PLOTINUS
ENNEAD II
WITH AN ENGLISH TRANSLATION BY
A. H. ARMSTRONG

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II. 1. ON HEAVEN (ON THE UNIVERSE)

Introductory Note

This treatise is No. 40 in Porphyry’s chronological order. Its purpose is to defend the doctrine, vigorously maintained by all pagan Neoplatonists, of the incorruptibility of the heavens and the heavenly bodies, the unchangingness and everlastingness of everything in the regions above the moon. This was one of the main points of disagreement between Christians and pagans in late antiquity. But, though Plotinus seems to have the Christian doctrine of the end of the world in mind at the end of ch. 4, his arguments in this treatise are mainly directed against Stoics and Stoicising Platonists who interpreted Plato’s Timaeus to fit in with their own doctrines that the universe as a whole, including the heavenly regions, was subject to change in a regular, never-ending cycle, and that there was a real community of substance and interaction between the regions below and the regions above the moon. Plotinus is concerned to refute these errors without falling into the opposite, Aristotelian, heresy that the heavens are made of the “quintessence” or fifth element, and not, as Platonists held, of fire.

Synopsis

What is the reason why the visible heaven is everlasting in all its parts as well as the whole? The will of God and the fact that there is nothing outside it are not sufficient explanations (ch. 1). Plato’s view that all bodies are in a state of flux, and our rejection of Aristotle’s “fifth element” make the explanation more difficult, but none the
II. 1. (40) ΠΕΡΙ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ

1. Τὸν κόσμον ἀεὶ λέγοντες καὶ πρόσθεν εἶναι καὶ ἔσεσθαι σῶμα ἔχοντα εἶ μὲν ἐπὶ τὴν βουλήν του θεοῦ ἀνάγωμεν τὴν αἰτίαν, πρῶτον μὲν ἀληθὲς μὲν ἄν ὅσοι λέγομεν, σαφῆνειαν δὲ συνειδήμα τὸν 5 παραχωμέθα. Ἐκεῖνα τῶν στοιχείων ἡ μεταβολή καὶ τῶν ζῴων τῶν περὶ γῆν ἡ φθορά τὸ εἴδος σύρχουσα μὴ ποτε οὕτω καὶ ἐπὶ τοῦ παντὸς ἄξωσις γένεσθαι ἃς τῆς βουλήσεως τοῦ δυναμικῆς άεὶ ὑπεκφεύγοντο καὶ ρέστος τοῦ σώματος ἐπιτελεῖν τὸ εἴδος τὸ αὐτὸ ἀλλοτρίον ἄλλω, ὡς μὴ σύρχεσθαι τὸ 10 ἐν άρμαν ἐλ. τὸ ἄει, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἐν τῷ ἔδει: ἐπὶ διὰ τι τὸ μὲν οὕτω κατὰ τὸ εἴδος μόνον τὸ ἄει ἔξει, τά δ' ἐν εὑραμένη καὶ αὐτὸς ὁ εὑραμός κατὰ τὸ τόδε ἔξει τὸ ἄει; Ἐλ δὲ τῷ πάσα τούτων συνειληφέναι καὶ μη ἔως εἰς ὁ τὴς μεταβολῆς πείραται μηδὲ τὸ ἐξεβεν ἀν προσειδον φθείραι δύνασθαι ποτὲ. 15 δύοντες τὴν αἰτίαν τῆς οὗ φθορᾶς, τῷ μὲν δόλῳ καὶ πάντι δύοντες ἐκ τοῦ λόγου τοῦ μη, ἃ φθαρῆιναι, ὁ δ' ἡμὶς ἡμῖν καὶ τῶν άλλων ἁστρών ἡ ὁδὸς τῷ

1 This is a reference to Plato, Timaeus 41B4 (the address of the Demiurge to the gods whom he has made, of whom 8.
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are parts, and not each of them a whole and all, the argument will give no assurance that they will last forever; they will have only permanence of form, and the same will apply to fire and such-like things, and even to the whole universe itself. For there is nothing to prevent it, even if it is not being destroyed by something from outside, from having its own continual destruction as its parts destroy each other, and so being permanent only in form; as its substratum is in continual flux and its form comes from elsewhere it will be in the same state as every living thing; man and horse and the rest; man and horse always exist, but not the same man and horse. So there will not be one permanent part of the universe, like the heaven, while the things on earth pass away, but all will be alike, differing only in the time they last; for we can grant that the things in heaven last longer. If then we admit that both the whole and the parts are permanent in this way, our doctrine will be less difficult: or rather we shall have got completely out of our difficulty, if it can be shown that the will of God is adequate to hold the All together in this way and manner. But if we say that any individual constituent of the All, whatever its size, is permanent, we must show that the divine will is adequate to make it so; and the difficulty remains why some things are permanent in this way and others are not, but have only permanence of form, and also why the parts in heaven are permanent as well as the whole; since on the supposition that they are it would seem that all the parts of the universe were permanent.

2. Thus, then, we accept this view and maintain that the heaven and everything in it last for ever as
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Republic VII. 530B2-3 (slightly adapted). Plato is here arguing that the true, philosophical astronomer should not seriously study the motions of the visible heavenly bodies, which, being material, are imperfect and changeable, but devote his attention to the laws of motion perceived by the intellect alone.

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individuals, but the things below the sphere of the moon are only everlasting in form, we must show how heaven, which has a body, can have proper individual identity, in the sense that each particular detail remains unchanged, when the nature of body is in continual flux. This is the view held by Plato himself, as well as by all other natural philosophers, not only about other bodies but about the heavenly bodies themselves. For "how," he says, "when they have bodies and are visible can they be unchangeable and always the same?" agreeing, obviously, in this, too, with Heraclitus, who said that the sun kept on coming into being. There would be no difficulty for Aristotle, if one accepted his assumption of the fifth body. But for those who do not postulate this fifth element but hold that the body of the heaven is composed of the same elements of which the living creatures down here are made, the question does arise how there can be individual identity. And still more, how can the sun and the other things in heaven be individually everlasting when they are parts? Now every living thing is composed of soul and the nature of body: so it follows necessarily that the heaven, if it exists for ever as one and the same individual, must owe its immortality either to both of its component parts or to one or other of them, i.e. soul or body. Anyone, then, who attributes indestructibility to the body will have no need of the soul for this purpose, except that it will always have

1 Republic VII. 530B2-3 (slightly adapted). Plato is here arguing that the true, philosophical astronomer should not seriously study the motions of the visible heavenly bodies, which, being material, are imperfect and changeable, but devote his attention to the laws of motion perceived by the intellect alone.

to be with the body to make up the living creature. But anyone who says that the body is in itself destructible and makes the soul the cause of immortality will have to try and show that the character of body is not essentially opposed to permanent association with soul, that there is no natural discord between the components, but that even the matter of body must be favourably disposed to assist the purpose of the accomplishing power.

3. How, then, can the matter and body of the All, when it is always in a state of flux, cooperate towards the immortality of the universe? It is, we should say, because it flows in itself; it does not flow out. If, then, it flows in itself and not away from itself, it remains the same and does not increase or decrease; so it does not grow old either. One must observe that the earth, too, remains always from eternity in the same shape and bulk and the air never fails, nor does the nature of water; and all that changes of them does not alter the nature of the total living thing. With us too, though parts of us change and go away outside us, each individual lasts a long time; and when something has no outside, the nature of body is not so discordant with the soul as to prevent it being one and the same everlasting living thing.

Fire is keen and swift by not staying here below (just as earth will not stay above); when it comes there where it has to stop one must not think of it as being so firmly established in its own place that it does not, like the other elements, seek a position for itself in both directions. Now it cannot go any higher, for there is nothing beyond; and it is not its nature to go down. It remains for it to be tractable
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and, drawn by soul to an excellent life in a way according with its nature, to move in soul in a noble place. If anyone is afraid it will fall, he should feel reassured: the soul’s guidance on its circular path anticipates any tendency to decline, mastering it and holding it up: and if fire has no spontaneous inclination downward, it stays in place without resistance. Our own members, which come to be in a definite shape, cannot maintain their own structure and demand portions from other things to make them last: but if there is no loss by flux in heaven there is no need for nourishment. If anything was lost there through fire being extinguished, other fire would have to be kindled; and if it had this other fire from something else and that something else lost it by flux, that again would have to replaced by other fire. But as a result of this the universal living creature would not remain the same thing, even if it remained the same sort of thing.

4. But we ought to consider this question in itself, and not in relation to our main investigation, whether anything in heaven is lost by flux so that the heavenly bodies do need nutrition (not in the strict and proper sense of the word), or whether the beings there, once established, remain naturally and endure no loss by flux; and also whether there is only fire or whether fire predominates and it is possible for the other elements to be carried up and held on high by the dominant fire. If one takes into account the sovereign cause, the soul, along with bodies of the kind which exist in heaven, pure and altogether better than those of earth (for in other living things, too, nature selects and places in their most important
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19. Gā ἡ φύσις—πάγων ἰν τὴν δύσαν πεί τοῦ οὐρανοῦ 
τῆς ἀδαμασίας λάβῃ. Ὄρθος γὰρ καὶ Ἀριστοτέλες 
tὶν φόρον ἐξείρησεν καὶ πέρ ἐπὶ διὰ κόρων 
τῶν ἁβραίων τὸ δὲ ἐκεῖ ὁμολογοῦν καὶ ἴρμανοὺν καὶ τῇ 
tῶν ἀτυχεῖν πρὸς ἄφεσιν φινεύσει. Τὸ δὲ δὴ μέγαστον, 
15 τὴν ψυχὴν ἐφεξῆς τοῦ ἀρίστου καταστάσεις δυνάμει 
θαμμαστὶ καλέντα, πῶς ἐκφεύγεται τι αὐτὴν εἰς 
tὴν μὴ εἰναὶ τῶν ἁπάν τού ἄρτα τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; Μὴ 
παντὸς δὲ θεοῦ ὀνείρησεν κρείστονα εἶναι ἐκ θεοῦ 
ἀρχήναν, ἀνθρώπους ἀνείρων ἀντί οὖν τῆς 
συνεχόμενης τὰ πάντα. "Ἀποτον γὰρ τὴν καὶ 
20 ὅσονοι διοικήσαντες συνέχειας μὴ καὶ ἀλ 
ποτέ τε τούτο, ὡσπερ βιά τοῦ συνεχός γεγονότο 
καὶ τοῦ κατὰ φόρον ἄλλου ἡ συντροφία ὑπὲρ, ἐν ἑν 
tοῦ παντὸς ἐστὶ φύσει καὶ ἐν τῶν καλῶν τεθένω 
ἐκ τοῦ τοῦ παντός ἄρετος φύσει καὶ ἐν τοῖς 
καλῶν τοῦ βασιλεύου καὶ διαλύσατος τὴν 
συντροφίαν καὶ οὐν βασιλεύουν νῦν καὶ ἀρχής 
25 καταλύσατος τὴν ψυχήν φύσαι. Τὸ τε μήποτε 
ἀρέσατο—ἀποτον γὰρ καὶ ἒναίαν ἐπιστεῖν 
καὶ περὶ τοῦ μελλόντος ἔσχε. Διὰ τὸ γὰρ ἔστι 
ἐκεῖ καὶ νῦν ὑπέρ τὸ γὰρ ἐκπηρετεύτω 
ἐσπερ ξύλα καὶ τὰ τουάτα μενιόντων δ' ἄει καὶ 
τὸ πᾶν μένει. Καὶ εἰ ἐν μεταβάλει ἄει, τὸ πᾶν 
30 μένει, μένει γὰρ καὶ ἡ τῆς μεταβολῆς αἰώνα. Ἡ 
δὲ μετάνοια τῆς ψυχῆς ἐπὶ κανὸν ἕστω νικήτημα.

18 CP. Aristotel, Meteorologica A. 3. 344b23 and 4. 341b22.
2 Plotinus particularly disliked the idea that the divine power which made the universe might change its mind and 

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parts the bodies of better quality), one will have a 
1 solid conviction about the immortality of the heaven. 
Aristotle, certainly, is right in calling flame a "boiling-over;1 fire rioting because it is full fed; but fire in heaven is equable and placid, adapted to the 
nature of the stars. But the greatest argument of 
all is: when soul, moved with a marvellous power, 
is situated next after the best of realities, how can 
anything which was once set in it escape from it 
into non-being? Only those who have no under-
standing of the cause which holds all things together 
would not think soul, sprung from God, stronger than 
your bound. For it would be absurd for soul, if it is 
able to hold the universe together for any length of 
time, however short, not to do so for ever, as if it 
held it together by force and the natural state 
of affairs was other than this existing one which is in 
the nature of the universe and the noble disposition 
of things, or as if there was someone who was going to 
dissolve the universal structure by violence and 
depose the nature of soul as if from some sort of 
kingship or magistracy. The fact, too, that it had 
no beginning—we have already said that that would 
be absurd—gives us assurance for the future. For 
why should there come a time when it exists no 
more? The elements do not wear out like pieces of 
wood and things of that kind; and if they last the 
All lasts. And even if they are continually changing, 
the All lasts; for the cause of change endures. And 
we have shown that it is empty to suppose that 
soul might change its mind;2 for its direction of the 
destroy it. He had already attacked it in his treatise Against 
the Gnostics (II. 4).
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universe is without trouble or harm to it; and even if it were possible for all body to perish, nothing unpleasant would happen to soul.

5. How then do the parts in heaven last, but down here the elements and living things do not last? Because, Plato says, the heavenly things derive their being from God, but the living things down here from the gods derived from him; and it is not lawful for the things which derive their being from him to perish. This amounts to saying that the heavenly soul (and our souls too) comes next in order after the maker of the universe: from the heavenly soul comes out an image of it and so to speak flows down from above and makes the living things on earth. Since, then, this kind of soul tries to imitate the soul up there but is unable to because it is using worse bodies for its making and is working in a worse place, and since the ingredients which it takes for its composition are unwilling to endure, the living things here cannot last for ever and the bodies are not as effectively mastered by soul as if the other (heavenly) soul ruled them directly. But if the heaven must last as a whole, then its parts, the stars in it, must last too; how could it last if they do not last as well? (The things under heaven are no longer part of heaven; if we assumed that they were, then heaven would not stop at the moon.) We, however, are formed by the soul given from the gods in heaven and heaven itself, and this soul governs our association with our bodies. The other soul, by which we are ourselves, is cause of our well-being, not of our

1 Timaeus 60C3-5.
2 Cp. Timaeus 41A7-B5.
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elai, oú tòv elai oígía. Ἱδὴ γονὴ τοῦ αἵματος ἔχεται γενομένῳ μικρά ἐκ λογίσμῳ πρὸς τὸ ἐλαιοφανεμένῳ.

6. Ἀλλὰ πάτερον πῦρ μόνον καὶ εἰ ἄπορρέθει ἐκείνην καὶ δεῖ τα τροφῆς τῶν σκεπτόν. Τῷ μὲν οὖν Τιμάιῳ τὸ τοῦ πνεύματος σώμα πεποιηκότα πρῶτον ἐκ γῆς καὶ πυρὸς, ἔνα ὀρατόν τὸ ὕδατόν τῷ πῦρ, στεροῦσθαι δὲ διὰ τὴν γῆν, ἀπολύθειν οἴσιν καὶ τὰ ἀστρα ποιεῖν. οὐδὲν ἀλλὰ τὸ πλέον πυρὸς ἔχειν, ἐπειδὴ τὰ ἀστρα τὸ στερεύνεται ἐκεῖνα. Καὶ τοιοῦ ὄρθως ἐν ἐχοῖν συνεπείραστος καὶ Πλάτωνος τῷ εἰσόδῳ τῆς γραμμῆς ταύτης. Παρὰ μὲν γὰρ τῆς αἰσθητοῦ κατὰ τῇ διήνυ κατὰ τῇ τῆς ἄφρος ἀντίληπτον πυρὸς ἔχειν τὸ πλέον ἢ τὸ τῶν φαίνεται, διὰ νῦ τὸ πλέον ἀναπαράσκευα, εἰ τὸ στερεύστω ἡμῖν γῆς οὐκ ἔνα ἡμῖν, καὶ γῆς ἢ ἔχοι. Τότε μὲν δὲ καὶ ἄρθρο τὶ ἔν ἑνοῦ; Ἀποτελέσθε τῇ γῇ διότι ἐπιτείνων εἰμί ἐν τοϊκότητι πυρὸς, δὲ τῆς ἐνθεὶ ἀνεάλητον ἄν τοι πυρὸς φάνον.

15 Ἀλλὰ εἰ δύο στερεῶν ἄκρων λόγων ἔχοντα διὸ μέσον δεῖται, ἀπέρησθην ἐν τῇς, εἰ καὶ ἐν φαντασμοῖς ὁυίσκη- ἐνεύς καὶ γῆς ἢ τοῖς ἐπικλεῖσαν ὀδύνεις δερθείς μέσον. Εἰ δὲ λόγοις ἑνταχθεῖν γὰρ ἥν ἐν τῇ γῆς καὶ τῷ ἐντεύ καὶ τὰ ἄλλα, διότι οὕτως τὸ λέγεται εἶναι αὐτῶν τῆς τοῦ ἄλλον ὑπὸ τοῦ ἐν. ἄλλοι ὀφίς τὸ

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being. It comes when our body is already in existence, making only minor contributions from reasoning to our being.

6. But now we must consider whether the heavenly bodies are made of fire only, and whether anything flows away from them and so they need nourishment. To Timaeus, who formed the body of the All primarily from earth and fire, so that it might be visible by means of the fire and solid by means of the earth, it seemed consistent to make the stars contain, not all fire but mostly fire, since the stars obviously have solidity. And he is probably right, since Plato agrees that this view is probable. From our senses-perception, by sight and the apprehension of contact [with their rays], they seem to contain all fire or mostly fire; but if we consider them rationally, we see that, if there is no solidity without earth, they must contain earth. But what need would they have of water and air? It will seem absurd to suppose that there is any water in so much fire, and if there was any air in it, it would change into the nature of fire. But even if two solids standing in the relationship of extremes need two middle terms, one might find it difficult to suppose that this logical relationship held good for natural bodies; for one can mix earth and water without needing any middle term. But if we say "The other elements are already present in earth and water" there will, perhaps, appear to be some sense in this argument, though one might object. These other elements will not serve to bind

1 Timaeus 31B4-8.
2 Timaeus 40A2-3.
3 This is, perhaps, a reference to what Plato makes Timaeus say at 32B3-34, that his account of the formation of the universe is a probable but not a certain one.
4 Timaeus 32B2-3.
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20 συνόδευσιν συνώντα τὰ δῶ. ἄλλ' ὀμοφ. ἐροῦμεν ἡδον συνδέεσθαι τῷ ἑκέντερον πάντα. ἄλλ' ἐπισκεπτόμεν, εἰ ἀνείν πυρὸς σχή όρατον γῆ, καὶ ἄνει γῆς, ὑπ' οὐσίαν ὁποτε, εἰ γὰρ τοῦτο, τάξι̑ν ὁποτέ ἐκέτερον τὴν ἀκτίναν οὐδεν, ἀλλ' πάντα μὲν μέμυκται, λέγεται δὲ κατὰ τὸ ἐπιστράτευν ἐκείνων. Ἐπεὶ οὐδὲ θεία γῆν ἀνείν ὄγραφο φαινείσθαι δύναται γᾶλλα γὰρ εὕνετο τῇ γῆς τὴν ἐστιον ἐγράφη. ἄλλ' εἰ καὶ διώσκομεν σώματα, ἀλλ' ἐκείνων χείρον λέγοντα εὑνε τῇ ἐπιτο οὐκ ἔτον μηδενοὶ κἀδιδάναι σύναι αὐτῷ, μετὰ δὲ τῶν ἀλλών ὅμοιοι, ὀσμένοι ἐκέστοι ἄντοι. Πῶς

25 γὰρ ἀν εἰς γῆς φόσιν καὶ τῷ τὸ ἐνεῖρε γῆς μέσον ὁποτε. μορίον γῆς τῷ ἐπιστράτευν, εἰ μηκιών καὶ κατοχὺν καὶ μόνον ἔναν γῆς ἐνεῖρεν χείρον, εἰς κόλλησις οὖ οὐκ ἔκεκλάμθον, ὄπλος λεύκον συνεχές συνάνθει, εἰ γὰρ καὶ ἐκείνων μέσο ἐπι τῷ ἐπιστράτευν, εἰς γῆς φόσιν καὶ ἀνείν ἔτον εὑνε, εἰ μηκιών τούτου, 30 οὐδὲν εὑνει, δὴ κατασκευάσει ὕπο τοῦ ὅμοιοι. Ἁέρος δὲ τῷ τὸ δύναι γῆς ἐνεῖρεν πρὸς τῷ ἐπιστράτευν ἐπὶ νεμόνιον καὶ ἐπὶ τὸ ἐπιστράτευν. Ποῦ δὲ πυρὸς εἰς μὲν τῷ γῆς εὑνει ὁσκείρητα, εἰς δὲ τῷ ἐπιστράτευν εὐκαίρει καὶ ἀνείν καὶ τῷ ἐπιστράτευν εὐκαίρει πορὰ φωτὸς τὸ ὄρασθαί γένεσθαι. Οὐ γὰρ δὴ τὸ

1 This is the doctrine of Epimenes 981D–E, where all living beings are composed of all the elements, but in the earthly group (men, animals, plants) the earthly and solid elements.

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the two when they come together.” But all the same we shall say [for the sake of argument] that they are joined because of each of them contains all things. But we must consider whether it is true that earth is not visible without fire and fire is not solid without earth. If this is so, it looks as if no element would ever have its own essential nature by itself, but all are mixed and take their names from the dominant element in each. They say that earth cannot have concrete existence without moisture; the moisture of water is earth’s adhesive. But even if we grant that this is so, it is absurd to say that each element is a separate something and not give it any concrete existence but only an existence along with the others, without anything being separate. How could there be a nature and substantial reality of earth if there is no particle of earth which is earth unless water is present in it to stick it together? What could the water stick if there was no bulk of earth at all which it could join to another contiguous particle? And if there is any bulk of absolute earth at all, then earth can exist by nature without water; and if it is not so, there will be nothing to be stuck together by the water. And how could the mass of earth require air for its existence, air that was still air, before it changed? As for fire, it was not maintained that it was needed for earth to exist, but for it and the other elements to be visible, and it is certainly reasonable to agree that visibility comes from light. For we should not say that darkness is

* Timaeus 31B3.
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40 ἄκος ὁμοσπονδία, ἄλλα μὴ ὁραμάτω ψυχαί, διαπερ τὴν ἀμφίβολον μὴ ἀκούσθην. Ἀλλὰ πῦρ γιὰν ἀνήρ ὑπὲρ ἀνάγκη σοφία ψαράνων Ἐὼς γὰρ ἄρδεσ. Χάριν γοῦν καὶ τὰ ψυχάτα αὐτὰ λαμπρὰ πυρὸς ἀνέθην. Ἀλλὰ ἢσαν ταῖς ψυχέσ τις, καὶ ἔφεσε πρὶν ἀπέλθουσιν. Καὶ περὶ ἐστῶς δὲ ἀποφεύγων, ἐὶ μὴ ἐκτὸς ὅφει, εἰ μὴ ἴδος λάβοι. Ἀλλὰ δὲ πᾶς ἄν λέγωντο μετέχειν γῆς εὐθυμίας ὅν; Περὶ δὲ πυρὸς, εἰ γῆς δέ κι αὐτῷ τὸ συνεχείς περὶ αὐτοῦ ὅμως ἐγείρει οὐδὲ τὸ διάστατον τρίχη. Ἡ δὲ στερεώσεις αὐτοῦ, ὡς κατὰ τὴν διάστασιν τὴν ἀτρώτητα, ἄλλα κατὰ τὴν ἀντίθεσιν δηλοῦσι, διὰ τὶ οὐκ ἔστατῃ ἡ φυσικὴ σῶμα. Σωληνίτης δὲ γῆ μόνη. Ἐπεὶ καὶ τὸ πυρὸς τῇ χρώσει ὑθαμεν ὤνς προσαγόμεθα, οὐ γῆς προσαγομενοῖς, ἄλλα πυρκακτῆσης οὐ πυρίζουσιν. Καὶ πῦρ δὲ ἔχον αὐτῷ διὰ τὶ ψυχής παρασκευής οὐ χωκαίμενος πρὸς τὴν δύναμιν αὐτῆς. Καὶ ἔστα δὲ πῦρ ἐν πυρὶ ἀκούσαν, Ἀλλὰ καὶ παραδόμενον τὸ πῦρ ἐν αὐτῷ τὰ πώς ἔγει ἑκάστου τὴν σύστασιν ἔγει. "Η τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς τῶν ἔρεων, γῆρα δὲ εἰς τῶν ὅφεινι ἀνέρω τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐκατένακτοι, οὐκ ἔστατος ὁ πρὸς τὸ πῦρ περὶ τῆς σκόμματος πῦρ ἐναπόδη διὰ τὴν παρακείμενον γεφυρα σώματος αὐτῆς διὰ τῆς σκόμματος πῦρ περὶ τῆς σκόμματος τῆς πυρῆς καὶ τὰ μὲν ὅπως ἐκεῖ πῦρ.  

55 πῶς ἐστὶ δαιμόνιον. Ἀλλὰ καὶ περὶ τῶν ἐν τῆς σύστασιν ἔγει. "Η τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς τῶν ἔρεων, γῆρα δὲ εἰς τῶν ὅφεινι ἀνέρω τὸν ἄνθρωπον ἐκατένακτοι, οὐκ ἔστατος ὁ πρὸς τὸ πῦρ περὶ τῆς σκόμματος αὐτῆς διὰ τὴν παρακείμενον γεφυρα σώματος αὐτῆς διὰ τῆς σκόμματος πῦρ περὶ τῆς σκόμματος τῆς πυρῆς καὶ τὰ μὲν ὅπως ἐκεῖ πῦρ.  

60 καὶ λευκὸν τὸ ἐκεῖ πῦρ.  

7. Τιτοὺς δὲν μὴν ἀλλοτριοῦ χρῆ ἄκούσαν τοῦ Πλάτωνος λέγωντος ἐν μέν τῷ παντὶ κόσμῳ δεῖν ἐκεῖ τὸ γοῦν τῶν στερεῶν, τὸ ἀνίκτου ἔκει, άνα τῇ γῇ ἐκεῖ μὲν ἄτομο ἐπιζητάμεν ἐπιζητάμεν καὶ τοῖς εἶ ἀνίκτης.  

ON HEAVEN (ON THE UNIVERSE)

visible but that it is invisible, just as noislessness is inaudible. But there is no need for fire to be present in earth: light is enough. Snow, anyhow, and many very cold things are bright without fire—but there was fire in them, someone will say, and it coloured them before it went away. And there is a difficulty about water, too; is it not water unless it contains some earth? And how could one say that air has earth in it when it is so unstable? As for fire, one must ask if it needs earth because it has neither continuity nor three-dimensionality of itself. But why has it not solidity (in the sense not of three-dimensionality but of resistance) simply from being a natural body? Hardness is the property of earth alone. For gold, for example, which is water, acquires density not by the accession of earth but of denseness or coagulation.1 And why, then, should not fire, since soul is present to it, attain existence by itself through soul's power? There are, in fact, fiery living beings among the spirits. We shall question the assumption that every living thing is constituted of all the elements. One can agree that this is true of the things on earth, but to lift up earth into heaven is against nature and opposed to her laws; it is not probable that the swiftest of all movements carries round earthly bodies; it would impede the brightness and clearness of the heavenly fire.

7. So perhaps we should listen more carefully to Plato; this is what he says: there must in the universal order be a solidity, that is a resistance, of such a kind that the earth set in the middle may be a foundation.

1 Timeoet 59B1-4.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 1.

5 beamina ideia ta esti authe e authe anagnosin tou taisanoteran ekein, he de ge to me eina suvichos kai par authe ekei, epistamose de upo puro ometekos de 'idatos pros to jh aukhmen-echen de kai merous proso merh mi kaloumata svagwghen aeria de kownsev yge.

10 dekeos: melechnav de toe anoi prob oike doj tis svostase ton astrapon tis ge, all' en kasmur gnomemoun ekastou kai to phe apohadoxai ti tis yge, osper kai ti th yge tou puro kai ekastou ekastou, ouk ous to apohadoxan genesthai e amfous, xastou se kai ouso metekhun, all' kata tis eivn.

15 kaiam kouvainen de en esti labtho oike ai byl all' ti aitou, olo oike aeria, all' aeros ti th apaloqitya kai ti th yge puroi tis lamprftitya. tis de meiv tanta didiouni kai to suymofreton tos ponei, ou yge monoun kai ti th puroi phous, tis astrapotitya.

20 taumati kai ti th pukokhtita. Marptorei de kai autous toipous eipwn. fous anphvven o theos peri thn duneumat apa yge periforoin, ton plnon legon, kai lamprptaton pou lega allauchon ton yloun, ton aitou de leikestimo, apagw evmas ton allo tis koumein proide, puroi de.

25 sudeiron ton edwv aitou ton yloun, all' to fous o phous etereon phlogos eloun, thermou de.

