

An Apology for the Fables of Homer

Proclus



As a very considerable part both of the second and third books of *The Republic* consists in examining and reprobating the assertions of the poets and particularly the fables of Homer, concerning divine natures, it appeared to me that I could not more essentially benefit the reader than by presenting him with the following defence of Homer and divine fables in general, from the exposition of the more difficult questions in this dialogue, by that coryphæus of all true philosophers Proclus. For in this apology Homer and Plato are so admirably reconciled, that the poetry of the one and the philosophy of the other are in the highest degree honoured by the expulsion of the former from the polity of the latter. In short, it will be found, however paradoxical it may appear, that the most divine of poets ought beyond all others to be banished from a republic planned by the prince of philosophers. Such readers, too, as may fortunately possess a genius adapted for these speculations, will find that the fables of Homer are replete with a theory no less grand than scientific, no less accurate than sublime; that they are truly the progeny of divine fury; are worthy to be ascribed to the Muses as their origin; are capable of exciting in those that understand them the most exalted conceptions, and of raising the imagination in conjunction with intellect, and thus purifying and illuminating its figured eye.

Though I availed myself in this translation of the epitome made by Gesner of this apology, who seems to have consulted a more perfect manuscript than that from which the Basil edition was printed, yet I frequently found it necessary to correct the Greek text from my own conjecture, as the learned reader will readily perceive. Some of these emendations I have noted in the course of the translation; but as they are numerous many are omitted.

I. CONCERNING THE MODE OF THE APPARATUS OF DIVINE FABLES WITH THEOLOGISTS. — THE CAUSES OF SUCH FABLES ASSIGNED; AND A SOLUTION OF THE OBJECTIONS AGAINST THEM.

Since Socrates accuses the mode of fables according to which Homer and Hesiod have delivered doctrines concerning the Gods, and prior to these Orpheus, and any other poets, who with a divine mouth, ,
have interpreted things which have a perpetual sameness of subsistence, it is

necessary that we should in the first place show that the disposition of the Homeric fables is adapted to the things which it indicates. For it may be said, How can things which are remote from the good and the beautiful, and which deviate from order, — how can base and illegal names, ever be adapted to those natures whose essence is characterized by the good; and is consubsistent with the beautiful, in whom there is the first order, and from whom all things are unfolded into light, in conjunction with beauty and undefiled power? How then can things which are full of tragical portents and phantasms which subsist with material natures, and are deprived of the whole of justice and the whole of divinity, be adapted to such natures as these? For is it not unlawful to ascribe to the nature of the Gods, who are exempt from all things through transcendent excellence, adulteries, and thefts, precipitations from heaven, injurious conduct towards parents, bonds, and castrations, and such other particulars as are celebrated by Horner and other ancient poets? But, as the Gods are separated from other things, are united with the good, or the ineffable principle of things, and have nothing of the imperfection of inferior natures belonging to them, but are unmingled and undefiled with respect to all things, presubstisting uniformly according to one bound and order, — in like manner it is requisite to employ the most excellent language in speaking of them, and such appellations as are full of intellect, and which are able to assimilate us, according to their proper order, to their ineffable transcendency. It is also necessary to purify the notions of the soul from material phantasms, in the mystic intellectual conceptions of a divine nature; and, rejecting every thing foreign and all false opinions, to conceive every thing as small with respect to the undefiled transcendency of the Gods, and believe in right opinion alone, and the more excellent spectacles of intellect in the truth concerning the first of essences.

Let no one therefore say to us that such things harmonize with the Gods as are adapted to men, nor endeavour to introduce the passions of material irrationality to natures expanded above intellect, and an intellectual essence and life: for these symbols do not appear similar to the hyparxes of the Gods. It is therefore requisite that fables, if they do not entirely wander from the truth inherent in things, should be in a certain respects assimilated to the particulars, the occult theory of which they endeavour to conceal by apparent veils. Indeed, as Plato himself often mystically teaches us divine concerns

through certain images, and neither any thing base, nor any representation of disorder, nor material and turbulent phantasm, is inserted in his fables, — but the intellectual conceptions concerning the Gods are concealed with purity, before which the fables are placed like conspicuous statues, and most similar representations of the inward arcane theory, — in like manner it is requisite that poets, and Homer himself, if they devise fables adapted to the Gods, should reject these multiform compositions, and which are at the same time replete with names most contrary to things, but employing such as regard the beautiful and the good, should, through these, exclude the multitude from a knowledge concerning the Gods, which does not pertain to them, and at the same time employ in a pious manner fabulous devices reflecting divine natures.

These are the things which, as it appears to me, Socrates objects to the fables of Homer, and for which perhaps some one besides may accuse other poets, in consequence of not admitting the apparently monstrous signification of names. In answer then to these objections, we reply that fables fabricate all that apparatus pertaining to them, which first presents itself to our view, instead of the truth which is established in the arcana, and employ apparent veils of conceptions invisible and unknown to the multitude. This indeed is their distinguishing excellence, that they narrate nothing belonging to natures truly good to the profane, but only extend certain vestiges of the whole mystic discipline to such as are naturally adapted to be led from these to a theory inaccessible to the vulgar. For these, instead of investigating the truth which they contain, use only the pretext of fabulous devices; and, instead of the purification of intellect, follow phantastic and figured conceptions. Is it not therefore absurd in these men to accuse fables of their own illegitimate conduct, and not themselves for the erroneous manner in which they consider in them?

In the next place, do we not see that the multitude are injured by such things as are remarkably venerable and honourable, from among all other things, and which are established in and produced by the Gods themselves? For who will not acknowledge that the mysteries and perfective rites lead souls upwards from a material and mortal life, and conjoin them with the Gods, and that they suppress all that tumult which insinuates itself from the irrational part into intellectual illuminations, and expel whatever is indefinite and dark from

those that are initiated, through the light proceeding from the Gods? Yet at the same time nothing can refrain the multitude from sustaining from these all-various distortions, and, in consequence of using the good, and the powers proceeding from these, according to their perverted habit, departing from the Gods, and truly sacred ceremonies, and falling into a passive and irrational life. Those indeed that accuse the mysteries for producing these effects in the multitude, may also accuse the fabrication of the universe, the order of wholes, and the providence of all things, because those that receive the gifts of these, use them badly; but neither is such an accusation holy, nor is it fit that fables should be calumniated on account of the perverted conceptions of the multitude. For the virtue and vice of things are not to be determined from those that use them perversely; but it is fit that every thing should be estimated from its own proper nature, and the rectitude which it contains. Hence the Athenian guest, in the Laws of Plato, is of opinion that even intoxication ought not to be expelled from a well-instituted city, on account of the views of the multitude and its corrupt use; for he says it greatly contributes to education, if it is properly and prudently employed. And yet it may be said that intoxication corrupts both the bodies and souls of those that are subject to it; but the legislator does not on this account detract from its proper worth, and the aid it affords to virtue.

But if any one accuses fables on account of their apparent depravity, and the base names which they employ, — since things of this kind are by no means similar to the divine exemplars of which fables are the images, — we reply in the first place, that there are two kinds of fables, those adapted to the education of youth, and those full of a divine fury, and which rather regard the universe itself than the habit of those that hear them. In the next place we must distinguish the lives of those that use fables; and we must consider that some are juvenile, and conversant with simple habits; but that others are able to be excited to intellect, to the whole genera of the Gods, to their progressions through all things, their series, and their terminations, which hasten to be extended as far as to the last of things. This being premised, we must say that the fables of Homer and Hesiod are not adapted to the education of youth, but that they follow the nature of wholes, and the order of things, and conjoin with true beings such as are capable of being led to the elevated survey of divine concerns. For the fathers of fables — perceiving that nature, fabricating

images of immaterial and intelligible forms, and diversifying the sensible world with the imitations of these, adumbrated things impartible partly, but expressed things eternal through such as proceed according to time, things intelligible through sensibles, that which is immaterial materially, that which is without interval with interval, and through mutation that which is firmly established, conformably to the nature and the progression of the phænomena, — they also, devising the resemblances and images of things divine in their verses, imitated the transcendent power of exemplars by contrary and most remote adumbrations. Hence they indicated that which is supernatural in things divine by things contrary to nature, that which is more divine than all reason, by that which is contrary to reason, and that which is expanded above all partial beauty, by things apparently base. And thus by an assimilative method they recalled to our memory the exempt supremacy of divine natures.

Besides this, according to every order of the Gods, which beginning from on high gradually proceeds as far as to the last of things, and penetrates through all the genera of beings, we may perceive the terminations of their series exhibiting such idioms as fables attribute to the Gods themselves, and that they give subsistence to, and are connective of, such things as those through which fables conceal the arcane theory of first essences. For the last of the dæmoniacal genera, and which revolve about matter, preside over the perversion of natural powers, the baseness of material natures, the lapse into vice, and a disorderly and confused motion. For it is necessary that these things should take place in the universe, and should contribute to fill the variety of the whole order of things, and that the cause of their shadowy subsistence and of their duration, should be comprehended in perpetual genera. The leaders of sacred rites, perceiving these things, ordered that laughter and lamentations should be consecrated to such-like genera in certain definite periods of time, and that they should be allotted a convenient portion of the whole of the sacred ceremonies pertaining to a divine nature. As therefore the art of sacred rites, distributing in a becoming manner the whole of piety to the Gods and the attendants of the Gods, that no part of worship might be omitted adapted to such attendants, conciliated the divinities by the most holy mysteries and mystic symbols, but called down the gifts of dæmons by apparent passions, through a certain arcane sympathy, — in like manner the fathers of these

fables, looking, as I may say, to all the progressions of divine natures, and hastening to refer fables to the whole series proceeding from each, established the imagery in their fables, and which first presents itself to the view, analogous to the last genera, and to those that preside over ultimate and material passions; but to the contemplators of true being they delivered the concealed meaning, and which is unknown to the multitude, as declarative of the exempt and inaccessible essence of the Gods. Thus, very fable is dæmoniack according to that which is apparent in it, but is divine according to its recondite theory. If these things then are rightly asserted, neither is it proper to deprive the fables of Homer of an alliance to things which have a true subsistence, because they are not serviceable to the education of youth; for the end of such fables is not juvenile tuition, nor did the authors of fables devise them looking to this, nor are those written by Plato to be referred to the same idea with those of a more divinely inspired nature, but each is to be considered separately; and the latter are to be established as more philosophic, but the former as adapted to sacred ceremonies and institutions. The latter likewise are fit to be heard by youth, but the former by those who have been properly conducted through all the other parts of learning.

Socrates, indeed, sufficiently indicates this to those who are able to perceive his meaning, and also that he only blames the fables of Homer so far as they are neither adapted to education, nor accord with the restless and simple manners of youth. He likewise signifies that the recondite and occult good of fables requires a certain mystic and entheastic (i.e. divinely inspired) intelligence. But the multitude, not perceiving the meaning of the Socratic assertions, and widely deviating from the conceptions of the philosopher, accuse every such-like kind of fables. But it is worth while to hear the words of Socrates, and through what cause he rejects such a mythology:

“The young person,” says he “is not able to judge what is allegory, and what is not; but whatever opinions he receives at such an age are with difficulty washed away, and are generally immoveable. On these accounts, care should be taken, above all things, that what they are first to hear be composed in the most handsome manner for exciting them to virtue.”

With great propriety, therefore, do we say that the Homeric fables do not well imitate a divine nature; for they are not useful to legislators for the purposes of virtue and education, nor for the proper tuition of youth, but in this respect

indeed they do not appear at all similar to things themselves, nor adapted to those that preside over the politic science; but, after another manner, they harmonize with the Gods, and lead those who possess a naturally good disposition to the contemplation of divine natures; and the good which they contain is not disciplinative, but mystic, nor does it regard a juvenile, but an aged habit of soul. This also Socrates himself testifies, when he says that:

“such fables should be heard in secrecy, by as few as possible, after they had sacrificed not a hog, but some great and wonderful sacrifice.”

Socrates therefore is very far from despising this kind of fables, according to the opinion of the multitude; for he evinces that the hearing of them is coordinated with the most holy initiations, and the most subtle mysteries. For to assert that such fables ought to be used in secret with a sacrifice the greatest and most perfect, manifests that the contemplation of them is mystic, and that they elevate the souls of the hearers to sublime speculations. Whoever therefore has divested himself of every puerile and juvenile habit of the soul, and of the indefinite impulses of the phantasy, and who has established intellect as the leader of his life, such a one will most opportunely participate of the spectacles concealed in suchlike fables; but he who still requires instruction and symmetry of manners, cannot with safety engage in their speculation.

It follows therefore, according to Socrates himself, that there is a two-fold species of fables, one of which is adapted to the instruction of youth, but the other is mystic; one is preparatory to moral virtue, but the other imparts a conjunction with a divine nature; one is capable of benefiting the many, the other is adapted to the few; the one is common and known to most men, but the other is recondite and unadapted to those who do not hasten to become perfectly established in a divine nature; and the one is co-ordinate with juvenile habits but the other scarcely unfolds itself with sacrifices and mystic tradition. If therefore Socrates teaches us these things, must we not say that he harmonizes with Homer respecting fables? But he only rejects and reprobates them so far as they appear unadapted to the hypothesis of his discourse, and the narration of the education of youth.

But if it be requisite that legislators should in one way be conversant with mythical fictions, and those who endeavour to cultivate more imperfect

habits, but in another way those who indicate by the divinely inspired intuitive perceptions of intellect the ineffable essence of the Gods to those who are able to follow the most elevated contemplations, we shall not hesitate to refer the precipitations of Vulcan to the irreprehensible science concerning the Gods, nor the Saturnian bonds, nor the castrations of Heaven, which Socrates says are unadapted to the ears of youth, and by no means harmonize with those habits which require juvenile tuition. For, in short, the mystic knowledge of divine natures can never subsist in foreign receptacles. To those therefore that are capable of such sublime speculations we must say, that the precipitation of Vulcan indicates the progression of a divine nature from on high, as far as to the last fabrication in sensibles, and this so as to be moved and perfected and directed by the demiurgus and father of all things.

