PLOTINUS
ENNEAD IV
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A. H. ARMSTRONG
PLOTINUS
ENNEAD III
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PLOTINUS
ENNEAD II
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PLOTINUS
WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY
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IN SEVEN VOLUMES
I
PORPHYRY ON THE LIFE OF PLOTINUS
AND THE ORDER OF HIS BOOKS
ENNEADS
I. 1-9

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NOTE

The text and translation of this revision (1987) are now in accordance with the latest published changes and corrections in the Henry-Schwyzer text as recorded in the Addenda et Corrigenda ad Textum in the third volume of the Oxford Classical Text (Plotini Opera III, Oxford 1962, pp. 304-7).

Section 111 of the Preface has been completely revised.

PREFACE

I. THE ENNEADS

Plotinus, as Porphyry tells us in his Life (ch. 4), did not begin to write till the first year of the reign of Gallienus (253/4), when he was forty-nine years old and had been settled at Rome and teaching philosophy for ten years. He continued to write till his death in 270 in his sixty-sixth year. His writings thus all belong to the last sixteen years of his life and represent his mature and fully developed thought. We should not expect to find in them, and, in the opinion at least of the great majority of Plotinian scholars, we do not in fact find in them, any major development. The earliest of them are the fruit of over twenty years’ study and teaching of philosophy. (He came to Alexandria to study philosophy at the age of twenty-seven, in 232.) There is a good deal of variation, and it is even perhaps sometimes possible to trace a genuine development, in his repeated handling of particular problems. Plotinus had an intensely active and critical mind, and was not easily satisfied with his own or other people’s formulations. But in all essentials his philosophy was fully mature before he began to write; and we have very little evidence indeed upon which to base speculation about the stages of its growth.

Plotinus’s writings grew naturally out of his teaching. He never set out to write down a sys-
tematic exposition of his philosophy, but as important and interesting questions came up for discussion in his school he wrote treatises on the particular problems involved (Porphyry, Life, 4. 13, 5. 80). Thus it seems likely that the treatise V. 5, That the Intelligibles are not outside the Intellect; and on the Good was the result of the discussion which Porphyry records in chapter 18 of the Life; and III. 4, On Our Allotted Guardian Spirit, was, Porphyry says (Life, 10. 31), provoked by the conjuration of Plotinus's guardian spirit in the temple of Isis. The treatises were not intended for publication, but for circulation among carefully selected members of the school (Life, 4. 14-16). They give us, therefore, an extremely unsystematic presentation of a systematic philosophy. No reader of the Enneads can long remain unaware that Plotinus has a fully and carefully worked-out philosophical system. But neither his writings nor Porphyry's description of his teaching (Life, 13 and 18) have any suggestion of the dry, tidy, systematic, authoritarian presentation of the scholastic text-book. His teaching was informal and left plenty of room for the freest discussion, and in his writings we find his philosophy presented, not step by step in an orderly exposition, but by a perpetual handling and rehandling of the great central questions, always from slightly different points of view and with reference to different types of objections and queries.

Plotinus appointed Porphyry to take charge of the revision and arrangement of his writings (Life, V. 24, 2), and the Enneads as we have them are the result of his editorial activity. He did not, however, publish his edition till more than thirty years after the death of Plotinus (i.e., somewhere between 301 and 305), and in the interval another edition of the treatises was published by Eustochius, also a pupil of Plotinus and the doctor who attended him in his last illness; of this only a few traces remain. Porphyry has given us a good deal of information about his editorial methods in the Life; the full title of the work is On the Life of Plotinus and the Order of his Books, and it looks as if one of his main purposes in writing it was to explain, and perhaps to justify against actual or possible criticism, the principles which governed his edition. He adopted the same principle of arrangement, he tells us (Life, ch. 24) as that used by Apollodorus of Athens in his edition of Epicharmus and Andronicus the Peripatetic in his edition of Aristotel and Theophrastus; that is, he arranged the treatises according to subject-matter and not in chronological order. In fact, a division of Plotinus's works

There is no reason to believe that he made any important modifications of the text of Plotinus's treatises as he received them.

1 For a discussion of the evidence that the edition of Eusebius existed, and that Eusebius in several places in the Praep. ev. cites Plotinus according to it and not to Porphyry's edition see P. Henry, Recherches sur la Préparation Evangélique d'Eusebe, pp. 73-80, and Eaux du Texte de Plotin, 73ff. (where the Eusebius texts are printed), and H.R. Schwyzer's article Plotin in Pauly's Realenzyklopaedie R. XXI. col. 488-490.

2 He gives us, however, the chronological order of the treatises in chs 4-8 of the Life.
according to subject matter is bound to have a great deal that is arbitrary in it because Plotinus does not, as has already been remarked, write systematically; there is no tidy separation of ethics, metaphysics, cosmology, and psychology in his treatises. Porphyry's arrangement therefore is by no means altogether satisfactory and should not be taken as a safe guide to the content of the treatises; the student of Plotinus's ethics must be familiar with the Sixth (and all the other) Enneads as well as the First, and anyone interested in his metaphysics will be very ill advised to neglect the so-called "ethical" and "psychological" treatises. It is however interesting, if not very useful, to the student of Plotinus to understand how Porphyry made his division. He arranged the whole body of treatises into six Enneads, or sets of nine, forming three volumes (Life, chs. 24-26). The treatises on the Categories and those of which the principal subject is the One form one volume (the Sixth Ennead), those dealing chiefly with Soul and Intellect another (the Fourth and Fifth Enneads), and all the other treatises go into the first volume (the First, Second, and Third Enneads); the First Ennead has an ethical emphasis, the Second is predominantly cosmological, the Third has a greater variety of subject-matter than any of the others. It is clear from what Porphyry says in ch. 24 of the Life that his reason for adopting the six-nine division was nothing better than the pleasure in the symmetry of sacred number characteristic of his age. To achieve it he had to do some vigorous cutting-up of the treatises as he received them. He subdivided a number of the longer treatises (III. 2-3. IV. 3-5, VI. 1-3, VI.

II. THE THOUGHT OF PLOTINUS

Plotinus is, like other philosophers of the Hellenistic and Roman periods, a practical religious and moral teacher and also a professional philosopher, engaged in the critical interpretation of a long and complicated school-tradition which we are beginning to know and understand a good deal better than formerly, and working in an intellectual milieu which included not only those esoteric pietists the Gnostics and Hermetists, with whom he is sometimes rather misleadingly coupled, but a considerable number of other professional philosophers (about whom we know next to nothing) of very varying schools and points of view. His philosophy is both an account of an ordered structure of living reality, which proceeds eternally from its transcendent First.
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Principle, the One or Good, and descends in an unbroken succession of stages from the Divine Intellect and the Forms therein through Soul with its various levels of experience and activity to the last and lowest realities, the bodies perceived by our senses; and it is also a showing of the way by which the human self, which can experience and be active on every level of being, is able, if it will, to ascend by a progressive purification and simplification to that union with the Good which alone can satisfy it. There are two movements in Plotinus's universe, one of outgoing from unity to an ever-increasing multiplicity, and the other of return to unity and unification: and closely connected with these two movements is what is perhaps the deepest tension in his thought. This results from two opposed valuations of the movement from unity to multiplicity and two correspondingly different ways of regarding the First Principle. When Plotinus's attention is concentrated on the great process of spontaneous production by which the whole of derived reality streams out from the First Principle, he sees that First Principle as the superabundant spring of creativity, the Good which is source of all goodness, the One from whose rich unity all multiplicity unfolds; and to emphasise the goodness of the splendid multiplicity of derived being is all the more to exalt the goodness of its source. The One as creative source of all being is properly described in the language of positive transcendence, as better than all good existing and conceivable. But when his mind is bent on the ascent to the Good by the stripping off of our lower and the transcending even of our higher self, when the First Principle appears no longer as superabundant source but as the goal of pure unity which we attain by a radical simplification, by putting away all the varied multiplicity of being; then in comparison with that One and Good so passionately desired everything else seems so hopelessly inferior that he can think of its very existence as due to a fault, and represent the timeless coming forth of the Divine Intellect and of Soul as acts of illegitimate self-assertion. Plato, when he fixed his mind on God, had a very poor opinion of the human race; and Plotinus, when he fixes his mind on God, sometimes seems to have a very poor opinion of the whole of existence. But in neither philosopher was this way of looking at things a settled conviction, governing the whole of their philosophy. Plato's whole life and work show that he did, after all, usually think the human race worth taking seriously: and the positive view of derived reality, as good from the Good, greatly predominates over the negative in the Enneads. The tension between the two attitudes of mind is most apparent when Plotinus is considering the lowest level of reality, the material world. There is a very noticeable fluctuation in his thought about the precise degree of goodness or badness to be attributed to the body and the rightness or wrongness of the soul's descent into it. Plotinus is rightly conscious at this point of a similar tension in the thought of Plato, and in his effort to present Plato's thought as perfectly reasonable and consistent he tries hard, if not altogether successfully, to resolve it. The same basic tension probably accounts for a certain in-

1. III. 8. 8. 2. III. 7. 11. 3. Laws 804B. 4. E.g., in IV. 8. 5.
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consistency in his description of the matter of the
sense-world. He speaks several times of this
matter as derived from the principles immediately
preceding it (i.e., Soul), and so ultimately from the
Good; which would imply (as the later Neo-Platonists
saw) that it was itself good in its own kind, even
if that kind was the lowest possible. But for Plotinus
the matter of the sense-world is the principle of evil,
and in I. 8 in particular he speaks of it as absolute
evil in a way which suggests an ultimate dualism
and is hardly compatible with its derivation from the
Good. It is possible to produce a philosophical
reconciliation of these contrasting emphases, and
even of Plotinus’s divergent accounts of the matter
of the sense-world. But I am not sure that they are
over fully reconciled in Plotinus himself. There are,
too, perhaps other fluctuations and tensions besides
this major one. There are elements in his experience
which do not fit into his system, elements in the
tradition he inherited which are not fully assimilated,
and lines of thought suggested which if they had
been followed up might have led to a radical revision
of his philosophy—the same, after all, might be said
of almost any great philosopher. But his thought
cannot be resolved into a mere jumble of conflicting
elements. Tension is not the same thing as in-

coherence, as anyone can see who turns from read-
ing the Enneads to read the Hermetica.

B

It is impossible to read any treatise in the Enneads intelligently without some at least elementary
understanding of Plotinus’s system as a whole,
because they are, as has been said already, an un-
systematic presentation of a systematic philosophy.
I shall therefore try to give here a summary
account of how Plotinus conceives his First Principle,
the One or Good, and of the stages in the descent or
expansion of reality from that Principle, and also
to say something about the way of return to the
Good, to follow and show which was Plotinus’s main
object in living, writing, and teaching.

Plotinus insists repeatedly that the One or Good is
beyond the reach of human thought or language, and,
though he does in fact say a good deal about It, this
insistence is to be taken seriously. Language can
only point the mind along the way to the Good, not
describe, encompass, or present It. As Plotinus
himself says (VI. 9. 3), “strictly speaking, we ought
to apply any terms at all to It; but we should, so
to speak, run round the outside of It trying to inter-
pret our own feelings about It, sometimes drawing
near and sometimes falling away in our perplexities
about It.” There is, however, a certain amount
which ought to be said about the language Plotinus
uses about the One if we are not to misunderstand
completely the direction in which he is pointing.
The One is not, as has sometimes been suggested,
conceived as a mere negation, an ultimate void, a

1 II. 3. 17; II. 4. 1; IV. 8. 6.
2 And a yet further inconsistency is introduced into his
thought at this point by his attitude to celestial matter, the
matter of the bodies of the “visible gods,” the sun, moon,
and stars, which he regards, in accordance with the beliefs of
the astral or cosmic piety of his time, as not a principle of
resistance but perfectly docile and subdued to it, so that it in no way troubles the life
of the celestial intelligences. Cp. II. 1. 4; II. 9. 8.
great blank behind the universe in attaining to which the human personality disintegrates into unconscious nothingness, but as a positive reality of infinite power and content and superabundant excellence. The extreme negativity—partly inherited from the school tradition—of the language which Plotinus uses about Him is designed either to stress the inadequacy of all our ways of thinking and speaking about Him or to make clear the implications of saying that He is absolutely One and Infinite and the source of all defined and limited realities. Building on Plato's remark in Book VI of the Republic, Plotinus insists that the Good is "beyond being," that He cannot properly be even said to exist—surely the extreme of negation. But it is perfectly clear from all that Plotinus says about Him, in the very passages where His existence is denied, that He is existent in some sense, and the supreme Existence. What Plotinus is saying is that the unity of the Good is so absolute that no predicates at all can be applied to Him, not even that of existence; and that as the Source of being to all things He is not a thing Himself. Again, Plotinus insists that the One does not think, because thought for him always implies a certain duality of thinking and its object, and it is this that he is concerned to exclude in speaking of the One. But he is anxious to make clear that this does not mean that the life of the One is mere unconsciousness, to show

1 Though the terms for One and Good are both neuter in Greek, Plotinus when speaking about his First Principle, even in passages where these neuter terms are used, passes over quite naturally from neuter to masculine pronouns and adjectives. I have followed him in this as closely as possible in my translation.

From the One proceeds the first great derived reality, Intellect, the Divine Mind which is also the

14. 2; VI. 7. 38-9; VI. 8. 18.
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World of Forms or Ideas, and so the totality of true being in the Platonic sense. I have chosen Intellect as the best available translation of Plotinus's word for this second reality, Nous: it should be understood in a sense like that of the Scholastic term intellectus as opposed to ratio—a distinction which derives from and corresponds exactly to the Greek distinction between νοησις (the proper activity of νοος) and διάνοια. So understood, Intellect means the activity of direct mental sight or immediate grasp of the object of thought, or a mind which grasps its object in this direct way and not as the conclusion of a process of discursive reasoning (ratio or διάνοια). I shall say more shortly about the relation of the Plotinian Intellect to its objects.

The procession of Intellect from the One is necessary and eternal, as are also the procession of Soul from Intellect and the forming and ordering of the material universe by Soul. The way in which Intellect proceeds from the One and Soul in its turn from Intellect is rather loosely and inadequately described as "emanation." The background of Plotinus's thought at this point is certainly a late Stoic doctrine of the emanation of intellect from a divinity conceived as material light or fire, and his favourite metaphor to describe the process is that of the radiation of light or heat from sun or fire (he also uses others of the same sort, the diffusion of cold from snow or perfume from something scented). But he is not content merely to use these traditional analogies and leave it at that, to allow the generation of spiritual beings to be thought of in terms of a materialistically conceived automatism. Intellect proceeds from the One (and Soul from Intellect) without in any way affecting its source. There is no activity on the part of the One, still less any willing or planning or choice (planning and choice are excluded by Plotinus even on a much lower level when he comes to consider the forming and ruling of the material universe by Soul). There is simply a giving-out which leaves the source unchanged and undiminished. But though this giving-out is necessary, in the sense that it cannot be conceived as not happening or as happening otherwise, it is also entirely spontaneous: there is no room for any sort of binding or constraint, internal or external, in Plotinus's thought about the One. The reason for the procession of all things from the One is, Plotinus says, simply that everything which is perfect produces something else. Perfection is necessarily productive and creative. Here we touch an element in Plotinus's thought which is of great importance, the emphasis on life, on the dynamic, vital character of spiritual being. Perfection for him is not merely static. It is a fullness of living and productive power. The One for him is Life and Power, an infinite spring of power, an unbounded life, and therefore necessarily productive. And as it is one of the axioms which Plotinus assumes without discussion that the product is always less than, inferior to, the producer, what the One produces must be that which is next to Him in excellence, namely Intellect: when Plotinus concentrates his mind on the inferiority of even this derived reality to its source, of any sort of multiplicity to the pure unity to which he aspires, then he comes to think of its production as unfortunate even though necessary, and of the will to separate existence of Intellect and

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Soul as a sort of illegitimate self-assertion. But this does not mean that he ever thinks that the One might not produce, that there is any possibility of the derived realities not existing, of all things relapsing back into the original partless unity. Plotinus, when he gives a more precise account of how Intellect proceeds from the One, introduces a psychological element into the process which goes beyond his light-metaphor. He distinguishes two "moments" in this timeless generation; the first in which intellect is radiated as an unformed potentiality, and the second in which it turns back to the One in contemplation and so is informed and filled with content and becomes the totality of real existence. Here we meet another of the great principles of the philosophy of Plotinus: that all derived beings depend for their existence, their activity, and their power to produce in their turn, on their contemplation of their source. Contemplation always precedes and generates activity and production.

Intellect is for Plotinus also the Platonic World of Forms, the totality of real beings: it is both thought and the object of its thought. This unity of thought and Forms in a single reality obviously derives from the Middle Platonist teaching that the Forms were the "thoughts of God." But it is clear from the opposition which Plotinus's teaching on this point aroused from Porphyry on his entrance into the school and from Longinus¹ that it was by no means universally accepted by contemporary Platonists. And Plotinus's doctrine of the absolute co-equality and unity-in-diversity of thought, life, and being goes a good deal beyond anything that we know any of his predecessors to have taught. Plotinus's World of Forms is an organic living community of interpenetrating beings which are at once Forms and intelligences, all "awake and alive," in which every part thinks and therefore in a real sense is the whole, so that the relationship of whole and part in this spiritual world is quite different from that in the material world, and involves no sort of separation or exclusion. This unity-in-diversity is the most perfect possible image of the absolute unity of the One, whom Intellect in its ordinary contemplation cannot apprehend as He is in His absolute simplicity. It represents His infinity as best it can in the plurality of Forms. Intellect is itself infinite in power and immeasurable, because it has no extension and there is no external standard by which it could be measured, but finite because it is a complete whole composed of an actually existing number (all that can possibly exist) of Forms, which are themselves definite, limited realities.

Looked at from the point of view of our own human nature and experience, Intellect, as has already been suggested, is the level of intuitive thought which grasps its object immediately and is always perfectly united to it, and does not have to seek it outside itself by discursive reasoning; and we at our highest are Intellect, or Soul perfectly formed to the likeness of Intellect (this is a point on which there is some variation in Plotinus's thought). Plotinus in some passages at least admits the existence of Forms of individuals, and this enables him to give our particular personalities their place in the world of Intellect, with the eternal

¹ Life, ch. 18 and 20.
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value and status which this implies. And this means that in that world, where the laws of space and time do not apply and the part is the whole, we are Being and the All. This is the explanation of a number of passages in Plotinus which at first reading have a pantheistic sound. In order to understand them correctly we must remember: (i) that, they refer to Intellect (Being or the All), not to the One; (ii) that to become Intellect does not involve the destruction or absorption of the particular personality but its return to its perfect archetypal reality, distinguished in unity from all other archetypal realities, individual and universal.

Soul in Plotinus is very much what it is in Plato, the great intermediary between the worlds of intellect and sense and the representative of the former in the latter. It proceeds from Intellect and returns upon it and is formed by it in contemplation as Intellect proceeds from and returns upon the One; but the relationship of Soul to Intellect is a much more intimate one. Soul at its highest belongs to the world of intellect. Universal Soul has two levels, the higher where it acts as a transcendent principle of form, order, and intelligent direction (without deliberate choice or previous planning), and the lower where it operates as an immanent principle of life and growth. This latter is in fact (though Plotinus is reluctant to admit it) a fourth distinct hypostasis, and has its own name, Nature. It is related to the higher soul as the higher soul is to Intellect and, like it, acts or produces as a necessary result of contemplation; but because its contemplation is the last and lowest sort of contemplation, a sort of dream, it is too weak to produce anything which is itself productive. So what it produces is the immanent forms in body, the ultimate level of spiritual being, which are non-contemplative and so sterile, and below which lies only the darkness of matter.

The characteristic of the life of Soul is movement from one thing to another; unlike Intellect, it does not possess being as a whole, but only one part at a time, and must always be moving from one to the other; it is on the level of discursive thought, which does not hold its object in immediate possession but has to seek it by a process of reasoning; and its continual movement from one thing to another produces time, which is "the life of the soul in movement"; this movement of soul is the cause of all physical movement in space and time.

Our individual souls are "Plotinian parts" of Universal Soul, parts, that is, which in the manner proper to spiritual being have the whole in a certain sense present in them and can if they wish expand themselves by contemplation into universality and be the whole because they completely share Universal Soul's detachment from the body it rules. The individual soul's descent into body is for Plotinus both a fall and a necessary compliance with the law of the universe and the plan of Universal Soul. The spiritual state of the soul in body depends on its attitude. If it devotes itself selfishly to the interests of the particular body to which it is attached it becomes entrapped in the atomistic particularity of the material world and isolated from the whole. The root sin of the soul is self-isolation, by which it is

1 Notably VI. 5. 19
2 III. 7. 11.
3 IV. 8. 5.
imprisoned in the body and cut off from its high destiny. But the mere fact of being in body does not necessarily imply imprisonment in body. That comes only if the soul surrenders to the body; it is the inward attitude which makes the difference. It is always possible for a man in the body to rise beyond the particularism and narrowness of the cares of earthly life to the universality of transcendent Soul and to the world of Intellect. Universal Soul is in no way hampered by the body of the universe which it contains and administers; and the celestial bodies of the star-gods in no way interfere with their spiritual life. It is not embodiment as such but embodiment in an earthly, animal body which the Platonist regards as an evil and a handicap.

The material universe for Plotinus is a living, organic whole, the best possible image of the living unity-in-diversity of the World of Forms in Intellect. It is held together in every part by a universal sympathy and harmony, in which external evil and suffering take their place as necessary elements in the great pattern, the great dance of the universe. As the work of Soul, that is as a living structure of forms, it is wholly good and everlasting as a whole, though the parts are perishable (the universe of Intellect is of course eternal as a whole and in every part). All in it that is life and form is good; but the matter which is its substratum is evil and the principle of evil, though paradoxically, it is also the last and lowest stage of procession from the Good. Matter according to Plotinus never really unites with form; it remains a formless darkness upon which form is merely superimposed. It is non-

1 According to the text now adopted by P. Henry (see his essay La Dernière Parole de Plotin, Studi Classici e Orientali II, pp. 113-30, Fisa, 1953) and which I translate: see note on Life, ch. 2, 26-7.
whole life and work. They are also a summing up of his religion—the two are the same, for I think this work of return can properly be called a religious work. Plotinus, like his contemporaries, believed in a great hierarchy of gods and spirits inside and outside the visible universe. But he does not appear to attach much religious importance to the beings in the lower ranks of this hierarchy (though he insists, as against the Gnostics, on proper respect being paid to the high gods of the visible universe, the sun, moon, and stars); nor does he consider that external religious rites are any help to the ascent of the soul. He takes a sacramental view of the visible universe, in that he regards it as a sign, or sacrament in the large sense, of the invisible; but there is no room for sacramentalism in his religion. The process of return is one of turning away from the external world, of concentrating one's powers inwardly instead of dissipating them outwardly, of rediscovering one's true self by the most vigorous intellectual and moral discipline, and then waiting so prepared for the One to manifest His presence. The rediscovery of one's true self is a return to Intellect; for, as we have seen, Plotinus teaches that our selves at their highest belong to the sphere of Intellect. This does not however mean that Plotinus simply reduces spiritual life to intellectual life. Intellect to him means something more than, and something different from, what we usually understand by the term; and in the ascent of the soul the moral life counts for at least as much as the intellectual life. The following passage shows how misleading it would be to describe Plotinus as a one-sided intellectualist (and his life here confirms his teaching): "We learn about the Good by comparisons and negations and knowledge of the things which proceed from It and intellectual progress by ascending degrees; but we advance towards It by purifications and virtues and adorning of the soul and by gaining a foothold in the world of Intellect and settling ourselves firmly there and feasting on its contents." Here moral and true intellectual life form an indissoluble unity.

The fact that we can only attain to the One when we are firmly established in Intellect has some important consequences, which are not always fully appreciated, for Plotinus's account of the final union. The first is that there is for him no short cut, no mysticism which does not demand moral and intellectual perfection. Union with the One transcends our moral and intellectual life, because in it we ascend to the source of intellect and goodness which is more than they are, but it is only possible because our intellectual and moral life has reached its perfection. We are "carried out by the very surge of the wave of Intellect." It is the completion and confirmation, not the negation and destruction, of all that has been done to bring ourselves to perfection, to the fullest consciousness and activity. And again, because it is as Intellect that we attain to union, it would seem that it is not Plotinus's thought that our individual personalities are finally absorbed and disappear. It is true that in the union we rise above Intellect to a state in which there is no consciousness of difference from the One, in which there is no longer seer and seen.

1 VI. 7. 36.
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but only unity. But universal Intellect, of which we are then a part, exists continually in that state of union without prejudice to its proper life of intuitive thought and unity-in-diversity. There is never any suggestion in Plotinus that all things except the One are illusions or fleeting appearances.

III. Text, Editions, Translations

For full information about the history of the text of Plotinus, reference should be made to the Preface of the great critical edition of P. Henry and H.-R. Schwyzer (Vols. I & II Paris & Brussels, Desclée de Brouwer; Vol. III Paris-Brussels-Leiden, Desclée de Brouwer and Brill 1951-73), whose text is printed and translated in these volumes, and to the massive prolegomena to this edition published by P. Henry under the general title of "Etudes Plotiniennes" (Vol. I: Les États du Texte de Platon 1838, Vol. II: Les Manuscrits des Ennéades 1941 and 1948; both Desclée de Brouwer). Briefly, their conclusions are: (i) The archetype of our present MSS represented the text of Porphyry's edition with remarkable fidelity. This archetype was certainly written after the beginning of the sixth century, and probably between the ninth and twelfth centuries. (ii) The extant MSS cannot safely be divided into boni and deteriores; in reconstituting the text of the archetype the primary MSS of four of the five families into which the MSS can be grouped (WXYZ) must be used, and no one MS or family can be given predominant authority. (iii) As the text of the archetype is believed on good grounds to represent faithfully the text of Porphyry's edition, there is little room for conjectural emendation.

The text presented by the editors is therefore both extremely conservative and eclectic, in the sense that it does not rely exclusively on any one MS or family of MSS. Its conservatism has been criticised, perhaps in some particular cases justifiably. But in the case of Plotinus there are special reasons for ultra-conservatism. We have always to remember Porphyry's words in ch. 8 of the Life about his master's method of work: "when Plotinus had written anything he could never bear to go over it twice; even to read it through once was too much for him, as his eyesight was not strong enough. In writing he did not form the letters with any regard to appearance or divide his syllables correctly, and he paid no attention to spelling." And anyone who reads the Ennéades will soon discover that Plotinus writes a Greek very much of his own, which is certainly not bad or barbarous, but is highly unconventional and irregular: it is therefore extremely dangerous to emend him according to any preconceived ideas of Greek, or even late Greek philosophical usage, and very difficult to establish any reliable internal criteria derived from the Ennéades themselves which will enable us to state with any confidence what oddities of language were impossible for Plotinus. As a translator, with no pretensions to competence as a textual critic, I can

1 The fifth family (U) consists of 1 MS (Marcianus Graecus 200) which, though the oldest, is too fragmentary and faulty to be of use in constituting the text.

1 Cp. also Longinus's experience recorded in Life, ch. 19-20.

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only say that in most difficult and disputed passages I have found that the Henry-Schwyzer text is easier to understand and gives a better sense than the versions of their predecessors. And since the publication of the first volume in 1951, the editors have been engaged in a continual process of critical (often self-critical) revision of the text, in the freest discussion with other Plotinian scholars, by which it has been greatly improved. Particularly notable contributions to this revision were made by the late Professor Jesus Igal of Bilbao, and it has gone on in continual and fruitful interaction with the Harder-Beutler-Theiler edition of Plotinus (see below).

Full account of this revision, at the stage which it has so far reached (H. R. Schwyzer is still continuing it), has been taken in the last four volumes of the Loeb Plotinus (IV–VII, containing Enneads IV–VI), on the text of this revision of Vol. I see the Note on page vi; Vols. II and III represent the stage reached when Vol. I of the editio minor (= OCT) was published in 1964, with a few later revisions.

A full, severe, and sometimes entertaining account of the previous editions will be found in Henry and Schwyzer's Preface. They are as follows:

A. Kirchhöf. Leipzig 1856.

Before his death Richard Harder had begun to prepare a Greek text of Plotinus to accompany a revision of his admirable German translation (first published 1930-37). The first volume of his text (containing the treatises 1-21 in the chronological order given in Porphyry's Life, which he preferred to Porphyry's later arrangement of them in Enneads) was published in 1956. After his death in 1957 the work was continued by R. Beutler and W. Theiler and completed in 1971. (Plotinus Schriften V–VI Hamburg, Meiner 1956-61); in spite of Harder's too modest remarks in his preface to the first volume, this ranks as a major critical edition of great value; its relation to the Henry-Schwyzer text is one of friendly independence. After these two great editions, the principal help to students of Plotinus which has appeared in recent years is the Lexicon Plotinianum, compiled by J. H. Sleeman and G. Pollet (Leiden, Brill; Leuven, University Press 1980), which accords with the Henry Schwyzer text.

There are several good commentaries on individual works of Plotinus. I have found the following particularly helpful; all have Greek texts.

V. Cilento. Paideia antignostica (III 8, V 8, V 5, VI 9; now generally recognised as parts of a single long work) Florence, Le Monnier 1971.

Since Marsilius Ficinus re-introduced Plotinus to Western Europe with his great Latin translation in 1492, translations of the Enneads have played an
important part in Plotinian studies, and their number is rapidly increasing. Harder's German translation has already been referred to. V. Cilento's Italian version with critical commentary (Plotino: Enneadi Bari, Laterza 1947-9) is of great scholarly value. J. Igal, whose contributions to the revision of the Henry-Schwyzer text were so great (see above), was engaged on a Spanish translation at the time of his death: two volumes, with a long and excellent introduction, have been published (Porfirio, Vida de Plotino, Plotino, Enneas I-II and Plotino, Enneas III-IV Madrid, Gredos 1982 and 1985), and the third is in active preparation. There is a good Dutch translation by R. Ferwerda (Amsterdam, Ambo Athenaeum—Polak and Van Gennep 1984), and translations into Polish and Hebrew. A Japanese translation is now appearing (Plotinos Zenshū, tr. Michitaro Tanaka, Muneaki Mizachi and Yasuniko Tanogashira, 5 vols., Tokyo, Chuō-Kōron Sha 1986–7). P. Hadot has published the first volume of an important new French translation, to be completed by various hands under his direction, with extensive introductions and commentaries (Plotin, Traité 38 (VI7), Paris, Éditions du Cerf, 1988). The English translation by Stephen MacKenna and B. S. Page (4th edition London, Faber 1969—the third of the one-volume editions revised by Page) is of much scholarly value and will always hold the affection of some readers because of its noble esoteric-majestic style. My debt to it is considerable, but I have had a better critical text at my disposal and have tried to give a plainer version and one closer to the Greek.

Since the appearance of the first volume of the Henry-Schwyzer text in 1951 there has been a great increase in interest in Plotinus and later Platonism;
SIGLA

A = Laurentianus 87, 3.
A' = Codex A primus corrector.
R = Parisinus Gr. 1976.
B = Laurentianus 85, 15.
R = Vaticanus Reginensis Gr. 97.
J = Parisinus Gr. 2082.
U = Vaticanus Urbina Gr. 62.
S = Berolinensis Gr. 375.
N = Monacensis Gr. 215.
M = Marcianus Gr. 240.
C = Monacensis Gr. 449.
V = Vindobonensis philosophicus Gr. 226.
Q = Marcianus Gr. 242.
L = Ambrosianus Gr. 667.
D = Marcianus Gr. 209.
W = AE.
X = BRJ.
Y = USM.
Z = QL.

mg = in margine.
ac = ante correctionem.
pc = post correctionem.
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XXXVII
Eunapius (p. 6. Boissonade) says Plotinus came from Egypt and that his birthplace was Lyco David, in his preface to his commentary on Porphyry's *Enagoge* (4. pp. 91. 3-92. 1), gives the name of Plotinus's birthplace as Lyon, possibly the town of that name in Upper Egypt (though the town of the same name in the Delta may be meant). But the reliability of this information must remain somewhat suspect. It is difficult to see what good source of information could have been open to Eunapius which was not available to Porphyry. For Amelius Gentiliscus from Etruria cp. *Life*, ch. 3, 7, 10, 17 (his epistle dedicatory to Porphyry). 19, and 20. He was, as the *Life* makes clear, the leading member of the school in which he seems to have acted as Plotinus's chief assistant (cp. especially ch. 18). He was extremely pious (ch. 10) and a diffuse and voluminous writer. Nothing survives of the hundred volumes of the notes which he made at the meetings of the school.
A much more highly coloured account of Plotinus's last illness appears in Firmicus Maternus, *Mathesis* i. 14. B. H. Oppermann (*Plotins Leben*, Heidelberg 1929, ch. 1) regards this as an independent account based on a lost biography by Eustochius prefixed to his edition of Plotinus's writings (cp. *Introduction*, p. ix). Henry (*Plotin et l'Occident*, Louvain, 1934, ch. 1) considers it, more probably, as a rhetorical amplification of the account given here by Porphyry. Both agree, however, that the disease described here of which Plotinus died was in fact *elephantiasis Graecorum*, i.e., a form of leprosy.
THE LIFE OF PLOTINUS

...dead. His wants were provided for partly from the estate of Zethus and partly from that of Castricius at Minturnae: for Castricius had his property there. When he was on the point of death, Eustochius told us, as Eustochius had been staying at Puteoli and was late in coming to him he said, "I have been waiting a long time for you." Then he said, "Try to bring back the god in us to the divine in the All!" and, as a snake crept under the bed on which he was lying and disappeared into a hole in the wall, he breathed his last. It was the end of the second year of the reign of Claudius, and according to Eustochius he was sixty-six years old. At the time of his death I, Porphyry, was staying at Lilybaeum, Amelius was at Apamea in Syria, and Castricius was in Rome: only Eustochius was with him. If we reckon sixty-six years back from the second year of the reign of Claudius the date of his birth falls in the thirteenth year of the reign of Severus; 1 but he never told anyone the month in which he was born or the day of his birth, because he did not want any sacrifice or feast on his birthday, though he sacrificed and entertained his friends on the traditional birthdays of Plato and Socrates; on these occasions those of his friends who were capable of it had to read a discourse before the assembled company.

