XXI.—THE PHILOSOPHY OF PROCLUS.

By A. E. TAYLOR.

WE have seen in recent years a remarkable awakening of intelligent interest in the Neo-Platonist philosophy which our grandfathers and their fathers were content to deride without understanding. We have learned that the Neo-Platonists were neither magicians nor emotionalist *schöne Seelen*, but systematic philosophers addressing themselves to the philosopher's task of understanding the world in which he lives as seriously as Aristotle or Descartes or Kant. No one writing to-day on the history of Greek thought about God, man and nature would be likely to mistake so great a metaphysician as Plotinus for an apologist of polytheism or a New England *littérateur* born out of due season. Still the rehabilitation of the Neo-Platonists has hardly so far led to an adequate appreciation of Proclus, by far the most important member of the school after its great founder, though an honourable step has been taken in this direction by Mr. Whittaker.

This neglect of Proclus is unfortunate in more ways than one. For the historian of thought his significance is hardly second to that of Plotinus himself. It is in the main from him that Christianity received the Neo-Platonic impress still distinguishable in orthodox theology under all the disguise of a formal Aristotelianism. It is true, that before the date of Proclus, Christianity had been deeply influenced by Neo-Platonic ideas derived from Plotinus through such intermediaries as St. Augustine. But the main sources of the unmistakable Neo-Platonism of the great scholastic philosophers are two,—the writings of the so-called Dionysius, themselves the work of some Christianized follower of Proclus, and the work *de Causis*, supposed by St. Thomas and his contemporaries to be Aristotelian, though it is really a Latin rendering through the

Arabic of a part of the very treatise of Proclus to which I shall directly invite your attention.* It was from these sources that the schoolmen of the golden thirteenth century derived the peculiar theory of causality upon which their conception of the universe rests, and it is most instructive, as an illustration of the impossibility of drawing any real dividing line between ancient and modern thought, to find Descartes, in the very act of professing to construct a new way in philosophy, assuming as his fundamental principle and treating as evident "by the natural light" of the understanding just this same theory. Proclus, again, is the author of the only work that has come down to us in which the attempt is made to exhibit the main principles of the Neo-Platonic doctrine, in the strict order of their logical connexion as a well-articulated whole. In many ways a student of Neo-Platonism would be well-advised to begin his reading with the brief but pregnant *στοιχείωσις θεολογική* or *Elements of Neo-Platonism* of which I am to speak this evening. He will find there, brought together in a compact form and expressed with a special view to logical precision, just the leading positions he requires to understand in order to find his way in the multitude of occasional essays we call the *Enneads* of Plotinus. He will also find that the style of the author presents far fewer difficulties. Proclus has, indeed, none of the splendid bursts of spiritual eloquence which at times carry the reader of Plotinus off his feet. His is emphatically the *sermo pedestes*. Yet, by way of compensation, he makes no such demands on his reader as Plotinus in his uninspired moments. He neither defies the rules of grammar nor perplexes his sentences by Plotinus' trick of incessantly interweaving with his own words imperfectly quoted phrases from Plato. If you approach him with a decent working knowledge of Greek, you will find his style on the whole less difficult and less

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* I observe that even in Dr. Norman Smith's very recent *Commentary on Kant's Critique* the *De Causis* is referred to as a "mystical" work of Arabian origin.

encumbered with technicalities than Aristotle's, and not more arid than, say, that of John Stuart Mill in English. If he is dry to the taste of many readers, it is only for the same reason that Mill's *Logic* is dry to readers of the same class; the nature of his subject requires him to pursue a train of close argumentation to its logical issue, and affords no scope for the eloquence which appeals to the imagination.

The one real difficulty which besets the student of the *στοιχείωσις* is the wretched condition of the text. As regards this, in many ways his most important book, Proclus has been most unfortunate in his editors. To the schoolmen, as I have said, only part of the work was known in the Latin version of William of Morbeke. Since the invention of printing, so far as I am aware, only two texts have been published. The Greek was first printed in 1618 by Aemilius Portus at the end of his folio edition of the much longer but infinitely less valuable *Six Books on the Theology of Plato*. Of Portus it is hard to speak worse than he deserved. His Greek text was made from bad manuscripts and swarmed with errors equally fatal to grammar and to sense. The Latin version which accompanies it proves that he was quite incapable of translating even an uncorrupt and simple Greek original with any fidelity. The worst stumbling block is created, however, by his wholly senseless method of punctuation. On the whole, Portus seems to have a preference for placing a full stop or even beginning a new paragraph in the middle of a sentence. The first translation into English was made from this execrable text in 1816 by that curious eccentric, Thomas Taylor, "the Platonist," and, so far as I know, there has never been a second until the praiseworthy enterprise of Mr. Ionides.* Taylor deserves great respect for his real devotion to Platonic studies, but as a translator he was badly handicapped by the hopeless badness of his text, and in an only less degree by his own want of Greek.

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* Unfortunately, Mr. Ionides also appears to have mistaken the nonsense of Portus for the genuine text of Proclus.

His book is now very rare, and probably most of you may never have seen it.