But the Saturnian bonds manifest the union of the whole fabrication of the universe, with the intellectual and paternal supremacy of Saturn. The castrations of Heaven obscurely signify the separation of the Titanic series from the connective order. By thus speaking we shall perhaps assert things that are known, and refer that which is tragical and fictitious in fables to the intellectual theory of the divine genera. For whatever among us appears to be of a worse condition, and to belong to the inferior coordination of things, fables assume according to a better nature and power. Thus, for instance, a bond with us impedes and restrains energy, but there it is a contact and ineffable union with causes. A precipitation here is a violent motion from another; but with the Gods it indicates prolific progression, and an unrestrained and free presence to all things, without departing from its proper principle, but in an orderly manner proceeding from it through all things.

And castrations in things partial and material cause a diminution of power, but in primary causes they obscurely signify the progression of secondary natures into a subject order, from their proper causes; things first at the same time remaining established in themselves undiminished, neither moved from themselves through the progression of these, nor mutilated by their separation, nor divided by their distribution in things subordinate. These things, which Socrates justly says are not fit to be heard by youth, are not on that account to be entirely rejected. For the same thing takes place with respect to these fables, which Plato somewhere says happens to divine and all-holy dogmas: For these are ridiculous to the multitude, but to the few who are

excited to intellectual energy they unfold their sympathy with things, and through sacred operations themselves procure credibility of their possessing a power connate with all that is divine.

For the Gods, hearing these symbols, rejoice, and readily obey those that invoke them, and proclaim the characteristic of their natures through these, as signs domestic and especially known to them. The mysteries likewise and the greatest and most perfect of sacrifices () possess their efficacy in these, and enable the mystics to perceive through these, entire, stable and simple visions, which a youth by his age, and much more his manners, is incapable of receiving. We must not therefore say that such-like fables do not instruct in virtue, but those that object to them should show that they do not in the highest degree accord with the laws pertaining to sacred rites. Nor must it be said that they dissimilarly imitate divine natures, through obscure symbols, but it must be shown that they do not prepare for us an ineffable sympathy towards the participation of the Gods.

For fables which are composed with a view to juvenile discipline should possess much of the probable, and much of that which is decorous in the fabulous, in their apparent forms, but should be entirely pure from contrary appellations, and be conjoined with divine natures through a similitude of symbols. But those fables which regard a more divinely inspired habit, which co harmonize things last with such as are first through analogy alone, and which are composed with a view to the sympathy in the universe between effects and their generative causes, — such fables, despising the multitude, employ names in an all-various manner, for the purpose of indicating divine concerns. Since also, with respect to harmony, we say that one kind is poetic, and which through melodies exciting to virtue cultivates the souls of youth; but another divine, which moves the hearers, and produces a divine mania, and which we denominate better than temperance: and we admit the former as completing the whole of education, but we reject the latter as not adapted to political administration. Or does not Socrates expel the Phrygian harmony from his Republic as producing ecstasy in the soul, and on this account separate it from other harmonies which are subservient to education?

As, therefore, harmony is two-fold, and one kind is adapted to erudition, but the other is foreign from it; in a similar manner, likewise, is mythology divided; into that which contributes to the proper tuition of youth, and into that

which is subservient to the sacred and symbolic invocation of a divine nature. And the one, viz. the method through images, is adapted to those that philosophize in a genuine manner; but the other, which indicates a divine essence through recondite signs, to the leaders of a more mystically-perfective operation; from which Plato himself also renders many of his peculiar dogmas more credible and clear. Thus, in the *Phædo*, he venerates with a becoming silence that recondite assertion, that we are confined in body as in a prison secured by a guard, and testifies, according to the mysteries, the different allotments of the soul, when in a pure or impure condition, on its departure to Hades; and again, its habitudes, and the triple paths arising from its essence, and this according to paternal sacred institutions; all which are full of a symbolic theory, and of the ascent and descent of souls celebrated by poets, of Dionysiacal signs, and what are called Titanic errors, the triviæ, and wandering in Hades, and everything else of this kind. So that Plato does not entirely despise this mode of mythologizing, but considers it as foreign from juvenile tuition, and, on this account, delivers types of theology commensurate with the manners of those that are instructed.

It likewise appears to me, that whatever is tragical, monstrous, and unnatural, in poetical fictions, excites the hearers, in an all-various manner, to the investigation of the truth, attracts us to recondite knowledge and does not suffer us through apparent probability to rest satisfied with superficial conceptions, but compels us to penetrate into the interior parts of fables, to explore the obscure intention of their authors, and survey what natures and powers they intended to signify to posterity by such mystical symbols.

Since therefore fables of this kind excite those of a naturally more excellent disposition to a desire of the concealed theory which they contain, and to an investigation of the truth established in the adyta through their apparent absurdity, but prevent the profane from busying themselves about things which it is not lawful for them to touch, are they not eminently adapted to the Gods themselves, of whose nature they are the interpreters? For many genera are hurled forth before the Gods, some of a dæmoniacal, and others of an angelic order, who terrify those that are excited to a participation of divinity, who are exercised for the reception of divine light, and are sublimely elevated to the union of the Gods. But we may especially perceive the alliance of these fables with the tribe of dæmons, whose energies manifest many things

symbolically, as those know who have met with dæmons when awake, or have enjoyed their inspiration in dreams, unfolding many past or future events. For, in all such phantasies, after the manner of the authors of fables, some things are indicated by others. Nor, of the things which take place through this, are some images, but others paradigms; but some are symbols, and others sympathize with these from analogy. If, therefore, this mode of composing fables is dæmoniacal, must we not say that it is exempt from every other variety of fables, as well that which regards nature, and interprets natural powers, as that which presides over the instruction of the forms of the soul?

II. WHAT THE DIFFERENT MODES OF THEOMACHY, OR, THE BATTLES OF THE GODS, ARE, AMONG THEOLOGISTS, AND AN INTERPRETATION OF THE OCCULT TRUTH WHICH THEY CONTAIN.

And thus much concerning those forms of fables according to which other poets and Homer have delivered mystic conceptions respecting the Gods, and which are unapparent to the vulgar. After this, it follows I think that we should distinctly consider the several fables in the order in which they are mentioned by Socrates, and contemplate according to what conceptions of the soul Homer represents the Gods fighting, or doing or suffering any thing else, in his poems. And in the first place let us consider this theomachy as it is called, or battles of the Gods, which Homer devises, but Socrates thinks worthy of animadversion, as by no means adapted to the education of youth. For, that there is neither sedition, nor dissension and division, as with mortals, among the Gods, but peace and an inoffensive life, the poet himself testifies when he somewhere says concerning Olympus, that it is a substratum to the Gods, who possess every possible joy, and spectacles of immense beauty:

The blessed Gods in joy unceasing live.

What discord and war then can find any entrance among those who are allotted eternal delight, who are perpetually propitious, and rejoicing in the goods which they possess? But if it be proper that discourses concerning the Gods should regard as well their providence as the nature of the beings for whom they provide, I think we may interpret as follows their opposition to each other:

In the first place, the divided progressions of all things, and their separations according to essence, supernally originate from that division of first operating causes which is unknown to all things; and subsisting according to those principles which are expanded above wholes, they dissent from each other; some being suspended from the unifying monad bound, and about this determining their subsistence, but others receiving in themselves a never-failing power from that infinity which is generative of wholes, and is a cause productive of multitude and progression, and about this establishing their proper hyparxis. After the same manner, therefore, in which the first principles of things are separated from each other, all the divine genera and true beings have a progression orderly divided from each other; and some of them are the leaders of union to secondary natures, but others impart the power of separation; some are the causes of conversion, convolving the multitude of progressions to their proper principles; but others bound the progressions, and the subordinate generation from the principles. Again, some supply a generative abundance to inferior natures, but others impart an immutable and undefiled purity; some bind to themselves the cause of separate goods, but others, of those goods that are consubsistent with the beings by whom they are received. And thus in all the orders of being is such a contrariety of genera diversified. Hence permanency, which establishes things in themselves, is opposed to efficacious powers, and which are full of life and motion. Hence the kindred communion of sameness receives a division according to species, opposite to the separations of difference; but the genus of similitude is allotted an order contrary to dissimilitude, and that of equality to inequality, according to the same analogy. And the divisions of all these are supernally defined from that duad which subsists as a principle, according to which all beings are distinguished by their proper boundaries, proceed with an opposite division to each other from their generative causes, and from their connection with each other generate all the variety of secondary natures. Is it therefore any longer wonderful, if the authors of fables, perceiving such contrariety in the Gods themselves and the first of beings, obscurely signified this to their pupils, through battles? the divine genera indeed being perpetually united to each other, but at the same time containing in themselves the causes of the union and separation of all things.

We may also, I think, adduce another mode of solution: that the Gods themselves are impartibly connascent with each other, and subsist uniformly in each other, but that their progressions into the universe and their communications are separated in their participants, become divisible, and are thus filled with contrariety; the objects of their providential exertions not being able to receive in an unmingled manner the powers proceeding from thence, and without confusion their multiform illuminations. We may likewise say, that the last orders which are suspended from divine natures, as being generated remote from first causes, and as being proximate to the subjects of their government, which are involved in matter, participate themselves of all-various contrariety and separation, and partly preside over material natures, minutely dividing those powers which presubsist uniformly and impartibly in their first operating causes. Such then and so many being the modes according to which the mystic rumours of theologists are wont to refer war to the Gods themselves, other poets, and those who in explaining divine concerns have been agitated with divine fury, have ascribed wars and battles to the Gods, according to the first of those modes we related, in which the divine genera are divided conformably to the first principles of wholes. For those powers which elevate to causes are after a manner opposed to those that are the sources of generation, and the connective to the separating; those that unite, to those that multiply the progression of things; total genera, to such as fabricate partibly; and those which are expanded above, to those that preside over partial natures: and hence fables concealing the truth assert that such powers fight and war with each other. On this account, as it appears to me, they assert that the Titans were the antagonists of Bacchus, and the Giants of Jupiter; for union, indivisible operation, and a wholeness prior to parts, are adapted to those artificers that have a subsistence prior to the world; but the Titans and Giants produce the demiurgic powers into multitude, divisibly administer the affairs of the universe, and are the proximate fathers of material concerns.

We may also conceive that the Homeric fables after another manner have devised the battles of the Gods. For, in the first place, Homer exempts the demiurgic monad from all the multitude of the Gods, and neither represents him proceeding to the contrariety of generation, nor in any respect opposing it; but, while this is firmly established in itself, the number of the Gods

proceeds from it, which number both abides and proceeds into the universe, and on this account is said to be divided about the providence of the natures which it governs. In the next place, of these Gods which are distributed from their father, some abide in him, and have an unproceeding subsistence in their proper monad, which the poetry of Homer says are established in the abode of Jupiter, and together with their father providentially preside in an exempt manner over wholes. That these war against, or oppose each other, the fable does not even according to the apparent description admit. But it represents those Gods as warring against each other, who proceeding from the demiurgic monad, subside into multiform orders, become more partial, and more proximate to the objects of their government, and give completion to the angelic or dæmoniacal armies, through their abundant sympathy with subordinate natures and partial allotment of providential energy. For to these I think the passions of the subjects of their providential care are more allied, such as wounds, blows, and repercussions; and, in short, the contrariety of generation is not very remote from the administration of these Gods. That which is partial likewise in the fabrication of things secondary, and a minute distribution of providence, are adapted to such like powers, but not to those which rank as principles, and are exempt from all the objects of their providential energy, and subsist as separate causes.

Moreover, since the angelic orders are suspended from the government of the more excellent genera of Gods, and preserve the characteristics of their leaders though in a partial and multiplied manner, they are called by their names; and as they subsist analogously to the first Gods, they appear in their progressions to be the same with their more total causes. And this not only the fables of the Greeks have occultly devised, — I mean that leading Gods and their attendants should be called by the same names, — but this is also delivered in the initiatory rites of the Barbarians. For they say that angels suspended from the Gods, when invoked, particularly rejoice to be called by the appellations, and to be invested with the vehicles, of the leaders of their series, and exhibit themselves to theurgists in the place of these leading deities. If therefore we refer Minerva, Juno, and Vulcan when engaged in war below about generation, and likewise Latona, Diana, and the river Xanthus, to other secondary orders, and which are proximate to divisible and material things, we ought not to wonder on account of the communion of names. For each series

bears the appellation of its monad, and partial spirits love to receive the same denomination with wholes. Hence there are many and all-various Apollos, Neptunes, and Vulcans; and some of them are separate from the universe, others have an allotment about the heavens, others preside over the whole elements, and to others the government of individuals belongs. It is not therefore wonderful if a more partial Vulcan, and who is allotted a dæmoniacal order, possesses a providential dominion over material fire, and which subsists about the earth, or that he should be the inspective guardian of a certain art which operates in brass. For, if the providence of the Gods has a subjection according to an ultimate division, being allotted a well-ordered progression supernally from total and united causes, this Vulcanian dæmon also will rejoice in the safety of that which he is allotted, and will be hostile to those causes which are corruptive of its constitution. War therefore in such like genera, a division of all-various powers, mutual familiarity and discord, a divisible sympathy with the objects of their government, verbal contentions, revenge through mockery, and other things of this kind, are very properly conceived to take place about the terminations of the divine orders. Hence fables, in representing such like powers discordant with and opposing each other on account of the subjects over which they providentially preside, do not appear to be very remote from the truth. For the passions of the things governed are proximately referred to these.