1 All the same, he did often in the course of conversation spontaneously tell us something about his...
early life, to the following effect. Up to the age of eight, though he was already going to school, he used to keep going to his nurse and baring her breasts and wanting to suck; but when someone once told him that he was a little pest he was ashamed and stopped. In his twenty-eighth year he felt the impulse to study philosophy and was recommended to the teachers in Alexandria who then had the highest reputation; but he came away from their lectures so depressed and full of sadness that he told his trouble to one of his friends. The friend, understanding the desire of his heart, sent him to Ammonius, whom he had not so far tried. He went and heard him, and said to his friend, "This is the man I was looking for." From that day he stayed continually with Ammonius and acquired so complete a training in philosophy that he became eager to make acquaintance with the Persian philosophical discipline and that prevailing among the Indians. As the Emperor Gordian was preparing to march against the Persians, he joined the army and went on the expedition; he was already in his thirty-ninth year, for he had stayed studying with Ammonius for eleven complete years. When Gordian was killed in Mesopotamia Plotinus escaped with difficulty and came safe to Antioch. After Philip

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1 Ammonius (c. 175-242) was a self-taught philosopher who wrote nothing. We know very little about his teaching; the scanty evidence is fully reported and discussed by Schwyzer,
Porphyry

had become Emperor he came to Rome, at the age of forty. Erennus, Origen, and Plotinus had made an agreement not to disclose any of the doctrines of Ammonius which he had revealed to them in his lectures. Plotinus kept the agreement, and, though he held conferences with people who came to him, maintained silence about the doctrines of Ammonius. Erennus was the first to break the agreement, and Origen followed his lead; but he wrote nothing except the treatise On the Spirits and, in the reign of Gallienus, That the King is the Only Maker. Plotinus for a long time continued to write nothing, but began to base his lectures on his studies with Ammonius. So he continued for ten complete years, admitting people to study with him, but writing nothing. Since he encouraged his students to ask questions, the course was lacking in order and there was a great deal of pointless chatter, as Amelius told us. Amelius came to him during his third year in Rome (the third year of the reign of Philip), and stayed with him till the first year of the reign of Claudius, twenty-four years in all. He came with a philosophical training from the school of Lysimachus, 1

cho. 14 and 19 of the Life was quite a different person. Driven was not an uncommon name at Alexandria; there are chronological difficulties against identifying the two (for which see Schwzyzer, art. cit., col. 480); there is no trace of the writings mentioned here among the known works of the Christian Origen; and, most important of all, the references in the Life clearly imply that the Origen mentioned here was a perfectly normal Platonist, enjoying the friendship and respect of other Platonists and of Plotinus himself. In the passage quoted by Eusebius, Porphyry speaks of the Christian Origen in a very different and thoroughly hostile tone, so one would expect the greatest anti-Christian writer of antiquity to speak of the great Christian apologist.
and was the most industrious of all Plotinus’s associates; he wrote out and collected almost all the works of Numenius, and nearly knew the greater part of them by heart. He made notes of the meetings of Plotinus’s school and put together about a hundred volumes of these notes, which he has presented to Hostilianus Hesychius of Apamea, his adopted son.

4. In the tenth year of the reign of Gallienus, I, Porphyry, arrived from Greece with Antonius of Rhodes, and found that Amelius, though he had been with Plotinus for eighteen years, had not yet brought himself to write anything except the notebooks, which he had not yet brought up to their total of a hundred. In the tenth year of the reign of Gallienus Plotinus was about fifty-nine years old. I, Porphyry, when I first joined him was thirty. From the first year of Gallienus Plotinus had begun to write on the subjects that came up in the meetings of the school: in the tenth year of Gallienus, when I, Porphyry, first came to know him, I found that he had written twenty-one treatises, and I also discovered that few people had received copies of them. The issuing of copies was still a difficult and anxious business, not at all simple and easy; those who received them were most carefully scrutinised. These were the writings, to which, since he gave them no titles himself, each gave different titles for the several treatises. The following are the titles which finally prevailed. I add the first words of the treatises, to make it easy to recognise from them which treatise is indicated by each title.

1. as is customary in translations of the Life, these first words have been omitted here and the Ennead reference substituted.
PORPHYRY

α' Περὶ τοῦ καλὸν: [I. 6].
οὴ ἀρχὴ τὸ καλὸν έστι μὲν ἐν ὅλαις πλείστων.

β' Περὶ φυσῆς ἀθανασίας: [IV. 7].
οὴ ἀρχὴ εἰ δὲ ἐστὶν ἀθανάτος ἐστὶν.

γ' Περὶ εἰμικρισίας [III. 1].
οὴ ἀρχὴ πάντα γίνομεν.

δ' Περὶ οὐσίας τῆς φυσῆς: [IV. 2].
οὴ ἀρχὴ τὴν τῆς φυσῆς οὐσίαν.

ε' Περὶ καὶ τῶν δεων καὶ τοῦ ἀντος: [V. 9].
οὴ ἀρχὴ μέν ἐναὶς ἀνθρώποι ἐκ ἀρχῆς γενόμενοι.

ζ' Περὶ τῆς εὖ τὰ σώματα καθόδου τῆς φυσῆς: [IV. 8].
οὴ ἀρχὴ πολλάκις ἐγγυμφάμενος.

η' Εἰ αἱ πάσαι φυσάι μία: [IV. 9].
οὴ ἀρχὴ ἡ ὅποια ἀπὸν ἄλλης φυσῆς.

θ' Περὶ τόγκαθαι ή τοῦ ἐνός: [VI. 9].
οὴ ἀρχὴ ἃπαντα ταῦ ἄντα.

ι' Περὶ τῶν τριῶν ἀρχῶν ὑποστάσεων: [V. 1].
οὴ ἀρχὴ τὰ πολλά ἐστί οἱ πολλοὶ περὶ τῆς φυσῆς.

ια' Περὶ γενέσεως καὶ τάξεως τῶν μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον: [V. 2].
οὴ ἀρχὴ καὶ ἐν πάντα.

ιβ' Περὶ τῶν δύο υλῶν [II. 4].
οὴ ἀρχὴ τὴν λεγόμενην υλὴν.

ιγ' Ἐπισκέψεως διάφορος [III. 9].
οὴ ἀρχὴ τῇς φυσῶν ὑπὸ ἑνεκές ἑνῶς.

THE LIFE OF PLOTINUS

2. On the Immortality of the Soul (IV. 7).
3. On Destiny (III. 1).
4. On the Essence of the Soul (IV. 2).
5. On Intellect, the Forms, and Being (V. 9).
6. On the Descent of the Soul into Bodies (IV. 8).
7. How That which is after the First comes from the First, and about the One (V. 4).
8. If All Souls are One (IV. 9).
9. On the Good or the One (VI. 9).
10. On the Three Primary Hypostases (V. 1).
11. On the Origin and Order of the Beings which come after the First (V. 2).
13. Various Considerations (III. 9).
50. On the Circular Motion (II. 2).

55. On our Allotted Guardian Spirit (III. 4).

60. On the Reasonable Departure (I. 9).

65. On Quality (II. 6).

70. Whether there are Ideas of Particulars (V. 7).

75. On Virtues (I. 2).

80. On Dialectic (I. 3).

85. In What Way the Soul is Said to be a Mean between Undivided and Divided Being (IV. 1).

These treatises, twenty-one in all, I, Porphyry, found already written when I first came to him. Plotinus was then in his fifty-ninth year.

5. I, Porphyry, had in fact already been in Rome a little before the tenth year of Gallienus, while Plotinus was taking his summer holiday and only engaging in general conversation with his friends. While I was with him this year and for five years afterwards, in these six years many discussions took place in the meetings of the school and Amelius and I kept urging him to write, so he wrote:
PORTHOYR

10. Peri tou te to tov on pantachou blon eivai ev
kai taupon bibliia dio [VI. 4-5].

20. Oi poii dve to tov prwtov arkhiv nwm. h
phiw parantaguc.

25. To de de Peri tou doymatoi kai energet.

[PI. 5].

24. On the Fact that That Which is beyond
Being does not think, and on What is the
Primary and What the Secondary Think-
ing Principle (V. 6).

Next he wrote another two of which the first is the
treatise

27. On What Exists Potentially and What
Actually (II. 5).

Then came

26. On The Impassibility of Beings without
Body (III. 6).

28. On the Soul I (IV. 3).

29. On the Soul II (IV. 4).

30. On Contemplation (III. 8).

31. On the Intelligible Beauty (V. 8).

32. On Intellect, and That the Intelligibles are
not outside the Intellect and On the
Good (V. 5).
The Life of Plotinus

Against the Gnostics (II. 9).

On Numbers (VI. 6).

How Distant Objects appear Small (II. 8).

Whether Well-Being depends on Extension of Time (I. 5).

On Complete Intermingling (II. 7).

How the Multitude of the Forms came into being and On the Good (VI. 7).

On Free Will (VI. 8).

On the Universe (II. 1).

On Sense-Perception and Memory (IV. 6).

On the Kinds of Being I (VI. 1).

On the Kinds of Being II (VI. 2).

On the Kinds of Being III (VI. 3).

On Eternity and Time (III. 7).
THE LIFE OF PLOTINUS

These twenty-four treatises are those which he wrote during the six-year period when I, Porphyry, was with him. He took their subjects from problems which came up from time to time in the meetings of the school, as I have shown in the summaries of the several treatises. With the twenty-one treatises written before I came to Rome the total comes to forty-five.

6. While I was living in Sicily—I went there about the fifteenth year of the reign of Gallienus—Plotinus wrote and sent me these five treatises:

46. On Well-Being (I. 4).
47. On Providence I (III. 2).
48. On Providence II (III. 3).
49. On the Knowing Hypostases and That Which is Beyond (V. 3).
50. On Love (III. 5).

He sent me these in the first year of the reign of Claudius. At the beginning of the second year, shortly before his death, he sent these:

51. On the Nature of Evils (I. 8).
52. Whether the Stars are Causes (II. 3).
PORPHYRY

53. What is the Living Being? (I. 1).
54. On Well Being (I. 7).

These, with the forty-five of the first and second sets that he wrote, amount to fifty-four. The power of the treatises varies according to the period in which he wrote them, in early life, in his prime, or in his illness. The first twenty-one show a slighter capacity, not yet attaining to the dimensions of his full vigour. Those produced in his middle period reveal his power at its height; these twenty-four, except for the short ones, are of the highest perfection. The last nine were written when his power was already failing, and this is more apparent in the last four than in the five which precede them.

7. He had many hearers, and some who were brought together by a real enthusiasm for philosophy. Among these was Amelius of Tuscany, whose family name was Gentilianus; the master preferred to substitute K for L and call him Amerius, saying that it suited him better to take his name from amereic (indivisibility) than ameleia (indifference).

There was also a medical man, Paulinus of Scythopolis, whom Amelius used to call Mikkalos—he always got things wrong. There was too another medical man, Eustochius of Alexandria, who came to know Plotinus towards the end of his life and stayed with him and tended him till his death. He devoted himself entirely to the thought of Plotinus and acquired the character of a genuine philosopher. Zoticus the critic and poet was also one of the company.
The Life of Plotinus

Porphyry, dictating some of the earlier biographical work on Plotinus in the form of a dialogue, tells us that Plotinus wished to make a favourable reputation for his friend Critias, in order to create a better understanding of Critias among the people. Therefore, he wrote some things in his dialogue that were supportive of Critias, even though these things were not entirely true. Plotinus believed that it was important to present Critias in a positive light.

Porphyry states that Plotinus and Critias were close friends and that Plotinus was influenced by Critias' philosophy. He writes that Plotinus was a man of great wisdom and that he was able to inspire others with his teachings.

The dialogue between Porphyry and Plotinus is a reflection of their close relationship and their shared beliefs. Porphyry describes Plotinus as a wise and thoughtful person who was deeply influenced by Critias' philosophy.

Plotinus was one of the most important philosophers of the ancient world, and his influence can be seen in many of the great thinkers of later centuries. His ideas continue to be studied and debated by scholars today, and his influence can still be felt in the modern world.

The Life of Plotinus, written by Porphyry, is one of the most important works on Plotinus and his philosophy. It provides us with a glimpse into the life and teachings of this great philosopher, and it remains a valuable resource for anyone interested in the history of philosophy.
The Life of Plotinus

result of this renunciation and indifference to the needs of life, though he had been so gouty that he had to be carried in a chair, he regained his health, and, though he had not been able to stretch out his hands, he became able to use them much more easily than professional handicraftsmen. Plotinus regarded him with great favour and prased him highly, and frequently held him up as an example to all who practised philosophy. Another companion was Sclerion of Alexandria, who began as a rhetorician and afterwards took to the study of philosophy as well, but was unable to free himself from the degradation of finance and money-lending. I myself, Porphyry of Tyre, was one of Plotinus’s closest friends, and he entrusted to me the editing of his writings.

8. When Plotinus had written anything he could never bear to go over it twice; even to read it through once was too much for him, as his eyesight did not serve him well for reading. In writing he did not form the letters with any regard to appearance or divide his syllables correctly, and he paid no attention to spelling. He was wholly concerned with thought; and, which surprised us all, he went on in this way right up to the end. He worked out his train of thought from beginning to end in his own mind, and then, when he wrote it down, since he had set it all in order in his mind, he wrote as continuously as if he was copying from a book. Even if he was talking to someone, engaged in continuous conversation, he kept to his train of thought. He could take his necessary part in the conversation as the full, and at the same time keep his mind fixed without a break on what he was considering. When the person he had been talking to was gone he did not go over
what he had written, because his sight, as I have said, did not suffice for revision. He went straight on with what came next, keeping the connection, just as if there had been no interval of conversation between. In this way he was present at once to himself and to others, and he never relaxed his self-turned attention except in sleep: even sleep he reduced by taking very little food, often not even a piece of bread, and by his continuous turning in contemplation to his intellect.

1. There were women, too, who were greatly devoted to philosophy: Gemina, in whose house he lived, and her daughter Gemma, who had the same name as her mother, and Amphiclea, who became the wife of Ariston, son of Iamblichus. Many men and women of the highest rank, on the approach of death, brought him their children, both boys and girls, and entrusted them to him along with all their property, considering that he would be a holy and god-like guardian. So his house was full of young lads and maidens, including Potamon, to whose education he gave serious thought, and would even listen to him revising the same lesson again and again.

2. He patiently attended to the accounts of their property when their trustees submitted them, and took care that they should be accurate; he used to say that as long as they did not take to philosophy their properties and incomes must be kept safe and untouched for them. Yet, though he shielded so many from the worries and cares of ordinary life, he never, while awake, relaxed his intent concentration upon the intellect. He was gentle, calm, and at the
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On the details of Porphyry's account of this curious episode see E. R. Dodds, *The Greeks and the Irrational.* Appendix II iii, *A Seance in the locum.* Since Porphyry connects the writing of the treatise *On Our Allotted Guardian Spirit* (III. 4) with the affair, it must have taken place before the disposal of all who had any sort of acquaintance with him. Though he spent twenty-six whole years in Rome and acted as arbitrator in very many people's disputes, he never made an enemy of any of the officials.

10. One of those claiming to be philosophers, Olympius of Alexandria, who had been for a short time a pupil of Ammonius, adopted a superior attitude towards Plotinus out of rivalry. This man's attacks on him went to the point of trying to bring a star-stroke upon him by magic. But when he found his attempt recoiling upon himself, he told his intimates that the soul of Plotinus had such great power as to be able to throw back attacks on him on to those who were seeking to do him harm. Plotinus was aware of the attempt and said that his limbs on that occasion were squeezed together and his body contracted "like a money-bag pulled tight." Olympius, since he was often rather in danger of suffering something himself than likely to injure Plotinus, ceased his attacks. Plotinus certainly possessed by birth something more than other men.

An Egyptian priest who came to Rome and made his acquaintance through a friend wanted to give a display of his occult wisdom and asked Plotinus to come and see a visible manifestation of his own companion spirit evoked. Plotinus readily consented, and the evocation took place in the temple of Isis:

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If Plotinus had anything more in mind when he said this than a determination to stop Amelius bothering him, it may have been something like the view of the sort of spirits who attend sacrifices which is to be found in Porphyry's *De Abstinentia* II. 37-43, i.e., that they are *daemon εφύτευμα*, sublunary spirits of the lowest rank, and those of them who delight in blood-sacrifices are thoroughly evil *daemon*.

This crowd of lower spirits the philosopher, who lives on the level of Intellect and has the One for his guardian spirit (III. 4. 6), naturally regards as his inferiors, so that it is their duty to attend on him, not he on them. But there are higher ranks of divinities in the Platonic universe, and there is no suggestion, here or in the *Enneads*, that Plotinus thought himself superior to them.
11. He had a surpassing degree of penetration into character. Once a valuable necklace was stolen, belonging to Chione, who lived with her children in his house in honourable widowhood. The slaves of the house were assembled before the eyes of Plotinus, and he looked carefully at them all; then, pointing to one man he said, “This is the thief.” The man was flogged, and persisted at first in denial, but finally confessed and gave back what he had stolen.

He was, too, in the habit of foretelling how each of the children who lived with him would turn out; that Polemon, for instance, would be amorous and short-lived, as he actually was. He once noticed that I, Porphyry, was thinking of removing myself from this life. He came to me unexpectedly while I was staying indoors in my house and told me that this lust for death did not come from a settled rational decision but from a bilious indisposition, and urged me to go away for a holiday. I obeyed him and went to Sicily, since I had heard that a distinguished man called Probus was living near Lilybaeum. So I was brought to abandon my longing for death and prevented from staying with Plotinus to the end.

12. The Emperor Gallienus and his wife Salonina greatly honoured and venerated Plotinus. He tried to make full use of their friendship: there was said to have been in Campania a city of philosophers which had fallen into ruin; this he asked them to revive, and to present the surrounding territory to the city when they had founded it. Those who settled there were to live according to...
the laws of Plato,1 and it was to be called Platonopolis; and he undertook to move there with his companions. The philosopher would easily have gained his wish if some of the courtiers, moved by jealousy, spite, or some such mean motive, had not prevented it.

13. In the meetings of the school he showed an adequate command of language and the greatest power of discovering and considering what was relevant to the subject in hand, but he made mistakes in certain words: he did not say anammeisasthai but anamnemisasthai and made other slips which he also constantly committed in his writing. When he was speaking his intellect visibly lit up his face; there was always a charm about his appearance, but at these times he was still more attractive to look at: he sweated gently, and kindliness shone out from him, and in answering questions he made clear both his benevolence to the questioner and his intellectual vigour. Once I, Porphyry, went on asking him for three days about the soul’s connection with the body, and he kept on explaining to me. A man called Thaumasius came in who was interested in general statements and said that he wanted to hear Plotinus speaking in the manner of a set treatise, but could not stand Porphyry’s questions and answers. Plotinus said, “But if when Porphyry asks questions we do not solve his difficulties we shall not be able to say anything at all to put into the treatise”.

14. In writing he is concise and full of thought. He puts things shortly and abounds more in ideas described in Plato’s Laws, rather than the ideal, but in Plato’s own opinion unattainable, constitution of the Republic.

1 Though laws with a small l seems to be required in the translation, there can be little doubt that the constitution of Platonopolis was to be that of the “second-best state”
than in words; he generally expresses himself in a tone of rapt inspiration, and states what he himself really feels about the matter and not what has been handed down by tradition. His writings, however, are full of concealed Stoic and Peripatetic doctrines. Aristotle’s *Metaphysics*, in particular, is concentrated in them. He had a complete knowledge of geometry, arithmetic, mechanics, optics and music, but was not disposed to apply himself to detailed research in these subjects. In the meetings of the school he used to have the commentaries read, perhaps of Severus, perhaps of Cronius or Numerius or Gaius or Atticus, and among the Peripatetics of Aspasius, Alexander, Adrastus, and others that were available. But he did not just speak straight out of these books but took a distinctive personal line in his considerations, and brought the mind of Ammonius to bear on the investigations in hand. He quickly absorbed what was read, and would give the sense of some profound subject of study in a few words and pass on. When Longinus’s work *On Principles* and his *Lover of Antiquity* were read to him, he said, "Longinus is a scholar, but certainly not a philosopher." When Origen once came to a meeting of the school he was filled with embarrassment and one of the most important philosophers of the generation before Plotinus, who was sometimes accused of plagiarising his thought (see below, ch. 17). Alexander of Aphrodisias (head of the Peripatetic school at Athens at the beginning of the 3rd century) was the greatest of the ancient commentators on Aristotle. Aspasius and Adrastus were Aristotelian commentators of the 2nd century. This passage shows clearly how scholarly and professional a philosopher Plotinus was and how he worked, though with great originality, on the basis of an extensive school tradition.

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1 On Severus, Cronius, Numerius, Gaius and Atticus, see John Dillon *The Middle Platonists* (Duckworth, London 1977).
2 For Longinus see below, ch. 19 n.1.
3 See note on ch. 3.
15. At Plato's feast I read a poem, "The Sacred Marriage"; and because much in it was expressed in the mysterious and veiled language of inspiration someone said, "Porphyry is mad." But Plotinus said, so as to be heard by all, "You have shown yourself at once poet, philosopher, and expounder of sacred mysteries." The rhetorician Diophanes read a defence of Alcibiades in Plato's "Banquet" in which he asserted that a pupil for the sake of advancing in the study of virtue should submit himself to carnal intercourse with his master if the master desired it. Plotinus repeatedly started up to leave the meeting, but restrained himself, and after the end of the lecture gave me, Porphyry, the task of writing a refutation. Diophanes refused to lend me his manuscript, and I depended in writing my refutation on my memory of his arguments. When I read it before the same assembled hearers I pleased Plotinus so much that he kept on quoting during the meeting, "So strike and be a light to men."

Eubulus the Platonic Successor wrote to him from Athens and sent treatises on some Platonic questions. Plotinus had them given to me, Porphyry, with instructions to consider them and submit my notes on them to him.

He studied the rules of astronomy, without going very far into the mathematical side, but went more
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carefully into the methods of the casters of horoscopes. When he had detected the unreliability of their alleged results he did not hesitate to attack many of the statements made in their writings. 1

16. There were in his time many Christians and others, and sectarians who had abandoned the old philosophy, men of the schools of Adelphius and Aculeinus, who possessed a great many treatises of Alexander the Libyan and Philocomus and Demostratus and Lydus, and produced revelations by Zoroaster and Zostrianus and Nictheus and Allogenes and Messus and other people of the kind, 2 deceived themselves and deceiving many, alleging that Plato had not penetrated to the depths of intelligible reality. Plotinus hence often attacked their position in his lectures, and wrote the treatise to which we have given the title "Against the Gnostics"; 3 he left it to us to assess what he passed over. Amelius went to forty volumes in writing against the book of Zostrianus. I, Porphyry, wrote a considerable number of refutations of the book of Zoroaster, which I showed to be entirely spurious and modern, made up by the sectarians to convey the impression that the doctrines which they had chosen to hold in honour were those of the ancient Zoroaster.

17. When the people from Greece began to say that Plotinus was appropriating the ideas of

The collection of Gnostic books found at Nag Hammadi in Upper Egypt in 1945 includes "Revelations" attributed to Allogenes (the Foreigner, a Gnostic name for Seth), Zostrianus, Messus, and possibly Zoroaster.

1 C. Eun. II. 3. Whether the Stars are Causes.

2 These sectaries were Gnostics. It is very likely that we now have some of the works to which Porphyry here refers.

3 II. 9.
In fact, the system of Numenius, as far as we know it from scattered quotations and references in later authors, shows some resemblances to that of Plotinus, notably in its descending hierarchy of three gods, the Supreme Good or Mind, the Second Mind, and the cosmos conceived as an ensouled divine being. But there are also most important differences in the way Plotinus conceives his Three Hypostases and their relation to each other, and as far as we can tell from the evidence available, Amelius and Porphyry seem to be amply justified in claiming originality for their master.
way just for the sake of mocking and jeering at him. But I have conformed to your idea that we should use the occasion to provide ourselves with a statement of the doctrines which we accept in a form easier to remember, and—even though they have long been famous—to make them more widely known, so as to increase the reputation of a friend as eminent as Plotinus is. So here is the work I promised you, written, as you know yourself, in three days. You must treat it with justified indulgence, as there has been no selection or arrangement corresponding to the order of the original attack; I have simply put down my recollections of our former discussions in the order in which they occurred to me; and besides, the intention of our friend, who is being put on trial for the opinions which he shares with us, is not easy to grasp, because he treats the same subjects indifferent ways in different places. I am sure, however, that if I have misrepresented any of the doctrines of our spiritual home, you will have the kindness to correct me. As it says in the tragedy,

"I must correct and reject, since I am a busy man and far from the teachings of our master. So you can see what a business it was to gratify your request as completely as you wished. Farewell."

18. I thought this letter worth inserting, to demonstrate not only that people in his own time thought that he was making a show on a basis of plagiarism from Numenius, but also that they considered he was a big driveller and despised him exclusively in them. It is the only trace of tragic diction in the works which follow. Amelius's style throughout this letter is excessively pompous and high-flown.
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and because he was so completely free from the staginess and windy rant of the professional speechifier: his lectures were like conversations, and he was not quick to make clear to anybody the compelling logical coherence of his discourse. I, Porphyry, experienced something of the sort when I first heard him. The result was that I wrote against him in an attempt to show that the object of thought existed outside the intellect. He made Amelius read this essay to him, and when the reading was finished smiled and said, "You shall have the task of solving these difficulties, Amelius. He has fallen into them because he does not know what we hold." Amelius wrote a lengthy treatise "In Answer to Porphyry's Difficulties"; I replied to what he had written; Amelius answered my reply; and the third time I with difficulty understood the doctrine, changed my mind and wrote a recantation which I read in the meeting of the school. After this I believed in Plotinus's writings, and tried to rouse in the master himself the ambition to organise his doctrine and write it down more at length; and Amelius also stimulated his desire to write books.

19. The opinion which Longinus, too, had of Plotinus, derived mainly from what I had told him in my letters, will appear from part of a letter written to me, as follows. He is asking me to come from ideas, which he thought of as external to the Divine Mind (cp. cha. 18, 20). Plotinus called him "a scholar, not a philosopher" (ch. 14), which may mean that he stuck closer to the text in his interpretation of Plato and objected to Plotinus's speculative flights on the basis of a small number of passages. It is generally agreed by modern scholars, perhaps for not quite conclusive reasons, that he was not the author of the famous extant critical treatise On the Sublime.
Sicy to join him in Phoenicia and bring Plotinus's works with me. He says:

"Send them when you like, or, better, bring them: for I shall never stop asking you to give the journey to us the preference over any other, if for no other reason—for surely there is no wisdom which you could expect to learn from us as a result of your visit—for the sake of our old friendship and of the climate, which is particularly good for the ill-health of which you speak. Whatever else you think you may find, do not expect anything new from me, or even the old works which you say you have lost. There is such a shortage of copyists here that really all this time I have been trying to complete my set of Plotinus, and have only just managed it by taking my manuscript-writer away from his usual tasks and setting him to this one only. I have everything, as far as I know, including what you have just sent me; but I have it only half complete, because the manuscripts are extremely full of faults. I thought our friend Amelius would have corrected the mistakes of the copyists, but he had other more urgent duties than this sort of supervision. So I do not see how I am to get acquainted with them, though I am extremely anxious to examine On The Soul and On Being, for it is just these that are the most faulty. I should be very glad if you could send me the accurately written copies, simply to read for the purpose of comparison and then return; though I again repeat my request to you not to send, but to come yourself.

1 Probably the treatise which now appears as Enneads IV. 3-5.
2 Probably Enneads VI. 1-3. another single treatise split up by Porphyry.
ΠΟΡΦΥΡΥ

άλλα αὐτῶν ἦκεν ἐχοντα μᾶλλον ἀξίω ταύτα τε καὶ τῶν λοιπῶν εἰ τι διαπέρνει τὸν Ἀμέλιον.
"Α μὲν γὰρ ἤγγιξεν, ἀπάντησα δια σπουδῆς ἐκτενῶς. Πῶς δὲ οὖν ἐξανθήν ἄνδρός ὑπομέναται πάντος ἰδοὺς ἄξιον καὶ τιμὴς κτῆσαι: Τούτῳ γὰρ

35 πών καὶ παρώντι σοι καὶ μακρὰ ἀπόντα καὶ περὶ τὴν Τύρων διατρίβειν τυχώμενον δῆσοθεν ἐποταλ καὶ τῶν μὲν ὑποθέσεων οὐ πάντως μὲ τὰς πολλὰς προσείπους ἀμβεβήκει τὸν δὲ τύπον τῆς γραφῆς καὶ τῶν ἐνοικίων τάδερ δὲ τῆς πυκνότητα καὶ τὸ φῶς τοῦ άνθρωπος τῶν ἐγγράμματος διαθέσεως ὑπερβαλ- λόντων ἀναρχεῖ καὶ φιλῶ καὶ μετὰ τῶν ἐλλειψιμο-

迢πάτων ἰδίως τὰ τούτων βιβλία φαίνη ἃν δεῖν τούς ἐγγράμμασιν.

20. Τούτα ἐπειδήν παρατέθηκα τοὐ καθ’ ἡμᾶς κριτικάτσατο γενομένου καὶ τάς τῶν ἄλλων σχέδις πάντα τοὺς καθ’ αὐτῶν διελεύσατος δεικνύσιον οἷς γέγονεν ἢ περὶ Πλωτίνου κρίσις.

πᾶ τα τά πρῶτα ἐκ τῶν τῶν ἄλλων ἀμβατίς καταφανώτατος ἐχον πρὸς αὐτῶν διευθετεῖ. Ἐπει

καὶ ἐτι σχεδόν ἐκ τῶν Ἀμέλιου λαβών ἐγραμματισά τι διὰ τὸ μὴ νοεῖν τῶν ἀνάψεων τὸν συγκλῆ ἐμπετεί. Εἴπα γὰρ τινα καὶ ἄλλα, καὶ τά σαρ Ἀμέλιος διαφημίζω ὡς ἀν έκ τῶν αὐτογράφων

10 μετεξελήμενα. Ἑτὶ δὲ τοῦ Λογιγοῦ ἂν εν συγ-

γραμματί γέγραφε περὶ Πλωτίνου τε καὶ Ἀμέλιου καὶ τῶν καθ’ ιαυτός γεγονότων φιλοσόφων ἀνάγ-

κών παράδειγμα, ἵνα καὶ πλῆρης γίνηται ἡ περὶ

αὐτών κρίσις ὡς γέγονεν τοῦ ἐλλειψιμοτάτου ἄνδρος καὶ ἐλεγκτικώτατος. Επιδρότεται δὲ το τι βιβλίων

15 Λογίγον πρὸς Πλωτίνου καὶ Γεντιλιανοῦ Ἀμέλιον

"Περὶ τέλους." Ἐχει δὲ τοιοῦτο προσώπων

54 and bring better copies of these and of any others which Amelius may have overlooked. I eagerly acquired all he brought; of course I should want to possess works of Plotinus, who deserves every possible honour and respect. It is true of course that I have given you word, when you were here, when you were far away, and especially at the time when you were staying in Tyre, that I cannot go very far in agreeing with most of his theories; but I feel the utmost admiration and affection for the general character of his writing, the closeness of his thinking, and the philosophical way in which he deals with his enquiries; and I think that seekers after truth must rank his works among the most important."