In 1832 the *Elements* obtained a second editor, the notorious Friedrich Creuzer, better known as responsible for the wholly incompetent but typographically beautiful Plotinus of the Oxford University Press.* Creuzer was one of the mystagogues of Schelling's coterie, who professed to find the key to all philosophies in Orphic, Eleusinian and Samothracian *orgia* of which these authors knew nothing and no one else much. He also stood in relations with Hegel, whose adulatory letters to him suggest some unpleasant doubt of that philosopher's competence to act as an expositor of things Hellenic. The whole brood of quacks to which Creuzer belonged, as I may remind you, was finally blown into the air by the scathing exposure of Lobeck's immortal *Aglaophamus*. Creuzer, had he been less incompetent, might perhaps have produced a final text of the *Elements*, as he received from Schweighäuser the readings of a manuscript then at Strassburg which corrects most of the worst faults and fills up many of the lacunæ of the inferior MSS. on which Portus had relied. Unfortunately, Creuzer knew very little Greek, and thought he knew a good deal. Hence, though he inevitably made a great advance on Portus by adopting many of the readings furnished by Schweighäuser, he rejected to his notes scores of others which should have been adopted. A conscientious editor would, of course, have made or caused to be made a complete collation of Schweighäuser's MS., but it is not clear from Creuzer's prefatory account of his own proceedings whether he did more than record such readings as he thought fit. What is worse, he retained the sense-destroying paragraphing and punctuation of his predecessor; and, though he professed to have revised the Latin version of the Greek, very little examination shows that, while removing some bad

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* Creuzer's text forms the third volume of a work, of which the first and second volumes contain the commentaries of Olympiodorus and Proclus on the *First Alcibiades*.

errors, he introduced a goodly number on his own account, so that his rendering is often a mere trap for the confiding and unwary. The text has not been edited since Creuzer, and I do not know where the Strassburg MS.—if it has survived, which is perhaps unlikely—may be now. At the present moment, any reader who is to understand his author requires to construct a working text for himself by the aid of such light as Creuzer's records of the readings of the Strassburg MS. afford. Fortunately, the *usus et norma loquendi* of the author enable this to be done with a reasonable approach to certainty in all matters of moment.

I propose in the following pages to give some general account of the method and contents of Proclus' work, leaving the task of criticism to others. It should, of course, be remembered that the doctrine expounded is not, except on one or two points, peculiar to the author. His object is to give a compendious summary of the principles of the whole Neo-Platonic school; and, in the main, the doctrines expounded are those which were held in common by all the thinkers who looked back to Plotinus as the restorer of what they took to be the philosophy of Plato. There are perhaps only two points on which Proclus diverges from Plotinus, both duly recorded by Mr. Whittaker. Like most of the later members of the school, Proclus rejects the possibility, admitted by Plotinus, that the soul may lead a double life, lapsing, as the phrase was, from eternity into time and mutability only in her least worthy elements, while her higher and nobler activities remain in the purely spiritual world "unfallen." Proclus, like nearly all the Neo-Platonists from the time of Iamblichus, maintains in the last proposition of his book that the soul, when she "falls," falls wholly and in every part. This modification of the doctrine of Plotinus, as Mr. Whittaker has said, seems to have been due, at any rate in part, to reaction against what was felt as an over-strained idealism. Even to his devotees Plotinus seemed to be preaching an other-worldliness which

was not quite wholesome. It is the same feeling which comes out in the commentary on the *Republic*, where Proclus makes a vigorous defence of the Homeric stories and the tragic drama against the censures of Plato's Socrates. But there was also a sound logical reason for the revision of the older view ; the theory of Plotinus was felt to be inconsistent with the unity of human personality. It involved something like what our Anglo-Hegelians call a "faculty psychology," and it is on this ground that Proclus rejects it in the *Elements*. You cannot reconcile the unity of our mental life with the distinction between a "fallen" and an "unfallen" part in the soul. More important, and much more difficult to interpret, is a doctrine which appears in the very middle of the book, and affects the whole subsequent exposition, the doctrine of the divine Henads or Unities which Proclus identifies with the "gods many" of Hellenic religion. On the probable meaning of this doctrine—which appears to be peculiar to Proclus—and the reasons for insisting upon it, I hope to offer a suggestion in the right place. For the moment, I must be content to introduce my digest of Proclus' metaphysics by some general remarks on the method and arrangement of his manual.

Perhaps, I need hardly say that Proclus will wholly disappoint a reader who comes to him eager to hear about ecstasies and other abnormal psychological wonders. These things belong to the personal religious life, not to philosophy. Even in Plotinus, for all his personal saintliness, the passages where the mystical "rapt" is dwelt on are few and far between, and there is no suggestion that it is attended with any of the abnormal psychological excitements on which the adepts and theurgists lay stress ; and, in a logical exposition of the metaphysical doctrine of the school, there is no occasion to mention ecstasy at all. In *philosophy*, as Mr. Whittaker has rightly said, the Neo-Platonists are from first to last rationalists. Like Descartes, they believe themselves to have found a strictly logical and coherent theory of God, Man, and Nature, and they