In short, since we may perceive two conceptions of battles celebrated by poets inspired by Phœbus, one of these considers the well-ordered division of the divine genera about those two principles of wholes which the one, the exempt cause of all things, produced, and according to the opposition of these principles represents the Gods also as acting contrary to each other. For, whether it be proper to call those first natures bound and infinity, or monad and indefinite duad, they will entirely appear to be oppositely divided with respect to each other, according to which the orders of the Gods are also separated from each other. But the other conception arises from considering the contrariety and variety about the last of things, and referring a discord of this kind to the powers that proximately preside over it, and thus feigning that the Gods, proceeding into a material nature, and distributed about this, war with each other. Homer, to those who consider his poems with attention, will appear to speak about the former mode of divine contention when he says,

When Saturn was by Jove all-seeing thrust Beneath the earth:

And in another place respecting Typhon,

Earth groan'd beneath them; as when angry Jove Hurls down the forky lightning from above, On Arime when he the thunder throws, And fires Typhæus with redoubled blows, Where Typhon, prest beneath the burning load, Still feels the fury of th' avenging God.

For in these verses he obscurely signifies a Titanic war against Jupiter, and what the Orphic writers call precipitations into Tartarus (). But he particularly introduces the Gods warring with each other, and dissenting about human affairs, according to the second conception of divine battles, in which the divine and intellectual disposition of the figments adopted by the poet is worthy of the greatest admiration. For, in describing their battles (who though they are allotted a subsistence at the extremities of the divine progressions, yet are suspended from the Gods, and are proximate to the subjects of their government, and are allied to their leaders), he indicates their sympathy with inferior natures, referring a divided life, battle, and opposition from things in subjection to the powers by which they are governed; just as Orpheus conjoins with Bacchic images compositions, divisions and lamentations, referring all these to them from presiding causes.

But Homer represents the alliance of these divisible spirits with the series from which they proceed, by the same names through which he celebrates the powers exempt from material natures, and employs numbers and figures adapted to their whole orders. For those who engage in battle are eleven in number, imitating the army of the Gods and dæmons following Jupiter, and distributed into eleven parts. Of these, those that preside over the better coordination are contained in the pentad; for the odd number, the spheric, and the power of leading all secondary natures according to justice, and of extending from the middle to every number, are adapted to those who desire to govern more intellectual and perfect natures, and such as are more allied to the one. But those of an inferior destiny, and who are the guardians of material natures, proceed according to the hexad, possessing indeed a perfective power over the subjects of their providential care through a proper number; but in consequence of this number being even, and coordinate with a worse nature,

they are subordinate to the other powers.

Nor is it wonderful if same one should call these genera Gods, through their alliance to their leaders, and should represent them as warring through their proximate care of material natures. The opposition therefore of Neptune and Apollo signifies that these powers preside over the apparent contrariety of all sublunary wholes: and hence these Gods do not fight with each other. For parts are preserved by their containing wholes, as long as they subsist. But the opposition of Juno and Diana referents the opposite division of souls in the universe, whether rational or irrational, separate or inseparable, supernatural or natural; the former of these powers presiding over the more excellent order of souls, but the latter bringing forth and producing into light those of all inferior condition. Again, the discord of Minerva and Mars represents the division of the whole of the war in generation into providence subsisting according to intellect, and that which is perfected through necessity; the former power intellectually presiding over contraries, and the latter corroborating their natural powers, and exciting their mutual opposition.

But the battle between Hermes and Latona insinuates the all-various differences of souls according to their gnostic and vital motions; Hermes giving perfection to their knowledge, and Latona to their lives; which two often differ from and are contrary to each other. Lastly, the battle between Vulcan and the river Xanthus adorns in a becoming manner the contrary principles of the whole corporeal system; the former assisting the powers of heat and dryness, and the latter of cold and moisture, from which the whole of generation receives its completion. But since it is requisite that all contrarieties should end in mutual concord, Venus is present, producing friendship in the adverse parties, but at the same time assisting those powers that belong to the worse coordination; because these are especially adorned, when they possess symmetry and familiarity with the better order of contrary natures. And thus much concerning the divine battles of Homer.

III. IN WHAT MANNER AN APOLOGY IS TO BE MADE FOR THOSE DIVINE FABLES WHICH APPEAR TO MAKE THE GODS THE CAUSES OF EVIL.

In the next place let us consider how, since the Gods in the summit of their essence are particularly characterized by goodness, poetry makes them to be the authors of both evil and good, though it is proper to refer to them the principal cause of what is good alone. For this, Socrates, demonstrating that divinity gives subsistence to good alone, but to nothing evil, thinks worthy of animadversion in the poems of Homer. And it seems that he reprobates the battles of the Gods, as subverting divine union, but condemns what we now propose to investigate, as diminishing the goodness of the Gods. For,

Two vessels on Jove's threshold ever stand, The source of evil one, and one of good.

To this objection, we answer that there are two coordinations of things in the world, which, as we have before observed, supernally proceed from the Gods themselves. For all things are divided by the bifurcated principles of things, viz. the orders of the Gods, the natures of beings, the genera of soul, physical powers, the circulations of the heavens, and the diversities of material things; and lastly human affairs, and allotments according to justice, thence receive a two-fold generation. For, of these, some are of a better, and others of an inferior condition. I mean, for instance, that the natural habits of bodies, viz. beauty, strength, health, and also such things as, independent of the corporeal constitution, pertain to souls, viz. power, and honour, and riches, belong to allotments of a better condition; but those habits and circumstances which are opposite to these, belong to those of an inferior condition.

These things then being necessarily divided after the above-mentioned manner, those which belong to the better portion it was usual with the ancients immediately to denominate good, but those of the contrary portion they denominated evil; yet not in the same signification as when we call an unjust and intemperate habit of the soul evil; but as impediments of energies, as darkening our natural dispositions, and disturbing the providence of the soul in its tranquil management of human affairs, they admitted them to be evil, and to be so denominated, but after a different manner from what are called the evils of the soul. Thus also they were accustomed to call disease, imbecility, and a privation of the necessities of life, evils. And why is it necessary to adduce all poetry as a witness of the use of this name? For the Pythagoreans also, in establishing two-fold coordinations of things in all orders, did not refuse to call one of these good, and the other evil.

Though, how can any one admit that the even, the oblong, and motion, are to be enumerated among those evils which we define as privations of good? How can we say that the feminine, the genus of difference and of dissimilitude, are contrary to nature? But I think this entirely evident, that, according to every progression of things, they called the subordinate series of things opposite, evil, as deserting the other series, and being neither primarily beneficent, nor distant by the same interval from the one cause of every thing beautiful and good, It is requisite therefore to suspend these two-fold coordinations of good and evil in the universe from the demiurgic monad. For the divisions of the Gods, and of the genera posterior to the Gods, depend on that first principle. The cause likewise of the good and evil which happen from fate, and which are allotted to souls about generation, according to justice, must be referred to the dispensator of the universe, who also sends souls into the region of mortality.

For the effects of fate are suspended from demiurgic providence, about which the series of justice also subsists, and the boundaries of which it follows, being, as the Athenian guest in Plato observes, the avenger of the divine law. Lastly, the gifts of fortune, and the distribution of all things according to justice, are determined according to the will of the father. The demiurgus and father therefore of the universe has pre-established in himself the cause of every thing good and evil, of more excellent and subordinate gifts, of prosperous events, and of such as are impediments to the energies of the soul in externals; and he governs all things according to intellect, distributing to every being such things as are fit, and referring all things to his own paternal administration. For he distributes to souls, with a view to good, both things of the better and of the inferior coordination; looking in his distribution to the perfection of the recipients.

If these things then are rightly asserted we must admit the Homeric arrangement, which places in the demiurgic intellect of Jupiter twofold primary causes of the goods and the ills which he imparts to souls. For, of all the intellectual kings, the duad especially belongs to the demiurgus of the universe: since, according to the Oracle, "the duad is seated with him; and, by his governing all things, and disposing every thing in its proper place, he shows virtue to be victorious, and vice to be vanquished in the universe." For what difference is there between asserting these things, and comparing the demiurgus to one playing at chess, and sending souls in to lives adapted to

their respective natures? These two fountains therefore of a better and worse condition of things, by which the demiurgus conducts souls according to justice, the poet mythologizing denominates tubs; whether indicating that divinity assigns to every thing its proper boundary through intellectual persuasion (for intellect, says Timæus, is the principle of necessity, persuading it to lead all things to that which is best), or the capaciousness of these principles, and their comprehending all-various effects. For the demiurgus and father of the universe contains unitedly in himself the dispersed multitude of all that he distributes to souls. So that, according to this reasoning, Plato and the Homeric poetry accord with each other. For the former says that it is not proper to make God the cause of any evil; but the other perpetually produces every thing good from thence: yet, since goods are two-fold, and each kind benefits those by whom it is received, hence the Homeric poetry distributes them into twofold coordinations, and, indicating their difference with respect to each other, denominates the one as absolutely good, but places the other separate, as contrary to good. But that what is called evil by Homer is not such as that which Plato denies to be given by the Gods, the poet himself declares in the following verses,

The Gods on Peleus from his birth bestow'd illustrious gifts
With these God also evil join'd

What this evil is he immediately tells us:

No race succeeding to imperial sway; An only son, and he (alas!) ordain'd To fall untimely in a foreign land. See him in Troy the pious care decline Of his weak age, to live the curse of thine!

In these verses, it appears that Homer does not make divinity the cause of real evils, since he calls the loss of a son, and the being deprived of his attendance in old age, evils. But in what manner these are evils, we have above explained, viz. so far as they cause difficulty in the present life, and sorrow in the soul. For, though it is not lawful for those who philosophize in a genuine manner to call these evils, yet they appear to be impediments of a life according to virtue, to those who make choice of a practical life. Hence the Athenian guest also contends that all such things are, in a certain respect, evil to good men, but good to such as are depraved; though he makes God to be the cause, both of these, and of every thing imparted from the universe. So that not only Homer,

and Achilles in Horner assert these things, but Plato himself, and the legislator according to Plato.

IV. HOW THE POETRY OF HOMER SEEMS TO REFER A VIOLATION OF OATHS TO THE GODS: — THE TRUTH RESPECTING THIS UNFOLDED.

In the next place let us consider how leagues and oaths, according to the poetry of Homer, are violated with the will of the mighty Jupiter, and of Minerva acting in subserviency to the will of her father: for this also Socrates reprobates, as referring the principle of evils to the first of the Gods.

And here indeed it is worth while especially to doubt, how he who makes divinity to be the cause of these things, does not make him to be the cause of the greatest and real evils. For Homer cannot here be defended by saying, that he represents poverty, disease, and things of this kind, as proceeding from the Gods, but he ascribes to divinity the cause of these things which are acknowledged by all men to be evils. Timæus, indeed, in Plato, represents the demiurgus as entirely prescribing laws to souls prior to their descent into generation, that he may not be accused as the cause of their consequent evils; but these verses of Homer admit that the principle of the greatest evils is imparted to them from divinity, when they have descended, and are conversant with generation. How then shall we reply to these animadversions, so as to harmonize the doctrine of Homer with the nature of things, and the narration of Plato? We may reply as follows: That fables of this kind are not adapted to the habit of youth, as has been asserted by us before, and we shall now, and in all that follows repeat the assertion. For it is not possible for youth to distinguish the nature of things, nor to refer the apparent signs of truth to an unapparent theory, nor to see how every thing in the universe is accomplished according to the will of divinity, through other intervening causes. But we shall show that these things are agreeable to the philosophy of Plato.

The Athenian guest then, in the Laws, says, that “God is the beginning, the middle, and end of all things, and that justice follows him, taking vengeance on those that desert the divine law: but these, as he informs us, are such as through youth and folly have their soul inflamed with insolence, and for a

certain time appear to themselves to govern, but afterwards suffer the proper punishment of their conduct from justice, and entirely subvert themselves, their city, and their family." These things are asserted by the Athenian guest politically; but Homer, relating them in a divinely inspired manner (), says that those who have often sinned, and committed the greatest crimes, are punished for their offences according to the single will of Jupiter, and are deprived of life together with their wives and children. He further informs us, that Jupiter first of all accomplishes this punishment, and in a manner exempt and unapparent to all; but Minerva in the second place, being subservient to and cooperating with the paternal providence of Jupiter; for, as Orpheus says, "she is the powerful queen of the intellect of Saturnian Jove." The same poet likewise adds, that "his brain who violates leagues and oaths shows on the ground like wine." In consequence, therefore, of this violation, such men subject themselves to justice, and render themselves adapted to punishment.

Hence the violation of leagues and oaths is especially perpetrated by those who, prior to this, have deserved the vengeance of the Gods, who justly govern mortal affairs and thus punish former crimes. But such are said to be moved, and led forth into energy by the Gods themselves: not that the Gods render men who are to be punished impious and unjust, but as calling into energy those that are adapted to the perpetration of such-like actions, that by once energizing according to their inward habit and producing into light the progeny of depraved actions with which they are pregnant, they may become worthy of punishment. For we should rather say, according to Plato, that vengeance, the attendant of justice, is perfected in such, than divine justice itself; since the just and justice are beautiful things. But both he on whom vengeance is inflicted, and he on whom it is not, are miserable.