20. I have inserted at length this judgement by the most discerning critic of our times, a man who subjected practically all the works of his other contemporaries to drastic investigation, to show what conclusion he came to about Plotinus—though at first, as a result of the stupidity of others, he persisted in despising him. He seems to have misjudged the manuscripts which he received from Amelius because he did not understand Plotinus’s usual manner of expressing himself; or if there ever were any carefully corrected copies they were those of Amelius, which were transcribed from the author’s own originals. I must also insert what Longinus wrote in a book about Plotinus, Amelius, and the philosophers of his time, to give a complete account of the judgement passed on them by this most outstanding man and extremely severe critic. The title of the book is On The End: by Longinus in answer to Plotinus and Gentilianus Amelius. This is its preface:
"There have been in our time, Marcellus, many philosophers, especially in the early part of our life, I say this because at the present moment there is an indescribable shortage of philosophy. When I was a boy there were not a few masters of philosophical argument, all of whom I was enabled to see because from childhood I travelled to many places with my parents, and became acquainted in the same way with those who had lived on later in my intercourse with a great number of peoples and cities. Some of them undertook to set down their doctrines in writing, so as to give posterity the chance of deriving some benefit from them; others thought that all that was required of them was to lead the members of their school to an understanding of what they held. Of the first kind were the Platonists Eucleides and Democritus, and Proclinus, who lived in the Troad, and Plotinus and his friend Gentilianus Amelius, who are still teaching publicly at Rome, and the Stoics Themistocles and Phocion and the two who were in their prime a little while ago, Annius and Medius, and the Peripatetic Heliodorus, the Alexandrian. Of the second were the Platonists Ammonius and Origen, with whom I studied regularly for a very long time, men who much surpassed their contemporaries in wisdom, and the Successors at Athens, Theodotus and Eubulus. Some of these did write something, for instance Origen, On The Spirits and Eubulus, On the Philebus and the Gorgias and Aristotle's objections to Plato's 'Republic', but these are not enough to

1 The philosophers contemporary with Plotinus mentioned in this preface are only names to us.
 PORPHYRY

45 μετὰ τῶν ἐξειρεσμένων τῶν λόγων αὐτῶν ἀρίθμευν ἄν γένοιτο τάρεργον τῇ τειαίῃ χρηματικῶν σποουδὴ καὶ μὴ προηγεμένῳ περὶ τῶν γράφεων ὄμην λαβόντων. Τῶν δὲ Στοικῶν Ἐρίμων καὶ Λυσιχας οἱ τε ἐν ἄστει καταβιώνσι τὴν Ἀδειάν καὶ Μουνίσιος, καὶ Περιπατητικῶν Ἀμμώνιος καὶ Πτολεμαῖος φιλολογῶν τατοῦ μὲν τῶν καθ’ ἑούσαις ἀμφοῖ γενόμενος καὶ μᾶλλον ἡ Ἀμμώνιος οὖ γὰρ ἐστὶν ἄτις ἐκεῖνος γέγονεν ἐς πολυμαθῶν παραπλήσιος, οὐ μὲν καὶ γραφαίνει τῆς τεχνικῆς ὀφειλεία, ἀλλὰ ποιήματα καὶ λόγους ἐπιδεικτικοίς, ἀπερ ὑπὲρ ὁ καὶ συστήμαται τῶν ἀνθρώπων οὕς ἐκόπτονοι οἷς μὴ γὰρ ἄν αὐτοῖς δέξασθαι δι’ ἐποίηματα καὶ συστήματα καὶ γενέσθαι γνωρίμενος, ἀσέβος καὶ ἀποδεικτικὸς συγράφαι τὴν ἐαυτὸς ἀποθηκεύσας διάνοιαν. Τῶν δὴ τῶν γραφαίνων οὓς μὲν οὖν πλέον ἡ συστήματα καὶ μεταγραφὴ τῶν προηγούμενων καθάπερ Εὐκλείδης καὶ Δημόκριτος καὶ Προκλῆος, οἱ δὲ μικρὰ κομιδὴ πράγματα τῆς τῶν πολλῶν ἱστορίας ἀπομνημονεύσαστες εἰς τοὺς αὐτοῖς τόπους ἐκεῖνος ἐπεχείρησαν συνιδεῖν καὶ μεταγραφή τῶν προηγούμενων καθάπερ Αννίς καὶ Μήδιος καὶ Φοῖβος, οὕτως μὲν ἀπὸ τῆς ἐν τῇ διανόησις συνιδεσμένων δὲ καὶ τῶν Ἡλιοδότου συγκατασκευάσθαι ταῖς ὃς, οὐδὲ ἐκεῖνος παρά τοῖς προηγούμενοι ἐν ταῖς ἀνέρχεσθαι εἰρημένα πλέον εἰς συμβολήματα τῆς τοῦ λόγου διάθεσιν. Οἱ δὲ καὶ πλήθει προβλημάτων ὑπὸ μεταχειρίσατο τῆς σποουδῆς τῶν γράφεων ἀποδεικτικοί.
they treated and have had an original way of thinking are Plotinus and Gentilianus Amelius. Plotinus, it would seem, has expounded the principles of Pythagorean and Platonic philosophy more clearly than anyone before him. The works of Numenius and Cronius and Moderatus and Thrasyllus came nowhere near the accuracy of Plotinus's treatises on the same subjects. Amelius chooses to walk in his footsteps, and mostly holds the same doctrines, but is diffuse in exposition, and in his roundabout method of explanation is led by an inclination opposed to that of Plotinus. Their treatises are the only ones which I consider worth attention. Why should anyone think he ought to turn over the works of the rest and neglect the authors from whom they derived what they wrote, when they did not add anything of their own, even in the arguments, to say nothing of the chief points, and did not try to do anything but collect the opinions of the majority or select the best?

1 I have already expressed my own opinions elsewhere, for instance in my reply to Gentilianus about righteousness in Plato, and my examination of Plotinus, Or, The Ideas: 1 for my friend and theirs, Basileus of Tyre, 2 who has himself written a good deal in the manner of Plotinus, whose direction he has preferred to my own, tried to demonstrate in a treatise that the doctrine of Plotinus about the Ideas was better than that which I approve. I think I showed fairly thoroughly in my reply that his change of mind was a mistake; and I dealt with a con-

1 Possibly Enneads VI. 7.
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kôtes dôxas, ύστερ καὶ τῇ πρὸς τὸν Ἀμελίου ἐπιστολῆς, μέγεθος μὲν ἐγκύους συγγράμματος, ἀπαιμισμένη δὲ πρὸς ἐκτὸς τὸν ὅποιον τὴν ἡμᾶς ἦσαν τῆς Πρώτης ἐπιστολῆς. τὸν Ἀμελίου ἐπιστολῆς μὲν ἠρμύρω Πέρι τοῦ πρῶτος τῆς Πλούτινου φιλοσοφίας οἱ προσφεκτέοντες, ἠμειαὶ δὲ αὐτὸ μόνον προσηγκεκατέμεν τῇ εἰσαγωγῇ τοῦ συγγράμματος ἐπιγράφῃ. Πρὸς τὴν Ἀμελίου ἐπιστολῆς αὐτὸ προσηγκεκατέμεν

21. "Εν δὲ τούτωσι τότε ὄμολογησε μὲν πάσης τῶν ἐπὶ αὐτοῦ γεγονός τῶν πλέον τοὺς προβλημάτων διενεχέσθη, ἐκ τῶν Πλούτινου ταῖς Δικαιολογίαις, τῷ Πλούτινου. τρόπῳ δὲ τιθέμενος διὰ μᾶλλον τούτων χρήσασθαι, τά 5 Νομοθετοῦν δὲ οὐκ ὕποβάλλοντο καὶ τακτικῶς προθετέον δόγματα, ἀλλὰ τὰ τῶν Παραπομπρόντων αὐτοῦ τὰ ἑλαμένα μετείχαν δόγματα, καὶ οὐκ ἔγον ἐν ἑνὶ Πλούτινου καὶ Κροῖνος καὶ Μοδέρατος καὶ Ἐρεσσίλου τῶν Πλούτινου περὶ τῶν αὐτῶν συγγράμματος εἰς ἀκριβείαν. Εἰς τῶν 10 δὲ περὶ Πλούτινου, οὐκ ἦσαν μὲν τοῦ Πλούτινου ἐβαθικῶς, τῇ δὲ ἐξερευνήσει πολὺς ὁ καὶ τῇ τῆς ἐξωτικῆς περιβολῆς πρὸς τὸν ἐκατόσεβεις ἥλιον ὑπότρηττον, ὡς μιαράτως ἔμελος Πορφυρίου ἐπὶ ἀρχάς ἐγκύους τῆς πρὸς τὸν Ἐρεσσίλου ἀναφέρουσας ἄρχοντα νῦν ὅτι ὁ δὲ κατὰ όμοιον τῆς κακείας ἑμένων. 15 ἑπάρχεις Βασίλειος ὁ Τύρῳς όν, ἀλλὰ πραγματευόμενος εἰς τὴν Πλούτινου μέρους." Συνέβηκεν τότε ἡταντάς κατὰ τὸν τῆς Ἀμελίου περιβολῆς τὸ ἀρχάς ἐγκύους περιβολῆς ἀρχαῖα οὐκ οἷον πρὸς ἥλιον τῶν Πλούτινου γράφων ἀρχαίων. Ἀρκεῖ τούτων ὁ τοσοῦτος ἄνθρωπος ἐν κρίνει 20 πρῶτος ὁ ὅπως ὡς καὶ ὑπενθυμμένος ἄρχρ ὧν τοιαύτα

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The considerable number of the opinions of these philosophers in this and in my letter to Amelius, which is as long as a book, and answers a number of the points in the letter which he addressed to me from Rome, which he entitled On The Method of the Philosophy of Plotinus. I was satisfied to give my treatise the ordinary title, calling it In Answer to the Letter of Amelius.

21. Longinus, then, admitted at that time in this preface "that among all his contemporaries Plotinus and Amelius were outstanding in the number of problems which they treated and had a particularly original way of thinking, and were so far from plagiarising from Numenius and giving his views the first place in their system that Plotinus deliberately propounded Pythagorean views, and the works of Numenius and Cronius and Moderatus and Thrasylus come nowhere near the accuracy of Plotinus's treatises on the same subjects." He said of Amelius that "he walked in Plotinus's footsteps, but was diffuse in exposition and in his roundabout method of exposition was led by an inclination opposed to that of Plotinus"; and at the same time, in referring to me, Porphyry, when I was still at the beginning of my association with Plotinus, he says, "my friend and theirs, Basileus of Tyre, who has himself written a good deal in the manner of Plotinus." He put it in this way because he really recognised that I altogether avoided the unphilosophical circuitousness of Amelius and looked to the manner of Plotinus as my standard in writing. The opinion which so great a man, who is, and is recognised as the foremost critic of our time, expressed in writing like this about...
Plotinus is enough to indicate that if I, Porphyry, had been able to converse with him, as he invited me to, he would not have written in opposition things which he took it upon himself to write before arriving at a sufficiently accurate understanding of the doctrine of Plotinus.

22. But "Why should I talk of oak and rock?" as Hesiod says; for if one wants to appeal to the evidence of the wise, who could be wiser than a god, and that god who truly said,

"I know the number of the sand, the measure of the sea.
I understand the dumb, and hear him who does not speak."  

For when Amelius asked where the soul of Plotinus had gone, Apollo, who said of Socrates,

"Socrates is the wisest of men."

hear what a great and noble oracle he uttered about Plotinus: "I begin to strike upon my lyre an immortal song, in honour of a gentle friend, weaving it of the sweetest notes of the tuneful harp struck by the golden plectrum. And I call the Muses to raise their voices with me in a full-noted crying of triumph, a sweep of universal melody, as when they were summoned to set the dance going for Aeneas with divine inspiration in the verses of Homer. Come, sacred company of Muses, let us unite our voices to accomplish the fullness of all song, I, Phoebus of the thick hair, singing in the midst of you.

Porphyry

The oracle is full of Homeric tags here we have a reminiscence of Odyssey 6, 399 τῆς δὲ ἔστειλεν, and this whole passage seems to be based on an allegorical interpretation of Odysseus’s swim where after the wreck of his raft. For the interpretation (common in late antiquity and adopted by the Christians) of the voyages of Odysseus as a symbol of the journey of the soul see Enneads I 6.8.

The word ἐκοψα is used of the body in a highly pessimistic and dualistic passage of the pseudo-Platonic Axiocitus 366 A1.

1 A reference to the ἀυτῷ ὁ θεὸς ὁ παρὰ ὑμῖν ὁ πόρος (of Orphic origin) in Plato Gorgias 498 A3, where again it is said that life in the body is really death, and separation from it true life for the soul.

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"Spirit, man once, but now nearing the diviner lot of a spirit, as the bond of human necessity has been loosed for you, and strong in heart, you swam swiftly from the roaring surge of the body to that coast where the stream flows strong, far apart from the crowd of the wicked, there to set your steps firm in the easy path of the pure soul, where the splendour of God shines round you and the divine law abides in purity far from lawless wickedness.

Then too, when you were struggling to escape from the bitter wave of this blood-drinking life, from its sickening whirlpools, in the midst of its billows and sudden surges, often the Blessed Ones showed you the goal ever near. Often when your mind was thrusting out by its own impulse along crooked paths the Immortals raised you by a straight path to the heavenly circuits, the divine way, sending down a solid shaft of light so that your eyes could see out of the mournful darkness. Sweet sleep never held your eyes, but scattering the heavy cloud that would have kept them closed, borne in the whirl you saw many fair sights which are hard for human seekers after wisdom to see.

But now that you have been freed from this tabernacle and have left the tomb which held your heavenly soul, you come at once to the com..."
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pany of heaven, where winds of delight blow, where
is affection and desire that charms the sight, full of
pure joy, brimming with streams of immortality
from the gods which carry the allurements of the
Loves, and sweet breeze and the windless brightness
of high heaven. There dwell Minos and Rhadamanthus, brethren of the golden race of great
Zeus, there righteous Aeacus and Plato, the sacred
power, and noble Pythagoras and all who have set
the dance of immortal love and won kinship with
spirits most blessed, there where the heart keeps
festival in everlasting joy. O blessed one, you have
borne so many contests, and now move among holy
spirits, crowned with mighty life.

"Muses, let us set going our song and the
gracefully winding circle of our dance in honour of
Plotinus the happy. My golden lyre has this much
to tell of his good fortune."

23. The oracle says that he was mild and kind,
most gentle and attractive, and we knew ourselves
that he was like this. It says too that he sleep-
lessly kept his soul pure and ever strove towards the
divine which he loved with all his soul, and did
everything to be delivered and "escape from the
bitter wave of blood-drinking life here." So to this
god-like man above all, who often raised himself in
thought, according to the ways Plato teaches in the
Banquet, to the First and Transcendent God, that God
appeared who has neither shape nor any intelligible
form, but is throned above intellect and all the
intelligible. I, Porphyry, who am now in my sixty-
years.
eighth year, declare that once I drew near and was united to him. To Plotinus "the goal ever near was shown": for his end and goal was to be united to, to approach the God who is over all things. Four times while I was with him he attained that goal, in an unspeakable actuality and not in potency only. Also it is said that the gods often set him straight when he was going on a crooked course "sending down a solid shaft of light," which means that he wrote what he wrote under their inspection and supervision. Through inward and outward wakefulness, the god says, "you saw many fair sights, hard to see" for men who study philosophy. The contemplation of men may certainly become better than human, but as compared with the divine knowledge it may be fair and fine, but not enough to be able to grasp the depths as the gods grasp them. Thus much the oracle has told about Plotinus's activity and fortunes while he was still in the body. After his deliverance from the body the god says that he came to "the company of heaven," and that there affection rules and desire and joy and love kindled by God, and the sons of God hold their stations, who are judges of the souls, as we are told, Minos and Rhadamanthus and Aeacus; to them, the god says, he went not to be judged but to be their companion, as are the other noblest of mankind. Such are their companions, Plato, Pythagoras, and all who "set the dance of immortal love." There, he says, the most blessed

Note that Porphyry attributes his master's achievement predominantly to divine inspiration and guidance. This has little support from the Enneads. Plotinus normally thinks that the philosopher can attain to the divine level without this sort of special assistance.
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spirits have their birth and live a life filled full of festivity and joy; and this life lasts for ever, made blessed by the gods.

24. This, then, is my account of the life of Plotinus. He himself entrusted me with the arrangement and editing of his books, and I promised him in his lifetime and gave undertakings to our other friends that I would carry out this task. So first of all I did not think it right to leave the books in confusion in order of time as they were issued. I followed the example of Apollodorus of Athens, who collected the works of Epicurianus the comedian into ten volumes, and Andronicus the Peripatetic, who classified the works of Aristotle and Theophrastus according to subject, bringing together the discussions of related topics.

So I, as I had fifty-four treatises of Plotinus, divided them into six sets of nine (Enneads)—it gave me pleasure to find the perfection of the number six along with the nines. I put related treatises together in each Ennead, giving the first place to the less difficult questions.

The First Ennead contains the treatises mainly concerned with morals, as follows:

I. 1. What is the Living Being, and what is Man?
I. 2. On Virtues.

*On Porphyry's editorial methods see Introduction (pp. ix-xi).

1 Born c. 180 B.C.; chronologist and scholar; a pupil of the great Aristarchus.
2 Of Rhodes; 1st century B.C. It was his edition (c. 40 B.C.) that brought the mature philosophical works of Aristotle back into general circulation.
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I. 5. Whether Well-Being depends on Extension of Time.
I. 7. On the First Good and the other goods.

These are the treatises contained in the First Ennead, which includes mainly ethical subject-matter. The Second contains a collection of the treatises on natural philosophy, including those on the physical universe and subjects connected with it. They are:

II. 1. On the Universe.
II. 2. On the Circular Motion.
II. 3. Whether the Stars are Causes.

II. 5. On What Exists Potentially and What Actually.

II. 6. On Quality and Form.

II. 7. On Complete Intermingling.


II. 9. Against those who say that the Universe and its Maker are Evil.

The contents of the Third Ennead are still concerned with the physical universe; it includes the following treatises dealing with considerations about the universe:

III. 1. On Destiny.

III. 2. On Providence I.

III. 3. On Providence II.


III. 5. On Love.

III. 7. On Eternity and Time.


25. We have arranged these three Enneads to form a single volume. We placed the treatise On Our Allied Guardian Spirit in the Third Ennead because the subject is treated in a general way and the question is one of those which people consider when dealing with the origins of man. The same applies to the treatise entitled On Love. We included Time and Eternity here because of the discussion of time. On Nature and Contemplation and the One is placed here because of the section on Nature. After the treatises on the physical universe comes the Fourth Ennead, containing those dealing with the soul. Its contents are as follows:

IV. 1. On the Essence of the Soul I.

IV. 2. On the Essence of the Soul II.

IV. 3. On Difficulties about the Soul I.

IV. 4. On Difficulties about the Soul II.
Porphyry

IV. 5. ε' Περὶ ψυχῆς ἀπορίων τρίτων ἡ περὶ δήσεως:
       αδ' ἡ ψυχῆ ἐπεὶ υπερβεβληθάτα ακέφαλη.

IV. 6. γ' Περὶ αἰσθήσεως καὶ μνήμης:
       αδ' ἡ ψυχῆ τὰς αἰσθήσεις αἰς τοπόσεις.

25 IV. 7. ζ' Περὶ ἀθανασίας ψυχῆς:
       αδ' ἡ ψυχῆ "τι δε τῶν ἀθανάτων ἐστων."

IV. 8. η' Περὶ τῆς εἰς τὰ σώματα καθόδου τῆς ψυχῆς:
       αδ' ἡ ψυχῆ τολάκια ἐγγερήμενοι.

IV. 9. θ' Εἰς α' πάσαι ψυχαὶ μια:
       αδ' ἡ ψυχῆ ἧν ὅπου ἐν ὑψι ψυχῆ ἐνδοῦν φορεῖν.

"Ἡ μὲν οὖν τετάρτη ἐνεάς τὰς περὶ ψυχῆς αὐτῆς ὑποθέσεις πάσαις. Ἡ δὲ πέμπτη ἔχει μὲν τὰς περὶ νοο, περιεχεῖ δὲ ἐκαστὸν τῶν νοο λογίων εν ται καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἐπέκεινα καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἐν ψυχῇ νοο καὶ περὶ τῶν θεων.' Εἴη δὲ τάδε:

V. 1. α' Περὶ τῶν τριῶν ἄρχων ὑπονομείων:
       αδ' ἡ ἄρχη "τι ποντέ ἔνα τλη πολιμοίον.

V. 2. β' Περὶ γνώσεως καὶ τάξεως τῶν μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον:
       αδ' ἡ ἄρχη "τι ἐν πάντῃ.

40 V. 3. γ' Περὶ τῶν γνωστικῶν ὑπονομολογεων καὶ τοῦ ἐπέκεινα:
       αδ' ἡ ἄρχη "δρα τι νοον ἐαντο ποιεῖτο διὰ ζώνα.

V. 4. δ' Πῶς ἀπὸ τοῦ πρῶτον τὸ μετὰ τὸ πρῶτον καὶ περὶ τοῦ ἐνδῶς:
       αδ' ἡ ἄρχη "τι το ἐπὶ μετὰ το πρῶτον, ἀνάγκη εἰς ἐκεῖνον εἴη.

So the Fourth Ennead contains all the treatises whose subject is the soul itself. The fifth includes those on intellect, and all books in which there is also reference to That Which is beyond Intellect and to the intellect in the soul, and to the Ideas. They are as follows:

V. 1. On the Three Primary Hypostases.

V. 2. On the Origin and Order of the Beings which came after the First.

V. 3. On the Knowing Hypostases and That Which is Beyond.

V. 4. How That which is after the First comes from the First, and on the One.

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IV. 5. On Difficulties about the Soul III, or On Vision.

IV. 6. On Sense-Perception and Memory.

IV. 7. On the Immortality of the Soul.

IV. 8. On the Descent of the Soul into Bodies.

IV. 9. If All Souls are One.
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V. 5. That the Intelligible are not outside the Intellect and on the Good.

V. 6. On the Fact that That Which is beyond Being does not think, and on What is the Primary and What the Secondary Thinking Principle.

V. 7. On whether there are Forms of Particulars.


V. 9. On Intellect, the Forms, and Being.

26. So we arranged the Fourth and Fifth Enneads to form one volume. The remaining, Sixth, Ennead we made into another volume, so that all of Plotinus's writings were distributed in three volumes, of which the first contains three Enneads, the second two, and the third one. The contents of the third volume, the Sixth Ennead, are these:

VI. 1. On the Kinds of Being I.

VI. 2. On the Kinds of Being II.

VI. 3. On the Kinds of Being III.
VI. 4. On the Presence of Being, One and the Same, Everywhere as a Whole I.

VI. 5. On the Presence of Being, One and the Same, Everywhere as a Whole II.

VI. 6. On Numbers.

VI. 7. How the Multitude of the Forms came into being and On the Good

VI. 8. On Free Will and the Will of the One.

VI. 9. On the Good or the One.

So we arranged the fifty-four books in this way in six Enneads; and we have included commentaries on some of them, irregularly, because friends pressed us to write on points they wanted cleared up for them. We also composed headings for all of them except On Beauty, because it was not available to us, following the chronological order in which the books were issued; and we have produced not only the headings for each book but also summaries of the arguments, which are numbered.
in the same way as the headings.\(^1\) Now we shall try to revise all the books and put in the punctuation and correct any verbal errors: anything else that may occur to us the work itself will make clear.

\(^1\) On the attempts of modern scholars to discover traces of the commentaries, headings, and summaries which Porphyry mentions here in the text of the Enneads see Schwyzer, art. cit., col. 405-409. The marginal numbers which appear in some MSS may be references to Porphyry's lost commentaries: cp. Henry, *Etats du Texte de Plotin*, pp. 312-332 and Henry-Schwyzer I, Preface, p. xxvii. The various "table of contents" which forms the second part of the Arabic *Theology of Aristotle* may be a translation of Porphyry's "headings" for the first 34 chapters of IV 4: cp. Henry-Schwyzer II, Preface pp. xxvii-xxviii. The English translation of these "headings" is printed under the text of IV 4, 1-34.
SVMMARIVM

Τάδε ἔνεστιν ἑνεάδος πρώτης Πλατάνου φιλοσοφών.

I. 1. a' Περὶ τοῦ τὶ τὸ ἡλίον καὶ τίς ὁ ἀνθρωπός.
I. 2. b' Περὶ ἀρετῶν.
I. 3. γ' Περὶ διαλεκτικῆς.
I. 4. δ' Περὶ εἰδαιμονίας.
I. 5. ε' Περὶ τοῦ εἶ τὸ εἰδαιμονεῖν ἐπίδοσιν χρόνῳ λαμβάνει.
I. 6. ε' Περὶ τοῦ καλοῦ.
I. 7. ξ' Περὶ τοῦ πρώτου ἀγαθοῦ καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἀγαθῶν.
I. 8. η' Περὶ τοῦ τίνα καὶ πόθεν τὰ κακά.
I. 9. θ' Περὶ ἐξαγωγῆς.
I. WHAT IS THE LIVING BEING, AND WHAT IS MAN?

Introductory Note

This treatise, though placed first by Porphyry in his edition, is the last but one (No. 53) in his chronological order, and was written by Plotinus shortly before his death (Life, ch. 6). Its purpose is to establish the impassibility of our higher soul or true self and its separateness from our animal nature, the compound of body and lower soul, which desires and fears, sins and suffers. This Plotinus does by a critical examination of Peripatetic and Stoic doctrine about the nature and functions of soul and its relationship to body, in which he adopts a great deal of Aristotle's teaching in the De Anima, but adapts it to his own views. He concludes by discussing the difficulties which arise for his view from Plato's teaching about the transmigration of souls and their judgement and punishment for sin after death.

Synopsis

What is it in us that feels and thinks—soul or body or a compound of both (ch. 1)? First of all what do we mean by soul? Is it a kind of Form? If so it will be impassible and transcend bodily life, giving to body and receiving nothing from it. How then is soul related to body? Our conclusion, after examining various views that have been put forward, is that our higher soul, our true self, is in fact entirely unaffected by the sensations and passions of bodily life; these belong to the compound of lower soul, a sort of emanation from the higher soul, and body; reason, on the other hand, is an activity of our true self.

WHAT IS THE LIVING BEING

(chs. 2-7). The higher realities, Intellect and God, the One or Good who is beyond Intellect, we possess as "ours" in a sense but yet transcending us (ch. 8). Error and sin belong to our lower nature, and so do the moral virtues which result from habit and training; true reasoning and the intellectual virtues belong to our true, higher self (chs. 9-10). After a brief consideration of children's consciousness and the consciousness of transmigrated human souls in animal bodies (ch. 11) we come to the serious problem of how to reconcile our view of the sinlessness of the true self with Plato's teaching about judgement and punishment after death; we conclude that it is the lower soul, the "image" of the higher soul, which sins and is punished and goes to Hades (ch. 12). This investigation, being a properly intellectual activity, has been carried out by our true self or higher soul, and in carrying it out it has moved with a motion which is not that of bodies but its own life (ch. 13).
1. Pleasures and sadnesses, fears and assurances, desires and aversions and pain—who are they? They either belong to the soul or the soul using a body or a third thing composed of both (and this can be understood in two ways, either as meaning the mixture or another different thing resulting from the mixture). The same applies to the results of these feelings, both acts and opinions. So we must investigate reasoning and opinion, to see whether they belong to the same as the feelings, or whether this is true of some reasonings and opinions, and something different of others. We must also consider intellectual acts and see how they take place and who or what they belong to, and observe what sort of thing it is that acts as overseer and carries out the investigation and comes to a decision about these matters. And, first of all, who or what does sensation belong to? That is where we ought to begin, as feelings are either a sort of sensations or do not occur without sensation.

2. First we must consider soul. Is soul one thing and essential soulness another? If this is so, soul will be a composite thing and there will be nothing accounting for the discussion than the passages (Republic 429C-D and 430A-B; Phaedo 83B) cited by Henry-Schwyzer in their apparatus fontium. (They also cite the Aristotelian passage.)

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1. The starting-point of the discussion seems to be a passage of Aristotle, De Anima A. 4. 406b 1 ff., where Aristotle raises the question whether the soul is really "moved" when it has these affections. It is possible also that Plotinus has in mind (as Aristotle most probably has) Plato's description at Laws X 897A of the motions of soul which are prior to and the cause of the motions of body: this seems more relevant to the present discussion than the passages (Republic 429C-D and 430A-B; Phaedo 83B) cited by Henry-Schwyzer in their apparatus fontium. (They also cite the Aristotelian passage.)
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αὐτῆς εἶναι τὰ πάθη τὰ τοιαῦτα, εἰ ἐπιτρέψῃ καὶ 5 οὕτως ὁ λόγος, καὶ ὅλος ἐξεις καὶ διαδέσεις ἱερὰς καὶ βελτίων. Ὡ, εἰ τοιαῦτα ἐστὶ φύσι καὶ τὸ φυσικὸ εἶναι, ἐθέλας τι ἢ ἐν ἐν ἐν ὅποιον ἀπάτης τῶν ἐνεργείων, ὃν ἐποικιῶν ἄλλα, ἐνεῖπε de συμφωνία ἐχει τὴν ἐνέργειαν ἐν ἐαυτῷ, ἤπιαν ἢ φύσιν ὁ λόγος. Οὕτω γὰρ καὶ τὸ ἀδάνατον ἀληθὲς λέγειν, εἰπερ δεὶ τὸ ἀδάνατον καὶ ἀδιάλεκτον ἀπαθῆς εἶναι, ἄλλω εἴπεν τως διδόν, αὐτὸ δὲ παρ' ἄλλου μηδὲν ἢ ὅποια παρὰ τῶν πρὸ αὐτοῦ ἔχει, ὃν μη ἁπάτης τοις κρείττοις ὑμῖν. Τί γὰρ ἂν καὶ σοφοίτας τοιούτον ἀδέκτον 10 ὁν πιστὸς τοῦ ἐνεῖπε; Ἐσπερίδει τῶν φοβείζεσθαι, δὲ δύναται παθεῖν. Ὑπερθερμανόμενον τῶν ὑδάτων γὰρ ὄμορον, οὐ δὲ τὸ φοβεῖτα μὴ παρήκ; Ἐπιστήμη τε, αἰ διὰ σωμάτων ἀποπληρώσει κενοφιλίαν καὶ πληρομένου, ἄλλου τοῦ πληρομένου καὶ κενοφιλο- 15 νοῦς ὅποες δὲ μένεις: Ἡ τὸ ὑόωσες ἀμίκτου. Πῶς δὲ ἐπεισάγωγος ταῦτα; Οὕτω γὰρ ἂν συνέβαινε ὑπὸ τὸ ἢ ἐστι ῥήτορ. Τὸ δὲ ἀληθεῖται ἐπὶ πόρων. Ἀνακείσθαι δὲ πῶς ἢ ἐπὶ τούτων; Αὐτοκείμενο γὰρ τὸ γε ἀπαίσι ἐν οὐσίᾳ, οἷον ἑτεῖν 20 μένον εἰ σύπα τῇ αὐτῇ. Ἡδονὴ δὲ προμε- νεύοντος τῶν, οὐδένου οὖσα ἀγαθὸς προσώπους,

1 Cf. Aristotle, Metaphysics H. 3. 1043 b. 3. ὑοῦ ἂν γὰρ καὶ ἐκ ταὐτῶν ἀνθρώπων δὲ καὶ ἄλλων ὅποι θείης, εἰ μὴ καὶ ὁ ἐκ τούτων λογικός ἐκεῖ γὰρ ἄλλων ἀνθρώπων σχηματιζόμενοι. "For soul' and 'to be soul' are the same, but 'to be man' and 'man' are not the same, unless even the bare soul is to be called man." (Ross). For Plotinus, on this point in opposition to Aris-

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strange in its admitting and possessing feelings of this kind (if the argument turns out to require this), and in general better and worse states and dispositions. If on the other hand soul and essential soul-ness are one and the same, soul will be a kind of Form, which will not admit of all these activities which it imparts to something else, but has an immanent connatural activity of its own, whatever the discussion reveals that activity to be. If this is so, we can really call it immortal, if the immortal and incorruptible must be impassive, giving something of itself somehow to another thing, but receiving nothing from anything else, except what it has from the principles prior to it, those higher principles from which it is not cut off. What could a thing of this kind fear, since it admits nothing at all from outside? Let that fear which is capable of being affected! Nor does it feel assurance. How can there be assurance for those who never encounter anything frightening? And how can there be desires, which are satisfied by the body when it is emptied and filled, since that which is emptied and filled is different from the soul? And how could it admit of mixture? Substantial being is unmixed. How could there be any sort of addition? If there was, it would be hastening to be no more what it is. Pain is far from it too; and how could it feel sad, and what about? For that which is essentially simple is sufficient for itself, inasmuch as it stays set in its own essential nature. And will it be pleased at any increase, when nothing, not even any good, can accrue to it? It is
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always what it is. Furthermore it will have no
sensations and reasoning and opinion will have no
connection with it; for sensation is the reception of
a form or of an affection of a body; and reasoning
and opinion are based on sensation. We must enquire
how it is with intelligence, whether we are going
to allow this to the soul; and also whether it
experiences pure pleasure when it is alone.

3. We must certainly too consider soul as being in
body (whether it does in fact exist before it or in it)
since it is from the combination of body and soul that
"the complete living creature takes its name." Now
if soul uses body as a tool it does not have to
admit the affections which come through the body;
craftsmen are not affected by the affections of their
tools. Perhaps one might suggest that it would
necessarily have sensation, if a necessary accompani¬
ment of using the tool is knowing by sensation the
ways in which it is affected from outside; for using
the eyes is just seeing. But there can be harm in see¬
ing, and it can bring sadness and pain and in general
anything that may happen to the whole body; and so
desire, when the soul seeks the service of its tool.
But how will the affections which come from body
manage to reach the soul? Body can give of its
own to another body, but how can body give to soul?
This amounts to saying that if one thing is affected,
som e must another different thing be. For insofar as
e is the user and the other what it uses, they are
two separate things. At any rate anyone who states
that the soul uses the body as a tool separates the
two. But what was their relationship before the
separation of soul by philosophy? There was a
mixture. But if there was a mixture, there was

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1This is Aristotlean; cp. De Animc. B. 12. 24a 18.
2The phrase is taken from Plato, Phaedritos 246C5: the
idea of the soul using the body as a tool comes from Alecibades
199C–E.
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either a sort of intermingling, or the soul was in some way "woven through"1 the body, or it was like a form not separated from the matter, or a form handling the matter as the steersman steers the ship, or one part of it was related in one way and another in another. I mean that one part is separate, the part which uses the body, and the other somehow mixed with body and on a level with that which it uses. In this case philosophy should turn this lower part towards the using part, and draw the using part away from that which it uses, insofar as the connection is not absolutely necessary, so that it may not always have even to use it.

4. Let us assume, then, that there is a mixture. But, if this is so, the worse element, the body, will be improved and the other element, the soul, will be made worse. The body will be improved by sharing in life, the soul made worse by sharing in death and unreason. How then can that which has its life reduced in any way whatever acquire thereby an additional faculty, that of sensation? The opposite is true; it is the body which receives life, and so the body which shares in sensation and the affections which come from sensation. So too, it will be the body that desires—for it is the body which is going to enjoy the objects of desire—and is afraid for itself—for it is going to miss its pleasures and be destroyed. And we must investigate the way in which this "mixture" takes place, and see if it is not really impossible, it is like talking about a line being mixed with white, one kind of thing with another kind of thing.

The idea of "being interwoven" does not imply that the things interwoven are affected in the same

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1So Plato describes the soul of the universe as "woven through" its body, Timaeus 36E2.