are as ready as any other philosophers who have ever lived to expound their reasons for their convictions. The manner and method of Proclus are, in fact, much those of the great rationalists of the seventeenth century from Descartes to Leibniz and Locke. In method, in particular, he recalls at once two famous names in modern philosophy, Spinoza and Hegel. Of Spinoza, he reminds us by the care with which his method is based on that of Euclid and the geometers, of Hegel by his insistence upon the grouping of notions in triads. These resemblances, however, must not blind us to equally important differences. As far as regards the use of the "geometric method" goes, its employment is, of course, not peculiar to Spinoza; nor is there really anything peculiarly geometrical about it. It is merely the method known to the ancient mathematicians as synthesis, the systematic exhibition of a body of truths in the order of increasing logical complexity, the simplest being placed first, and the more complex exhibited as a series of successive deductions from them. It is, thus, the natural method of any thinker who has to expound a system of true propositions, and is concerned not with the historical problem of showing how they were originally discovered, but with the purely logical problem of indicating the implications which hold between them. It used at one time to be thought that there was some special connection between the matter of Spinoza's *Ethics*, and the method adopted for exhibiting it. This is, of course, a mere misapprehension. Any body of demonstrable propositions can be thrown into the form of the "geometrical method." Spinoza had been preceded in its use by Descartes, who gave, in the *Answers* to the objections against his *Meditations*, a formal geometrical proof of the real distinction between body and mind, and Spinoza's own first use of the method was to employ it in an exposition of Cartesian doctrine with which, as he candidly avowed, he did not himself wholly agree.* Proclus uses it, of course, precisely because it is

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* This has absurdly been made a ground of reproach against Spinoza's moral character. What it really proves is simply that Spinoza correctly

the method now called the "hypothetical-deductive," originated by Zeno and explained at length by Socrates in the *Phaedo* of Plato. It consists simply in putting forward a theory or "hypothesis," or set of postulates, as the explanation of a group of "appearances."

The consequences of the "hypothesis" are deduced at length, for the purpose of seeing whether they accord with the "appearances." If they do, the appearances are said to be "saved"; if they do not, some other hypothesis must be discovered which will save them. In the case of Proclus, the appearances to be "saved" are just the whole body of all that we know, or think we know, about the things in the universe, and the justification of his philosophical postulates is that these known truths about minds, souls, and bodies are "saved" in their entirety by the postulates of Neo-Platonism. (There is, of course, no question of dismissing the "appearances" as illusions or transmuting and transforming them into something other than what they are. We are throughout kept faithful to the principle enunciated by Butler in what is perhaps the most weighty single sentence ever uttered by any philosopher: "Everything is what it is and not another thing.") Proclus believes that his postulates do in fact "save" all the appearances and are therefore true, but there is no miraculous virtue about the mere use of the method. If you start with false premisses, it will not prevent you from drawing conclusions which are also false. Spinoza, too, understood this quite well, as is shown by his use of the method in an exposition of Descartes where it brings out results which are false in Spinoza's opinion precisely because it has relied on false premisses. As a point of history, it was of course the geometers of the Alexandrian age who took over the synthetic method with much else from the philosophy of Plato, not the philosophers who borrowed it from the mathematicians.

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regarded the method as strictly "dialectical," and as no guarantee for the truth of its initial postulates.

As to the parallel with Hegel, again, it is instructive to observe precisely how far it holds. Proclus, like Hegel, believes that the triadic arrangement reproduces in thought the order of the links by which the richest of realities, the *ens realissimum*, is connected with the poorest and meanest. Only, in spite of appearances, he really begins at the end of the ladder where Hegel left off. Hegel, you will remember, opens his *Logic* with the notion of *Being*, on the ground that it is the most empty, abstract, and insignificant of all concepts, and works up gradually through increasingly fully determined concepts to the Absolute Spirit, the most significant of all. Proclus, on the other hand, begins with an even simpler concept than Being, Unity, or the One—precisely because he believes it to be, like God in the philosophy of the Christian schools, the richest and fullest of all concepts, and works downwards from it through the successive series of minds, souls, and bodies to what he regards as the poorest. Again, the method by which successive triads are found is widely different from Hegel's,—to my own thinking, not for the worse. Hegel's method, as we know, was first to take a concept, next to discover a contradictory opposite for it, and then to look for a third which could be plausibly represented as contradicting the contradiction. The procedure of Proclus is less heroic, but more readily intelligible. He usually arrives at a triad by first calling attention to two members A and B, which are doubly disjunct. A, that is, has the characters x and y , B those of not- x and not- y . He then argues that if A and B are both found as terms of a serial order of connected concepts, they cannot be in immediate juxtaposition. There must be an intermediary which resembles A, let us say, in having the character y and B in having the character not- x . The full reason for insisting on this necessity of an intermediate link between two doubly disjunct terms will only appear as we come to speak of the logically most important thing in the system, the Neo-Platonic doctrine of causality. The importance of this theory can hardly be exaggerated,

though it is one of the pleasant ironies of history that Proclus' exposition of it should have provided the Christian religion, which he so heartily disliked, with just the instrument it needed for the elaboration of its doctrine of God, and should a second time have given Descartes the basis of the argument for the existence of God without which he could not take the first step beyond the mere affirmation of his own existence.

It has been truly said by Mr. Whittaker that the general theory of the world which Proclus elicits from his initial postulates forms something like a *via media* between Leibniz and Spinoza. We have a monism with an Absolute as the logical and causal *prins* of everything but itself, yet just because Proclus goes farther back than Spinoza in his quest for a simple first principle, the Absolute is a theistic Absolute, a transcendent Deity who is the source alike of existents, their characters and the relations between them.