Men therefore, who have committed many and the greatest crimes, and who have a depraved habit which is parturient with greater and more weighty evil, in the first place sustain vengeance, which appears indeed to crush those that suffer it, leading them to the violation of oaths, but in reality brings them to suffer the punishment of their crimes, effecting that which is similar to the opening of ulcers by the surgeon's instrument, which produces an increase of pain at the time, but, by discharging the putridity and the latent humour, becomes the cause of future health. But the poetry of Homer says that this

punishment, beginning supernally from Jupiter (for justice, as we have before observed, follows him, taking vengeance on those that desert the divine law), is perfected through Minerva as the medium. For the Trojans, seeing into what an evil they had brought themselves, and that their life was obnoxious to deserved punishment, rendered this inevitable to themselves, by the violation of oaths and leagues.

Again then, it must be in the first place said that the Gods were not the causes of this confused and disorderly conduct to the Trojans, but that they through their own depravity rendered themselves worthy of an energy of this kind, and among these Pandarus in an eminent degree, as being a man ambitious, avaricious, and leading an atheistical life. Hence Minerva, proceeding according to the intellect of her father, does not excite any one casually to this action, but is said to seek Pandarus, as particularly adapted to an avenging energy.

She ev'ry where the godlike Pandarus explor'd.

For a man who is capable of doing and suffering any thing, and who also opposes himself to divinity, through a certain gigantic and audacious habit of soul, is rare, and truly difficult to be found. As therefore physicians are not the causes of cuttings and burnings, but the diseases of those that are cured, so neither are the Gods the causes of the impiety respecting oaths and leagues, but the habits of those by whom it is committed.

In the second place, this also must be considered, that Minerva is not said to prepare Pandarus for the deed, but only to try if he gave himself up to this energy. For divinity does not destroy the freedom of the will, not even in such as are consummately wicked:

Lycaon's warlike son, what I suggest, Wilt thou obey?

But Pandarus, incited by an immoderate desire of riches and power, leaps to unjust energies, the poet all but exclaiming in the very words of Socrates in the Republic, that "many things are extended to souls from the universe, which astonish the stupid, and cause them to err respecting the elections of lives." As therefore the prophet extends a tyrannic life, and he who first chooses this is said to be stupid, although he by whom it was extended was entirely a divine nature; so here, when Minerva offers to the choice of Pandarus a more powerful and rich condition with impiety, or one entirely contrary to this, he

makes choice of the worse. And in this case Minerva is not the cause of the election, but the improbity of him by whom the election is made. For neither is the prophet in Plato the cause of a tyrannic life, but the intemperance of him that chose it. Hence Pandarus, in obeying Minerva, is said to suffer this through his stupidity. For indeed (to speak accurately) he did not obey Minerva, but the avaricious and stupid habit of his soul. Though, is it not wonderful that Minerva, in this instance, is not the cause of wisdom, but of folly? But, says, Plotinus, "Craft is produced from a defluxion of intellect; an illumination of temperance becomes intemperance; and audacity is the gift of fortitude." For such as are the forms of life, such also from necessity must be the participations from more excellent natures. Hence some participate of intelligibles intellectually, others according to opinion, and others phantastically. Others again participate of passions impassively, others with mediocrity of passion, and others with perfect passivity. But all things are moved by the Gods, according to their respective aptitudes. So that the violation of oaths did not proceed from Jupiter and Minerva, but from Pandarus and the Trojans. This action however is suspended from the Gods, as being the forerunner of justice, and as preparing those by whom it was perpetrated for the perfect punishment of their guilt.

Nor is a divine nature the cause of true evil to souls, but the depraved habits of these are the sources to them of their depraved energies. But every energy, though it proceeds with depravity into the universe, is under the direction of presiding Gods, and of a more total or partial providence. For it becomes, says Plotinus, an unjust action to him who does it, so far as pertains to the doing it, but just to him who suffers for it, so far as he suffers. And so far as an action of this kind is atheistical, it originates from a partial cause, which gives perfection to an action full of passion; but so far as it is good, it obtains from presiding powers its proper end. For it is necessary that the authors of the greatest crimes should some time or other be called to punishment; but this would never take place, unless their depravity received its completion. Many habits therefore, remaining unenergetic, render those by whom they are possessed incapable of obtaining their proper cure. Hence, on the Gods consulting concerning bringing the war to an end, and saving the Trojans, the goddess who presides over justice prevents any energy of this kind, that the Trojans may more swiftly suffer the punishment of their crimes; and Minerva, who cooperates

with this divinity, excites to the violation of the oath, that, energizing according to the whole of their depravity, they may receive the punishment of the whole of it. For neither was it good for them to remain without a cure, nor that their latent depravity should be healed prior to their second offences. All their unjust life therefore being unfolded, punishment follows, correcting the whole of their impious conduct.

V. THE WHOLE THEORY OF THE FABLE UNFOLDED, IN WHICH JUPITER, THROUGH THEMIS, EXCITES THE GODS TO CONTENTION.

In the next place, since Socrates mentions the judgment of the Gods in Homer, and the strife to which Jupiter excites the multitude of the Gods, through Themis elevating all of them to himself, let us also speak concerning these things. That Jupiter then is a monad separated from the universe, and the multitude of mundane Gods, and that he is able to produce all things from, and again convert them to himself, has often been said. But since his energy proceeding to the multitude of Gods is two-fold, one of which converts and the other moves the Gods to the providence of inferior natures, poetry also describes two-fold speeches of Jupiter to the Gods. According to the first of these, the one and whole demiurgus of the universe is represented as communicating an unmingled purity to the multitude of the Gods, and imparting to them powers separate from all division about the world. Hence he orders all the Gods to desist from the war and the contrariety of mundane affairs. But, according to the second of these speeches, he excites them to the providence of subordinate natures, and permits their divided progressions into the universe, that they may not only be contained in one demiurgic intellect, which, as the poet says,

None can escape, or soaring run beyond —

but may energize in the subjects of their providential care, according to their own characteristics. Hence Jupiter says to them,

Each, as your minds incline, to either host Your succour lend.

But as the progressions of the Gods are not divulged from the demiurgic monad, Themis first converts them to this monad.

But Jove to Themis gives command, to call The Gods to council —

that, acting providentially according to the will of their father, they may also energize according to the judgment of Themis. And the poet indeed delivers to us separate speeches of the one demiurgus of the universe to the junior Gods; but Timæus represents him in one speech converting the multitude of these Gods to himself, and exciting them to the providence of mortal affairs, that they may govern all secondary natures according to justice. But these things in no respect differ from exciting them to war, and through Themis converting them to himself. For those who preside over generation govern the war in matter; and those who energize according to justice are suspended from the whole of Themis, of whom justice is the daughter, and imitate the one demiurgic intellect to whom it is not lawful to do any thing but what is most beautiful, as Timæus himself asserts.

VI. WHAT THE JUDGMENT OF THE GODS IS IN THE FABLES OF THE POET, AND WHAT DIFFERENCES OF LIVES IT OBSCURELY SIGNIFIES.

Again, it is not proper to think that the celebrated judgment of the Gods, which fables say was accomplished by Paris, was in reality a strife of the Gods with each other, under the judgment of a barbarian; but we ought to consider the elections of lives, which Plato delivers in many places, as subsisting under the Gods who are the inspection guardians of souls. And this indeed Plato clearly teaches us in the *Phædrus*, when he says that a royal life is the gift of Juno, a philosophic life of Jupiter, and an amatory life of Venus. Since therefore souls, from among a multitude of lives proposed to them from the universe, embrace some according to their own judgment and reject others, hence fables, transferring to the Gods themselves the peculiarities of lives, assert that not the diversities of living, but the Gods that preside over these diversities, are judged by those that choose them. According to this reasoning, Paris also is said to have been appointed a judge of Minerva, Juno and Venus; and that of three lives which were proposed to him, he chose the amatory life: and this not with prudence, but recurring to apparent beauty, and pursuing the image of that beauty which is intelligible. For he who is truly amatory, taking intellect and prudence for his guides, and with these contemplating

both true and apparent beauty, is no less the votary of Minerva than of Venus. But he who alone pursues the amatory form of life by itself, and this accompanied with passion, deserts true beauty, but through folly and luxury leaps to the image of beauty, lies about it in a fallen condition, and does not attain to a perfection adapted to an amatory character. For he who is truly amatory and studious of Venus, is led to divine beauty, and despises all that is beautiful in the regions of sense. Since however there are certain dæmons with the characteristics of Venus, who preside over apparent beauty, and which subsists in matter, hence he who embraces the image of beauty, is said to have Venus cooperating with him in all his undertakings.

VII. WHAT THE MUTATIONS OF THE GODS ARE, WHICH ARE INTRODUCED IN FABLES, AND IN HOW MANY WAYS, AND THROUGH WHAT CAUSES, THEY ARE DEVISED.

Since a divine nature is not only beneficent, but likewise immutable, without form, simple, and always subsisting according to the same, and after the same manner, Socrates very properly considers the following verses of Homer worthy of animadversion,

The Gods at times, resembling foreign guests, Wander o'er cities in all-various forms.

And again those respecting Proteus and Thetis, in which they are represented as changing their forms, and variously appearing. Indeed, that fables of this kind ought not to be heard by those who genuinely receive a political education, is perfectly evident; since it is requisite that the paradigm of a polity which is to be stable, should be immutable, and not obnoxious to all-various mutations. But here also it is requisite to collect by reasoning the divine dianoëtic conceptions of Homer, though I am not ignorant that the above verses are ascribed to one of the suitors, and that on this account the poet is free from blame. For neither should we think it right to take the opinion of Plato from what is said by Callicles or Thrasymachus, or any other sophists that are introduced in his writings; but when Parmenides or Socrates, or Timæus, or any other of such divine men speaks, then we think that we hear the dogmas of Plato. In like manner we should form at judgment of the

conceptions of Homer, not from what is said by the suitors, or any other depraved character in his poems, but from what the poet himself, or Nestor, or Ulysses, appears to say.

If any one however is willing to ascribe this dogma concerning the mutation of the Gods to Homer himself, he will not be destitute of arguments which accord with all sacred concerns, with the greatest sacrifices and mysteries, and with those appearances of the Gods which both in dreams and true visions, the rumour of mankind has supernally received. For in all these the Gods extend many forms of themselves, and appear passing into many figures. And sometimes an unfigured light of them presents itself to the view; at other times this light is fashioned in a human form, and at others again assumes a different shape. These things also the discipline of divine origin pertaining to sacred concerns delivers. For thus the Oracles speak:

“A similar fire extending itself by leaps through the waves of the air; or an unfigured fire whence a voice runs before; or a light beheld near, every way splendid, resounding and convolved. But also to behold a horse full of refulgent light; or a boy carried on the swift back of a horse, — a boy fiery, or clothed with gold, or, on the contrary, naked; or shooting an arrow, and standing on the back of the horse.”

And such things as the oracles add after these, not at any time attributing either internal change, or variety, or any mutation to a divine nature, but indicating its various participations. For that which is simple in the Gods appears various to those by whom it is seen, they neither being changed, nor wishing to deceive; but nature herself giving a determination to the characteristics of the Gods, according to the measures of the participants. For that which is participated, being one, is variously participated by intellect, the rational soul, the phantasy, and sense. For the first of these participates it impartibly, the second in an expanded manner, the third accompanied with figure, and the fourth with passivity. Hence that which is participated is uniform according to the summit of its subsistence, but multiform according to participation. It is also essentially immutable and firmly established, but at different times appearing various to its participants through the imbecility of their nature. And not only these things follow, but that which is without weight appears heavy to those that are filled with it: “The miserable heart by whom I am received cannot bear me,” says some one of the Gods. Whence

Homer also perceiving the truth of these things through divine inspiration says concerning Minerva:

Loud crash'd the beechen axle with the weight, For strong and dreadful was the power it bore.

Though here it may be said, how can that which is without weight be the cause of weight? But such as is the participant, such necessarily must that which is participated appear. Whether, therefore, some of the Gods have appeared similar to guests, or have been seen in some other form, it is not proper to attribute the apparent mutation to them, but we should say that the phantasy is varied in the different recipients. And this is one way in which the poetry of Homer delivers multiform mutations of immutable natures.

But there is another way, when a divine nature itself, which is all powerful and full of all-various forms, extends various spectacles to those that behold it. For then, according to the variety of powers which it possesses, it is said to be changed into many forms, at different times extending different powers; always indeed energizing according to all its powers, but perpetually appearing various to the transitive intellections of souls, through the multitude which it comprehends. According to this mode, Proteus also is said to change his proper form to those that behold it, perpetually exhibiting a different appearance. For though he is subordinate to the first Gods, and immortal indeed, but not a God; the minister of Neptune, but not allotted a leading dignity; yet he is a certain angelic intellect belonging to the series of Neptune, possessing and comprehending in himself all the forms of generated natures. Idothea has the first arrangement under him; the being a certain dæmoniacal soul conjoined to Proteus as to her proper divine intellect, and connecting her intellections with his intelligible forms. Another number of rational and perpetual souls follows, which the fable denominates Phocæ. Hence Proteus is represented as numbering these, poetry indicating by this the perpetuity of their nature. For the multitude of things which are generated and perish is indefinite. Partial souls therefore beholding Proteus, who is an intellect possessing many powers and full of forms, whilst at different times they convert themselves to the different forms which he contains, fancy that the transition of their own intellections is a mutation of the intelligible objects. Hence to those that retain him he appears to become all things —

Water, and fire divine, and all that creeps On earth.

For such forms as he possesses and comprehends, or rather such as he perpetually is, such does he appear to become when these forms are considered separately, through the divisible conception of those that behold them.

