to be despised by one who has mounted above all we know here, and is bound now no longer to anything below?

If the Sage thinks all fortunate events, however momentous, to be no great matter — kingdom and the rule over cities and peoples, colonisations and the founding of states, even though all be his own handiwork — how can he take any great account of the vacillations of power or the ruin of his fatherland? Certainly if he thought any such event a great disaster, or any disaster at all, he must be of a very strange way of thinking. One that sets great store by wood and stones, or . . . Zeus . . . by mortality among mortals cannot yet be the Sage, whose estimate of death, we hold, must be that it is better than life in the body.

But suppose that he himself is offered a victim in sacrifice?

Can he think it an evil to die beside the altars?

But if he go unburied?

Wheresoever it lie, under earth or over earth, his body will always rot.

But if he has been hidden away, not with costly ceremony but in an unnamed grave, not counted worthy of a towering monument?

The littleness of it!

But if he falls into his enemies' hands, into prison?

There is always the way towards escape, if none towards well-being.

But if his nearest be taken from him, his sons and daughters dragged away to captivity?

What then, we ask, if he had died without witnessing the wrong? Could he have quitted the world in the calm conviction that nothing of all this could happen? He must be very shallow. Can he fail to see that it is possible for such calamities to overtake his household, and does he cease to be a happy man for the knowledge of what may occur? In the knowledge of the possibility he may be at ease; so, too, when the evil has come about.

He would reflect that the nature of this All is such as brings these things to pass and man must bow the head.

Besides in many cases captivity will certainly prove an advantage; and those that suffer have their freedom in their hands: if they stay, either there is reason in their staying, and then they have no real grievance, or they stay against reason, when they should not, and then they have themselves to blame. Clearly the absurdities of his neighbours, however near, cannot plunge the Sage into evil: his state cannot hang upon the fortunes good or bad of any other men.

As for violent personal sufferings, he will carry them off as well as he can; if they overpass his endurance they will carry him off.

And so in all his pain he asks no pity: there is always the radiance in the inner soul of the man, untroubled like the light in a lantern when fierce gusts beat about it in a wild turmoil of wind and tempest.

But what if he be put beyond himself? What if pain grow so intense and so torture him that the agony all but kills? Well, when he is put to torture he will plan what is to be done: he retains his freedom of action.

Besides we must remember that the Sage sees things very differently from the average man; neither ordinary experiences nor pains and sorrows, whether touching himself or others, pierce to the inner hold. To allow them any such passage would be a weakness in our soul.

And it is a sign of weakness, too, if we should think it gain not to hear of miseries, gain to die before they come: this is not concern for others' welfare but for our own peace of mind. Here we see our imperfection: we must not indulge it, we must put it from us and cease to tremble over what perhaps may be.

Anyone that says that it is in human nature to grieve over misfortune to our household must learn that this is not so with all, and that, precisely, it is virtue's use to raise the general level of nature towards the better and finer, above the mass of men. And the finer is to set at nought what terrifies the common mind.

We cannot be indolent: this is an arena for the powerful combatant holding his ground against the blows of fortune, and knowing that, sore though they be to some natures, they are little to his, nothing dreadful, nursery terrors.

So, the Sage would have desired misfortune?

It is precisely to meet the undesired when it appears that he has the virtue which gives him, to confront it, his passionless and unshakeable soul.

But when he is out of himself, reason quenched by sickness or by magic arts?

If it be allowed that in this state, resting as it were in a slumber, he remains a Sage, why should he not equally remain happy? No one rules him out of felicity in the hours of sleep; no one counts up that time and so denies that he has been happy all his life.

If they say that, failing consciousness, he is no longer the Sage, then they are no longer reasoning about the Sage: but we do suppose a Sage, and are enquiring whether, as long as he is the Sage, he is in the state of felicity.

“Well, a Sage let him remain,” they say, “still, having no sensation and not expressing his virtue in act, how can he be happy?”

But a man unconscious of his health may be, none the less, healthy: a man may not be aware of his personal attraction, but he remains handsome none the less: if he has no sense of his wisdom, shall he be any the less wise?

It may perhaps be urged that sensation and consciousness are essential to wisdom and that happiness is only wisdom brought to act.

Now, this argument might have weight if prudence, wisdom, were something fetched in from outside: but this is not so: wisdom is, in its essential nature, an Authentic-Existence, or rather is The Authentic-Existent — and this Existent does not perish in one asleep or, to take the particular case presented to us, in the man out of his mind: the Act of this Existent is continuous within him; and is a sleepless activity: the Sage, therefore, even unconscious, is still the Sage in Act.

This activity is screened not from the man entire but merely from one part of him: we have here a parallel to what happens in the activity of the physical or vegetative life in us which is not made known by the sensitive faculty to the rest of the man: if our physical life really constituted the “We,” its Act would be our Act: but, in the fact, this physical life is not the “We”; the “We” is the activity of the Intellectual-Principle so that when the Intellective is in Act we are in Act.

Perhaps the reason this continuous activity remains unperceived is that it has no touch whatever with things of sense. No doubt action upon material things, or action dictated by them, must proceed through the sensitive faculty which exists for that use: but why should there not be an immediate activity of the Intellectual-Principle and of the soul that attends it, the soul that antedates sensation or any perception? For, if Intellection and Authentic-Existence are identical, this “Earlier-than-perception” must be a thing having Act.

Let us explain the conditions under which we become conscious of this Intellective-Act.

When the Intellect is in upward orientation that [lower part of it] which contains [or, corresponds to] the life of the Soul, is, so to speak, flung down again and becomes like the reflection resting on the smooth and shining surface of a mirror; in this illustration, when the mirror is in place the image

appears but, though the mirror be absent or out of gear, all that would have acted and produced an image still exists; so in the case of the Soul; when there is peace in that within us which is capable of reflecting the images of the Rational and Intellectual-Principles these images appear. Then, side by side with the primal knowledge of the activity of the Rational and the Intellectual-Principles, we have also as it were a sense-perception of their operation.

When, on the contrary, the mirror within is shattered through some disturbance of the harmony of the body, Reason and the Intellectual-Principle act unpictured: Intellection is unattended by imagination.

In sum we may safely gather that while the Intellective-Act may be attended by the Imaging Principle, it is not to be confounded with it.

And even in our conscious life we can point to many noble activities, of mind and of hand alike, which at the time in no way compel our consciousness. A reader will often be quite unconscious when he is most intent: in a feat of courage there can be no sense either of the brave action or of the fact that all that is done conforms to the rules of courage. And so in cases beyond number.

So that it would even seem that consciousness tends to blunt the activities upon which it is exercised, and that in the degree in which these pass unobserved they are purer and have more effect, more vitality, and that, consequently, the Sage arrived at this state has the truer fulness of life, life not spilled out in sensation but gathered closely within itself.

We shall perhaps be told that in such a state the man is no longer alive: we answer that these people show themselves equally unable to understand his inner life and his happiness.

If this does not satisfy them, we must ask them to keep in mind a living Sage and, under these terms, to enquire whether the man is in happiness: they must not whittle away his life and then ask whether he has the happy life; they must not take away man and then look for the happiness of a man: once they allow that the Sage lives within, they must not seek him among the outer activities, still less look to the outer world for the object of his desires. To consider the outer world to be a field to his desire, to fancy the Sage desiring any good external, would be to deny Substantial-Existence to happiness; for the Sage would like to see all men prosperous and no evil befalling anyone; but though

it prove otherwise, he is still content.

If it be admitted that such a desire would be against reason, since evil cannot cease to be, there is no escape from agreeing with us that the Sage's will is set always and only inward.

The pleasure demanded for the life cannot be in the enjoyments of the licentious or in any gratifications of the body — there is no place for these, and they stifle happiness — nor in any violent emotions — what could so move the Sage? — it can be only such pleasure as there must be where Good is, pleasure that does not rise from movement and is not a thing of process, for all that is good is immediately present to the Sage and the Sage is present to himself: his pleasure, his contentment, stands, immovable.

Thus he is ever cheerful, the order of his life ever untroubled: his state is fixedly happy and nothing whatever of all that is known as evil can set it awry — given only that he is and remains a Sage.

If anyone seeks for some other kind of pleasure in the life of the Sage, it is not the life of the Sage he is looking for.

The characteristic activities are not hindered by outer events but merely adapt themselves, remaining always fine, and perhaps all the finer for dealing with the actual. When he has to handle particular cases and things, he may not be able to put his vision into act without searching and thinking, but the one greatest principle is ever present to him, like a part of his being — most of all present, should he be even a victim in the much-talked-of Bull of Phalaris. No doubt, despite all that has been said, it is idle to pretend that this is an agreeable lodging; but what cries in the Bull is the thing that feels the torture; in the Sage there is something else as well, The Self-Gathered which, as long as it holds itself by main force within itself, can never be robbed of the vision of the All-Good.