We meet with *causa sui* and *substantia* (if we may take the latter as a rendering of the Greek *οὐσία*), but they are not the Absolute; their place is a secondary one. There are also monads of various orders, but, since the Neo-Platonist theory of causality makes all causality transitive—even in the case of the *causa sui*—the monads are not “windowless,” and we escape all the paradoxes connected with the Pre-Established Harmony and its ambiguous relation to God's “choice of the best.” For the same reasons, we are left free to accept at their full value all the familiar facts which tell so powerfully in favour of an interactionist theory of the relation of mind and body. Moreover, the very insistence on the transcendent character of the Deity and the transitivity of causality make it possible, against Spinoza, to assert the permanent reality of individual souls; and, against Leibniz, the genuine reality of brute inanimate matter. The Neo-Platonist philosophy, thus, aims at uniting coherently the strongest points in what are commonly thought the incompatible doctrines of monism and monadism. As the choice

seems to lie between monism and monadism for all of us who can find no refuge either in Kantian agnosticism or in some pure materialism, the type of view represented by the epitome of Proclus may perhaps fairly claim to have more than a merely antiquarian interest.

I shall probably succeed best in the attempt to give an account of the Neo-Platonist metaphysics at once concise and reasonably intelligible to students of philosophy who have no previous acquaintance with Neo-Platonist literature by allowing myself to sit rather loose to the actual terminology and order of the propositions of Proclus, and to deal only with the central concepts of the system. It will be found that the notions of chief importance in the development of the system are those of the transcendent character of the One, the ultimate source of the universe, and its identity with the Good which, as Plato had taught, is at once the motive power throughout the life-history of the universe and the goal or aim of all processes, the causal relation which connects the One with the various stages of its evolution, and every stage with every other, the principal stages of this evolution, or, as the Neo-Platonists call it, "progression," and the process of "reversion" or "reflection" which is always found associated with progression and serves to make the whole formed by the One and its manifestations into a complete and harmonious whole. If we take our main topics in this order, the One, Causality, Progression, Reversion, we shall not indeed be following the order of Proclus quite exactly, but we shall not depart very far from the main structural outlines of his work.

He begins then, as was natural to a Platonist who had the *Philebus* well-nigh by heart and had commented at enormous length on the *Parmenides*, with the earliest and most stubbornly persistent of all philosophical antitheses, that of the One and the Many, which had, in fact, dominated all Greek thought from the time that it was first insisted upon by Parmenides and Zeno. The two conceptions of unity and plurality are

not, strictly speaking, co-ordinate. Logically, and, therefore, ontologically also, the One is antecedent to the Many because it is involved in the very conception of a Many or Aggregate or Assemblage (*πλῆθος*) that it is, to use the old Pythagorean and Euclidean definition *πλῆθος μονάδων*, an assemblage of units.* It is the same thought which leads Leibniz to begin his *Monadology* with the proposition that the complex presupposes the simple. A modern mathematical logician would hardly be satisfied with the form of Proclus's proof, which, as is common with him, is a *reductio ad absurdum* based on the alleged impossibility of an infinite regress. The real point is, however, independent of this assumption, and amounts to the contention that a well-ordered series must at least have a first term, though it need have no other; or, again, that all complexes, even if their degree of complexity be infinite, must, as Leibniz said, be complexes of individuals; or, to take other illustrations of the same principle, if logical classes are to "exist," there must be at least one thing which is not a class but an individual, if "classes of classes" are to "exist" there must be at least one class which is a class not of classes but of individuals; if propositions of what Mr. Russell calls the "first order" are to be possible, there must be at least one thing which is not a proposition but an individual about which a proposition can be made, if there are to be propositions of the second order, there must be at least one proposition of the first order, and so on *in indefinitum*.

The propositions which follow furnish the basis for a philosophy of transcendence as opposed to all "immanence doctrines" of the *ἐν καὶ πᾶν* type. Whatever "partakes of the one," *i.e.*, whatever can have oneness predicated about it, is in a sense "one thing," but in a sense also not-one or many. As our Anglo-Hegelians say, it is one in virtue of being a *whole* of parts,

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* This is the standing definition of *ἀριθμός* in Greek philosophy, and Aristotle's sharpest criticisms of Plato are based on the very fact that Plato included among "numbers" quadratic and cubic surds, which are not "assemblages of units."

not-one or many in virtue of being a whole of *parts*. It is a unity but it is not Unity. The oneness we ascribe to such wholes must be something other than any of them. This is why Plato and the Platonists say that they *are* not "one" but "partake of" the One. What follows prepares the way for the enunciation of the theory of causality. Whatever produces anything other than itself (*i.e.*, is the source of its existence) is superior in kind to that which is produced. This is the principle implied in the characteristic Platonic conception of evolution as "progression" or "emanation" (a word, by the way, which is not with Plotinus and Proclus a technicality but an illustrative metaphor). It is also the principle denied by every philosophy which treats *epigenesis* as the final word in evolutionary theory. The proof of this proposition is interesting, and depends on the implied assumption that causality is a transitive relation and that its terms are substantival entities, not events. Either the entity produced by a causal agent is itself capable of producing something further, or it is not. If it is not, this very fact establishes its inferiority to its own cause. If it is, its effects are either superior to, equal to, or inferior to itself. The second possibility may be excluded as it leads to the conclusion that there is no hierarchy of better and worse, no difference in levels of value, among things, and this is assumed to be plainly at variance with the "appearances." The third possibility is that evolution is a steady process of epigenesis by which the inferior gives rise to the superior. But this, too, is unthinkable. For if an agent could bestow certain perfections on that on which he acts, he could equally have produced at least as much perfection in himself, since, *ex hypothesi*, he had sufficient power, and his failure cannot be due to lack of will, since by a universal law all things tend to attain the Good as far as their powers reach. (This, it will be recollected, is the reason given by Descartes for holding that he is not himself the perfect being.) Universally, then, the cause from which anything derives at once its being and its specific character is higher in the scale of goodness than its effects.