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Position and firm support for those who stand upon it, and the living beings upon it may necessarily have a solidity of this kind; 1 the earth will possess continuity from itself and will be illuminated by fire; it has a share of water to prevent dryness (as, in fact, it has) and so as not to hinder the cohesion of its particles; and air gives lightness to the bulk of earth; but earth is mingled with the upper fire, not in the constitution of the stars but because, since they are both in the universal order, fire gains something from earth as earth does from fire and each element from each of the others; not in the sense that the element which gains something is composed of both, itself and that of which it has a share; but, through the community of the universe, while remaining itself it takes, not the actual other element but something which belongs to it, not air, for instance, but the yielding softness of air, and earth the brightness of fire: the mixture gives all qualities and consequently produces the compound thing, not supplying earth only and the nature of fire but this solidity and density of earth. Plato himself supports this view when he says "God kindled a light in the second circuit from the earth," meaning the sun; 2 and elsewhere he calls the sun "the brightest," 3 and also says it is the clearest; so he prevents us from thinking that it is made of anything but fire, but by fire he does not mean either of the other kinds of fire but the

1 Timaeus 39E1--3 and 39D8. This is not exactly what Plato says but what Plotinus thinks he means. Here, as

2 Timaeus 39D4--5.

3 Theaetetus 208D2: Republic 616E9.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II.1.

PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II.1.

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light which he says is other than flame, and only gently warm. This light is a body, but another light shines from it which has the same name, which we reach is incorporeal. This is given from that first light, shining out from it as its flower and splendour; that first light is the truly bright and clear body. We take "earthly" in the lower sense, but Plato understands "earth" in the sense of "solidity"; we apply the name "earth" in one and the same sense, but Plato distinguishes different kinds of "earth". Now since fire of this kind, which gives the purest light, rests in the upper region and is established there by nature, we must not suppose that the flame down here mingles with the fires of heaven; it reaches a certain way and then is extinguished when it encounters a greater quantity of air, and as it takes earth with it on its ascent it falls back and is not able to get up to the upper fire but comes to a standstill below the moon, so as to make the air finer there; the flame, if it lasts, fades into softness and has not enough brightness to blaze out but only enough to be illuminated by the upper light; the light in the heavens, being varied in different proportions, brings about the distinction of the stars both in size and colour; the rest of the heaven is also made of light of this kind, but is not seen because of the luminous body, closely parallel to life, the ἐνέγγυα of the soul. Cp. iv. 5. 6-7. I have discussed this doctrine and the important place which it holds in the thought of Plotinus in my Architecture of the Intelligible Universe in Plotinus, pp. 54-58.

1 CP. Timaeus 58C5-7.
2 Light for Plotinus is the incorporeal ἐνέγγυα of the...
3 Timaeus 31D3.
4 Plotinus may be thinking of Timaeus 80B6, but the passage is really quite irrelevant to his argument here.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 1.

8. Now when light of this kind stays on high in the place in which it is set, pure in the purest region, what kind of outflow could there possibly be from it? A nature of this kind is certainly not naturally adapted to flow downwards; and there is nothing of a violent sort up there to push it down. Every body is different when it is combined with soul, and not the same as it is when it is left to itself; and body in the heavens is with soul, and not as it would be by itself. And which kind of fire would be either air or fire, and what could air do? And there is no single kind of fire which would be fitted for acting on the heavenly
fire, nor could it make contact to do anything; the heavenly fire would be carried on by its momentum to another place before anything could happen to it; and the fire in the upper air is less in strength, not equal to the fires here on earth. Then, too, it would act by heating; and that which is going to be heated must not be hot of itself. And if anything is going to be destroyed by fire, it must be heated first, and be brought in the heating into an unnatural state. So, then, the heaven needs no other body for it to last or for its revolution to take its natural course; for it has never been demonstrated that its natural movement is in a straight line: it is natural to the heavenly bodies either to stay still or to go round in a circle; other movements belong to beings which are subject to force. We must assert, then, too, that the heavenly beings have no need of nourishment, nor must we base our statements about them on the things here on earth, since they have not the fineness and non-reflecting transparency of its body (just like pure air); and besides this it is far away.
Plotinus: Ennead II. 1.

τὴν αὐτὴν τὴν συνέχουσαν ἐχώντων οὐτε τῶν αὐτῶν τόπων οὐτε αὐτίς οὔτις ἐκεῖ, ἢ' ἢν τὰ τρίτα τρέφεται συγκρίματα λεί σύντατα, τῶν τοις μεταβολήν τῶν τῆς σωμάτων ἢφ' αὐτῶν μεταβαλλέων ἄλλης. 25 ἐπιστατούσης φύσεως αὐτῶν ή' ὑπ' άσθενείας οὐκ οὐδέ κατέχειν εἰς τῷ εἶναι, μείνειν δὲ ἐν τῷ γίνεσθαι ἡ γενναί τῆν πρὸ αὑτῆς φύσιν. Τὸ δὲ μὴ ὁμοίως πάντων, ὡστε τὰ νοητά, εἰρήται.

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same soul holding them together and do not inhabit the same region; and the reason why the compound things on earth are nourished does not apply in heaven; the bodies here are always in a state of flux, and their change is a change away from their true selves, for they are under the direction of another nature, which because of its weakness has no way of keeping them in being, but imitates the nature before it in becoming and generating. —But we have already explained that the heavenly bodies are not in every way unchanging like the beings of the realm of Intellect.
II. 2. ON THE MOVEMENT OF HEAVEN

Introductory Note

This short treatise (No. 14 in Porphyry's chronological order), has an alternative title, *On the Circular Motion*, in the *Tetrabiblos* (ch. 4. 49 and 94. 49), which is used in some modern editions and translations. It is a defence of the Platonic doctrine (the movement of heaven is the bodily expression of the spiritual movement of the soul of the universe) against the Aristotelian conception of movement by an unmoved mover and the materialist explanation given by the Stoics. Heinemann denied the authenticity of the treatise; but its opening words are quoted as being by Plotinus by Proclus, Damascius, Simplicius and Philoponus (references in the Henry-Schwyzer edition and Cilento's commentary); and Heinemann's arguments drawn from the contents of the treatise are adequately refuted by Brehier in his introduction to it (Vo. II, pp. 17-19).

Synopsis

What makes the heaven move in a circle? Its movement cannot be the result of any local or spatial movement of soul, for soul is not moved spatially. The movement of heaven is only local accidentally; it is a movement of awareness and life, the movement of an ensouled living thing. It cannot be the natural movement of fire; fire, like all other bodies, moves naturally in a straight line; circular motion is the result of providence, the action of universal soul—it is not of course unnatural, for "nature" is just what universal soul ordains. Argument against the idea of an unmoved mover (ch. 1). Why do we not move in circles? Our souls, our real selves, which are "private wholes," do move, circling lovingly round God; but our bodies are only parts, and parts whose nature is to move in straight lines (ch. 2). Explanation of *Timaeus* 36E in terms of Plotinus's own psychology (ch. 3).
ΠΕΡΙ ΚΙΝΗΣΕΩΣ ΟΥΡΑΝΟΥ

1. Διὰ τί κύκλῳ κινεῖται; Ἡσιμίν μετέχει. Καὶ τίνος ἡ κάψις, φυσική ἢ σώματος; Τί οὖν ὅτι φυσικῇ ἐν αὐτῇ ἐστι καὶ πρὸς αὐτὴν; Ἡ σπεύδει εἶναι; ἡ ἐστιν ἐν αὐτῇ οὐ συνεχεῖ ὁδός; ἡ φωρομένη συμβεβήκα; 'Αλλὰ ἡ ἐστι συμβιβάσαν μηκέτι φέρειν, ἀλλ' ἐνεργείαι, τουτέστι στήνῃ μᾶλλον ποιήσαι καὶ μὴ ἄτι κύκλῳ. Ἡ καὶ αὐτῇ στήσηται ή, εἴ κινεῖται, οὔτε γε τοπικός. Πῶς οὖν τοπικός καὶ αὐτῇ ἄλλον τρόπον κυμαμένη; Ἡ ἰσος οὐδὲ τοπικὴ ἡ κύκλῳ, ἀλλ' εἴ ἄρα, κατά 10 συμβεβηκός. Ποιά οὖν τις; Εἰς αὐτὴν συναισθησικὴ καὶ συνονομακικὴ καὶ ζωτικὴ καὶ σύναμον ἐξώ οὖν ἀλλ' ἄλλοθι καὶ τὸ πάντα δεῖ περιλαμβάνει τοῦ γὰρ ζωῆς τὸ κάρα διὸ περιλαμβανόμεθα καὶ τοῦν ἐν. Οὐ περιλάμβαντας ζωτικός, εἰ μένος, οὐδὲ σώσαι τὰ ἐνδόν σώμα ἐχον καὶ γὰρ σώματος ζωῆς 15 κάψις. Εἴ δὲν καὶ τοπική, οἷς δυνήσοντας κινήσεται

ι. Why does it move in a circle? Because it imitates intellect. And what does the movement belong to, soul or body? Is it that soul is in the movement and directed towards it? Or [does it move] because soul is eager to go? Or does soul exist in a state of discontinuity? Or is soul carried along itself and carries heaven with it? But if that was so, it would be no longer carrying it round; it would have finished its conveyance; that is, it would rather make it stand still, and not always go round in a circle. Surely soul will stand still, or if it is moved is certainly not moved spatially. How, then, does it move heaven spatially when it is moved in another way itself? Perhaps the circular movement is not spatial, or if it is, only accidentally. What sort of movement, then, is it? A movement of self-concentrated awareness and intellection and of life, and at no point outside or elsewhere. And [what about] the necessity of encompassing everything? It does so in the sense that the dominant part of the living being is that which encompasses it and makes it one. If it stayed still, it would not encompass it in a living way, nor would it, since it has a body, preserve what is within it; for the life of the body is movement. If, then, there is local movement.

1 Cr. Timaeus 34A4. Throughout this chapter Plotinus seems to have in mind Aristotle's criticism of the Timaeus in De Anima A. 3 407a6–407b12, and to be answering Aristotle's arguments there.
ON THE MOVEMENT OF HEAVEN

too, then it will move as it can, and not as soul alone
but as an ensouled body and a living thing; so its
movement will be a mixture of body-movement and
soul-movement; body is naturally transported in a
straight line and soul’s natural tendency is to contain,
and from both of them together there comes to be
something which is both carried along and at rest.
If circular motion is to be attributed to body, how
can it be when all body, including fire, moves in a
straight line? It moves in a straight line till it comes
to its ordained place; for as it is ordained, so it
appears both to rest naturally and to be conveyed to
the place where it was ordained to be. Why, then,
does it not stay still when it has come to heaven?
It is, is it not, because the nature of fire is to be in
motion. So if it does not move in a circle, going on in
a straight line will dissipate it; so it must move in a
circle. But this is the doing of providence; rather,
its something in it which comes from providence, so
that if it comes to heaven it moves in a circle of its
own accord. It seeks to go on in a straight line, but
has no longer any place to go to, so it glides round,
we may say, and curves back in the regions where it
can; for it has no place beyond itself: this is the
last.1 So it runs in the space it oversteps and in its own
place; it came to be there not in order to stay still but
to move. The centre of a circle naturally stays
still, but if the outside circumference stayed still, it
would be a big centre. So it can rather be expected,
in the case of a living body in its natural state, to go
round the centre. In this way, then, it will direct
itself towards the centre, not by coinciding with it—
that would abolish the circle—but, since it cannot

1 This is Aristotelian doctrine. Cf. De Caelo A. 9. 278a17—
18.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 2.

do that, by whirling round it: for in this way alone can it satisfy its impulse. But if soul does carry it round, it will not get tired; for it does not drag it, nor is the movement against nature.1 "Nature" is just what has been ordained by universal soul. Then again, since the whole soul is everywhere and, being the soul of the All, is not divided part to part, it gives omnipresence to the heaven too, as far as it is capable of it; and it is capable of it by pursuing and reaching all things. If soul stood still anywhere, the heavenly fire would stand when it came to that point; but as it is, since soul is universal,2 the heavenly fire seeks it in every direction. Will it never, then, attain it? In this way it always attains it; or rather, soul itself, drawing heaven to itself, moves it continually in drawing it continually, not moving it to some other place but towards itself in the same place; it does not draw it on in a straight line but in a circle, and so gives it possession of soul at every stage in its progress. If soul stayed still, being only at that point where each individual thing was at rest, then the heaven would stand still too. If, then, soul is not just there at any particular point, the heaven will move everywhere, and not outside soul; in a circle, therefore.

2. Then what about other things? Each of them is not a whole but a part, and contained in a partial place. But that other [that is heaven] is a whole; it is space, in a way, and there is nothing to hinder it, because it is the All. What about men, then? In

2 I print and translate the reading which Schwyzcr now proposes, with Henry’s agreement. The MSS πάντα ἐστίν...
Our spherical part is the head, which according to the Timaeus (44D) is mounted on the body as its vehicle so that it shall not have to roll about.

This is a reference to the description of respiration as a circular process, like a turning wheel, in Timaeus 79A5-E9.

So far as he derives from the All, man is a part, in so far as men are themselves, each is a private universe. If, then, heaven, wherever it is, possesses soul everywhere, why does it have to go round? Because it does not possess it only in that particular place. And if the soul's power is movement: round its centre, in this way, too, it would make heaven move in a circle: though "centre" is not to be understood in the same way when one is speaking of the nature of soul as it is when one is speaking of a body: with soul the centre is the source from which the other nature derives, with body "centre" has a spatial meaning. So one must use "centre" analogically: there must be a centre for soul as there is for body (though "centre" in the literal sense means the middle point of a body, a spherical one), because just as a body is round its centre, so is soul. If it is the centre of soul that is in question, soul runs round God and embraces him lovingly and keeps round him as far as it can; for all things depend on him: since it cannot go to him, it goes round him. Then why do not all souls do this? Each individual soul does, in its own place. Why, then, do our bodies not go round too? Because there is an additional constituent in them which moves in straight lines, and the impulses of body are directed elsewhere, and our spherical part does not run easily, being earthy.

But there the body of heaven fellows along with soul, being light and easy to move; why ever should it stop when it goes on moving, whatever its motion? And in us, too, it seems that the breath which is around the soul moves in a circle. If God is in all things, the soul which desires to be with him must...
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move around him; for he is not in any place. And Plato gives the stars not only their spherical motion with the whole universe but also individual motions, each around its own centre: for each in its place encompasses God and rejoices, not by rational planning but by natural necessity.

3. This, too, is another way of putting it; there is the ultimate power of soul which begins at the earth and is interwoven through the whole universe, and there is the power of soul which is naturally perceptive and receives the opinonative kind of reasoning; this keeps itself above in the heavenly spheres and is in contact with the other from above and gives it power from itself to make it more alive. The lower soul, therefore, is moved by the higher which encompasses it in a circle and bears upon all of it that has risen to the spheres. So the lower soul, as the higher encircles it, inclines and tends towards it, and its tendency carries round the body with which it is interwoven. For if any particular part of a sphere is moved even in the slightest degree, then, if it only is moved, it stirs that in which it is and the sphere is set in motion. In our bodies too, when our soul is moved in a different way from the body—by joy, for instance, and by something which appears good to it—then there is a spatial movement of the body as well. And in heaven, where the soul is in good and more vividly perceptive, it moves to the good and sets its body moving in space in the manner natural to it there. The perceptive power in its turn receives the good from that which

1 CP. Timaeus 40B8-9-2.
2 Timaeus 46F2.
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is above and in delight pursues its own and is carried everywhere to the good which is everywhere. This is how intellect is moved; it is both at rest and in motion; for it moves around Him [the Good]. So, then, the universe, too, both moves in its circle and is at rest.
II. 3. ON WHETHER THE STARS ARE CAUSES

Introductory Note

This very late treatise (No. 52 in Porphyry's chronological order) takes up again and develops the objections to the ideas of the astrologers about the stars which Plotinus had already put forward in the early work On Destiny (III. 1: No. 8 in the chronological order). Plotinus does not deny that the stars foretell, or even that influences coming from them may make a limited contribution to our fortunes and physical make-up. He finds the astrologers objectionable because: (1) they make stars evil and causes of evil to us; (2) they make them changeable, varying in mood and activity according to their aspect and position, a view which Plotinus shows is unscientific, incompatible with the findings of the astronomers, as well as unorthodox from the point of view of Platonic astral theology; (3) they reduce the universe to a disorderly chaos by making the stars act independently and capriciously, instead of seeing it as a living organic whole in which star-movements and influences as well as everything else form part of the pattern of its rational direction by Universal Soul; (4) they very much exaggerate the degree to which the stars are responsible for our physical constitution and fortunes: star-influences are only one kind of cause among many, and not the most important. Further, Plotinus maintains in this as in other treatises (notably that which he wrote next, I. 1) that our true, higher self transcends the physical universe and is beyond the reach of its necessity.

A curious little problem is presented by the section printed in square brackets in ch. 12 (if it really belongs to this treatise it would fit in better where the translation of Ficino and the "editio princeps" of Perna place it, immediately before the last sentence of ch. 5). This seems to be more favourable to the views of the astrologers than the rest of the treatise, and even to be trying to answer the scientific objections brought against them in ch. 5. Though it expresses the view of the universe as an organic whole which is found elsewhere in the treatise and is always taken by Plotinus. It looks almost as if it was a fragment of an essay written by a member of the school in defence of astrology, rather like the papers written by Porphyry in defence of the doctrine of Longinus and answered by Amelius which are mentioned in ch. 18 of the Life. But, if this were really what it was, it would be very difficult to explain how it got into the text of this treatise there is no parallel anywhere else in the Enneads.

Synopsis

Detailed refutation of astrological doctrines by scientific and common-sense arguments (chs. 1–6). Explanation of why the stars give signs of things to come from the organic unity of the universe (chs. 7–8). Our higher and lower self (ch. 9). The real nature and limitations of astral influences and the modest part they play in determining our constitution and fortunes (chs. 10–15). How soul directs the All, and reasons for the existence of evils in this world (chs. 16–18).
II. 3. ON WHETHER THE STARS ARE CAUSES

1. That the course of the stars indicates what is going to happen in particular cases, but does not itself cause everything, as most people think, has been said before elsewhere (and the argument offered some proofs); but now we need a more precise and detailed discussion, for to take one view rather than the other is of no small importance. They say that the planets in their courses do not only cause everything else, poverty and riches, sickness and health, but also ugliness and beauty and, what is most important of all, virtue and vice, and even the actions which result from them in each particular case on each particular occasion; just as if they were angry with men over things in which men have done them no wrong, since it was the planets which made the men what they are: and that they give benefits (so-called), not because they feel kindly towards those who receive them but because they themselves are either pleasantly or unpleasantly affected according to the point they have reached on their course, and again are in a different state of mind when they are at their zeniths and when they are declining; and of the basic absurdities of this pseudo-science in A. J. Festugière, La Révélation d'Hermès Priamosiotè I. ch. V. pp. 89-101.

1 II. 3. 33 ff.
2 For a full explanation of the astrological doctrines criticised in these first six chapters see A. Bouche-Leclercq, L'Astronomie Grecque: there is an excellent short account
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the most important point is, they say that some of the
planets are bad and others good, but that the ones
which are called bad give good gifts, and the good
ones become wicked; and again when they see
each other they cause one kind of thing, when they do
not see, another, as if they were not really in control
of themselves but varied according to whether they
saw or not; and that a planet is good when it sees
this particular other planet, but changes if it sees
another one; and that it sees differently according
to whether its seeing is in this figure or in that; and
that the mixture of all the planets together is dif-
ferent again, just as the mixture of distinct liquids
is something unlike any of the ingredients. These,
and others of the same kind, are their opinions: now
we ought to examine and discuss each individual
point. This would be a good starting-point.

2. Should we think that these things which go
round in their courses have souls or not? If they
have no souls, they will have nothing to offer but heat
or cold—if we assume that some of the stars are cold;
however that may be, they will determine our given
destiny only in our bodily nature, since there is a
corporeal transference from them to us, and one of
such a kind that the alteration it produces in our
bodies is not great, since the outflow from each
individual star is the same, and they are all mixed
together into one on earth, so that the only differences
are local differences, according to how near or far we
are from the stars and the cold kind of star will give
an influence differentiated in the same way. But,
then, how will they make some men wise and some
foolish, some teachers of letters and others of rhetoric,

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and others lyre-players and practitioners of the other arts, or again rich and poor? How will they produce the other effects which do not have their cause of origin in bodily mixture? For instance, how will they give a man a brother or a father, a son or a wife of a particular kind, or make him prosper for the moment and become a general or a king? But if they have souls and act with conscious purpose, what have we done to them to make them deliberately injure us, these beings which are set in a divine region and are divine themselves? They do not have what makes men evil, nor does any good or evil to them result from our happiness or suffering.

3. But the planets do not do these things willingly, but under the compulsion of their positions and figures! But if they are under compulsion, they ought, surely, all to do the same things when they are in the same positions and figures. And really, what difference can it make to a particular planet that it is passing through, now this and now that section of the zodiac? It is not even in the zodiac itself but far below it, and at whatever point it is, it is in heaven. It is ridiculous for a planet to become different and to give different gifts according to the sign it is passing; and to be different when it is rising and when it stands at the centre and when it is declining. It is certainly not pleased when it is at the centre, nor is it distressed and enfeebled when it is declining; nor does a planet grow angry when it is rising and gentle when it is declining—and another of them is even better when it is declining. For each particular planet is at the centre for some when it is declining in relation to others, and when it is declining for one group it is at

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αδ υμνοῦται ἀναστειλαὶ ἄλλοις, πραΰνει δὲ ἀποκλίνας, ἐξ δὲ τῶν αὐτῶν καὶ ἀποκλίναις ἀμείνων.

15 Ἐστι γὰρ ἀδικός καὶ ἐπίκεντρος ἄλλοις ἀποκλίνας ἄλλοις καὶ ἀποκλίναις ἐτέροις ἐπίκεντρος ἄλλοις: καὶ οὐ δήσων κατὰ τὸν αὐτὸν χρόνον χαίρει τε καὶ λυπεῖται καὶ θυμοῦται καὶ πρᾶξις ἐστι. Τὸ δὲ τούς μὲν αὐτῶν χαίρεις λέγεις δέντονται, τοὺς δὲ ἐν ἀνασταλαὶς ὅτι καὶ

20 ἄλογον; Καὶ γὰρ οὕτω συμβαίνει ἐμὲ λυπεῖναι τε καὶ χαίρειν. Ἐνιαὶ δὲ τὰ ἐκεῖνα λύπη ἡμῶς κακῶσαι; Ὁλος δὲ οὐδὲ λυπεῖσθαι οὐδὲ ἐπί κατοιχο χαίρεις αὐτοῖς ἄλλοις, ἀλλὰ δὲ τὸ ἄλοχον ἐκεῖνον χαίροντας ἐφ᾽ οἷς ἀγαθοὶ έχουσι καὶ ἐφ᾽ οἷς ὀρῷσι. Βίος γὰρ ἐκάστος ἐδ᾽ αὐτοὶ, ἐκάστῳ καὶ 25 ἐν τῇ ἐνεργείᾳ τοῦ εὖ τὸ δὲ ὑμεῖς ἡμᾶς. Καὶ μάλιστα τοὺς οὐκουνοῦντον ἡμῶν ἐκατε ἀλλοτρίως κατὰ συμβεβηκές, οὐ προηγούμενοι οὐδὲ ἀλλος τὸ ἐργὸν πρὸς ἡμᾶς, εἰ ἐσπερ ὀρᾶτι κατὰ συμβεβηκός τὸ σημαίνειν.

4. Κάκεινον δὲ ἄλογον, τόνῳ μὲν τόνῳ ἀριθμητὰ χαίρειν, τόνῳ δὲ τόνῳ τούτων τῶν γὰρ αὐτοὺς ἔχεις ἡ περὶ τῶν; Διὰ τι δὲ τρίγωνοι μὲν ὀρόν ἄλλοις, ἐξ ἐνατιοῦς δὲ τῇ τριγώνῳ

20 ἄλλοις; Διὰ τι δὲ ὅτι μὲν ἐκχυματισμένοις ὀρὲς νυστάτως νῦν μέλλον συν ὀρὲι; Ὅλος δὲ τῆς καὶ δὴ τρόπος ἔσται τοῦ τοιῶν δὲ λέγονται πνεύμα; Ποὺς τὰ χωρὶς ἐκποτα καὶ ἐπὶ τῶς όμοιον πάντες ἄλλο ἐκ πάντων; Οὐ γὰρ δὴ συνθέμενοι πρὸς ἀλλήλους οὕτω συμφωνοῦν εἰς ἡμᾶς

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the centre for another: and it cannot, presumably, be glad and sad and angry and gentle all at the same time. And surely it is quite irrational to say that some planets are glad when they are setting and others when they are rising; this would again have the consequences that they are glad and sad at the same time. And then, why should their grief harm us?

But one cannot admit at all that they are glad on one occasion and sad on another. They are always serene and rejoice in the goods they have and in what they see. For each has its own life to itself, and each one's good is in its own act, and has nothing to do with us. The action of living beings that have no part with us is always something incidental, not their dominant activity. If, as with birds, their acting as signs is incidental, their work is not directed to us at all.

4. It is irrational, too, to say that one planet is glad when it sees a particular other planet, but another is in the opposite state when it sees another: for what enmity is there between them, and about what? And why should it make a difference whether one planet sees another triangularly or in opposition or quadrilaterally? And why should one see another in one particular figure, but not see it when it is in the next sign of the zodiac, and so nearer? And altogether, how ever do they manage to do what they are supposed to do? How does each act separately, and again how do they all together produce an effect different from all their separate effects? They certainly do not hold meetings and then execute the

1 On the doctrine of “aspects” see Bouche-Lecleereq, p. 100 (summarised in Potuglara, p. 109).
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decision of the meeting on us, each surrendering something of his own influence, nor does one hinder by force the giving of another from coming to pass, nor does one yield under persuasion a free field of action to another. And to suppose that one is glad when it is in the region of another, but the other, when it is in the region of the first, feels the reverse, is like saying that two people love each other, and then going on to add that one loves the other but the other hates the first!

5. Then they say that one of the planets is cold, and further, that when it is far away from us it is better for us, assuming that its harmfulness for us consists in its coldness; but it ought, when it is in the opposed signs of the zodiac, to be good for us: and they say that when the cold planet is in opposition to the hot both are dangerous: but there ought to be a blend of temperaments. They allege that one planet delights in the day and becomes good when it is warmed, but another, a fiery one, enjoys the night—as if it was not always day—that is, light—for the planets, and as if the second one was ever overtaken by night, though it is far above the shadow of the earth. And as for their statement that the moon when she is full is good in conjunction with a particular planet, but bad when she is waning, the reverse would be true, if this sort of thing is to be admitted as possible at all. For when she is full in relation to us she would be dark in the other hemisphere to the planet which stands above her, and when she is waning for us she is full for that planet: so she ought to do the opposite when she is waning [for us] since she is looking at that planet with her full light. It will make no difference
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whatever to the moon herself what phase she is in since half of her is always illuminated; it might, however, on their assumption, make some difference to the planet when it is warmed. But it would be warmed when the moon is dark in relation to us: when it is good in relation to the other planet in the dark phase it is, in relation to it, full. Surely, then, these things are signs from the correspondence of different spheres...

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μὲν οὖν ὅπως ἐχοῦσα οὐδὲν διαφέρει ἑν τῷ ἦμασὶ αἱ φυτεύματι τῷ δὲ οὕς διαφέρει ἐν θερμαυσιομένῃ, ὅπερ λέγομεν. Ἀλλὰ θερμαύως ὅπερ, εἰ αὐτόστρωτος πρὸς ἦμας ἢ σελήνης ἐγείρ, πρὸς δὲ τῶν ἐπεραὶ ἀγαθὰ ἀοῦσα ἐν τῷ αὐτόστρωτω πλήρεσθαι ἐστι πρὸς αὐτὸν. Ταῦτα οὖν πῶς οὐ σημεῖα εἴς ανάλογας εἴναι ἐν;

6. Ἀρεα δὲ τοῦτό ἢ Ἀφροδίτην θεμένως μορφέσαι ποιεῖν, εἰ ἀδελφεῖς, ὡσπερ ἐκ τῆς τῶν ανθρώπων ἀκολουθίας αὐτοῖς ἐκπεπλήνασιν ὅπερ πρὸς ἄλλους δεινοῦσα, πῶς ὧν πολλοῖς ἄλλοις ἔχει;

5 Καὶ τὴν μὲν θεῖα ἀναφέρειν τὴν πρὸς ἄλλους, εἰ ἀδελφοὶ διορίᾳ, ἤδεις εἶναι, πέρας δὲ αὐτῶς μακρὰς εἶναι, πῶς ὧν ταῖς παραθέσεις; Μικροδον ἔτι ἐξέχων ἀναστάθηκαν γνωμένοι, καὶ αὐτοῖς ἐκάστου τελευτεῖν ἐν τῷ τοῦ ἄνδρον ἀδόξον ἀδέξαν, πλανεῖται ποιεῖται, ἀκολούθοις, καὶ τά ἐνεργεία ἐκάστου τοὺς τελευταίοις αὐτῶς ἔτη βίος ἂν ἦν δυνατὸν τοιὸν ποιεῖν; ὅ τὸ δὲ ἀναφέροις ἀναφέροις αὐτοῖς καὶ τότε τελευταίοις καὶ ὁποῖς μοιρᾶς ἀνατέλλει ἐκατον, ἀνατέλλοις εἰναι τοιούτοις τῆς ἐναλλοίρων, καὶ οὖν ἐπὶ ἀκρίπλιον τίθεναι, ὅτε παντοῦσι, μὴ ἐξείλαι δ' αὐτοῖς πρὸ

1 At this point the editio princeps and Ficino's translation insert the puzzling passage printed in square brackets in ch. 12 (on which see Introductory Note) which would certainly be more in place here.