For man, and especially the Sage, is not the Couplement of soul and body: the proof is that man can be disengaged from the body and disdain its nominal goods.

It would be absurd to think that happiness begins and ends with the living-body: happiness is the possession of the good of life: it is centred therefore in Soul, is an Act of the Soul — and not of all the Soul at that: for it certainly is not characteristic of the vegetative soul, the soul of growth; that

would at once connect it with the body.

A powerful frame, a healthy constitution, even a happy balance of temperament, these surely do not make felicity; in the excess of these advantages there is, even, the danger that the man be crushed down and forced more and more within their power. There must be a sort of counter-pressure in the other direction, towards the noblest: the body must be lessened, reduced, that the veritable man may show forth, the man behind the appearances.

Let the earth-bound man be handsome and powerful and rich, and so apt to this world that he may rule the entire human race: still there can be no envying him, the fool of such lures. Perhaps such splendours could not, from the beginning even, have gathered to the Sage; but if it should happen so, he of his own action will lower his state, if he has any care for his true life; the tyranny of the body he will work down or wear away by inattention to its claims; the rulership he will lay aside. While he will safeguard his bodily health, he will not wish to be wholly untried in sickness, still less never to feel pain: if such troubles should not come to him of themselves, he will wish to know them, during youth at least: in old age, it is true, he will desire neither pains nor pleasures to hamper him; he will desire nothing of this world, pleasant or painful; his one desire will be to know nothing of the body. If he should meet with pain he will pit against it the powers he holds to meet it; but pleasure and health and ease of life will not mean any increase of happiness to him nor will their contraries destroy or lessen it.

When in the one subject, a positive can add nothing, how can the negative take away?

But suppose two wise men, one of them possessing all that is supposed to be naturally welcome, while the other meets only with the very reverse: do we assert that they have an equal happiness?

We do, if they are equally wise.

What though the one be favoured in body and in all else that does not help towards wisdom, still less towards virtue, towards the vision of the noblest, towards being the highest, what does all that amount to? The man commanding all such practical advantages cannot flatter himself that he is more truly happy than the man without them: the utmost profusion of such

boons would not help even to make a flute-player.

We discuss the happy man after our own feebleness; we count alarming and grave what his felicity takes lightly: he would be neither wise nor in the state of happiness if he had not quitted all trifling with such things and become as it were another being, having confidence in his own nature, faith that evil can never touch him. In such a spirit he can be fearless through and through; where there is dread, there is not perfect virtue; the man is some sort of a half-thing.

As for any involuntary fear rising in him and taking the judgement by surprise, while his thoughts perhaps are elsewhere, the Sage will attack it and drive it out; he will, so to speak, calm the refractory child within him, whether by reason or by menace, but without passion, as an infant might feel itself rebuked by a glance of severity.

This does not make the Sage unfriendly or harsh: it is to himself and in his own great concern that he is the Sage: giving freely to his intimates of all he has to give, he will be the best of friends by his very union with the Intellectual-Principle.

Those that refuse to place the Sage aloft in the Intellectual Realm but drag him down to the accidental, dreading accident for him, have substituted for the Sage we have in mind another person altogether; they offer us a tolerable sort of man and they assign to him a life of mingled good and ill, a case, after all, not easy to conceive. But admitting the possibility of such a mixed state, it could not be deserved to be called a life of happiness; it misses the Great, both in the dignity of Wisdom and in the integrity of Good. The life of true happiness is not a thing of mixture. And Plato rightly taught that he who is to be wise and to possess happiness draws his good from the Supreme, fixing his gaze on That, becoming like to That, living by That.

He can care for no other Term than That: all else he will attend to only as he might change his residence, not in expectation of any increase to his settled felicity, but simply in a reasonable attention to the differing conditions surrounding him as he lives here or there.

He will give to the body all that he sees to be useful and possible, but he himself remains a member of another order, not prevented from abandoning the body, necessarily leaving it at nature's hour, he himself always the master

to decide in its regard.

Thus some part of his life considers exclusively the Soul's satisfaction; the rest is not immediately for the Term's sake and not for his own sake, but for the thing bound up with him, the thing which he tends and bears with as the musician cares for his lyre, as long as it can serve him: when the lyre fails him, he will change it, or will give up lyre and lyring, as having another craft now, one that needs no lyre, and then he will let it rest unregarded at his side while he sings on without an instrument. But it was not idly that the instrument was given him in the beginning: he has found it useful until now, many a time.

Fifth Tractate.

Happiness and Extension of Time.

Is it possible to think that Happiness increases with Time, Happiness which is always taken as a present thing?

The memory of former felicity may surely be ruled out of count, for Happiness is not a thing of words, but a definite condition which must be actually present like the very fact and act of life.

It may be objected that our will towards living and towards expressive activity is constant, and that each attainment of such expression is an increase in Happiness.

But in the first place, by this reckoning every to-morrow's well-being will be greater than to-day's, every later instalment successively larger than an earlier; at once time supplants moral excellence as the measure of felicity.

Then again the Gods to-day must be happier than of old: and their bliss, too, is not perfect, will never be perfect. Further, when the will attains what it was seeking, it attains something present: the quest is always for something to be actually present until a standing felicity is definitely achieved. The will to life which is will to Existence aims at something present, since Existence must be a stably present thing. Even when the act of the will is directed towards the future, and the furthest future, its object is an actually present having and being: there is no concern about what is passed or to come: the future state a man seeks is to be a now to him; he does not care about the forever: he asks that an actual present be actually present.

Yes, but if the well-being has lasted a long time, if that present spectacle has been a longer time before the eyes?

If in the greater length of time the man has seen more deeply, time has certainly done something for him, but if all the process has brought him no further vision, then one glance would give all he has had.

Still the one life has known pleasure longer than the other?

But pleasure cannot be fairly reckoned in with Happiness — unless indeed by pleasure is meant the unhindered Act [of the true man], in which case this pleasure is simply our “Happiness.” And even pleasure, though it exist continuously, has never anything but the present; its past is over and done with.

We are asked to believe, then, it will be objected, that if one man has been happy from first to last, another only at the last, and a third, beginning with happiness, has lost it, their shares are equal?

This is straying from the question: we were comparing the happy among themselves: now we are asked to compare the not-happy at the time when they are out of happiness with those in actual possession of happiness. If these last are better off, they are so as men in possession of happiness against men without it and their advantage is always by something in the present.

Well, but take the unhappy man: must not increase of time bring an increase of his unhappiness? Do not all troubles — long-lasting pains, sorrows, and everything of that type — yield a greater sum of misery in the longer time? And if thus in misery the evil is augmented by time why should not time equally augment happiness when all is well?

In the matter of sorrows and pains there is, no doubt, ground for saying that time brings increase: for example, in a lingering malady the evil hardens into a state, and as time goes on the body is brought lower and lower. But if the constitution did not deteriorate, if the mischief grew no worse, then, here too, there would be no trouble but that of the present moment: we cannot tell the past into the tale of unhappiness except in the sense that it has gone to make up an actually existing state — in the sense that, the evil in the sufferer’s condition having been extended over a longer time, the mischief has gained ground. The increase of ill-being then is due to the aggravation of the malady not to the extension of time.

It may be pointed out also that this greater length of time is not a thing existent at any given moment; and surely a “more” is not to be made out by adding to something actually present something that has passed away.

No: true happiness is not vague and fluid: it is an unchanging state.

If there is in this matter any increase besides that of mere time, it is in the sense that a greater happiness is the reward of a higher virtue: this is not counting up to the credit of happiness the years of its continuance; it is simply noting the high-water mark once for all attained.

But if we are to consider only the present and may not call in the past to make the total, why do we not reckon so in the case of time itself, where, in fact, we do not hesitate to add the past to the present and call the total greater? Why not suppose a quantity of happiness equivalent to a quantity of time? This would be no more than taking it lap by lap to correspond with time-laps instead of choosing to consider it as an indivisible, measurable only by the content of a given instant.

There is no absurdity in taking count of time which has ceased to be: we are merely counting what is past and finished, as we might count the dead: but to treat past happiness as actually existent and as outweighing present happiness, that is an absurdity. For Happiness must be an achieved and existent state, whereas any time over and apart from the present is nonexistent: all progress of time means the extinction of all the time that has been.

Hence time is aptly described as a mimic of eternity that seeks to break up in its fragmentary flight the permanence of its exemplar. Thus whatever time seizes and seals to itself of what stands permanent in eternity is annihilated — saved only in so far as in some degree it still belongs to eternity, but wholly destroyed if it be unreservedly absorbed into time.

If Happiness demands the possession of the good of life, it clearly has to do with the life of Authentic-Existence for that life is the Best. Now the life of Authentic-Existence is measurable not by time but by eternity; and eternity is not a more or a less or a thing of any magnitude but is the unchangeable, the indivisible, is timeless Being.