Further, from the Platonic principle that all beings seek for the Good, and their whole life is determined by the pursuit of it along the lines possible to them in virtue of their various specific constitutions, it follows that the Supreme Good, the first term in an ordered hierarchy of goods, cannot itself be one of these beings or the totality of them. Just because it is what all beings strive to obtain, it must be beyond them all. It must be, as Plato had put it in the famous passage of the *Republic*, ἐπέκεινα τῶν ὄντων, "on the other side of Being." It cannot be a "good something" but must be just "the Good," that whose whole character is goodness and nothing else. Good is not a predicate of it; Good *is* it. It needs only the further step of identification of the Good, thus conceived, with the One, that is the identification of the Universal End with the Universal Source, to convert the logic of Proclus into a theistic theology agreeing with that of the Christian Church, in looking on God as a transcendent being distinct from the universe or whole of creatures and internally simple, not like an Herbartian "real" or the "bare monad" from the poverty of His nature, but just because all the perfections which are found in diffusion among His creatures are wholly concentrated and interpenetrant in their source. This is, in fact, what the schoolmen mean when they tell us that *Deus est suum esse*, and again that each "attribute" of God is God Himself. We are specially warned against confusing the Good with the "self-sufficing." A self-sufficing being can, indeed, meet all its needs out of the plenitude of its internal resources; it can live, so to say, by the consumption of its own fat. But the very statement implies that such a being *has* needs, though it can always meet them. The Good, being "good" *simpliciter*, has no needs to meet. We must not mistake it for a magnified Stoic Cato. We may not even say of it that it is "filled with good." It is Good, and therefore must be called, as Proclus more than once calls it, "more than full," ὑπερπλήρες. The epithet seems meant to indicate the Neo-Platonist answer to the obvious

question why there should be a universe at all. Why should the Good not be alone to all eternity in a state of single and perfect blessedness? How comes there to be a world of creatures who aspire to it? The Neo-Platonist explanation is that which Plato had long before put into the mouth of Timaeus. Goodness is, of its very nature, a self-imparting or self-communicating activity. It cannot keep itself to itself, but *must* overflow, much as Christians have said the same thing of love. Unlike Christian theologians, Plotinus and Proclus do not represent the creative activity in which Goodness finds its outlet as one of "free choice." To them this would have implied that Goodness might conceivably not have imparted itself to anything; and, therefore, might not have been wholly good. Finally, they agree with Spinoza that God acts *ex legibus suae naturae*, though, unlike him, they are stout assertors of Providence and final or intentional causality, and are careful to treat Free Will (τὸ αὐτεξούσιον) as a reality. The difference between them and Spinoza is really much greater than their divergence from the thought of Christian scholastics. Indeed, this latter divergence is much reduced when we recollect that, according to the schools, neither free choice nor anything else can be *univocally* asserted of God and of any creature. The difference from Spinoza goes deeper. For Proclus would understand by the "laws of God's nature," the law of *Goodness*, whereas in Spinoza it is no part of the nature of *Deus-substantia* to be good, and even the distinction between good and bad in human character and conduct comes perilously near being dismissed as an illusion in the famous appendix to the first book of the *Ethics*.

The formal identification of the One with the Good—derived, of course, from Plato himself—which turns Proclus' "First Cause" into God is effected by the help of the famous definition of Eudoxus, "the good is that at which all things aim." Such a good or end of appetition is manifestly a principle of unification and co-operation. Health, for instance,

is the body's good,* and health is just the harmonious "temperature" of all the constituents and members of the body. *Salus populi* is the good of a society of men, and it is realised in virtue of the *conatus* or *nisis*, conscious or otherwise, of each member of the body politic after it. Wherever you find good you find it as the common object of appetite to the members of a *πλήθος*, and it is this *nisis* after one and the same end which makes the *πλήθος* a unity-in-multitude.† So, if the creatures really form a universe—and it is the presumption involved alike in thought and action that they do—it is because all of them are striving up to "the measure of the light vouchsafed" towards a common principle or Good which is beyond and above them all. It sounds a paradox, but it is thus the fact, that the One is the unifying principle in the universe just because it is itself not "in" the universe but "beyond" it. The general line of thought is thus very similar to that which is followed by Professor Varisco in the last chapter of his *Massimi Problemi*, where he sets himself to argue that the question whether the universe as a whole, has value (is good) or not depends upon the prior question whether, as he phrases it, "Being has other determinations than the concretes, in which case the traditional conception of Being is transformed into the Christian conception of God." Proclus answers this question affirmatively; it is a matter of terminology that what Professor Varisco speaks of as "determinations of Being other than the concretes," are called by Proclus *ὑπερούσια*, the things "above" Being.

At this point, it will be convenient for a moment to desert the actual order of our author's exposition, which is designed with a view to preparing for the distinctions to be drawn between minds, souls, and bodies, and anticipate a little by explaining the doctrine of causality upon which his further

* Or, more exactly, health is the good aimed at by medicine, *ιατρική*.