In the third place, therefore, we say that the Gods appear to be changed, when the same divinity proceeds according to different orders, and subsides as far as to the last of things, multiplying himself according to number, and descending into subject distinctions; for then again fables say, that the divinity, which supernally proceeds into this form, is changed to that into which it makes its progression. Thus they say that Minerva was assimilated to Mentor, Mercury to the bird called the sea-gull, and Apollo to a hawk; indicating by this their more dæmoniacal orders, into which they proceed from those of a superior rank. Hence when they describe the divine advents of the Gods, they endeavour to preserve them formless and unfigured. Thus, when Minerva appears to Achilles, and becomes visible to him alone, the whole camp being present, there Homer does not even fabulously ascribe any form and figure to the goddess, but only says that she was present, without expressing the manner in which she was present. But when they intend to signify angelic appearances, they introduce the Gods under various forms, but these such as are total; as for instance, a human form, or one common to man or woman indefinitely. For thus, again, Neptune and Minerva were present with Achilles:

Neptune and Pallas haste to his relief, And thus in human form address the chief.

Lastly, when they relate dæmoniacal advents, then they do not think it improper to describe their mutations into individuals and partial natures; whether into particular men, or other animals. For the last of those genera that are the perpetual attendants of the Gods are manifested by these figures. And here you may see how particulars of this kind are devised according to the order of things. For that which is simple is adapted to a divine nature, that which is universal to an angelic, and the rational nature to both these; and that which is partial and irrational accords with a dæmoniacal nature for a life of this kind is connected with the dæmoniacal order. And thus much concerning the modes according to which the Homeric fables devise mutations of things immutable, and introduce various forms to uniform natures.

VIII. CONCERNING THE DREAM SENT TO AGAMEMNON, WHICH APPEARS TO ACCUSE THE GODS OF FALSEHOOD, AND HOW IT MAY BE SHOWN THAT A DIVINE NATURE IS VOID OF FALSEHOOD.

It now remains that we speak concerning the dream sent by Jupiter to Agamemnon; for Socrates, at the end of his theological types, reprobates this, because the whole of a divine and dæmoniacal nature is without falsehood, as he collects by demonstrative arguments. But Homer says that Agamemnon was deceived through this dream. Though, is it not absurd, if this dream is from Jupiter, according to the assertion of the poet, that this alone nearly, of all the particulars which are mentioned as deriving their origin from Jupiter, should be attended with fraud?

In answer to this objection, we may say what is usually asserted by most of the interpreters, that the fallacy had its subsistence in the phantasy of Agamemnon. For Jupiter in his speech to the dream, and the dream again in its address to Agamemnon, evidently indicate that it would be requisite to call together all the army, and to attack the enemy with all his forces; for this is the meaning of the word *in*, which is used in both the speeches. But Agamemnon, not understanding the mandate, neglected the greatest part of his army, and, engaging in battle without the aid of Achilles, was frustrated in his expectations through his unskillfulness in judging of divine visions. So that Jupiter is not the cause of the deception, but he who did not properly understand the mandates of Jupiter.

We shall also add the solution given by our preceptor Syrianus, which both accedes to the meaning of Homer and the truth of things. For, if Jupiter is represented as providing for the honour of the hero Achilles, and consulting how he may destroy the greatest number of the Greeks, is it not necessary that he must previously comprehend in himself the cause of the deception? For, if Achilles had been associated with the army, the Greeks would not have been destroyed, nor would they have been punished for their unjust conduct towards him. It is better therefore to say that the deception was from divinity for the good of the deceived. For good is better than truth. And among the Gods, indeed, they are conjoined with each other: for neither is intellect without divinity, nor divinity without an intellectual essence. But in their

participants they are often separated; and good is produced through falsehood, and truth is frustrated of good. Whence also Socrates himself, when he is framing laws for the guardians of his republic, orders falsehood to be employed, through the opinion of the stupid, who are not otherwise able to obtain the good which is adapted to their condition. If therefore it be said that divinity benefits some through truth, and others through falsehood, and at the same time leads all of them to good, it is by no means wonderful. For, of generated natures, some subsist without matter, but others with matter, in which fallacy is inherent; or, rather, matter is true fallacy itself. So that, in the providence of souls, if they are, as we have said, variously benefited by divinity, some immaterially through truth, but others materially through falsehood, such providential energy will be adapted to the nature of the Gods.

But, if it be requisite, this also may be asserted, that deception and falsehood are generated in the participant, and that this takes place according to the will of divinity, that he who has acted erroneously may through the deception become more worthy: just as that which is material is generated in these lower regions, but subsists according to demiurgic providence, that there may be generation and corruption in order to the completion of the universe. Divinity therefore does not deceive, but he who is deceived is deceived by himself; and this takes place, according to the will of divinity for the good of him who sustains the deception. For, God making immaterially, that which is generated is generated materially; and he energizing impartibly, that which proceeds from this energy, receives its completion partibly; and he signifying intellectually, falsehood obtains a shadowy subsistence in the being that receives what is signified. But the divine poet himself manifests, that, truth dwelling with the Gods, deception is generated from the opinion of the recipients, when he makes Jupiter commanding the dream say —

All that I order tell with perfect truth.

How then is there falsehood in divinity, according to Homer? And how is divinity the cause of deception? Unless it should be said he is the cause in such a manner, as that neither is the shadowy subsistence of deception in these lower regions contrary to his will. But the habit of youth is incapable of distinguishing and contemplating, how, wholes remaining void of evil, in the natures which receive them divisibly evil appears; how, natures more excellent than ours not deceiving, we are often deceived; and how, when deceived, we

suffer this according to the will of providence. Hence Socrates is not willing that young men should hear things of this kind, as being incapable of forming properly distinct opinions of things.

IX. A COMMON APOLOGY BOTH FOR THE HOMERIC AND PLATONIC FABLES, IN WHICH THEY SPEAK OF THE JUDGMENTS IN HADES, OF SOULS, AND THE DIFFERENT ALLOTMENTS WHICH THEY RECEIVE ON DEPARTING FROM THEIR BODIES, ACCORDING TO THE IDIOMS OF THE LIFE IN THE BODY.

Having then discussed these things, let us examine what is written in the third book of the Republic, and, prior to other things, what the poet either himself asserts, or introduces another asserting, mythologically concerning Hades; and let us consider whether they contain anything of truth, and accord with the narrations of Plato. What then are we to understand, when the poet represents Achilles as preferring servitude in the present life to the possession of every thing in Hades? What is the meaning of those dreadful habitations, which are odious to the Gods, of the image and the soul, of shades wandering without intellect, of lives compared to shadows, of the lamentations of souls passing thither, of their being assimilated to bats, of smoke, a crashing noise, and such like particulars, which the poems of Homer contain? What likewise are the rivers in Hades, and those appellations, which are the most tragical? For these Socrates reprobates, but at the same time adds, what is common to all fables, “that they contribute to something else; but we,” says he, “are afraid for our guardians, lest from these terrible relations, they should think death to be dreadful.”

However, that Socrates himself in many places uses names and ænigmas of this kind, is obvious to every one. For, that I may omit the rivers mentioned in the Phædo, the wanderings of souls, their anxieties, the three roads, the punishments, the being carried in rivers, the lamentations and exclamations there, and the supplications of injurers to the injured, of all which Plato says Hades is full; — though these things should be omitted, yet does not what we find written at the end of the Republic accord with the intention of the Homeric poetry, viz. the bellowing mouth, Tartarus, fiery dæmons, the

tearing off the flesh of the tyrant Aridæus, and souls full of dust and filth? For, what is there in these which falls short of the tragical in the extreme? So that for the same reason these also are to be rejected, or the Homeric doctrine is not to be reprehended. In defence of both therefore, whether some Epicurean or any other endeavours to accuse such-like fables, we say, that the habits of souls liberated from the body are different, and the places of the universe are multiform, into which they are introduced. Of these also some are so separated from mortal instruments, as neither to have any habitude to things of a worse condition, nor to be filled with the tumult which they contain, and material inanity. The vehicles of such are necessarily pure and luciform, not disturbed by material vapours, nor thickened by a terrestrial nature. But others who are not yet perfectly purified by philosophy, but are drawn down to an affection towards the testaceous body, and pursue a life conjoined with this, — these exhibit such like vehicles suspended from their essence to those who are capable of beholding them, viz. shadowy, material, drawing downwards by their weight, and attracting much of a mortal condition. Hence Socrates, in the *Phædo*, says that such souls, rolling about sepulchres, exhibit shadowy phantasms; and the poet relates that they are impelled along similar to shadows.

Further still, of those souls which yet embrace a corporeal life there are many differences. For some live a more practic life, and not yet deserting a life of this kind, embrace an organ adapted to practical energies, from which when they are separated they are indignant; as was the case with the soul of Patroclus,

Which leaving youth and manhood wail'd its fate.

And when in Hades, they still desire an association with this organ, as did the soul of Achilles, because he preferred a life on earth to a separate life, according to which he was not able to energize, but very much excelled in an active life. Others again, through the infelicity of their condition, eagerly embrace the testaceous body, and think that the life conjoined with it differs in no respect from the proper life of the soul. Such as these the divine poetry of Homer assimilates to bats, as looking to that which is dark in the universe, and its very extremity, and which may be denominated a stupendous cavern; and as having the winged nature of the soul gross and terrestrial. Is it therefore wonderful that Achilles, who possessed practical virtue, should desire a life in conjunction with body, and which was capable of being subservient to his

actions? For Hercules, being purified through the telestic science, and partaking of undefiled fruits, obtained a perfect restoration among the Gods; whence the poet says of him,

He with th' immoital Gods delighted lives, And beauteous Hebe crowns his joys. —

But Achilles, since he embraces rectitude in practical affairs, and the present life, pursues also and desires an instrument adapted to this life. Plato himself, therefore, also says that souls according to the manners to which they have been accustomed, make choice of secondary lives. Is not this likewise worthy of admiration in the divine tradition of Homer — I mean the separation of the soul from its image, and intellect from the soul? Also that the soul is said to use the image, but that intellect is more divine than both these? And again, that the image and the soul may in a certain respect be known while yet detained in the body; and that the soul takes care of and providentially attends to the testaceous body, and, when this is not effected, desires its accomplishment; but that intellect is incomprehensible by our phantastic and figured motions? Hence Achilles, on beholding Patroclus speaking concerning the burial of his body, was led to believe that the soul and its image were in Hades, but that intellect was not there, nor prudence, by which these are used. For the energies of the irrational life hastened to adopt this position, but could not credit the reception of the intellectual soul in Hades from the visions of dreams.

Does it not also most perfectly accord with things themselves to say, that the multitude of souls depart from their bodies lamenting, and are divulsed from them with difficulty, through the alluring life and manifold pleasures which they enjoy in them? For every corporeal pleasure, as Socrates says in the *Phædo*, as if armed with a nail, fastens the soul to the body.

And such souls after deserting their bodies use shadowy vehicles, which are disturbed by the ponderous and terrene vapours of the Sirens, and utter an uncertain voice, and a material sound, which the Homeric poetry denominates a crashing noise. For, as the instruments of ascending souls emit a harmonious sound, and appear to possess an elegant and well-measured motion, so the found of more irrational souls descending under the earth is similar to a crashing noise, bearing an image of an appetitive and phantastic life alone. Nor must we think that the places in Hades, and the tribunals under

the earth, and the rivers which both Homer and Plato teach us are there, are merely fabulous, prodigies: but, as many and all-various places are assigned to souls ascending to the heavens, according to the allotments which are there; in like manner it is proper to believe that places under the earth are prepared for those souls that still require punishment and purification. These places, as they contain the various defluxions of the elements on the earth, are called by poets rivers and streams. They likewise contain different orders of presiding dæmons; some of whom are of an avenging, others of a punishing, others of a purifying, and, lastly, others of a judicial characteristic. But if the Homeric poetry calls these places

Horrid and dark, and odious to the Gods,

neither is it proper to condemn it for this. For souls are terrified through the variety and phantasy of the presiding dæmons which are there. The infernal region likewise is extended according to all-various allotments, adapted to the different habits of those that descend thither. It is also most remote from the Gods, as being the extremity of the universe, and as possessing much of material disorder, and never enjoying the splendor of the solar rays. And thus much concerning those verses which Socrates thinks should be obliterated, and should by no means be heard by those whom he educates: for through these, says he, the love of the soul for the body will be increased, and a separation from it will appear to be of all things most dreadful.

X. WHAT THE CAUSES ARE THROUGH WHICH THE POETRY OF HOMER ASCRIBES LAMENTATIONS BOTH TO HEROES AND GODS; AND LIKEWISE TO THE BEST OF HEROES AND THE GREATEST OF THE GODS.

It now follows that we should consider how the poetry of Homer does not represent one of us weeping and lamenting, when he also ascribes these effects of sorrow to his heroes, but makes the Gods themselves to weep, for the death of mortals whom they loved; though, according to Plato, Socrates neither wept, nor suffered any perturbation of mind, when his familiars wept on account of his approaching death; but Apollodorus, who wept abundantly, and any other who was similarly affected, were reproved by their master. But

the divine poet represents his heroes immoderately lamenting the loss of their familiars. And, though some one should say that such things as the following became Priam who was a barbarian, and more irrational in his conduct:

Roll'd in the dust he suppliant call'd on all, And nam'd them one by one:

yet is it not absurd that Achilles, the son of a goddess, should at one time lie supine, at another prone, and, at another on his side, and, defiling his head with dust, weep in a very puerile manner? And even if such passions were proper in men who are allotted a mortal nature, yet they ought not to be ascribed to the Gods themselves. Why then is it requisite that Thetis should say weeping:

Ah wretched me ! unfortunately brave A son I bore.