We must not muddle together Being and Non-Being, time and eternity, not even everlasting time with the eternal; we cannot make laps and stages of an absolute unity; all must be taken together, wheresoever and howsoever we

handle it; and it must be taken at that, not even as an undivided block of time but as the Life of Eternity, a stretch not made up of periods but completely rounded, outside of all notion of time.

It may be urged that the actual presence of past experiences, kept present by Memory, gives the advantage to the man of the longer felicity.

But, Memory of what sort of experiences?

Memory either of formerly attained wisdom and virtue — in which case we have a better man and the argument from memory is given up — or memory of past pleasures, as if the man that has arrived at felicity must roam far and wide in search of gratifications and is not contented by the bliss actually within him.

And what is there pleasant in the memory of pleasure? What is it to recall yesterday's excellent dinner? Still more ridiculous, one of ten years ago. So, too, of last year's morality.

But is there not something to be said for the memory of the various forms of beauty?

That is the resource of a man whose life is without beauty in the present, so that, for lack of it now, he grasps at the memory of what has been.

But, it may be said, length of time produces an abundance of good actions missed by the man whose attainment of the happy state is recent — if indeed we can think at all of a state of happiness where good actions have been few.

Now to make multiplicity, whether in time or in action, essential to Happiness is to put it together by combining non-existents, represented by the past, with some one thing that actually is. This consideration it was that led us at the very beginning to place Happiness in the actually existent and on that basis to launch our enquiry as to whether the higher degree was determined by the longer time. It might be thought that the Happiness of longer date must surpass the shorter by virtue of the greater number of acts it included.

But, to begin with, men quite outside of the active life may attain the state of felicity, and not in a less but in a greater degree than men of affairs.

Secondly, the good does not derive from the act itself but from the inner disposition which prompts the noble conduct: the wise and good man in his very action harvests the good not by what he does but by what he is.

A wicked man no less than a Sage may save the country, and the good of the act is for all alike, no matter whose was the saving hand. The contentment of the Sage does not hang upon such actions and events: it is his own inner habit that creates at once his felicity and whatever pleasure may accompany it.

To put Happiness in actions is to put it in things that are outside virtue and outside the Soul; for the Soul's expression is not in action but in wisdom, in a contemplative operation within itself; and this, this alone, is Happiness.

Sixth Tractate.

Beauty.

Beauty addresses itself chiefly to sight; but there is a beauty for the hearing too, as in certain combinations of words and in all kinds of music, for melodies and cadences are beautiful; and minds that lift themselves above the realm of sense to a higher order are aware of beauty in the conduct of life, in actions, in character, in the pursuits of the intellect; and there is the beauty of the virtues. What loftier beauty there may be, yet, our argument will bring to light.

What, then, is it that gives comeliness to material forms and draws the ear to the sweetness perceived in sounds, and what is the secret of the beauty there is in all that derives from Soul?

Is there some One Principle from which all take their grace, or is there a beauty peculiar to the embodied and another for the bodiless? Finally, one or many, what would such a Principle be?

Consider that some things, material shapes for instance, are gracious not by anything inherent but by something communicated, while others are lovely of themselves, as, for example, Virtue.

The same bodies appear sometimes beautiful, sometimes not; so that there is a good deal between being body and being beautiful.

What, then, is this something that shows itself in certain material forms? This is the natural beginning of our enquiry.

What is it that attracts the eyes of those to whom a beautiful object is presented, and calls them, lures them, towards it, and fills them with joy at the sight? If we possess ourselves of this, we have at once a standpoint for the wider survey.

Almost everyone declares that the symmetry of parts towards each other and towards a whole, with, besides, a certain charm of colour, constitutes the beauty recognized by the eye, that in visible things, as indeed in all else, universally, the beautiful thing is essentially symmetrical, patterned.

But think what this means.

Only a compound can be beautiful, never anything devoid of parts; and only a whole; the several parts will have beauty, not in themselves, but only as working together to give a comely total. Yet beauty in an aggregate demands beauty in details; it cannot be constructed out of ugliness; its law must run throughout.

All the loveliness of colour and even the light of the sun, being devoid of parts and so not beautiful by symmetry, must be ruled out of the realm of beauty. And how comes gold to be a beautiful thing? And lightning by night, and the stars, why are these so fair?

In sounds also the simple must be proscribed, though often in a whole noble composition each several tone is delicious in itself.

Again since the one face, constant in symmetry, appears sometimes fair and sometimes not, can we doubt that beauty is something more than symmetry, that symmetry itself owes its beauty to a remoter principle?

Turn to what is attractive in methods of life or in the expression of thought; are we to call in symmetry here? What symmetry is to be found in noble conduct, or excellent laws, in any form of mental pursuit?

What symmetry can there be in points of abstract thought?

The symmetry of being accordant with each other? But there may be accordance or entire identity where there is nothing but ugliness: the proposition that honesty is merely a generous artlessness chimes in the most perfect harmony with the proposition that morality means weakness of will; the accordance is complete.

Then again, all the virtues are a beauty of the soul, a beauty authentic beyond any of these others; but how does symmetry enter here? The soul, it is true, is not a simple unity, but still its virtue cannot have the symmetry of size or of number: what standard of measurement could preside over the compromise or the coalescence of the soul's faculties or purposes?

Finally, how by this theory would there be beauty in the Intellectual-Principle, essentially the solitary?

Let us, then, go back to the source, and indicate at once the Principle that bestows beauty on material things.

Undoubtedly this Principle exists; it is something that is perceived at the first glance, something which the soul names as from an ancient knowledge and, recognising, welcomes it, enters into unison with it.

But let the soul fall in with the Ugly and at once it shrinks within itself, denies the thing, turns away from it, not accordant, resenting it.

Our interpretation is that the soul — by the very truth of its nature, by its affiliation to the noblest Existents in the hierarchy of Being — when it sees anything of that kin, or any trace of that kinship, thrills with an immediate delight, takes its own to itself, and thus stirs anew to the sense of its nature and of all its affinity.

But, is there any such likeness between the loveliness of this world and the splendours in the Supreme? Such a likeness in the particulars would make the two orders alike: but what is there in common between beauty here and beauty There?

We hold that all the loveliness of this world comes by communion in Ideal-Form.

All shapelessness whose kind admits of pattern and form, as long as it remains outside of Reason and Idea, is ugly by that very isolation from the Divine-Thought. And this is the Absolute Ugly: an ugly thing is something that has not been entirely mastered by pattern, that is by Reason, the Matter not yielding at all points and in all respects to Ideal-Form.

But where the Ideal-Form has entered, it has grouped and coordinated what from a diversity of parts was to become a unity: it has rallied confusion into co-operation: it has made the sum one harmonious coherence: for the Idea is a unity and what it moulds must come to unity as far as multiplicity may.

And on what has thus been compacted to unity, Beauty enthrones itself, giving itself to the parts as to the sum: when it lights on some natural unity, a thing of like parts, then it gives itself to that whole. Thus, for an illustration, there is the beauty, conferred by craftsmanship, of all a house with all its parts,

and the beauty which some natural quality may give to a single stone.

This, then, is how the material thing becomes beautiful — by communicating in the thought that flows from the Divine.

And the soul includes a faculty peculiarly addressed to Beauty — one incomparably sure in the appreciation of its own, never in doubt whenever any lovely thing presents itself for judgement.

Or perhaps the soul itself acts immediately, affirming the Beautiful where it finds something accordant with the Ideal-Form within itself, using this Idea as a canon of accuracy in its decision.

But what accordance is there between the material and that which antedates all Matter?

On what principle does the architect, when he finds the house standing before him correspondent with his inner ideal of a house, pronounce it beautiful? Is it not that the house before him, the stones apart, is the inner idea stamped upon the mass of exterior matter, the indivisible exhibited in diversity?

So with the perceptive faculty: discerning in certain objects the Ideal-Form which has bound and controlled shapeless matter, opposed in nature to Idea, seeing further stamped upon the common shapes some shape excellent above the common, it gathers into unity what still remains fragmentary, catches it up and carries it within, no longer a thing of parts, and presents it to the Ideal-Principle as something concordant and congenial, a natural friend: the joy here is like that of a good man who discerns in a youth the early signs of a virtue consonant with the achieved perfection within his own soul.

The beauty of colour is also the outcome of a unification: it derives from shape, from the conquest of the darkness inherent in Matter by the pouring-in of light, the unembodied, which is a Rational-Principle and an Ideal-Form.

Hence it is that Fire itself is splendid beyond all material bodies, holding the rank of Ideal-Principle to the other elements, making ever upwards, the subtlest and sprightliest of all bodies, as very near to the unembodied; itself alone admitting no other, all the others penetrated by it: for they take warmth but this is never cold; it has colour primally; they receive the Form of colour from it: hence the splendour of its light, the splendour that belongs to the Idea. And all that has resisted and is but uncertainly held by its light remains

outside of beauty, as not having absorbed the plenitude of the Form of colour.