† Hobbes's "Leviathan" is just a mythological personification of such a principle of unity.

account of the universe depends. Causality, as I said before, is always, to the Neo-Platonists, a transitive relation. It implies two related terms, the producer (*τὸ παράγων*) and the produced (*τὸ παραγόμενον*), and these are never events.

The cause or producer is always an agent or the activity of an agent; the effect produced may be the existence of an individual or a quality of an individual, or both. As the relation is not one between events, it is not necessary that it should involve temporal sequence, and the Neo-Platonists were thus free to maintain with Aristotle that the historical succession of events has no beginning. That the Good is the Great First Cause, means with them simply that everything depends, both for its existence and its special character, on the Good; but for the Good there would be nothing. It does not mean that there was a time when the Good was not "overflowing," and there was no world of creatures. Further, the way in which the agent or cause works is by imparting its *own* characteristics to that of which it is the cause. This is, of course, because *operari sequitur esse*, and it is in virtue of being what it is, that a cause causes just such effects as it does and no others. The effect is thus "like" its cause, or an "image" of it, but since, as we have already seen, it is a cardinal point in the system that what is produced is always an inferior and imperfect image of what produces it, the causal relation is asymmetrical, and Proclus thus agrees with Mr. Russell on the fundamental importance of asymmetrical relations. As Proclus and Plotinus are fond of putting it, the cause is imperfectly "mirrored" in its effects. It irradiates them, but they are at best broken lights of it. The Neo-Platonists would have been only in imperfect sympathy with the numerous modern philosophers who have maintained that the relation of cause and effect is really identical with the logical relation of antecedent and consequent. They would have agreed that the cause is always the "reason why," since, in their view, the causal relation is always a case of "participation"; the effect is

what it is because the cause is what *it* is. But they would never have admitted either that temporal sequence is an illusion or that to complete insight it would be possible to reason from effect to cause with the same certainty as to effect from cause, precisely because they hold that the effect is not the cause but only “participates” in it, and, therefore, only mirrors it partially. On their view there is always more in the cause than is ever reflected in the effect. It is notable that Proclus is careful to warn us that the transitivity of the relation is not done away with, even in the case of things which may be said to be “self-caused” (*αὐθοπόστατα*), because they contain in themselves the source of their own motions. As we know from Plato, this is the case with all souls, and it is the defining *proprium* of a soul, in contradistinction from all other existents, that it has “its principle of movement within itself,” or is “that which can move *itself*.” Even here, the Neo-Platonists, following the lead of Aristotle, say that though the terms of the causal relation are identical, it is still a dyadic relation and transitive. For this reason *causa sui* cannot, as with Spinoza, be identified with the “great first cause.” The One, because its Oneness *is* itself, is not *causa sui*. It is simply uncaused.

Strictly speaking, the phrases self-moving or self-caused (*αὐτοκίνητος*) must not even be used of Intelligence or Mind, for Intelligence or Mind is (as Aristotle had held) something which remains itself unmoved or unchanged, but gives rise to an internally initiated change in the soul. Hence, by putting the *causa sui* at the head of his hierarchy, Spinoza is, from the point of view of Proclus, opening his account of things in the middle. He can only take into his reckoning souls and the bodies which are moved by those souls. He has left out of consideration all that is really of highest moment in the universal order.

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* The change is, in fact, *ὄρεξις*, appetitive, and *ὀρεγόμεθα διότι δοκεῖ*.

A last point of fundamental importance in this doctrine of causality is that, as Proclus is careful to state, the higher up in the hierarchy a cause is the lower down the scale are its effects felt. The reason is that what comes nearer to the Absolute One in the scale is, being a truer reflection of the One, a unifying principle of higher order than what is more remote. Hence, the unifying power of the One or Good extends to the whole Universe. Everything in the Universe, down to the mere unformed matter which is the ideal lower limit of dispersion and lack of organisation, derives its being from the One or Good. As Socrates said, everything is, and is what it is, because it is best that it should be so. The activity of Mind does not reach so far down, precisely because Mind is not itself the supreme or divine principle, but merely its most immediate reflection. We can, indeed, satisfy ourselves of this by the simple consideration that Mind does not make matter. It is true that order and structure are everywhere put into matter, even into inanimate matter, by Mind. For Divine Providence extends to the inorganic as well as to the organic world, and again human intelligence, which within its own limits mirrors Providence, shows itself constantly at work shaping inorganic matter by the introduction of form. But matter is not existentially dependent on mind; it is something which from the point of view of Mind is *vorgefunden* as an instrument of expression, not created by Mind itself. There is no ultimate dualism in the system, since minds and all the things which are existents are alike existentially dependent on the transcendent One or Good: but if you forget the One, and start with Mind as your *ens realissimum*, you will be led to such a dualism, just because Mind is found everywhere correlated with an object, not Mind, to which it is related alike as knower and as organising principle. It is just by not accepting idealism in the modern sense, by not equating the *ens realissimum* with Mind, that the Neo-Platonists avoid dualism. Again, the soul is a less adequate mirroring of the