For a divine nature is established very remote from pleasure and pain. But though some one should dare to introduce the Gods affected in this manner, yet it is not fit that the greatest of the Gods should lament and mourn both for Hector when pursued by Achilles, and for his son Sarpedon, and exclaim respecting both, "Ah me!" For such an imitation does not appear to be in any respect adapted to its paradigms, since it ascribes tears to things without tears, pain to things void of pain, and in short passion to things free from passion. These things Socrates reprobrates in Homer, and expels from the education of youth, fearful lest some impediment should arise, through such-like assertions, to a right discipline according to virtue. For education is particularly conversant with pleasure and pain; which being increased, the legislator must necessarily be frustrated of his proper end.

To these objections we reply, that since the poet introduces heroes engaged in practical affairs, and living a life adapted to these, he very properly represents them as affected with particular events, and living conformably to such affections. For to philosophers, and those who energize cathartically, pleasures and pains, and the mixtures of these, are by no means adapted; since they are separated from these, lay aside all the trifling of mortality, and hasten to be divested of the forms of life with which they are surrounded from the elements, rapidly withdrawing themselves from material passions the offspring of generation. But pleasures, pains, sympathies, and a scene of all-various passions, are coordinated to those engaged in war, and who energize according to the passive part of the soul. And how could the vehement about actions

take place, without the impulse of the appetites? Priam, therefore, and Achilles, neither being philosophers, nor willing to separate themselves from generation, nor living after the manner of the guardians of Plato's republic, — if they lament and commiserate their familiars, it is by no means wonderful. For the loss of friends, the being destitute of children, and the subversions of cities, appear to warriors to impart a great portion of misery. The accomplishment of mighty deeds, therefore, is adapted to these, as being allotted an heroic nature; and in conjunction with this the pathetic, from their being conversant with particulars.

With respect to the Gods, however, when they are said to weep for or lament those that are most dear to them, another mode of interpretation is to be adopted, and which was formerly admitted by the authors of fables, who indicated by tears the providence of the Gods about mortal, generated, and perishable natures. For this object of providential energy naturally calling for tears afforded a pretext to the inventors of fables; and through these they obscurely signified providence itself. Hence some one, in a hymn to the Sun, says,

Phœbus, the much-enduring race of men Thy tears excite. —

And on this account, in the mysteries also, we mystically assume sacred lamentations, as symbols of the providence pertaining to us from more excellent natures. Thetis therefore, and Jupiter, are said to lament those most dear to them, when in extreme danger — not that they are passively disposed after the manner of men, but because a certain separate providence proceeds from them, and gifts to particulars. And when the order of the universe concurs with this divisible providence, the preserving energy of that which provides is unimpeded; but when this order opposes, and that which is the object of a particular providence, as being a part of the universe, and allotted generation, sustains that corruption which is adapted to its nature, then fables, adducing the idiom or peculiarity of the providence which this object received according to its order, say that the powers who exert this providential energy lament, but not with exclamation: so that grief with them is a sign of the energy of a particular providence about individuals. After this manner, then, we attribute lamentations to the first Gods; since the greatest and most perfect of mystical sacrifices () deliver in the arcana certain sacred lamentations of Proserpine and Ceres, and of the greatest goddess herself.

But it is by no means wonderful if the of the genera which are the perpetual attendants of the Gods, and which proximately attend to the affairs of mortals, in consequence of employing appetites and passions, and having their life in these, should rejoice in the safety of the objects of their providence, but be afflicted and indignant when they are corrupted, and should suffer a mutation according to passions:

The Nymphs lament when trees are leafless found; But when the trees through fertilizing rain In leaves abound, the Nymphs rejoice again —

says a certain poet. For all things subsist divinely in the Gods, but divisibly and dæmoniacally in the divided guardians of our nature. And thus much may suffice concerning the lamentations of the Gods.

XI. WHAT THE CAUSE IS OF THE LAUGHTER ASCRIBED TO THE GODS IN FABLES, AND WHY THE POETRY OF HOMER MAKES THE GODS TO LAUGH IMMODERATELY AT VULCAN.

Let us in the next place consider whether fables properly attribute to the Gods a passion contrary to that which we have just now discussed, viz. immoderate laughter, and which is thought worthy of reprehension by Socrates.

Vulcan ministrant when the Gods beheld, Amidst them laughter unextinguish'd rose.

What then is the laughter of the Gods? and why do they laugh in consequence of Vulcan moving and energizing? Theologists, therefore, say that Vulcan, as we have elsewhere observed, is the demiurgus and maker of every thing apparent. Hence he is said to have constructed habitations for the Gods:

Then to their proper domes the Gods depart, Form'd by lame Vulcan with transcendent art.

And this, in consequence of preparing for them mundane receptacles. He is also said to be lame in both his feet, because his fabrication is without legs. For that which is moved with a motion about intellect and prudence does not, says Timæus, require feet. He is likewise said to preside over the brazier's art, and he himself energizes working in brass. Hence, in the poetry of Homer, heaven is often celebrated as brazen; and many other particulars confirm this opinion.

But since every providential energy about a sensible nature, according to which the Gods assist the fabrication of Vulcan, is said to be the sport of divinity, hence Timæus also appears to me to call the mundane Gods junior, as presiding over things which are perpetually in generation, or becoming to be, and which may be considered as ludicrous. The authors of fables are accustomed to call this peculiarity of the providence of the Gods energizing about the world, laughter. And when the poet says that the Gods, being delighted with the motion of Vulcan, laughed with inextinguishable laughter, nothing else is indicated than that they are cooperating artificers; that they jointly give perfection to the art of Vulcan, and supernally impart joy to the universe. For Vulcan suspends all their mundane receptacles, and extends to the providence of the Gods whole physical powers. But the Gods, energizing with a facility adapted to their nature, and not departing from their proper hilarity, confer on these powers also their characteristic gifts, and move wholes by their perfective providence. In short, we must define the laughter of the Gods to be their exuberant energy in the universe, and the cause of the gladness of all mundane natures. But, as such a providence is incomprehensible, and the communication of all goods from the Gods is never-failing, we must allow that the poet very properly calls their laughter unextinguished. And here you may again see how what we have said is conformable to the nature of things. For fables do not assert that the Gods always weep, but that they laugh without ceasing. For tears are symbols of their providence in mortal and frail concerns, and which now rise into existence, and then perish; but laughter is a sign of their energy in wholes, and those perfect natures in the universe which are perpetually moved with undeviating sameness. On which account I think, when we divide demiurgic productions into Gods and men, we attribute laughter to the generation of the Gods, but tears to the formation of men and animals; whence the poet whom we have before mentioned, in his hymn to the Sun, says,

Mankind's laborious race thy tears excite, But the Gods, laughing, blossom'd into light.

But when we make a division into things celestial and sublunary, again after the same manner we must assign laughter to the former, and tears to the latter; and when we reason concerning the generations and corruptions of sublunary natures themselves, we must refer the former to the laughter, and the latter to

the tears, of the Gods. Hence, in the mysteries also, those who preside over sacred institutions order both these to be celebrated at stated times. And we have elsewhere observed, that the stupid are neither able to understand things employed by theurgists in secrecy, nor fictions of this kind. For the hearing of both these, when unaccompanied with science, produces dire and absurd confusion in the lives of the multitude, with respect to the reverence pertaining to divinity.

XII. AN APOLOGY FOR THOSE PARTS IN THE POETRY OF HOMER, WHICH APPEAR IN ALL-VARIOUS WAYS TO EXCITE THE HEARERS TO A CONTEMPT OF TEMPERANCE.

It now follows that we should consider whether the poems of Homer are inimical to the acquisition of temperance. The greatest species therefore of temperance, says Socrates, is reverence towards governors; the next to this is a command over the pleasures and desires of the soul; and there is a third consequent to these, which we shall shortly after contemplate. Achilles appears to have erred according to the first of these, when he freely says to the commander of all the Grecian forces,

Drunkard, dog-eyed, with heart of deer!

But Ulysses according to the third of these, when, defining the most beautiful life, he says that he particularly approves that polity of men in which there are

The heav'n-taught poet, and enchanting strain; The well-fill'd palace, the perpetual feast, A land rejoicing, and a people blest! The plenteous board high-heap'd with cates divine, And o'er the foaming bowl the laughing wine!

For in these verses he places the end of life in nothing else than variety of pleasure, and the gratification of desire. Such then being the objections made by Socrates to the verses of Homer, in answer to the first we say, that those guardians which he places over his city, and who are allotted such a transcendency, on account of their erudition and virtue, over those whom they govern, demand the most abundant and the greatest honour, both from their associates and all others; as they are truly the saviours and benefactors of the whole polity over which they preside: nor is it to be supposed that the

governed will ever suffer any thing unholy or unjust from them, governing as they do according to intellect and justice. But the poet neither admits that Agamemnon excels all those that are subject to him, in virtue, nor in benefiting others; but he ranks him among those that are benefited by others, and particularly by the military science of Achilles. Very properly, therefore, does he represent him as reviled by those more excellent than himself, and consider the general good of the governed, against which Agamemnon sinned, as of more consequence than gratifying the passions of the chief. The poet therefore introduces the best of the Greeks freely speaking to Agamemnon, without regarding the multitude of soldiers that followed him, or his naval power. For virtue is every where honourable, but not the instruments of virtue. We must not therefore say, that he who employs such disgraceful epithets sins against the rulers and saviours of the whole army, when they are only superior by the multitude of those that are subject to their command, but are far inferior in virtue. For even the commander himself of so great an army, and so difficult to be numbered, acknowledges, a little after, how much Achilles excels him in virtue, laments his own infelicity, and says,

For I have err'd, nor this win I deny.

And,

That happy man whom Jove still honours most, Is more than armies, and himself an host.

With respect to the word of Ulysses, we may say in their defence, that every thing of thing, kind is interpreted more symbolically by those who transfer to other conceptions his wanderings, and who think it proper to rank both the Phæacians and their felicity higher than human nature. For with them the festival, the dainties, and the enchanting strain, have a different signification from that which is obvious to the multitude. It may also be said, that even those who do not depart from the apparent meaning of the poet, may nevertheless reply to such objections, and show, in the first place, that Ulysses, the wisest of the Greeks, does not think it fit that pleasure should have dominion in well-instituted polities, but worthy joy (). And how much these differ from each other, we may learn from Plato himself. In the second place, Ulysses approves of the whole city becoming harmonized and unanimous with itself through music, being an auditor of such melodies as

lead to virtue. For it is of great consequence to the whole polity, and to true erudition and virtue, that he who exercises music among the vulgar should not be any casual person, but one who derives his knowledge of it supernally through divine inspiration, from its presiding deity. In the third place, such harmony, to those that partake of it, adds an abundance of things necessary, which the multitude in cities very much require. For Ulysses does not remarkably praise a life filled with things of this kind, but that life which is in want of nothing necessary to mortal existence. The wisest of the Greeks, therefore, appears to speak conformably to our dogmas, and to unperverted preconceptions respecting divine felicity. But if Ulysses thought that he deserves approbation who takes away worthy delight, and the discipline subsisting through divine music, alone regarding feasting, and immoderate enjoyments, destitute of the Muse, and directs his attention to pleasure, Socrates with great propriety says that things of this kind are remote from his polity. For it is by no mean fit that immoderate pleasure, and a life adapted to gluttony, should have dominion in a city consisting of the happy.

XIII. WHAT THE CONNECTION OF JUPITER WITH
JUNO OBSCURELY SIGNIFIES; WHAT THE
ORNAMENT OF JUNO IS; AND WHAT THE PLACE IN
WHICH THEY WERE CONNECTED. WHAT THE LOVE
OF JUPITER SIGNIFIES; WHAT THE DIVINE SLEEP IS;
AND, IN SHORT, THE WHOLE INTERPRETATION OF
THAT FABLE.

To such objections therefore of Socrates it is not difficult to reply; but a doubt yet remains to be solved by us, greater and more difficult, respecting the connection of Jupiter with Juno; for this Socrates reprehends, as by no means fit to be heard by youth. For, does it not appear to be perfectly impious, to suspect of the greatest of the Gods, that through his love to Juno he should be forgetful of all his former decrees, should have connection with the goddess on the ground, not waiting to enter into her bedchamber, and should condescend to speak in the language of human lovers? For these in the first place prefer before all things a conjunction with the objects of their love; and in the next place say, that they experience the power of love more than in any former

time. For Jupiter is made to speak in this manner in the following verses;

Ne'er did my soul so strong a passion prove, Or for an earthly, or a heavenly love.

And also that he loved her more

Than when, ascending to the nuptial couch, In love they mingled, from their parents hid.

Our preceptor in a most divinely inspired manner has unfolded the occult theory of this fable; from whose writings extracting as much as is sufficient to the present purpose, we shall briefly explain the several parts of the fable, and show that Homer is free from all blasphemy in the preceding verses.

All the divine orders, therefore, proceeding from the one principle of wholes, which Plato usually calls the good, and from those biformed causes proximately appearing after this principle, which Socrates in the *Philebus* denominates bound and infinity, but other wise men have venerated by other names; these orders likewise being divided and separated from each other, in a manner adapted to the Gods, through those second biformed principles, — the interpreters of the truth concerning the Gods usually oppose in their divisions the male to the female, the even to the odd, and the paternal to the maternal genera. But these divine orders again hastening to union and a connate communion, through the first cause, which is the leader of united goods to all beings, hence I think the authors of fables took occasion in their symbolical theory to ascribe marriage to the Gods, connections, and a progeny from these, and also celebrated the connections and conjunctions of their progeny, till they had perfectly contemplated the whole extent of a divine nature, diversified by such like progressions and conjunctions supernally, as far as to mundane natures.