2 This sentence, which does not seem to belong to the argument here, may possibly have stayed from the beginning of ch. 7.

3 ἑπεξάρῃ here seems to make very little sense. L. A. Post suggests ἑπεξάρῃ in the sexual sense, "intercourse".

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to grant to any one principle authority over the direction of the universe, but to give everything to the planets, as if there was not one ruler, from whom the universe has separated out, and who gives to each according to its nature to fulfill its own function and do its own work, in union with the ruling principle—this is the opinion of someone who wants to dissolve the unity of the universe and knows nothing about its nature: the universe which has a principle and first cause which reaches to everything.

7. But if these planets give signs of things to come—as we maintain that many other things do—what might the cause be? How does the order work? There would be no signifying if particular things did not happen according to some order. Let us suppose that the stars are like characters always being written on the heavens, or written once for all and moving as they perform their task, a different one: and let us assume that their significance results from this, just as because of the one principle in a single living being, by studying one member we can learn something else about a different one. For instance, we can come to conclusions about someone’s character, and also about the dangers that beset him and the precautions to be taken, by looking at his eyes or some other part of his body. Yes, they are members and so are we; so we can learn about one from the other. All things are filled full of signs; and it is a wise man who can learn about one thing from another. Yet, all the same, many processes of learning in this way are customary and known to all. Then what is the single-linked order? If there is one, our auguries from birds and other living creatures, by which we

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1 The thought here is Stoic. Cp., e.g., Seneca, Naturalis Quaestiones 11.32.
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The universe is also Stoic (Posidonius and others), cp. Diogenes Laertius VII. 140. 2

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predict particular events, are reasonable. All things must be joined to one another; not only must there be in each individual part what is well called a single united breath of life 4 but before them, and still more, in the All. One principle must make the universe a single complex living creature, one from all; 2 and just as in individual organisms each member undertakes its own particular task, so the members of the All, each individual one of them, have their individual work to do; this applies even more to the All than to particular organisms, in so far as the members of it are not merely members but wholes, and more important than the members of particular things. Each one goes forth from one single principle and does its own work, but they also co-operate one with another; for they are not cut off from the whole. They act on and are affected by others; one comes up to another, bringing it pain or pleasure. Their going out has nothing random or casual about it. Something else proceeds again from these; and something else in succession from that, according to the order of nature.

8. Soul, then, is set upon doing its own work—for soul, since it has the status of a principle, does everything—and it may keep to the straight path 3 and it may also be led astray; and just payment follows upon what is done in the All; otherwise it will be dissolved. 4 But the All remains for ever, since the whole is directed by the ordering and the power of its ruler. And the stars co-operate towards the whole,

1 The oikumene of the universe is also Stoic (Posidonius and others), cp. Diogenes Laertius VII. 140.
2 This Platonic conception (Timaeus 30D-31A) developed by the Stoics of the universe as a single living being is of great importance in the thought of Plotinus cp. e.g., IV. 4. 32 ff.
3 Bouille is probably right in supposing that Plotinus here had in mind the great passage about Soul, divine and human,
4 A reminiscence of Timaeus 41A8.
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since they are no small part of the heaven; this is why they are so bright and well adapted for signs. So they signify everything that happens in the sense-world, but do other things, the things which they are seen to do. We, however, do the works of soul according to nature, as long as we do not fail in the multiplicity of the All; if we fail we have as just penalty both the failure itself and the being in a worse position afterwards. Wealth, then, and poverty are due to chance encounters with things outside. But what about virtues and vices? Virtues are due to the ancient state of our soul, vices to its chance encounter with things outside it. But this has been discussed elsewhere.1

9. But now we should call to mind the Spindle, which according to the ancients the Fates spin; but for Plato the Spindle is the wandering and the fixed parts of the heavenly circuit,2 and the Fates and Necessity, who is their mother, turn the spindle and spin a thread at the birth of each one of us, and what is born comes to birth through Necessity. And in the Timaeus3 the God who makes the world gives the "first principle of the soul," but the gods who are borne through the heavens "the terrible and inevitable passions," "angers" and "pleasures and pains," and the "other kind of soul," from which come passions of this kind. These statements bind us to the stars, from which we get our souls, and subject us to necessity when we come down here; from them we get our moral characters, our characteristic actions, and our

1 The reference back is probably to I. 8 (51), op. ch. 12. 5-7.
2 Republic X. 610C4 ff.
3 69C5-D8.
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emotions, coming from a disposition which is liable to emotion. So what is left which is "we"? Surely, just that which we really are, we whom nature gave power to master our passions.¹ Yes, and God gave us too, in the midst of all these evils which we receive through the body, "virtue who is no man's slave."² For we do not need virtue when we are in peace but when there is a risk of being in evils if virtue is not there. So we must "fly from here"³ and "separate"⁴ ourselves from what has been added to us, and not be the composite thing, the ensouled body in which the nature of body (which has some trace of soul) has the greater power, so that the common life belongs more to the body; for everything that pertains to this common life is bodily. But to the other soul, which is outside the body, belongs the ascent to the higher world, to the fair and divine which no one masters, but either he makes use of it so that he may be it and live by it, withdrawing himself; or else he is bereft of this higher soul and lives under destiny, and then the stars do not only show him signs but he also becomes himself a part, and follows along with the whole of which he is a part. For every man is double, one of him is the sort of compound being and one of him is himself; and the whole universe is, one part the composite of body and a sort of soul bound to body, and one the soul of the All which is not in body but makes a trace of itself shine on that which is in body. And the sun and the other heavenly bodies are double in this way; they communicate no evil to the other pure soul, but what comes into the All

¹ Plato, Theaetetus 176A8 B1.
² Republic X. 617E3.
³ Plato, Phaedo 67C6.
⁴ Republic X. 617E3.
from them, in so far as they are part of the All and ensoled body, their body, which is a part, gives to another part—while the star's intention and the soul which is really itself is looking to the Best. The other effects happen in sequence upon it (or rather not upon it but upon its environment), like heat from a fire spreading through the whole—and perhaps something comes from the star's other soul to another soul which is skin to it. The bad effects are because of the mixture. For the nature of this All is mixed, and if anyone separates from him the separable soul, what is left is not much. The universe is a god if the separable soul is reckoned as part of it: the rest, Plato says, is a great daemon and what happens in it is daemonic.

10. If this is so, we must grant even at this stage of the discussion the power of signifying to the stars, but action not completely to their whole natures, but only in so far as affections of the All are concerned and as regards what is left of them when their separable souls are left out of account. And we must admit that the soul, even before it enters the realm of becoming, brings something [lower] of itself when it comes: for it would not have come into body unless it had a large part subject to affections. And we must grant, too, that it enters into the domain of chance. And we must grant that the heavenly circuit does act of itself, co-operating and completing by its own power what the All must accomplish; and in its action each individual heavenly body in it has the status of a part.
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11. We must consider, too, that what comes from the stars will not reach the recipients in the same state in which it left them. If it is fire, for instance, the fire down here is dim [by comparison with that of the stars], and if it is a loving disposition it becomes weak in the recipient and produces a rather unpleasant kind of loving; and manly spirit, when the receiver does not take it in due measure, so as to become brave, produces violent temper or spiritlessness; and that which belongs to honour in love and is concerned with beauty produces desire of what only seems to be beautiful, and the efflux of intellect produces knavery; for knavery wants to be intellect, only it is unable to attain what it aims at. So all these things become evil in us, though they are not so up in heaven; since even the things which have come down, though they are not that which they were in heaven, do not remain what they were when they came since they are mingled with bodies and matter and each other.

12. And, further, the influences which come from the stars combine into one, and each thing that comes into being takes something from the mixture, so that what it already is acquires a certain quality. The star-influences do not make the horse; they give something to the horse. Horse comes from horse and man from man: the sun co-operates in their making; but man comes from the formative principle of man. The outside influence sometimes harms or helps. A man is like his father, but often he turns out better, sometimes worse. But the tie is the "cause of the rhythm of generation and decay" (Cornford).
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outside influence does not force anything out of its fundamental nature; sometimes, however, the matter, not the nature, gets the upper hand, so that, as a result of the defeat of the form, the thing does
not come to perfection.

The side of the moon which is towards us is unlighted in relation to the regions of earth, but does no harm to that which is above it. But since that which is above does not help because it is far away, this conjunction is thought to be worse. But when the moon is full, it is sufficient for what is below even if the star above is far away. But when the moon is unlighted on the side towards the fiery star she is thought to be good in relation to us: for the power of that star persists which is fierier than it needs to be for itself [?]. The bodies of living things which come from that upper region differ from each other according to their degrees of heat, but none of them is cold. Their place is evidence of this. The planet that people call Zeus is of fire in a well-balanced mixture; and so is the Morning Star; so these two because of their likeness are considered as harmonious,” but are alien in disposition to the star called Fiery because of its composition and to Cronos because of its distance. Hermes, however, is indifferent and is, it is thought, like all. But all contribute to the whole, and are therefore related to each other in a way that brings advantage to the whole, as we see that all the parts individually are of a living thing. For they are there precisely for the sake of the whole living thing, as, for instance, the gall is to serve the whole and in relation to the part next to it: for it has to stir up the manly spirit and keep the

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χείρον διπέπειν. 'Αλλ' οὐκ ἐκβαίνει τοῦ ὑπο-
κειμένου· ὀτὲ δὲ καὶ ὡς ἢ κρατεῖ, οὐχ ἢ φύσις, ἀλλ' ὡς μὴ τέλεον γενόταται ἤτοιμόν τοῦ εἶναι.

[Τὸ δὲ πρὸς ἡμᾶς τῆς σελήνης αἱρετικῶν ἔστι
πρὸς τὰ ἐπὶ γῆς, οὐ τὸ ἀνώ λυπεῖ. Οὐκ ἐπικον-
ροῦσος δὲ ἐκεῖνον τὸ πόρρω χείρον εἶναι δοκεῖ]

5 ὅταν δὲ πλήρης ἦ, ἀρκεῖ τῷ κάτω, κἂν ἐκεῖνος
πάραθεν ἦ. Πρὸς δὲ τὸν πυράδο ἀφανιστὸς
οὖσα πρὸς ἡμᾶς κρόξον εἶναι ἀγαθήν· ἀντικεῖ γάρ τὸ
ἐκεῖνον περισσότερον ἢ πρὸς ἐκεῖνον ὄστος.

Τὰ δὲ ἱάτα ἔκτεθην σώματα ἐφεξῆς ἄλλα ἄλλων
ἐπὶ τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἤττου θερμά, φυσικῶ δὲ οὐδὲν

20 ἐμπεμφθεὶ τὸ τόπον. Καί δὲ ὅλος θύσαν, εὐθρατος
πυρί· καί ὁ Ἑρμῆς οὖσις: διό ὡς καὶ σύμφωνοι
δοκείσθη τοῖς ἀμοιβαῖς, πρὸς δὲ τὰς Πνεύματα ἀληθεμένου τῷ
κράσει, πρὸς δὲ Κρόνου ἀλλοτρίῳ τῷ
πόρρῳ· Ἐρμῆς δ' ἀλλάξας πρὸς ἀπάντως, διὸ
δοκεῖ, ἀμοιβάζοντως. Πάντες δὲ πρὸς τὸ ἄλο

25 σύμφωνοι· οὕτως πρὸς τὰ ἄλλα ὄστοις, ὡς τῷ
ἄλλῳ συμφέρει, ὡς ἐφ' ἐνοῦ ἐκείνα τῶν
μερῶν ὀράσει. Τούτου γὰρ χρήσιν μᾶλλον, ἵνα
χολή καὶ τῷ ἄλλῳ καὶ πρὸς τὸ ἐφάνης· καὶ γὰρ ἐδει
καὶ οὕτως ἐγκαίρως καὶ τὸ πῶς καὶ τὸ πλήρον μὴ

1 οὖσας Σέραντ, II. 8: ὅτες κολάγουν.

The planet mentioned in this passage are Jupiter, Venus, Mars, Saturn and Mercury.
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13. Aei toivw to enevthev, epeivh tâ mên kai
parâ têf phorâs ywvetai, tâ de òi, diabolhê kai
diâkriânaia kai eipeia, poîthen evkatai òlous. 'Arxhê
de òde: òflechi de tò pâv tûde diokodôsias kata
tô lêgou, olâ òi kai efê 'ekástos òlêmos òi òn asthô
'Arxhê, òde 'e òkata tâ tòv òlêmv mérh kai
îlîptetai kai prós tò òlou svntétxtais, òde mérh
èstv, òn mên tò òlou òstî tò pânta, òn de tòv
mêpeis toouvouv mûnov, ònou èstv òkatom. Tâ
de 'exwvthen proppôvta, tâ mên kai ènàntia tê
10 boulîvnei têf òflechê, tâ de kai prósfora: tòv
de òlou pânta èstv mérh òstî atûv tâ pânta
svntétxtais òflechê òn mên lêbanta òv òdèi kai
svmploûnta têf òflechê òflechê prôs tòv òlou
tòv pântos òlou. Tà mên ouv òflechê tòv òn òdèi
pânta òflechê kai ònou èsthmîvna òdèi òv tò
poiyv tâ de òflechê, tâ mên kai koiakivet àôrîstwos
èstv, òv efê 'òðmose ouv prîv òn tòn òmînov
àôrîstwos atûv tòn èstv, òvè òn phugê
evamêna. logikov de òlêmos òdèi òdèi pâr

1 Or this passage see Introductory Note.
2 Again a reminiscence of the Phaedrus (246C2; cp. note on ch. 8).
3 The phrase is taken from Plato, Crйtйas 109C1, where it is used in a context relevant to the argument here. But

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whole and the part next to it from excess. So, too,
in the complete whole [of the universe] there is need
of some organ like the gall and of some other directed
to producing sweetness; others are the eyes of the
universe; all are united in feeling by their irrational
part. So the universe is one and a single melody.]¹

13. We must, then, in consequence of this discus¬
sion (since some things do happen as a result of the
movement of the heavens, but others do not) dis¬
tinguish and discriminate and say from what cause in
general each particular happening results. Our
starting-point is this: since soul directs this All ac¬
cording to a rational order ² (as with each individual
living thing the principle in it does, from which the
formation of the individual parts of the living thing
and their ordering to the whole derive), it is altogether
present in the whole, but in the parts only propor¬
tionately to the being of the individual. The in¬
fluences which come from outside [to each indi¬
vidual thing] are sometimes opposed to the in¬
tention of its nature and sometimes favourable to it.
But all are ordered to the whole because they are all
parts of it; they received the nature which they have,
but all the same they contribute, each by its own in¬
dividual impulse, to the whole life of the All. The
lifeless things in the All are altogether instruments
and are, so to speak, pushed from outside to act.
As for living things, some have unlimited movement,
like horses harnessed to chariots before the driver
marks off their course, in that he "controls them
with the whip."³ But the nature of a rational

Plotinus also still has in mind the Phaedrus myth, with its
image of the charioteer and his horses.

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A creature has its driver of itself; and if it has a skilled one it goes straight, but if not, then often just as it chances. But both are within the All, and contribute to the whole. The greater living things which are higher in rank do much that is important, and contribute to the life of the whole in an active rather than a passive capacity; others continue passive, having little power to act; others are between the two, acted upon by others, but doing much and in many things having a principle of doing and making which is their own. And the All becomes a complete life when the best parts do the best, according to the best in each of them: and each has to subordinate its best, to the ruling principle, as soldiers to the general; so they are said to "follow Zeus" in his progress towards the nature of Intellect. The things which are equipped with a lower nature hold second place in the All, as we, too, have a second part of soul: the rest are like our parts; not everything in us is equal either. So then living things are all conformed to the complete pattern of the All, both the ones in heaven and the rest which have been made parts in the whole, and no part, even if it is a great one, has power to bring about a complete change in the patterns or the things which happen according to the patterns. It can bring about a non-essential alteration in either direction, for better or worse, but it cannot make anything abandon its own proper nature. It makes a thing worse either by giving it bodily infirmity, or by becoming responsible for an incidental badness in the soul which is in sympathy with it and was given out by it into the lower region.
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badly put together, it may by means of it hinder the activity of the soul which is directed towards it: as when a lyre is not so tuned that it takes the melody accurately so as to make its sounds musical.

14. But how about poverty and wealth and reputations and offices? If people are rich by inheritance from their fathers, the stars announce the rich man, just as they do no more than declare the man of good birth who comes of well-born parents and owes his distinction to his family. But if the wealth comes from manly virtue, then if the body has helped in producing this, those who have produced the body's vigour will have contributed, the parents first, then, if any place contributed anything, the heavenly regions and the earth. But if the virtue arose without the body, then the greatest part must be attributed to virtue alone, and it contributed all that was given by those who rewarded it. If the people who gave the riches were good, in this way, too, the cause must be referred back to virtue; but if they were bad, but were justified in giving the wealth, we must say that this happened by the activity of that which was best in them. But if the man who became rich was wicked his wealth must be attributed to his pre-existent wickedness and whatever was responsible for that wickedness, and we must include also those who gave the wealth, who also share in the responsibility. If a man's riches come from hard work, from farming, for instance, the cause is to be referred to the farmer, with the environment helping. If he found a treasure, we must say that something from the All cooperated; if so, it is indicated [in the heavens]: for

1 For the metaphor of the body as lyre, cp. 14. 16. 23 ff.
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all things without exception are connected with each other; so everything without exception is indicated. If someone loses his wealth, then if it is taken away, the taker is responsible, and his own principle is responsible for him; if it is lost in the sea, the circumstances are responsible. And as for fame, a man is either rightly famous or not. If rightly, then it is in his achievements that are responsible and that which is better in those who glorify him; but if not rightly, it is the unrighteousness of those who honour him that is responsible. The same argument applies to office: it is either appropriately conferred or not—in the one case the conferment is to be attributed to that which is better in the selectors; in the other to the man himself who has managed to succeed in getting it by the co-operation of others, or in some kind of other way. About marriages, the causes are free choice, or chance coming together with some incidental influence from the universal order. And births of children follow upon marriages, and the child is either formed according to pattern, when there is no hindrance, or it is in a worse state when some obstacle has occurred within, either due to the mother herself or because the environment is so disposed as to be out of harmony with this particular birth.

15. Plato gives the souls lots and choices before the circling of the Spindle, and afterwards gives them the beings on the Spindle as helpers, to bring to accomplishment in every way what they have chosen: since the guardian spirit also co-operates in the fulfillment of their choices. But what are the lots? Being born when the All was in the state in which it
was when they came into the body, and coming into this particular body and being born of these particular parents, and in such and such a place, and in general what we call the external circumstances. That all happenings form a unity and are as it were spun together, in the cases of individuals as well as wholes, is signified by one of the Fates, as they are called. Lachesis signifies the lots. And it is altogether necessary that it should be Atropos who brings in these concurrent circumstances. Of men some are born belonging to the powers that come from the whole and to external circumstances, as if under an enchantment, and are in few things or nothing themselves. Others master these powers and circumstances and rise above them, so to speak, by their heads towards the upper world and beyond soul, and so preserve the best and ancient part of the soul's substance. For we must not think of the soul as of such a kind that the nature which it has is just whatever affection it receives from outside, and that alone of all things it has no nature of its own; but it, far before anything else, since it has the status of a principle, must have many powers of its own for its natural activities. It is certainly not possible for it, since it is a substance, not to possess along with its being desires and actions and the tendency towards its good. The compound entity results from a composition of its nature and is of this particular [composite] kind and has these particular works. But any referred to here) for the way things are "spun together," Lachesis for destiny as "lot," Atropos for the way our circumstances are unchangeably determined.

1 For the allegorical interpretation of the names of the Fates, cp. Cornutus Thesaurus Theologicus Compendium ch. 13 (p. 13, Lang). Here, as in Cornutus, they stand for different aspects of the same power of destiny, Clotho (only indirectly

2 The Phaedrus myth again (248A1–3).
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ψυχή δὲ εἰ τις χωρίζεται, χωριστά καὶ ἰδια ἐνεργεῖ τὰ τοῦ σώματος πάθη ὅπως αὐτὴς τιθεμένη, ἀπὸ ἄλλη ὁμοίαν, ὅπως τὸ μὲν ἄλλο, τὸ δὲ ἄλλο.

16. "Αλλὰ τι ποίῳ καὶ τὰ τὰ μὴ καὶ τὰ τὸ χωριστῶν καὶ ἀνόμοιαν. ὅταν ἐν σώματι ἦ, καὶ δῶς ποίῳ τὰ ἵππον ἀρχὴν ἐτέρων ὀστεοῦν λαμβάνειν ζητηθέναι: οὐ γὰρ ἄπαντες τὰ τοῦ ὄστρον ἀνθρώπου τέλος ποιῆσαι. Νῦν δὲ ἐτι λέγωμεν πῶς τὸ 15 κατὰ λόγον ψυχὴς διοικήσις τοῦ πάντων ὁμοίως. Πάσης γὰρ ἔκαστη ὁμοίως ἐπὶ εὐθείᾳ πονεῖται, ἀνθρώπων, ἐπὶ ἄποικος καὶ ἄλλα ἱππότα καὶ ἄνευ καὶ θηρίων, πῶς δὲ καὶ γῆν πρότερον, εἰς συμπαραστέα ταῦτα ἰδιαῖα καὶ ἀνθρώπον ἀλλὰ καὶ ἀνθρωποῦνα. τὴν συμπλοκὴν τὴν ἐκ τούτων ἰδιαῖα μόνον καὶ τὰ ὀστεαν συμβαλλόμενα διὰ γένεσιν, ὅπερ ἐτέρος συμβαλλόμενοι πρὸς τὰ ἐφεξῆς, ἀλλ' ἡ μόνον ἵππων γενέσεις τῶν εἰς ἐρπῆς πάλαι ποιείναι καὶ τοὺς πάθεις τοὺς δὲ ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον αὐτὰ συγχωροῦντας; "Η αὐτῶν λέγεσιν καὶ τῶν αὐτῶν γεγομένων, ὅπως παρ." 17 αὐτὸς γεγομένης τὰ ἐφεξῆς ὁργάζεται; "Η καὶ τὸ τῶν τῶν ποιήσαι ἵππων ἔχει ὁ λόγος ὅπως εἰκῇ οὐδὲ καὶ ἐπίπτειν σύνεται τὸ ἱππευμένων, ἀλλ'

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soul which is separating itself has separate activities of its own and does not consider the body's affections as belonging to itself, because it already sees that body is one thing and soul is another.

16. But what the mixed is and what the unmixed, and what the separated is and what the unseparated, when the soul is in the body, and in general what the living being is, are questions which we must enquire into afterwards, taking a different starting-point; for everyone does not hold the same opinion on this subject. But now, continuing our present discussion, let us state in what sense we speak of "soul directing the All according to rational plan." Does soul, then, make individual things, so to speak, in a straight line one after another, man, then horse and some other living being, and wild beasts too, and fire and earth first, and then see these coming together and destroying or benefiting each other, only seeing their interweaving and the continual succession of its consequences, making no new contribution to what happens after but only again causing the births of living creatures from the original ones and giving them up to what they experience from their action upon each other? Or do we mean that soul is the cause of the things which happen in this way, because the beings produced by it accomplish what happens in consequence of their production? Or does the "rational plan" include this particular thing's acting or being acted on in this particular way, so that not even these particular events happen at random or by chance but occur in the way they do is sometimes inconsequent and it seems safer to keep the words in the text.

1 An announcement of the next treatise (I I).
2 Cp. ch. 13. 3-4 and Phaedrus 240C-2.
3 Hartweg rejects παρὶ ποιήσαι, perhaps rightly; it seems oddly inconsequent and inappropriate; but Plotinus
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by necessity? Is it, then, the rational forming principles which cause these happenings? The forming principles certainly exist, but not as causing but as knowing—or rather the soul which contains the generative rational principles knows the consequences which come from all its works; when the same things come together, the same circumstances arise, then it is altogether appropriate that the same results should follow. Soul takes over or foresees these antecedent conditions and taking account of them accomplishes what follows and links up the chain of consequences, bringing antecedents and consequents into complete connection, and again linking to the antecedents the causes which precede them in order, as far as it can in the existing circumstances. This is, perhaps, why what comes later in the series is always worse. Men, for instance, were quite different once from what they are now, since by reason of the space between them and their origins and the continual pressure of necessity their forming principles have yielded to the affections of matter. So soul sees the continual succession of different events and, following what happens to its works, has a corresponding kind of life, and is not freed from care for its work when it has set the crown on its achievement and has arranged once for all that it shall be in a good state for ever; but it is like a farmer who, when he has sown or planted, is always putting right what rainstorms or continuous frosts or gales of wind have spoiled. But if this account is absurd, then must we maintain the alternative, that corruption and the works that come from evil are known and already present in the forming principles? But if this is so, then we shall be
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asserting that the forming principles are the causes of evil, though in the arts and their principles there is no error and nothing contrary to the art or any corruption of the work of art. But here someone will say that there is nothing contrary to nature or evil in the Whole; all the same, he will admit that there is worse and better. Suppose, then, the worse helps towards the completion of the Whole, and everything ought not to be good? For the opposites, too, co-operate for the perfection of the universe, and without them there is no universal order: yes, and it is so with particular living beings too. The forming principle compels the better things to exist and shapes them; the things which are not so, are present potentially in the principles, but actually in what comes to be: there is no need then any more for soul to make or to stir up the forming principles as matter is already, by the disturbance which comes from the preceding principles, making the things which come from it, the worse ones; though it is none the less overruled towards the production of the better. So there is one universe composed of all the things that have come to be, differently in each of these two ways, and that exist differently again in the forming principles.

17. Are these forming principles which are in soul thoughts? But, then, how will it make things in accordance with these thoughts? For it is in matter that the forming principle makes things, and that which makes on the level of nature is not thought or vision, but a power which manipulates matter, which does not know but only acts, like an impression or a figure in water; something else, different from what
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is called the power of growth and generation, gives it what is required for this making. If this is so, the ruling principle of the soul will make by manipulating the generative soul in matter. Will it, then, manipulate it as the result of having reasoned? But if it is after having reasoned, it will first refer to something else, or to what it has in itself. But if it refers to what it has in itself, there is no need of reasoning. For it is not reasoning that manipulates, but the part of the soul which possesses the forming principles: for this is both more powerful, and is able to make in the soul. It makes, then, according to forms: that is, it must give what it receives from Intellect. Intellect gives to the Soul of the All, and Soul (the one which comes next after Intellect) gives from itself to the soul next after it, enlightening it and impressing form on it, and this last soul immediately makes, as if under orders. It makes some things without hindrance, but in others, the worse ones, it meets obstruction. Since its power to make is derived, and it is filled with forming principles which are not the original ones, it will not simply make according to the forms which it has received but there would be a contribution of its own, and this is obviously worse. Its product is a living being, but a very imperfect one, and one which finds its own life disgusting since it is the worst of living things, ill-conditioned and savage, made of inferior matter, a sort of sediment of the prior realities, bitter and embittering. This is the lowest soul’s contribution to the Whole.

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1 If the text is sound, this translation, suggested by Henry-Schwyzer in their critical note, is probably right, but the word-order is extraordinarily unnatural and there is a good deal to be said for Kirchhoff’s deletion of τῆς ... λειματίους as a gloss, which is accepted by Cien. 99
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18. Then are the evils in the All necessary, because they follow on the prior realities? Rather because if they did not exist the All would be imperfect. Most of them, even all of them, contribute something useful to the Whole—poisonous snakes do, for instance—though generally the reason why remains obscure. Even moral evil itself has many advantages and is productive of much excellence, for example, all the beauty of art, and rouses us to serious thought about our way of living, not allowing us to slumber complacently. If this is correct, it must be that the Soul of the All contemplates the best, always aspiring to the intelligible nature and to God, and that when it is full, filled right up to the brim, its trace, its last and lowest expression, is this productive principle that we are discussing. This, then, is the ultimate maker; over it is that part of soul which is primarily filled from Intellect: over all is Intellect the Craftsman, who gives to the soul whose traces are in the third. This visible universe, then, is properly called an image always in process of being made; its first and second principles are at rest, the third at rest too, but also in motion, incidentally and in matter. As long as Intellect and Soul exist, the forming principles will flow into this lower form of soul, just as, as long as the sun exists, all its rays will shine from it.

1 Is Plotinus thinking here, perhaps, of tragic poetry? If so, the argument shows a startling reversal of Plato's standpoint. Plato in Republic II refused to allow poets to portray moral evil; Plotinus here seems to be justifying the existence of moral evil in the universe because it produces art.

2 Cp. the end of the Timaeus 92C7.
II. 4. ON MATTER

Introductory Note

The title of this treatise (No. 12 in Porphyry's chronological order) is given by Porphyry in the *Life* as μὴ τῶν ἕλεος ἔλεος (On the Two Kinds of Matter); in the MSS of the *Enneads* and the ancient tables of contents (*Pinax*, *Summarium*) it appears simply as *On Matter*. It is referred to by Plotinus himself in I. 8. 15. 2... δέντον ἄρτι λόγοι εἰς τῶν μὴ ἔλεος λόγους... but Harder is surely right in saying that there is no question of a title there—the phrase simply means "from our discussions about matter." Plotinus in fact, we know (*Life* ch. 4), gave no titles to his treatises: and the title given in the *Life* to this one seems preferable, because it describes the contents better, since the first part of the treatise is devoted to intelligible matter, the second to the matter of the sense-world. The treatise is a good example of Plotinus's method of work at its most professional and technical, a close and critical discussion of the views of the Stoics and of Aristotle. As often, he is particularly concerned to carry through a critical rethinking of Aristotle's doctrine designed to adapt it to Platonism as he understood it. The main points on which he differs from Aristotle in this treatise are: (1) he accepts matter in the intelligible world; the objections to belief in its existence stated in ch. 2, and refuted in the following chapters are in substance Aristotelian; (2) he identifies matter in the sense-world with privation; this is established against Aristotle in chs. 14-end, as is essential if Plotinus is to maintain his doctrine that matter is the principle of evil, the ultimate negativity.