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16 ψευδήν διάπεταντικάνον μήτης πάσχει τά ἕκαστάν πάθη, ἀπεται καὶ τὸ φῶς, καὶ μάλιστα, εἰ οὖν, δι' ἄλλον ός διαιπελέχθαι: οὐ πάρα τούτα ἀλή πέλευτα τὰ σώματα πάθη, ὅτι διαιπέλχεται. Ἄλλα ὡς εἴδος εἰς ὅψη ἔσται εἰς τὸ σώματι. Πρῶτον μὲν ὡς χωριστόν εἴδος ἐσται, ἐπερ οὐσία, καὶ 20 μᾶλλον ἃν εἴη κατὰ τὸ χρώματον. Εἰ δὲ ὡς τὰ πελέει τὸ σχήμα τὸ ἐπὶ τῷ σεῖδήρω, καὶ τὸ συναμφότερον τὸ πέλεκες ποιήσει, ἀναμφότερον τὸ σώματος τὸ ὅντως ἐναχθερμένου, κατὰ τὸ σχήμα μέντοι, μᾶλλον ἃν τὸ σώματι διδομένη ὡς κανάν

25 πάθη, τὸ μέντοι τοιοῦτο, τῷ φυσικῷ, ὄργανικῷ, δυνάμει ζωῆς ἔχοντι. Καὶ γὰρ ἰδίον ὁμορρηγὶ τὴν ψυχὴν ὑφαίσθην λέγειν, ὡς καὶ ἐπιθυμεῖν καὶ λυπεῖθαι. ἀλλὰ τὸ ζυζον μᾶλλον.

5. Ἄλλα τὸ ζύζον ἢ τὸ σῶμα δέη λέγει τὸ τοιοῦτο, ἢ τὸ κοινόν, ἢ τὸ τρίτον εἰς ἀμφότερον γεγενήμενον. Ὅπως δὲ ἢ κατὰ ἢ ἀπαθὴ διὰ τὴν ψυχὴν ὑφαίσθην αὐτὴν αἰτία γεγενημένην ἢ ἄλλο τοιοῦτον, ἢ συμπάσχειν καὶ αὐτὴν καὶ ἡ ταύταν πάσχειν πάθημα πάσχει, ἢ ὑμείν

1 This comparison is taken from Aristotle, De Anima B. 1. 412b. 12.
2 These phrases are quotations from De Anima B. 1. 412a. 27-8. The reference to Aristotle which follows is to the key passage already quoted, De Anima A. 4. 406b. 12-13. Plotinus is here using Aristotle's doctrine of the soul as the immanent (and, except for the intellect, inseparable) form of the body as a starting-point from which to develop his own really very different doctrine of the relationship of soul and body.

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way: it is possible for the principle interwoven to be unaffected and for the soul to pass and repass through the body without being touched by its affections, just like light, especially if it is interwoven right through the whole; this sort of interweaving will not make it subject to the affections of the body. Will it then be in the body like form in matter? First of all, it will be like a separable form, assuming it to be a substantial reality, and so will correspond still more exactly to the conception of it as a "user." But if we assume it to be like the shape of an axe imposed on the iron 1 (in this case it is the compound of matter and form, the axe, which performs its functions, that is to say the iron shaped in this particular way, though it is in virtue of the shape that it does so) we shall attribute all the common affections rather to the body, but to a body "of a specific kind," "formed by nature," "adapted to the use of the soul," "having life potentially." 2 Aristotle says that it is absurd "to talk about the soul weaving," and it follows that it is also absurd to talk about it desiring or grieving; we should attribute these affections rather to the living being.

6. But we must define the living being as either the body of this special kind, or the community of body and soul, or another, third, thing, the product of both. 3 However that may be, the soul must either remain unaffected and only cause affections in something else or must be affected itself along with the body: and, if it is affected, it must either he
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subjected to the same affection or a similar one (as for instance, if the living being desires in one way, the desiring part of the soul may be active or affected in a different one). We will consider this special kind of body later. But in what way is the compound of body and soul, for instance, capable of grief? Is it that the body is disposed in this particular way, and its affection penetrates to sense-perception, and sense-perception ends in the soul? But this leaves it still obscure how sense-perception comes about. Or alternatively, does grief originate from an opinion, a judgement that there is some evil there for the person concerned himself or something belonging to him, and does this result in an unpleasant change in the body and the living being as a whole? But then it is not yet clear which the opinion belongs to, the soul or the compound. Besides, the opinion about someone's evil does not contain the feeling of grief. It is possible to have the opinion without being grieved at all in consequence, as it is possible not to be angry when we have the opinion that we have been slighted, and for our appetite not to be stirred when we have the opinion that a good is present. How then are affections common to body and soul? Is it because desire belongs to the desiring part of the soul and passion to the passionate part, and in general the movement out towards anything to the appetitive part? But then they are no longer common to body and soul but belong to soul alone. Or do they belong to the body too, because blood and bile must boil and the body be in

1 This idea of the emotions as judgements or opinions is Stoic (Chrysippus); cp. Stoiocorum Veterum Fragmenta III. 459.
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A certain state to stir appetite, as in the case of sexual passion? Let us grant anyhow that the appetite for the good is not an affection of both, but of the soul, and this is true of other affections too; a reasoned examination does not attribute them all to the joint entity. But when man has an appetite for sexual pleasures, it will be the man that desires, but in another way it will be the desiring part of the soul that desires. How will this come about? Will the man start the desire and the desiring part of soul follow on? But how could the man manage to desire at all if the desiring part was not moved? Perhaps the desiring part will start. But where will it start from, if the body is not previously disposed in the appropriate way?

6. But perhaps it is better to say that, in general, as a result of the presence of the powers of soul it is their possessors which act by them, and the powers themselves are unmoved and only impart the power to act to their possessors. But if this is so, when the living being is affected, the cause of its life, which gave itself to the compound, can remain unaffected, and the affections and activities belong to the possessor. But if this is so, life will belong altogether, not to the soul, but to the compound. Certainly the life of the compound will not be that of the soul: and the power of sense-perception will not perceive, but that which has the power. But if sense-perception is a movement through the body which ends in the soul, how will the soul not perceive? When the power of sense-perception is present the compound will perceive whatever it perceives by its presence. But if the power is not going to be moved, how will it still be the compound
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That perceives if neither soul nor soul-power are reckoned as included in it.

7. Let us say that it is the compound which perceives, and that the soul by its presence does not give itself qualified in a particular way either to the compound or to the other member of it, but makes, out of the qualified body and a sort of light which it gives of itself, the nature of the living creature, another different thing to which belong sense-perception and all other affections which are ascribed to the living body. But then, how is it we who perceive? It is because we are not separated from the living being so qualified, even if other things too, of more value than we are, enter into the composition of the whole essence of man, which is made up of many elements. And soul's power of sense-perception need not be perception of sense-objects, but rather it must be receptive of the impressions produced by sensation on the living being; these are already intelligible entities. So external sensation is the image of this perception of the soul, which is in its essence truer and is a contemplation of forms alone without being affected. From these forms, from which the soul alone receives its lordship over the living being, come reasonings, and opinions and acts of intuitive intelligence; and this precisely is where "we" are. That which comes before this is "ours" but "we," in our presidency over the living being, are what extends from this point upwards. But there will be no objection to calling the whole thing "living being"; the lower parts of it are something mixed, the part which begins on the level of thought is, I suppose, the true man; those lower parts are

1That is "below": sensation and emotion belong to the body-soul compound, the "living being"; the true self begins where thought begins.

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Plotinus is here quoting Republic IX 590A9 and 588C7. The "lion" in Plato symbolises the higher emotions, the "various beast" (a sort of many-headed dragon) the carnal lusts and desires. It is noteworthy that the difference in quality and value of these two lower parts of the soul, which is so important in the psychology of the Republic and Phaedrus, has little significance for Plotinus.

Plotinus is again quoting from Plato's description of the making of the world-soul in Timaeus 30A: in what

fellows he gives an interpretation of Plato's phrase in terms of his own doctrine of the lower soul and its powers as emanations of the higher soul, which "gives itself" to bodies by illuminating, forming, and vivifying them, remaining itself undiminished and unaffected.

Since man coincides with the rational soul, when we reason it is really we who reason because rational processes are activities of soul.

8. But how are we related to the Intellect? I mean by "Intellect" not that state of the soul, which is one of the things which derive from Intellect, but Intellect itself. We possess this too, as something that transcends us. We have it either as common to all or particular to ourselves, or both common and particular; common because it is without parts and one and everywhere the same, particular to ourselves because each has the whole of it in the primary part of his soul. So we also possess the forms in two ways, in our soul, in a manner of speaking unifolded and separated, in Intellect all together.

But how do we possess God? He rides mounted on the nature of Intellect and true reality—that is how we possess him; 2 "we" are third in order counting from God, being made, Plato says, "from the undivided," that which is above, "and from that which is divided in bodies"; 3 we must consider this part of soul as being divided in bodies in the sense that it gives itself to the magnitudes of bodies, in proportion to the size of each living being, since it gives itself to the whole universe, though the soul is one; or because it is pictured as being present to bodies since it shins into them and makes.
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living creatures, not of itself and body, but abiding itself and giving images of itself, like a face seen in many mirrors. The first image is the faculty of sensation in the joint entity, and after this comes everything which is called another form of soul, each in its turn proceeding from the other: the series ends in the powers of generation and growth, and, speaking generally, in the powers which make and perfect other things different from the soul which makes, while the making soul itself stays directed towards its product.

9. The nature of that higher soul of ours will be free from all responsibility for the evils that man does and suffers; these concern the living being, the joint entity, as has been said. But if opinion and reasoning belong to the soul, how is it free from sin? For opinion is a cheat and is the cause of much evil doing. Evil is done when we are mastered by what is worse in us—for we are many—by desire or passion or an evil image. What we call thinking falsities is a making of mind-pictures which has not waited for the judgement of the reasoning faculty—we have acted under the influence of our worse parts, just as in sensation the perception of the joint entity may see falsely before the reasoning faculty has passed judgment on it. The intellect is either in touch with the proceedings or it is not, and so sinless: but we ought rather to say that we are in touch with the intelligible in the intellect or we are not—with the intelligible in ourselves; for one can have it and not have it available.

So we have distinguished what belongs to the joint entity and what is proper to the soul in this way: what belongs to the joint entity is bodily or not

1 Cp Theaetetus 184D7 (from the comparison, which Plato afterwards rejects as unsatisfactory, of the mind to an aviary).
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD I. 1.

Without body, but what does not require body for its operation is proper to the soul. Reasoning when it passes judgment on the impressions produced by sensation is at the same time contemplating forms and contemplating them by a kind of sympathy—I mean the reasoning which really belongs to the true soul: for true reasoning is an operation of acts of the intelligence, and there is often a resemblance and community between what is outside and what is within. So in spite of everything the soul will be at peace, turned to itself and resting in itself. The changes and the clamour1 in us come, as we have said, from what is attached to us and from the affections of the joint entity, whatever precisely that is.

10. But if we are the soul, and we are affected in this way, then it would be the soul that is affected in this way, and again it will be the soul which does what we do. Yes, but we said that the joint entity is part of ourselves, especially when we have not yet been separated from body: for we say that we are affected by what affects our body. So "we" is used in two senses, either including the beast or referring to that which even in our present life transcends it. The beast is the body which has been given life. But the true man is different, clear of these affections; he has the virtues which belong to the sphere of intellect and have their seat actually in the separate soul, separate and separable even while it is still here below. (For when it withdraws altogether, the lower soul which is illumined by it goes away too in its train.) But the virtues which result not from thought but from habit and training2 belong to the joint entity, for the vices belong to this, since envy and jealousy and emotional sympathy are located

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1 For the "clamour" of the body cp. Phaedo 66D6 and Timaeus 43B6.
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kai ζηλον και έλεος. Φιλοι δέ τέκνοις; "Η α' μέν
15 τούτοις, οί δέ τού ένδον ανθρώπων.

11. Ποίδὼν δ' ἠστων ἐνεργεῖ μεν τά ἐκ τού
σώματος, ὁλόγα δ' ἐλειμέτει ἐκ τῶν ἄνω ἐς αὐτό.
'Ὅταν δ' ἀργῇ εἰς ἡμᾶς, ἐνεργεῖ πρὸς τό άνω: εἰς
10 ἡμᾶς δ' ἐνεργεῖ, ὅταν μέχρι τοῦ μέσου ἴκης. Τί
οὖν; Ὁμ ημέως καὶ πρὸ τοῦτον; Ἀλλ' αντίληψαι
δει γενέσθαι: οὐ γάρ, δοξα ἐχουμεν, τοῦτοις χρώμαθα
αι, ἀλλ' όταν τό μέσον τίζωμεν; ἡ πρὸς τά ἄνω ἡ
πρὸς τά ἐνερτά, ἡ δέ απὸ ἀπὸν ἀνθρώπων; ζέσοις
εἰς ἐνεργείαν ἄγομεν. Τὸ δ' θημά πώς τὸ ξένον
ἔχει; Ἡ ε' μὲν φυσικοί εἰν ἐν αὐτοῖς ἀνθρώπων,
10 ὅπερ λέγεται, ἀμαρτόνσαν, οὐ τῶν θανάτων γίνεται
τούτο, ὅπως χωρεῖπται, ἄλλ' πάμον αὐτοῖς, ἀλλ' η
συμπίεσθαι τῷ τῆς ψυχῆς εϊδωλον
μετά τοῦ άματος ἔχει; αὕτη δ' τοιάδε οὖν
ποιοδεν ψυχῆς εἶδωλον εἰς ἔχει, εἰ δέ μὴ ἀνθρώπων φυσικοί
15 εἶσθαι, εἰλὼνται ἐπὶ τῆς ὅλης τοῦ τοπιόντος ἄματον
γενομένων ἐστιν.

12. Ἀλλ' ε' αναμάρττοντος ἡ ψυχή, πώς α' δίκαι;
'Αλλ' γάρ ὁδός τοῦ λόγου ἀσυμβλέπει παντί λόγον,
ἀνθρώπους καὶ ἀμαρτάνοντας καὶ κατορθούντας καὶ
διδόναι δίκαια καὶ ἐν Άκιδος καὶ μετενεμομοίως.
6 Προεθέτον μέν οὖν ὅτι τὰς βουλέταις λόγων 
τάχα
8 ο' ἔν τις ξεφρον καὶ οὐ δή μή μαγευθείται. 'Ο μὲν
γὰρ τό ἀναμάρττοντος δίδοναι τῇ ψυχῇ λόγον ἐν

1 In Republic 589A7 the "man within" is the reason, who should rule the whole man by dominating the "many-headed beast" with the help of the "lion."

2 The doctrine of the transmigration of human souls into animal bodies is accepted by Plotinus on the authority of Plato; it does not however play any important part in his thought about the nature and destiny of man.

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there. But which do our loves belong to? Some to the jointed entity, some to the man within.¹

11. While we are children the powers of the compound are active, and only a few gleams come to it from the higher principles. But when these are inactive as regards us their activity is directed upwards: it is directed towards us when they reach the middle region. But then does not the "we" include what comes before the middle? Yes, but there must be a conscious apprehension of it. We do not always use all that we have, but only when we direct our middle part towards the higher principles or their opposites, or in whatever we are engaged in bringing from potency or state to act.

And how does the living thing include brute beasts? If as it is said² there are sinful human souls in them, the separable part of the soul does not come to belong to the beasts but is there without being there for them; their consciousness includes the image of soul and the body: a beast is then a qualified body made, as we may say, by an image of soul. But if a human soul has not entered the beast it becomes a living being of such and such a kind by an illumination from the universal soul.

12. But if the soul is sinless, how is it judged? This line of thought disagrees with all the arguments which maintain that the soul sins and acts rightly and undergoes punishment, punishment in Hades, and passes from body to body. We can accept whichever view we like; and perhaps we can find a point of view where they do not conflict. The argument which concludes that the soul is sinless
Here Plotinus is quoting Republic X 611D7-612A5, a passage which expresses extremely clearly that sharp dualism of rational soul and bodily nature which repeatedly appears in Plato’s thought about the soul (though it is not the whole of it) and from which Plotinus has developed his own doctrine.

assumes that it is a single completely simple thing and identifies soul and essential soulness; that which concludes that it sins interweaves with it and adds to it another form of soul which is affected in this dreadful way: so the soul itself becomes compound, the product of all its elements, and is affected as a whole, and it is the compound which sins, and it is this which for Plato is punished, not that other single and simple soul. This is why he says, “We have seen the soul like the people who see the sea-god Glaucus.” But, he says, if anyone wants to see its real nature, they must “knock off its encrustations” and “look at its philosophy,” 1 and see “with what principles it is in contact,” and “by kinship with what realities it is what it is.” So there is another life of soul, and other activities, and that which is punished is different. The ascent and the separation is not only from this body but from all that has been added. The addition takes place in the process of coming-to-be; or rather coming-to-be belongs altogether to the other form of soul. We have explained how the process of coming-to-be takes place; it results from the descent of the soul, when something else comes to be from it which comes down in the soul’s inclination. Does it then abandon its image? And how is this inclination not a sin? If the inclination is an illumination directed to what is below it is not a sin, just as casting a shadow is not a sin; what is illuminated is responsible, for if it did not exist the soul would have nowhere to illuminate. The soul is said to go down or incline in the sense that the thing which receives light from it lives with the help of Aristotelian and Stoic ideas.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD I. 1.

what is the living being

It abandons its image if there is nothing at hand to receive it; and it abandons it not in the sense that it is cut off but in that it no longer exists: and the image no longer exists when the whole soul is looking to the intelligible world. The poet seems to be separating the image with regard to Heracles when he says that his shade is in Hades, but he himself among the gods. He was bound to keep to both stories, that he is in Hades and that he dwells among the gods, so he divided him. But perhaps this is the most plausible explanation of the story: because Heracles had this active virtue and in view of his noble character was deemed worthy to be called a god—because he was an active and not a contemplative person (in which case he would have been altogether in that intelligible world), he is above, but there is also still a part of him below.

13. What is it that has carried out this investigation? Is it "we" or the soul? It is "we," but by the soul. And what do we mean by "by the soul"? Did "we" investigate by having soul? No, but in so far as we are soul. Will soul move then? Yes, we must allow it this sort of movement, which is not a movement of bodies but its own life. And intellectual activity is curs in the sense that the soul is intellectual and intellectual activity is its higher life, both when the soul operates intellectually and when intellect acts upon us. For intellect too is a part of ourselves and to it we ascend.

1The reference is to Odyssey 11. 601 2: the passage (as Plotinus in the next sentence seems to recognize) is an attempt to combine two traditions, one which made Heracles a mortal hero and the other which made him that most exceptional kind of being in the world of genuine Greek traditional religion, a man who had become a god.

2Here Plotinus returns to the question raised by Aristotle in the De Anima with which he started (cp. the note on ch. 1 of this treatise), but the answer he gives here is Platonic, not Aristotelian; for Aristotle thought not a movement, as it is for Plato.
I. 2. ON VIRTUES

Introductory Note

This treatise is No. 19 in Porphyry's chronological order; that is, it belongs to the group of twenty-one treatises which Plotinus had already written by his 59th year, when Porphyry joined him. It is a commentary on the passage from the *Theaetetus* (176A) cited at the beginning of the first chapter, and its object is to determine in what precise sense the virtues can be said to make us godlike. In pursuing this enquiry Plotinus, as often, makes great use of ideas taken from Aristotle, that the gods themselves cannot be said to possess moral virtue (cp. *Nicomachean Ethics* X. 8. 1178b) and that there are two kinds of virtue, intellectual and moral (cp. *Nicomachean Ethics* VI. 2. 1139a ff.) — a doctrine which seems to underlie and be the origin of Plotinus' own rather different doctrine of higher and lower virtue, in which there are also some Stoic elements. In chs. 1-3 Plotinus develops a very interesting and important doctrine of analogy.

Synopsis

We escape from the evils here below by becoming godlike by means of virtue. But what virtue makes us like? — perhaps the lowest of the three great divine principles, Universal Soul. But does this really possess the cardinal virtues? It does not have civic or moral virtues, but these as well as the higher virtues must play their part in making us godlike (ch. 1). The divinities possess, not virtues as we have them, but the principles from which our virtues derive, and this is sufficient for us to speak of "likeness", which means something different when it is applied to the relationship of a derived thing to its origin from what it means when applied to the relationship of two derived things on the same level (chs. 1-3). The distinction between "civic" and "purifying" virtues (ch. 3). What precisely we mean by "purification" (ch. 4). Its effects on our higher and lower self (ch. 5). What the virtues are in the highest stage of our development, when we are completely free of our lower self, and no longer good men but gods (chs. 6-7).
I. 2. (19) ΠΕΡΙ ΑΡΕΤΩΝ

1. Ἐπειδὴ τὰ κακὰ ἐσταθα καὶ τόν τόπον περιτολεῖ ἐξ ἀνάγκης, βούλεται δὲ η ὑπόχη φαγεὶν τὰ κακὰ, θεωτέον ἐπετεύθην. Τις οὖν ἡ φαγή; θεώ, φησιν, ἀμοιβάθρῃ. Τούτο 5 δὲ, εἰ διόκαιοι καὶ δοκοῦμεν μετά φρονήσεως γενομέθα καὶ έλος ἐν ἀρετῇ. Εἰ οὖν ἀρετή ὀμοσομελεί, ὃρα ἀρετήν ἔχουν; Καὶ διὰ καὶ τίνι θεῷ; 'Αρ', οὖν τὰ μάλλον δικοῦντες ταῦτα ἔχειν καὶ δὴ τῇ τοῦ κόσμου ὑπόχη καὶ τῇ ἐν τοῖς ἡγουμένοις ὥσπερ φρονήσεις θυμιαστῇ ὑπάρχῃ; Καὶ 10 γὰρ, εὐλογοῦν ἐνταῦθα ἄντος τοῦτο ὁμοιόουσι δι' ἥν πρῶτον μὲν ἀμφισβητήσαμον, εἰ καὶ τοῖς ὑπάρχονται πάσαι ὄνομα σώματον ἄνθρωπον εἶναι, ὃς μέτα τις δεινὸν ὅτι οὐδὲν γὰρ ἐξωθήνει μήτε προχθὴν ἂν ὡς καὶ ἐπιθυμίᾳ ἢ γένους μὴ παρόντος, οὐκ ἔχει ἐκείνη. Εἰ δὲ καὶ αὐτὸς ἐν ἀρέτας ἐκεῖνοι εἴη; 'Αρ', οὖν εὐλογοῦν τὰς γε πολιτικὰς λεγομένας ἐρετὰς ἔχειν, φρονήσεις μὲν

1. Since it is here that evils are, and "they must necessarily haunt this region," and the soul wants to escape from evils, we must escape from here. What, then, is this escape? "Being made like god," Plato says. And we become godlike "if we become righteous and holy with the help of wisdom," and are altogether in virtue.1 If then it is virtue which makes us like, it presumably makes us like a being possessing virtue. Then what god would that be? Would it be the one that appears to be particularly characterised by the possession of virtue, that is, the soul of the universe and its ruling principle, in which there is a wonderful wisdom? It is reasonable to suppose that we should become like this principle, as we are here in its universe.

But, first of all, it is debatable whether this principle has all the virtues; whether, for instance, it is self-controlled and brave when it has nothing to frighten it, for there is nothing outside the universe, and nothing attractive can come to it which it has not already got, and produce a desire to have or get it.2 But if this principle is in a state of aspiration towards the intelligible realities to which our aspirations too are directed, it is clear that our good order and our virtues also come from the intelligible. Has the intelligible, then, virtues? It is at any rate improbable that it has the virtues called "civic,"

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1 The text which Plotinus is quoting here is Plato, Theaetetus 170a-b. He comments on it again at I. 3. 7, where he is discussing the necessary existence of evil in this lower world.
This description of the "civic" virtues is based on the discussion of the virtues in the ideal state in Plato, Republic IV 427E-434D.
make that principle virtue; but we consider it greater than virtue. But if that in which the soul participates was the same as the source from which it comes, it would be right to speak in this way; but in fact the two are distinct. The perceptible house is not the same thing as the intelligible house, though it is made in its likeness; the perceptible house participates in arrangement and order, but There, in its formative principle, there is no arrangement or order or proportion. So then, if we participate in order and arrangement and harmony which come from There, and these constitute virtue here, and if the principles There have no need of harmony or order or arrangement, they will have no need of virtue either, and we shall all the same be made like them by the presence of virtue. This is enough to show that it is not necessary for virtue to exist There because we are made like the principles There by virtue. But we must make our argument persuasive, and not be content to force agreement.

2. First then we must consider the virtues by which we assert that we are made like, in order that we may discover this one and the same reality which when we possess it as an imitation is virtue, but There, where it exists as an archetype, is not virtue. We should note that there are two kinds of likeness; one requires that there should be something the same in the things which are alike; this applies to things which derive their likeness equally from the same principle. But in the case of two things of which one is like the other, but the other is primary, not reciprocally related to the thing in its likeness and not said to be like it, likeness must be understood in a different sense; we must not require the
This doctrine of the two kinds of likeness may well have arisen, as Brehier suggests, as an answer to the objection of Parmenides to the view that the Forms are ἐπαργέλα (patterns) (Plato, Parmenides 132D-133A).

1. 'All' ἐπει τὴν ἐμοίωσιν ἄλλην ὑποφαίνει ὡς τῆς μείζονος ἀρέτης ὁδοὺς, περὶ ἐκείνης λεκτίουν ἐκ ὧν καὶ σαφέστερον μέλη σαλλο καὶ τῆς πολιτείας ὅως, καὶ ἄρα ἢ μείζων κατὰ τὴν ὁδοῦ, καὶ ὅλους, ὅτι ἔστι παρὰ τὴν πολιτικὴν.

2. Soul is of course a god for Plotinus, though of the lowest rank; what we are not to believe is that it is the whole, or the most important part of divinity.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD I. 2.

6 repa. Aeycov Sr/TlXaratv 77)v OfXOLWOLV rjjv TpOS TOP 9*6 V <f)vywv TCCV €VTtvfifP ftV(ll, Kdi
7 TpOS apernlg rctlg 6v TroXireiq. ov to clttXcos 8i8ovs r kci aXXa npocnficls ttoXitikols kci aXXayov Kafidpoeis Xcycjv anrio cls SfjXos re coti Sirras
10 TiOtls Kal TTjV OfXOLCOOLV OV KCLTO. TTjV 7 ri6e is. Titos* ovv X4yop,cp rauras rcaOdpocis *ai T<l)S KaOapdivTes /xcAtara ooPioypvOa; *H em-iSfj KO.KTJ p€V ifJTlV 7) ^X) OVLL7Te(f>Vpp€VV Tttl otufXdTi Kdi Cfionddijs yivopevr) dvrep kcl trarra ovvdo^d^ovad, eHrj dv a yafirj Kdi dp€77)v eyovod,
15 ei mhte synodzalai, alla monh energhi—opeq esti noev te kai phroneiv—mhte omopadhs eih—opeq esti safroneyiv—mhte bhoioi ophistemenvi tou sarmatoiv—opeq estin enoiietesiva—hgyioi de logos kai noic, ta de mu' osteineo dikaiosnyn d' an eih toito. Tn de taiautn diathen tis psychhs
18 kai* ounu te kai apahth ouvou estin, eti tis omopadhs logoi proes thein, ouk ou amaprali katharon gar kai to theon kai en ebreia theia, os to miroousen exin frapan. Ti ouv kkeineo ouvou deiketai; H oude diaketai, phsyhs de e diathes. Noei te e phsyh allwv—tou di 25 ekpei to mev etepios, to de oude olvns. Paliw ayn

ON VIRTUES

Plato, when he speaks of "likeness" as a "flight to God" from existence here below, and does not call the virtues which come into play in civic life just "virtues," but adds the qualification "civic," and elsewhere calls all the virtues "purifications," makes clear that he postulates two kinds of virtues and does not regard the civic ones as producing likeness. What then do we mean when we call these other virtues "purifications," and how are we made really like by being purified? Since the soul is evil when it is thoroughly mixed with the body and shares its experiences and has all the same opinions, it will be good and possess virtue when it no longer has the same opinions but acts alone—this is intelligence and wisdom—and does not share the body’s experiences—this is self-control—and is not afraid of departing from the body—this is courage—and is ruled by reason and intellect, without opposition—and this is justice. One would not be wrong in calling this state of the soul likeness to God, in which its activity is intellectual, and it is free in this way from bodily affections. For the Divine too is pure, and its activity is of such a kind that that which imitates it has wisdom. Well then, why is the Divine itself not in this state? It has no states at all; states belong to the soul. The soul’s intellectual activity is different: but of the realities There one thinks differently, and the other does not think at all. Another question than: is "intellectual activity" just a common term covering two different things?

1 The reference here is to the passage of the Theaetetus quoted at the beginning of the first chapter.

2 Plato uses the epithet “civic” of virtues at Republic IV, 430C, but without any implication of the sort of distinction made here. Virtues are called “purifications” in the Phaedo, 69b-C.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD 1. 2.

ON VIRTUES

Not at all. It is used primarily of the Divine, and secondarily of that which derives from it. As the spoken word is an imitation of that in the soul, so the word in the soul is an imitation of that in something else: as the uttered word, then, is broken up into parts as compared with that in the soul, so is that in the soul as compared with that before it, which it interprets. And virtue belongs to the soul, but not to Intellect or That which is beyond it.

4. We must investigate whether purification is the same thing as this kind of virtue, or whether purification comes first and virtue follows, and whether virtue consists in the process of being purified or the achieved state of purification. The virtue in the process of purification is less perfect than that in the achieved state, for the achieved state of purification is already a sort of perfection. But being completely purified is a stripping of everything alien, and the good is different from that. If goodness existed before the impurity, purification is enough; but even so, though the purification will be enough, the good will be what is left after purification, not the purification itself. And we must enquire what that which is left is; perhaps the nature which is left was never really the good; for if it was it would not have come into evil. Should we call it something like the good? Yes, but not a nature capable of remaining in the real good, for it has a natural tendency in both directions. So its good will be fellowship with that which is akin to it, and its evil fellowship with its opposites. Then it must attain to this fellowship after being purified; and it will do so by a conversion. Does it then turn itself after the purification? Rather, after the purification it is already turned.
What the soul sees, the realities which become consciously present to and active in it after its conversion, are the beings of the realm of Intellect, the Forms; they were continually present to it, but it was not conscious of them when it was unpurified and unconverted.

5. Is this, then, its virtue? It is rather that which results for it from the conversion. And what is this? A sight and the impression of what is seen, implanted and working in it, like the relationship between sight and its object. But did it not have the realities which it sees? Does it not recollect them? It had them, but not active, lying apart and unilluminated; if they are to be illumined and it is to know that they are present in it, it must thrust towards that which gives it light. It did not have the realities themselves but impressions of them; so it must bring the impressions into accord with the true realities of which they are impressions. Perhaps, too, this, they say, is how it is; intellect is not alien and is particularly not alien when the soul looks towards it; otherwise it is alien even when it is present. The same applies to the different branches of knowledge; if we do not act by them at all, they do not really belong to us.

5. But we must state the extent of the purification; in this way it will become clear what god we are made like to and identified with. The question is substantially this; how does the purification deal with passion and desire and all the rest, pain and its kindred, and how far is separation from the body possible? We might say that the soul draws together to itself in a sort of place of its own away from the body, and is wholly unaffected, and only makes itself aware of pleasures when it has to, using them as remedies and reliefs to prevent its activity being impeded; it gets rid of pains or if it cannot, bears them quietly and makes them less by not suffering....
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD I. 2.

πράως φέρουσαν καὶ ἔλαττοις τεθίσαν τῷ μή
συμπάσχειν· τὸν δὲ θυμὸν ὡσον οὖν τῇ ἀφαιρέσιν
καὶ, εἰ δυνατόν, σινη, εἰ δὲ μὴ, μὴ γενών αὐτὴν
αὐνογιζομένην, ἀλλ' ἄλλοι εἶναι τὸ ἀπροάρστον,

15 τὸ δὲ ἀπροάρστον ὅλγον εἶναι καὶ ἀσθενεῖ· τὸν
dὲ φόβον πάντως περὶ ὁυδὲνς γὰρ φοβήσται—
tὸ δὲ ἀπροάρστον καὶ ἐναίθα—πλῆν γ' ἐν
νουθετήσει. Ἐπιθυμίαν δὲ· Ὑπὶ μὲν μηδὲνος
φαθεῖν, δηλοῦν· σίτων δὲ καὶ ποτῶν πρὸς ἄναισι
σικτῆ εἶναι· οὕδε τῶν ἀφροδίσιων δὲ· εἰ δ' ἀρα,

20 φυσικῶν, οἶμαι, καὶ οὕδε τὸ ἀπροάρστον ἔχουσιν·
eἰ δ' ἀρα, ὅσον μετὰ φαντασίας προτυπῶν καὶ
ταῖτης. "Οἶμοι δὲ αὕτη μὲν πάντων τούτων
καθαρά ἐσται καὶ τὸ ἔλογον δὲ βουληθῆσαι καὶ
αὐτὸ καθαρὸν ποιήσει· ὅταν μὲθυ πλήθεσθαι· εἰ
δ' ἀρα, μὴ σφόδρα, ἀλλ' ἄλλος τάς πάλης αὐτοῦ

25 εἶναι καὶ κάθος λειψάνους ἐν γεγονήσει. ὡσπερ
εἰ τῆς σοφοῦ γεγονήσεως ἐπολαμβάνης τῆς τοῦ σοφοῦ
tεκνικάς ἡ δύναμις γεγονήσεως ἡ αἰθομένη, ὁς
μηδὲν τοιμὰν ποιεῖν δὲν ὁ ἀγαθὸς οὐ ἔστηκεν. Ὁδοὺς
ἔστησεν μάχη· ἀρχή γάρ παρον ὁ λόγος, ὁν τὸ
χείρον αἰσθάνεται, ὡστε καὶ αὐτὸ τὸ χείρον

30 διασχέρασαι, εἰσὶ τὸ ἔλογον κινήτη, δι' αὐτῷ
ἡ ἡσύχιαν ἡγε παράνοιας τοῦ διστούν, καὶ ἀσθενεῖν αὐτοῦ
ἐπιμηχανέα.