One than its Mind or Intelligence. In fact, the soul directly mirrors Mind or Intelligence, and reflects the One only at second-hand. And, again, we see that the causal activity of the soul ceases to show itself before that of Mind. The activity of the soul consists, in fact, precisely in communicating to another its own *proprium*, life. It is just the principle of life, and what it does to things is to bestow life on them, to endow them with the special kind of unity and organisation characteristic of organisms. Now, not all bodies are capable of receiving this kind of unity and structure, but only some. There is organic matter, but there is also inorganic matter, and on dead or "inorganic" matter the soul can exercise no influence. It can mould to its own ends the protoplasm of which our bodies are formed; it cannot dwell in or "inform" stocks and stones. But Mind, as we have seen, can give form to inorganic matter. A cabinet-maker or a statuary can not merely beget sons and daughters, but he can also, because he is not only an animal but an intelligent one, fashion cabinets or statues out of boards and stones. So universally, the higher the rank of a causal agent the more far-reaching are its effects, and, in particular, we may say of the Good which stands outside the whole series of existents and is above "being" that there is a sense in which *its* effects extend beyond the realm of existents and affect what is "below" being. For, as we have seen, inorganic bodies fill the lowest place in the system of existents. The "bare matter" which we are constrained to think of as that which is common to them all is never found actually existing. It is like the limit of an infinite absolutely convergent series, to which each successive term makes a closer approximation, though it never appears itself as a term of the series, or, to be more precise, it is like the limit of an infinite series whose terms, though all positive, tend to zero.

Thus, as Aristotle had held, such mere matter may be called $\mu\eta\ \delta\upsilon\nu$ "the non-existent," and can only be conceived by way of

negation. Just as God is implicitly thought of by Neo-Platonists and Christian schoolmen as a simple being, who is at the same time the subject of all positive predicates, "bare matter" is a simple being which is the subject of no positive predicates. Yet the One stands in causal relation even with this mere negation. It is because of the presence of the One that what exists is not this bare potentiality of being something, in other words, that there really is something and not nothing. The idealist of the modern type is naturally tempted to call this shadowy universal "substrate" or "first matter," which is nothing in particular, a "creation" or "fiction" of our minds, but the Aristotelian and Neo-Platonic thought seems to me the truer. Of course, we only arrive at the notion by a process of comparison and abstraction, but comparison, if we consider it rightly, only discovers, it never creates. That there is something common to the most elementary existents, which is never found itself actually existing, is a discovery. If the "something common" were not really there, no process of comparison would ever conduct us to it; comparison would be, as the Anglo-Hegelians say abstraction is, always falsification.

It is a corollary of this conception of causality that a predicate may be said to be contained in its subject in any one of three ways. Since a cause is mirrored in its effect, *i.e.*, its activity consists in imparting its own character, so far as that is possible, to the effect, whatever is characteristic of the effect may already be said to be contained in the cause. It is not there exactly as it is in the effect, since the effect is an imperfect image of the cause. In the cause the character of the effect is present "in a more perfect manner," in intimate conjunction with other characters which do not appear in that particular effect, but only in other effects of the same cause. To borrow Leibniz's metaphor, the effects of a cause are perspectives, each reproducing the cause from one special point of view. In the effect itself the character in question is said to exist *καθ' ἑαυτὴν*—*i.e.*, it is strictly only of the effect that we can *predi-*

cate the character in question. (The expression καθ' ὑπαρξιν is obviously coined by analogy with the use of the verb ὑπάρχειν in Aristotelian logic, where $A \text{ ὑπάρχει τῷ } B$ is the standing way of saying B is an A , or A is predicable of B .) In the effects of the effect, the same character again will be found imperfectly mirrored or represented, or, as Proclus says, "by participation." In scholastic Latin these distinctions are carefully kept up. The characters of an effect are said to be "formally" in itself, but "eminently" in its cause; Descartes' familiar assertion that what is thus "formally" in the object of an idea is "objectively" in the idea itself is a simple special case of the presence of a character "by participation" in the effects of the cause which has the character "formally," since the idea is held by Descartes to be caused by its object. The special Cartesian proof of the existence of God from my possession of the idea of God thus is proved by its very terminology to be a simple reproduction of Neo-Platonism as put into technical form by Proclus. Presumably all this Neo-Platonism reached Descartes through the medium of Thomistic philosophy in his early days at Rennes, and this is why he supposed what he had been taught as a schoolboy to be so evident by the natural light of the understanding.

We can now formulate very briefly the general Neo-Platonic conception of the world of existents and its relation to its single, internally simple, transcendent cause, or source, the Good. It is of the nature of the Good to overflow its own banks, to bestow itself on something else, and this is the real answer to the questions, why there are existents at all, and why they form an ordered and connected universe. The overflow is by way of representation; the Good gives rise to a system of existents which imperfectly mirror or image its own goodness, and they in turn to "appearances" which imperfectly mirror them. It is to be noted that the imperfection of the mirroring, as Proclus tells us, is due to the inevitable defects of the mirror. If the actual world is not perfect, this is not due to