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which appears clearly at the end of the treatise. On the other hand, Plotinus is maintaining Aristotle's doctrine against the Stoics when he argues that matter is incorporeal and without any sort of dimension (chs. 1, 8-12).

Synopsis

Matter is the substrate and receptacle of forms. Diverse views of its nature; corporeal (Stoics) incorporeal (Platonists and Aristotelians). The Platonist doctrine of intelligible matter (ch. 1). Objections to the existence of intelligible matter (ch. 2). Refutation of the objections and explanation of the true nature and function of intelligible matter (chs. 3-5). Matter in the sense-world, Aristotelian arguments for its existence (ch. 6). Criticism of pre-Socratic conceptions, also from Aristotle (ch. 7). Arguments to show that matter is incorporeal and without size, and that the conception of a sizeless incorporeal matter has a real meaning and philosophical value (chs. 8-12). Neither is matter quality, either positive or negative (ch. 13). As against Aristotle, it is identical with privation (chs. 14-16), and so is absolute negativity and evil (ch. 16).
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1. What is called "matter" is said to be some sort of "substrate" and "receptacle" of forms;¹ this account is common to all those who have arrived at a conception of a nature of this kind, and as far as this they all go the same way. But they disagree as soon as they begin to pursue the further investigation into what this underlying nature is and how it is receptive and what of. Those who adopt the position that realities are exclusively bodies and that substance consists in bodies say there is one matter and that it underlies the elements and is itself substance: all other things are, so to speak, affections of matter, and the elements, too, are matter in a certain state. They even dare to take matter as far as the gods, and finally, even [to say] that their God himself is this matter in a certain state.² And they give it a body too, for they say that it is a body without quality and a magnitude.³ But others ⁴ say that

¹ ἐσφακέων is Aristotle's word (cp., e.g., Physics A. 9. 192a33), ἐσφακεῖα Plato's (Timaeus 49a6). The two conceptions, of course, differ from each other considerably more than this summary definition would suggest.

² Plato's: cp. the Stoicopoeic Λεκτικὰ Βικτόρων Fragmenta II. 316, 309, 326.

³ Platonists and Aristotelians.

⁴ These are the Stoicopoeic Λεκτικὰ Βικτόρων Fragmenta II. 316, 309, 326.
It seems probable that Plotinus is making a distinction between Platonists and Aristotelians here. The only incorporeal beings whose existence was recognised by Aristotle were pure forms (intelligences), not composites of form and matter (op. Met. A. 6.1071 b2). Aristotle speaks of ἑνικὲς ἀκαλλακτοὺς ἀτυχεσίαν ἀφετέρους ἀρχηγοὺς ὑπερβολικάς καὶ ἀρτικώς προτερὰς ἔργα τῆς ζωῆς ἀναμικτοὺς τοῖς ἐκεί εἴδεσθαι καὶ ταῖς ὀσμάσιμοις οὐσίαις.

2. Αἀρστερεῖα ἐγκλήσεως περὶ ταύτης εἰ ἐστὶ, καὶ τὰς ὁμοιαίας τυγχάνει, καὶ τὰς ἑαυτὶς. Εἰ δὴ ἄνωτεν τι καὶ ἀμορφὸν δεῖ τὸ τῆς ζωῆς ἀναμίκτος, ἐν δὲ τοῖς ἑκατέρους οὕτων οὐθὲν ἀόριστον οὐθὲν ἀμορφοῦ, οὐθότι ἐν οἷς ἑκατέρους καὶ ἐν οἷς ἄλλοι τοῦ ὑπάρχοντος καὶ γνωσμένοις μὲν ἔλθαι καὶ εὐ ἐτέρων ἑτέρων μεταξύ, ἀφ' ἑν καὶ ἡ τῶν ἀιδιῶν οὐκ εὐφύσην, μὴ γνωρισάγας καὶ οὐ. Πάθος δὲ ἐν θύμῳ καὶ ὑπέστης; Εἰ δὲ ἐν τούτῳ, καὶ ὑπὸ τούτου: εἰ δὲ οὕσας, καὶ ἐν τούτῳ πάθος καὶ καθ' ὑμνικᾶς τὰ πάσα. Καὶ ἐδοὺς τῆς προσόντις τὸ ὑπάρχου ἀναμίκτος· ὧστε καὶ τούτῃ ὧστε. 3. Πρὸς τὸν οὖν λεκτέαν ὅσ' οἱ παντοτικῶς τὸ ἀόριστον ἀτμοστέαν, οὐθέν ἢ ἄν αμορφοῦν ἢ τῇ
iavrov inivclα, el peXXot Trapeyeiv α tols irpo avrov Kal rocs apicrrois motov ri<al Trpcs o vovv Kal Xoyov 7re<f>VKe puptpjup ct -y wet ptovtujk Kal els elbos fieXnov dyo/zcW hr re rols voryrois to ovvderov irepcos> ovy &s rd awixara' inel cat Xoyvc avvOtruc Kal evepyela 8e avvOerov ttocovoc ttjv evepyoveav els etSos (jrvviv.

10 yiyvopcvcov vXrj del aXXo Kal dXXo elSos Tcryct, tGjv StucScluv ij uurij to vrov dec. Ta^a 8c aavanaXiv 7) evravda. 'EvrauOa pev yap Trapa ixdpos iravra Kai ev cKaoroTC* Sto ovdev eppevec aXXou dXXo eijeudovvTQS' 8to ov ramov act. 'E/cei Sc a pa iravra' 8to ovk eyei els 5 perafldXXoi, rjdrj yap €KCC, €7T€l Ov8 €1 'TdvOa, dAA* TepOV TpOTTGV eKariepa.

9 yiyvopcvcov vXrj del aXXo Kal dXXo elSos Tcryct, tGjv StucScluv ij uurij to vrov dec. Ta^a 8c aavanaXiv 7) evravda. 'EvrauOa pev yap Trapa ixdpos iravra Kai ev cKaoroTC* Sto ovdev eppevec aXXou dXXo eijeudovvTQS' 8to ov ramov act. 'E/cei Sc a pa iravra' 8to ovk eyei els 5 perafldXXoi, rjdrj yap €KCC, €7T€l Ov8 €1 'TdvOa, dAA* TepOV TpOTTGV eKariepa.

4. *0 8 rj Xoyos fjplv viroOepevois to vvv elvac to. —ScSct/cTat yap ev aXXocs — tooltco. Et ovv iroXXd ra 7], kolvov pev tl ev avrocs avcyKT)

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the very idea implies shapelessness, if it is going to offer itself to the principles before it and to the best beings. Soul, for instance, is naturally disposed like this to Intellect and Reason; it is shaped by them and brought to a better form. And in the Intelligible world the composite being is differently constituted, not like bodies: since forming principles, too, are composite, and by their actuality make composite the nature which is active towards the production of form. But if this nature both works on and derives from something other than itself, it is composite to an even higher degree. The matter, too, of the things that came into being is always receiving different forms, but the matter of eternal things is always the same and always has the same form. With matter here, it is pretty well exactly the other way round; for here it is all things in turn and only one thing at each particular time; so nothing lasts because one thing pushes out another; so it is not the same for ever. But in the intelligible world matter is all things at once; so it has nothing to change into, for it has all things already. Therefore, intelligible matter is certainly not ever shapeless in the intelligible world, since even the matter here is not, but each of them has shape in a different way. The question whether matter is eternal or came into being will be cleared up when we grasp what sort of a thing it is.

4. Let us assume for the present that the Forms exist—for it has been demonstrated elsewhere—and continue our discussion on this assumption. If, then, the Forms are many, there must be something in them common to them all; and also something
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individual, by which one differs from another. Now this something individual, this separating difference, is the shape which belongs to each. But if there is shape, there is that which is shaped, about which the difference is predicated. Therefore, there is matter which receives the shape, and is the substrate in every case. Further, if there is an intelligible universal order There, and this universe here is an imitation of it, and this is composite, and composed of matter, then there must be There too. Or else how can you call it a universal order except with regard to its form? And how can you have form without something on which the form is imposed? Intelligible reality is certainly altogether absolutely without parts, yet it has parts in a kind of way. If the parts are torn apart from each other, then the cutting and tearing apart is an affection of matter: for it is matter that is cut. But if intelligible reality is at once many and partless, then the many existing in one are in matter which is that one, and they are its shapes: conceive this unity as varied and of many shapes. So, then, it must be shapeless before it is varied; for if you take away in your mind its variety and shapes and forming principles and thoughts, what is prior to these is shapeless and undefined and is none of these things that are on it and in it.

5. But if it is objected that, because intelligible matter always has these forms and has them all together, both are one and that underlying reality is not matter, then the matter of the bodies here will not exist in this world either: for it is never without shape but is always a complete body, but all the same a composite one. Intellect finds out its doubleness,
for it divides till it comes to something simple which cannot itself be resolved into parts; but as long as it can it advances into the depth of body. And the depth of each individual thing is matter: so all matter is dark, because the light (in each thing) is the rational forming principle. Now intellect too is rational principle. So intellect sees the forming principle in each thing and considers that what is under it is dark because it lies below the light; just as the eye, which has the form of light, directs its gaze at the light and at colours (which are lights) and reports that what lies below the colours is dark and material, hidden by the colours. The darkness, however, in intelligible things differs from that in the things of sense, and so does the matter, by just as much as the form superimposed on both is different. The divine matter when it receives that which defines it has a defined and intelligible life, but the matter of this world becomes something defined, but not alive or thinking, a decorated corpse. Shape here is only an image; so that which underlies it is also only an image. But there the shape is true shape, and what underlies it is true too. So those who say that matter is substance must be considered to be speaking correctly if they are speaking of matter in the intelligible world. For that which underlies form is substance, or rather, considered along with the form imposed upon it forms a whole which is illuminated substance. As for the question whether intelligible matter is eternal, one must investigate it in the same way as one investigates the ideas: intelligible realities are originated in so far as they have a beginning, but unoriginated because they

\footnote{This is an allusion to Plato's theory of vision. \textit{Cp. Timaeus} 46B.}
Here we encounter Plotinus's interpretation of the υποδοξής of Plato, *Sophist* 254D ff. (Being, Motion, Rest, Sameness and Otherness) as "categories of the intelligible world," for which, cp. V. 1. 4 and the full exposition in VI. 2. 7-8.

The doctrine briefly stated here is of cardinal importance in the thought of Plotinus; it is that two moments are to be distinguished in the simultaneous generation of Intellect from the One; the first, in which it proceeds as an unformed potentiality; the second, in which it returns upon the One in contemplation.

have not a beginning in time; they always proceed from something else, not as always coming into being, like the universe, but as always existing, like the universe There. For Otherness There exists always, which produces intelligible matter; for this is the principle of matter, this and the primary Movement. For this reason Movement, too, was called Otherness, because Movement and Otherness sprang forth together. The Movement and Otherness which came from the First are undefined, and need the First to define them; and they are defined when they turn to it. But before the turning, matter, too, was undefined and the Other and not yet good, but unilluminated from the First. For if light comes from the First, then that which receives the light, before it receives it has eternally no light; but it has light as other than itself, since the light comes to it from something else. And now we have disclosed about the intelligible matter more than the occasion demanded.

6. About the receptacle of bodies, let this be our account. There must be something underlying bodies, which is different from the bodies themselves, is made clear by the changing of the elements into each other. For the destruction of that which

and is informed and actualised by him. For the basic doctrine, cp. V. 4. 2; for Plotinus's explanation of why the multiplicity of Forms results from Intellect's contemplation of the One, cp. V. 3. 11, V. 1. 7.

What follows is an accurate exposition of Aristotle's doctrine of matter, in Aristotelian language: it reads like a Peripatetic commentary on *Met.* A 1-2, 1069b. The criticism of Pre-Socratic views in the following chapter is also entirely based on Aristotle; see the first note to ch. 7.
changes is not complete; otherwise, there will be a
being which has totally perished into non-being;
or has the engendered thing come to being from
absolute non-being, but there is a change from one
form into another. But if this is so there remains
that which has received the form of the engendered
thing and lost the other one. And then destruction
also makes this completely clear: for it is destruction
of a composite; but if each individual thing is a
composite, it is composed of matter and form. In-
duction demonstrates this by showing that what is
being destroyed is a composite; and the process of
reduction to a thing's elements shows it too; if, for
example, the cup is reduced to its gold and the gold to
water, the water in process of dissolution requires
something analogous to be reduced to ... Ar.d the ele-
ments must be either form or first matter or composed
of matter and form. But it is not possible for them
to be form; for without matter how could they be in
a state of having bulk and dimension? But they are
not first matter either; for they are destroyed; so
they must be composed of matter and form: form
is in relation to their quality and shape, and matter
to their substrate, which is undefined because It Is
not form.

7. Empedocles, who classes the elements as matter,
has their destruction as evidence against him.1
Anaxagoras, when he makes his mixture matter, and
says that it is not a capacity for everything but con-
sists in relation to the elements of mind which he introduces by not making it the giver

988a37 ff.; A 2. 1009a20-23, and is entirely Peripatetic in

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1 The criticism of the Pre-Socratics in this chapter does not
indicate any independent study of them by Plotinus; it is

PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 4.
6 παντελῆς τοῦ μεταβάλλοντος ἡ φύσα. ἂν, ἠματι τοις
οὐσίας εἰς τὸ μὴ ἐν ἄπολομενήν φύσαν ἠματι τῷ γενεύ-
μενῳ καὶ τοῦ παντελῶς μὴ δύτος εἰς τὸ ἐν ἀληθείᾳ,
ἀλλ' ἐκτός εἴδους μεταβάλλει ἡμετ' εἴδους ἑδέον. Μένει δὲ τὸ
δεξαμενὸν τὸ εἶδος τοῦ γεγομένου καὶ
ἀποβαλλειν θάτερον. Τούτῳ τε ἄνω δηλοί καὶ ὅλος
10 ἡ φύσα· συνελευθεροὶ γὰρ εἰς τὸ ποῦτον, εἰς ἑλέος καὶ
eἴδους ἔκαστος. "Ἡ θεομομορφή μαρτυρεῖ τὸ
φθαρμένου σύνθετων δεικτικῶς καὶ ἡ ἀμάλλως
dε· οὗτοι εἰς καὶ φαίλεις εἰς τὸν χρυσόν, δὲ χρυσός εἰς
ὕψωρ, καὶ τὸ υψωρ δὲ φθαρμένου τὸ ἀναλογικὸν
ἀπαντεῖ. Ἀνάγκη δὲ τὰ συνεχέα ἡ εἴδος εἶναι ἢ
10 ὑπὲρ ὑπούργου εἰς ἑλέος καὶ εἴδους. Ἀλλ' εἴδος
μὲν εἰς ὑπὸν τε· πῶς γὰρ ἄκατο ἕνῳ ὕψῳ καὶ
μεγέτει; Ἀλλ' οὔτε ἐλθείς ἡ ὑπούργος φθαρίσταται γάρ.
Εἰς ἱπάτοις ὑπὸν καὶ εἴδους. Καὶ τὸ μὲν εἴδος κατὰ
tὸ ποντικὸν καὶ τὴν μορφήν, δὲ κατὰ τὸ ὕποκείμενον
ἀδιάφορον, ὥστε μὴ εἴδος.
7. Ἐμπεδοκλῆς δὲ τὰ συνεχέα ἐν ἱπάτῳ ἑλέον
ἀντιμαρτυροῦσαν ἔχει τὴν φθαρμένα ἑκάτων. Ἀνα-
exagoras δὲ τὸ μίσθων ὑπότιον ποιεῖ, οὐκ ἐπιτείναυτα
πρὸς πάντα, ἀλλ' πάντα ἐνεργεῖ ἔχει λέγων ὅτι
5 εἰσάγαγε νοῦν ἀναριστεῖ ὡς αὐτόν τῇ μορφῇ καὶ τῷ

1 Σημ. Στιήνβαρτ, Η 8: ὑπὸς χόλος.
This obscure criticism is less Peripatetic than the rest of the chapter, as it seems to imply Plotinus's own equation of intellect and being.

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*Note:* The Greek text is presented in a way that is difficult to interpret due to missing content and formatting issues. The text appears to be a translation of a dialogue between Plotinus and a student, discussing the nature of matter and its relationship to shape and form.

**ON MATTER**

Of shape and form, and not prior to matter but simultaneous with it. But this simultaneity is impossible. For if the mixture participates in being the existent is prior; and if both this mixture and that other [i.e., being] are existent, there will be need of a third over them, different from them. If, then, it is necessary for the maker to be prior, why did the forms have to be in small pieces in the matter, and why did mind have to separate them out with endless trouble, when it could, as matter is without quality, extend quality and shape over the whole of it? And how is it not impossible that everything should be in everything? And as for the man who posits the unbounded [as matter], let him explain what it is. And if he means that it is unbounded in the sense that one cannot get to the end of it, it is clear that there is no such thing in existence, neither an unbounded-in-itself, nor an unbounded in another nature, as an accident of some body; there is no unbounded-in-itself, because its part, too, would be necessarily unbounded, and no accidental unbounded, because that of which it was an accident would not be unbounded in itself and would not be simple and not be matter any longer. Nor will the atoms hold the position of matter—they do not exist at all; for every body is altogether divisible: and the continuity and flexibility of bodies, and the inability of individual things to exist without mind and soul, which cannot be made of atoms (and it is impossible to make out of the atoms another kind of thing besides the atoms, he is following Peripatetic tradition here; for he himself regards matter as ἀπείρον (below ch. 15), though in a very different sense from Anaximander.

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1. This obscure criticism is less Peripatetic than the rest of the chapter, as it seems to imply Plotinus's own equation of intellect and being.

2. Anaximander. Plotinus's criticism shows how closely
since no maker will make anything out of discontinuous materia\), and innumerable other objections could be, and have been, alleged against this hypothesis; so there is no need to spend more time on this question.

8. What, then, is this one matter which is also continuous and without quality? It is clear that, if in fact it is without quality, it is not a body—if it was, it would have quality. But, since we say that it is the matter of all sense-objects and not the matter of some, but form in relation to other—as clay is matter to the potter, but not matter absolutely—since we do not mean that it is matter in this sense, but matter in relation to everything, we should not attribute to its nature any of the properties which are observed in sense objects. Now if this is so, then besides the other qualities, colours and degrees of heat and cold, we must not attribute to it lightness or heaviness, density or rarity, and indeed not even shape: and so not size either. For it is one thing to be size and another to be given a size; one thing to be shape, another to be given a shape. And matter must not be composite, but simple and one thing in its own nature; for so it will be destitute of all qualities. And the giver of its shape will give it a shape which is different from matter itself, and a size, and everything, bringing them to matter, so to speak, from its store of realities. Otherwise, it will be enslaved to the size of matter and will make something, not as large as it wills, but of the size that matter wants: the idea that the will of the maker keeps in step with the size is a fiction. But if, too, the making principle is prior to the matter, matter will
ON MATTER

he exactly as the making principle wills it to be in every way, tractable to everything, and so to size too. And if it had size it would necessarily have shape as well; so that it would be still harder to work. So when the form comes to the matter it brings everything with it; the form has everything, the size and all that goes with and is caused by the formative principle. Therefore, in every natural kind the dimensions are determined along with the form; the dimensions of a man are different from those of a bird, and those of different kinds of birds from one another. Is there anything more surprising in the bringing of quantity to matter as something different from itself than in the addition to it of quality? It is not the case that quality is a rational formative principle and quantity is not, since quantity is form and measure and number.

9. How, then, is one to conceive an existing thing which has not size? Everything is without size which is not identical with that which has quantity; for, certainly, that which exists is not identical with that which has quantity; and there are many other things which are different from that which has quantity. One must regard all bodiless nature as altogether without quantity; but matter is also bodiless. For quantity itself, too, is not a thing which has quantity; that which has quantity is that which participates in quantity; so it is clear from this, too, that quantity is a form. As, then something becomes white by the presence of whiteness, but that which makes the white colour in a living thing, and the other varied colours too, is not varied colour itself but a various, if you like to put it that
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 4.

ON MATTER

λόγος, οὗτος καὶ τὸ ποιῶν τὸ τηλικόν τε ὑπὸ τηλικὸν, ἀλλ’ οὗ τὸ "τι πηλκοῦνται τι πηλκότης η" ἀ λόγος τὸ ποιῶν. Προσελθοῦσα οὖν ἡ πηλκότης ἐξελίχθη εἰς μέγεθος τὴν ὑπὸ; Οὔδεμοις’ οὐδε γὰρ ἐν ὑπὸ μυθετέρατο οὖν ἐδώκε μέγεδος
tο τὸ οὐ πρῶτον δὲν, οὕτως καὶ ποιῶτα τὸν οὐ πρῶτον οὕτως.

10. Τὶ οὖν νοήσω ἀμέσως ἐν ὑπ. Τὶ δὲ νοήσεις ἀποκοιμοῦ? Καὶ τὴς; ἦ νόησαι καὶ τῆς διανοίας ἢ ἐπίθετον; "Ἡ διάνοια: εἰ γὰρ τῷ ἁμαίνεθ το ἀμαίνεθ, καὶ τῷ ἀμαίνεθ το ἀμαίνεθ.

Δόγμα μὲν οὖν γένοιτο ἐν περὶ τοῦ ἀμαίνεθ ὁμοιμένον, ἢ δὲ πρῶτος αὐτὸ ἐπιθέτον ἀμαίνεθος. Εἰ δὲ ἐκατόν δόγμα καί νοήσαις μενοκεκτείσθη, ἀνταρταὶ δὲ οἷον λόγος ἴδεξι, ἢ ἄρη λέγει περὶ αὐτῆς, ἢ δὲ διακεκεκτέται εἰλαὶ νόησαι ὧ νόησαις, ἀλλ’ οἷον ἰδια, μᾶλλον ἴδεξι ἡ ἐν τῷ φαντασμα ἀμαίνεθ, καὶ εἰ ἰδίωμα Εὐθέρεως, ἢ ἔθερεως ὡς ἀκρόος καὶ μετὰ τοῦ εἴρετο λόγου συγκεκριμένοι. Καὶ τάχα εἰς τὸ ἴδία βλέπον τὸ Ἐπίστολον νέα χρονισμοῦ ἑτερ αἰτίαν εἰσέναι. Τὶ οὖν ἡ διανοία τῆς σφυρήγης; Ἄρα παρευλέγέτης ὡρίαν ὡς ἀρκείας; 1 "Ἡ ἐν καταφάσει τινί τὸ ἀμαίνεθ, καὶ οἰον ἔθθλομεν τὸ σκότος ὑπ."

1 ἐκεῖνος Ηέντς: ἐποκοίμων χαλδ. H-S.

1 Timaeus 52B2.
2 ἐν καταφάσει in the next sentence strongly suggests that Heinze’s ἐναθέτα is the right reading here, and I translate it. But the MSS ἐποκοίμων is not quite impossible; Dr. Schwyzser suggests that the antithesis to ἐν καταφάσει is to be found in way, formative principle; so that which makes a thing a certain size is not a thing of certain size itself, but the specific magnitude, or magnitude itself, or the formative principle which makes magnitude. Does magnitude, then, come to matter and unfold it into size? By no means; for matter was not shrunk together in a small space; but the formative principle gave a size which was not there before, just as it gave a quality which was not there before.

10. "What, then, shall I conceive this sizelessness in matter to be?" What will you conceive any tiling whatever without quality to be? What is the act of thought, and how do you apply your mind to it? By indefiniteness: for if like is known by like, the indefinite is known by the Indefinite. The concept, then, of the indefinite may be defined, but the application of the mind to it is indefinite. If, then, each thing is known by concept and thought, but in this case the concept states about matter what it does in fact state, that which wants to be a thought about it will not be a thought but a sort of thoughtlessness; or rather the mental representation of it will be spurious and not genuine, compounded of an unreal part and with the diverse kind of reasoning. And it was perhaps because he observed this that Plato said that matter was apprehended by a "spurious reasoning." 1 What, then is the indefiniteness of the soul? Is it complete ignorance amounting to inability to say anything? Rather, the indefiniteness is contained in a positive statement, and, as with the eye we see

παρευλέγετη ὡρία and that ἐποκοίμων introduces a comparison, "Is it complete ignorance, like an absence? Rather, the indefiniteness is contained in a positive statement..."
darkness which is matter of every unseen colour, so, too, the soul, when it has taken away everything which corresponds to light in the objects of sense, being no longer able to define what is left, is made like sight in darkness, having become then somehow the same as what it, so to speak, sees. But does it really see? Only as if it was seeing absence of shape and absence of colour, and something lightless, and without size as well. If it does not see in this way, it will already be giving matter a form. Is not the soul, then, affected in this very same way when it thinks nothing? No, but when it thinks nothing, it says nothing, or rather is not affected at all; but when it thinks matter, it is affected in a way as if it received an impression of the shapeless; since, also when it thinks things that have received shape and size, it thinks them as composites; for it thinks them as things which have been given colour and, in general, quality. So it thinks the whole and the compound of both elements [matter and form]; and the thought or perception of the overlying elements is clear, but that of the sub¬strate, the shapeless, is dim; for it is not form. That, then, which it apprehends in the composite whole along with the overlying elements, when it has analysed these out and separated them, that which reason leaves over, this is what it thinks, a dim thing dimly and a dark thing darkly, and it thinks it without thinking. And since matter itself does not remain shapeless, but is shaped in things, the soul, too, immediately imposes the form of the things on it because matter's indefiniteness distresses it, as if it were in fear of being outside the realm of being and could not endure to stay for long in non-being.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 4.

11. Kαὶ τὸ δὲ τοῦ Ὠλίου πρὸς ὀστεταιν σωμάτων μέγεθος καὶ ποιότητας ἀπάσας; Ἡ τοῦ ὑποδεξομένου πᾶντα. Ὁθεν τὸ ὕγκος: ἦ δὲ τὸ ὕγκος, μέγεθος ὅψεως. Ἡ τὸ ὕγκος, ὅπως ὅτι δὲ ἐκείνον ὃ ὃ ἐκείνον ἐκεί

ON MATTER

11. "And why is there any need of anything else for the composition of bodies besides size and all qualities? There is need of something to receive them all. This, then, is the mass. But if mass, then presumably, size. But if it has no size, it will have nowhere to receive anything. If it is without size, what would it contribute, if it contributes neither to form and quality nor to extension and size, which appears, wherever it occurs, to come to bodies from their matter? But in general, just as actions and productions and times and movements exist in reality without having a foundation of matter in them, so there is no need for the primary bodies to have matter; they can each of them be what they are as wholes, with a more varied richness of content when they have their structure produced by the mixture of a greater number of forms: so that this sizelessness of matter is an empty name." 1 First of all, then, it is not necessary that what receives anything should be a mass, if size is not already present to it: since the soul which receives everything contains everything together; but if size were one of its incidental attributes it would contain all individual things in their sizes. But matter does accept in extension what it receives, for this reason, that it is itself receptive of extension: just as animals and plants along with their growth in size have development of quality corresponding to their increase in quantity, and if the quantity decreased the quality...
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 4.

On matter

would decrease too. But if, because in things like
these a certain size is present beforehand underly-
ing the shaping principle, our opponent demands it
there too [in the case of prime matter], the demand
is incorrect; for in the case of plants and animals the
matter is not simply matter, but the matter of this
particular thing; matter which is simply matter must
receive size too from something else. So, then,
that which is going to receive the form must not be a
mass, but it must receive the rest of its qualities as
well at the same time as it becomes a mass. And it
does, indeed, have an imaginary appearance of mass
because the first, so to speak, of its capacities is a
capacity for mass, but the mass is void. For this
reason some people have said that matter is identical
with the void. I say: an imaginary appearance of
mass " because the soul, too, when it is keeping com-
pany with matter, having nothing to delimit, spills
itself into indefiniteness, neither drawing a line
round it nor able to arrive at a point; for if it did it
would already be delimiting it. For this reason
matter should not be called "great" separately or
again " small " separately, but " great-and-small." ²
It is " mass " in this sense and " without size " in
this sense, that it is the matter of mass, and when
mass is contracted from the great to the small and
expands from the small to the great, matter, so to
speak, runs through the whole range of mass: and
its indefiniteness is mass in this sense, that it has the
capacity of receiving size in itself; but in imaginary
representation it is mass in the sense we have de-
scribed. For in the case of the other things without
size, those of them that are forms are each of them

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referring to Plato; cp. 205b11.
2. Plato's term, as reported by Aristotle (Physics A4. 187a17,
G4. 203a16; Metaphysics A7. 986a26).
clearly defined, so that there is no room anywhere in their case for a conception of mass. But matter is indefinite and not yet stable by itself, and is carried about here and there into every form, and since it is altogether adaptable becomes many by being brought into everything and becoming everything, and in this way acquires the nature of mass.