6. 'Εστι μὲν οὖν οὐδὲν τῶν τινῶν ἀμαρτίας,
ἀλλὰ κατάρθωσις ἅθανάσιως· ἀλλ' ἡ σπουδὴ οὖν

ON VIRTUES

ing with the body. It gets rid of passion as completely as possible, altogether if it can, but if it cannot, at least it does not share its emotional excitement; the involuntary impulse belongs to something else, and is small and weak as well. It does away with fear altogether, for it has nothing to be afraid of—though involuntary impulse comes in here too—except, that is, where fear has a corrective function. What about desire? It will obviously not desire anything bad; it will not itself have the desire of food and drink for the relief of the body, and certainly not of sexual pleasures either. If it does have any of these desires they will, I think, be natural ones with no element of involuntary impulse in them; or if it does have other kinds, only as far as it is in the imagination, which is also prone to these.

The soul will be pure in all these ways and will want to make the irrational part, too, pure, so that this part may not be disturbed; or, if it is, not very much; its shocks will only be slight ones, easily allayed by the neighbourhood of the soul: just as a man living next door to a sage would profit by the sage's neighbourhood, either by becoming like him or by regarding him with such respect as not to dare to do anything of which the good man would not approve. So there will be no conflict: the presence of reason will be enough; the worse part will so respect it that even this worse part itself will be upset if there is any movement at all, because it did not keep quiet in the presence of its master, and will rebuke its own weakness.

6. There is no sin in anything of this sort for a man, but only right action. Our concern, though, is not to
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD I. 2.

The allusion is to the procession of the gods in Plutarch's Phaedrus 240E ff. In Plato those who follow the first god, Zeus the leader of the procession, are the philosophical souls (200B3, 202E1), but Plotinus is probably using Plato's language to express his own thought and means by the First his own First Principle, the Good, and by the gods who follow, the divinities of the realm of Intellect.

ON VIRTUES

be out of sin, but to be god. If, then, there is still any element of involuntary impulse of this sort, a man in this state will be a god or spirit who is double, or rather who has with him someone else who possesses a different kind of virtue: if there is nothing, he will be simply god, and one of those gods who follow the First. For he himself is the god who came There, and his own real nature, if he becomes what he was when he came, is There. When he came here he took up his dwelling with someone else, whom he will make like himself to the best of the powers of his real nature, so that if possible this someone else will be free from disturbance or will do nothing of which his master does not approve. What, then, is each particular virtue when a man is in this state? Wisdom, theoretical and practical, consists in the contemplation of that which intellect contains; but intellect has it by immediate contact. There are two kinds of wisdom, one in intellect, one in soul. That which is There [in intellect] is not virtue, that in the soul is virtue. What is it, then, There? The act of the self, what it really is, virtue is what comes There and exists here in another. For neither absolute justice nor any other moral absolute is virtue, but a kind of exemplar; virtue is what is derived from it in the soul. Virtue is someone's virtue; but the exemplar of each particular virtue in the intellect belongs to itself, not to someone else.

If justice is "minding one's own business" does that mean that it always requires a plurality of parts for its existence? There is one kind of justice which exists in a plurality, when the parts which it orders are many, and another which is solely and entirely
Plotinus: Ennead 1. 2.

ON VIRTUES

Plotinus is here trying to fit Plato’s definition of justice as “minding one’s own business” (from the passage in Republic IV referred to in the note on ch. 1) into his own scheme of higher and lower virtues by means of his principle that the order and pattern in a lower multiplicity is always the expression of a higher unity.

The doctrine that the virtues imply one another reciprocally is Stoic. Cf. Stoicorum Veterum Fragmenta III. 296 and 299. Plotinus in this treatise, as Bréhier points out in his introduction, reconciles, by means of his doctrine of

higher and lower virtues, the Stoic view that the virtue of the sage is identical with divine virtue, one and indivisible, with Aristotle’s view that the virtues are specifically human excellences, not found in the divine, which is above virtue as the beast is below it (ep. Nicomachean Ethics VII 1. 1146a 25-7).

1 Plotinus is here trying to fit Plato’s definition of justice as “minding one’s own business” even if it is the business of a unity. True absolute justice is the disposition of a unity to itself, a unity in which there are not different parts. So the higher justice in the soul is its activity towards intellect, its self-control is its inward turning to intellect, its courage is its freedom from affections, according to the likeness of that to which it looks which is free from affections by nature: this freedom from affections in the soul comes from virtue, to prevent its sharing in the afflictions of its inferior companion.

7. These virtues in the soul, too, imply one another reciprocally, in the same way as the exemplars (so to call them) There in intellect which are prior to virtue. For intuitive thought There is knowledge and wisdom, self-concentration is self control, its own proper activity is “minding its own business”; its equivalent to courage is immateriality and abiding pure by itself. In the soul, sight directed towards intellect is wisdom, theoretical and practical; these are virtues belonging to soul; for it is not itself they, as is the case There, and the others follow in the same way. And if all virtues are purifications, in the sense that they are the result of a completed process of purification, that process must produce them all, otherwise, if they are not all present, no single one of them will be perfect. Whoever has the greater virtues...
must necessarily have the lesser ones potentially, but it is not necessary for the possessor of the lesser virtues to have the greater ones. Here, then, we have described the life of the good man in its principal features.

The question whether the possessor of the greater virtues has the lesser ones in act or in some other way must be considered in relation to each individual virtue. Take, for example, practical wisdom. If other principles are in use, how is it still there, even inactive? And if one kind of virtue naturally permits so much, but the other a different amount, and one kind of self-control measures and limits, the other totally abolishes? The same applies to the other virtues, once the question of practical wisdom has been raised. Perhaps the possessor of the virtues will know them, and how much he can get from them, and will act according to some of them as circumstances require. But when he reaches higher principles and different measures he will act according to these. For instance, he will not make self-control consist in that former observance of measure and limit, but will altogether separate himself, as far as possible, from his lower nature and will not live the life of the good man which civic virtue requires. He will leave that behind, and choose another, the life of the gods; for it is to them, not to good men, that we are to be made like. Likeness to good men is the likeness of two pictures of the same subject to each other; but likeness to the gods is likeness to the model, a being of a different kind to ourselves.
ON DIALECTIC

Introductory Note

This treatise is No. 20 in Porphyry's chronological order; it was probably written about the same time as the preceding treatise On Virtues (No. 19) and is closely connected with it. It was established in the former treatise that our object is to become godlike, and that this is to be attained by purifying the soul by separating it from the body and ascending in spirit to the intelligible world. On Dialectic, as its first words show, is intended to indicate the way of intellectual purification and ascent which we must follow. The first three chapters are an admirable summary of Plato's account of the beginning of the ascent in the Phaedrus and the Symposium, with two significant (all the more so for being unconscious) alterations: the first is that in Plato θεός, μουσικός and φιλόσοφος (Phaedrus 218D) are three different descriptions of the same kind of person, but in Plotinus they are three distinct people: the second is that μουσικός in Plato is used, as always, in the wide classical sense of "cultivated person", one versed in the arts of the Muse; but in Plotinus (as sometimes in Aristotle) it means what we mean by "musician" (in the sense of "music-lover", not specifically composer or performer). The second part of the treatise gives an exposition of Platonic dialectic based on the Republic, Phaedrus and Sophist, asserts its superiority to Aristotelian and Stoic logic, and sketches the relationship to it of natural and moral philosophy.

Synopsis

What is our way up to the Good, and who is best fitted to start on it? The people best qualified are those of whom Plato speaks, the philosopher, the musician, and the lover. The two stages of the journey, from the sensible world, and in that higher world up to its top (ch. 1). Characteristics of the musician (ch. 1), of the lover (ch. 2) and the philosopher (ch. 3). Description of Platonic dialectic (ch. 4): it is the valuable part of philosophy, concerned with realities (the Forms) and not with words like logic (ch. 5). The dependence on it of natural and moral philosophy and its relationship to moral virtue (ch. 6).
I. 3. ON DIALECTIC

1. What art is there, what method or practice, which will take us up there where we must go? Where that is, that it is to the Good, the First Principle, we can take as agreed and established by many demonstrations; and the demonstrations themselves were a kind of leading up on our way. But what sort of person should the man be who is to be led on this upward path? Surely one who has seen all or, as Plato says, 'who has seen most things, and in the first birth enters into a human child who is going to be a philosopher, a musician or a lover.' The philosopher goes the upward way by nature, the musician and the lover must be led by it. What then is the method of guidance? Is it one and the same for all these, or is there a different one for each? There are two stages of the journey for all, one when they are going up and one when they have arrived above. The first leads from the regions below, the second is for those who are already in the intelligible realm and have gained their footing there, but must still travel till they reach the furthest point of the region; that is the "end of the journey," when you reach the top of the intelligible. But that can wait. Let us first of all try to speak about the ascent.

2 From the description of dialectic in Republic VII (532E3). The "end of the journey" is the vision of the Good.
First of all we must distinguish the characteristics of these men: we will begin by describing the nature of the musician. We must consider him as easily moved and excited by beauty, but not quite capable of being moved by absolute beauty; he is however quick to respond to its images when he comes upon them, and just as nervous people react readily to noises, so does he to articulate sounds and the beauty in them; and he always avoids what is inharmonious and not a unity in songs and verses and seeks eagerly after what is rhythmical and shapely. So in leading him on, these sounds and rhythms and forms perceived by the senses must be the starting-point. He must be led and taught to make abstraction of the material element in them and come to the principles from which their proportions and ordering forces derive and to the beauty which is in these principles, and learn that this was what excited him, the intelligible harmony and the beauty in it, and beauty universal, not just some particular beauty, and he must have the doctrines of philosophy implanted in him; by these he must be brought to firm confidence in what he possesses without knowing it. We shall explain later what these doctrines are.

2. The lover (into whom the musician may turn, and then either stay at that stage or go on farther) has a kind of memory of beauty. But he cannot grasp it in its separateness, but he is overwhelmingly amazed and excited by visible beauties. So he must be taught not to cling round one body and be excited by that, but must be led by the course of reasoning to consider all bodies and shown the beauty that is the same in all of them, and that it is something
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other than the bodies and must be said to come from elsewhere, and that it is better manifested in other things, by showing him, for instance, the beauty of ways of life and laws—this will accustom him to loveliness in things which are not bodies and that there is beauty in arts and sciences and virtues. Then all these beauties must be reduced to unity, and he must be shown their origin. But from virtues he can at once ascend to intellect, to being; and there he must go the higher way.

3. But the philosopher—he is the one who is by nature ready to respond and "winged." He may say, and in no need of separation like the others. He has begun to move to the higher world, and is only at a loss for someone to show him the way. So he must be shown and set free, with his own good will, he who has long been free by nature. He must be given mathematical studies to train him in philosophical thought and accustom him to firm confidence in the existence of the immaterial—he will take to them easily, being naturally disposed to learning; he is by nature virtuous, and must be brought to perfect his virtues, and after his mathematical studies instructed in dialectic, and made a complete dialectician.

4. What then is dialectic, which the former kinds of men as well as philosophers must be given? It is the science which can speak about everything in a reasoned and orderly way, and say what it is and how it differs from other things and what it has in common with those among which it is and

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1 This is the ascent of the mind to the vision of Absolute Beauty in the *Symposium* 21CA ff.

2 The perfect soul is winged in the *Phaedrus* myth (246C1).

3 The description of dialectic which follows is entirely in Platonic terms, and there seems no need to assume any Stoic influence, as Brehier does. The principal passages from Plato which Plotinus is using are the descriptions of dialectic in *Republic* 501C—535A and *Sophist* 253D—254D (with the long discussion which follows), and of the method of division in *Phaedrus* 265D—266A.
The symbolic place of the Forms in Phaedrus 248B6, where the soul finds its true food.

Plotinus speaks of logic here and in ch. 5 in very general terms, which apply both to Aristotelian and Stoic logic. The essential differences for him between logic and dialectic is that logic deals with words and sentences and their relationships, but dialectic discerns the relationships between things, the only true realities, the Forms, with which the mind of the dialectician is in immediate contact.
and interweaves and distinguishes their consequences, till it arrives at perfect intelligence. For, Plato says, dialectic is "the purest part of intelligence and wisdom." So, since it is the most valuable of our mental abilities, it must be concerned with real being and what is most valuable; as wisdom it is concerned with real being, as intelligence with that which is beyond being. But surely philosophy is the most valuable thing? Are dialectic and philosophy the same? It is the valuable part of philosophy. For it must not be thought to be a tool the philosopher uses. It is not just bare theories and rules; it deals with things and has real beings as a kind of material for its activity; it approaches them methodically and possesses real things along with its theories. It knows falsehood and sophism incidentally, as another's product, and judges falsehood as something alien to the truths in itself, recognising, when anyone brings it forward, something contrary to the rule of truth. So it does not know about propositions—they are just letters—but in knowing the truth it knows what they call propositions, and in general it knows the movements of the soul, what it affirms and what it denies, and whether it affirms the same thing as it denies or something else, and if things are different from each other or the same; whatever is submitted to it it perceives by directing intuition, as sense-perception also does, but it hands over petty precisions of speech to another discipline which finds satisfaction in them.

6. So dialectic is the valuable part. Philosophy has other parts; it also surveys the nature of the physical world with assistance from dialectic, as the

1 Philebus 58D6-7.
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other skills use arithmetic to help them; though natural philosophy stands closer to dialectic in its borrowing: in the same way moral philosophy derives from dialectic on its contemplative side, but adds the virtuous dispositions and the exercises which produce them. The intellectual virtues have principles from dialectic almost as their proper possession; although they are with matter most of their principles come from that higher realm. The other virtues apply reasoning to particular experiences and actions, but practical wisdom is a kind of superior reasoning concerned more with the universal; it considers questions of mutual implication, and whether to refrain from action, now or later, or whether an entirely different course would be better. Dialectic and theoretical wisdom provide everything for practical wisdom to use, in a universal and immaterial form.

Can the lower kinds of virtue exist without dialectic and theoretical wisdom? Yes, but only incompletely and defectively. And can one be a wise man and a dialectician without these lower virtues? It would not happen; they must either precede or grow along with wisdom. One might perhaps have natural virtues, from which the perfect ones develop with the coming of wisdom. So wisdom comes after the natural virtues, and then perfects the character; or rather when the natural virtues exist both increase and come to perfection together: as Diogenes Laertius VII 83), with the essential differences due to the distinction referred to in the note on ch. 4.

Footnotes:
1 The idea of the dependence of the other skills on arithmetic comes from Republic VII. 522C 1-6. Plotinus is here claiming for dialectic the same position in relation to natural and moral philosophy as the Stoics claimed for logic (cp. 162

Diogenes Laertius VII. 83), with the essential differences due to the distinction referred to in the note on ch. 4.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD I. 3.

`Η τῶν φυσικῶν ουσῶν συνάβεβαι ήδη ἀμφο 
καὶ συντελείονται: ἡ προλαβώσα ἡ ἑτέρα τὴν 
ἐτέραν ἐπελιώσεσθαι. Εἰς γὰρ ἡ φυσικὴ ἀρετὴ 
καὶ ὁμοία ἁτέλες καὶ ἡθὸς ἔχει, καὶ αἱ ἀρχαι 
τῶν πλείστων ἀμφοτέρως, ὥστε δὲ ἔχουμεν.

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the one progresses it perfects the other; for in 
general natural virtue is imperfect both in vision and 
character, and the principles from which we derive 
them are the most important thing both in natural 
virtue and wisdom.
ON WELL-BEING

Introductory Note

This is a late treatise (No. 46 in the chronological order), written towards the end of Plotinus's life. It is concerned with what was always, and more than ever in his last years, his chief preoccupation, the practical and most urgent question of how we are to live well and attain our true good. The first four chapters are devoted to an establishment of his fundamental position, that the good life is the life of Intellect, independent of all outward circumstances and material and emotional satisfactions of our lower nature, by a critical examination of Aristotelian and Stoic views. The rest of the treatise is a sermon on true well-being; this is very much in the manner of, and deals with the usual themes of, the Stoic-Cynic diatribe; but there are important differences even here between the thought of Plotinus and that of the Stoics due to his different conception of man as a double being, not a single and simple one.

Synopsis

If the good life is simply a matter of successfully performing one's proper functions and attaining one's natural end, as Aristotle thinks, one cannot deny it to other living things, plants included (ch. 1). The Epicurean attempt to make the good life consist in a feeling of pleasure or tranquillity, a particular kind of conscious experience, also breaks down on examination (ch. 2). The Stoic position, that the good life is the life of reason, is nearer the truth, but their doctrine of "primary natural needs" confuses the issue (ch. 2). The good life, the true human good, can only be the highest and most perfect kind of life, that of the Intellect (which depends on the Absolute Good as its cause) (ch. 3). And a man to attain perfection must not only have Intellect but be Intellect, and so perfectly virtuous; and if he is this he has all he needs for well-being (ch. 4). His well-being will be unaffected by pain, sickness and even the greatest misfortune (chs. 5-8); it will be even independent of consciousness, which is something secondary, the reflection of the life of Intellect on the level of the body-soul composite (chs. 9-10). Outward circumstances and bodily goods will add nothing to his well-being, and if he has too much of them may even detract from it, but he will recognize a responsibility to his body and give it what it really needs (chs. 11-16).
I. 4. (46) ΠΕΡΙ ΕΥΔΑΙΜΟΝΙΑΣ

1. Τὸ εὖ ἔρη καὶ τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ τελέσθηκεν καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ζώοις ἀρὰ τούτων μεταδόσθηκεν; Εἰ γὰρ ἔστιν αὐτοῖς ἢ πεφύκασιν ἀνεμποδιστῶς διεξάγεται, κακεῖνα τί καλύπτει ἐν 5 εὐδαιμονίᾳ λέγεις ἐναί διεξάγεται εἰτε ἐν ἔργῳ ὁπείρᾳ τελειομένῳ, κατὰ ἄμφος καὶ τοῖς ἄλλοις ζῴοις ὑπάρχει. Καὶ γὰρ εὐπαθείᾳ ἐνδέχεται καὶ ἐν τῷ κατὰ φύσιν ἔργῳ εἶναι· οἷον καὶ τὰ μοναστήρια τῶν ζῴων ὅπως τοῖς ἄλλοις εὐπαθεῖ καὶ δὴ καὶ 10 ἄσος, εἰ πέφυκε καὶ πάρῃ ἄρετῇ αὐτοῖς τῷ ζῶῃ ἔχει. Καὶ τούτοι καὶ εἰ τέλος τι τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν τεθηκα, ὅπερ ἐστὶν ἐσχατών τῆς ἐν φύσει ὅρθρος, καὶ πάρῃ ἀν αὐτοῖς μεταδόθηκε τοῦ εὐδαιμονεῖν ἐς ἐσχατών ἀφικνομένων, εἰς τὸ ἐλθούσι τοτετο. η ἐν εἰσόδῳ φῶς πᾶσιν ζωῆν 15 αὐτοῖς διεξάγεται καὶ πληρώσασα ἐξ ἀρχῆς τέλος. Εἰ δὲ τὰς διαχείρισις τὴν ἐν εὐδαιμονίας

1 I translate εὐδαιμονία and kindred words by "well-being," "being well off" because this kind of expression, though inadequate, is at least less misleading than the common translation "happiness." Happiness, as we normally use the word, means feeling good; but εὐδαιμονία means being in a good state; and Plotinus devotes a great part of this treatise to showing that one can be εὐδαιμονήν if one has no

I. 4. ON WELL-BEING

1. Suppose we assume the good life and well-being to be one and the same, shall we then have to allow a share in them to other living things as well as ourselves? If they can live in the way natural to them without impediment, what prevents us from saying that they too are in a good state of life? For whether one considers the good life as consisting in satisfactory experience or accomplishing one's proper work, in either case it will belong to the other living things as well as us. For they can have satisfactory experiences and be engaged in their natural work; musical creatures, for instance, which are otherwise well off and sing in their natural way as well, and so have the life they want. Then again, suppose we make well-being an end, that is, the ultimate term of natural desire; we shall still have to allow other living things a share in well-being when they reach their final state, that where, when they come to it, the nature in them rests, since it has passed through their whole life and fulfilled it from beginning to end. But if anyone dislikes the idea of extending some degree of well-being down to the other

happy emotions and even if one is completely unconscious of one's εὐδαιμονία.

2 This is Aristotle's position; cp. Nicomachean Ethics I. 8 1098b. 21.

3 Cp. N.E. VII. 14. 1153b. 11.

Both Hedonists and Epicureans maintained this, in different senses; but as Epicurus is clearly alluded to in the next sentence, this is probably meant to be a reference to the Hedonists only; cp. Aristippus in Diog. Laert. II 88.

As Aristotle did; in N.E. X. 9 1.708. 20 he denies it to all living beings except man because they have no share in ἔννοια. Plotinus criticises Aristotle because, though he regards ἔννοια as something distinctively human, he often defines it in terms which must necessarily apply to all living things. Both Aristotle and Plotinus place ἔννοια in the life of the intellect, though they conceive that life in very different ways.
So if something is good and is there its possessor is already well off; so why should we bring sensation into it, unless of course people attribute good not to the actual experience but to the knowledge and perception of it? But in this way they will be saying that the good is really the sensation, the activity of the sense life; so that it will be all the same whatever is sensed. But if they say that the good is the product of the two, the sensation of an object of a particular kind, why, when each of the constituents is neutral, do they say that the product is good? But if it is the experience which is good, and the good life is the special state when someone knows that the good is present to him, we must ask them whether he lives well by knowing that this present thing is present or whether he must know not only that it gives him pleasure but that it is the good. But if he must know that it is the good, this is no longer the business of sensation but of another greater power than that of sense. So the good life will not belong to those who feel pleasure but to the man who is able to know that pleasure is the good. Then the cause of living well will not be pleasure, but the power of judging that pleasure is good. And that which judges is better than mere experience, for it is reason or intellect; but pleasure is an experience; and the irrational is never better than reason. How then can the reason set itself aside and assume that something else which has its place in the contrary kind is better than itself? It looks as if the people who deny well-being to plants, and those who place it in a particular kind of sensation, were unconsciously in search of a good life which is something higher, and were assuming that it is
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD 1.4

better the purer and clearer life is. Those who say that it is to be found in a rational life, not simply in life, even life accompanied by sensation, may very likely be right; but we ought to ask them why they post well-being only in the case of rational living things. "Do you add the 'rational' because reason is more efficient and can easily find out and procure the primary natural needs, or would you require reason even if it was not able to find them out or obtain them? If you require it because it is better able to find them out, then irrational creatures too, if by their nature they can satisfy the primary natural needs without reason, will have well-being; and then reason would be a servant and not worth having for itself, and the same would apply to its perfection, which we say is virtue. But if you say that reason has not its place of honour because of the primary natural needs, but is welcome for its own sake, you must tell us what other work it has and what is its nature and what makes it perfect." For it cannot be the study of these primary natural needs which perfects reason; its perfection is something else, and its nature is different, and it is not itself one of these primary natural needs or of the sources from which the primary natural needs derive; it does not belong to this class of beings at all, but is

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These are the Stoics, cp. Diog. Laert VII. 130. The serious discussion of their position begins here (there has been a passing allusion to their teaching—"the life according to nature"—at the end of ch 1). Plotinus in his criticism of the Stoics in this chapter fastens upon what was generally regarded by opponents of the school as the weakest point in their ethical theory, the difficulty of reconciling their insistence that the life of reason and virtue was the only real good with their doctrine of the importance of τὰ πρῶτα καὶ τὰ βασικά, the primary natural needs. For criticism of Stoic ethics on these lines cp. Cicero, De Finibus, Book IV, and Plutarch, De Communes Notitia (especially chs. 23 and 26). Plotinus however is closer to the Stoic position than its earlier critics; he agrees completely with them that external goods and natural advantages are indifferent, and that true well-being lies in the life of reason and virtue alone; but, he says, the Stoics cannot explain why this is so.
better than all these; otherwise I do not think they
would be able to explain its place of honour. But until
these people find a better nature than the things
at which they now stop, we must let them stay
where they are, which is where they want to be,
unable to answer the question how the good life is
possible for the beings which are capable of it.

3. We, however, intend to state what we under¬
stand by well-being, beginning at the beginning.
Suppose we assume that it is to be found in life;
then if we make "life" a term which applies to all
living things in exactly the same sense, we allow that
all of them are capable of well-being, and that those
of them actually live well who possess one and the
same thing, something which all living beings are
naturally capable of acquiring; we do not on this
assumption grant the ability to live well to rational
beings, but not to irrational. Life is common to both,
and it is life which by the same acquisition [in both
cases] tends towards well-being, if well-being is to
be found in a kind of life. So I think that those who
say that well-being is to be found in rational life are
unaware that, since they do not place it in life in
general, they are really assuming that it is not a life
at all. They would have to say that the rational
power on which well-being depends is a quality.
But their starting-point is rational life. Well-being
depends on this as a whole; that is, on another kind
of life. I do not mean "another kind" in the sense of
a logical distinction, but in the sense in which we
Platonists speak of one thing as prior and another
as posterior.1 The term "life" is used in many
in which one kind of life is dependent on another higher kind
and the image of it.

1 Plotinus is distinguishing here between a simple classi¬
fication, by dichotomy or genus and species, of the sort of
which ἀναθεμάτητα is used by Aristotle (Categories 13.
14b33 ff.), and the recognition of a hierarchical order of reality,
ON WELL-BEING

different senses, distinguished according to the rank of the things to which it is applied, first, second and so on; and “living” means different things in different contexts; it is used in one way of plants, in another of irrational animals, in various ways of things distinguished from each other by the clarity or dimness of their life; so obviously the same applies to “living well.” And if one thing is an image of another, obviously its good life is the image of another good life. If then the good life belongs to what has a superabundance of life (this means what is in no way deficient in life), well-being will belong only to the being which lives superabundantly: this will have the best, if the best among realities is being really alive, is perfect life. So its good will not be something brought in from outside, nor will the basis of its goodness come from somewhere else and bring it into a good state: for what could be added to the perfect life to make it into the best life? If anyone says “The Absolute Good,” that is our own way of talking, but at present we are not looking for the cause, but for the immanent element.

We have often said that the perfect life, the true, real life, is in that transcendent intelligible reality, and that other lives are incomplete, traces of life, not perfect or pure and no more life than its opposite. Let us put it shortly: as long as all living things proceed from a single origin, but have not life to the same degree as it, the origin must be the first and most perfect life.

4. If then man can have the perfect life, the man who has this life is well off. If not, one would have to attribute well-being to the gods, if among them alone this kind of life is to be found. But since we
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On well-being maintain that this well-being is to be found among men we must consider how it is so. What I mean is this; it is obvious from what has been said elsewhere that man has perfect life by having not only sense-life but reasoning and true intelligence. But is he different from this when he has it? No, he is not a man at all unless he has this, either potentially or actually (and if he has it actually we say that he is in a state of well-being). But shall we say that he has this perfect kind of life in him as a part of himself? Other men, we maintain, who have it potentially, have it as a part, but the man who is well off, who actually is this and has passed over into identity with it, [does not have it but] is it. Everything else is just something he wears; you could not call it part of him because he wears it without wanting to; it would be his if he united it to him by an act of the will. What then is the good for him? He is what he has, his own good. The Transcendent Good is Cause of the good in him; the fact that It is good is different from the fact that It is present to him. There is evidence for this in the fact that the man in this state does not seek for anything else; for what could he seek? Certainly not anything worse, and he has the best with him. The man who has a life like this has all he needs in life. If he is virtuous, he has all he needs for well-being and the acquisition of good; for there is no good that he has not got. What he seeks he seeks as a necessity, not for himself but for something that belongs to him; that is, he seeks it for the body which is joined to him; and even granting that this is a living body, it lives its own life and not the life which is that of the good man. He knows its needs, and gives it what he gives it without
plotinus: ennead i. 4.

ελαττώσεται εἰς τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν μένει γὰρ καὶ ὡς ἡ τοιαύτη ἐκείνη ἀποθησάκηται τε οἰκείων καὶ φίλων ὑπὲρ τῶν δύνατων τῆς εξής, οὐας δὲ καὶ οἱ πάσχοντες σπούδασι οὕτως. Οἰκείως δὲ καὶ 35 προσημότερα τούτα πάσχοντες κἂν λυπῶσαν, οὐκ αὐτῶν, τὸ δὲ ἐν αὐτῷ νῦν οὐκ ἔχει, οὐκ αὐτὸς λύπας οὗ δέχεται.

5. Ἀλληγόρεις δὲ τί καὶ νόοι καὶ τὰ δόλως κωλύοντα ἐνεργεῖ; Εἰ δὲ δὴ μηδὲ εὐαντω παρακολουθοῦ; Γένοιτο γὰρ ἂν καὶ ἐκ φακέμαχων καὶ ἔτους νόσων. Πῶς δὴ ἐν τούτωι ἀμαίνει τὸ ζῆν 5 τὸ καὶ τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν ἀν ἔχει; Πενήντα γὰρ καὶ ἀδαφίας οἰκείων. Καίτοι καὶ πρὸς τάς οὐκ ἀποβλέψεις ἐπιστήμεια καὶ πρὸς τὸς πολυθρηνήτως αὐτοῖς ἡμιλοῦτος κύκλως τούτα γὰρ εἰ καὶ φέροι καὶ ραδίως φέροι, ἄλλα πρὸς διάτατη γε ἢν αὐτῷ· δεῖ δὲ βουλῆται τὸν εὐδαιμόνιον μὲν εἶναι· επεὶ οὐκ Ἰακτος τοιών εἶναι τὰς σπούδασιν ὧν κύκλῳ παραμείνει. Μὴ συναρμολογεῖται δὲ αὐτὸς τῇ 10 οἰκείων καὶ τῷ συμμαθίτης δόλως· Ἐτοιμώς γὰρ τούτῳ φαίνεται αὐτοὶ λογικῶς, έκαστος αὐτοὶ συμμαθίτης πρὸς τούτῳ διαφορεῖται καὶ αὐτὸς ἀναφέρεται καὶ αὐτὸς αἰσθάνεται ἡς καὶ διά τοῦ γίνεται αὐτῷ.

15 Ἡδονὴς δὲ συναρμολογεῖται τῷ εὐδαιμόνιον, πῶς δὲ λυπηρὸν διὰ τὸκαι ἀδίκως εἶχον εὐδαιμονεῖν εἰπ. οὐ χείρ τοῦ σπούδαιον ὅτι γίγνετο; ἀλλὰ θεοὶ μὲν ἡ τοιαύτη διάθεσις εὐδαιμόνιον καὶ

praenota. Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics I. 10. 1106a8 and 11. 1101ab. Plotinus in this section of the treatise is defending the essential Stoic position, that the good man is absolutely

on well-being

taking away anything from his own life. His well being will not be reduced even when fortune goes against him; the good life is still there even so. When his friends and relations die he knows what death is—as those who die do also if they are virtuous. Even if the death of friends and relations causes grief, it does not grieve him but only that in him which has no intelligence, and he will not allow the distresses of this to move him.

5. But what about pain and sickness and everything that hinders activity? And suppose the good man is not even conscious? That could happen as the result of drugs and some kinds of illness. How could he in all these circumstances have a good life and well-being? We need not consider poverty and disgrace; though someone might raise an objection in regard of these two, and especially that "fate of Priam" that people are always talking about. For even if he bore them and bore them lightly, he would not want them; and the life of well-being must be something one wants. This good man, it might be objected, is not a good soul, without reckoning his bodily nature as part of his essential being. Our opponents might say that they willingly accept our point of view, as long as the bodily affections are referred to the man himself, and it is he himself who chooses and avoids for reasons connected with the body. But if pleasure is counted as part of the life of well-being, how can a man be well off when chance and pain bring distress, even if it is a good man that these things happen to? This kind of state of self-sufficient well-being belongs to the independent of external circumstances, against an attack on Peripatetic lines.
ON WELL-BEING

Plotinus, Ennead I. 4.

Gods; since men have a supplement of lower nature one must look for well being in the whole of what has come into existence, and not in a part; for if one part is in a bad state the other, higher, part must necessarily be hindered in its proper work if the affairs of the lower part are not going well. Otherwise one must cut off the body, and even perception of the body, from human nature, and in this way try to find self-sufficiency in the matter of well-being.

But [we should answer], if our argument made well-being consist in freedom from pain and sickness and ill-luck and falling into great misfortunes, it would be impossible for anyone to be well off when any of these circumstances opposed to well-being was present. But if well-being is to be found in possession of the true good, why should we disregard this and omit to use it as a standard to which to look in judging well being, and look for other things which are not reckoned as a part of well-being? If it was a collection of goods and necessities, or things as well which are not necessities but even so are called goods, we should have to try and see that these were there too. But if the end at which we aim must be one and not many—otherwise one must gain that alone which is of ultimate and highest value, and which the soul seeks to clasp close within itself.

This search and willing is not directed to not being in this condition. These things are not of our very nature, but only [incidentally] present, and it is our reasoning power that avoids and manages to get rid of them, or also sometimes seeks to acquire them. But the real drive of desire of our soul is towards that which is better than itself. When that is present...
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within it, it is fulfilled and at rest, and this is the way of living it really wills. We cannot be said to "will" the presence of necessities, if "willing" is used in its proper sense and not misapplied to the occasions when we prefer the necessities also to be there; for we generally avoid evils, but this sort of avoidance is not, I suppose, a matter of willing, for we should will rather not to have occasion for this sort of avoidance. The necessities themselves provide evidence of this when we have them, health and freedom from pain, for instance. What attraction have they for us? We despise health when we have it, and freedom from pain as well. But these things, which have no attraction for us when they are there and do not contribute anything to our well-being, but which we seek in their absence because of the presence of things which distress us, can reasonably be called necessities, but not goods. So they must not be reckoned as part of the end we aim at: even when they are absent and their opposites are present, the end must be kept intact.