And harmonies unheard in sound create the harmonies we hear, and wake the soul to the consciousness of beauty, showing it the one essence in another kind: for the measures of our sensible music are not arbitrary but are determined by the Principle whose labour is to dominate Matter and bring pattern into being.

Thus far of the beauties of the realm of sense, images and shadow-pictures, fugitives that have entered into Matter — to adorn, and to ravish, where they are seen.

But there are earlier and loftier beauties than these. In the sense-bound life we are no longer granted to know them, but the soul, taking no help from the organs, sees and proclaims them. To the vision of these we must mount, leaving sense to its own low place.

As it is not for those to speak of the graceful forms of the material world who have never seen them or known their grace — men born blind, let us suppose — in the same way those must be silent upon the beauty of noble conduct and of learning and all that order who have never cared for such things, nor may those tell of the splendour of virtue who have never known the face of Justice and of Moral-Wisdom beautiful beyond the beauty of Evening and of dawn.

Such vision is for those only who see with the Soul's sight — and at the vision, they will rejoice, and awe will fall upon them and a trouble deeper than all the rest could ever stir, for now they are moving in the realm of Truth.

This is the spirit that Beauty must ever induce, wonderment and a delicious trouble, longing and love and a trembling that is all delight. For the unseen all this may be felt as for the seen; and this the Souls feel for it, every soul in some degree, but those the more deeply that are the more truly apt to this higher love — just as all take delight in the beauty of the body but all are not stung as sharply, and those only that feel the keener wound are known as Lovers.

These Lovers, then, lovers of the beauty outside of sense, must be made to declare themselves.

What do you feel in presence of the grace you discern in actions, in manners, in sound morality, in all the works and fruits of virtue, in the beauty of souls? When you see that you yourselves are beautiful within, what do you feel?

What is this Dionysiac exultation that thrills through your being, this straining upwards of all your Soul, this longing to break away from the body and live sunken within the veritable self?

These are no other than the emotions of Souls under the spell of love.

But what is it that awakens all this passion? No shape, no colour, no grandeur of mass: all is for a Soul, something whose beauty rests upon no colour, for the moral wisdom the Soul enshrines and all the other hueless splendour of the virtues. It is that you find in yourself, or admire in another, loftiness of spirit; righteousness of life; disciplined purity; courage of the majestic face; gravity; modesty that goes fearless and tranquil and passionless; and, shining down upon all, the light of god-like Intellection.

All these noble qualities are to be revered and loved, no doubt, but what entitles them to be called beautiful?

They exist: they manifest themselves to us: anyone that sees them must admit that they have reality of Being; and is not Real-Being, really beautiful?

But we have not yet shown by what property in them they have wrought the Soul to loveliness: what is this grace, this splendour as of Light, resting upon all the virtues?

Let us take the contrary, the ugliness of the Soul, and set that against its beauty: to understand, at once, what this ugliness is and how it comes to appear in the Soul will certainly open our way before us.

Let us then suppose an ugly Soul, dissolute, unrighteous: teeming with all the lusts; torn by internal discord; beset by the fears of its cowardice and the envies of its pettiness; thinking, in the little thought it has, only of the perishable and the base; perverse in all its the friend of unclean pleasures; living the life of abandonment to bodily sensation and delighting in its deformity.

What must we think but that all this shame is something that has gathered about the Soul, some foreign bane outraging it, soiling it, so that, encumbered with all manner of turpitude, it has no longer a clean activity or a clean sensation, but commands only a life smouldering dully under the crust of evil; that, sunk in manifold death, it no longer sees what a Soul should see, may no longer rest in its own being, dragged ever as it is towards the outer, the lower, the dark?

An unclean thing, I dare to say; flickering hither and thither at the call of objects of sense, deeply infected with the taint of body, occupied always in Matter, and absorbing Matter into itself; in its commerce with the Ignoble it has trafficked away for an alien nature its own essential Idea.

If a man has been immersed in filth or daubed with mud his native comeliness disappears and all that is seen is the foul stuff besmearing him: his ugly condition is due to alien matter that has encrusted him, and if he is to win back his grace it must be his business to scour and purify himself and make himself what he was.

So, we may justly say, a Soul becomes ugly — by something foisted upon it, by sinking itself into the alien, by a fall, a descent into body, into Matter. The dishonour of the Soul is in its ceasing to be clean and apart. Gold is degraded when it is mixed with earthy particles; if these be worked out, the gold is left and is beautiful, isolated from all that is foreign, gold with gold alone. And so the Soul; let it be but cleared of the desires that come by its too intimate converse with the body, emancipated from all the passions, purged of all that embodiment has thrust upon it, withdrawn, a solitary, to itself again — in that moment the ugliness that came only from the alien is stripped away.

For, as the ancient teaching was, moral-discipline and courage and every virtue, not even excepting Wisdom itself, all is purification.

Hence the Mysteries with good reason adumbrate the immersion of the unpurified in filth, even in the Nether-World, since the unclean loves filth for its very filthiness, and swine foul of body find their joy in foulness.

What else is Sophrosyne, rightly so-called, but to take no part in the pleasures of the body, to break away from them as unclean and unworthy of the clean? So too, Courage is but being fearless of the death which is but the parting of the Soul from the body, an event which no one can dread whose delight is to be his unmingled self. And Magnanimity is but disregard for the lure of things here. And Wisdom is but the Act of the Intellectual-Principle withdrawn from the lower places and leading the Soul to the Above.

The Soul thus cleansed is all Idea and Reason, wholly free of body, intellectual, entirely of that divine order from which the wellspring of Beauty rises and all the race of Beauty.

Hence the Soul heightened to the Intellectual-Principle is beautiful to all its power. For Intellection and all that proceeds from Intellection are the Soul's beauty, a graciousness native to it and not foreign, for only with these is it truly Soul. And it is just to say that in the Soul's becoming a good and beautiful thing is its becoming like to God, for from the Divine comes all the Beauty and all the Good in beings.

We may even say that Beauty is the Authentic-Existents and Ugliness is the Principle contrary to Existence: and the Ugly is also the primal evil; therefore its contrary is at once good and beautiful, or is Good and Beauty: and hence the one method will discover to us the Beauty-Good and the Ugliness-Evil.

And Beauty, this Beauty which is also The Good, must be posed as The First: directly deriving from this First is the Intellectual-Principle which is pre-eminently the manifestation of Beauty; through the Intellectual-Principle Soul is beautiful. The beauty in things of a lower order-actions and pursuits for instance — comes by operation of the shaping Soul which is also the author of the beauty found in the world of sense. For the Soul, a divine thing, a fragment as it were of the Primal Beauty, makes beautiful to the fulness of their capacity all things whatsoever that it grasps and moulds.

Therefore we must ascend again towards the Good, the desired of every Soul. Anyone that has seen This, knows what I intend when I say that it is beautiful. Even the desire of it is to be desired as a Good. To attain it is for those that will take the upward path, who will set all their forces towards it, who will divest themselves of all that we have put on in our descent: — so, to those that approach the Holy Celebrations of the Mysteries, there are appointed purifications and the laying aside of the garments worn before, and the entry in nakedness — until, passing, on the upward way, all that is other than the God, each in the solitude of himself shall behold that solitary-dwelling Existence, the Apart, the Unmingled, the Pure, that from Which all things depend, for Which all look and live and act and know, the Source of Life and of Intellection and of Being.

And one that shall know this vision — with what passion of love shall he not be seized, with what pang of desire, what longing to be molten into one with This, what wondering delight! If he that has never seen this Being must hunger for It as for all his welfare, he that has known must love and reverence It as the

very Beauty; he will be flooded with awe and gladness, stricken by a salutary terror; he loves with a veritable love, with sharp desire; all other loves than this he must despise, and disdain all that once seemed fair.

This, indeed, is the mood even of those who, having witnessed the manifestation of Gods or Supernals, can never again feel the old delight in the comeliness of material forms: what then are we to think of one that contemplates Absolute Beauty in Its essential integrity, no accumulation of flesh and matter, no dweller on earth or in the heavens — so perfect Its purity — far above all such things in that they are non-essential, composite, not primal but descending from This?

Beholding this Being — the Choragos of all Existence, the Self-Intent that ever gives forth and never takes — resting, rapt, in the vision and possession of so lofty a loveliness, growing to Its likeness, what Beauty can the soul yet lack? For This, the Beauty supreme, the absolute, and the primal, fashions Its lovers to Beauty and makes them also worthy of love.

And for This, the sternest and the uttermost combat is set before the Souls; all our labour is for This, lest we be left without part in this noblest vision, which to attain is to be blessed in the blissful sight, which to fail of is to fail utterly.

For not he that has failed of the joy that is in colour or in visible forms, not he that has failed of power or of honours or of kingdom has failed, but only he that has failed of only This, for Whose winning he should renounce kingdoms and command over earth and ocean and sky, if only, spurning the world of sense from beneath his feet, and straining to This, he may see.