As therefore, among the Gods prior to the fabrication of the world, they celebrate the connections of Saturn and Rhea, of Heaven and Earth, and their cogenerations, in the same manner also, among the fabricators of the universe, they inform us that the first conjunction is that of Jupiter and Juno; Jupiter being allotted a paternal dignity, but Juno being the mother of every thing of which Jupiter is the father. The former likewise produces all things in the rank of a monad, but the latter in conjunction with him gives subsistence to secondary natures, according to the prolific duad: and the former is

assimilated to intelligible bound, but the latter to intelligible infinity. For, according to every order of Gods, it is requisite that there should be primary causes subsisting analogously to those two principles. But, to the union of these greatest divinities, it is necessary that there should previously subsist a oneness of transcendency of the monadic and demiurgic God, and a perfect conversion to him of the generative and dyadic cause.

For the connate communion of more excellent natures is after this manner effected, more elevated causes being established in themselves, and in natures more divine than themselves, but such as are subordinate giving themselves up to those that are superior. Through these causes, as it appears to me, Juno hastening to a connection with Jupiter, perfects her whole essence, and prepares it with all-various powers, the undefiled, the generative, the intellectual, and the unific; but Jupiter excites the divine love in himself, according to which he also fills his proximate participants with good, and extends to them a cause collective of multitude, and an energy convertive of secondary natures to himself. But the union and indissoluble conjunction of both these divinities is effected separate from the universe, and exempt from the mundane receptacles.

For Jupiter elevates to this communion, Juno extending to him that which is subordinate and mundane; the Gods indeed being always united, but fables separating them from each other; and referring a connection separate from the universe to the will of Jupiter, but the common cooperation of these divinities proceeding into the world, to the providence of Juno. The reason of this is, that every where the paternal cause is the leader of exempt and more uniform good, but the maternal of that good which is proximate to its participants, and is multiplied according to all-various progressions. With great propriety, therefore, are sleep and wakefulness usurped separately in the symbols of fables; wakefulness manifesting the providence of the Gods about the world, but sleep a life separate from all subordinate natures; though the Gods at the same time both providentially energize about the universe, and are established in themselves.

But as Timæus represents the demiurgus of wholes, at one time energizing, and giving subsistence to the earth, the heavens, the planets, the fixed stars, the circles of the soul, and the mundane intellect, but at another time abiding in himself, after his accustomed manner, and exempt from all those powers that

energize in the universe; so, long before Timæus, fables represent the father of all mundane natures, at one time awake, and at another asleep, for the purpose of indicating his two-fold life and energy. "For he contains intelligibles in his intellect, but introduces sense to the worlds," says one of the Gods. According to the former energy, therefore, he may be said to be awake; for wakefulness with us is an energy of sense; but according to the latter to sleep, as separated from sensibles, and exhibiting a life defined according to a perfect intellect.

It may also be said, that he consults about human affairs when awake; for according to this life he provides for all mundane concerns; but that when asleep, and led together with Juno to a separate union, he is not forgetful of the other energy, but, possessing and energizing according to it, at the same time contains both. For he does not, like nature, produce secondary things without intelligence, nor through intelligence is his providence in subordinate natures diminished, but at the same time he both governs the objects of his providence according to justice, and ascends, to his intelligible watch-tower. The fable, therefore, indicates this exempt transcendency, when it says that his connection with Juno was on mount Ida; for there Juno arriving gave herself to the embraces of the mighty Jupiter. What else, then, shall we say mount Ida obscurely signifies, but the region of ideas and an intelligible nature, to which Jupiter ascends, and elevates Juno through love; — not converting himself to the participant, but through excess of goodness imparting this second union with himself, and with that which is intelligible?

For such are the loves of more excellent natures, — they are convertive of things subordinate to things first, give completion to the good which they contain, and are perfective of subject natures. The fable, therefore, does not diminish the dignity of the mighty Jupiter, by representing him as having connection on the ground with Juno, and refusing to enter into her bed-chamber; for by this it insinuates that the connection was supermundane, and not mundane. The chamber, therefore, constructed by Vulcan indicates the orderly composition of the universe, and the sensible region; for Vulcan, as we have said before, is the artificer of the universe.

If you are also willing to consider the dress of Juno, through which she conjoined herself to the greatest of the Gods, and called forth the paternal providence of Jupiter to a communion with her own prolific powers, you will, I think, in a still greater degree behold the excess of the separate union of the

Gods, celebrated in this fable. For she assimilates herself all-variously to the mother of the Gods, from whom she also proceeds, and is adorned with the more partial powers of those natures which presubstist in her totally, and, becoming all but another Rhea, proceeds to the demiurgus of the universe, who had then ascended to his proper intelligible. For she who is about to be conjoined with him who imitates his father, through a life separate from mundane natures, assimilates also her own perfection to the mother of all the divine orders, and thus enters into a connate communion with him. The hairs therefore of the goddess, and her ringlets widely spreading, which she again binds, are evidently analogous to the hairs of the mother of the Gods: "for her hairs appear similar to rays of light ending in a sharp point," says some one of the Gods. And the poet calls the hairs of Juno shining. But her zone, with the fringes depending on and not cut off from it, resembles the whole and all-perfect girdle of Rhea. For Juno also is a vivific goddess, and is generative of all the multitude of souls, which the number of the depending fringes symbolically indicates. Her earrings and her sandals represent the first and the last of the partial powers which flow from thence, some of which substist about the highest powers of the goddess, and thence depend, but others are situated about her lowest progressions. The ambrosia and the oil are signs of the undefiled powers of the goddess; for the inflexible order of Gods substists about her. What therefore that untamed genus of Gods and cause of purity is to Juno, that is here signified through these symbols. For ambrosia represents a power superior to all impurity and all defilement, and oil, as it produces strength, and is adapted to gymnastic exercises, properly belongs to Curetic deity. For the first Curetes are in other respects ascribed to the order of Minerva, and are said by Orpheus to be crowned with a branch of olive.

The Goddess, therefore, being perfectly furnished with such like symbols, and becoming as it were a partial Rhea, proceeds to the demiurgus of the universe, that she may be conjoined with him according to that life by which he particularly imitates Saturn; not proceeding into the universe, but being separate from mundane natures; nor consulting about things which are here, according to the sleepless providence of wholes, but exempt from sensibles, according to divine sleep; and in this respect emulating his father, who is represented as sleeping the first of the Gods.

When Saturn tasted the deceitful food, Loud snoring lay the God.

Since therefore Jupiter thus imitates his father Saturn, with great propriety does the dress of Juno regard the whole of Rhea; and hence Jupiter, through his similitude to Saturn, prefers a connection on mount Ida to that which proceeds into the universe.

The girdle also, and the assistance of Venus, assimilate Juno still more to Rhea. For there also was the presubstisting monad of this goddess, proceeding supernally from the connective divinity of Heaven, through Saturn as a medium, and illuminating the whole of an intellectual life with the light of beauty. Venus is said to carry this girdle in her bosom, as possessing its powers conspicuously extended; but Juno after a manner conceals it in her bosom, as being allotted a different idiom of hyparxis, but as possessing the girdle also, so far as the likewise is filled with the whole of Venus. For she does not externally derive the power which conjoins her with the demiurgus, but comprehends it also in herself. But the general opinion of mankind evinces the comm union of these Goddesses: for they honour Juno as Nuptial and Pronuba, as beginning such like energies from herself. For she conjoins herself with the demiurgus through the girdle in herself; and hence the likewise imparts to all others a legitimate communion with each other.

But how are Jupiter and Juno said to have been at first connected with each other, concealed from their parents, but that now they are connected in a greater degree, through the excess of love with which Jupiter then loved Juno? Shall we say that the peculiarities of other goods are also two-fold; and that, of union, one kind is connate to those that are united, but that the other supernally proceeds to them from more perfect causes? According to the former of these, therefore, they are said to be concealed from their parents, in consequence of being allotted this union as peculiar to themselves; but according to the other they are elevated to their causes, and hence this is said to be a greater and more perfect union than the former. But both these unions eternally subsisting together, with the Gods, fables separate them, in the same manner as sleep and wakefulness, progression and conversion, a communication of proper goods to things secondary, and a participation of primary causes; for these the authors of fables, concealing the truth, separate, though they are consubstistent with each other. Every thing, therefore, is asserted by Homer respecting the connection of the great Jupiter and Juno after a theological manner; which is also testified by Socrates in the Cratylus,

who derives the etymology of Juno from nothing else than love, as being, says he, lovely to Jupiter. According to an occult theory, there fore, we must not accuse Homer for writing such things concerning these mighty divinities. But if it should be objected, that things of this kind are not fit to be heard by youth, according to their apparent signification, poets the authors of such fables will say, Our fables are not for youth, nor did we write such things with a view to juvenile discipline, but with an insane mouth; for these are the productions of the mania of the Muses, of which whoever being deprived arrives at the poetic gates, will be both as to himself and his poetry imperfect. And thus much may suffice for these particulars.

XIV. WHAT THE MYTHOLOGY OF HOMER OBSCURELY SIGNIFIES CONCERNING VENUS AND MARS, AND THE BONDS OF VULCAN, WITH WHICH BOTH ARE SAID TO BE BOUND.

Let us now consider the connection between Mars and Venus, and the bonds of Vulcan. For Socrates says that neither must these be admitted, nor must such fables be delivered to youth. Let us, therefore, concisely relate what the poetry of Homer obscurely signifies by these things. Both these divinities then, I mean Vulcan and Mars, energize about the whole world, the latter separating the contraries of the universe, which he also perpetually excites, and immutably preserves, that the world may be perfect, and filled with forms of every kind; but the former artificially fabricating the whole sensible order, and filling it with physical reasons and powers. He also fashions twenty tripods about the heavens, that he may adorn them with the most perfect of many-sided figures and fabricates various and many-formed sublunary species, Clasps, winding bracelets, necklaces, and chains.

Both these divinities require the assistance of Venus to their energies; the one, that he may insert order and harmony in contraries; and the other, that he may introduce beauty and splendour as much as possible, into sensible fabrications, and render this world the most beautiful of things visible. But, as Venus is every where, Vulcan always enjoys her according to the superior, but Mars according to the inferior, orders of things. Thus, for instance, if Vulcan is supermundane, Mars is mundane; and if the former is celestial, the latter is

sublunary. Hence the one is said to have married Venus according to the will of Jupiter, but the other is fabled to have committed adultery with her. For a communion with the cause of beauty and conciliation is natural to the demiurgus of sensibles; but is in a certain respect foreign to the power which presides over division, and imparts the contrariety of mundane natures; for the separating are opposed to the collective genera of Gods.

Fables therefore denominate this conspiring union of dissimilar causes adultery. But a communion of this kind is necessary to the universe, that contraries may be co-harmonized, and the mundane war terminate in peace. Since, however, on high among celestial natures, beauty shines forth, together with forms, elegance, and the fabrications of Vulcan, but beneath, in the realms of generation, the opposition and war of the elements, contrariety of powers, and in short the gifts of Mars, are conspicuous, on this account the sun from on high beholds the connection of Mars and Venus, and discloses it to Vulcan, in consequence of cooperating with the whole productions, productions of this divinity. But Vulcan is said to throw over them all various bonds, unapparent to the other Gods, as adorning the mundane genera with artificial reasons, and producing one system from martial contrarieties, and the co-harmonizing goods of Venus.

For both are necessary to generation. Since too, of bonds, some are celestial, but others sublunary (for some are indissoluble, as Timæus says, but others dissoluble); on this account, Vulcan again dissolves the bonds with which he had bound Mars and Venus, and this he particularly accomplishes in compliance with the request of Neptune; who being willing that the perpetuity of generation should be preserved, and the circle of mutation revolve into itself, thinks it proper that generated natures should be corrupted, and things corrupted be sent back again to generation. What wonder is it, then, if Homer says that Mars and Venus were bound by the bonds of Vulcan, since Timæus also denominates those demiurgic reasons bonds, by which the celestial Gods give subsistence to generated natures? And does not Homer speak conformably to the nature of things when he says the bonds were dissolved, since these are the bonds of generation?

Indeed the demiurgus of wholes, by composing the world from contrary elements, and causing it through analogy to be in friendship with itself, appears to have collected into union the energies of Vulcan, Mars and Venus.

In producing the contrarieties of the elements, too, he may be said to have generated them according to the Mars which he contains in himself; but, in devising friendship, to have energized according to the power of Venus. And in binding together the productions of Venus with those of Mars, he appears to have previously comprehended in himself, paradigmatically, the art of Vulcan. He is therefore all things, and energizes in conjunction with all the Gods. The junior artificers also, imitating their father, fabricate mortal animals, and again receive them when they are corrupted, generating, in conjunction with Vulcan, sublunary bonds and previously containing in themselves the causes of their solution. For every where, he who comprehends in himself a bond, knows also the necessity of its solution.

XV. WHAT MUST BE SAID TO THE ANIMADVERSIONS OF SOCRATES, RESPECTING THE AVARICE ASCRIBED BY HOMER TO HIS HEROES.

Let us now consider those places in the poems of Homer, which, according to Socrates, increase the love of riches in our souls. For why does Phoenix advise Achilles to receive gifts when he lays aside his anger, but otherwise not to lay it aside? Why also does Achilles receive gifts from Agamemnon for his insolence, and refuse to restore the dead body of Hector, unless it was redeemed with money? For he who becomes an auditor of things of this kind is in danger of falling into a dire and insatiable avarice. To these objections we shall briefly say, that Phoenix advises Achilles to lay aside his anger on receiving the gifts, and Achilles, on receiving them, did lay it aside, both of them considering the gifts as an argument of the repentance of the giver; but not that they might satisfy the avaricious disposition of their soul, nor considering an increase of riches as the boundary of felicity. For they did not from the first demand these presents, but received them when they were spontaneously offered. But if Achilles restored the dead body of Hector to Priam, on its being redeemed by money, perhaps we may say that it was at that time customary to receive a ransom for the bodies of enemies. This also must be considered, that it belongs to the art of commanding an army, to cut off the riches of the enemy, but to increase the property of those who are compelled to oppose the enemy in a foreign country. But all these and such-like particulars may be defended as the transactions of those heroes who energized according to circumstances, and

whose actions are to be estimated according to other manners than those of common men: they are, however, entirely unfit to be heard by those educated under the legislator of Socrates, whose geniuses are philosophic, whose erudition regards a philosophic life, and who are entirely deprived of possessions and property.