7. Why then does the man who is in a state of well-being want these necessities to be there and reject their opposites? We shall answer that it is not because they make any contribution to his well-being, but rather, to his existence: and he rejects their opposites either because they help towards non-existence or because they get in the way of his aim by their presence, not by taking anything away from it but because he who has the best wants to have it alone, and nothing else with it, something which when it is there has not made away with the best, but, still, exists alongside it. But even if something which the man who is well off does not
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want is there all the same, nothing at all of his well-being is taken away; otherwise he would change every day and fall from his well-being—if he lost a servant, for instance, or any one of his possessions: there are thousands of things which, if they do not turn out according to his mind, disturb in no way the final good which he has attained. But, people say, consider great disasters, not ordinary chances! What human circumstance is so great that a man will not think little of it who has climbed higher than all this and depends on nothing below? He does not think any piece of good fortune great, however important it may be, kingship, for instance, and rule over cities and peoples, or founding of colonies and states (even if he founds them himself). Why then should he think that falling from power and the ruin of his city are great matters? If he thought that they were great evils, or evils at all, he would deserve to be laughed at for his opinion; there would be no virtue left in him if he thought that wood and stones, and (God help us!) the death of mortals, were important. This man who, we say, ought to think about death that it is better than life with the body! If he himself is offered in sacrifice, will he think his death an evil, because he dies by the altars? If he is not buried, his body will rot anyhow, on the earth or under it. If he is distressed because he does not have an expensive funeral but is buried without a name and not thought worth a lofty monument—the pettiness of it! If he is taken away as a war-slave, "the way lies open" to depart,
e i. 4.

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if it is not possible to live well. If his relatives are captured in war, his daughters-in-law and daughters dragged off — well, suppose he had died without seeing anything of the sort; would he then leave the world in the belief that it was impossible that it should happen? If so, he would be a fool. So will he not think that it is possible for his relatives to fall into such misfortune? And does his belief that this may happen prevent his well-being? Then neither does the fact of its happening. For he will think that the nature of this universe is of a kind to bring these sorts of misfortunes, and we must follow it obediently. Anyhow, many people will do better by becoming war-slaves; and it is in their own power to depart if they find the burden heavy. If they stay, either it is reasonable for them to stay and there is nothing terrible about it, or if they stay unreasonably, when they ought not to, it is their own fault. The good man will not be involved in evil because of the stupidity of others, even if they are his relatives; he will not be dependent on the good or bad fortune of other people.

8. As far as his own pains go, when they are very great, he will bear them as long as he can; when they are too much for him, they will bear him off. He is not to be pitied even in his pain; his light within is like the light in a lantern when it is blowing hard outside with a great fury of wind and storm. But suppose the pain brings delirium, or goes on at such a height that, though it is extreme it does not

1 This means suicide, which Plotinus admitted as legitimate, though only in absolutely desperate circumstances; cp. the next chapter and 1. 9. 11. 14, and 17.
2 A for an allusion to Priam, cp. Iliad 22. 65.
4 There may be a reminiscence here of Empedocles B 84, Diels, but the context there is quite different—the storm-lantern is only an analogy for the structure of the eye.
9. 'All' éi méν páraτεννοι, tit hρη παπείν
bouλούσεται: εν γάρ ἀφθορίαν το τοποθεσίαν εϊ
τοῦτοις. Χρη δὲ εἰδέναι, ὡς ὁμ, αλα τοῦ ἄλλου
φανότα, τοιαύτα καὶ το τοποθετεῖται ἑκαστα, καὶ οἱ μέχρι τοῦ εἰσιν ἑκαστα ὡτε τα ἄλλα, [οὕτε ἄλγειν] ὡσ τα λυπημα. Καὶ ὁταν
περὶ ἄλλους τα ἄλγεσαι; ἁσθένει γαρ εἰς φυτῆς ἐμεταρχ. Καὶ τοῦτο μαρτυρεί, ὅταν λανθανεν
ημισ κέρδος ἡγομεθα καὶ ἀποθανόντων ἡμῶν, εἰ
γίγνεσται, κέρδος εἰναι τιμίαμα καὶ οὔ το το ἐκεῖνον
ἐτι σκοπουμένων, ἀλλα το ἄνων, ὅτις µη
λυτομεθα. Τοῦτο δὲ ἡμετέρα ὅθη ἁσθένεια, ὅ
δε περαιρεναι, ἀλλα µη ἐώςτε φοβείσθαι µη
γένεται. Εἰ δὲ τις λέγει ὡστος ἁμας πεκκεναι,
30 ὅστε ἄλγειν ἔτι τος τῶν αὐτῶν συμφοραί,
γιγονεσκῖτων, ὅτι οὐ πάντες οὕτως, καὶ ότι τῆς
ἀρετῆς τῷ κοινῷ τῆς φύσεως προς τὸ ἀμενον
ἀγεν καὶ πρὸς τὸ κάλλον παρὰ τῶν πολλῶν
cάλλον δε το µη ἐνδοιαν τοις νομομενοις τῇ
κοινῇ φύσις δευνος εἰσιν. Οὐ γαρ ἰδιωτικος δει,
25 ἀλλ ὅνοι θλητήν μεγαν διακειστα τα τῇ τιχης
πληγάς ἁμομεμον, γιγονεσκάντα ων ὅτι τιν φύσει
τατα οὐκ ἀρετα, τῇ δε αὐτῶ φυσει οιστα, εἰκ
ὡς δεινα, ἀλλ ὡς παιοι φοβερα. Τατε ὡς
ἡβελαν; Η ντι πρὸς τα µη βεληντα, ὅταν παρη,
ἀρεταν καὶ πρὸς τατα ἔτη δυσανθηνα καὶ
30 δυσανθηθη την ψυχήν περέχεισαι.
9. 'All' ὅταν µη παρακολουθη βαπτισθης ἡ
νόσους ἡ μάγουν τέχνης; 'All' εἰ μὲν φιλάξουνιν

1 Plotinus's view, expounded in this and the next chapter, of the secondary and relatively inferior status of consciousness.

2 If they maintain that
he is a good man when he is in this state, only fallen into a sort of sleep, what prevents him from being well off? After all, they do not remove him from well-being when he is asleep, or reckon the time he spends asleep so as to show that he is not well off for his whole life. But if they say that he is not good when he is in this state, then they are not any longer discussing the good man. But we are taking the good man as our starting-point, and enquiring if he is well off as long as he is good.

But if he does not know that he is healthy, he is healthy just the same, and if he does not know that he is handsome, he is handsome just the same. So if he does not know that he is wise, will he be any the less wise? Perhaps someone might say that wisdom requires awareness and consciousness of its presence, because it is in actual and active wisdom that well-being is to be found. If intelligence and wisdom were something brought in from outside, this argument would perhaps make sense; but if wisdom essentially consists in a substance, or rather in the substance, and this substance does not cease to exist in someone who is asleep or what is called unconscious; if the real activity of the substance goes on in him, and this activity is unsleeping; then the good man, in that he is a good man, will be active even then. It will not be the whole of him that is unaware of this activity, but only a part of him.

1 Contrast Aristotle Nicomachean Ethics, 1176a34-35.
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Plotinus says, "and, since they are, the activity of the intellect; so that when that is active, we are active.

10. Perhaps we do not notice it because it is not concerned with any object of sense; for our minds, by means of sense-perception—which is a kind of intermediary when dealing with sensible things—do appear to work on the level of sense and think about sense-objects. But why should not intellect itself be active [without perception], and also its attendant soul, which comes before sense-perception and any sort of awareness? There must be an activity prior to awareness if "thinking and being are the same."1

It seems as if awareness exists and is produced when intellectual activity is reflexive and when that in the life of the soul which is active in thinking is in a way projected back, as happens with a mirror-reflection when there is a smooth, bright, untroubled surface. In these circumstances when the mirror is there the mirror-image is produced, but when it is not there or is not in the right state the object of which the image would have been is [all the same] actually there. In the same way as regards the soul, when that kind of thing in us which mirrors the images of thought and intellect is undisturbed, we see them and know them in a way parallel to sense-perception, along with the prior knowledge that it is intellect and thought that are active. But when this is broken because the harmony of the body is upset, thought and intellect as his citation of them at V. 1. 8. 7 makes clear, interprets them as referring to his own doctrine of the unity of Real Being and Intellect.

\[1\]Parmenides fr. B3 Diels. What Parmenides may have really meant by these words is not relevant here. Plotinus, 198
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operate without an image, and then intellectual activity takes place without a mind-picture. So one might come to this sort of conclusion, that intellectual activity is [normally] accompanied by a mind-picture but is not a mind-picture. One can find a great many valuable activities, theoretical and practical, which we carry on both in our contemplative and active life even when we are fully conscious, which do not make us aware of them. The reader is not necessarily aware that he is reading, least of all when he is really concentrating; nor the man who is being brave that he is being brave and that his action conforms to the virtue of courage; and there are thousands of similar cases. Conscious awareness, in fact, is likely to enfeeble the very activities of which there is consciousness; only when they are alone are they pure and more genuinely active and living; and when good men are in this state their life is increased, when it is not spilt out into perception, but gathered together in one in itself.

11. If some people were to say that a man in this state is not even alive, we shall maintain that he is alive, but they fail to observe his well-being just as they do his life. If they will not believe us, we shall ask them to take as their starting-point a living man and a good man and so to pursue the enquiry into his well-being, and not to minimise his life and then to enquire if he has a good life, or to take away his humanity and then enquire about human well-being, or to agree that the good man has his attention directed inward and then to look for him in external activities, still less to seek the object of his desire in outward things. There would not be any possibility

1 ἄναρχος is here used in its Aristotelian sense, for which see De Anima III. 3. 427b–429a.

12. When they demand to be shown what is pleasant in a life of this kind, they will not be requiring the presence of the pleasures of debauchees, or of bodily pleasures at all—these could not be there and would abolish well-being—or of violent emotions of pleasure—why should the good man have any?—but only those pleasures which accompany the presence of goods, pleasures not consisting in movements, which are not the results of any process: for the goods are there already, and the good man is present to himself; his pleasure and happiness are at rest. The good man is always happy; his state is tranquil, his disposition contented and undisturbed by any so-called evils—if he is really good. If anyone looks for another kind of pleasure in life it is not the life of virtue he is looking for.

13. The good man’s activities will not be hindered by changes of fortune, but will vary according to what change and chance brings: but they will all be equally fine, and, perhaps, finer for being adapted to circumstances. As for his speculative activities, some of them which are concerned with particular points will possibly be hindered by circumstances,
The "greatest study" is for both Plato and Plotinus that of the Good; cf. Republic VI. 502A and Erin. VI. 7. 36.

The paradox that the wise and good man would be on the rack or while being roasted in the brazen bull of Phalaris was common to Stoics and Epicureans.

Plotinus argues that it makes no sense on their assumptions about the nature of man, but does on his, for he distinguishes the lower self (which really suffers) from the higher self (which remains unaffected).

πάντων ἀνθρώπων ἄρχων ὡς ἐν ὦν τούτῳ τοῦ τόπου, καὶ οὐ φθονητέον αὐτῷ τῶν τοιούτων ἡπατημένων. Περὶ δὲ σοφῶν ταῦτα ἵνα μὲν ἄν οὐδὲ τὴν ἄρξην γένους, γενεαλέον δὲ ἐλαστῶσει αὐτῶς, εἰπέρ αὐτοῖς κηδεῖται. Καὶ εὐπρόσωπα μὲν 20 καὶ μακραι ἀκριβεῖς τὰς τοῦ σώματος πλούσιας, ἄρχεις δὲ ἀποθήκευται. Σώματος δὲ ἐν ἐγκυσίαις φυλάσσων ὅπως εἶναι παντάπασι βουλήσαται: οὐδὲ μὴ οὐδὲ ἀπείρου εἶναι ἐλαστοῦ ἀλλὰ καὶ μὴ γινομένων νῦν ὄν μεθέλειν βουλήσαται, ἵνα δὲ ἐν γῇρᾳ ἄν ταῦτα ὑπὲρ ὑδαῖς 25 ἐνυχθεῖν οὐδὲ τὰ τῶν τῆδε ὑπὲρ προσφέρειν ὑπὲρ ἐναντίων, ἵνα μὴ πρὸς τὸ σώμα βλέπη. Τὰνομέαν δὲ ἐν ἐλαστοῦ δὴ τὸς τούτος αὐτοῦ πεπομένην δύναμιν ἄντοτε, οὕτω προσδίδησεν ὑπὲρ ταῖς ἁδύναμος καὶ ἐνυχθεῖσα καὶ ἀπανθαίρεσιν πρὸς τὸ εὐδαιμονεῖν λαμβάνων ὑπὲρ ἀφάρεσιν ή ἐλάττωσι ταύτης ἐν τοῖς ἐναντίοις τοῖς τούτοις. Τόῦ γαρ ἐναντίων μὴ προστίθεναι τῷ αὐτῷ ποι ἄν τὸ ἐναντίον ἄφαιρετο; 30

15. Άλλ' εἰ διὸ εἶπεν σοφοὶ, τῷ δὲ ἐπέρω παρείη διὰ κατὰ φύσιν λέγεται, τῷ δὲ τὸ ἐναντίον, ἵστων φύσιμον τοῦ εὐδαιμονεῖν αὐτοῖς παρεῖναι; ἂν γὰρ οὕτως εἴπερ ἐπάνω σοφοί. Εἰ δὲ καλὸς τὸ οὕρος τὸς ἐπέρω δὲ ἐπέρω καὶ πάντα τὰ ἄλλα διὰ μὴ πρὸς σοφοῖν μηδὲ ὅλος πρὸς ἀρκεῖν καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον θεῖαι καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον εἶναι, τῷ τούτῳ ἐν εἰπὲ· ἔστιν δὲ αὐτὸς τὸ ταῦτα ἐχον παριστάτηται ὡς κάλλους εὐδαιμονεῖν τὸ μὴ ἐχοντος: οὐδὲ γὰρ ἄν πρὸς 206

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ruler of all mankind (since he is essentially of this region), and we ought not to envy him for things like these, by which he is beguiled. The wise man will perhaps not have them at all, and if he has them will himself reduce them, if he cares for his true self. He will reduce and gradually extinguish his bodily advantages by neglect, and will put away authority and office. He will take care of his bodily health, but will not wish to be altogether without experience of illness, nor indeed also of pain. Rather, even if these do not come to him he will want to learn them when he is young, but when he is old he will not want either pains or pleasures to hinder him, or any earthly thing, pleasant or the reverse, so that he may not have to consider the body. When he finds himself in pain he will oppose to it the power which he has been given for the purpose; he will find no help to his well-being in pleasure and health and freedom from pain and trouble, nor will his opposites take it away or diminish it. For if one thing adds nothing to a state, how can its opposite take anything away?

15. But suppose there were two wise men, one of whom had all of what are called natural goods and the other their opposites, shall we say that they both have well-being equally? Yes, if they are equally wise. Even if one is good-looking and has all the other advantages which have nothing to do with wisdom, or in any way with virtue and the vision of the best, or with the best itself, what does that amount to? After all, even the man who has these advantages will not give himself airs about them as if he was better off than the one who has not got them; to have more of them than others would be no help
even towards becoming a piper. But we bring our own weakness into it when we are considering whether a man is well off, and regard things as frightening and terrible which the man in a state of well-being would not so regard. He would not yet have attained to wisdom or well-being if he had not freed himself of all imaginations about this sort of thing, and become in a way quite a different man, with confidence in himself that evil can never touch him. In this state of mind he will be without fear of anything. If he is afraid at all he is not perfect in virtue, but a kind of half-man. If sometimes when he is concerned with other things an involuntary fear comes upon him before he has time to reflect, the wise man [in him] will come and drive it away and quiet the child in him which is stirred to a sort of distress, by threatening or reasoning; the threatening will be unemotional, as if the child was shocked into quietness just by a severe look. A man of this sort will not be unfriendly or unsympathetic; he will be like this to himself and in dealing with his own affairs: but he will render to his friends all that he renders to himself, and so will be the best of friends as well as remaining intelligent.

16. If anyone does not set the good man up on high in this world of intellect, but brings him down to chance events and fears their happening to him, he is not keeping his mind on the good man as we consider he must be, but assuming an ordinary man, a mixture of good and bad, and assigning to him a life which is also a mixture of good and bad and of a kind which cannot: easily occur. Even if a person of this sort did exist, he would not be worth calling well off; he would have no greatness in him, either of the
dignity of wisdom or the purity of good. The common life of body and soul cannot possibly be the life of well-being. Plato was right in maintaining that the man who intends to be wise and in a state of well-being must take his good from There, from above, and look to that good and be made like it and live by it. He must hold on to this only as his goal, and change his other circumstances as he changes his dwelling-place, not because he derives any advantage in the point of well-being from one dwelling-place or another, but guessing, as it were, how his alien covering will be affected if he lodges here or there. He must give to this bodily life as much as it needs and he can, but he is himself other than it and free to abandon it, and he will abandon it in nature's good time, and, besides, has the right to decide about this for himself. So some of his activities will tend towards well-being; others will not be directed to the goal and will really not belong to him but to that which is joined to him, which he will care for and bear with as long as he can, like a musician with his lyre, as long as he can use it; if he cannot use it he will change to another, or give up using the lyre and abandon the activities directed to it. Then he will have something else to do which does not need the lyre, and will let it lie unregarded beside him while he sings without an instrument. Yet the instrument was not given him at the beginning without good reason. He has used it often up till now.

Plotinus is referring to Symposium 212A1 and the Theaetetus passage (176a) quoted at the beginning of the treatise On Virtue (I. 2).
ON WHETHER WELL-BEING INCREASES WITH TIME

Introductory Note

This short treatise is No. 36 in the chronological order; its subject is one that had been much discussed in the philosophical schools since Aristotle (see *Nicomachean Ethics* I. ch. 10), and, for once, Peripatetics, Stoics and Epicureans were substantially in agreement that the length of time a man was well off made no essential difference to his well-being. Plotinus's own original contribution to the discussion is his argument (ch. 7) that the life of well-being is really lived in eternity, not in time, and so the passage of time cannot affect it.

Synopsis

Well-being must consist in an actual present state, not in memory or anticipation (chs. 1-2). Short refutations of opposing arguments (chs. 2-5). The case of the man who is badly off (ch. 6). Well-being, time, and eternity (ch. 7). Memory of past goodness and pleasure can add nothing to well-being (chs. 8-9). Well-being a matter, not primarily of good external acts but of a good interior disposition (ch. 10).
1. Does well-being increase with time, though it is understood always to refer to our present state? Memory, surely, can play no part in well-being; nor is it a matter of talking, but of being in a particular state. And a state is something present, and so is actuality of life.

2. But if it is said that, because we are always aiming at life and actuality, attaining [progressively] to this is greater well-being; first of all tomorrow's well-being will always be greater, and that which comes after greater than what was before it, and well-being will no longer be measured by virtue. Even the gods will be better off now than they were before, but they will not be perfectly well off; they will never be perfectly well off. And then, desire when it attains its end attains something present, something present at each particular moment, and seeks to possess well-being as long as it exists. Then too, since the desire of life seeks existence, it will be desire of the present, if existence is in the present. Even if it does want the future and what come after, it wants what it has and what it is, not what it has been or is going to be; it wants what is already to exist; it is not seeking for the everlasting but wants what is present now to exist now.

3. What, then, about the statement "he has been well off for longer and had the same thing before his..."; Ei
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eyes for longer”? If in the longer time he gained a more accurate knowledge of it, then the time would have done something more for him. But if he knows it just the same all the time, the man who has seen it once has as much.

4. "But the first man had a longer period of pleasure." But it is not right to count pleasure in reckoning well-being. But if someone says that pleasure is "unhindered activity,"1 he is stating just the conclusion we are seeking. And anyhow this longer-lasting pleasure at any moment only has what is present; past pleasure is gone and done with.

5. Well then, if one man has been well off from beginning to end, and another in the latter part of his life, and yet another has been well off at first and then changed his state, do they have equal shares? Here the comparison is not being made between people who are all in a state of well-being; it is a comparison of those who are not well off, at the time when they are not well off, with a man who is well off. So if this latter has anything more, he has just what the man in a state of well-being has in comparison with those who are not; and that means that his advantage is by something in the present.

6. Then what about the man who is badly off? Is he not worse off the longer his bad fortune lasts? And do not all other troubles make the misfortune worse the longer they last, long-lasting pains and griefs for instance, and other things of that stamp? But if these troubles in this way make the evil increase with the passage of time, why do not their opposites in the same way cause an increase of well-being? One could, certainly, say in the case of griefs and pains that time brings about an increase,

PLOTINUS: ENNEAD I. 5.

6 For instance in chronic illness; it becomes a permanent state, and as time goes on the condition of the body grows worse. For if it remains the same and the damage is no greater, then here too it will be the present state always which is painful, if one does not add on what is past in consideration of the persistence of the illness once it has come into existence; in the case of a state of ill-being, too, the evil will grow worse the longer it lasts since the badness of the state will be increased by its persistence. So the greater misfortune will be due to the addition of the increase, not to the persistence for a longer time in the same state. That which lasts longer in the same state is not all present at once; one ought not really to talk about "longer" at all, because it means reckoning that which does not any longer exist along with that which does. But as regards well-being, it has a boundary and a limit and is always the same. But if here too there is an increase with greater length of time, so that as a man progresses to greater virtue he is better off, one is not counting the many years of well-being and praising it for lasting so long, but praising it for being greater at the time when it is greater.

7. But why, if we ought only to consider the present and not to count it along with the past, do we not do the same with time? Why do we count the past along with the present and say that it is more? Why, then, should we not say that well-being is equal in quantity to the time its lasts? We should then divide well-being according to the divisions of time; of course if we measure it by the present we shall make it indivisible. Now it is not
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unreasonable to count time even when it does not exist any longer, since we reckon the number of things which have been there in the past but no longer exist, the dead for instance; but it is unreasonable to say that well-being which no longer exists is more than that which is present. For well-being requires to persist, but time over and above the present admits of existing no longer. In general extension of time means the dispersal of a single present. That is why it is properly called "the image of eternity," since it intends to bring about the disappearance of what is permanent in eternity by its own dispersion. So if it takes from eternity what would be permanent in it and makes it its own, it destroys it—it is preserved, up to a point, by eternity, in one way, but destroyed if it passes altogether into temporal dispersion. So if well-being is a matter of good life, obviously the life concerned must be that of real being: for this is the best. So it must not be counted by time but by eternity; and this is neither more nor less nor of any extension, but is a "this here," unextended and timeless. So one must not join being to non-being or everlastingness of time to eternity nor must one extend the unextended; one must take it all as a whole, if one takes it at all, and apprehend, not the undividedness of time but the life of eternity, which is not made up of many times, but is all together from the whole of time.

8. But if someone says that the memory of the past remaining in the present gives more to the man who has been longer in a state of well-being, what does he mean by memory? If it is memory from previous
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virtue and intelligence, he will be saying that the man is more virtuous and intelligent [not better off] and so will not be keeping to the point; if it is memory of pleasure, he will be representing the man in a state of well-being as needing a great deal of extra enjoyment and not being satisfied with what he has. And besides what pleasure is there in the memory of pleasantness—for instance, if someone remembers that yesterday he enjoyed some nice food? And if it was ten years ago that he enjoyed it, he would be even more ridiculous. The same applies to the memory that one was virtuous and intelligent last year.

9. But if it is memory of excellence that is in question, is there not some sense in this? This is the idea of a man whose life is without excellence in the present, and because he has not got it now is seeking for memories of past excellences.

10. But length of time brings many excellent actions, in which the man who has only been well off for a short time has no share; if indeed we can call anyone well off who is not so as the result of much well-doing. Anyone who says that the state of well-being is produced by many times and actions is putting it together out of pieces which no longer exist but are past and one which is present. That is why we started by positing well-being in the present, and then enquired whether longer duration of well-being meant an increase. So we must enquire whether well-being which lasts for a long time is increased by a greater number of actions. First of all, it is possible for someone who is not active to be well off, and better off than the active man; then, actions do not produce goodness of themselves, but
it is men's dispositions which make actions excellent, and the wise and good man gets the benefit of goodness in his action, not from the fact that he acts nor from the circumstances of his action, but from what he has. Even a bad man can save his country; and the good man's pleasure that his country is saved will be there even if someone else saves it. So it is not this which causes the pleasure of well-being; it is one's inner state which produces both well-being and any pleasure that results from it. To place well-being in actions is to locate it in something outside virtue and the soul; the activity of the soul lies in thought, and action of this kind within itself; and this is the state of well-being.
I. 6. ON BEAUTY

Introductory Note

This treatise is the first in Porphyry's chronological order (which does not necessarily mean that it was the first which Plotinus wrote). It has been perhaps the best known and most read treatise in the Enneads, both in ancient and modern times. It should be read with the later treatise On the Intelligible Beauty (V. 8). The two together give a fairly complete view of Plotinus's most original and important aesthetic philosophy and of how he understands the relationship of physical to moral beauty and of both to their origin in the intelligible beauty of the World of Forms and its principle, the Good. The object of the treatise On Beauty, as becomes clear in the later chapters, is not to provide its readers with an aesthetic philosophy but to exhort them to ascend through all the visible and invisible beauties of derived reality to the source of all beauty, the Good, on that journey of the mind to God which was always Plotinus's main concern.

Synopsis

What is it that makes things beautiful? We will start our enquiry by considering the beauty of bodies. The Stoic view that it is entirely a matter of good proportion will not do (ch. 1). It is due to the presence of form from the intelligible world (ch. 2) and we recognise and appreciate it by our inward knowledge of intelligible form (ch. 3). The beauty of virtue (ch. 4). It is the beauty of true reality in its transcendent purity, and its opposite, moral ugliness, is due to admixture with body (ch. 5). We attain to it by purifying ourselves (ch. 6). The supreme and absolute beauty, the Good (ch. 7). The way to it (ch. 8). The power of inner sight and how to develop it (ch. 9).
I. 6. ON BEAUTY

1. Beauty is mostly insight, but it is to be found too in things we hear, in combinations of words and also in music, and in all music [not only in songs]; for tunes and rhythms are certainly beautiful: and for those who are advancing upwards from sens-perception ways of life and actions and characters and intellectual activities are beautiful, and there is the beauty of virtue. If there is any beauty prior to these, it itself will reveal it.

Very well then, what is it which makes us imagine that bodies are beautiful and attracts our hearing to sounds because of their beauty? And how are all the things which depend on soul beautiful? Are they all made beautiful by one and the same beauty or is there one beautifulness in bodies and a different one in other things? And what are they, or what is it? Some things, bodies for instance, are not beautiful from the nature of the objects themselves, but by participation, others are beauties themselves, like the nature of virtue. The same bodies appear sometimes beautiful, sometimes not beautiful, so that their being bodies is one thing, their being beautiful another. What is this principle, then, which is present in bodies? We ought to consider this first. What is it that attracts the gaze of those who look at something, and turns and draws them to it and makes them enjoy the sight? If we find this perhaps we can use it as a stepping-stone and get

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That good proportion was an essential part of beauty was a general Greek conviction, accepted by Plato and Aristotle; but it was the Stoics who defined beauty strictly and exclusively in these terms, cp. Cicero, Tusculans IV. 31, et ut corpora est quaedam apte figura membranae cum coloris.
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beauty in these too, what can be meant by good proportion in beautiful ways of life or laws or studies or branches of knowledge? How can speculations be well-proportioned in relation to each other? If it is because they agree, there can be concord and agreement between bad ideas. The statement that "righteousness is a fine sort of silliness" agrees with and is in tune with the saying that "morality is stupidity"; the two fit perfectly. Again, every sort of virtue is a beauty of the soul, a truer beauty than those mentioned before; but how is virtue well-proportioned? Not like magnitudes or a number. We grant that the soul has several parts, but what is the formula for the composition or mixture in the soul of parts or speculations? And what [on this theory] will the beauty of the intellect alone by itself be?

2. So let us go back to the beginning and state what the primary beauty in bodies really is. It is something which we become aware of even at the first glance; the soul speaks of it as if it understood it, recognises and welcomes it and as it were adapts itself to it. But when it encounters the ugly it shrinks back and rejects it and turns away from it and is out of tune and alienated from it. Our explanation of this is that the soul, since it is by nature what it is and is related to the higher kind of reality in the realm of being, when it sees something akin to it or a trace of its kindred reality, is delighted and thrilled and returns to itself and remembers itself and its own possessions. What likeness, then, is there between beautiful things here and There? If

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1 Ciceron, in the Tusculan passage quoted above, goes on to draw a precise parallel between the beauty of body, which consists in good proportion with pleasant colour, and beauty of soul.

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there is a likeness, let us agree that they are alike. But how are both the things in that world and the things in this beautiful? We maintain that the things in this world are beautiful by participating in form; for every shapeless thing which is naturally capable of receiving shape and form is ugly and outside the divine formative power as long as it has no share in formative power and form. This is absolute ugliness. But a thing is also ugly when it is not completely dominated by shape and formative power, since its matter has not submitted to be completely shaped according to the form. The form, then, approaches and composes that which is to come into being from many parts into a single ordered whole; it brings it into a completed unity and makes it one by agreement of its parts; for since it is one itself, that which is shaped by it must also be one as far as a thing can be which is composed of many parts. So beauty rests upon the material thing when it has been brought into unity, and gives itself to parts and wholes alike. When it comes upon something that is one and composed of like parts it gives the same gift to the whole; as sometimes art gives beauty to a whole house with its parts, and sometimes a nature gives beauty to a single stone. So then the beautiful body comes into being by sharing in a formative power which comes from the divine forms.

3. The power ordained for the purpose recognises this, and there is nothing more effective for judging its own subject-matter, when the rest of the soul judges along with it; or perhaps the rest of the soul pronounces the judgement by fitting the beautiful body to the form in itself and using this for judg-

5 kanon tou eidos. Piose de symfonei to peri soma to pro somatos; Pios de tin eirh oikies tis eidos oikias eidei o oikonomikos sunaromias kalhn eisai legei; "H oti esti to eirh, eis charodeias toius lites, to einoi eidos merisei to eirh ousis logos, amteres on en pollaies mantaxmenon.

10 Otan on kai h aiosthesi to en aomasi eidois idhe suvndamiemenon kai krathei tis ousios tis enantios omoiouno amhne kai morphi en. Alliai morphi en ekporeus epoxomenei, synelosia eteron auton to polloch anfregyqe te kai einhygen eis to eisom amneres idhe kai idiake to einoi suvndamiemnon kai suvndami neit kai filon. 11 Othe en kai to upo autou para to allo soma kata kalh, oti tais eidois pro to allo stonai keihi anoi tis theseis, lepotaifin de ton ousin osomastai, oun eirh ou to allo ousiasto, monon de autou ous eidoskomei to allo. 12" Alliai degetai auton. Thermaoetai gar ekeina, ou feugei de toito, kekrustai te proutos, tis 13. 15 Allia para tooton to eidos tis chrias lamabain. Lampei on kai stibbei, ois en eidos oin. Tis de

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ing beauty as we use a ruler for judging straightness. But how does the bodily agree with that which is before body? How does the architect declare the house outside beautiful by fitting it to the form of house within him? The reason is that the house outside, apart from the stones, is the inner form divided by the external mass of matter, without parts but appearing in many parts. When sense-perception, then, sees the form in bodies binding and mastering the nature opposed to it, which is shapeless; and shape riding gloriously upon other shapes, it gathers into one that which appears dispersed and brings it back and takes it in, now without parts, to the soul’s interior and presents it to that which is within as something in tune with it and fitting it and dear to it; just as when a good man sees a trace of virtue in the young, which is in tune with his own inner truth, the sight delights him. And the simple beauty of colour comes about by shape and the mastery of the darkness in matter by the presence of light which is incorporeal and formative power and form. This is why fire itself is more beautiful than all other bodies, because it has the rank of form in relation to the other elements; it is above them in place and is the finest and subtlest of all bodies, being close to the incorporeal. It alone does not admit the others; but the others admit it: for it warms them but is not cooled itself; it has colour primarily and all other things take the form of colour from it. So it shines and glitters as if it was a form. The inferior

1 For Plotinus light is the incorporeal ousia of the luminous body: cp. IV. 5, chs. 6 and 7.
2 This seems to be a Platonic adaptation of the Stoic doctrine of fire as the divine formative principle.
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thing which becomes faint and dull by the fire's light is not beautiful any more, as not participating in the whole form of colour. The melodies in sounds, too, the imperceptible ones which make the perceptible ones, make the soul conscious of beauty in the same way, showing the same thing in another medium. It is proper to sensible melodies to be measured by numbers, not according to any and every sort of formula but one which serves for the production of form so that it may dominate. So much, then, for the beauties in the realm of sound, images and shadows which, so to speak, sadly out and come into matter and adorn it and excite us when they appear.

4. But about the beauties beyond, which it is no more the part of sense to see, but the soul sees them and speaks of them without instruments—we must go up to them and contemplate them and leave sense to stay down below. Just as in the case of the beauties of sense it is impossible for those who have not seen them or grasped their beauty those born blind, for instance—to speak about them, in the same way only those can speak about the beauty of ways of life who have accepted the beauty of ways of life and kinds of knowledge and everything else of the sort: and people cannot speak about the splendour of virtue who have never even imagined how fair is the face of justice and moral order; neither the evening nor the morning star are as

possible translation is "fire that is overcome and vanishes in the sunlight." This has been suggested by Professor Post, who cites for comparison Plutarch De Facie in Orbe Lunae 933 D. It has obviously very much to commend it; my only reason for hesitation about adopting it is that there is nothing about the sun and its relationship to earthly fires in the context.

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1 to μὴ κρατοῦν in this sense is very odd, and unparalleled, but not quite impossible. I take the point of the sentence to be that Plotinus had noticed that dull, ugly colours sometimes look uglier and not more beautiful in a bright light and is trying to explain this in terms of his own theory: the matter of the thing is incapable of receiving enough of the form of colour which the light gives it to look beautiful. Another

fair."1 But there must be those who see this beauty by that with which the soul sees things of this sort: and when they see it they must be delighted and overwhelmed and excited much more than by those beauties we spoke of before, since now it is true beauty they are grasping. These experiences must occur whenever there is contact with any sort of beautiful thing, wonder and a shock of delight and longing and passion and a happy excitement. One can have these experiences by contact with invisible beauties, and souls do have them, practically all, but particularly those who are more passionately in love with the invisible, just as with bodies all see them, but all are not stung as sharply, but some, who are called lovers, are most of all.