But what must we do? How lies the path? How come to vision of the inaccessible Beauty, dwelling as if in consecrated precincts, apart from the common ways where all may see, even the profane?

He that has the strength, let him arise and withdraw into himself, foregoing all that is known by the eyes, turning away for ever from the material beauty that once made his joy. When he perceives those shapes of grace that show in body, let him not pursue: he must know them for copies, vestiges, shadows, and hasten away towards That they tell of. For if anyone follow what is like a beautiful shape playing over water — is there not a myth telling in symbol of such a dupe, how he sank into the depths of the current and was swept away to nothingness? So too, one that is held by material beauty and will not break

free shall be precipitated, not in body but in Soul, down to the dark depths loathed of the Intellective-Being, where, blind even in the Lower-World, he shall have commerce only with shadows, there as here.

“Let us flee then to the beloved Fatherland”: this is the soundest counsel. But what is this flight? How are we to gain the open sea? For Odysseus is surely a parable to us when he commands the flight from the sorceries of Circe or Calypso — not content to linger for all the pleasure offered to his eyes and all the delight of sense filling his days.

The Fatherland to us is There whence we have come, and There is The Father.

What then is our course, what the manner of our flight? This is not a journey for the feet; the feet bring us only from land to land; nor need you think of coach or ship to carry you away; all this order of things you must set aside and refuse to see: you must close the eyes and call instead upon another vision which is to be waked within you, a vision, the birth-right of all, which few turn to use.

And this inner vision, what is its operation?

Newly awakened it is all too feeble to bear the ultimate splendour. Therefore the Soul must be trained — to the habit of remarking, first, all noble pursuits, then the works of beauty produced not by the labour of the arts but by the virtue of men known for their goodness: lastly, you must search the souls of those that have shaped these beautiful forms.

But how are you to see into a virtuous soul and know its loveliness?

Withdraw into yourself and look. And if you do not find yourself beautiful yet, act as does the creator of a statue that is to be made beautiful: he cuts away here, he smooths there, he makes this line lighter, this other purer, until a lovely face has grown upon his work. So do you also: cut away all that is excessive, straighten all that is crooked, bring light to all that is overcast, labour to make all one glow of beauty and never cease chiselling your statue, until there shall shine out on you from it the godlike splendour of virtue, until you shall see the perfect goodness surely established in the stainless shrine.

When you know that you have become this perfect work, when you are self-gathered in the purity of your being, nothing now remaining that can shatter that inner unity, nothing from without clinging to the authentic man,

when you find yourself wholly true to your essential nature, wholly that only veritable Light which is not measured by space, not narrowed to any circumscribed form nor again diffused as a thing void of term, but ever unmeasurable as something greater than all measure and more than all quantity — when you perceive that you have grown to this, you are now become very vision: now call up all your confidence, strike forward yet a step — you need a guide no longer — strain, and see.

This is the only eye that sees the mighty Beauty. If the eye that adventures the vision be dimmed by vice, impure, or weak, and unable in its cowardly blenching to see the uttermost brightness, then it sees nothing even though another point to what lies plain to sight before it. To any vision must be brought an eye adapted to what is to be seen, and having some likeness to it. Never did eye see the sun unless it had first become sunlike, and never can the soul have vision of the First Beauty unless itself be beautiful.

Therefore, first let each become godlike and each beautiful who cares to see God and Beauty. So, mounting, the Soul will come first to the Intellectual-Principle and survey all the beautiful Ideas in the Supreme and will avow that this is Beauty, that the Ideas are Beauty. For by their efficacy comes all Beauty else, but the offspring and essence of the Intellectual-Being. What is beyond the Intellectual-Principle we affirm to be the nature of Good radiating Beauty before it. So that, treating the Intellectual-Kosmos as one, the first is the Beautiful: if we make distinction there, the Realm of Ideas constitutes the Beauty of the Intellectual Sphere; and The Good, which lies beyond, is the Fountain at once and Principle of Beauty: the Primal Good and the Primal Beauty have the one dwelling-place and, thus, always, Beauty's seat is There.

Seventh Tractate.

On the Primal Good and Secondary Forms of Good

[OTHERWISE, "ON HAPPINESS"].

We can scarcely conceive that for any entity the Good can be other than the natural Act expressing its life-force, or in the case of an entity made up of parts the Act, appropriate, natural and complete, expressive of that in it which is best.

For the Soul, then, the Good is its own natural Act.

But the Soul itself is natively a “Best”; if, further, its act be directed towards the Best, the achievement is not merely the “Soul’s good” but “The Good” without qualification.

Now, given an Existent which — as being itself the best of existences and even transcending the existences — directs its Act towards no other, but is the object to which the Act of all else is directed, it is clear that this must be at once the Good and the means through which all else may participate in Good.

This Absolute Good other entities may possess in two ways — by becoming like to It and by directing the Act of their being towards It.

Now, if all aspiration and Act whatsoever are directed towards the Good, it follows that the Essential-Good neither need nor can look outside itself or aspire to anything other than itself: it can but remain unmoved, as being, in the constitution of things, the wellspring and firstcause of all Act: whatsoever in other entities is of the nature of Good cannot be due to any Act of the Essential-Good upon them; it is for them on the contrary to act towards their source and cause. The Good must, then, be the Good not by any Act, not even by virtue of its Intellection, but by its very rest within Itself.

Existing beyond and above Being, it must be beyond and above the Intellectual-Principle and all Intellection.

For, again, that only can be named the Good to which all is bound and itself to none: for only thus is it veritably the object of all aspiration. It must be unmoved, while all circles around it, as a circumference around a centre from which all the radii proceed. Another example would be the sun, central to the light which streams from it and is yet linked to it, or at least is always about it, irremoveably; try all you will to separate the light from the sun, or the sun from its light, for ever the light is in the sun.

But the Universe outside; how is it aligned towards the Good?

The soulless by direction toward Soul: Soul towards the Good itself, through the Intellectual-Principle.

Everything has something of the Good, by virtue of possessing a certain degree of unity and a certain degree of Existence and by participation in Ideal-Form: to the extent of the Unity, Being, and Form which are present, there is a

sharing in an image, for the Unity and Existence in which there is participation are no more than images of the Ideal-Form.

With Soul it is different; the First-Soul, that which follows upon the Intellectual-Principle, possesses a life nearer to the Verity and through that Principle is of the nature of good; it will actually possess the Good if it orientate itself towards the Intellectual-Principle, since this follows immediately upon the Good.

In sum, then, life is the Good to the living, and the Intellectual-Principle to what is intellective; so that where there is life with intellection there is a double contact with the Good.

But if life is a good, is there good for all that lives?

No: in the vile, life limps: it is like the eye to the dim-sighted; it fails of its task.

But if the mingled strand of life is to us, though entwined with evil, still in the total a good, must not death be an evil?

Evil to What? There must be a subject for the evil: but if the possible subject is no longer among beings, or, still among beings, is devoid of life . . . why, a stone is not more immune.

If, on the contrary, after death life and soul continue, then death will be no evil but a good; Soul, disembodied, is the freer to ply its own Act.

If it be taken into the All-Soul — what evil can reach it There? And as the Gods are possessed of Good and untouched by evil — so, certainly is the Soul that has preserved its essential character. And if it should lose its purity, the evil it experiences is not in its death but in its life. Suppose it to be under punishment in the lower world, even there the evil thing is its life and not its death; the misfortune is still life, a life of a definite character.

Life is a partnership of a Soul and body; death is the dissolution; in either life or death, then, the Soul will feel itself at home.

But, again, if life is good, how can death be anything but evil?

Remember that the good of life, where it has any good at all, is not due to anything in the partnership but to the repelling of evil by virtue; death, then, must be the greater good.

In a word, life in the body is of itself an evil but the Soul enters its Good through Virtue, not living the life of the Couplement but holding itself apart, even here.

Eighth Tractate.

On the Nature and Source of Evil.

Those enquiring whence Evil enters into beings, or rather into a certain order of beings, would be making the best beginning if they established, first of all, what precisely Evil is, what constitutes its Nature. At once we should know whence it comes, where it has its native seat and where it is present merely as an accident; and there would be no further question as to whether it has Authentic-Existence.

But a difficulty arises. By what faculty in us could we possibly know Evil?

All knowing comes by likeness. The Intellectual-Principle and the Soul, being Ideal-Forms, would know Ideal-Forms and would have a natural tendency towards them; but who could imagine Evil to be an Ideal-Form, seeing that it manifests itself as the very absence of Good?

If the solution is that the one act of knowing covers contraries, and that as Evil is the contrary to Good the one act would grasp Good and Evil together, then to know Evil there must be first a clear perception and understanding of Good, since the nobler existences precede the baser and are Ideal-Forms while the less good hold no such standing, are nearer to Non-Being.

No doubt there is a question in what precise way Good is contrary to Evil — whether it is as First-Principle to last of things or as Ideal-Form to utter Lack: but this subject we postpone.