If you are willing, we may also add to what has been said respecting Achilles, that he himself accuses Agamemnon of avarice, and reprobates this passion as disgraceful.

Atrides, who in glory art the first, And no less avaricious than renown'd!

Besides, he indicates to us his contempt of wealth, when he says to Agamemnon,

Thine in each contest is the wealthy prey, Though mine the sweat and danger of the day. Some trivial present to my ships I bear, Or barren praises pay the wounds of war.

Further still, neither would he accept the gifts at first, when they were offered by Agamemnon, because he did not think it was then fit to be reconciled to him. So that it was not the promise of riches which made him more mild to Agamemnon, by whom he had been treated with insolence; but, when he thought it was proper to lay aside his anger, he prepared himself for battle that he might revenge his friend and when Agamemnon sent him the gifts, he neither looked at them, nor thought that any accession would thence be made to his own goods. Besides, his contempt of these things is evident from the multitude of rewards proposed by him in the funeral games: for he honoured the several champions with proper gifts; and magnificently bellowed upon Nestor, who through his age was unable to engage in the games, a golden bowl. How therefore, according to Homer, could he be avaricious, who used riches in a proper manner, who when they were present despised them, when absent did not anxiously desire them, and could endure to receive less of them than others? To which we may add, that he reprobated, in the midst of the Greeks, that passion of the soul as a disease, which aspires after immoderate wealth. How likewise can it be said that Phoenix was the teacher of avarice, who exhorts Achilles to imitate the ancient custom of the Greeks? For he says, Thus ancient heroes, when with rage inflam'd, By words were soften'd, and by gifts appeas'd.

But these things, which are adapted to heroic times, and to the customs which then subsisted among heroes, were considered by Homer as deserving the highest imitation; though they are by no means adapted to the youth educated by Socrates, who are assigned no other employment by the legislator, than discipline and the study of virtue. But an attention to riches, and such things as are necessary to the preservation of the life of mortals, is assigned to others who are necessary to the perfection of an inferior republic.

XVI. IN WHAT MANNER IT IS REQUISITE TO
APOLOGIZE FOR THE NEGLIGENCE OF HEROES
RESPECTING A DIVINE NATURE, WHICH APPEARS
TO TAKE PLACE IN THE POETRY OF HOMER.

It now follows that we should consider how we are to answer Socrates, when he accuses Achilles of negligence respecting a divine nature. For how can he be pious and a worshipper of the Gods, who dares to say to Apollo,

Me thou hast injur'd most pernicious God?

who also opposes the river Xanthus though a God, and presents his locks to the dead body of Patroclus, though he had promised them to the river Sperchius? That Achilles therefore, according to Homer, was remarkably cautious respecting a divine nature, is evident from his advising the Greeks to reverence Apollo, to send a sacrifice to him, and to appease Chryses the priest of Apollo. This also follows from his readily obeying the commands of Minerva, when she appeared to him, though contrary to the impulse of his wrath. He likewise asserts that a subserviency to the Gods, and a compliance with the will of more excellent natures, is of all things the most useful; and offers a libation and prays to Jupiter, with science adapted to the Gods. For his first purifying the bowl, and in an especial manner consecrating it to Jupiter alone, and standing in the middle of the enclosure, invoking the power that pervades every where from the middle of the universe, afford a sufficiently conspicuous argument of his piety to a divine nature, and of his knowledge of the signs adapted to the objects of worship.

But if he appears to have spoken to Apollo more boldly than is fit, it is requisite to know that the Apolloniacal orders pervade from on high, as far as to the last of things; and some of them are divine, others angelic, and others

dæmoniacal, and these multiformly divided. It must be considered, therefore, that these words were not addressed to a God, but to a dæmoniacal Apollo, and this not the first in rank, and coordinated with those that have a total dominion, but one who proximately presides over individuals; and, in short, (for why should I not speak clearly?) the guardian of Hector himself. For the poet perspicuously says,

Apollo now before Achilles stood, In all things like Agenor — — —

This Apollo, therefore, Achilles calls most pernicious, so far as he was a hindrance to his actions, by preserving his enemy uninjured. Nor does he by thus speaking sin against a God, but against a power who ranks amongst the most partial of the Apolloniad series. For it is not proper to refer either all the speeches or energies to that first Apollo, but we should also attend to his second and third progressions. Thus, for instance, we should consider who the Apollo is that fits with Jupiter and the Olympian Gods; who, that convolves the solar sphere; who the aerial Apollo is; who the terrestrial; who, that presides over Troy; and who, that is the peculiar guardian of Hector, concerning whom the poet also says,

He fled to Hades by Apollo left.

For, by looking to all these orders, we shall be able to refer the speeches of Achilles to some such partial power, who was willing to preserve the object of his care, and impede Achilles in his strenuous exertions. For the words “thou hast injured me” are very properly addressed to a dæmon of this kind, who deprives him of the end of his present labours; and the epithet “most pernicious” clearly evinces that this power is more adverse to him than any other God or dæmon. For he who preserves uninjured a principal enemy, becomes more than any one noxious to the person injured, by impeding his avenging the injury. But, as such language even to such an inferior power is not unattended with punishment, it is said that Achilles shortly after was slain by a certain power of the Apolloniad order, which Hector when he was dying thus predicts to him:

Paris and Phœbus shall avenge my fate, And stretch thee here before this Scæan gate.

Does not therefore the poetry of Homer by these things make us more modest respecting a divine nature, since we learn from it that even the most

subordinate powers cannot be offended with impunity? Though I am not ignorant that those who are skilled in mystic sacrifices dare many things of this kind respecting dæmons; but perhaps they are defended by more divine natures from sustaining any such injury from subordinate powers. In the mean time justice follows other men, correcting the improbity of their speech.

It is also not difficult to reply to what is said in objection to the contest of Achilles with the river Xanthus. For he was not disobedient to the God himself, but he either contended with the apparent water which hindered his impulse against the enemy, or with some one of the indigenous powers, the associate of the Gods in battle: for Minerva and Neptune were present with him, and afforded him assistance. And it appears to me, indeed, that the poetry of Homer devises contests according to all possible diversities; sometimes relating the battles of men with men, and sometimes of the more excellent genera with each other, as in what is called theomachy, or the battles of the Gods; and sometimes, as in the instance before us, the oppositions of heroes to certain dæmoniacal natures; indicating to those that are able to understand things of this kind, that the first of last natures are after a manner equal to the last of such as are first, and particularly when they are guarded and moved by the Gods. Hence, not only Achilles is said to have contended with Xanthus, but Hercules also with the river Achelous, of whose life Achilles being emulous, he did not avoid similar contests.

Lastly, we may solve the third of the proposed inquiries by saying that the first and principal design of Achilles was, on returning to his country, to offer to the river Sperchius his locks, as he had promised; but when he despaired of his return, in consequence of hearing from his mother,

Soon after Hector shall thy death succeed,

was it not then necessary that he should cut off his hair in honour of his friend? For Socrates in Plato received the crowns which Alcibiades was to have offered to a God, and was crowned with them; nor did he think that he sinned by so doing, or injured the young man. I omit to say that the hairs of Achilles were not yet sacred to the river: for he who had promised to consecrate them on his return, when deprived of this, was also deprived of the consecration of his hairs.

XVII. AN APOLOGY FOR THE UNWORTHY
TREATMENT OF THE DEAD BODY OF HECTOR, AND
FOR THE TWELVE TROJANS SLAIN AND BURNT ON
THE FUNERAL PILE OF PATROCLUS, SINCE THESE
THINGS EVIDENTLY APPEAR TO BE CRUEL, ABSURD,
AND UNBECOMING THE CHARACTER OF HEROES.

It now remains that we consider the conduct of Achilles to Hector, his dragging him round the tomb of Patroclus, and his sacrificing twelve Trojan youths on his pile; for these things, says Socrates, can not be truly ascribed to Achilles, who was the son of a goddess, and of the most temperate Peleus descended from Jupiter, and who was educated by the wife Chiron. In the first place, then, it is said by the ancients that this was the custom of the Thessalians, as the Cyrenæan poet also testifies, when he informs us, that “it is an ancient Thessalian custom, to drag round the tomb of the slain the body of the slaughterer.”

Achilles therefore thus acted conformably to the custom of his country, that all due honours might be paid to the funeral of Patroclus. But if Hector dragged Patroclus when a dead body, threatened to cut off his head, and cast his corpse to the Trojan dogs, which is also told to Achilles by Iris —

A prey to dogs he dooms the corse to lie, And marks the place to fix his head on high. Rise and prevent (if yet you think of fame) Thy friend’s disgrace, thy own eternal shame!

does not Achilles, therefore, insist a proper punishment on Hector, in dragging him round the tomb of Patroclus? For thus he both revenges the cruelty of Hector, and openly testifies his benevolence to his friend. He does not, however, accomplish what he intended; for he restores the dead body of Hector to his friends, and suffers him to be buried. He therefore who introduces such measures to his actions energizes according to the whole of justice, and the providence of the Gods. Hence the poet also says, that, by complying with the will of more excellent natures, he was rendered so mild with respect to Hector, that with his own hands he placed him on the bier.

Two splendid mantles, and a carpet spread, They leave, to cover and inwrap the dead; Then call the handmaids with assistant toil To wash the body, and

anoint with oil. This done, the garments o'er the corse they spread; Achilles lifts it to the funeral bed.

Achilles, therefore, performed every thing pertaining to the dead in a manner adapted to his character. For he illustriously honoured his friend by the vengeance which he inflicted on his enemy, and, afterwards becoming more mild, behaved with great philanthropy to Priam, and paid him the utmost attention and respect.

With respect to the Trojan youths that were slaughtered at the funeral pile of Patroclus, it may be said, that by this action, according to appearance, Achilles perfectly honoured his friend, and that he did nothing more to these Trojans than he was accustomed to do to other enemies, viz. slaying those whom he happened to meet. For what difference is there between dying at a funeral pyre, or in a river? Does he not indeed act better by these, whose bodies were totally destroyed by fire, than by those whose bodies were torn in pieces by savage beasts, and who suffer the same things with Lycaon? to whom Achilles says,

Lie there, Lycaon! let the fifth surround. Thy bloated corse, and suck thy gory wound.

But if it be requisite to recall to our memory the more occult speculations of our preceptor respecting these particulars, we must say that the whole transaction of Achilles concerning the pyre imitates the immortalizing of the soul () by theurgists, and pertains to the separate soul of Patroclus. Hence, before the pyre was enkindled, he is said to have invoked the winds, the north and the west, that the apparent vehicle of Patroclus, through their visible motion, might obtain a convenient culture, and that the vehicle, which is more divine than this, might be invisibly purified, and restored to its proper allotment, "being drawn upwards by ærial, lunar and solar splendours," as one of the Gods somewhere asserts. It is also related of him, that he made a libation all night on the pyre:

All night Achilles hails Patroclus' soul With large libations from the golden bowl.

The poet all but proclaiming to us, in these verses, that Achilles was busily employed about the soul of his friend, and not about his visible body only, and that all things are symbolically usurped by him. For the libation from a

golden bowl signifies the defluxion of souls from their fountain; which defluxion imparts a more excellent life to a partial soul, and is able through undefiled purity to lead it from bodies to an invisible and divine condition of being. And, in short, many arguments in confirmation of this opinion may be derived from the writings of our preceptor.

Since then it appears that Achilles celebrated the funeral of Patroclus mystically, it may be not improperly said, that these twelve Trojans that were slaughtered at the pyre were coordinated as attendants with the soul of Patroclus, the ruling nature of which was both known and revered by Achilles. Hence, he chose this number as most adapted to attendants, and as sacred to the all-perfect progressions of the Gods. By no means, therefore, did Achilles slay these Trojans from a certain dire and savage cruelty of soul, but performed the whole of this transaction in conformity with certain sacred laws pertaining to the souls of those that die in battle. Nor ought he to be accused of a proud contempt of Gods and men; nor ought we to deny that he was the son of a goddess and Peleus, and the disciple of Chiron, for acting in this manner. For some of his actions he performed as regarding universal justice, others as a warrior, and others as employing sacred methods. But in all these the poet has perfectly preserved the measures of imitation. And such is the answer to all that Socrates objects to in Homer, as deserving reprehension.

But if any one should say that the fable is not to be admitted, which says that Theseus and Pirithoüs ravished Helen, and descended into Hades, perhaps these things also, which are asserted more mythologically, may be properly solved by saying that these heroes, being lovers both of unapparent and visible beauty, are fabled to have ravished Helen, and to have descended into the invisible regions; and that, when there, one of them (Pirithoüs), through the elevation, of his intellect was led back by Hercules, but that the other in a certain respect remained in Hades, from not being able to raise himself to the arduous altitude of contemplation. And though some one should contend that this is not the true meaning of the fable, it does not affect the poetry of Homer, which every where attributes, according to imitation, that which is adapted to the Gods, to the genera more excellent than human nature, and to heroic lives; indicating some things more occultly, teaching us other particulars about these things, with intellect and science, and leaving no genus of beings uninvestigated, but delivering each as energizing with respect to itself

and other things, according to its own order.