5. Then we must ask the lovers of that which is outside sense: "What do you feel about beautiful ways of life, as we call them, and beautiful habits and well-ordered characters and in general about virtuous activities and dispositions and the beauty of souls?2 What do you feel when you see your own inward beauty?3 How are you stirred to wild exultation, and long to be with yourselves, gathering your selves together away from your bodies?"

For this is what true lovers feel. But what is it which makes them feel like this? Not shape or colour4 or any size, but soul, without colour itself and possessing a moral order without colour and possessing all the other light of the virtues, you feel like this when you see, in yourself or in someone else,

1 Aristotle applies this quotation, probably from the Melanippe of Eupides (fr. 446 Nauck), to justice in Neomachean Ethics V. 3. 1129b 29-9. Plotinus recalls the passage again at VI. 5. 6. 39.
2 Op Plate, Symposium 210B-C.

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ψυχής καὶ ἄλογος δίκαιον καὶ σωφροσύνην καθαράν
cαι ἀνδριάν βλεποῦν ἐξουσίων πρόσωπων καὶ
σημεῖα καὶ ἀδικία ἐπιθέσεων ἐν ὀφθαλμοῖς καὶ
ἀκόντων καὶ ἑπεξεργασίας ἐπιστάσεις, ἐπὶ πάντα ἔρρος
tοῦ θεοειδή νοῦν ἐπιλήματον. Ταῦτα οὖν ἀγάμενοι
καὶ φιλοάριστοι ποιοί αὐτὰ λέγομεν καλὰ: Ἐστι
μὲν γὰρ καὶ φαίνεται καὶ οὐ μὴν οὐ ἔχειν ἄλλο
τι τὶ ἡ τὰ ὅστις ὅταν ταῦτα εἶναι. Τί οὖν ὅτις;
"Ἡ καλὰ. Ἀλλὰ ἔπει δὲ λόγος, τί δὲντα πεποίηκε τὴν ψυχήν εἵνεκεν ἐρείπων; τὸ τοῦ
tοῦ πάνσας ἀρετοὶς διαπρέπον οἷον ὅσοι; "Βούλες
dὴ καὶ τὰ ἑνεκτία λαβὼν, τὸ περὶ ψυχῆς αἰσχρῶ
χαράμετα, ἀπαντατείνας; Τάχα γὰρ ἐν συμβαλλο-
λόγοι πρὸς τὸ ζητοῦμεν τὸ αἰσχρὸν τὸ πικρὸν ἐστὶ
cαι διότι φανέρων. Ἑστι δὴ ψυχῆς αἰσχρᾶ, ἀκόλου-
tῶς τὸ τοῦ καὶ ἀδικοὶς, πλεῖστοι μὲν ἐπιθέμων
χρόνων, πλεῖστος δὲ παραχρῆς ἐν φόβοις διὰ
dειλίων, ἐν φόβοις δὲ ἀκραποπείπει, πικρὰ
φρονοῦσαν αὐτὶ καὶ φονεῖ θητὴς καὶ ταπεινά,
σχολεὶ παντοχαῖς, ἡμώνοις οὐ καθαρῶν φιλῇ,
ζωὴ ἡν χὸν τὸ τί τι ἐν πάθῃ διὰ σώματος ὡς ἡν
λαβόμενος ἁμάχος. Αὐτὸ πρῶτο τὸ ἁμάχος αὐτῆς ἄρα
οὐ προσεγγιζόμενοι οἷον ἐπακοῦν καὶ οἳ ψυχῆς,
ἐλεομένοι μὲν αὐτῇ πεποίηκε δὲ αὐτὴ ἀκραποπείπει
καὶ πολλῇ τῷ κακῷ συμπεριλήφθη, αὐτῇ
ζωῆς ἐν τῇ ἐξουσίᾳ οὐδὲν ἁμάχον καθαράν,
ἀλλὰ τῷ μίγματι τοῦ κακοῦ ἁμάχος τῇ ἁμάχης
καὶ πολλῷ τῷ κακῷ ἁμαρταίων, οὐκέτι μὲν
ὁρῶσαν αὐτὶ δὲ ὑψηλὴν ἁμάχον, οὐκέτι δὲ ἐκμενήν ἐν

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greatness of soul, a righteous life, a pure morality,
courage with its noble look, and dignity and modesty
advancing in a fearless, calm and unperturbed dis-
position, and the godlike light of intellect shining
upon all this. We love and delight in these quali-
ties, but why do we call them beautiful? They
exist and appear to us and who see them cannot
possibly say anything else except that they are
what really exists. What does "really exists" mean?
That they exist as beauties. But the argu-
ment still requires us to explain why real beings
make the soul loveable. What is this kind of glorify-
ing light on all the virtues? Would you like to take
the opposites, the uglinesses in soul, and contrast
them with the beauties? Perhaps a consideration of
what ugliness is and why it appears so will help us
to find what we are looking for. Suppose, then,
unugly soul, dissolute and unjust, full of all lusts,
and all disturbance, sunk in fears by its cowardice
and jealousies by its pettiness, thinking mean and mortal
thoughts as far as it thinks at all, altogether dis-
torted, loving impure pleasures, living a life which
consists of bodily sensations and finding delight in
its ugliness. Shall we not say that its ugliness came
to it as a "beauty" brought in from outside, in-
juring it and making it impure and "mixed with a
great deal of evil,"1 with its life and perceptions no
longer pure, but by the admixture of evil living a dim
life and diluted with a great deal of death, no longer
seeing a soul ought to see, no longer left in

1 The phrase is taken from the description of Ajax ad-
ancing to battle in Iliad 7. 212.

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peace in itself because it keeps on being dragged out, and down, and to the dark? Impure, I think, and dragged in every direction towards the objects of sense, with a great deal of bodily stuff mixed into it, consorting much with matter and receiving a form other than its own: it has changed by a mixture which makes it worse; just as if anyone gets into mud or filth he does not show any more the beauty which he had: what is seen is what he wiped off on himself from the mud and filth; his ugliness has come from an addition of alien matter, and his business, if he is to be beautiful again, is to wash and clean himself and so be again what he was before. So we shall be right in saying that the soul becomes ugly by mixture and dilution and inclination towards the body and matter. This is the soul’s ugliness, not being pure and unmixed, like gold, but full of earthiness; if anyone takes the earthy stuff away the gold is left, and is beautiful, when it is singled out from other things and is alone by itself. In the same way the soul too, when it is separated from the lusts which it has through the body with which it consorted too much, and freed from its other affections, purged of what it gets from being embodied, when it abides alone has put away all the ugliness which came from the other nature.

6. For, as was said in old times, self-control, and courage and every virtue, is a purification, and so is every wisdom itself. This is why the mysteries are right when they say riddlingly that the man who has not been purified will lie in mud when he goes to Hades, because the impure is fond of mud by reason of its badness; just as pigs, with their unclean

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bodies, like that sort of thing. For what can true self-control be except not keeping company with bodily pleasures, but avoiding them as impure and belonging to something impure? Courage, too, is not being afraid of death. And death is the separation of body and soul; and a man does not fear this if he welcomes the prospect of being alone. Again, greatness of soul is despising the things here: and wisdom is an intellectual activity which turns away from the things below and leads the soul to those above. So the soul when it is purified becomes form and formative power, altogether bodiless and intellectual and entirely belonging to the divine, whence beauty springs and all that is akin to it. Soul, then, when it is raised to the level of intellect increases in beauty. Intellect and the things of intellect are its beauty, its own beauty and not another's, since only then (when it is perfectly conformed to intellect) is it truly soul. For this reason it is right to say that the soul's becoming something good and beautiful is its being made like to God, because from Him come beauty and all else which falls to the lot of real beings. Or rather, beautifulness is reality, and the other kind of thing is the ugly, and this same is the primary evil; so for God the qualities of goodness and beauty are the same, or the realities, the good and beauty. So we must follow the same line of enquiry to discover beauty and goodness, and ugliness and evil. And first we must posit beauty which is also the good; from this immediately comes intellect, which is beauty; and

\[1\] Dias, followed by Henry-Schwyzer, thinks that there is an allusion here to a remark Heraclitus appears to have made about pigs liking mud (fr. B13): but it seems to me at least possible that Plotinus might have thought of pigs at this point for himself, without any assistance from earlier philosophy.

\[2\] Cp. Phaedo 61C5-7.
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Soul is given beauty by intellect. Everything else is beautiful by the shaping of soul, the beauties in actions and in ways of life. And soul makes beautiful the bodies which are spoken of as beautiful; for since it is a divine thing and a kind of part of beauty, it makes everything it grasps and masters beautiful, as far as they are capable of participation.

7. So we must ascend again to the good, which every soul desires. Anyone who has seen it knows what I mean when I say that it is beautiful. It is desired as good, and the desire for it is directed to good, and the attainment of it is for those who go up to the higher world and are converted and strip off what we put on in our descent; (just as for those who go up to the celebrations of sacred rites there are purifications, and stripings off of the clothes they wore before, and going up naked) until, passing in the ascent all that is alien to the God, one sees with one's self alone that alone, simple, single and pure, from which all depends and to which all look and are and live and think: for it is cause of life and mind and being. If anyone sees it, what passion will lie feel, what longing in his desire to he united with it, what a shock of delight! The man who has not seen it may desire it as good, but he who has seen it glories in its beauty and is full of wonder and delight, enduring a shock which causes no hurt, loving with true passion and piercing longing; he laughs at all other loves and despises what he thought beautiful before; it is like the experience of those who have met appearances of gods or spirits and do not any more appreciate as they did the beauty of other bodies. "What then are we to think, if any..."
one contemplates the absolute beauty which exists pure by itself, uncontaminated by flesh or body, not in earth or heaven, that it may keep its purity?" 1 All these other things are external additions and mixtures and not primary, but derived from it. If then one sees That which provides for all and remains by itself and gives to all but receives nothing into itself, if he abides in the contemplation of this kind of beauty and rejoices in being made like it, how can he need any other beauty? For this, since it is beauty most of all, and primary beauty, makes its lovers beautiful and lovable. Here the greatest, the ultimate contest is set before our souls; 2 all our toil and trouble is for this, not to be left without a share in the best of visions. The man who attains this is blessed in seeing that "blessed sight," and he who fails to attain it has failed utterly. A man has not failed if he fails to win beauty of colours or bodies or power or office or kingship even, but if he fails to win this and only this. For this he should give up the attainment of kingship and of rule over all earth and sea and sky, if only by leaving and overlooking them he can turn to That and see. 3 8. But how shall we find the way? 4 What method can we devise? How can one see the "inconceivable beauty" 4 which stays within the holy sanctuary and does not come out where the profane may see it? Let him who can, follow and come within, and leave outside the sight of his eyes and

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1 Cp. Symposium 211A8 and D3-E2 (this is not an exact quotation but is amplified by Plotinus).
2 A partial quotation from Phaedrus, 247B5-6.

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not turn back to the bodily splendours which he saw before. When he sees the beauty in bodies he must not run after them; we must know that they are images, traces, shadows, and hurry away to that which they image. For if a man runs to the image and wants to seize it as if it was the reality (like a beautiful reflection playing on the water, which some story somewhere, I think, said riddlingly a man wanted to catch and sank down into the stream and disappeared) then this man who clings to beautiful bodies and will not let them go, will, like the man in the story, but in soul, not in body, sink down into the dark depths where intellect has no delight, and stay blind in Hades, consorting with shadows there and here. This would be truer advice "Let us fly to our dear country." "

What then is our way of escape, and how are we to find it? We shall put out to sea, as Odysseus did, from the witch Circe or Calypso—as the poet says (I think with a hidden meaning)—and was not content to stay though he had delights of the eyes and lived among much beauty of sense. Our country from which we came is there, our Father is there. How shall we travel to it, where is our way of escape? We cannot get there on foot; for our feet only carry us everywhere in this world, from one country to another. You

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1 The quotation is from Iliad 2, 140 (of course from a quite irrelevant context). But Plotinus's mind turns immediately to reminiscences of Odyssey 9, 29ff. and 10, 488-4, where Odysseus tells Alcinous how Calypso and Circe had loved him and tried to detain him on his journey home. Odysseus became in late antiquity, for Christians as well as pagans, the type of the soul journeying to its true home and overcoming all difficulties and temptations on the way.
must not get ready a carriage, either, or a boat.
Let all these things go, and do not look. Shut your eyes, and change to and wake another way of seeing, which everyone has but few use.

9. And what does this inner sight see? When it is just awakened it is not at all able to look at the brilliance before it. So that the soul must be trained, first of all to look at beautiful ways of life: then at beautiful works, not those which the arts produce, but the works of men who have a name for goodness: then look at the souls of the people who produce the beautiful works. How then can you see the sort of beauty a good soul has? Go back into yourself and look; and if you do not yet see yourself beautiful, then, just as someone making a statue which has to be beautiful cuts away here and polishes there and makes one part smooth and clears another till he has given his statue a beautiful face, so you too must cut away excess and straighten the crooked and clear the dark and make it bright, and never stop working on your statue till the divine glory of virtue shines out on you, till you see "self-mastery enthroned upon its holy seat." If you have become this, and see it, and are at home with yourself in purity, with nothing hindering you from becoming in this way one, with no inward mixture of anything else, but wholly yourself, nothing but true light, not measured by dimensions, or bounded by shape into litness, or expanded in size by unboundedness, but everywhere unmeasured, because greater than all measure and

1 A reference to Phaedrus 253D7; but in Plato it is the lover who works on the soul of his beloved, fashioning it into the likeness of the god they once followed together.

2 Phaedrus 254B7.
PLOTinus: ENNEAD I. 6.

superior to all quantity; when you see that you have become this, then you have become sight; you can trust yourself then; you have already ascended and need no one to show you; concentrate your gaze and see. This alone is the eye that sees the great beauty. But if anyone comes to the sight blear-eyed with wickedness, and unpurified, or weak and by his cowardice unable to look at what is very bright, he sees nothing, even if someone shows him what is there and possible to see. For one must come to the sight with a seeing power made akin and like to what is seen. No eye ever saw the sun without becoming sun-like, nor can a soul see beauty without becoming beautiful. You must become first all godlike and all beautiful if you intend to see God and beauty. First the soul will come in its ascent to intellect and there will know the Forms, all beautiful, and will affirm that these, the Ideas, are beauty; for all things are beautiful by these, by the products of intellect and essence. That which is beyond this we call the nature of the Good, which holds beauty as a screen before it. So in a loose and general way of speaking the Good is the primary beauty; but if one distinguishes the intelligibles [from the Good] one will say that the place of the Forms is the intelligible beauty, but the Good is That which is beyond, the "spring and

1 Cp. Republic VI. 508B3 and 509A1. Plato’s point in these passages is, however, not that the eye must become sun-like in order to see the sun, but that the eye (the symbol of knowledge) is sun-like but not the sun (the symbol of the Good). This Platonic context may perhaps be relevant to the correct interpretation of Plotinus’s thought here and elsewhere where he speaks of the vision of the Good.

2 Cp. Republic VII. 517B5.

πηγήν καὶ ἀρχὴν τοῦ καλοῦ. Πο ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ
tάγαλων καὶ καλῶν πρῶτον δησεται; πλὴν ἕκει τὸ
καλόν.

1 Cp. Phaedrus 245C9: the context of the phrase there is,
however, quite different.
2 Plotinus in these last sentences is discussing questions of
language; he is very conscious of the inadequacy of all human

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origin of beauty; or one will place the Good and
the primal beauty on the same level. In any case,
however, beauty is in the intelligible world.

Language to describe the realities here under discussion, and
is prepared to tolerate a variety of ways of expressing the
relationship of beauty to the Good; cp. the discussions of the
same subject in V. 5. 12 and VI. 7. 22. The one thing he
insists on is that true beauty is only to be found in the
intelligible world, not in that of sense-perception.
1. 7. ON THE PRIMAL GOOD

Introductory Note

This short treatise is the last which Plotinus wrote before his death; in it we find the essentials of his moral and religious teaching in their simplest form. In the first chapter he establishes briefly the necessity of accepting the transcendent Platonist Good, refuting Aristotle's rejection of it according to Aristotle's own principles. Then, after stating that life is a way of sharing in the Good and so a good, he shows that death, the death he himself saw approaching, is a greater good than life in the body.

Synopsis

If, as Aristotle says, a thing's proper good is its full natural activity, then that to which the soul directs its best activity will be the Absolute Good; this has no activity directed towards other things but is the source and goal of all activities; it is, in a truer sense than Aristotle's Unmoved Mover, the supreme object of desire (ch. 1). Unity, existence, form, life, intellect are all in their degree ways of sharing in the Good, and soul approaches the Good through its life and intellect (ch. 2). But if life, then, is a good, is not death an evil? No, for life in the body is only good in so far as the soul separates itself from the body by virtue, and death, the separation of soul and body, brings the soul to a better life (ch. 3).
I. 7. (54) 

I. 7. ON THE PRIMAL GOOD AND THE OTHER GOODS

1. Could one say that the good for a thing was anything else than the full natural activity of its life? If the thing was made up of many parts, would not its good be the proper, natural, and never-failing activity of the better part of it? So the soul’s activity will be its natural good. Now if it is of the best sort itself and its activity is directed towards the best, this best will not only be the good for it but it will be the good absolutely. Then if something does not direct its activity towards another thing, since it is the best of beings and transcends all beings, and all other things direct their activities towards it, it is obvious that this will be the Good, through which other things are enabled to participate in good. All the other things which have the good like this will have it in two ways, by being made like it and by directing their activity towards it. So if the aspiration and activity towards the best is good, the Good must not look or aspire to something else, but stay quiet and be the “spring and origin” of natural activities, and give other things the form of good, not by its activity directed to them—for they are directed to it, their source. It must not be the Good by activity or thought, but by reason of its made in what follows to lead up to a Platonic view of the Absolute Good.

1 These first lines are a compressed summary of Aristotelian and Stoic views about the good of the individual which are 268
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μονὴ τάγαθον εἶναι. Καὶ γὰρ ὅτι ἐπέκεινα
20 σῶσις· ἐπέκεινα καὶ ἐνεργεῖα καὶ ἐπέκεινα νοῦ καὶ νοῆσεως. Καὶ γὰρ ὁσ᾽ ὁταῦτα δεῖ τάγαθον
τίθεσθαι, εἰς ὁ πάντα ἀναρτητα, αὐτὸ δὲ εἰς
μηνὸν οὗτο γὰρ καὶ ἀληθὲς τὸ οὐ πάντα
ἐφισταί. Δεὶ οὖν μὲνεν αὐτό, πρὸς αὐτός δὲ
ἐπιστρέφειν πάντα, ὡσπερ κύκλον πρὸς κέντρον
25 ἀνά πάσαι γραμμαῖ. Καὶ παρὰ δείγμα τὸ ἦλιον
διπλάνο κέντρον ὅπερ τὸ φῶς τὸ παρ᾽ αὐτόν
ἀναρτητόν πρὸς αὐτὸν πανταχοῦ γονί μετ᾽
αὐτοῦ καὶ οὐκ ἐπιστρέφεται καὶ ἀποτρέπειν
ἐθέλησις ἐπὶ δακτύλῳ, πρὸς τὸν ἦλιον ἐστὶ τὸ φῶς.
2. Τὰ δὲ ἄλλα πάντα πρὸς αὐτὸ πάντες· Ἡ τὰ
μὴν ἐμφύσα πρὸς ἐμφύσα, ἐμφύσα δὲ πρὸς αὐτό διὰ
νοῦ. ἂν δὲ τὶ αὐτῷ τῇ ἐν ποιεῖ καὶ τῷ ὅπου
ἐκατοντα εἰδώς. Καὶ μετέχει δὲ καὶ ἐϊδοὺς ὅς
οὕτου μετέχει τούτων, ὡστε καὶ τὸν ἄγαθον,
6 Εἰσὶν δόξα τοῦ ἄγαθον· ἄν γὰρ μετέχει, οὕτως ὅστος καὶ ἕνος, καὶ τὸ ἐϊδοὺ ποιώσασθαι. ὡς τὴ ἐξ
τῆς μὲν πρώτης ἢ ἐκατοντα νόην, ἐγγονήσω ἀληθείας,
καὶ διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ διὰ τοῦ ἀγαθοῦ, εἰ ὃς ἐκεῖνον ἀληθείας·
νοοῦ δὲ μετὰ τὰγαθῶν. Ζωῆ τοῦν, ὅτοι τὸ ἦλιον, τὸ ἄγαθον,

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very abiding. For because it is "beyond being," 1 it transitions activity and transcends mind and thought. For, to put it another way, one must assume the Good to be that on which everything else depends and which itself depends on nothing; for so the statement is true that it is that "to which everything aspires." 2 So it must stay still, and all things turn back to it, as a circle does to the centre from which all the radii come. The sun, too, is an example, since it is like a centre in relation to the light which comes from it and depends on it; for the light is everywhere with it and is not cut off from it; even if you want to cut it off on one side, the light remains with the sun.

2. And how is everything else directed towards it? Soulless things are directed towards soul, and soul to the Good through intellect. But soulless things too have something of it, because each particular thing is one somehow and is existent somehow. Soulless things, too, share in form; and as they share in unity, existence and form, so they share in the Good. In an image of the Good, that is to say; for what they share in are images of existence and the One, and their form in an image too. But the life of soul, of the first soul which comes next after intellect, is nearer to truth, and this first soul has through intellect the form of good. It can have the Good if it looks to it (Intellect comes after the Good). Life, then, is the good to that which

1 Aristotle's definition of the Good (Nicomachean Ethics I. 1094a3) here applied to the transcendent Plutonic Good, probably not without some remembrance of Aristotle's Unmoved Mover in Metaphysics A 7. 1072a-b, which moves all things as the object of desire.

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10 καὶ νοῦς, ὅτε νοῦς μέτεται· ὅστε δὲ τῷ ζωῆς μετὰ νοῦ, διὰ χάς καὶ ἐπὶ ἀυτῆ.

3. Εἰ δ’ ἡ ζωή ἀγαθῶν, ὑπάρχει τοῦτῳ ζωῆς παντί; Ἡ οὐ δὲ χελεύει γιὰρ ἡ ζωὴ τῷ φαύλῳ, ὡσπερ ὅμω τῷ μὴ καθήρος ὀροντι· οὐ γὰρ ποιεῖ τὸ ἐργον ἄλτου. Εἰ δὲ η ἡ ζωή ἡμῖν, ἣ μεμεικται

κακῶν, ἀγαθῶν, πῶς οὐχ θάνατος κακῶν; Ἡ τί; Τὸ γὰρ κακὸν συμβεβηκάνει δεῖ τῷ· δ’ δ’ οὐκ ἐστὶν ἐτι δὲ, ἣ, εἰ ἐστιν, ἐστερημένον ζωῆς, οὐδ’ οὐδὲ κακῶν ἀοοδόν, ὑστερ οὐδὲ κακῶν; τῷ ἄνθρωπῳ. Εἰ δ’ ἐστὶ ζωή καὶ φυσικὴ μετὰ θάνατον; ἢ ἐὰν εἰς ἀγαθῶν, οὐσι μᾶλλον ἐνεργεῖ τῇ αὐτῆς ἀνευ σώματος. Εἰ δὲ

τῆς διής γίνεται, τί ἐκ κεῖνος ἐχεί κακών; Καὶ ὁλος ὑστερόν τοῖς θεοῖς ἀγαθῶν μὲν ἐστὶ, κακῶν δὲ οὐδέν, οὐσι μὲν τῇ φυσικῇ τῇ σωμάτω τῷ καθαρῷ αὐτῆς· εἰ δὲ μὴ σημαίνεται, ἡμῖν ἡ θάνατος αὐτῆς κακόν· ἢ, ἢ μη; ζωή. Εἰ; δὲ καὶ ἐν Ἀιδών δίκαιον, πάλιν αὐτῆς ἡ ζωή κακοὶ· ὅτι μὴ ζωή μᾶλλον; Ἀλλ’ εἰ σύνοδος μὴν ψυχῆς καὶ σώματος

ζωῆς, θάνατος δὲ διάλυσις τούτων, ἡ ψυχή ἐστὶ ἀμφιτέρων δεκτή. Ἀλλ’ εἰ ἀγαθὴ ἡ ψυχή, πῶς ὁ θάνατος οὐ κακόν; Ἡ ἀγαθή μὲν ἡ ψυχή δὲ ἐστίν, ἀγαθῶν οὐ καθόθουν σύνοδος, ἀλλ’ ὅτι δ’ ἀρετῆς ἀμικτικῆς τῷ κακῶν· ὁ δὲ θάνατος μᾶλλον

ἀγαθός; Ἡ λειτυάν αὐτῆς μὲν τῇ ἐν σαρκί ζωῆς κακῶν τῷ; ὅτι δ’ ἀρετῆς ἐν ἀγαθῳ γίνεσθαι τῇ ψυχῇ οὐ κακάν τῷ σώματος, ἀλλ’ ἡ δ’ ψυχῆ παρίσταται κατὰ ὁμοίως.

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lives, and intellect to that which has a share in intellect; so that if something has life and intellect, it has a twofold approach to the Good.

3. If life is a good, does every living thing have this good? No; in the bad, life limps; it is like an eye in one who does not see clear; it is not doing its proper work. But if our life, in its mixture of evil, is good, why is not death an evil? Evil for whom? Evil must happen to someone; and as for what does not exist any more or, if it exists, is deprived of life, there is nothing evil for this, just as nothing is evil for a stone. But if life and soul exist after death, then there is good, in proportion as it pursues its proper activity better without the body. If it becomes part of the universal soul, what evil can there be for it there? And altogether, just as the gods have good and no evil, so there is no evil for the soul which keeps its purity; and if it does not keep pure, it is not death that is an evil for it, but life. Even if there are punishments in Hades, it will be again life that is an evil for it, there too, because it is not simply life. But if life is a union of soul and body, and death is their separation, then the soul will be adapted to both. But if life is good, how can death not be an evil? Life is good to those for whom it is a good, not in so far as it is a union but because by virtue it keeps away evil; and death is a greater good. We must say that life in an body is an evil in itself, but the soul comes into good by its virtue, by not living the life of the compound but separating itself even now.
I. 8. ON WHAT ARE AND WHENCE COME EVILS

Introductory Note

This is again a very late treatise (No. 51 in Porphyry's chronological order). Its primary object appears to be to provide a solid metaphysical foundation for Plotinus's moral teaching about the necessity of purifying the soul by separating it from the material. This it does by showing that evil is not an imperfection or weakness of the soul but has an independent quasi-existence and is identical with matter. The treatise falls into three parts: the first (chs. 1–5) is intended to show that there is an absolute evil and that it is identical with matter, absolute formlessness; the second (chs. 6–7) is a commentary on Plotinus's favourite text from the Theaetetus (178A), coupled in ch. 7 with others from the Timaeus (47E–48A and 41B), in which two important objections to the idea of an absolute contrary to good, drawn from Aristotle's logic, are refuted; they are, that the existence of a term does not necessarily imply the existence of its contrary and that substance has no contrary; the third part (chs. 8 to 10) deals with a series of objections to the idea of matter as absolute evil, which come from various sources, mostly Aristotelian and Stoic.

The genuineness of various parts of the treatise has been attacked by Thedinga and Heinenann. Bréhier refutes their arguments briefly but adequately in the introduction to the treatise in his edition.

Synopsis

What is evil and how do we know it (ch. 1)? It cannot be included in what exists or in what is beyond existence. There is no evil in the Good, Intellect or Soul (ch. 2). It must, then, be absolute non-existence, formlessness and immemoratness (ch. 3). Bodies are evil in the second degree, not absolute evil, and soul is not evil in itself at all; its evil comes from matter (ch. 4). Matter is absolute deficiency, not any particular evil but the source of them all (ch. 5). Commentary on a text from the Theaetetus, with refutation of objections drawn from Aristotle's logic (ch. 6). Linking of the Theaetetus text with texts from the Timaeus (ch. 7). It is never pure form, but form in matter and corrupted by matter which causes particular evils like ignorance and bad desires (ch. 8). We know particular evils by measuring them against good and seeing the falling short, but absolute evil by a process of extreme abstraction which leads to a "seeing which is not seeing" (ch. 9). Matter is evil by its very absence of quality (ch. 10). Refutation of arguments which make evil a privation, an impediment, or a weakness in the soul (chs. 11–14). The relationship between matter and soul and the nature of the soul's fall into matter (ch. 14). Summing-up, with emphasis on the moral implications of the doctrine (ch. 15).
1. Οἱ ἐπιτόντες, πάθεν τὰ κακά, εἶτ' ὅσον εἰς τὰ δότα εἴτε περὶ γένεις τῶν ὄντων παρελθούσεν, ἀρχήν ὡς προσήκουσιν τῆς ἐπιτόντες ποιήσεις, εἰ τί ποτ' ἐστι τὸ κακῶν καὶ ἡ κακία φύσις πρότερον ὑπάθειντο. Οὕτω γὰρ καὶ ὅθεν ἔλθοντε καὶ ὅπου ἠρισταὶ καὶ ὁταν συμβεβίβηκε γνωσθείσης, καὶ ὅπου εἰ ἔστιν ἐν τοῖς ὀσῶν ὁμολογηθεῖσι. Κακοῦ δὲ φῶς τῶν ποτὲ διαμέιντον ἐν ἑαυτῷ γυναικείον τὴν γνώσεως ἐκάστων διὰ ὁμοιότητος γνωσμένης, ἀπερίαν ἐν ἑαυτῇ. Νοσεῖ μὲν γὰρ καὶ πολὺς ἐν τοῖς ὀσῶν διὰ τοῦτο 10 εἰδῶν καὶ τὴν γνώσιν ὑποδότον, καὶ πρὸς αὐτὰ ἐν ἑαυτῷ ἐδοχού τὴν ἀρχήν εἰδος δὲ τὸ κακῶν πῶς ἀν τῶν ἀναλύγοντα ἐν ἀποφαίνεια παντὸς ἁγαθοῦ ὑδαλ- λόμενον; Ἀλλ' εἰ, ὅτι τῶν ἐναντίων ἡ ἀναλήγησιν ἐν εἰσιτήρω καὶ τὸ ἁγαθὸν ἐναντίον τὸ κακόν, ἢτερ τοῦ ἁγαθοῦ, καὶ τοῦ κακοῦ ἐστιν. 15 Ἀναγκαῖον περὶ ἁγαθοῦ διέδωκα τοῖς μέλλουσιν τῷ κακῷ γινόμενοις, ἐπείπερ προγιγυγόμενα τὰ ἀρέσκεια τῶν χειρόνων καὶ εἶδον, τὰ δ' οὖ, ἀλλὰ στέρησις μᾶλλον. Ζήτημα δ' ὁμοιός καὶ πῶς ἐναντίον τὸ ἁγαθὸν τῷ κακῷ 'ει μὴ ἅρμα, ως τὸ μὲν ἅρμα, τὸ δὲ ἐσχάτον, ώς τὸ μὲν ἡ σύνοδος, τὸ δὲ ἡ αἴτησις. 20 Ἀλλὰ ταῦτα μὲν ὑπάρχουν.
2. Now we must state what is the nature of the Good, as far as the present argument requires. It is that on which everything depends and "to which all beings aspire"; they have it as their principle and need it: but it is without need, sufficient to itself, lacking nothing, the measure and bound of all things, giving from itself intellect and real being and soul and life and intellectual activity. Up to it all things are beautiful. But he is beautiful beyond all beauty, and is king in the intelligible realm, transcending the best—intellect there is not the sort one might conceive on the analogy of our so-called intellects which get their content from premises and are able to understand what is said, and reason discursively and observe what follows, contemplating reality as the result of a process of reasoning since they did not have it before but were empty before they learnt, though they were intellects. Intellect there is not like this, but has all things and is all things, and is with them when it is with itself and has all things without having them. For it is not one thing and they another; nor is each individual thing in it separate; for each is the whole and in all ways all, and yet they are not confused, but each is in a different sense separate; at any rate what participates in it does not participate in everything at once, but in what it is capable of. That intellect is the first act of the Good and the first substance; the Good stays still in himself; but intellect moves about him in its activity, as also it lives around him. And soul dances round intellect outside, and looks to it, and in contemplating its interior sees God through it. "This is the life of the gods," without
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD I. 8.

The passage from the doubtfully genuine Platonic Second Letter (312E1-4) is one of the foundation-texts of Neo-Platonic theology. 2

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sorrow and blessed; evil is nowhere here, and if things had stopped here there would not have been any evil, only a First and the second and third goods. "All things are around the King of all, and That is the cause of all good and beautiful things, and all things belong to That, and the second things are around the Second and the third around the Third."

3. If, then, these are what really exists and what is beyond existence, then evil cannot be included in what really exists or in what is beyond existence; for these are good. So it remains that if evil exists, it must be among non-existent things, as a sort of form of non-existence, 2 and pertain to one of the things that are mingled with non-being or somehow share in non-being. Non-being here does not mean absolute non-being but only something other than being; not non-being in the same way as the movement and rest which affect being, 2 but like an image of being or something still more non-existent. The whole world of sense is non-existent in this way, and also all sense-experience and whatever is posterior or incidental to this, or its principle, or one of the elements which go to make up the whole which is of this non-existent kind. At this point one might be able to arrive at some conception of evil as a kind of unmeasuredness in relation to measure, and unboundedness in relation to limit, and formlessness in relation to formative principle, and perpetual neediness in relation to what is self-sufficient; always undefined, nowhere stable, subject to every sort of influence, insatiable, complete poverty: and logically distinct from being ("motion" means something different from "being") but to refer to matter as a pseudo-being something which really is not being, a real unreality.

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These words seem to be a rather stupid gloss on the sentence which follows. Plotinus speaks of both Intellect (VI. 5.11, VI. 6.18) and the One (V. 6.4) as "measure which is not measured," the absolute standard of measurement which transcends all that is measured or numbered and is the source of measure or number.

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is the substance of evil (if there really can be a substance of evil); this is what our argument discovers to be the primal evil, absolute evil.