For the moment let us define the nature of the Good as far as the immediate purpose demands.

The Good is that on which all else depends, towards which all Existences aspire as to their source and their need, while Itself is without need, sufficient to Itself, aspiring to no other, the measure and Term of all, giving out from itself the Intellectual-Principle and Existence and Soul and Life and all Intellective-Act.

All until The Good is reached is beautiful; The Good is beyond-beautiful, beyond the Highest, holding kingly state in the Intellectual-Kosmos, that sphere constituted by a Principle wholly unlike what is known as Intelligence in us. Our intelligence is nourished on the propositions of logic, is skilled in following discussions, works by reasonings, examines links of demonstration, and comes to know the world of Being also by the steps of logical process, having no prior grasp of Reality but remaining empty, all Intelligence though it be, until it has put itself to school.

The Intellectual-Principle we are discussing is not of such a kind: It possesses all: It is all: It is present to all by Its self-presence: It has all by other means than having, for what It possesses is still Itself, nor does any particular of all within It stand apart; for every such particular is the whole and in all respects all, while yet not confused in the mass but still distinct, apart to the extent that any participant in the Intellectual-Principle participates not in the entire as one thing but in whatsoever lies within its own reach.

And the First Act is the Act of The Good stationary within Itself, and the First Existence is the self-contained Existence of The Good; but there is also an Act upon It, that of the Intellectual-Principle which, as it were, lives about It.

And the Soul, outside, circles around the Intellectual-Principle, and by gazing upon it, seeing into the depths of It, through It sees God.

Such is the untroubled, the blissful, life of divine beings, and Evil has no place in it; if this were all, there would be no Evil but Good only, the first, the second and the third Good. All, thus far, is with the King of All, unfailing Cause of Good and Beauty and controller of all; and what is Good in the second degree depends upon the Second-Principle and tertiary Good upon the Third.

If such be the Nature of Beings and of That which transcends all the realm of Being, Evil cannot have place among Beings or in the Beyond-Being; these are good.

There remains, only, if Evil exist at all, that it be situate in the realm of Non-Being, that it be some mode, as it were, of the Non-Being, that it have its seat in something in touch with Non-Being or to a certain degree communicate in Non-Being.

By this Non-Being, of course, we are not to understand something that simply does not exist, but only something of an utterly different order from Authentic-Being: there is no question here of movement or position with regard to Being; the Non-Being we are thinking of is, rather, an image of Being or perhaps something still further removed than even an image.

Now this [the required faint image of Being] might be the sensible universe with all the impressions it engenders, or it might be something of even later derivation, accidental to the realm of sense, or again, it might be the source of the sense-world or something of the same order entering into it to complete it.

Some conception of it would be reached by thinking of measurelessness as opposed to measure, of the unbounded against bound, the unshaped against a principle of shape, the ever-needy against the self-sufficing: think of the ever-undefined, the never at rest, the all-accepting but never sated, utter dearth; and make all this character not mere accident in it but its equivalent for essential-being, so that, whatsoever fragment of it be taken, that part is all lawless void, while whatever participates in it and resembles it becomes evil, though not of course to the point of being, as itself is, Evil-Absolute.

In what substantial-form [hypostasis] then is all this to be found — not as accident but as the very substance itself?

For if Evil can enter into other things, it must have in a certain sense a prior existence, even though it may not be an essence. As there is Good, the Absolute, as well as Good, the quality, so, together with the derived evil entering into something not itself, there must be the Absolute Evil.

But how? Can there be Unmeasure apart from an unmeasured object?

Does not Measure exist apart from unmeasured things? Precisely as there is Measure apart from anything measured, so there is Unmeasure apart from the unmeasured. If Unmeasure could not exist independently, it must exist either in an unmeasured object or in something measured; but the unmeasured could not need Unmeasure and the measured could not contain it.

There must, then, be some Undetermination-Absolute, some Absolute Formlessness; all the qualities cited as characterizing the Nature of Evil must be summed under an Absolute Evil; and every evil thing outside of this must either contain this Absolute by saturation or have taken the character of evil and become a cause of evil by consecration to this Absolute.

What will this be?

That Kind whose place is below all the patterns, forms, shapes, measurements and limits, that which has no trace of good by any title of its own, but [at best] takes order and grace from some Principle outside itself, a mere image as regards Absolute-Being but the Authentic Essence of Evil — in so far as Evil can have Authentic Being. In such a Kind, Reason recognizes the Primal Evil, Evil Absolute.

The bodily Kind, in that it partakes of Matter is an evil thing. What form is in bodies is an untrue-form: they are without life: by their own natural disorderly movement they make away with each other; they are hindrances to the soul in its proper Act; in their ceaseless flux they are always slipping away from Being.

Soul, on the contrary, since not every Soul is evil, is not an evil Kind.

What, then, is the evil Soul?

It is, we read, the Soul that has entered into the service of that in which soul-evil is implanted by nature, in whose service the unreasoning phase of the Soul accepts evil — unmeasure, excess and shortcoming, which bring forth licentiousness, cowardice and all other flaws of the Soul, all the states, foreign to the true nature, which set up false judgements, so that the Soul comes to name things good or evil not by their true value but by the mere test of like and dislike.

But what is the root of this evil state? how can it be brought under the causing principle indicated?

Firstly, such a Soul is not apart from Matter, is not purely itself. That is to say, it is touched with Unmeasure, it is shut out from the Forming-Idea that orders and brings to measure, and this because it is merged into a body made of Matter.

Then if the Reasoning-Faculty too has taken hurt, the Soul's seeing is baulked by the passions and by the darkening that Matter brings to it, by its decline into Matter, by its very attention no longer to Essence but to Process — whose principle or source is, again, Matter, the Kind so evil as to saturate with its own pravity even that which is not in it but merely looks towards it.

For, wholly without part in Good, the negation of Good, unmingled Lack, this Matter-Kind makes over to its own likeness whatsoever comes in touch with it.

The Soul wrought to perfection, addressed towards the Intellectual-Principle, is steadfastly pure: it has turned away from Matter; all that is undetermined, that is outside of measure, that is evil, it neither sees nor draws near; it endures in its purity, only, and wholly, determined by the Intellectual-Principle.

The Soul that breaks away from this source of its reality to the non-perfect and non-primal is, as it were, a secondary, an image, to the loyal Soul. By its falling-away — and to the extent of the fall — it is stripped of Determination, becomes wholly indeterminate, sees darkness. Looking to what repels vision, as we look when we are said to see darkness, it has taken Matter into itself.

But, it will be objected, if this seeing and frequenting of the darkness is due to the lack of good, the Soul's evil has its source in that very lack; the darkness will be merely a secondary cause — and at once the Principle of Evil is removed from Matter, is made anterior to Matter.

No: Evil is not in any and every lack; it is in absolute lack. What falls in some degree short of the Good is not Evil; considered in its own kind it might even be perfect, but where there is utter dearth, there we have Essential Evil, void of all share in Good; this is the case with Matter.

Matter has not even existence whereby to have some part in Good: Being is attributed to it by an accident of words: the truth would be that it has Non-Being.

Mere lack brings merely Not-Goodness: Evil demands the absolute lack — though, of course, any very considerable shortcoming makes the ultimate fall possible and is already, in itself, an evil.

In fine we are not to think of Evil as some particular bad thing — injustice, for example, or any other ugly trait — but as a principle distinct from any of the particular forms in which, by the addition of certain elements, it becomes manifest. Thus there may be wickedness in the Soul; the forms this general wickedness is to take will be determined by the envining Matter, by the faculties of the Soul that operate and by the nature of their operation, whether seeing, acting, or merely admitting impression.

But supposing things external to the Soul are to be counted Evil — sickness, poverty and so forth — how can they be referred to the principle we have described?

Well, sickness is excess or defect in the body, which as a material organism rebels against order and measure; ugliness is but matter not mastered by Ideal-Form; poverty consists in our need and lack of goods made necessary to us by our association with Matter whose very nature is to be one long want.

If all this be true, we cannot be, ourselves, the source of Evil, we are not evil in ourselves; Evil was before we came to be; the Evil which holds men down binds them against their will; and for those that have the strength — not found in all men, it is true — there is a deliverance from the evils that have found lodgement in the soul.

In a word since Matter belongs only to the sensible world, vice in men is not the Absolute Evil; not all men are vicious; some overcome vice, some, the better sort, are never attacked by it; and those who master it win by means of that in them which is not material.

If this be so, how do we explain the teaching that evils can never pass away but “exist of necessity,” that “while evil has no place in the divine order, it haunts mortal nature and this place for ever”?

Does this mean that heaven is clear of evil, ever moving its orderly way, spinning on the appointed path, no injustice There or any flaw, no wrong done by any power to any other but all true to the settled plan, while injustice and disorder prevail on earth, designated as “the Mortal Kind and this Place”?