12. Matter, then, makes the greatest contribution to the formation of bodies; for the forms of bodies are in sizes. But these corporeal forms could not come into being in size but only in that which has been given size; for if in size, they would not come into being in matter and would be the same as before, without size and without underlying material substantiality, or they would only be rational principles—but these are in soul—and would not be bodies. So here in the material world the many forms must be in something which is one; and this is different from size. We can see that this is so because in our present experience things that are mixed together come to identity by having matter, and there is no need for any other medium, because each constituent of the mixture comes bringing its own matter. All the same, there is need of some one kind of vessel or place to receive bodies; but place is posterior to matter and bodies, so that bodies would need matter before they need place. Nor, because actions and productions are without matter, are bodies without matter too: for bodies are composite, but actions are not. And matter does provide the substrate for those who act, whenever they act, by its continuing presence in themselves, but does not give itself to the action; nor
PLUTONUS: ENNEAD II. 4.

toutines touto xeiropoi. Kai o metaβαλλει ἄλλη
πράξει εἰς ἄλλην, ἵνα ἄν ἢ καὶ αὐταῖς ἄλην, ἀλλ' τ
πράττων ετ' ἄλλην metaβαλλει πράξει ε ἂλην
ώστε ἄλην αὐτῶν εἶναι ταῖς πράξεσιν. 'Εστι
τοῖς ἄλην ἀναγκαίους ἢ ἄλην καὶ τῇ πολύτητι καὶ τῷ
μεγάλῳ. οὔτε καὶ τοῖς σάμασιι καὶ οὐ καὶ κενον
ἁμάμα, ἀλλ' ἔστι τῷ ὑποκείμενοι καὶ ἀρατον καὶ
μέγεθες ὑπάρχει. Ἡ σελετος οὔτε τᾶς ποιήτης

25 ὕψομεν οὐδὲ το μέγεθες τῷ ἄλην λόγῳ· ἐκατον
γρα τῶν τοιούτων λέγοντο οὐ οὔχ ἐν οἴρ
ἐκατον μόνον λαμβανόμενον. Εἰ δὲ ταῦτα ἔστι
καὶ περὶ ὁμοίως ὡς ἐκατον, πολὺ μᾶλλον ἐν εἰς
ἄλην καὶ μὴ ἐλαργής ὑπάρχει ὑπάρχει ὡς οὔτα

οὔτας ἀληθευόμενοι. οὔτε γὰρ ὕμας, ἄχρους ἄρα' οὔτε

ακοή, οὐ γάρ ὅφελος· οὔτε γύμας, δια οὔτε δώτες

οὔτε γνώση. Ἀρ' οὖν ἄφης; "Η οὖ, ὅτι μὴ δὲν

ὁμοίων καὶ ἄφη· ὅτι ἡ πλινύνοι ἤ ἄραιοι, μαθηματικοὶ σκληροί, ὑγρὸς ἤ ἐξερευνοῦν· τούτων

δὲ οὔτε περὶ τὴν ἄλην· ἀλλ' λογισμῷ τοι δὲν χάος, ἀλλ' κενάς· διά καὶ κατον, οὔτε ἔχεται· Ἀλλ'

35 οὔτε ὑπερβολής περὶ αὐτὴν· ἐκ μὲν λόγοι ἢ

ὑπερβολής, ἐπιρροής αὐτῆς· αὐτὴ οὖν ἄλλο· ἐκ δὲ

ἄλη αὐτήν καὶ ὑμῖν κριτῶν, ὁμοίων φαινόμεν

ἐν εἴς καὶ ὑμῖν ἄλην µόνον.

13. Εἰ δὲ ποιήτης τις τῷ ὑποκείμενοι κοινῇ τις

οὔτα ἐν ἐκάσει τῶν ποιητικῶν, πρώτων μὲν τις

1 In ch. 10 (the reference to the Timaeus).

ON MATTER

do those who are acting even want it to. And one
action does not change into another—if it did
then actions, too, would have matter—but the person
acting changes from one action to another, so that he
himself is matter to his actions. So, then, matter is
necessary both to quality and to size, and therefore
to bodies; and it is not an empty name but it is
something underlying, even if it is invisible and size¬
less. If we do deny the existence of matter we shall
by the same argument be prevented from asserting
the existence of qualities and size; for everything of
this kind could be said to be nothing taken alone by
itself. But if these have an existence, though in
each case an obscure one, still more would matter
exist, though it is not obvious since it is not by the
sense that it is apprehended: not by the eyes, for
it is without colour; not by the hearing, since it
makes no noise; nor has it taste or smell, so it is not
nostirils or tongue that perceive it. Is it touch, then?
No, because it is not a body, for touch apprehends
body, because it apprehends density and rarity,
hardness and softness, wetness and dryness; and none
of these apply to matter. It is apprehended by a
process of reasoning, which does not come from mind
but works emptily; so it is spurious reasoning, as has
been said.1 But even corporeality does not belong
to it; for if corporeality is a rational formative prin-
ciple it is different from matter, and so matter is
something else; but if corporeality has already come
into action and is so to speak mixed, it would clearly
be body and not matter alone.

13. If the substrate is to be some quality, a com-
mon one which exists in each and every one of the
Plotinus: Ennead II. 4.

aúth lektoin. Ἑσείται πόσα ποιότης ὑποκείμενον ἔσται; Πώς δὲ ἐν ἀμεγέθει ποιών θεωρηθήσεται

μὴ ἔχον ὑλήν μὴ δὲ ὑγείαν; "Ἑσείται εἰ μὲν ὁμομείην ή ποιότης, πῶς ὑλή; Εἰ δὲ ἀδροτόν τι, οὖν ποιότης, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὑποκείμενον καὶ ἡ ἕνεμος ὑλή. Τὰ οὖν καλῶσι ἀπὸ τοῦ τῶν ἄλλων μηδεμάς τῇ αὐτῆς φύσει μετέχειν, αὐτῷ δὲ τούτῳ τῷ μηδεμάς μετέχειν ποιῶν εἶναι ἰδιότητα

πάντως ποιών ἔχον οὖν καὶ τῶν ἄλλων διαφέρουσαν, αὐτὸν στέρρησι πως ἐκείνων; Καὶ γὰρ αἱ διστομένων ποιῶν, αὐτὸν αἱ διστομένας. Εἰ δὲ καὶ ἄλλωσ στέρρησις περὶ αὐτῆς, ἢν μᾶλλον, εἰ γε δὴ καὶ στέρρησις ποιῶν τι. 'Ο δὴ ταῦτα λέγων τί ἄλλο ἢ ποιῶν καὶ ποιῶν ὑπόκεινται πάντα ποιῶν; ὡστε καὶ ἡ ποιότης ποιότης ἀν εἴη καὶ ἡ ὑστία δὲ. Εἰ δὲ ποιῶν, πρόσεται ποιότης. Γελοίων δὲ τὸ ἐτερον τοῦ ποιῶν καὶ μὴ ποιῶν ποιῶν ποιῶν. Εἰ δὲ, ὡστε ἐτερον, ποιῶν, εἰ μὲν αὑτοκρέταις, οδὴ δὲ ποιῶν ἐπει οὐδ' ἡ ποιότης ποιῶν. εἰ δὲ ἐτερον μάλλον, οὐκ

ἐστιν, ἀλλ' ἐτερότητι ἐτερον καὶ ταινότητι ταινῶν. Οὐδὲ δὴ ἡ στέρρησις ποιῶν αὐτῇ ποιῶν, ἀλλ' ἐρημία ποιότητος ἢ ἄλλον, ὡς ἡ ὑστία οὐ δόθηκε ἢ ἐπικρίνου ἄλλον ἀρκεῖ γὰρ ἡ στέρρησις, τὸ δὲ

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elements, first of all it must be stated what this quality is. Next, how can a quality be a substrate? How is a quality in something without size to be conceived, when it does not have matter or size? Then, if the quality is defined, how is it matter? But if it is something indefinite, it is not a quality but the substrate and the matter we were looking for. "What, then, prevents it from being something qualified by participating, by its own nature, in none of the other qualities, but by this very fact of participating in none of them being qualified, since it has a thoroughly distinctive characteristic, different from the others, a sort of privation of those other qualities? For anyone who is deprived has a quality—a blind man, for instance. If then privation of the qualities belongs to it, how is it not qualified? But if complete privation belongs to it, it is qualified still more, if privation, too, is really something qualified." But what else is the person who says this doing than making everything qualified and qualities? So that even quantity would be a quality, and substance too. But if something is qualified, quality is present to it. But it is absurd to make qualified what is other than the qualified and so not qualified. But if it is qualified because it is other, if it is absolute otherness, it is not so as being qualified, since quality [the form] is not qualified; but if it is simply other, it is not so by itself, but other by otherness and the same by sameness. And privation is certainly not quality or qualified, but lack of quality or of something else, as soundlessness does not belong to sound or anything else positive; for privation is a taking away, but qualification is a matter of positive assertion. The

1 I.e. you cannot classify soundlessness as a special sort of sound or any other sort of positive quality: a quality is always something positive, a privation, never.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 4.

14. But we must investigate this further point, whether it is privation or the subject of privation. Now the argument which says that in the substrate both are one, but that in rational definition they are two, is under an obligation to instruct us what rational definition of each of these two things one must give, one of matter which will define it without applying to it any term belonging to privation, and an exactly similar one of privation. For there are three possibilities; neither of them is contained in the definition of the other, or both are in each other's definitions, or one only is in the definition of the other, whichever one it is. If, then, each of the two things is separate and neither of them requires the other, the pair of them will be two distinct things and matter will be other than privation, even if privation is incidentally predicated of it. But, then, the other must not appear even potentially in the definition of one of them. But if they are related as the snub

distinctive characteristic, too, of matter is nor shape: for it consists in not being qualified and not having any form: it is surely fantastic to call it qualified because it has no quality; it is like saying that because it is sizeless, by this very fact it has a size. So, then, its distinctive characteristic is not something else other than what it is; it is not an addition to it but rather consists in its relationship to other things, its being other than they. Other things are not only other but each of them is something as form, but this would appropriately be called nothing but other; or perhaps others, so as not to define it as a unity by the term "other" but to show its indefiniteness by calling it "others."

1 To say that something is "other" than something else is a way of helping to define it, to show it as a distinctive unity; this remarkable phrase is an attempt to exclude all definition, to speak of matter as absolutely indefinite and incoherent with no sort of distinctive unity.

PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 4.

15. We must enquire, therefore, again whether the unlimited and indefinite are incidentally predicated

1 A striking Aristotelian example, e.g., Metaphysics Z3, 1000b30-31. Was this philosophical snub noses originally Socrates'?
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 4.

συμβεβηκός καὶ εἰς στέρησις συμβεβηκεν. Εἰ δὴ δοσα μὲν ἄρθρῳ καὶ λόγοι ἀπειρίας ἔχω—δροι γὰρ ὁ καὶ τάξεις καὶ τὸ τεταγμένον καὶ τοῖς ἀλλοις παρά τούτων, τάττει δὲ ταύτα οἳ τὸ τεταγμένον οὐδὲ τάξις, ἄλλα ἄλλο τὸ ταττόμενον παρὰ τὸ τάττον, τάττει δὲ τὸ πέρας καὶ ὁρὰς καὶ λόγος—ἀνάγκη τὸ ταττόμενον καὶ ὁραζόμενον τὸ ἀπειρον εἶναι. Τάττεται δὲ ἡ ὑλη καὶ ὅσα δὲ μὴ ὑλη τῷ μετέχειν ἢ

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of another nature, and how they are incidental attributes, and if privation is an incidental attribute. Now if all things that are number and proportion are outside limitlessness—for they are bounds and orders, and other things derive their being set in order from them, but it is not being ordered or order that orders them, but that which is set in order is different from that which orders it, and what which orders is limit and bound and proportion—that which is set in order and bounded must be the unlimited. But matter is set in order, as are all things which are not matter in so far as they participate in it or are reckoned as matter; so matter must be the unlimited, but not unlimited in the sense that it is so incidentally and that the unlimited is an incidental attribute of it. For, first, the incidental attribute of anything must be a rational concept; but the unlimited is not a concept. Then what will the subject be of which the unlimited is incidentally predicated? Limit and something limited. But matter is not something limited, nor is it limit. And the unlimited when it comes to that which is limited will destroy its nature. So the unlimited is not an incidental attribute of matter; matter itself, then, is the unlimited. For in the intelligible world, too, matter is the unlimited, and it would be produced from the unlimitedness or the power or the everlastingness of the One; unlimitedness is not in the One, but the One produces it. How, then, is matter both there and here? The unlimited is double, too. And what is the difference between the two unlimiteds? They differ as the archetype differs from the image. Is the unlimited here, then, less unlimited? More, rather;
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 4.

ταῦτα; "Η μᾶλλον δια γὰρ εἰδώλων πεφευγός τὸ
εἶναι (καὶ) τὸ ἀληθὲς, μᾶλλον ἄπειρον. Ἡ γὰρ
25 ἀπειρά ἐν τῷ ἤττον ὀρισθεῖσι μᾶλλον τὸ
γὰρ ἤττον ἐν τῷ ἁγάθῳ μᾶλλον ἐν τῷ κακῷ. Τοῦ ἐκεῖ
οὗ μᾶλλον διὰ εἰδώλων ὡς ἄπειρον, τὸ δὲ ἐνταῦθα
ἄττον, διὸ λέγεις τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἀληθὲς, εἰς δὲ
eἰδώλων κατεργάσῃ φύσιν, ἄληθεστέρως ἄπειρον.
Τὸ αὐτὸ οὖν τὸ ἄπειρον καὶ τὰ ἀπειρῷ εἶναι; Ἡ
30 ὅπου λόγος καὶ Ἡ ἄλλο ἐκάστορον, ὅπου δὲ Ἁλὴ
μόνον ἡ ταῦτα λεκτίνη ἡ ὅλως; δὲ καὶ βέλτων,
οἷος εἶναι ἀνθάδε τὸ ἄπειρῳ εἶναι: λόγος γὰρ
ἔσται, ὃς οὐκ ἐστὶ σὰρξ ἡ ἄρτῃ οὐκ ἀπειρδὲν.
"Απειρῶν μὲν δὴ παρ' αὐτῆς τῶν ἄλλων λεκτίνων
ἀντιτάξει τῇ πρὸς τὸν λόγον. Καὶ γὰρ, ἄνωτερ ὁ
35 λόγος οὗ τὸ ἄλλο τὰ ἐν τῇ λόγῳ; οὕτω καὶ τὴν
ἄλην ἀντεπτευόμενον τὴν λόγῳ κατὰ τὴν ἄπειραν
οὐκ ἄλλο τοῦ ὅπου διώκεται ἄπειρον.
16. 'Ἀρ' οὖν καὶ ἐτέροττητι ταῦτα; "Η οὖς,
ἀλλὰ μορφώ ἐπετρέπτητον ἀντιπαραμέτρον πρὸς τὰ
ὕπτα κυρίως, ἡ δὴ λόγῳ. Διὸ καὶ μὴν οὕτως τὸ
δὲ καὶ στερῆσαι ταῦτα, εἰ ἡ στέρησις ἀντίστροφη
5 πρὸς τὰ ἐν λόγῳ ὄντα. Οὐκοῦν ἰδοὺς ἀπιστεύεται ἡ
στέρησις προσελθόντος τοῦ οὐ στέρησος; Ὅδηγετο;

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for in so far as it is an image which has escaped from
being and truth, it is more unlimited. For unlimited¬
ness is present in a higher degree in that which is
less defined; and less in the good is more in the bad.
That which is there, which has a greater degree of
existence, is unlimited only as an image, that which
is here has a less degree of existence, and in pro¬
portion as it has escaped from being and truth, and
sunk down into the nature of an image, it is more
truly unlimited. Are, then, the unlimited and es¬
sential unlimitedness the same? Where there is
a formative principle and matter the two are dif¬
ferent, but where there is only matter they must be
said to be the same, or, which is better, that there is
no essential unlimitedness here; for it will be a
rational formative principle, the absence of which
from the unlimited is the condition of its being un¬
limited. So matter must be called unlimited of it¬
self, by opposition to the formative principle; and just
as the formative principle is forming principle without
being anything else, so the matter which is set over
against the formative principle by reason of its un¬
limitedness must be called unlimited without being
anything c.so.
16. Is matter, then, the same thing as otherness?
No, rather it is the same thing as the part of otherness
which is opposed to the things which in the full and
proper sense exist, that is to say rational formative
principles. Therefore, though it is non-existent, it
has a certain sort of existence in this way, and is the
same thing as privation, if privation is opposition to
the things that exist in rational form. Will privation,
then, be destroyed by the accession of that of which


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Ιτάδοχή γάρ ἦσεως οὐχ ἦσει, ἀλλὰ στέρησις, καὶ πέρας οὐ τὸ πεπερασμένον οὐδὲ τὸ πέρας, ἀλλὰ τὸ ἁπειρὸν καὶ καθ’ ὄνομα ἁπειρον. Πῶς οὖν [οὖ καὶ] ἀπολεῖ αὐτοῦ τὴν φύσιν τοῦ ἁπειροῦ προσελθὼν τὸ

10 πέρας καὶ ταῦτα οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκός ὄντος ἁπειροῦ; "Ἡ εἶ μὲν κατὰ τὸ ποιόν ἁπειροῦ, ἀνήρειν νῦν δὲ οὐχ οὕτως, ἀλλὰ τοιαύτῳ αὐξεῖ αὐτῷ ἐν τῷ εἶναι: δὴ γὰρ στέφκει, εἰς ἀνάγραμμα καὶ τελείωσιν ἤγει, ὡς περὶ τὸ ἁπαρτῶν, ὅταν σπείρη-" ται: καὶ διὰ τὸ ἄνθρωπον τὸ ἀρχοντὸς γίνεται καὶ οὖκ

15 ἀπόλυτων τὸ δήμω, ἀλλὰ μᾶλλον θηλώνται: τοῦτο δὲ ἔστιν: δ᾽ ἔστι μᾶλλον γίνεται. "Αρι" οὖν καὶ κακῶν ἡ ὀλη μεταλαμβάνεται ἄγαθον; "Ἅ διὰ τοῦτο, ὅτι ἐδεῖχέν τί γὰρ ἔγαμε. Καὶ γὰρ ἐν μὲν ἀν δεῖγμα τῶν, τὸ δὲ ἔστι, μεσόν ἀν ὅσον γίνοντο ἄγαθον καὶ κακῶν, εἰ ἂν σῶσαι καὶ ἐπὶ ἀμυνί γε, ἀν ἐν μηδὲν ἔστιν ἄν πεινα ὁ, μᾶλλον δὲ πεινα ὁ, ἀνάγκη κακῶν εἶναι. ὅ τι γὰρ πληθύνει πεινα τοῦτο [οὐδὲ ἴχθυος], ἀλλὰ πεινα μὲν φρονίσως, πεινα δὲ ἀρέτης, κάλλως, ἴχθυος, μορφής, εἰδοὺς, τουσιδ. Πῶς οὖν οὐ διεσεῦδε; Πῶς δὲ οὐ πάντωσιν αἰγραφώ; 20

25 Πῶς δὲ οὐ πάντως κακῶν; ἝκΕινη δὲ ἡ ὀλη ἢ ἴχθυ ὁν τῷ γὰρ πρὸ αὐτῆς ἐπίκειται ὄντος. Ἔκπαιδα δὲ τὸ πρὸ αὐτῆς ὁν. Οὐκ ὁ δὲ ἀρα ἀντῇ, ἔκειν ὁν, πρὸς τῷ καλῷ τοῦ ὄντος.

L. A. Post suggests that the MSS text can be accepted here if we understand <σείμαν σείρισεα>: this is not part.

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it is privation? Not at all; for that which receives a state is not a state but a privation, and the recipient of limit is not what is limited or limit, but the unlimited and that in so far as it is unlimited. Now, then, can limit, when it has come to it, possibly destroy the nature of the absolutely unlimited, especially when it is not only incidentally unlimited? If it was quantitatively unlimited, limit would do away with it; but as it is, it does not do so; on the other hand, it keeps it in being; for it brings what it naturally is to actuality and perfection, like the unsown field when it is sown, and as when the female conceives by the male, and does not lose its female-ness but becomes still more female: and that is, becomes more what it is. Is matter, then, also evil because it participates in good? Rather, because it lacks it; for this means that it does not have it. Anything which lacks something, but has something else, might perhaps hold a middle position between good and evil, if its lack and its having more or less balance; but that which has nothing because it is in want, or rather is want, must necessarily be evil. For this thing is not want of wealth but want of thought, want of virtue, of beauty, strength, shape, form, quality. Must it not then be ugly? Must it be utterly vile, utterly evil? But the matter: There is something real, for that which is before it is beyond being. Here, however, that which is before matter is real, and so matter itself is not real; it is something other, over and above the excellence of real being.

haps too much of an ellipsis for Plotinus, and is certainly the best suggestion so far.
II. 5. ON WHAT EXISTS POTENTIALLY AND WHAT ACTUALLY

Introductory Note

This treatise (No. 25 in Porphyry's chronological order) is, like most of II. 4, concerned with the close discussion of technical Aristotelian concepts: it is less explicitly critical of Aristotle than the preceding treatise, but the conception of matter which it presents is Plotinus's own and not that of Aristotle. The main purpose of the treatise is in fact to show clearly what Plotinus means by matter in the intelligible world, and how he conceives of matter in the sense-world as potentiality which never can be actualised, essence: negation, "that which is really unreal"; this paradoxical conception is stated more clearly, perhaps, in the last chapter of this treatise than anywhere else in the Enneads.

Synopsis

What is meant by potential and actual existence, and by potentiality and actuality: a discussion designed to bring out clearly the meaning of these Aristotelian concepts (ch. 1–2). How these concepts are to be applied to the intelligible world: there is no matter there in the sense of a principle of change, but the something like matter which our analysis detects is form, one aspect of the unchanging actuality (ch. 3). How they apply to the matter of the sense-world: it is a potentiality which never becomes or can become anything actual (chs. 4–5).
II. 5. ON WHAT EXISTS POTENTIALLY AND WHAT ACTUALLY

1. One speaks of potential and actual existence; and one speaks of actuality as something in the class of existing things. We must consider therefore what potential and what actual existence is. Is actuality the same as actual existence, and if anything is actuality is it also actually existent, or are the two different, and is it not necessary for that which is actually existing to be actuality? Further, it is clear that there is potential existence in the world of things perceived by the senses; but we must consider whether it is also in the intelligible world. Now, in that world there is only actual existence; even if there is potential existence, it is always only potential, and even if it always exists, it would never come to actuality because it is excluded from it by the fact that it is not in time. 1 But first we must say what potential existence is, if, as is indeed the case, we must not speak of potential existence simply; for it is not possible to exist potentially without being potentially anything. For instance, "the bronze is potentially statue"; 2 for if nothing was going to come out of a thing or come upon it, and it was not going to be anything subsequent to what it was and there was no possibility of its becoming anything,
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 5

15 γενόσθαι, ἢ τι ἢ τι μόνον. "Ὁ δὲ ἢ, ἢ θησί παρηκτικόν καὶ οὐκ ἐμπίπτει: τι δέν ἐδύνατο ἄλλο μετὰ τὸ παρὶν αὐτῷ; Ὑδροῖ παρὴκτικόν ἢ δυνάμει. Δηλαδή τοιν παρὴκτικόν τι δὲν ἢ ἢ θησί τῷ τι καὶ ἄλλη μετ’ αὐτῷ δυνασθαι, ἢτοι μόνον μετὰ τοῦ ἐκείνου ποιήν ἢ παρέχον αὐτῷ ἐκείνῳ δύναμιν φθαρμέν αὐτό, δυνάμει λέγοσθαι: ἄλλως γάρ τὸ "δυνάμει εὐδορίας ὁ χαλκός," ἄλλως τὸ ἰδιφρό δυνάμει γαλακτε καὶ ὁ ὄμη πορ. Ταῦτα δὲν ἢ τὸ δυνάμει ἄρα καὶ δύναμις λέγοντο ἢν πρὸς τὸ ἐσόμενον, οἶον ὁ χαλκός δύναμις τοῦ ἀνθρώπου; "Ἡ, εἰ μὲν ἢ δύναμις κατὰ τὸ ποιήν λαμβάνοντο. 20 συναίσθησθαι. οὐ γάρ ἢ δύναμις ἢ κατὰ τὸ ποιήν λαμβανομενή λέγοντο ἢν δυνάμει. ἖λ δὲ τὸ δυνάμει μὴ μόνον πρὸς τὸ ἐνέργεια λέγεται, ἄλλα καὶ πρὸς ἐνέργειαν, εὖτε ἢ καὶ δύναμις δυναμεὶ. Βλέπειν δὲ καὶ σαφέστερον τὸ μὲν δυνάμει πρὸς τὸ ἐνέργεια, τὸν δὲ δύναμιν πρὸς ἐνέργειαν λέγειν.

25 τὸ μὲν δὴ δυνάμει γνώστην ὅποιον ὑποκειμένον τι πάθει καὶ μορφῆς καὶ εἶσεν, καὶ μέλλει δέχοσθαι καὶ πέμφει. ἢ καὶ ὑποτέθηκήν ἡθέλει, καὶ τὰ μὲν ὢν πρὸς τὸ βελτίστου, τὰ δὲ πρὸς τὰ χειροὺ καὶ λαμπρὰ καὶ ὑποτέθηκήν ἢν ἐκκόστον καὶ ἐνέργεια ἐστιν ἄλλο.

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it would be what it was alone. But what it was, was there already, and was not going to be. What other potentiality, then, would it have after what was already there? It would not be potential at all. So one must speak of anything which is potential as already potentially something else by being able to become something after what it already is, either remaining along with its production of that other thing, or giving itself up to that which it is able to become and being destroyed itself; for "the bronze is potentially statue" in one sense, the water is potentially bronze and the air, fire, in another. Well, then, if this is the sort of thing which potential existence is, can it be called potentiality in regard to that which it is going to be? For instance, is the bronze the potentiality of the statue? If potentiality is taken in the sense of being able to make, certainly not; for potentiality understood in the sense of being able to make would not be described as existing potentially. But if the term "potential existence" is used not only in relation to actual existence but also in relation to actuality, then potentiality, too, would exist potentially. But it is better and clearer to use "potential existence" in relation to "actual existence," and "potentiality" in relation to "actuality." Potential existence in this sense is like something which underlies affections and shapes and forms, which it is going to receive and naturally disposed to receive: indeed, it even strives to come to them, and attains some of them with the best results, others with worse results, spoiling the individual things, of which each is actually something other [than what it is potentially].
We must also consider the question of matter, whether it exists potentially in relation to the things which are given shape and is something else actually, or whether it is nothing actually; and in general, whether the other things which we say exist potentially come to exist actually when they receive the form while remaining themselves, or whether actual existence will be predicated of the statue, but the predicate “actual” will not be applied to that of which the term “potential statue” was used. If this is so, it is not that which exists potentially which comes to exist actually, but the subsequent actually existing thing comes into being out of the prior potentially existing thing. Again, the actually existing thing is the compound of matter and form, not the matter on the one side, and on the other, the form imposed upon it. This is so when a different substance comes into existence, for instance, a statue from bronze; for the statue, as being the compound of matter and form is a different substance. And in the case of things of which no trace remains, it is obvious that what existed potentially was altogether different [from the actuality]. But when the man who is potentially educated becomes actually educated, surely in this case what existed potentially is the same as what exists actually. For it is the same Socrates who is potentially and actually wise. Then, is this true when the man without knowledge becomes a man of knowledge? For he was a man of knowledge potentially. It is only incidentally that the unlearned man becomes a man of knowledge. For it was not in so far as he was unlearned that he
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was potentially a man of knowledge, but it was incidental to him that he was unlearned, and his soul being appropriately disposed was the potential existence, and by it he became a man of knowledge. So, then, does he still keep the potential existence, and is he potentially educated when he is already educated? There is no obstacle to this, and we can put it in a different way: before he is educated he is only potentially educated, when he is educated the potentiality has its form. If, then, the potential existence is the substratum, and the actual existence the compound, the statue, what should the form imposed on the bronze be called? It is not unreasonable to call the shape and form, by which the statue exists actually and not only potentially, the actuality, that is, not simply actuality but the actuality of this particular thing: since we might also apply the term "actuality" more properly to something else, the actuality contrasted with the potentiality that brings it to the thing. For the potential existence has its actual existence from something else, but for the potentiality what it is capable of by itself is its actuality; for instance, a moral disposition and the activity called after it, courage and courageous behaviour. So much, then, for this.

3. Now we must speak about the question to which this preliminary discussion was directed, what is really meant by actual existence in the intelligible world, and whether each individual intelligible reality is only actually existent or whether it is also actuality, and if they are all together actuality, and if there is potential existence. There too. If, of course, there is no matter there in which potential existence could...
be, and nothing there is going to be that which it is not already, and nothing, either in the process of changing into another thing, or remaining what it is, produces anything else, or, going out of itself, gives another thing existence in its place: then there will be nothing there in which potential existence can be, among things which really exist and possess eternity, not time. If, then, anyone were to ask those who posit matter there, too, in the intelligible world, if there is not potential existence There, too, in respect of the matter There—for even if matter exists There in a different way, there will be in each thing something like matter, something like form, and the compound of the two—what will they say? The answer is that the something like matter There is form, since the soul too, which is form, can be matter in relation to something else. Then does it exist potentially in relation to that something else? No; for then the something else would be its form, and the form does not come to it afterwards and is not separated except by rational abstraction: it has matter in the sense that it is thought of as double, but both form and matter are one nature; just as Aristotle, too, says that his quintessence is without matter. But how are we to speak about the soul? For it is potentially a living being, when it is not one yet but is going to be, and is potentially musical, and so with everything else that it becomes and is not always; so that there is potential existence also in the intelligible world. No, the soul is not these things potentially, was without matter because he states so clearly that it is absolutely unchanging, and there is therefore no need to postulate any matter in it to be the substrate of change.