4. The nature of bodies, in so far as it participates in matter, will be an evil, not the primal evil. For bodies have a sort of form which is not true form, and they are deprived of life, and in their disorderly motion they destroy each other, and they hinder the soul in its proper activity, and they evade reality in their continual flow, being secondary evil. The soul

is not in itself evil, nor is it all evil. Which, then, is the evil soul? It is the sort of thing which Plato means when he says "those in whom the part of the soul in which evil naturally resides has been brought into subjection," that is, it is the irrational part of the soul which is receptive of evil, that is of unmeasurability and excess and defect, from which come unrestrained wickedness and cowardice and all the rest of the soul's evil, involuntary affections which produce false opinions, making it think that the things which it shuns and seeks after are evil and good respectively. But what is it which produces this evil, and how are you going to trace it back to the source and cause of evil which you have just described? First of all, this kind of soul is not outside matter or by itself. So it is mixed with unmeasurability and without a share in the form which brings order and reduces to measure, since it is fused with a body which has matter. And then its reasoning part, if that is damaged, is hindered in its seeing by the passions and by being darkened by matter, and inclined to matter, and altogether by looking towards becoming, not being; and the principle of becoming is the nature of matter, which is so evil
that it infects with its own evil that which is not in it but only directs its gaze to it. For since it is altogether without any share in good and is a privation of good and a pure lack of it, it makes everything which comes into contact with it in any way like itself. The perfect soul, then, which directs itself to intellect is always pure and turns away from matter and neither sees nor approaches anything undefined and unmeasured and evil. It remains, therefore, pure, completely defined by intellect. That which does not stay like this, but goes out from itself because it is not perfect or primary but is a sort of ghost of the first soul, because of its deficiency, as far as it extends, is filled with indefiniteness and sees darkness, and has matter by looking at that which it does not look at (as we say that we see darkness as well as the things we really see).

5. But if lack of good is the cause of seeing and keeping company with darkness, then evil for the soul will lie in the lack (or the dark] and this will be primary evil—the darkness can be put second—and the nature of evil will no longer be in matter but before matter. Yes, but evil is not in any sort of deficiency but in absolute deficiency: a thing which is only slightly deficient in good is not evil, for it can even be perfect on the level of its own nature. But when something is absolutely deficient—and this is matter—this is essential evil without any share in good. For matter has not even being—if it had it would by this means have a share in good; when we say it “is” we are just using the same word for two different things, and the true way of speaking is to say it “is not.” Deficiency, then, involves being not good, but...
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absolute deficiency evil: great deficiency involves the possibility of falling into evil and is already an evil in itself. On this principle one must not think of evil as this or that particular kind of evil, injustice for instance or any other vice, but that which is not yet any of these particular evils; these are a sort of species of evil, specified by the matter which they concern or the parts of the soul, or by the fact that one is like a sort of seeing, another like an impulse or experience.

But if one considers that things external to the soul are evils, illness or poverty for instance, how will one trace them back to the nature of matter? Illness is defect and excess of material bodies which do not keep order and measure; ugliness is matter not mastered by form; poverty is lack and deprivation of things which we need because of the matter with which we are coupled, whose very nature is to be need. If this is true, then we must not be assumed to be the principle of evil as being evil by and from ourselves; evils are prior to us, and those that take hold on men do not do so with their good will, but there is an “escape from the evils in the soul” for those who are capable of it, though not all men are. Though there is matter with the visible gods evil is not there, not the vice which men have—since not even all men have it; the visible gods master matter,—yet the gods with whom there is no matter are better—and they master it by that in them which is not in matter.

6. We must consider, too, what Plato means when he says “Evils can never be done away with,” but exist “of necessity”; and that “they have no
Here again we have Theaelelus. 1?GA (cp. 1. 2. 1.

Plotinus dearly means to reject the suggested interpretation of Plato in terms of the spatial other-worldliness common in his own day; which would make earth the place of evil among the gods, but haunt our mortal nature and this region for ever. 1 Is it meant that heaven is "clean of evil" because it always moves regularly and goes on in order, and there is no injustice or other vice there, nor do the heavenly bodies do injustice to each other, but go on in order but on earth there is injustice and disorder? For this is what is meant by "mortal nature" and "this place." But when he says "we must take flight from thence" he is no longer referring to life on earth. 2 For "flight," he says, is not going away from earth but being on earth "just and holy with the help of wisdom"; what he means is that we must fly from wickedness; so evil for him is wickedness and all that comes from wickedness; and when the answering speaker in the dialogue says that there would be an end of evils "if he convinced men of the truth of his words" Socrates answers that "this cannot be; evils must exist of necessity, since the good must have its contrary." But how can human wickedness be the contrary of that transcendent Good? Human wickedness is contrary to virtue, and virtue is not the Good, but a good, which enables us to master matter. How can anything be contrary to the transcendent Good? It is not of a particular quality; and then what universal necessity is there, that if one of a pair of contraries exists, the other must also exist? Granted that it is possible, and may in fact be the case, that when one contrary exists, the other does also—as when health exists sickness can also exist—

1 Here again we have Theaelelus 176A (cp. 1. 2. 1).

2 Plotinus clearly means to reject the suggested interpretation of Plato in terms of the spatial other-worldliness common in his own day; which would make earth the place of evil
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD I. 8.

"Η σῶκ ἀνάγκη λέγειν αὐτὸν, ὡς ἐπὶ παντὸς ἐναντίον τούτῳ ἐλθέως, ἀλλ' ἐπὶ τού ἀγαθοῦ ἐσχη
tαι. Ἀλλ' εἰ ὁ ὅσιόν τάγαθον, πῶς ἐστὶν αὐτὸ τι ἐναντίον; ἦ τῷ ἐπίκενων ὁσίας; Τὸ μὲν ὅν μὴ
eἶναι μὴ δεὶν ὁσία ἐναντίον ἐπὶ τῶν καθ' ἐκαστα
tῶν ὀσιῶν ἐστὶν πρῶτον τῇ ἐπαγγελγῇ ἔδειγμένον
tόλως δὲ ὁσία, ὃ ἐστίν ὁσίαν. Ἀλλὰ τὶ τῇ
cαθάλοι ὁσία ἐναντίον καὶ ἀλώς τοῖς
tρώτοις; ἦ τῷ μὲν ὁσίῳ ἡ μὴ ὁσία, τῷ δὲ
ἀγαθῷ φύσει ἦτι τις ἐνεκτί κακοῦ φύσει καὶ ἄρχη
tο ἡμῖν ἢ μὲν κακῶν, ἢ δὲ ἀγαθῶν· καὶ
tά πάντα τὰ ἐν τῇ φύσει ἕκαστρα ἐναντία· ὅστε καὶ
tὰ ὅλα ἐναντία καὶ μάλλον ἐναντία ἡ τὰ ἄλλα.
Τὰ μὲν γὰρ ἀλλὰ ἐναντία ἐν τῷ αὐτῷ εἰδε ᾧ
tὰ τῶν αὐτῶν γένει καὶ κοινῶν ἔστι μετακλη
tῶν ἐν οἷς ἔστιν· ὅδε δὲ χρῶς ἔστι, καὶ ἢ τῷ
teρμα ἐστὶν οὐκ ἑπικόλουχον τὸν ὃ ἔστι, τοῖς τά
tά ἐναντία ἐν τῷ ἐναντίῳ ἐν τῷ ἐναντίῳ ἐναντίον,
έπειτα ἐναντίον τὰ πλείστον ἄλλων ἀφε
tηκότα; Περαιτέρα δὴ καὶ μέτρητα καὶ [τὰ ἄλλα,] διὰ 
ἐναντία ἐν τῇ θείᾳ φύσει, ἀπερίκα καὶ ἀμετρία καὶ
tὰ ἄλλα, διὰ ἐξελε ἡ κακή φύσει, ἐναντία· ὅστε 
cαὶ τὸ ὅλον τῷ ὅλῳ ἐναντίον. Καὶ τὸ ἐναντίον 
τὰ ἐναντία καὶ μάλλον ἐναντίον ἐναντίον δὲ 
tὸ ὅλον τῷ ἐναντίῳ ἐναντίον· ὅστε καὶ καθι 
τὸ ἄλλῳ ἐναντίῳ ἐναντίον καὶ τὸ μὴ ἐναντίον 
tὸ κατ' ὁσίαν αὐτῆς ἐναντίον. Ως ἦν ἡ ἀνα-

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not necessarily mean that this is true in the case of
every contrary; he is only referring to the Good. But
if the Good is substance, or something which tran-
gends substance, how can it have any contrary?
That there is nothing contrary to substance is es-
tablished by inductive demonstration in the case of
particular substances; but it has not been demon-
strated that this applies in general. But what can
there be contrary to universal substance and, in
general, to the first principles? Non-substance is
contrary to substance, and that which is the nature
and principle of evil to the nature of good: for both
are principles, one of evils, the other of goods; and all
the things which are included in each nature are
contrary to those in the other; so that the wholes are
counter, and more contrary to each other than are
the other contraries.
For the other contraries be-
long to the same species or the same genus and have
something in common as a result of this belonging.
But things which are completely separate, and in
which there are present in one the contraries to
whatever is necessary for the fulfillment of the being
of the other, must surely be most of all contraries, if
by contraries we mean things that are furthest of all
removed from each other. Indefiniteness and un-
measuredness and all the other characteristics which
the evil nature has are contrary to the definition and
measure and all the characteristics present in the
divine nature; so the whole, too, is contrary to the
whole. The evil nature, too, has a false being,
primary and absolute falsehood; the being of the
divine is true being; so that as falsehood is con-
trary to truth, so is the non-substantiality of the
evil nature contrary to the substantial reality of
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There is an allusion here to *Politics* 273B5 and 114 Timaeus 47B5-48A1.

1 Timaeus 47B5-48A1.
2 There is an allusion here to *Politics* 273B5 and 114.
3 Timaeus 41B2-4. If the material universe is never to be dissolved, then matter—evil—is a permanent element in our mortal life, from which we cannot escape by getting into a

the divine. So we have shown that it is not universally true that there is nothing contrary to substance. Besides, even in the case of fire and water, we should accept that they were contraries if they did not have matter as a common element in them, in which hot and dry and wet and cold occurred as accidents. If they only had the things which go to make up their substantial forms without what they have in common there would be here too a contrariety of substance to substance. So things which are altogether separate, and have nothing in common, and are as far apart as they can be, are contrary in their very nature; for their contrariety does not depend on quality or any other category of being, but on their furthest possible separation from each other, and on their being made up of opposites and on their contrary action.

7. But how then is it necessary that if the Good exists, so should evil? Is it because there must be matter in the All? This All must certainly be composed of contrary principles; it would not exist at all if matter did not exist.

What comes into it from God is good; the evil comes from the "ancient nature" (Plato means the underlying matter, not yet set in order). But what does he mean by "mortal nature," granted that "this place" refers to the All? The answer is given where he says "Since you have come into being, you are not immortal, but you shall by no means be dissolved" through me. If this is so, the statement is superior part of the universe but only by a radical inner detachment: from the body.
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8. But if someone says that we do not become evil because of matter—giving as a reason that ignorance is not caused by matter, nor are bad desires; even supposing that their coming into existence is caused by the badness of body, it is not the matter but the form that causes them, heat, cold, bitter, salt and all the forms of flavour, and also fillings and emptyings, and not just fillings, but fillings with bodies of a particular quality; and in general it is the qualified thing which produces the distinction of desires, and, if you like, of falsified opinions, so that form rather than matter is evil—how then will he be compelled all the same to admit that matter is evil. For what the
"A the yap poi ei ή ἐν ἡλ η ποιητής, οὐ χωρίς οὐδέν ποιεῖ, ὡσπερ οὐδὲ τὸ σχῆμα τοῦ πελάκεως ἄνευ σαρκίου ποιεῖ: εἶτα καὶ τὰ ἐν τῇ ὑλῇ εἰδὴ σύ ταυτά ἐστι, ἀπερ ἂν, εἰ ἐν' αὐτῶν ὑπάρχων, ἀλλὰ 15 λόγοι ἐνυλοὶ ὑφαίνοντες ἐν ὑλῇ καὶ τῆς φύσεως τῆς ἐκείνης ἀναπληροῦντες οὐδὲ γὰρ τὸ ποὺ αὐτὸ καλεῖ οὐδὲ ἄλλο τὶ τῶν ἐν' αὐτῶν ταῦτα ἠργάζεται, ἀ ἐν τῇ ὑλῇ γενόμενα λέγεται ποιεῖν. Γενομένη γὰρ κυρία τοίς εἰς αὐτήν ἐμφανιζόμενος 20 φθείρει αὐτὸ καὶ διάλλα τὴν αὐτῆς παραθέσει φύσιν ἐναντίαν ἐστι, οὐ τῷ θερμῷ τῷ φύσει προσφέροντα, ἀλλὰ τῷ εἰδικῷ τῷ θερμῷ αὐτῆς ἀνείδους προσβάλλοντα, καὶ τῇ ἀμφίβολῃ τῇ μορφῇ καὶ ὑπερβολῇ καὶ ἐλλειψιν τῆς μετερμαχών, ἐστὶ 25 ἀν αὐτῷ ποιήσῃ αὐ-γ-μ-η, ἀλλὰ μὴ αὐτῷ ἐτε εἶναι, ὡσπερ ἐν τῷ ἔδοξεν τῷ ὑπερεκκλείνει μηρείτε εἶναι ὑπὲρ προσελθεῖσθαι, ἀλλὰ αἷμα κακὸς καὶ πάν χίλιον, καὶ χηροὶ πάντες πέπει τῷ διβοημένῳ ἐκείνῳ. Εἰ δὲ οὕσε σάρκεσ αὐτῶν τῶν κακῶν, ὡς ἂν εἴῃ καὶ ταῦτα αὕτων τῶν κακῶν. Ἀλλὰ κρατεῖν ἐδέ, ἄλλος ἂν εἴποι. Ἀλλ' οὐ καθαρὸν τὸ 30 δυνάμενον κρατεῖν, εἰ μὴ φύγοι. Καὶ ὁμοίως ἐπιθετεῖ ἐὰν ἐπιθυμίᾳ κρατήσῃ ταῦτα σωμάτων, ἄλλοι δὲ ἄλλων, ὡσεί μὴ κρατεῖν τὸ ἐν ἐκαίνι, ἀμβλύτερον δὲ καὶ πρός τὸ κράτειν διὰ σωμάτων ἀκρίβειας κατατηροῦμεν καὶ ἐπιτηδεύομεν, εἰ δὲ ἐναντίον ποιοῦσιν ἀνεματιστόσιν. Μαρτυρεῖσα δὲ ταῦτα καὶ 35 ἂν πρός καρδίαν ἔχει. Πλήρεις μὲν γὰρ ἄλλοι καὶ

1 Cp. Aristotle, De Anima B. 1. 412b12. This is good Aristotelian doctrine used to lead to a very un-Aristotelian conclusion.
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are full we are different, both in our desires and our thoughts, from what we are when we are empty, and when we have eaten our fill of one kind of food we are different from what we are when we are filled with another.

So then, let unmeasure be the primary evil, and that which is in a state of unmeasuredness by likeness or participation evil in a secondary sense, because its unmeasuredness is accidental. Primary evil is the darkness, secondary evil the darkened, in the same way. Vice, which is ignorance and unmeasuredness in the soul, is evil secondarily, not absolute evil: just as virtue is not primary good, but that which is made like to or participates in it.

9. With what, then, do we know good and evil? First, of all, with what do we know vice? We know virtue by our very intellect and power of thought; it knows itself: but how do we know vice? Just as with a ruler we know what is straight and also what is not straight, so we know what does not fit with virtue. Do we see it then or do we not see it when we know it, vice I mean? We do not see absolute wickedness, because it is unbounded; we know it by removal, as what is in no way virtue; but we know vice which is not absolute by its falling short of virtue. So we see a part, and by the part which is there we grasp what is not there, which is in the complete form but missing in that particular thing, and so we speak of vice, leaving the missing part in indefiniteness. So too, when for instance we see an ugly face in matter, because the formative principle in it has not got the better of the matter so as to hide its ugliness, we picture it to ourselves as ugly because it falls short of the form.
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But how do we know what has absolutely no part in form? By absolutely taking away all form, we call that in which there is no form matter; in the process of taking away all form we apprehend formlessness in ourselves, if we propose to look at matter. So this which sees matter is another intellect which is not intellect, since it presumes to see what is not its own. As an eye withdraws itself from the light so that it may see the darkness and not see it—leaving the light is so that it may see the darkness, since with the light it cannot see it; but without something it cannot see, but only not see—that it may be able to see in the way it is possible to see darkness; so intellect, leaving its own light in itself and as it were going outside itself and coming to what is not its own, by not bringing its own light with it experiences something contrary to itself, that it may see its own contrary.

10. So that is how this is. But if matter is without quality, how is it evil? It is called “without quality” because it has in its own right none of the qualities which it is going to receive and which are going to be in it as their substrate, but not in the sense that it has no nature at all. Well then, if it has a nature, what prevents this nature from being evil, but not evil in the way it would be if it had quality? Furthermore, quality is that in virtue of which something else is said to have quality. So quality occurs accidentally, and in something else, but matter is not in something else, but the substrate on which the accident occurs. Since it has not the quality which has the nature of an accident, it is said to be without quality. Then too, if quality in itself is without quality, how could matter which
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD I. 8.

This is the Aristotelian doctrine, implying the distinction between matter and privation which forms the basis of Aristotle’s criticism of the Platonic doctrine of matter.

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has not received quality be said to have it? So it is rightly said to be both without quality and evil; for it is not called evil because it has, but rather because it has not quality; so that perhaps it would not have been evil if it was a form instead of a nature opposed to form.

11. But the nature which is opposed to all form is privation; but privation is always in something else and has no existence by itself. So if evil consists in privation, it will exist in the thing deprived of form and have no independent existence. So if there is evil in the soul, it will be the privation in it which will be evil and vice, and nothing outside. There are some lines of argument which claim to abolish matter altogether, and others which say that though it exists it is not itself evil; so [on these assumptions] one should not look for evil elsewhere, but place it in the soul in such a way that it is simply absence of good. But if the privation is privation of a form which ought to be present, if the privation in the soul is a privation of good and produces vice in the soul corresponding to its own definition, soul then has no good in it; so then it has no life in it, though it is still soul. So then soul will be soulless, if it has not even any life in it; so though it is still a soul it will not be a soul. But it has life by its own definition; so it does not have the privation of good from itself: so it is a thing of a good kind since it has some good, a trace of intellect, and it is not evil of itself. It is not then primary evil, nor is primary evil an accident of it, because the good is not altogether absent from it.

(Physics I. 9) and which is attacked by Plotinus in II. 4. 14 (see note there).
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD I. 8.

12. But what is the answer if someone says that the vice and evil in the soul is not absolute privation of good, but only a [particular, limited] privation of good? In this case, if it has some good and is deprived of some, it will be in a mixed state and the evil will not be undiluted, and we have not yet found primary, undiluted evil: and the soul will have good in its very substance, but evil as some kind of accident.

13. But perhaps evil is an impediment to good, as the eye has impediments which prevent its seeing. Yea, but in this way evil will be what produces evil for the things where it occurs, and produces it in such a way that the actual evil produced is different from the evil which produces it. If then vice is an impediment to the soul, it is not evil but something which produces evil; and virtue is not the good, except in so far as it helps to produce it: so if virtue is not good, vice is not evil. Then too, virtue is not absolute beauty or absolute good; so it follows that vice is not absolute ugliness or absolute evil. We said that virtue was not absolute beauty or absolute good because absolute beauty and absolute good are prior to it and transcend it; it is good and beautiful by some kind of participation. So just as when one goes up from virtue one comes to the beautiful and the good, when one goes down from vice one comes to absolute evil, taking vice as the starting-point. One will contemplate it with the contemplation which belongs to absolute evil, and participate in it when one becomes it: one enters altogether into "the region of unlikeness" when one sinks into it in Confessions, VII. 10. 16. The "mud" is Orphic, taken over by Plato. Cp. Phaedo 63Cff.

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1 Plato speaks of the "bottomless sea of unlikeness" in Politicus 6730D-EL. S Augustine uses Plotinus's phrase, in regione dissimilitudinis, of the state of alienation from God.
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and has gone falling into the mud of darkness; for when the soul is fallen utterly into utter vice, it no longer has vice, but has changed to another nature, a worse one (for vice which is mixed with anything of its contrary is still human). So it dies, as far as the soul can die, and its death, while it is still plunged in the body, is to sink in matter and be filled with it, and, when it has gone out of the body, to lie in matter till it raises itself and somehow manages to look away from the mud; this is "going to Hades and falling asleep there."

14. But if someone says that vice is a weakness of the soul—pointing out that the bad soul is easily affected and easily stirred, carried about from one evil to another, easily stirred to lust, easily roused to anger, hasty in its assents, giving way freely to confused imaginations, like the weakest of the products of art or nature, which the winds or the sun's heat so easily destroy—_it will be worth enquiring what this weakness is and where the soul gets it from. For weakness in the soul is not just like that in bodies; but incapacity for work and being easily affected, as in the body, so by analogy in the soul has the name of weakness: unless we are to refer weakness in the soul to the same cause as that in the body, matter. But we must get to grips with the question, what is the cause for what we call weakness in the soul: it is not density or rarity or thinness or fatness, or an illness, like fever, which makes the soul weak. This kind of weakness of the soul must be found either in those souls which are completely separate or in those which are in matter.

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1 Republic VII. 584C7-D1.
2 Cp. Republic II. 380E5.
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20 ἐν ταῖς ἐνύλοις ἢ ἐν ἀμφοτέροις εἶναι. Ἐά δὴ μή 25 ἐν ταῖς χωρὶς ὕλης—καθαρὰ γὰρ πᾶσι καὶ τὸ λεγόμενον ἐπτερεύμενα καὶ τέλειον: καὶ τὸ ἐργόν αὐτά τοῖς ὑπερήφανοις—λοιπὸν ἐν ταῖς πεποίησις εἶναι τὴν ἀσθένειαν, ταῖς οὐ καθαραῖς οὐδὲ κεκαθαρωμέναι, καὶ η ἀσθένεια αὐτά τα ἢ ἂν οὐκ ἀραίης τοῦ ὀλλὰ ἀλλοτρίῳ παρουσία.

25 ὡσπέρ φλέγματος ἡ χολής ἐν σώματι. Τοῦ δὲ πτωμάτος το αίτων ψυχή σαφέστερον λαμβάνονται καὶ ὡς προφέρει λαβεῖν καταφανὲς ἐστι τὸ ἐκτυπώμενον ἡ ψυχῆς αἰσθήσει. Ἐστὶν ἐν τοῖς οὐδὲν ὕλῃ, ἠσθενῶ δὲ καὶ ψυχῆς, καὶ οἴνῳ τόπως εἴη τις.

Οὐ γὰρ χωρὶς μὲν ὁ τόπος τῇ ὕλῃ, χωρὶς δὲ ἄδικο. 30 τῆς ψυχῆς—οἴνῳ δὲ μὲν ἐν γῇ τῇ ὕλῃ, ὁ δὲ ἐν ἀέρι τῆς ψυχῆς—ἀλλ' ὁ τόπος τῆς ψυχῆς χωρὶς τὸ μὲν ἐν ὕλῃ τοῦτο δὲ τὸ μὴ ἐνωθέρι τῇ ὑλῇ τοῦτο δὲ τὸ μὴ ἐν ὑπερέκτυμον τῇ ὕλῃ γενόθημ'' καὶ τοῦτο ἐστὶ τὸ χωρὶς εἶναι. Διόνυσος δὲ 35 ψυχῆς πολλαὶ καὶ ἁρχὴν καὶ μέσα καὶ ἐσχατὰ ψυχῆς ἤδη, ὅπως τῷ παρουσίᾳ προσωπεῖ καὶ οἶνῳ καὶ ἀνοχεῖ καὶ καὶ τὸ ἐν εἰς παραλλαγὴν θέλει, πάντα δὲ τὸ χωρίον ἐρέσι καὶ ωδέν ἐστιν ὁ ἀμοιβὴν ἐστὶ ψυχής. 'Ελλαμπρεῖ ὁνὶ ὑποβαθμόνα ἐστὶ καὶ ἄδικος ὁ μὲν ἐλλαμπρεῖ ὁ δὲ ἄμετα ὁδρῶν ὁδρῶν ὁδρῶν ἐγὼ ἀνέκτων αὐτὴν ἐκεῖνον καὶ παραδίκην, δι'

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or in both. So if it is not in those without matter—
they are all pure, and, as Plato says, "winged and
perfect" and their activity is unhindered—it remains
that the weakness must be in the souls which have
fallen, those which are not pure and have not been
purified; and their weakness will not be a taking
away of something, but the presence of something
alien, like the presence of phlegm or bile in the body.
When we understand the cause of the fall of the soul
more clearly, and as it ought to be understood, what
we are looking for, the soul's weakness, will be ob¬
vious. There is matter in reality and there is soul
in reality, and one single place for both of them.
For there are not two separate places for matter and
for the soul—on earth, for instance, for matter and
in the air for the soul: the soul's separate place is its
not being in matter; and this means not being united
to matter; and this means that not one single thing
comes into being from it and matter; and this means
that it is not in matter as a substratum; and this is
being separate. But there are many powers of
soul, and it has a beginning, a middle and an end;
and matter is there, and begs it and, we may say,
bothers it and wants to come right inside. 1 All
the place is holy, 2 and there is nothing which is
without a share of soul. So matter spreads itself
out under soul and is illumined, and cannot grasp
the source from which its light comes: that source
cannot endure matter though it is there, because

1 Phaedrus 216B7. Cl.
2 The word ρακόνεια may be a reminiscence of Symposium.
3 Sophocles Oedipus at Colonus, 54; cp. 16. If Plotinus
fully remembered what he was quoting, and the passion of

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its evil makes it unable to see. Matter darkens the illumination, the light from that source, by mixture with itself, and weakens it by itself; offering it the opportunity of generation and the reason for coming to matter; for it would not have come to what was not present. This is the fall of the soul, to come in this way to matter and to become weak, because all its powers do not come into action; matter hinders them from coming by occupying the place which soul holds and producing a kind of cramped condition, and making evil what it has got hold of by a sort of theft—until soul manages to escape back to its higher state. So matter is the cause of the soul's weakness and vice: it is then itself evil before soul and is primary evil. Even if soul had produced matter, being affected in some way, and had become evil by communicating with it, matter would have been the cause by its presence: soul would not have come to it unless its presence had given soul the occasion of coming to birth.

15. If anyone says that matter does not exist, he must be shown the necessity of its existence from our discussions about matter, where the subject is treated more fully. But if anyone says that there is no evil at all in the nature of things, he must also abolish the good and have no object to aim at, and, for that matter, no aiming or avoidance or intelligence; for aiming is at the good and avoidance, of the evil, and intelligence and practical wisdom deal with good and evil, and are a good in themselves. So there must be good, and unmixed good, and that which is a mixture of bad and good, when it has a larger share of evil making itself totally evil, when it has a smaller share tending, because the evil is less.
to the good. What, after all, is the evil of the soul? What soul would have it if it did not come into contact with a lower nature? If it did not there would be no desires or sorrows or passions or tears; for fears are for the composite nature, dreading its dissolution; and sorrows and pains belong to it when it is being dissolved; desires arise when something interferes with the composition or when one is planning a remedy to prevent its being interfered with. Imagination is from a stroke of something irrational from outside; and the soul is accessible to the stroke because of what in it is not undivided. It has false opinions because it has come to be outside absolute truth; and it has come to be outside by not being pure. The impulse towards intellect is a different kind of thing; all that is necessary here is to be with intellect and established in it, without inclination to what is worse. But because of the power and nature of good, evil is not only evil; since it must necessarily appear, it is bound in a sort of beautiful fetters, as some prisoners are in chains of gold, and hidden by them, so that it may not appear in its charmelessness to the gods, and men may be able not always to look at evil, but even when they do look at it, may be in company with images of beauty to remind them.
I. 9. ON GOING OUT OF THE BODY

Introductory Note
This short treatise is one of the early group (No. 16 in the chronological order), written before Porphyry joined Plotinus; it cannot therefore present the arguments Plotinus used to discourage Porphyry from suicide (Life ch. 11). Creuzer supposed it to be an abridgement taken from the edition of Eastochius; Heinemann, a paraphrase or summary (and an inaccurate one) by Porphyry which has displaced the original text; but there seems no sufficient reason against believing, with Brehier, Harder, Henry and Schwizer, that it is the genuine treatise of Plotinus which held this place in Porphyry's edition.

Synopsis
If you take your soul out of your body by suicide, something evil will come with it; one must wait till the body goes from the soul by natural death; the violent emotions, too, which accompany suicide, harm the soul. One must not therefore go out of the body by suicide except in the case of desperate necessity.

Plotinus on Voluntary Death
L. G. Westernhoven has shown convincingly that this is not any sort of genuine quotation from Plotinus ("Elias and Plotin", Byzantinische Zeitschrift 57 (1964) 26-32); the editors are agreed that it should be deleted from the works of Plotinus (Addenda ad textum in OCT Plotinus vol. III, p. 307). But as it is still printed in vol. I of the OCT Plotinus I have retained the text and translation. [A.H.A. 1886]
1. 9. ON GOING OUT OF THE BODY

You shall not take out your soul, so that it may not go; for if it goes thus, it will go taking something with it so that it can manage to get out; and going out is moving to another place. But the soul waits for the body to depart altogether from it; then soul does not have to change its place, but is completely outside. But how does the body depart? When nothing of soul is any longer bound up with it, because the body is unable to bind it any more, since its harmony is gone; as long as it has this it holds the soul. But suppose someone contrives the dissolution of his body? He has used violence and gone away himself, not let his body go; and in dissolving it he is not without passion; there is disgust or grief or anger; one must not act like this. But suppose he is aware that he is beginning to go mad? This is not likely to happen to a really good man; but if it does happen, he will consider it as one of the inevitable things, to be accepted because of the circumstances, though not in themselves acceptable. And after all, taking drugs to give the soul a way out is not likely to be good for the soul. And if each man has a destined time allotted to him, it is not

I. 9. (16) ΠΕΡΙ ΕΞΑΙΔΩΓΗΣ

Οὐκ ἐξῆκες, ὅνα μὴ ἐξῆκε. ἐξελέφανται γὰρ ἔχουσα τι, ὅνα καὶ ἐξελέφανται, τὸ τε ἐξελέφανται ἔστι; μεταβὰνται εἰς ἄλλον τόπον. Ἀλλὰ μὲν τὸ σῶμα ἀποστάναι πᾶν αὐτῆς, ὅτε μὴ δεῖται μετελθεῖν, ὅλον ἔστι πάντη ἔξω. Πῶς οὖν ἀφιστάται τὸ σῶμα; Ὅταν μὴν ἔτι διδομένη ἡ τῆς ψυχῆς ἀδυνατούσῃ ἔτι τοῦ σώματος αὐτῇ ἀποκαθίστασιν, ἀρκετὸν ὑπὲρ, ἐν ἔχον εἰκῇ τῆς ψυχῆς. Τι οὖν, εἰ μικρόσυμοτε τις λειτάρια τὸ σῶμα; Ἡ ἐξάσσαι καὶ ἀπεῖται αὐτῶν, οὐκ ἔκειν αἵθικεν ὑπὲρ ὑπὲρ ἔκειν ὑπὲρ ἔκειν ὑπὲρ ἔκειν ὑπὲρ ἔκειν ὑπὲρ ἔκειν ὑπὲρ 10 καὶ ὅτε λυτεῖ, οὐκ ἀπαθεῖ τι, ἀλλ' η διασφάλισθαι ἤ λυπή ἤ θυμός: δει δὲ μηδὲν πράττειν. Εἰ οὖν ἄρχην αἴσθητον τοῦ ληφθῆναι; Ἡ τάγα μὲν οὐ περί συνειδούσαι τι δε καὶ γένοσι, τάπητ' ἀν ἐν τοις ἀνάγκαιοι τούτο καὶ ἐκ τις περιστασεῖς αἴρετον, οὐκ ἀπλῶς αἴρετοι. Καί γὰρ ἴ τοις φαιμάσων 15 προσσεγομένη πρὸς ἐξελέφαντας Ἰησιῶν τάγα ἴνα ψυχή οἱ πρόσφοροι. Καὶ εἰ εἰμαρμηνευῖς χρόνος ο ὁδικεῖς

1 This cryptic saying is stated by the Byzantine Psellus to have been taken by Plotinus from the *Chaldaean Oracles* (PG122. 11250-B); if so, it would be the only place in the

Enneads where Plotinus quotes from this sort of occultist literature, but it is by no means certain whether Plotinus is quoting the oracle or whether the oracle was later taken from Plotinus.

The "five ways of reasonable departure" are the five good reasons for suicide according to the Stoics; cp. Stoicorum Veteranum Fragmenta III 788. In I. 4. 7-8 and I. 5 Plotinus 324.

ON GOING OUT OF THE BODY

a good thing to go out before it, unless, as we maintain, it is necessary. And if each man's rank in the other world depends on his state when he goes out, one must not take out the soul as long as there is any possibility of progress.

Plotinus on Voluntary Death
(In Elias, Prolegomena 6. 15. 23-16. 2.)

Plotinus writes a single treatise about "reasonable departure" and does not accept any of these five ways: he says, that just as God does not leave off taking thought for us, but we make ourselves unfit and think God is far from us when he is always present equally to all, as men of pure life show, who came to see God face to face and be his close companions; and just as the sun dispenses his light equally, but bats, because they are unfit for the sunlight, fly from him and are not enlightened by him, but think that he is darkness when he is the source of light; so the philosopher must imitate God and the sun and not neglect: his body altogether in caring for his soul, but take thought for it in the appropriate way till it becomes unfit and separates itself from its community with the soul. It is all wrong to take oneself out before the right time, when he who bound body and soul together looses the bond.

does in fact accept at least three of them, long and extremely painful illness, madness, and, probably, coercion to immoral behaviour (I. 4. 74-45) as reasons for suicide.