Not quite so: for the precept to “flee hence” does not refer to earth and earthly life. The flight we read of consists not in quitting earth but in living our earth-life “with justice and piety in the light of philosophy”; it is vice we are to flee, so that clearly to the writer Evil is simply vice with the sequels of vice. And when the disputant in that dialogue says that, if men could be convinced of the doctrine advanced, there would be an end of Evil, he is answered, “That can never be: Evil is of necessity, for there must be a contrary to good.”

Still we may reasonably ask how can vice in man be a contrary to The Good in the Supernal: for vice is the contrary to virtue and virtue is not The Good but merely the good thing by which Matter is brought to order.

How can there any contrary to the Absolute Good, when the absolute has no quality?

Besides, is there any universal necessity that the existence of one of two contraries should entail the existence of the other? Admit that the existence of one is often accompanied by the existence of the other — sickness and health, for example — yet there is no universal compulsion.

Perhaps, however, our author did not mean that this was universally true; he is speaking only of The Good.

But then, if The Good is an essence, and still more, if It is that which transcends all existence, how can It have any contrary?

That there is nothing contrary to essence is certain in the case of particular existences — established by practical proof — but not in the quite different case of the Universal.

But of what nature would this contrary be, the contrary to universal existence and in general to the Primals?

To essential existence would be opposed the non-existence; to the nature of Good, some principle and source of evil. Both these will be sources, the one of what is good, the other of what is evil; and all within the domain of the one principle is opposed, as contrary, to the entire domain of the other, and this in a contrariety more violent than any existing between secondary things.

For these last are opposed as members of one species or of one genus, and, within that common ground, they participate in some common quality.

In the case of the Primals or Universals there is such complete separation that what is the exact negation of one group constitutes the very nature of the other; we have diametric contrariety if by contrariety we mean the extreme of remoteness.

Now to the content of the divine order, the fixed quality, the measuredness and so forth — there is opposed the content of the evil principle, its unfixedness, measurelessness and so forth: total is opposed to total. The existence of the one genus is a falsity, primarily, essentially, a falseness: the other genus has Essence-Authentic: the opposition is of truth to lie; essence is opposed to essence.

Thus we see that it is not universally true that an Essence can have no contrary.

In the case of fire and water we would admit contrariety if it were not for their common element, the Matter, about which are gathered the warmth and dryness of one and the dampness and cold of the other: if there were only present what constitutes their distinct kinds, the common ground being absent, there would be, here also, essence contrary to essence.

In sum, things utterly sundered, having nothing in common, standing at the remotest poles, are opposites in nature: the contrariety does not depend upon quality or upon the existence of a distinct genus of beings, but upon the utmost difference, clash in content, clash in effect.

But why does the existence of the Principle of Good necessarily comport the existence of a Principle of Evil? Is it because the All necessarily comports the existence of Matter? Yes: for necessarily this All is made up of contraries: it could not exist if Matter did not. The Nature of this Kosmos is, therefore, a blend; it is blended from the Intellectual-Principle and Necessity: what comes into it from God is good; evil is from the Ancient Kind which, we read, is the underlying Matter not yet brought to order by the Ideal-Form.

But, since the expression “this place” must be taken to mean the All, how explain the words “mortal nature”?

The answer is in the passage [in which the Father of Gods addresses the Divinities of the lower sphere], “Since you possess only a derivative being, you are not immortals . . . but by my power you shall escape dissolution.”

The escape, we read, is not a matter of place, but of acquiring virtue, of disengaging the self from the body; this is the escape from Matter. Plato explains somewhere how a man frees himself and how he remains bound; and the phrase “to live among the gods” means to live among the Intelligible-Existents, for these are the Immortals.

There is another consideration establishing the necessary existence of Evil.

Given that The Good is not the only existent thing, it is inevitable that, by the outgoing from it or, if the phrase be preferred, the continuous down-going or away-going from it, there should be produced a Last, something after which nothing more can be produced: this will be Evil.

As necessarily as there is Something after the First, so necessarily there is a Last: this Last is Matter, the thing which has no residue of good in it: here is the

necessity of Evil.

But there will still be some to deny that it is through this Matter that we ourselves become evil.

They will say that neither ignorance nor wicked desires arise in Matter. Even if they admit that the unhappy condition within us is due to the pravity inherent in body, they will urge that still the blame lies not in the Matter itself but with the Form present in it — such Form as heat, cold, bitterness, saltiness and all other conditions perceptible to sense, or again such states as being full or void — not in the concrete signification but in the presence or absence of just such forms. In a word, they will argue, all particularity in desires and even in perverted judgements upon things, can be referred to such causes, so that Evil lies in this Form much more than in the mere Matter.

Yet, even with all this, they can be compelled to admit that Matter is the Evil.

For, the quality [form] that has entered into Matter does not act as an entity apart from the Matter, any more than axe-shape will cut apart from iron. Further, Forms lodged in Matter are not the same as they would be if they remained within themselves; they are Reason-Principles Materialized, they are corrupted in the Matter, they have absorbed its nature: essential fire does not burn, nor do any of the essential entities effect, of themselves alone, the operation which, once they have entered into Matter, is traced to their action.

Matter becomes mistress of what is manifested through it: it corrupts and destroys the incomer, it substitutes its own opposite character and kind, not in the sense of opposing, for example, concrete cold to concrete warmth, but by setting its own formlessness against the Form of heat, shapelessness to shape, excess and defect to the duly ordered. Thus, in sum, what enters into Matter ceases to belong to itself, comes to belong to Matter, just as, in the nourishment of living beings, what is taken in does not remain as it came, but is turned into, say, dog's blood and all that goes to make a dog, becomes, in fact, any of the humours of any recipient.

No, if body is the cause of Evil, then there is no escape; the cause of Evil is Matter.

Still, it will be urged, the incoming Idea should have been able to conquer the Matter.

The difficulty is that Matter's master cannot remain pure itself except by avoidance of Matter.

Besides, the constitution determines both the desires and their violence so that there are bodies in which the incoming idea cannot hold sway: there is a vicious constitution which chills and clogs the activity and inhibits choice; a contrary bodily habit produces frivolity, lack of balance. The same fact is indicated by our successive variations of mood: in times of stress, we are not the same either in desires or in ideas — as when we are at peace, and we differ again with every several object that brings us satisfaction.

To resume: the Measureless is evil primarily; whatever, either by resemblance or participation, exists in the state of unmeasure, is evil secondarily, by force of its dealing with the Primal — primarily, the darkness; secondarily, the darkened. Now, Vice, being an ignorance and a lack of measure in the Soul, is secondarily evil, not the Essential Evil, just as Virtue is not the Primal Good but is Likeness to The Good, or participation in it.

But what approach have we to the knowing of Good and Evil?

And first of the Evil of soul: Virtue, we may know by the Intellectual-Principle and by means of the philosophic habit; but Vice?

A ruler marks off straight from crooked, so Vice is known by its divergence from the line of Virtue.

But are we able to affirm Vice by any vision we can have of it, or is there some other way of knowing it?

Utter viciousness, certainly not by any vision, for it is utterly outside of bound and measure; this thing which is nowhere can be seized only by abstraction; but any degree of evil falling short of The Absolute is knowable by the extent of that falling short.

We see partial wrong; from what is before us we divine that which is lacking to the entire form [or Kind] thus indicated; we see that the completed Kind would be the Indeterminate; by this process we are able to identify and affirm Evil. In the same way when we observe what we feel to be an ugly appearance in Matter — left there because the Reason-Principle has not become so completely the master as to cover over the unseemliness — we recognise Ugliness by the falling-short from Ideal-Form.

But how can we identify what has never had any touch of Form?

We utterly eliminate every kind of Form; and the object in which there is none whatever we call Matter: if we are to see Matter we must so completely abolish Form that we take shapelessness into our very selves.

In fact it is another Intellectual-Principle, not the true, this which ventures a vision so uncongenial.

To see darkness the eye withdraws from the light; it is striving to cease from seeing, therefore it abandons the light which would make the darkness invisible; away from the light its power is rather that of not-seeing than of seeing and this not-seeing is its nearest approach to seeing Darkness. So the Intellectual-Principle, in order to see its contrary [Matter], must leave its own light locked up within itself, and as it were go forth from itself into an outside realm, it must ignore its native brightness and submit itself to the very contradiction of its being.

But if Matter is devoid of quality how can it be evil?

It is described as being devoid of quality in the sense only that it does not essentially possess any of the qualities which it admits and which enter into it as into a substratum. No one says that it has no nature; and if it has any nature at all, why may not that nature be evil though not in the sense of quality?

Quality qualifies something not itself: it is therefore an accidental; it resides in some other object. Matter does not exist in some other object but is the substratum in which the accidental resides. Matter, then, is said to be devoid of Quality in that it does not in itself possess this thing which is by nature an accidental. If, moreover, Quality itself be devoid of Quality, how can Matter, which is the unqualified, be said to have it?