1 Aristotle never actually says this: it may perhaps be taken as implicit in De Caelo A. 3. 270a-b, where he argues that the celestial substance "the body that moves in a circle" must be ageless, impassible, without any sort of quantitative or qualitative change. Possibly Plotinus depends here on some Peripatetic commentator on this passage, who drew the conclusion that Aristotle thought that the quintessence
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 5.

it is the potentiality of these things. But how are we to understand actual existence there? Is it like the way in which the statue, the compound of matter and form, exists actually, because each intelligible thing has already received its form? Rather because each of them is form and is perfectly what it is. For intellect does not move from a potentiality consisting in being able to think to an actuality of thinking—otherwise it would need another prior principle which does not move from potentiality to actuality—but the whole is in it. For potential existence wants to be brought to actuality by the coming to it of something else, so that it may become something actually, but that which has itself from itself unchanging identity, this will be actuality. So all the primary beings are actuality; for they have what they need to have from themselves and for ever: and soul is in this state too, the soul which is not in matter but in the intelligible. But the soul in matter, too, is another actuality—the growth-soul for instance; for this, too, is an actuality, what it is. But, granted that everything there exists actually in this way, is everything there actuality? Why not? Certainly, if it is well said that that nature there is sleepless, and life, and the best life, the noblest actualities would be there. All things there, then, both exist actually and are actualities, and all are lives, and the region there is a region of life and the origin and spring of true soul and intellect.

4. Everything else, then, which is potentially something, has actual existence as something else; and this something else which already exists is said to exist potentially in relation to another thing.

1 On Timaeus 52B7. Plotinus speaks of the “sleepless light” in Intellect in his fine description of its changeless, eternal life and thought in VI. 2. 8. 7.

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PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 5.

But as for matter, which is said to exist and which we say is all realities potentially, how is it possible to say that it is actually something real? For if it was, it would already have ceased to be potentially all realities. If, then, it is nothing real, it necessarily cannot be existent either. How could it, then, be actually something when it is nothing real? But, even if it is not any of the realities which come into being upon it, there is no obstacle to its being something else, since it is not all realities which have a material foundation. In so far, then, as it is none of these things which are founded upon it, and these are realities, it is non-existent. But certainly it could not be a form, since it is imagined as something formless; so it could not be numbered among those form realities of the intelligible world. So it will be non-existent in this way too. If, then, it is non-existent in both these ways, it will be still more non-existent. If, then, it has made good its escape from the nature of the true realities, and cannot attain even to those which are falsely said to exist, because it is not even a phantasm of rational form as these are, in what sort of existence can it be grasped? And if in no sort of existence, how can it exist actually?

5. How, then, do we speak of it? How is it the matter of real things. Because it is they potentially. Then, because it is they already potentially, is it therefore just as it is going to be? But its being is no more than an announcement of what it is going to be: it is as if being for it was adjourned to that which it will be. So its potential existence is not being something, but being potentially everything;
and since it is nothing in itself—except what it is, matter—it does not exist actually at all. For, if it is to be anything actually, it will be what it is actually and not matter: so it will not be altogether matter, but only matter in the way that the bronze is. So then it must be non-existent not in the sense of being different from existence, like motion; for this rides on existence, as if coming from it and being in it, but matter is as if cast out and utterly separated, and unable to change itself, but always in the state it was from the beginning: and it was non-existent. It was not anything actually from the beginning, since it stood apart from all realities, and it did not become anything; it has not been able to take even a touch of colour from the things that wanted to plunge into it, but remaining directed to something else it exists potentially to what comes next; when the realities of the intelligible world had already come to an end it appeared and was caught by the things that came into being after it and took its place as the last after these too. So, being caught by both, it could belong actually to neither class of realities; it is only left for it to be potentially a sort of weak and dim phantasm unable to receive a shape. So it is actually a phantasm: so it is actually a falsity: this is the same as "that which is truly a falsity"; this is "what is really unreal." That, then, which has

1 Motion is one of the "categories of the intelligible world," cp. ch. 5 of the preceding treatise, and the note there.

2 The phrase ρῦ χαίρειν ψῆφοι comes from Plato, Republic II 352A4, but occurs there in a quite different context (the "lie in the soul"): ὅταν μὴ ὄν comes from Sophist 204D1, and again certainly does not refer to ὃν.
ON WHAT EXISTS POTENTIALLY

its truth in non-existence is very far from being actually any reality. If, then, it must exist, it must actually not exist, so that, having gone out of true being, it may have its being in non-being; for when you are dealing with things which exist falsely, if you take away their falsity, you have taken away what substance they have, and if you bring in actuality to things which have their being and substance in potentiality you have destroyed the ground of their existence, since their being was in their potentiality.

If, then, we must keep matter as indestructible, we must keep it as matter. One must say, then, it would seem, only that it exists potentially, in order that it may be what it is, or else one must refute these arguments.
II. 6. ON SUBSTANCE, OR ON QUALITY

Introductory Note

This treatise (No. 17 in Porphyry's chronological order) is a highly technical, and at times extremely obscure, criticism of Aristotle's doctrine of quality: it puts forward a view which is in all essentials the same as that which Plotinus much later expounds in his great treatise On the Categories (VI. 1–3. 42–44 in the chronological order). This is that the category of quality cannot be used in speaking of the intelligible world, where everything is substance; and even in the sense-world its use is severely restricted; the essential quality or differentia is not really a quality at all but an activity of the formative principle, and even accidental qualities, though they may still be called qualities, are traces or shadows of the activities of substances in the intelligible world.

Synopsis

In the intelligible world everything is substance. What place, then, can be found there for quality? The Aristotelian distinction between essential differentiations and accidental qualities does not work: the same quality appears in one thing as a differentia, in another as an accident, white, for instance, in "white lead" and "white man." We must say, rather, that what is quality here is substance in the intelligible world (ch. 1). Further critical examination of the Aristotelian doctrine of quality as applied to things in the sense-world, with the conclusion that the notion of differentia is unsatisfactory here too,
II. 6. (17) ΠΕΡΙ ΟΥΣΙΑΣ Η ΠΕΡΙ ΠΟΙΟΤΗΤΟΣ

1. Αρα τὸ δὲ καὶ ἡ οὐσία ἑτερον, καὶ τὸ μὲν δὲ ἀπεργημενένων τῶν ἄλλων, ἢ δὲ οὐσία τὸ δὲ μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων, κυνήγεως, στάσεως, ταῦτα, ἐτέρου, καὶ οὐκ οὐκ, ταῦτα ἑκάστης; Τὸ οὖν ἄλον οὐσία, ἅ ἐκαστὸν δὲ ἐκεῖνῳ τὸ μὲν δὲ, τὸ δὲ κύματος, τὸ δὲ ἄλον τι. Κύματος μὲν οὖν κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς ἄλον οὐσία δὲ ἄλον κατὰ συμβεβηκός, ἢ συμπληρωτικὸν οὐσίας; Ἔκαστην γὰρ καὶ τὰ ἑκάστα πάντα οὐσία. Πῶς οὖν οὐ καὶ ἐν τούτῳ; "Εἰ δὲ ἐν πάντα, ἐνθάδε δὲ διαλεγόμενον τῶν εἰδῶλων τὸ 10 μὲν ἄλον, τὸ δὲ ἄλον· ὅσπερ ἐν μὲν τῷ στάσματι ὅμοις πάντα καὶ ἐκαστὸν πάντα καὶ οὐ χωρὶς χωρίς καὶ χωρίς κεφαλή, ἐνθάδε δὲ κεφαλὴν ἀλλήλων εἰδώλα γὰρ καὶ οὐκ ἀληθῆ. Τάς οὖν ποιότητας ἐκεῖ φύσεως οὐσίας διαφόροις περὶ οὐσίων οὐσίας 15 ἡ περὶ δὲ, διαφοράς δὲ ποιότητας ἑτέρας οὐσίας

1 The "categories of the intelligible world": ep. II. 4. 5 and II. 5. 5.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 6.

White lead appears as a stock example of whiteness already in Aristotle, Nicomachean Ethics A.4. 1096b23, where it is coupled with snow. As for the swan, Plotinus’s self-correction below (1. 31-32) seems to confirm the correctness of the MSS reading: cp. also Simplicius, In Phys. L 3, p. 119, 19.

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them substances? Now this view is not unreasonable in itself, but it is unreasonable when it is applied to the qualities here, of which some are differentiations of substance, for instance, “two-footed” and “four-footed,” and some, which are not differentiations of substance are called just qualities, and nothing but qualities. And, in fact, the same thing becomes a differentiation essential to the completion of a substance, and in something else is not a differentiation and does not contribute to the completion of the substance, but is an incidental attribute: as for instance “white” is an essential completion in a swan or white lead, but in you it is an incidental attribute. The white which enters into the definition is an essential completing element and not a quality, that which appears on the surface is qualitative. Perhaps we should make a distinction between two kinds of quality, the substantial kind being a distinctive particularity of substance, and the other qualitative and nothing else, that by which a substance is of a certain quality when the quality does not change the thing either into or out of its substance, but only puts it into a certain state from outside when it exists already in fullness of substantial being, and produces an addition posterior to the substance, whether this happens in the case of body or of soul. But what if the visible white in white lead was an essential completion of it?—in the swan white is not an essential completion, for there could be a swan which was not white; but our question was about white lead: and the same might be true of the heat of fire. But suppose one said that “ureeness” is the substance of fire, and what corresponds to it the
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 6.

35 τὸ ἀνάλογον; Ἀλλ' ἄρα τοῦ ὁρμομένου πυρὸς [πυρότητα] ἡ θερμότης συμπληρώσει καὶ ἡ λευκότης ἐπὶ τοῦ ὕπερον. Αἱ αὕται τοῖς συμπλήρωσει καὶ τοῖς ποιότητες, καὶ οὐ συμπληρώσουσι καὶ [οὐ] ποιότητες. Καὶ ἄτοπον ἦν μὲν οἷς συμπληρώσει

40 λέγειν ἀλλὰ ἐστὶν, ἢ δὲ οἷς μὴ ἄλλα, τῆς αὐτῆς φύσεως οὐσίας. Ἀλλ' ἄρα τοὺς μὲν λόγους τοὺς ποιότητας αὕτα οὐδείς ὄνομει, τὰ δὲ ἀποτελήσματα ἤχουσιν ὡς τὰ ἑκατέτα ουλὰ οὐκ ἢ τί. Ὁθεν καὶ ἀμαρτάνειν ἡμᾶς ἐπὶ τὸ ἀπολογοβάνοντας ἐν ταῖς ζητήσεσιν αὐτοῦ καὶ ἐκ τοῦ ποιόν καταφυγόμενον. Ὅθεν γὰρ ἐστὶν τὸ πῦρ νῦν λέγομεν εἰς τὸ ποιόν ἀφορρίζοις, ἀλλὰ τὸ μὲν ἐναι οὐκίστιν, α δὲ τοῦ βλέπομεν, εἰς αὐτὰ ἀφορρίζοις λέγομεν, ἀπάγαιον ἡμᾶς ἀπὸ τοῦ καὶ ἀφίζοισι τὸ ποιόν. Καὶ ἐπὶ τῶν ἀιδοθητῶν εἰλίγονον οὖν γὰρ αὐτῶν οὐκίσσαι εἶναι, ἀλλ' αὐτῆς τίθη. Ὅθεν κάκειν,

45 πῶς οὐκ έξ οὐκίσσαι οὐσία. Ἐλεγετο μὲν οὖν, ὅτι τοῦ δὲ τὸ γενόμενον εἶναι τοῖς ἐξ δὲν λέγειν δεί ὁ οὐκ οὔτε τὸ γενόμενον οὐσία. Ἀλλὰ πῶς ἐκεί ήν λέγομεν οὐκίσσαι οὐκ έξ οὐσίας.

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substance of white lead? Even so, the heat is an essential completion of the visible fire, and the whiteness in white lead. So, then, the same distinctive features will be essential completions and not qualities, and qualities and not essential completions. And it is unreasonable to say that they are one thing in what they complete and another in what they do not, when their nature is the same. But, then, one must say rather that the rational formative principles which made them are altogether substantial, but that the things produced by them have here and now what in the intelligible world is a "something," but here below qualitative and not a "something." This is the reason why we are always making mistakes in our investigations about the "something," and slipping off it and being carried away to the qualitative.1 For fire is not what we say it is when we concentrate our gaze on the qualitative, but its being is substance, and what we see now, that which we concentrate our gaze on when we speak of it, leads us away from the "something" and we define only the qualitative. This is reasonable procedure when we are dealing with objects of sense; for there is nothing of them which is substance, but only affections of substance. This raises that other problem, how substance can come not from substances [but from something which is not substance]. Now it has already been said that what comes into being cannot be the same as that from which it comes; we must add at this stage that what has come into being is not substance. But how, then, does there come to be in the intelligible world what we said was substance, when we said it did not come from substance?  


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We shall assert that the substance There, because it has a more authentic and purer being, is really substance, as far as is possible in differentiations of being, or rather that when we speak of substance, There we speak of it with the addition of its activities; it seems to be a perfection of That [which is its source], but is perhaps deficient in comparison with it by this addition, and by not being simple but already moving away from its original simplicity.

2. But we must enquire what in itself quality is: for perhaps the knowledge of what it is will more effectively put an end to our difficulties. First of all, then, we must enquire into the question already raised, whether we are to assume that the same thing is at one time only qualitative, and at another essentially completing substance (we must not be uneasy about what is qualitative being an essential completing element of substance, but regard it rather as a completing element of a substance of a certain quality). Now in the substance of a certain quality the substance, the specific essence, must be there before it is qualified. What then, in the case of fire, is the substance which is there before the qualified substance. Is it the body? Then the genus "body" will be the substance, and fire will be a hot body, and the whole of it will not be substance but the hot will be in it in the same way as the quality of amphoterism is in you. So if the heat and the brightness and the lightness—these appear to be qualitative—are taken away, the three-dimensionality is left and the matter is the substance.1 But we do not think it is: the form, rather, is substance. But the form is quality. No, the form is not...
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 6.

quality but rational formative principle. What, then, is the result of the combination of the formative principle and the underlying matter? Not what is seen and burns: for this is qualitative. Unless, perhaps, someone were to say that the burning is an activity which comes from the formative principle; then the heating, too, and the brightening and the rest would be activities of making; so we shall have no place to put quality. We ought not to call what are said to be essential completions of substance qualities, seeing that those of them which come from the formative principles and substantive powers are activities: we should call qualities only what are outside all substance and do not appear in one place as qualities but in other things as not qualities; they contain that which is extra and comes after substance, for instance, virtues and vices, and uglinesses and beauties, and states of health, and being of this and that shape. Triangularity and quadrangularity in themselves are not qualitative, but being made triangular in so far as it is being given shape must be called qualitative, not the triangularity, that is, but the shaping. Arts and aptitudes should also be called qualities. So quality, we say, is a condition of substances which already exist, either brought about from outside or accompanying them from the beginning: [even in this latter case], if it was not there the substance would have nothing less. This quality can be sometimes easy to remove, sometimes hard; so that there are two kinds of it, the easily removable and the persistent.

3. The whiteness, therefore, in you must be assumed not to be a quality but an activity, obviously

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1 Cp. Aristotle, Categories 8, 10a14-16.
Proceeding from the power of whiteness; and in the intelligible world all qualities, as we call them, must be assumed to be activities, taking their qualitative-ness from the way we think about them, because each and every one of them is an individual characteristic, that is, they mark off the substances in relation to each other and have their own individual character in relation to themselves. In what way, then, will quality in the intelligible world differ from qualities here? The qualities here are activities too. The qualities in the intelligible world do not indicate what sort of things their underlying realities are, or their alterations or their distinctive characters, but only what we call quality, which is activity there; so that it is immediately clear that the reality there, when it possesses an individual characteristic of substance, is not qualitative, but when the process of rational thinking separates the distinctive individuality in these realities, not taking it away from the intelligible world but rather grasping it and producing something else, it produces the qualitative as a kind of part of substance, grasping what appears on the surface of the reality. If this is so, there is nothing to prevent heat, by the fact that it is inherent in fire, from being a form and activity of fire and not its quality, and again being a quality in a different way, when it is taken alone in something else and is no longer a shape of substance but only a trace, a shadow, an image, abandoning its substance, of which it was an activity, to be a quality. All, then, which is incidental and not activities and forms of substance, giving definite shapes, is qualitative. So, for instance, states and other dispositions of the
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underlying realities are to be called qualities, but their archetypal models, in which they exist primarily, are the activities of those intelligible realities. And in this way one and the same thing does not come to be quality and not quality, but that which is isolated from substance is qualitative, and that which is with substance is substance or form or activity; for nothing is the same in itself and when it is alone in something else and has fallen away from being form and activity. That, then, which is never a form of something else but always an incidental attribute, this and only this is pure quality.
ON COMPLETE TRANSFUSION

Synopsis
Summary of the discussion of the question by previous philosophers. The Peripatetic objections to complete transfusion and Stoic answers to them (ch. 1). Plotinus's own discussion, leading to the conclusion that the impenetrability of a body is due to its qualities, not to the matter (ch. 2). Note on the meaning of corporeity (ch. 3).

II. 7. ON COMPLETE TRANSFUSION

Introductory Note
This little treatise (No. 37 in Porphyry's chronological order) is devoted to the discussion of the curious Stoic doctrine that two material substances when they are mixed can totally interpenetrate one another. This doctrine aroused a good deal of opposition, especially from the Peripatetics, and Plotinus begins his discussion by stating the Peripatetic objections to it. Here he closely follows the exposition given by Alexander of Aphrodisias in his De Mixtione et Quaestionis et Solutiones II. 12 (ed. Bruns, p. 57). He often seems to have found that the critical reading of the great Aristotelian expositor and commentator stimulated his own thought. Next he gives the Stoic reply to the Peripatetic arguments, and finally, in ch. 2, his own reflections on the question, which lead him to a criticism of the Peripatetic view that it is the impenetrability of matter which prevents the total interpenetration of bodies. Following up a passing admission of Alexander (cp. Brdhier's excellent introduction to this treatise) he shows that the impenetrability of a body must be due to its qualities, not to any inherent property of the matter.

Ch. 3 is an appendix or footnote on "corporeity," which Plotinus maintains against Alexander of Aphrodisias to be not just an abstract general definition but the formative principle which makes bodies corporeal—a good illustration of the difference between the Platonic and the Aristotelian way of thinking about universals.
II. 7. ON COMPLETE TRANSFUSION

1. We must consider the question of what is called the complete transfusion of bodies. Is it possible that when one fluid body is mixed with another both penetrate each other whole through whole, or that one of them penetrates the other totally? For it makes no difference which way it happens, if it happens at all. We can leave out of account those who allow that it happens by simple juxtaposition of particles because they make a mechanical mixture rather than a coalescence, if we grant that a coalescence must make the total a whole of like parts, and each smallest part must be composed of the things which are said to have coalesced. Those, then, who make the qualities only coalesce, juxtaposing the matter of each body and imposing upon these matters the qualities of each, would seem to deserve belief because they disprove complete transfusion by the fact that the magnitudes of the masses will be completely cut away, if there is no interval between the divisions in either of the bodies—on the assumption that the division will be continuous because each of the bodies penetrates the other completely; and this account is based, De Mixtione 2 (II. 214, 18 Bruna-Diels 68A46).

1 This is a reference to Anaxagoras (ep. Diels 58A54) and Democritus (referred to by Alexander in the passage on which 194
then, too, there is the case when the bodies which have coalesced occupy a larger space than either of them, as much, in fact, as the spaces occupied by each of them put together. And yet, they say, if one had completely penetrated the other, the space of the one would have had to remain the same and the other would have been put into it. But in the case where the space occupied by the mixture does not become greater, they allege as the cause some sort of exit of air, whose place within the one body is taken by the other. And then, when a small body is mixed with a larger one, how could it be extended so as to penetrate the whole? And they have many other arguments. But then, on the other side, those who introduce the idea of complete transfusion could say that it was possible for a body to be divided without being completely used up in the cutting, even when complete transfusion occurs, since they will assert that drops of sweat do not make cuts in the body or even fill it full of holes. For even if someone were to argue that there was no objection to nature having arranged it that way so as to enable the drops of sweat to get through, yet, they could reply, in the case of artificial products, when they are of fine continuous texture, moisture is observed wetting them right through, and it flows through to the other side. But, if they are bodies, how can this happen? So it is not easy to conceive how there can be interpenetration without division; but if the bodies divide each other at every point they will obviously destroy each other. And when they say that in many cases there are no increases in size [when there is coalescence], they give the other party...
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 7.

τοῖς ἑτέροις ἀέρων ἐξοδους αἰτῶν, ἀνέβαιν ἤ. Πρὸς τὸν τόπον αὐξὴν χαλεπῶς μὲν, ἀμποῖ τὸ καθαρὰ λέγειν συνεισφερομένοι ἐκατέρω σύμμετα καὶ τὸ μέγεθος μετὰ τῶν ἄλλων ποιητῶν ἐξ ἀνάρως τὴν αὐξὴν γίνονται. Μὴ γὰρ μὴ δὲ τοῦτο ἀπαλλαθεὶ, ὦσπερ εἰδὶ τὰς ἄλλας ποιήσεις, καὶ ὄσπερ ἄρα ποιητής ἄλλοις εἴδος μικτὸν ἐξ ἀμφοῖν, αὕτω καὶ μέγεθος ἄλλο, ὥστε δὲ τὸ μέγεθος ποιητής τὸ ἐξ ἀμφοῖν μέγεθος. Ἀλλ' εἴ εἴῃ αὐτῆς ἢ ἐν ποῖς αὐτοῖς ἢ ἐν τῇ ἒκεῖ ἐλέγειν, ἢς, εἴ μὲν ἢ ὅλη τῇ ὅλῃ παράκειναι, καὶ δὴ ὅγκος τῷ ὅγκῳ, ἢ αὐτὴν τῷ μέγεθος, τὸ ἁμέτρον ἢ λέγοντες· εἴ δὲ δὲ δὲν ὄλου καὶ ἢ ὅλη μετὰ τῶν ἐπ' αὐτῆς πρῶτος μεγέθους, αὕτως ἢ γνώσις ὄσον ἡς γραμματική ἐφεξῆς ἢ κατὰ τὰ πέρατα τοῖς σημείοις ἐκάθεν συνάφει, ὥστε δὲ αὐξὴν ἢ γνώσις, ἀλλ' ἐκεῖνος ὅς ἑν γραμματική ἐφεξῆς ἐσώματι, ὥστε ἰδανικὴν μὴ γίνονται. Τὸ δ' ἐπίκρατον διὰ πάντων τῶν μεγέθος καὶ μεγάκερτον καὶ ἐπ' αὐτῷ φαινόμενον ὅτι κύμαται. Εἰπὲ γὰρ τῶν ἐπὶ λέγων ἐξαιτίας, λέγεται ἢς τὰς ἑξάνευς ἢς, ἀλλ' ἢς ἢς γε φαινόμενος ἀναμελεῖται, λέγοντας ἢς. Καὶ λέγοντας ἐκατέρω τῶν ὅγκων, αὕτως ἑκάτεροι ποίησες λέγοντες εἰς τοπικὰς τῶν συμμετάτης ὅγκων ἐκατερώσεις· εἴδε γὰρ μετα-

ON COMPLETE TRANSFUSION

the opportunity of alleging exits of air as the cause. And, though it is difficult to refute the argument from the increase of the spaces occupied, yet, all the same, what is the objection to saying that, as each of the two bodies brings its size along with it as well as all the other qualities, an increase must necessarily occur? For certainly sizes is not destroyed in the coalescence any more than the rest of the qualities, and just as in the case of the others there is another quality compounded of both, so there is another size, where the compounding [of the two sizes] produces the size which results from both. But suppose that at this point the other party replied to them, "If the matter of one body lies alongside the matter of the other, and the mass alongside the mass, with which the size goes, then you would be saying what we say; but if there is complete transfusion of the matter with the size which is primarily imposed upon it, it would come about not as when a line lies end to end with another line in that their terminal points coincide, where there certainly would be increase, but as in that arrangement where one line is made to coincide with another line, so that there is no increase in length." But as for a smaller body penetrating the whole of a larger one, and even the very smallest the very largest, this occurs in things which have manifestly coalesced. In the cases where it is not obvious it is possible to say that the smaller body does not reach every part of the larger one but in the cases where it manifestly occurs it ought to be admitted. They might allege extensions of the masses, but this is not a very plausible explanation when they extend the smallest mass so enormously; for they do not
56 βάλλοντες τὸ σώμα μέγεθος αὐτοῦ πλέον διδόσαν, ὕσπερ εἰ ἐξ ὀστῶν ἁρμὸ γίγνομαι.

2. Τοῦτο δὲ αὐτῷ ἔδωκε ὑγιής ἄγγελων, τι συμβαίνει, ὅταν ὕσπερ ἐν ὁγκοῖς ὀστῶν ἁρμὸ γίγνεται, πῶς τὸ ὕψος ἐν τῷ γεγομένῳ νῦν δὲ τὰ μὲν εἰρήσαπτα πολλὰ καὶ ἄλλα ποιήσαμεν ἀλλὰ εὐκατέφωρα λεγόμενα. Ἡμεῖς δὲ ἔδωκας αἰκῶν ἀκοῦσιν τι χρὴ λέγειν περὶ τούτων, τὶ δὲ δύναμιν τῶν λεγόμενων ἡ καὶ τὶς ἄλλῃ χαλαρῶς τὰς νῦν λεγόμενας φανερά.

3. Ὡς τούτων διὰ τοῦ ἐρμοῦ μέγα τὸ ὕψος ἡ βιβλία ἑκοτῆς τὸ ἐν αὐτῇ ὕψῳ, πῶς οὐ τὸ πᾶν ὕπαθεν αὐτὰ διάσκει δὲ ἁρμὸς; "Ἡ καὶ ὑπερθείων, πῶς συνάδημοι ἡν ἡ γῆ καὶ τὸν ὅγκον τοῦ ὅγκου, τὰς δὲ ποιήσαντας μόνας ὡς συγκράτησα ποιεῖσαμεν. Ὁ γὰρ δὴ ἐξο ἡ βιβλίου ἡ τοῦ ὑδάτου ἡγεῖται ἡ συγκαταθέτει πολλακαὶ ἐν αὐτῇ: Οὐ γὰρ ἔδωκεν ἡ βιβλίου ἡ τοῦ ὑδάτου ἡγεῖται ὡς αὐτῆς ὡς ἡ ἐν τοῖς διαστήμασιν αὐτῶς; πᾶσα γὰρ ὑγεία ἐστὶ καὶ ὁμάδαν ἡγεῖται καὶ οὐδὲν ὑπερθείων. Εἰ δὲ παύσατε μὴ ἐξ ἑκοτῆς τοῦ νομίσματος,

15 ὡς μετὰ τῆς ποιήσαντος, παύσατε τῖς βιβλίου τὸ ὕψος. "Ἡ ὡς τὸ ὕψος, ἅλλα τοῦ ὑδάτος ποιήσαντος. ἀλλὰ ποῦ ὑπερθείων, ἅλλα τοῦ ὑδάτος ποιήσαντος; Πῶς ὡς ὑπερθείων ὑπερθείων; "Ἡ ἐξετάζει τὴν βιβλίου τὸ προστεθέντα ἔλαβε γὰρ μέγεθος παρὰ τοῦ αὐτ很多朋友. Ἑλληνικὸς ἐπιστήμων. Ἑλληνικὸς ἐπιστήμων.

1 ἀναφέρων (Φικίονα) ὅπως τοῦ ὑδάτος ποιήσαντος. Ἑλληνικὸς ἐπιστήμων. Ἑλληνικὸς ἐπιστήμων.

20 ὡς κατοπίθηκα ἐν τῷ ἑπάρ, δεῖ τὸν ἁρμὸς καὶ ὑπερθείων.

1 ἀναφέρων (Φικίονα) ὅπως τοῦ ὑδάτος ποιήσαντος. Ἑλληνικὸς ἐπιστήμων. Ἑλληνικὸς ἐπιστήμων. Ἑλληνικὸς ἐπιστήμων.

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I print and translate ὅπως (Φικίονα’s suggestion in the margin of F). The corruption may have arisen through an abbreviation of ὅπως (Warmington’s suggestion).
different places. But what is the objection, just as one body gives and takes a share of quality from the other, to the same thing happening with the size? The objection is that when quality comes together with quality it is not that quality which it was before, but is associated with another, and, because in that association it is not pure, it is no longer perfectly what it was, but is dimmed: but when size comes together with another size it does not disappear. But one should consider carefully the sense of the assertion that when a body passes through a body it cuts it up completely: since we ourselves say that the qualities go through bodies without cutting them. The reason is that they are incorporeal. But if matter itself is incorporeal too, why then, since matter and its qualities are incorporeal, should not the qualities, if they are of such a kind that there are few of them, penetrate with the matter in the same way? We should say that they do not penetrate solid bodies because these have qualities of such a kind as to prevent their penetration. Or perhaps we might say that many qualities all together cannot penetrate with the matter? If, then, the multiplicity of qualities makes what is called a dense body, the multiplicity would be the cause of its impenetrability; but if density is a distinct quality, as is the quality they call corporeity, then this distinct quality is the cause: so that it is not in so far as they are qualities that they will blend but in so far as they are qualities of a certain kind, and it is not matter as matter that will not blend but matter in so far as it is associated with a certain quality: and particularly, if it has no size
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 7.

οὗτοις οὐκ ἔχει, ἀλλ' ἂν μὴ ἀποβαλοῦσα τὸ μέγεθος. Ταῦτα μὲν ὅσα ἔστω καὶ οὕτω διάφορα ἡμᾶς.

3. Ἡπεὶ δὲ ἐμνήσθημεν σωματότητος, ἐπισκεπτόμενοι πότερα ἡ σωματότης ἐστι τὸ ἐκ πάνων συγκεκριμένον ἢ εἴδος τῇ ἑαυτῶς καὶ λόγος τῆς, ὡς ἐγγεγειμένος τῇ ὑλῇ σώμα ποιεῖ. Εἰ μὲν οὖν ταῦτα ἐστὶ τῷ σώμα τὸ ἐκ πᾶσι ὀντων ποιητήριον σὺν ὑλῇ, τούτο ἀν εἰς ἡ σωματότης. Καὶ εἰ λόγος δὲ εἰς τὸ προσελθὼν ποιεῖ τῷ σώμα, δηλοῦσθαι τῷ λόγῳ ἐμπεριβαθεῖν ἐκεῖ τῷ ποιητήριον ἀνάσως. Δεῖ δὲ τὸν λόγον τοιοῦτον, εἰ μὲν ἡμᾶς ἄλλως ὀστερός ὑμνήματος δηλοῦσθαι τῷ τῇ ὑλῇ πράγμα, ἀλλὰ λόγος ποιεῖ τῇ ὑλῇ, μὴ τῇ ὑλῇ ἐπεριβαθεῖν τοιοῦτον, ἀλλὰ περὶ ὑλήν ἑαυτόν ἐστι καὶ ἐγγεγειμένος ἀποτελεῖν τῷ σώμα, καὶ ἐστὶ μὲν τῷ σώμα σὺν λόγῳ καὶ λόγον ἐνότα, αὐτὸν δὲ εἴδος ἵνα ἴθι ὑπὸ ὑλῆς ὑμιλεῖ εἰς ὑμᾶς, καὶ λόγος τοῦ ὑμῖν ἑκατὸν εἰς ὑμᾶς. Οὔ τόσο ἄλλος, καὶ τῷ οὕτως ἐνότα, ἀλλὰ τὰ ἀλλὰ ἄλλοι.
II. 8. ON SIGHT, OR HOW DISTANT OBJECTS APPEAR SMALL

Introductory Note

This very short treatise (No. 35 in Porphyry’s chronological order) is the only surviving evidence of Plotinus’s study of optics, mentioned by Porphyry in ch. 14 of the Life. It is a school discussion, based probably on the reading of Peripatetic προσθέσεως (on this, and for evidence of the origin of the views put forward, see Bréhier’s introduction). The question why distant objects appear smaller than they are was much discussed in the philosophical schools, and Plotinus puts forward five different views. The first is Stoic (the light is contracted in proportion to the size of the eye); the second, apparently, bad Aristotelian (we perceive the form without the matter, and so without the size—but, as Plotinus remarks in passing, size is a form); the third (necessity of seeing each part to perceive the size) is Epicurean; the fourth is Aristotelian (we perceive colour primarily, and size only incidentally). This is the solution which Plotinus prefers; he develops it at some length, with an excursus on sounds. The fifth is the mathematical explanation by the lesser angle of vision, which Plotinus seems to find more interesting than any of the first three, but which he none the less rejects.

Synopsis

Why do distant objects appear small? Four different explanations, the first three stated shortly, the fourth developed at length, with some remarks on sound (ch. 1). Rejection of a fifth explanation, from the lesser angle of vision (ch. 2).
II. 8. ON SIGHT, OR HOW DISTANT OBJECTS APPEAR SMALL

1. Do distant objects appear smaller, and things far apart seem to have only a small space between them, but objects which are near appear the size they are and the distance apart which they are? Distant objects seem smaller to those who look at them because the light tends to be contracted in proportion to the sight and the size of the pupil: and the farther the material of the seen object is away, the more the form comes, so to speak, bare of its matter (though size, too, itself, as well as quality, is a form), so that its rational formative principle comes alone. Or another explanation is that we perceive the size in the process of going over and surveying the thing part by part, each in its actual extent; so it must be on the spot and near, and in order that its extent may be known. Or another explanation is that the size comes to us incidentally, the primary object of contemplation being the colour: so when it is near we know how large a space is coloured, but when it is far off we know that it is coloured, but the parts being quantitatively contracted do not give an accurate determination of the extent: then too, the colours themselves come to us blurred. Then why is it remarkable if magnitudes too, as well as sounds, are smaller in proportion as their form comes to us.
kakēi ἡ ἀκοή ζητεῖ, τὸ δὲ μέγεθος κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς: ἀλλὰ σχετικὰ τῆς ἀκοῆς, εἰ τὸ μέγεθος κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς.  
20 ἄλλα περὶ τῆς ἀκοῆς, εἰ τὸ μέγεθος κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς: τὰν γὰρ πρῶτος τὸ ἐν τῇ φωνῇ μέγεθος, ὀμπερ δοκεῖ τῇ ἀφῇ τὸ ὁράμενον; Ἡ τὸ δοκεῖ μέγεθος ἡ ἀκοή αὐτῆς κατὰ τὸ ποσὸν, ἄλλα κατὰ τὸ μᾶλλον καὶ ἦν, εἰ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς, οἷον τὸ σφάδρα, ὡς καὶ ἦν κατὰ συμβεβηκός.  
25 γεώς τὸ σφάδρα τοῦ γλυκοῦς οὐ κατὰ συμβεβηκὸς: τὸ δὲ κυρίως μέγεθος φωνῆς τὸ ἐξ ὄσον τοῦτο δὲ κατὰ συμβεβηκός ἐκ τοῦ σφάδρα σημαίνεται ἂν, οἷον ἄκριβῶς δὲ. Τὸ μὲν γὰρ σφάδρα ἑκάστῳ τὸ αὐτῷ, τὸ δὲ ἐξ πλῆθος ἐξ ἀπαντῶν τῶν τόπων, ἐν ἑπεξεχεῖ. Ἀλλ' οὐ σημαίνεται τὰ χρώματα, ἄλλ' ἐκ τῆς μέγεθος φωνῆς τὸ μέγεθος. Ὁ ἐν ἀμφότεροις κακῶν τὸ ἤπειρον τὸ ἐπάνω χρώμα μὲν σχετικόν ἄλλα κατὰ συμβεβηκός, μέγεθος δὲ τὸ ἤπειρον σημαίνεται καὶ ἐπάνων τὸ χρώματος τὸ μέγεθος ἀναλόγως ἠλπίσατα. Συνθέτει μὲν ἐπὶ τῶν ποικίλων γίνεται τὸ πάθεσι, ὅλον ὡς ἔχοντον τολλίαν 30 ὀκνήσεις καὶ ἔκτισι πλῆθος καὶ ἄλλα πολλά, ὅπερ ἔκαστον, εἰ μὲν ἄρῃ, δίδοισιν ἐκ τῶν ὁμοιώματων ἑκάστων ἑπερατών ἐκ τῶν ὄρους τοῦ ὀλοῦ. τοῦ ἐκ τῶν ἔκαστον καθ' ἐκάστον ὅπερ ἀποτελεῖται τοῦ καθ' ἐκάστον ἑκάστων μεταβάλλει τὸ ὅπερ τὸ ὕποκείμενον μέγεθος τὸ παῦν ὅσον ἐστι γνώσκειν. Ἐπεὶ καὶ τὰ πληθύνων, ὅταν

**ON SIGHT**

...
at hand too; when they have many parts, but we only take a quick glance at them as a whole and do not observe all the forms of the parts, they seem smaller in proportion as the individual details evade our observation; but when all the details are seen, we measure the objects accurately and know how large they are. And those magnitudes that are of one form and like colour throughout cheat our sight, too, because it is not very well able to measure them part by part, since it slips off them as it measures by parts because it has no firm resting-place given it in each individual part by its distinction from others. And things far off appear near because the real extent of the distance between is contracted for the same reason. The near part of the distance appears in its true extent, from the same causes: but the sight cannot go through the far part of the distance and see its forms as they really are, and so it is not able to say how great in magnitude it really is.

2. It has been said elsewhere that the explanation by lesser angle of vision does not apply; but we should now add this, that the man who says that something appears smaller because of the lesser angle of vision leaves the rest of the sight seeing something outside, either another object or something that is completely out of the angle of vision, air for instance. When, therefore, he leaves nothing outside the angle of vision because the mountain [for instance] is large, but either the eye's range is equal to the object and can see nothing beyond it, in that the dimensions of the field of vision correspond with those of the seen object, or the seen object even extends beyond the field of vision on both sides,
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 8.

what will anyone say then, when the object appears far smaller than it is but is seen with the whole sight? But certainly, if one looked at the sky one could discover the truth of this without any possibility of doubt. One could not, of course, see the whole hemisphere with one look, nor could the sight be spread out so widely, extending over the whole of it. But if anyone likes, let it be granted that this is possible. If, then, the whole sight includes the whole hemisphere, and the size of what is seen is in the actual sky many times greater than the appearance, far less than it really is, how could one make the lessening of the angle of vision responsible for distant objects appearing small?
II. 9. AGAINST THE GNOSTICS

Introductory Note

This treatise (No. 33 in Porphyry's chronological order) is in fact the concluding section of a single long treatise which Porphyry, in order to carry out his design of grouping his master's works, more or less according to subject, into six sets of nine treatises, hacked roughly into four parts which he put into different Enneads, the other three being III. 8 (30); V. 8 (31) and V. 5 (32). Porphyry says (Life ch. 16. 11) that he gave the treatise the title Against the Gnostics (he is presumably also responsible for the titles of the other sections of the cut-up treatise). There is an alternative title in Life, ch. 24. 56-57 which runs Against those who say that the maker of the universe is evil and the universe is evil.

The treatise as it stands in the Enneads is a most powerful protest on behalf of Hellenic philosophy against the un-Hellenic heresy (as it was from the Platonist as well as the orthodox Christian point of view) of Gnosticism. There were Gnostics among Plotinus's own friends, whom he had not succeeded in converting (ch. 10 of this treatise) and he and his pupils devoted considerable time and energy to anti-Gnostic controversy (Life ch. 16). He obviously considered Gnosticism an extremely dangerous influence, likely to pervert the minds even of members of his own circle. It is impossible to attempt to give an account of Gnosticism here. By far the best discussion of what the particular group of Gnostics Plotinus knew believed is M. Puech's admirable contribution to Entretiens Hardt V

AGAINST THE GNOSTICS

(Des Sources de Plotins) 1. But it is important for the understanding of this treatise to be clear about the reasons why Plotinus disliked them so intensely and thought their influence so harmful. The teaching of the Gnostics seems to him untraditional, irrational and immoral. They despise and revile the ancient Platonic teaching and claim to have a new and superior wisdom of their own; but in fact anything that is true in their teaching comes from Plato, and all they have done themselves is to add senseless complications and pervert the true traditional doctrine into a melodramatic, superstitious fantasy designed to feed their own delusions of grandeur. They reject the only true way of salvation through wisdom and virtue, the slow patient study of truth and pursuit of perfection by men who respect the wisdom of the ancients and know their place in the universe. They claim to be a privileged caste of beings, in whom alone God is interested, and who are saved not by their own efforts but by some dramatic and arbitrary divine proceeding; and this, Plotinus says, leads to immorality. Worst of all, they despise and hate the material universe and deny its goodness and the goodness of its maker. This for a Platonist is utter blasphemy, and all the worse because it obviously derives to some extent from the sharply other-worldly side of Plato's own teaching (e.g. in the Phaedo). At this point in his attack Plotinus comes very close in some ways to the orthodox Christian opponents of Gnosticism, who also insist that this world is the good work of God in his goodness. But, here as on the question of salvation, the doctrine which Plotinus is defending is as sharply opposed in other ways to orthodox Christianity as to Gnosticism: for he maintains not only the goodness of the material universe but also its eternity and its divinity. The idea that the universe could have a beginning and end is inseparably connected in his mind with the idea that the divine action

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in making it is arbitrary and irrational. And to deny the divinity (though a subordinate and dependent divinity) of the World-Soul, and of those noblest of embodied living beings the heavenly bodies, seems to him both blasphemous and unreasonable.

Synopsis

Short statement of the doctrine of the three hypostases, the One, Intellect and Soul, there cannot be more or fewer than these three. Criticism of attempts to multiply the hypostases, and especially of the idea of two intellects, one which thinks and the other which thinks that it thinks. (ch. 1). The true doctrine of Soul (ch. 2). The law of necessary procession and the eternity of the universe (ch. 3). Attack on the Gnostic doctrine of the making of the universe by a fallen soul, and on their despising of the universe and the heavenly bodies (chs. 4–5). The senseless jargon of the Gnostics, their plagiarism from and perversion of Plato, and their insolent arrogance (ch. 6). The true doctrine about Universal Soul and the goodness of the universe which it forms and rules (chs. 7–8). Refutation of objections from the inequalities and injustices of human life (ch. 9). Ridiculous arrogance of the Gnostics who refuse to acknowledge the hierarchy of created gods and spirits and say that they alone are sons of God and superior to the heavens (ch. 9). The absurdities of the Gnostic doctrine of the fall of "Wisdom" (Sophia) and of the generation and activities of the Demiurge, maker of the visible universe (chs. 10–12). False and melodramatic Gnostic teaching about the cosmic spheres and their influence (ch. 13). The blasphemous falsity of the Gnostic claim to control the higher powers by magic and the absurdity of their claim to cure diseases by casting out demons (ch. 14). The false other-worldliness leads to immorality (ch. 15). The true Platonic other-worldliness, which loves and venerates the material universe in all its goodness and beauty as the most perfect possible image of the intelligible, contrasted at length with the false, Gnostic, other-worldliness which hates and despises the material universe and its beauties (chs. 16–18).
II. 9. AGAINST THE Gnostics

1. Since, then, the simple nature of the Good appeared to us as also primal (for all that is not primal is not simple), and as something which has nothing in itself, but is some one thing;\(^1\) and since the nature of what is called the One is the same (for this is not some other thing first and then one, nor is the Good something else first, and then good), whenever we say “the One” and whenever we say “the Good,” we must think that the nature we are speaking of is the same nature, and call it “one” not as predicating anything of it but as making it clear to ourselves as far as we can. And we call it the First in the sense that it is simplest, and the Self-Sufficient, because it is not composed of a number of parts; for if it were, it would be dependent upon the things of which it was composed; and we say that it is not in something else, because everything which is in something else also comes from something else. If, then, it is not from something else or in something else or any kind of compound, it is necessary that there should be nothing above it. So we must not go after other first principles but put this first, and then after it Intellect, that which primarily thinks, and then Soul after Intellect (for this is the order which corresponds to the nature of things); and we must not posit more principles than these in the intelligible world, or

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\(^1\) This is a reference back to the conclusion of what, as Plotinus wrote it, was the preceding section of the same treatise, which appears in the Enneads as V. 5; cp. V. 5. 13. 33-36.
Here, and in what follows in the rest of the chapter, Plotinus is probably not only, or even primarily, concerned with explicitly Gnostic doctrines. He is attacking views which were held in the Platonic school and to which he had himself at one time been prepared to make some concessions. The idea that there were two or more Intellects seems to have arisen in the course of discussions about the meaning of Plato, Timaeus 39E, and the relationship of the intellect of the Demiurge to the intelligible model of the universe, which had long been discussed in the Platonic school (as it still is by modern scholars). Amelius, according to Proclus, (In Timaeum III. 387A, p. 102. 18 ff., Diehl), came to the conclusion that there were three Intellects, the “existing,” the “possessing” and the “seeing,” a view which had a considerable influence on the later developments of Neoplatonism (ep. Dodds’s commentary on Proclus, Elements of Theology prop. 167). And in the first of the early notes collected by Porphyry in III. 9, Plotinus puts forward a distinction between an Intellect “in repose,” and another which is an “activity proceeding from it” and “seen” it, very similar to the distinction criticised here. This distinction seems to go back to Numenius, whose thought had affinities with Gnosticism (ep. Dodds on Proclus El. Th. prop. 168). Dodds also thinks that Numenius may be the author of the other distinction criticised here between the Intellect that thinks and the other which thinks that it thinks. But the passage describing Numenius’s doctrine about the thinking of his three Intellects (Proclus In Tim. III. 285A-B, p. 103. 28 ff., ; Diehl = Numenius test. 25 Leemans Pr. 22 Desplaces) is too obscure for any certainty. Similar ideas were, of course current among the Gnostics, but it is important to remember that they were seriously put forward in Plotinus’s own circle, by others than professed Gnostics. The Gnostics themselves, especially Valentinus, derived some of their ideas from Plotinism and Neopythagoreanism, which makes it easier to understand the reciprocal influence they exercised on some Platonists and Neopythagoreans.
Plotinus: Ennead II. 9.

Against the Gnostics

and what its motion and "going forth," or what would be its inactivity, and what the work of the other intellect? Intellect is as it is, always the same, resting in a static activity. Movement towards it and around it is already the work of Soul, and a rational principle proceeding from Intellect to Soul and making Soul intellectual, not making another nature between Intellect and Soul. Again, the supposition that one intellect thinks and the other thinks that it thinks, is certainly not a reason for making several intellects. For even if on our level it is one thing for an intellect to think and another for it to think that it thinks, yet all the same its thinking is a single application of the mind not unaware of its own activities; but it would be absurd to suppose this duality to exist in the case of the true Intellect, but the intellect which thinks that it thinks will be altogether the same as the intellect which did the thinking. Otherwise one intellect will be only thinking, and the other will be thinking that it thinks, but the thinking subject will be another, and not itself. But if they are going to assert that the distinction is only in our thought, first of all they will be abandoning the idea of a plurality of hypostases. Then we must consider if we can make distinctions in thought which leave room for the assumption of an intellect which only thinks, but is not conscious of its thinking. If this happened to ourselves, who always watch over our impulses and thought processes, if we are even moderately serious people, we should be blamed for witlessness. But certainly when the true Intellect thinks itself in its thoughts and its object of thought is not outside but it is itself also its
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object of thought, it necessarily in its thinking possesses itself and sees itself: and when it sees itself it does not as without intelligence but as thinking. So that in its primary thinking it would have also the thinking that it thinks, as an existent unity; and it is not double, even in thought, there in the intelligible world. And further, if it is always thinking what it is, what room is there for the distinction in thought which separates thinking from thinking that it thinks? But if one even introduced another, third, distinction in addition to the second one which said that it thinks that it thinks, one which says that it thinks that it thinks that it thinks, the absurdity would become even clearer. And why should one not go on introducing distinctions in this way to infinity? But when someone makes the rational principle proceed from Intellect, and then makes another principle come to be in the soul from the first rational principle itself, in order to make this first principle an intermediary between soul and Intellect, he will deprive soul of thinking, if it does not get its principle of thinking from Intellect but from another principle, the intermediary: and it will have an image of a rational principle, but not a principle, and it will not know Intellect at all or think at all.

2. One must not, then, posit more beings than these, nor make superfluous distinctions in the realities of the intelligible world which the nature of these realities does not admit: we must lay down that there is one intellect, unchangeably the same, without any sort of decline, imitating the Father as far as is possible to it: and that one part of our soul is
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 9.

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always directed to the intelligible realities, one to the things of this world, and one is in the middle between these; for since the soul is one nature in many powers, sometimes the whole of it is carried along with the best of itself and of real being, sometimes the worse part is dragged down and drags the middle with it; for it is not lawful for it to drag down the whole. This misfortune befalls it because it does not remain in the noblest, where the soul remains which is not a part; and at that stage we, too, are not a part of it—and grants to the whole of body to hold whatever it can hold from it, but remains itself untroubled, not managing body as a result of discursive thinking, nor setting anything right, but ordering it with a wonderful power by its contemplation of that which is before it. The more it is directed to that contemplation, the fairer and more powerful it is. It receives from there and gives what comes after it, and is always illuminated as it illuminates.

3. Since, therefore, it is always illuminated and continually holds the light, it gives it to what comes next after it, and this is held together and fertilised by this light and enjoys its share of life as far as it can; as if there was a fire placed somewhere in the middle and those who were capable of it were warmed. Yet fire has its limited dimensions; but when powers which are not limited to precise dimensions are not separated from real being, how can they exist without anything participating in them? But each of necessity must give of its own to something else as well, or the Good will not be the Good, or Intellect Intellect, or the soul this that it is, unless with the
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 9.

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... primal living some secondary life lives as long as the primal exists. Of necessity, then, all things must exist for ever in ordered dependence upon each other: those other than the First have come into being in the sense that they are derived from other, higher, princi- ples. Things that are said to have come into being did not just come into being [at a particular moment] but always were and always will be in process of becoming: nor will any- thing be dissolved except those things which have something to be dissolved into: that which has nothing into which it can be dissolved will not perish. If anyone says that it will be dissolved into matter, why should he not also say that matter will be dissolved? But if he is going to say that, what necessity was there, we shall reply, for it to come into being? But if they are going to assert that it was necessary for it to come into being as a consequence of the existence of higher principles, the necessity is there now as well. But if matter is going to remain alone, the divine principles will not be everywhere but in a particular limited place; they will be, so to speak, walled off from matter; but if this is impossible, matter will be illuminated by them.

4. But if they are going to assert that the soul made the world when it had, sc to speak, "shed its wings," 1 this does not happen to the Soul of the All; but if they are going to say that it made the world as the result of a moral failure, let them tell us the cause of the failure. But when did it fail? If it was from eternity, it abides in a state of failure according to their own account. If it began to fail, why did it not begin before? But we say that the making act of the

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1. The phrase is taken from Plato, Phaedrus 246C. It is clear from what follows in Plato that the reference is only to the fall of human souls. But a reading of the passage will show how the Gnostics might have misinterpreted it to fit in with their own doctrines.

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1. Perna et nunc Henry et Schweizer: ιων wxy, H-S: ιων 0.
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 9.

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soul is not a declination but rather a non-declination. But if it declined, it was obviously because it had forgotten the intelligible realities; but if it forgot them, how is it the craftsman of the world? For what is the source of its making, if not what it saw in the intelligible world? But if it makes in remembrance of those intelligible realities, it has not declined at all, not even if it only has them dimly present in it. Does it not rather incline to the intelligible world, in order not to see dimly? For why, if it had any memory at all, did it not want to ascend there? For whatever advantage did it think was going to result for it from making the universe? It is ridiculous to suppose that it did so in order to be honoured; the people who suppose so are transferring to it what is true of the sculptors here below. Then again, if it made the world by discursive reasoning and its making was not in its nature, and its power was not a productive power, how could it have made this particular universe? And when, too, is it going to destroy it? For if it was sorry it had made it, what is it waiting for? But if it is not sorry yet, it is not likely to be, since it has got used to the universe by now and grown more kindly disposed to it with the passage of time. But if it is waiting for the individual souls, they ought by now to have stopped coming again to birth, since they have made trial in their former birth of the evils in this world; so that they would have left off coming here by now.

We cannot grant, either, that this universe had an evil origin because there are many unpleasant things in it: this is a judgement of people who rate it too highly, if they claim that it ought to be the same as
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the intelligible world and not only an image of it. Surely, what other fairer image of the intelligible world could there be? For what other fire could be a better image of the intelligible fire than the fire here? Or what other earth could be better than this, after the intelligible earth? And what sphere could be more exact or more dignified or better ordered in its circuit [than the sphere of this universe] after the self-enclosed circle there of the intelligible universe? And what other sun could there be which ranked after the intelligible sun and before this visible sun here?

5. But really! For these people who have a body like men have, and desire and griefs and passions, by no means to despise their own power but to say that they can grasp the intelligible, but that there is no power in the sun which is freer than this power of ours from affections and more ordered and more unchangeable, and that the sun has not a better understanding than we have, who have only just come to birth and are hindered by so many things that cheat us from coming to the truth! And to say that their soul, and the soul of the meanest of men, is immortal and divine, but that the whole heaven and the stars there have no share given them in the immortal soul, though they are made of much fairer and purer material, though these people see the order there and the excellence of form and arrangement, and are particularly addicted to complaining about the disorder here around the earth! As if the immortal soul had taken care to choose the worse place, and chosen to retire from the better in favour of the mortal soul! Unreasonable, too, is their slipping in of this
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other soul of theirs, which they compose of the elements. For how could the composition of the elements have any sort of life? For the mixture of the elements makes hot or cold or a mixture of the two, or dry or wet or a mixture of these. And how can the soul be the principle which holds the four elements together when it has come into being out of them afterwards? But what can one say when they attribute to the soul compounded of the elements perception and deliberation and innumerable other things as well? But they do not honour this creation or this earth, but say that a new earth has come into existence for them, which, say they, they will go away from this one: and that this is the rational form of the universe. And yet why do they feel the need to be there in the archetype of the universe which they hate? And where did this archetype come from? It came into existence according to them, when its maker had already inclined towards this world. Well, then, if there was in the maker himself a great concern to make a universe after the intelligible universe which he possesses—and what need was there to do so!—and if it existed before our universe, what did he make it for? To put the souls on their guard. How could that be? They were not on their guard, so there was no point in its existence. But if he made it after this universe, taking the form out of the universe and stripping it off the matter, then their testing in this world would

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suffice to put on their guard the souls which had been tested in it. But if they claim to have received the form of the universe in their souls, what does this new way of speaking mean?

6. And what ought one to say of the other beings they introduce, their “Exiles” and “Impressions” and “Repentings”? For if they say that these are affections of the soul, when it has changed its purpose, and “Impressions” when it is contemplating; in a way, images of realities and not the realities themselves, then these are the terms of people inventing a new jargon to recommend their own school: they contrive this meretricious language as if they had no connection with the ancient Hellenic school, though the Hellenes knew all this and knew it clearly, and spoke without delusive pomposity of ascents from the cave and advancing gradually closer and closer to a truer vision. Generally speaking, some of these peoples’ doctrines have been taken from Plato, but others, all the new ideas they have brought in to establish a philosophy of their own, are things they have found outside the truth. For the judgements too, and the rivers in Hades and the reincarnations come from Plato. And the making a plurality in the intelligible world, Being, and Intellect, and the Maker different from Intellect, and Soul, is taken from the words in the Timaeus: for Plato says, “The maker of this universe thought that it should

1 This, of course, refers to the simile of the Cave in Plato Republic VII, 514A ff.
2 Op. Plato 111D ff.; the mention of the “rivers in Hades” suggests that this is the one of Plato’s myths of the after-life which Plotinus had particularly in mind here.
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contain all the forms that intelligence discerns contained in the Living Being that truly is." 1 But they did not understand, and took it to mean that there is one mind which contains in it in repose all realities, and another mind different from it, which contemplates them, and another which plans—but often they have soul as the maker instead of the planning mind—and they think that this is the maker according to Plato, being a long way from knowing who the maker is. 2 And in general they falsify Plato's account of the manner of the making, and a great deal else, and degrade the great man's teachings as if they had understood the intelligible nature, but he and the other blessed philosophers had not. 3

And by giving names to a multitude of intelligible realities they think they will appear to have discovered the exact truth, though by this very multiplicity they bring the intelligible nature into the likeness of the sense-world, the inferior world, when one ought there in the intelligible to aim at the smallest possible number, and attribute everything to the reality which comes after the First and so be quit of multiplicity, since it is all things and the first intellect and substance and all the other excellences that come after the first nature. The form of soul should come third; and they should trace the differences of souls in affections or in nature, without in any way disparaging those godlike men, but receiving their teaching with a good grace since it is the teaching of more ancient authorities and they themselves have received what is good in what they

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1 Timaeus 38E 7-9.
2 Again, it looks as if Plotinus was thinking of "Gnosticizing" Platonists, who derived their ideas to some extent from Numenius, at least as much as of Gnostics properly so called; cp. the second note on ch. I.
3 Cp. what Porphyry says about the Gnostics in Life ch. 16, 8-9.
say from them, the immortality of the soul, the intelligible universe, the first god, the necessity for the soul to shun fellowship with the body, the separation from the body, the escape from becoming to being. For these doctrines are there in Plato, and when they state them clearly in this way they do well. If they wish to disagree on these points, there is no unfair hostility in saying to them that they should not recommend their own opinions to their audience by ridiculing and insulting the Greeks but that they should show the correctness on their own merits of all the points of doctrine which are peculiar to them and differ from the views of the Greeks, stating their real opinions courteously, as befits philosophers, and fairly on the points where they are opposed, looking to the truth and not hunting fame by censuring men who have been judged good from ancient times by men of worth and saying that they themselves are better than the Greeks. For what was said by the ancients about the intelligible world is far better, and is put in a way appropriate to educated men, and it will be easily recognised by those who are not utterly deceived by the delusion that is rushing upon men that these teachings have been taken by the Gnostics later from the ancients, but have acquired some in no way appropriate additions; on the points, at any rate, on which they wish to oppose the ancient teachings they introduce all sorts of comings into being and passings away, and disapprove of this universe, and blame the soul for its association with the body, and censure the director of this universe, and identify its maker with the soul, and attribute to this universal soul the same
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affections as those which the souls in parts of the universe have.