Thus, it is quite correct to say at once that Matter is without Quality and that it is evil: it is Evil not in the sense of having Quality but, precisely, in not having it; give it Quality and in its very Evil it would almost be a Form, whereas in Truth it is a Kind contrary to Form.

“But,” it may be said, “the Kind opposed to all Form is Privation or Negation, and this necessarily refers to something other than itself, it is no Substantial-Existence: therefore if Evil is Privation or Negation it must be lodged in some Negation of Form: there will be no Self-Existent Evil.”

This objection may be answered by applying the principle to the case of Evil in the Soul; the Evil, the Vice, will be a Negation and not anything having a separate existence; we come to the doctrine which denies Matter or, admitting it, denies its Evil; we need not seek elsewhere; we may at once place Evil in the Soul, recognising it as the mere absence of Good. But if the negation is the negation of something that ought to become present, if it is a denial of the Good by the Soul, then the Soul produces vice within itself by the operation of its own Nature, and is devoid of good and, therefore, Soul though it be, devoid of life: the Soul, if it has no life, is soulless; the Soul is no Soul.

No; the Soul has life by its own nature and therefore does not, of its own nature, contain this negation of The Good: it has much good in it; it carries a happy trace of the Intellectual-Principle and is not essentially evil: neither is it primally evil nor is that Primal Evil present in it even as an accidental, for the Soul is not wholly apart from the Good.

Perhaps Vice and Evil as in the Soul should be described not as an entire, but as a partial, negation of good.

But if this were so, part of the Soul must possess The Good, part be without it; the Soul will have a mingled nature and the Evil within it will not be unblended: we have not yet lighted on the Primal, Unmingled Evil. The Soul would possess the Good as its Essence, the Evil as an Accidental.

Perhaps Evil is merely an impediment to the Soul like something affecting the eye and so hindering sight.

But such an evil in the eyes is no more than an occasion of evil, the Absolute Evil is something quite different. If then Vice is an impediment to the Soul, Vice is an occasion of evil but not Evil-Absolute. Virtue is not the Absolute Good, but a co-operator with it; and if Virtue is not the Absolute Good neither is Vice the Absolute Evil. Virtue is not the Absolute Beauty or the Absolute Good; neither, therefore, is Vice the Essential Ugliness or the Essential Evil.

We teach that Virtue is not the Absolute Good and Beauty, because we know that These are earlier than Virtue and transcend it, and that it is good and beautiful by some participation in them. Now as, going upward from virtue, we come to the Beautiful and to the Good, so, going downward from Vice, we reach Essential Evil: from Vice as the starting-point we come to vision of Evil,

as far as such vision is possible, and we become evil to the extent of our participation in it. We are become dwellers in the Place of Unlikeness, where, fallen from all our resemblance to the Divine, we lie in gloom and mud: for if the Soul abandons itself unreservedly to the extreme of viciousness, it is no longer a vicious Soul merely, for mere vice is still human, still carries some trace of good: it has taken to itself another nature, the Evil, and as far as Soul can die it is dead. And the death of Soul is twofold: while still sunk in body to lie down in Matter and drench itself with it; when it has left the body, to lie in the other world until, somehow, it stirs again and lifts its sight from the mud: and this is our “going down to Hades and slumbering there.”

It may be suggested that Vice is feebleness in the Soul.

We shall be reminded that the Vicious Soul is unstable, swept along from every ill to every other, quickly stirred by appetites, headlong to anger, as hasty to compromises, yielding at once to obscure imaginations, as weak, in fact, as the weakest thing made by man or nature, blown about by every breeze, burned away by every heat.

Still the question must be faced what constitutes this weakness in the Soul, whence it comes.

For weakness in the body is not like that in the Soul: the word weakness, which covers the incapacity for work and the lack of resistance in the body, is applied to the Soul merely by analogy — unless, indeed, in the one case as in the other, the cause of the weakness is Matter.

But we must go more thoroughly into the source of this weakness, as we call it, in the Soul, which is certainly not made weak as the result of any density or rarity, or by any thickening or thinning or anything like a disease, like a fever.

Now this weakness must be seated either in Souls utterly disengaged or in Souls bound to Matter or in both.

It cannot exist in those apart from Matter, for all these are pure and, as we read, winged and perfect and unimpeded in their task: there remains only that the weakness be in the fallen Souls, neither cleansed nor clean; and in them the weakness will be, not in any privation but in some hostile presence, like that of phlegm or bile in the organs of the body.

If we form an acute and accurate notion of the cause of the fall we shall understand the weakness that comes by it.

Matter exists; Soul exists; and they occupy, so to speak, one place. There is not one place for Matter and another for Soul-Matter, for instance, kept to earth, Soul in the air: the soul's "separate place" is simply its not being in Matter; that is, its not being united with it; that is that there be no compound unit consisting of Soul and Matter; that is that Soul be not moulded in Matter as in a matrix; this is the Soul's apartness.

But the faculties of the Soul are many, and it has its beginning, its intermediate phases, its final fringe. Matter appears, importunes, raises disorders, seeks to force its way within; but all the ground is holy, nothing there without part in Soul. Matter therefore submits, and takes light: but the source of its illumination it cannot attain to, for the Soul cannot lift up this foreign thing close by, since the evil of it makes it invisible. On the contrary the illumination, the light streaming from the Soul, is dulled, is weakened, as it mixes with Matter which offers Birth to the Soul, providing the means by which it enters into generation, impossible to it if no recipient were at hand.

This is the fall of the Soul, this entry into Matter: thence its weakness: not all the faculties of its being retain free play, for Matter hinders their manifestation; it encroaches upon the Soul's territory and, as it were, crushes the Soul back; and it turns to evil all that it has stolen, until the Soul finds strength to advance again.

Thus the cause, at once, of the weakness of Soul and of all its evil is Matter.

The evil of Matter precedes the weakness, the vice; it is Primal Evil. Even though the Soul itself submits to Matter and engenders to it; if it becomes evil within itself by its commerce with Matter, the cause is still the presence of Matter: the Soul would never have approached Matter but that the presence of Matter is the occasion of its earth-life.

If the existence of Matter be denied, the necessity of this Principle must be demonstrated from the treatises "On Matter" where the question is copiously treated.

To deny Evil a place among realities is necessarily to do away with the Good as well, and even to deny the existence of anything desirable; it is to deny desire, avoidance and all intellectual act; for desire has Good for its object, aversion

looks to Evil; all intellectual act, all Wisdom, deals with Good and Bad, and is itself one of the things that are good.

There must then be The Good — good unmixed — and the Mingled Good and Bad, and the Rather Bad than Good, this last ending with the Utterly Bad we have been seeking, just as that in which Evil constitutes the lesser part tends, by that lessening, towards the Good.

What, then, must Evil be to the Soul?

What Soul could contain Evil unless by contact with the lower Kind? There could be no desire, no sorrow, no rage, no fear: fear touches the compounded dreading its dissolution; pain and sorrow are the accompaniments of the dissolution; desires spring from something troubling the grouped being or are a provision against trouble threatened; all impression is the stroke of something unreasonable outside the Soul, accepted only because the Soul is not devoid of parts or phases; the Soul takes up false notions through having gone outside of its own truth by ceasing to be purely itself.

One desire or appetite there is which does not fall under this condemnation; it is the aspiration towards the Intellectual-Principle: this demands only that the Soul dwell alone enshrined within that place of its choice, never lapsing towards the lower.

Evil is not alone: by virtue of the nature of Good, the power of Good, it is not Evil only: it appears, necessarily, bound around with bonds of Beauty, like some captive bound in fetters of gold; and beneath these it is hidden so that, while it must exist, it may not be seen by the gods, and that men need not always have evil before their eyes, but that when it comes before them they may still be not destitute of Images of the Good and Beautiful for their Remembrance.

Ninth Tractate.

“THE REASONED DISMISSAL”.

“You will not dismiss your Soul lest it go forth . . . “ [taking something with it].

For wheresoever it go, it will be in some definite condition, and its going forth is to some new place. The Soul will wait for the body to be completely severed

from it; then it makes no departure; it simply finds itself free.

But how does the body come to be separated?

The separation takes place when nothing of Soul remains bound up with it: the harmony within the body, by virtue of which the Soul was retained, is broken and it can no longer hold its guest.

But when a man contrives the dissolution of the body, it is he that has used violence and torn himself away, not the body that has let the Soul slip from it. And in loosing the bond he has not been without passion; there has been revolt or grief or anger, movements which it is unlawful to indulge.

But if a man feel himself to be losing his reason?

That is not likely in the Sage, but if it should occur, it must be classed with the inevitable, to be welcome at the bidding of the fact though not for its own sake. To call upon drugs to the release of the Soul seems a strange way of assisting its purposes.

And if there be a period allotted to all by fate, to anticipate the hour could not be a happy act, unless, as we have indicated, under stern necessity.

If everyone is to hold in the other world a standing determined by the state in which he quitted this, there must be no withdrawal as long as there is any hope of progress.