7. It has been said already that this universe did not begin and will not come to an end but exists always as long as the intelligible realities exist. And it has been said before the Gnostics that the association of our soul with body is not to the advantage of the soul. But to apply conclusions drawn from our soul to the Soul of the All is as if somebody were to take the tribe of potters or smiths in a well-ordered city and make them a reason for blaming the whole. But one must take into account the differences between the universal soul and ours, in its management of body; it does not direct it in the same way, and is not bound to it. For, as well as all the other differences (of which we have mentioned a vast number elsewhere) this ought to have been taken into consideration, that we are bound by a body which has already become a bond. For the nature of body is already bound in the universal soul and binds whatever it grasps; but the Soul of the All could not be bound by the things it binds itself: for it is the ruler. Therefore it is unaffected by them, but we are not their masters: but that part of the universal which is directed to the divine above it remains pure, and is not hindered, but that part which gives life to the body takes no addition from it. For in general anything which is in something else is affected by what happens to it, but it does not itself give of its own to that other which has its own life. For instance, if a shoot of one tree is grafted on another, when anything happens to the stock the shoot is affected with it, but if the shoot is withered...
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8. To ask why Soul made the universe is like asking why there is a soul and why the Maker makes.

First, it is the question of people who assume a
beginning of that which always is: then they think that the cause of the making was a being who turned from one thing to another and changed. So they must be taught, if only they would endure the teaching with a good will, what is the nature of these beings, so as to stop them from abusing what are worthy of all honour, which they frivolously do instead of showing the reverent care which would be becoming. For it is not right to disapprove of the management of the All, first of all because it manifests the greatness of the intelligible nature. For if it has come into life in such a way that its life is not a disjointed one—like the smaller things in it which in its fullness of life it produces continually night and day—but coherent and clear and great and everywhere life, manifesting infinite wisdom, how should one not call it a clear and noble image of the intelligible gods? 1 If, being an image, it is not that intelligible world, this is precisely what is natural to it; if it was the intelligible world, it would not be an image of it. But it is false to say that the image is unlike the original; for nothing has been left out which it was possible for a fine natural image to have. The image has to exist, necessarily, not as the result of thought and contrivance; 2 the intelligible could not be the last, for it had to have a double activity, one in itself and one directed to something else. There had, then, to be something after it, for only that which is the most powerless of all things has nothing below it. But there always insists that the eternal production of the universe is a unitary spontaneous act without any previous planning: cp. V. 8. 7.
Plotinus maintains that the celestial bodies of the astral gods (the visible heavenly bodies), though material, are altogether superior to our earthly bodies, being everlasting.
9. But if anyone objects to wealth and poverty and the fact that all have not an equal share in things of this kind, first, he is ignorant that the good and wise man does not look for equality in these things, and does not think that people who have acquired a great deal of them have any kind of advantage, or that those who hold power have the advantage over private persons; he leaves concern of this kind to others. He has learnt that there are two kinds of life here below, one for the good and wise and one for the mass of men, that for the good and wise being directed to the highest point and the upper region, and that for the more human sort being of two kinds again; one is mindful of virtue and has a share in some sort of good, but the common crowd is there, so to speak, to do manual work to provide for the necessities of the better sort. But if anyone commits murder, or is worsted by his passions because of his incapacity, why is it surprising that there should be sins in intellect and in souls that are like children which have not grown up? And if the world is like a sports-ground, where some win and others lose, what is there wrong with that? If you are wronged, what is there dreadful in that to an immortal? And even if you are murdered, you have what you want. But if you have come by now to dislike the world, you are not compelled to remain a citizen of it. It is agreed that there are judgements and punishments here. How, then, is it possible rightly to disapprove of a city which gives each man his deserts? In this city [of the world] virtue is honoured and vice has its appropriate dishonour, and not merely the images of gods but gods

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1 Cp. III. 2, [47] 8 and 15.
Plotinus may be thinking here of Epicureans, where the heavenly bodies are said to be either gods themselves or images made by the gods themselves.
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and exalt yourself, alleging that you are no worse than they are, then, first of all, in proportion to a man's excellence he is graciously disposed to all, to men too. Then the man of real dignity must ascend in due measure, with an absence of boorish arrogance, going only so far as our nature is able to go, and consider that there is room for the others at God's side, and not set himself alone next after God; this is like flying in our dreams and will deprive him of becoming a god, even as far as the human soul can. It can as far as intellect leads it; but to set oneself above intellect is immediately to fall outside it. But stupid men believe this sort of talk as soon as they hear "you shall be better than all, not only men, but gods"—for there is a great deal of arrogance among men—and the man who was once meek and modest, an ordinary private person, if he hears "you are the son of God, and the others whom you used to admire are not, nor the beings they venerate according to the tradition received from their fathers; but you are better than the heaven without having taken any trouble to become so"—then are other people really going to join in the chorus? It is just as if, in a great crowd of people who did not know how to count, someone who did not know how to count heard that he was a thousand cubits tall; what would happen if he thought he was a thousand cubits, and heard that the others were five cubits? He would only imagine that the "thousand" was a big number. Then besides this, God in his providence cares for you; why does he neglect the whole universe in which you yourselves are? For if it is because he has no time to look at it, and it is not
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lawful for him to regard what is below him: why, when he looks at the Gnostics, does he not look outside himself and at the universe in which they are? But if he does not look outside, in order that he may not supervise the universe, he does not look at them either. But they have no need of him. But the universe does need him, and knows its station, and the beings in it know how they are in it and how they are there in that higher world, and those of men who are dear to God know this, and take kindly what comes to them from the universe, if any unavoidable necessity befalls them from the movement of all things. For one must not look at what is agreeable to the individual but at the All. A man who does this values individuals according to their worth, but presses on always to that goal to which all press on that can—he knows that there are many that press on to the higher world, and those that attain are blessed, others, according to what is possible for them, have the destiny which fits them—and he does not attribute the ability to himself alone. For if someone says he has something, having does not come by claiming it; but the Gnostics say that they have many things, even though they know they have not got them, and think they have them when they have not, and that they alone have what they alone have not.

10. There are many other points, or rather all the points of their doctrine, which if one investigated, one would have ample opportunity of showing the real state of the case in regard to each argument. [But we shall not continue this detailed refutation for we feel a certain regard for some of our friends]
From this point to the end of ch. 12 Plotinus is attacking a Gnostic myth known to us best at present in the form it took in the system of Valentinus. The Mother, Sophia-Azhdahā, produced as a result of the complicated sequence of events which followed the fall of the higher Sophia, and her offspring the Demiurge, the inferior and ignorant maker of the material universe, are Valentinian figures; cp. Irenaeus *Adv. Haer.* 1.4 and 1.5. Valentinus had been in Rome, and there is nothing improbable in the presence of Valentinians there in the time of Plotinus. But the evidence in the *Life* ch. 16 suggests that the Gnostics in Plotinus’s circle belonged to the older group called Sethians or Arundontes, related to the Ophites or Barbelognostics; they probably called themselves simply “Gnostics.” Gnostic sects borrowed freely from each other, and it is likely that Valentinus took some of his ideas about Sophia from older Gnostic sources, and that his ideas in turn influenced other Gnostics. The probably Sethian Gnostic library discovered at Nag Hammadi includes Valentinian treatises; cp. Puech, *I.c.* pp. 162-163 and 179-180.
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Soul started it or whether Wisdom was a cause of Soul being like this, or whether they mean both to be the same thing, and then they tell us that the other souls came down too, and as members of Wisdom put on bodies, human bodies for instance. But again they say that very being for the sake of which these souls came down did not come down itself, did not decline, so to put it, but only illuminated the darkness, and so an image from it came into existence in matter. Then they form an image of the image somewhere here below, through matter or materiality or whatever they like to call it—they use now one name and now another, and say many other names just to make their meaning obscure—and produce what they call the Maker, and make him revolt from his mother and drag the universe which proceeds from him down to the ultimate limit of images. The man who wrote this just meant to be blasphemous!

11. First of all then, if it did not come down, but illumined the darkness, how can it rightly be said to have declined? For if something like light streamed from it, it is not proper to say that it declined when that happened; unless the darkness lay somewhere below it and it moved spatially towards it and illuminated it when it came close to it. But if Soul remained in itself and illuminated matter without taking any action to this end, it did only it illumine matter, and not the powers greater than it in the realm of existence? But if it was by forming a rational conception of the universe that it was able to illumine as a result of its rational conception, why did it not make the universe at the same time as it
This and similar ideas are common to most kinds of Gnosticism: cf. Irenaeus, Adv. Haer. I. 29 (a non-Valentinian system) and Clement of Alexandria, Strom. IV ch. 13, 89 (Valentinus).
12. And how does this thought set to its task of making when it has just come into being? By memory of what it saw. But it did not exist at all so as even to see, neither it nor the mother whom they give it. Then is it not surprising that they themselves come here into this world not as images of souls but as real souls, but only one or two of them with difficulty just manage to get out of the world and, when they attain to recollection, with difficulty recapitulate what they once saw; but this image, even if dimly, as they say, yet does manage to form a conception of the intelligible realities when it has just come into being, itself or even its mother, an image in matter, and not only to conceive them and form an idea of a world, and of that world, but to learn the elements from which it could come into being? What could have been the reason why it made fire first? Because it thought that fire must come first? Why not something else? But if it was able to make fire when it conceived it, why when it conceived the world—for it must have conceived the whole first—did it not make the world straight away? For the elements, too, were included in its conception. For it made the world in every way after the manner of nature rather than as the arts make; for the arts are later than nature and the world. Even now the things which are parts of the world when they are brought into being by natural principles do not come into existence like this, first fire, then each individual constituent, and then a mixture of them, but there is an outline and sketch plan of the whole living thing impressing the form on the menstrual fluid. Why then, in the making

1. (καί) Heigl, εἰς οὐν Henry et Schwynz.
of the world, too, was not matter marked in outline with the form of the universe, in which form earth and fire and the rest were contained? But perhaps they would have made the world like this, since they possess a more genuine soul, but that creator of theirs did not know how to. Yet to see, before it existed, the greatness of the heaven—or rather to see its exact size—and the inclination of the zodiac and the circuit of the stars below it, and the earth, in such a way that it is possible to give reasons why all these things are so—this does not belong to an image, but altogether to a power which comes from the best principles. And this even they themselves unwillingly admit. For their "illumination of the darkness," if it is investigated, will make them admit the true causes of the universe. For why was it necessary for the soul to illuminate, unless the necessity was universal? It was either according to soul's nature or against it. But if it was according to its nature, it must always be so. If, on the other hand, it was against its nature, then there will be a place for what is against nature in the higher world, and evil will exist before this universe, and the universe will not be responsible for evil, but the higher world will be the cause of evil for this world, and evil will not come from the world here to the soul, but from the soul to the world here; and the course of the argument will lead to the attribution of responsibility for the universe to the first principles: and if the universe, then also the matter, from which the universe on this hypothesis would have emerged. For the soul which declined saw, they say, and illuminated the darkness already in existence.
THE COSMIC SPHERES AND THE ARCHONS WHO Ruled THEM WERE FOR THE Gnostics formidable barriers which the soul had to pass on its journey upwards to its true home. To do so it was necessary to know the correct formula with which to address the Archons:

Where, then, did the darkness come from? If they are going to say that the soul made it when it declined, there was obviously nowhere for it to decline to, and the darkness itself was not responsible for the decline, but the soul's own nature. But this is the same as attributing the responsibility to pre-exisiting necessities; so the responsibility goes back to the first principles.

13. The man who censures the nature of the universe does not know what he is doing, and how far this rash criticism of his goes. This is so because the Gnostics do not know that there is an order of firsts, seconds and thirds in regular succession, and so on to the last, and that the things that are worse than the first should not be reviled; one should rather calmly and gently accept the nature of all things, and hurry on oneself to the first, ceasing to concern oneself with the melodrama of the terrors, as they think, in the cosmic spheres, which in reality "make all things sweet and lovely" for them. For what is there terrible about the spheres, which makes them terrify people who are unpractised in reasoning and have never heard anything of a cultured and harmonious "gnosis." For even if their bodies are fiery, there is no need to fear them, since they are duly proportioned to the All and the earth; but one should look at their souls—it is on their souls that the Gnostics themselves, of course, base their claim to honour. Yet their bodies, too, are outstanding in size and beauty and are partners and co-operators in each Archon: cp. the Ophite spells in Origen Against Celcus VI. 31, with H. Chadwick's commentary.

1. The cosmic spheres and the Archons who ruled them were for the Gnostic formidable barriers which the soul had to pass on its journey upwards to its true home. To do so it was necessary to know the correct formula with which to address the Archons.


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all that happens according to nature, and cannot ever not happen as long as the first principles exist; they are essential to the completeness of the All and are important parts of the All. And if men have a degree of honour in comparison with other living things, these are much more honourable, as they are not in the All to exercise tyrannical rule but as the givers of beauty and order. As for what is said to happen as a result of their influence, one should consider that they give signs of things to come, but that the variety of things that happen is due to chance—it was not possible that the fortune of each individual should be the same—and to reasons of birth, and places far different from each other, and the dispositions of souls. And again, one should not demand that everybody should be good nor, because this is not possible, should they be ready with censure, demanding that this world should differ in no way from that higher one; nor is it right not to consider evil as anything else than a falling short in wisdom, and a lesser good, continually diminishing; as if one were to say that the growth-principle was evil because it is not perception, and the principle of perception, because it is not reason. Otherwise, they will be compelled to say that there are evils in the higher world too: for there soul is worse than intellect and intellect than Something Else.

14. But they themselves most of all impair the inviolate purity of the higher powers in another way too. For when they write magic chants, intending to
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address them to those powers, not only to the soul but to those above it as well, what are they doing except making the powers obey the word and follow the lead of people who say spells and charms and conjurations, any one of us who is well skilled in the art of saying precisely the right things in the right way, songs and cries and aspirated and hissing sounds and everything else which their writings say has magic power in the higher world? But even if they do not want to say this, how are the incorporeal beings affected by sounds? So by the sort of statements with which they give an appearance of majesty to their own words, they, without realising it, take away the majesty of the higher powers. But when they say they free themselves from diseases, if they meant that they did so by temperance and orderly living, they would speak well, just as the philosophers do; but in fact they assume that the diseases are evil spirits, and claim to be able to drive them out by their word; by this claim they might make themselves more impressive in the eyes of the masses, who wonder at the powers of magicians, but would not persuade sensible people that diseases do not have their origin in strain or excess or deficiency or decay, and in general in changes which have their origin outside or inside. The cures of diseases make this clear too. With a vigorous motion of the bowels or the giving of a drug the illness goes through the downward passage and out, and it goes out too with blood-letting; and fasting also heals. Does the evil spirit starve, and does the drug make it waste away,

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and does it sometimes come out all at once, or stay inside? But if it continues to stay, how does the patient not continue to be ill while it is still inside him? But if it went out, why did it go? What happened to it? Presumably because it was fed by the disease. So then the disease was different from the spirit. Then, if it came into the man without any cause of disease, why is he not always ill? But if there was a cause, what need is there of the spirit to produce the illness? For the cause is sufficient by itself to produce the fever. It is ridiculous to suppose that as soon as the cause occurs the evil spirit, all ready and waiting, immediately takes up its position in support of it. But it is clear how they say this and also why they say it; it was for this reason, too, that we mentioned these evil spirits. The rest of their teachings I leave to you to investigate by reading their books, and to observe throughout that the kind of philosophy which we pursue, besides all its other excellences, displays simplicity and straightforwardness of character along with clear thinking, and aims at dignity, not rash arrogance, and combines its confident boldness with reason and much safeguarding and caution and a great deal of circumspection: you are to use philosophy of this kind as a standard of comparison for the rest. But the system of the others [the Gnostics] is in every part constructed on entirely opposed principles—for I would not like to say more; this is the way in which it would be suitable for us to speak about them.

15 But there is one point which we must be particularly careful not to let escape us, and that is what these arguments do to the souls of those who
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Hear them and are persuaded by them to despise the universe and the beings in it. For there are two schools of thought about attaining the end; one which puts forward the pleasure of the body as the end, and another which chooses nobility and virtue, for whose members desire depends on God and leads back to God (as must be studied elsewhere); Epicurus, who abandons providence, exhorts to pursue pleasure and its enjoyment, which is what is left; but this doctrine censures the lord of providence and providence itself still more cruelly, and despises all the laws of this world and the virtue whose winning extends back through all time, and makes self-control here something to laugh at, that nothing noble may be seen existing here below, and abolishes self-control and the righteousness which comes to birth with men's characters and is perfected by reason and training, and altogether everything by which a man could become nobly good. So pleasure is left for them, and what concerns themselves alone, and what other men have no share in, and what is nothing but a matter of their needs—unless one of them is by nature better than these teachings of theirs: for nothing here is of value for them, but something else is, which they will go after one day. Yet those who already have the gnosis should start...
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going after it here and now, and in their pursuit should first of all set right their conduct here below, as they come from a divine nature: for that nature is aware of nobility and despises the pleasure of the body. But those who have no share of virtue would not be moved at all towards that higher world. This, too, is evidence of their indifference to virtue, that they have never made any treatise about virtue, but have altogether left out the treatment of these subjects; they do not tell us what kind of thing virtue is, nor how many parts it has, nor about all the many noble studies of the subject to be found in the treatises of the ancients, nor from what virtue results and how it is to be attained, nor how the soul is tended, nor how it is purified. For it does no good at all to say “Look to God,” unless one also teaches how one is to look. For someone could say, “What prevents me from looking and refraining from no pleasure, or from having no control over my emotions and from remembering the name ‘God’ and at the same time being in the grip of all the passions and making no attempt to get rid of any of them?” In reality it is virtue which goes before us to the goal and, when it comes to exist in the soul along with wisdom, shows God: but God, if you talk about him without true virtue, is only a name.

16. Again, despising the universe and the gods in it and the other noble things is certainly not becoming good. Every wicked man, in former times too, was capable of despising the gods, and even if he was not altogether wicked before, when he despised them he became so by this very fact, even if he was not wicked in everything else. Then again the honour which

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these people say they give to the intelligible gods would be of a very unfeeling sort. For anyone who feels affection for anything at all shows kindness to all that is akin to the object of his affection, and to the children of the father he loves. But every soul is a child of That Father. And there are souls in these [the heavenly bodies] too, and intelligent and good ones, much more closely in touch with the beings of the higher world than our souls are. How could this universe exist if it was cut off from that other world? How could the gods in it? But we spoke of this before, too: our point now is that because they despise the kindred of those higher realities, also, they do not know the higher beings either but only talk as if they did. Then, another point, what piety is there in denying that providence extends to this world and to anything and everything? And how are they consistent with themselves in this denial? For they say that God does care providentially for them, and them alone. Did he care for them only when they were in the higher world, or does he care for them when they are here, too? If he cared for them when they were there, how did they come here? But if he cares for them here, why are they here still? And how is it possible that God is not here, too? For from what source does he know that they are here? And how does he know that while they have been here they have not forgotten him and become wicked? But if he knows those who have not become wicked, he knows those who have become wicked too, in order to be able to separate the good from them. So he will be present to all and will be in this universe, whatever the manner of his presence; so that the universe
Plato in his Ennead II. 9.

μεθέξει αὐτοῦ ὁ κόσμος. Ἐξ δ' ἄπεστι τοῦ κόσμου, καὶ ὡμῶν ἀπέστη, καὶ οὖν ἂν ἔχοιτε τι λέγειν περὶ αὐτοῦ οὔτε τῶν μετ' αὐτῶν. 'Αλλ' οὗτος ὑμῖν πρὸς τὸν ἐρχεῖται ἔκειθεν, ἐπεὶ τὶ βούλεσθε, ἀλλ' ὃ γε κόσμος ἐκεῖθεν ἔχει καὶ οὐκ ἀπολεῖσθαι ὡς αὐτόν ἄπελευθέρωσται. Πολὺ γὰρ μᾶλλον τῶν ἁλών ή τῶν μερῶν ἡ πρόων καὶ ἡ μέθεξις κάκευσι τῆς ψυχῆς πολύ μᾶλλον δηλοὶ δὲ καὶ τὸ εἶναι καὶ τὸ ἐμφάνισθαι εἰναι. Τίς γὰρ οὗτος τεταγμένος ἡ ἐμφάσις τῶν ὑπερθοριωνίων ἁμόρφως, ὡς τὸ πάρ; Ἡ παραβασίλευσι καὶ γελοίων

καὶ πολλήν τὴν ἀποστίαν ἔχει, καὶ δ' ἂν Ἡ ἁλον ἡ πρόων ένεκα παραβασίλευσιν σὺν ἐξει αὐτῶν ἀνείαν γένοιτο. οὖν ἂν τὸ ζητεῖν περὶ τούτων ἐμφάνισθαι, ἀλλὰ τοιοῦτος παρὰ παραπάπαυσιν οὐκ ἐπιθύμησι, οὐδὲ τὸν ἐχοῖν οὐδὲ πόρον τοῦ νοοῦν κόσμοιν ἰδεῖν ὡντος, ἐκ τοῦ περὶ οὐδὲν βλέπει. Τίς γὰρ ἂν

μοιχοίς ἀνήρ εἰπ, ὅ τιν ἐν νοοτροπίᾳ ἀρμονίαν ἰδον ἣν κοινάζει τῆς ἐν φθόγγος αἰσθήσεως ἀκούων; Ἡ τῆς γεωμετρίας καὶ ἀνθρώπων ἐμπεσούς, δἐ τὸ συμμετρεῖ καὶ ἀναλογούν καὶ τεταγμένοι Χανέν ἐλ' ὕμματαν οὖχ ὑμηθήσεται. Εἴπερ οὖχ ὑμῶν τὰ αὐτὰ βλέπονται οὐδὲ ἐν ταῖς γραφαῖς οἱ δὲ ὑμῶν τὰ τῆς τεχνῆς βλέποντες, ἀλλ' ἐπιγινόσκοντες μέμμεν ἐν τῇ αἰσθήσει τῶν ἐν τοῖς κείμενοι οἷον θεοφράστου καὶ εἰς ἀναμμένοι ἔρχονται τοῖς

1 ὢς Kirchhoff E-S: τῶν codd.
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experience from which passionate loves arise. But if someone who sees beauty excellently represented in a face is carried to that higher world, will anyone be so sluggish in mind and so immovable that, when he sees all the beauties in the world of sense, all its good proportion and the mighty excellence of its order, and the splendour of form which is manifested in the stars, for all their remoteness, he will not thereupon think, seized with reverence, “What wonders, and from what a source?” If he did not, he would neither have understood this world nor seen that higher world.

17. And yet, even if it occurred to them to hate the nature of body because they have heard Plato often reproaching the body for the kind of hindrances it puts in the way of the soul—and he said that all bodily nature was inferior—they should have stripped off this bodily nature in their thought and seen what remained, an intelligible sphere embracing the form imposed upon the universe, souls in their order which without bodies give magnitude and advance to dimension according to the intelligible pattern, so that what has come into being may become equal, to the extent of its power, by its magnitude to the partlessness of its archetype: for greatness in the intelligible world is in power, here below in bulk. And, whether they wish to think of this sphere as moved, it seems impossible (as Henry and Schwizer now agree) to extract any tolerable sense from the MSS readings here. I read τὸ γεγομένον (Kirchhoff) for τὸ γεγομένον and τὸ τοῦ παραδείγματος for τὸ τοῦ παραδείγματος (this τὸ has no real MS authority, the τὸ of Δ being a manifest error, but is required by the sense).
PLOTINUS: ENNEAD II. 9.

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carried round by the power of God who holds the beginning and the middle and the end of the whole of its power, or standing still because it is not yet also directing something else, it would be well adapted to give an idea of the soul which directs this universe. And if they already put a body into it, they should think about the universe in this way, that soul would not be affected by body but would give to something else (since it is not lawful for there to be envy among the gods) 1 to possess whatever each and every thing can take; they should grant to the soul of the universe that amount of power with which it made the nature of body, not beautiful in itself, to share in beauty as far as it was possible for it to be beautified: it is this very beauty which moves souls, which are godlike. But perhaps they may say that they are not moved, and do not look any differently at ugly or beautiful bodies; but if this is so, they do not look any differently at ugly or beautiful ways of life, or beautiful subjects of study; 56 they have no contemplation, then, and hence no God. For the beauties here exist because of the first beauties. If, then, these here do not exist, neither do those; so these are beautiful in their order after those. But when they say they despise the beauty here, they would do well if they despised the beauty in boys and women, to avoid being overcome by it to the point of abandoned wickedness. But one should notice that they would not give themselves airs if they despised something ugly; they do so because they despise something which they begin by calling beautiful: and what sort of a way of managing is that? Then one should be aware that there is not the same beauty in part and


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Plotinus is probably thinking of Plato, Republic VI. 509a,b, where the word is used, though half-jokingly, of τὸ ἄριστον, rather than of Symposium 215b5, where it is used in a much less serious context of the beauty Alcibiades sees in Socrates.

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whole and in all individual things and the All: and then that there are such beauties in things perceived by the senses and in partial things (the beauties of spirits, for instance); that one admires their maker, and believes that they come from the higher world, and, judging from them, says that the beauty there is overwhelming; 1 one does not cling to them, but goes on from them to the beauties of the higher world, but without insulting these beauties here; and if their inward parts are beautiful, one acknowledges the harmony of inward and outward; but if their inward parts are bad, they are deficient in the better part. But perhaps it is not really possible for anything to be beautiful outwardly but ugly inwardly; for if the outside of anything is wholly beautiful, it is so by the domination of what is within. Those who are called beautiful and are ugly within have an outward beauty, too, which is not genuine. But: if anyone is going to say that he has seen people who are really beautiful but are ugly within, I think that he has not really seen them, but thinks that beautiful people are other than who they are. But if he has really seen them, then their ugliness was something superadded, not really belonging to people who were beautiful by nature; for there are many hindrances here below to arriving at perfection. But what was there to hinder the All, which is beautiful, from being also beautiful within? It might; perhaps, happen to beings to whom nature has not given perfection from the beginning not to arrive at their completion, so that it is possible for them even to become bad; but it never happened to the All to be incomplete like a child, nor does any
18. But perhaps they will assert that those arguments of theirs make men fly from the body since they hate it from a distance, but ours hold the soul down to it. 'This would be like two people living in the same fine house, one of whom reviles the structure and the builder, but stays there none the less, while the other does not revile, but says the builder has built it with the utmost skill, and waits for the time to come in which he will go away, when he will not need a house any longer: the first might think he was wiser and readier to depart because he knows how to say that the walls are built of soulless stones and timber and are far inferior to the true dwelling-place, not knowing that he is only distinguished by not bearing what he must—unless he affirms that he is discontented while having a secret affection for the beauty of the stones. While we have bodies we must stay in our houses, which have been built for us by a good sister soul which has great power to work without any toil or trouble. Or do the Gnostics think it right to call the lowest of men brothers, Dione 243. 2 and 270. 6 Terrazghi and Plato Theage (281 B 5) to show that προσφεύειν can have the same meaning as τοιεύω, "pretend." Henry and Schwyzer now agree that the text is sound, but point out that in the passages cited by Thiele προσφεύειν means "affirm" rather than "pretend."
but refuse, in their "raving talk," to call the sun and the gods in the sky brothers and the soul of the universe sister? It is not lawful to include the bad in the bonds of kindship but only those who have become good and are not bodies but souls in bodies, and able to live in them in such a way that they are very close to the dwelling of the soul of the All in the universal body. This means no clashing with, nor yielding to the pleasures or sights which hurl themselves upon us from outside, and not being disturbed by any hardship. The soul of the universe is not troubled; it has nothing that it can be troubled by. We, while we are here, can already repel the strokes of fortune by virtue, and make some of them become less by greatness of mind and others not even troubles because of our strength. As we draw near to the completely untroubled state we can imitate the soul of the universe and of the stars, and, coming to a closeness of resemblance to them hasten on to the same goal and have the same objects of contemplation, being ourselves, too, well prepared for them by nature and training (but they have their contemplation from the beginning). Even if the Gnostics say that they alone can contemplate, that does not make them any more contemplative, nor are they so because they claim to be able to go out of the universe when they die while the stars are not, since they adorn the sky for ever. They would say this through complete lack of understanding of what "being outside" really means, become intended to be complimentary. Plotinus, as often, care nothing for the context of the phrase he quotes—if, indeed, he knew it.

1 The phrase is taken from Hermes' description of the Sibyl's prophesying (Dels. 21892), which seems to have been intended to be complimentary. Plotinus, as often, cares nothing for the context of the phrase he quotes—if, indeed, he knew it.

2 Cp. Plato, Timaeus 43B7-C1.
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40 ψυχή παντός ἐπιμελεῖται ἡ δλη τοῦ αὐτής.
Εἴσησιν οὖν καὶ μή φιλοσοφαί καὶ καθαρούς γίνεσθαι καὶ τοῦ θανάτου καταφρονεῖν καὶ τὰ ἀσεμνα εἰδέναι καὶ καθάρειν ἀπὸ τῶν ἄλλων τῶν πάντων ἀσεμνών ἀπὸ τῶν ἀσεμνῶν ἀπὸ τούτων ἀπὸ τῶν ἀσεμνῶν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀσεμνῶν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀσεμνῶν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀσεμνῶν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀσεμνῶν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀσεμνῶν ἀπὸ τῶν ἀσεμνῶν.

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and of how “universal soul cares for all that is soulless.” So we can be without affection for the body and pure, and despise death, and know what is better and pursue it, and not show ill-feeling against others who can and do always pursue it, as if they did not; and not suffer from the same illusion as those who think the stars do not move because their senses tell them they stand still. In the same way the Gnostics, too, do not think that the nature of the stars sees what is outside the material universe, because they do not see that their souls come from outside.

1 Plato, Phaedrus 246B6.