any withholding of perfection from it by the Good. The Good is present to all things in its super-plenitude, but they cannot receive all that it has to give. They receive "according to their own constitution." It is with perfection as the Scottish divine admired by Johnson and Boswell said that it is with happiness: the quart pot and the pint pot are both full, but they do not contain the same measure; each is as full as *it* can hold. This is, of course, an inevitable inference from the general conception of causation as a process of imaging, or, what is the same thing, the principle that there is always greater excellence in the cause than its effect. (Fully thought out, of course, the principle would have led Christian theologians who accepted Neo-Platonism as their philosophic basis to an Arian doctrine of the Trinity. The Son, being the "image of the Father," would have been "inferior to the Father" not only "as touching His manhood" but also "as touching His godhead.") The doctrine of Plotinus had been that the immediate "image" of the Good is Mind ($\nu\omicron\upsilon\varsigma$), and the immediate image of Mind is Soul ($\psi\upsilon\chi\eta$), and that Mind is thus the highest member of the chain of actual existents. *I.e.*, Mind is the highest kind of individuality which we find as an actual existent. Mere Soul, as we know it, *e.g.*, in ourselves when we are at the mercy of irrational passion or impulse, or again in the immature who have not yet "found themselves," or still more as we discern it in the lower animals, is still less of a real complete and stable unity. The triad thus formed by the One, Mind and Soul is the only example of a triad in the *Enneads*. One must note carefully also that Mind and the objects of its thought (the world as apprehended by science) together make up the whole of what can be properly called ($\delta\upsilon\tau\alpha$) real existents, and that Mind and its objects are inseparable. "The objects of Mind ($\tau\grave{\alpha} \nu\omicron\eta\tau\acute{\alpha}$) do not subsist outside Mind" was the doctrine thought by Porphyry to be peculiarly characteristic of Plotinus, and it was precisely his stubborn doubts about this tenet which

delayed his entrance into the school of Plotinus until he had written a criticism which was in turn refuted to his own satisfaction by an earlier disciple. By this doctrine it is not meant that the objects known by Mind are themselves mental in the sense that they are made of "mental states" or "processes." What is meant is that the distinction between the epistemological subject and the epistemological object is not regarded as characteristic of the interior life—if we may call it so—of the Absolute One. It emerges first in the first image of that life, which is the life of Mind. The life of Mind is always a knower's attitude towards a known; the concept and the thinker of the concept are inseparable, not—to borrow a distinction familiar to readers of Professor Ward—in a psychological, but in an epistemological sense. Actual existence then consists of Mind and what Mind knows. When we come to the life of the mere soul, not as yet rationalized, we are at a lower level. It is, compared with the waking vision of science, a sort of confused dream. Like the dreamer, the soul, as mere soul, is itself perplexed and confused, and there is the same confusion in the object of its cognition and striving. It is a thing itself not realised moving about in a world unrealised. It belongs and its world belongs to "becoming"—the region where everything is perpetually baffling us by proving not to be what it seemed to be—not to "being."

Proclus refines somewhat on the original statement of the doctrine. Within the primary triad itself we have to distinguish a subordinate triad. On inspection, Being, which Plotinus had treated as equivalent to Mind, breaks up into the triad of Being, Life and Mind. For many things are, which are lifeless; and, again, many living things are not minds. But of this, as of the other triadic constructions which figure in rather confusing multitude in the elaborate *Six Books on the Theology of Plato*, it is not necessary to say much in a mere brief sketch like the present. Roughly, the successive more

and more imperfect reflections or images of the Good may be said to be, in order of increasing imperfection, Mind, and Soul (the former being eternal both in its nature and its activity, the latter eternal in nature but temporal in its activity, and both together making up "what is"), and finally Body—temporal at once in nature and in its activities, which is what "seems," though we must remember that what "seems" really does "seem." Body as such has its place in the system; it has not to be "transmuted" or "absorbed" into something else, as a condition of recognition.

Further, we must add that, as Proclus conceives the world, each member of this series gives rise to something other than itself in two different ways or along two different lines. The source of this conception is manifest. There are many individual minds, souls and bodies in the universe, and it does not occur to the Neo-Platonists to explain away this plurality of individuals of different types as an illusion. It is a fact which must take its place as a fact in an adequate philosophy. Hence, Proclus conceives of Mind and Soul, not merely as units each of which can be "imaged" by a unit of a lower type, Mind by Soul and Soul by Body, but as first terms of series. His doctrine is that in each such series the first member generates a series of beings of the same type as itself, though each, according to its distance in serial order from the first term, is a less adequate representative of the type. There are thus, at the level of Mind, a whole series of more or less exalted minds, and similarly, at the lower levels, a whole series of souls and a whole series of bodies of greater or less worth and dignity. The first member of each such series is called *ἀμέθεκτος*, imparticipable, that is unpredicable, because it is in the strictest sense only capable of appearing in a proposition as subject and can never be predicate. (Even Descartes at the stage of reflection reached by examination of the *cogito* can only say I am a mind, not I am Mind.) The rest of the series are the "participated" minds or "souls." Thus, in the case of minds, the first member of the

series is Mind with the capital M, the other are *the* minds of the various beings who are said each to "have" a mind.

This theory is obviously applicable to the Good or One, no less than to Mind or Soul. If Mind gives rise not only to Soul, but to a plurality of minds, the Supreme One or Absolute Good must be thought of likewise as giving rise to a series of Ones, which Proclus calls the "divine" Henads, or Unities, and also simply "the Gods." As the Good is God, so in his system the Henads are "Gods" in the plural, related to God as the minds of you and me are related to the entity we call Mind. This doctrine is, as I have said, the peculiar property of Proclus and its interpretation has caused some trouble. It has sometimes been spoken of a mere device for saving the face of dying Hellenic polytheism. This, however, is not to my thinking its real *raison d'être*, though Proclus has filled many weary pages of his *Theology of Plato* and commentary on the *Parmenides* with ingenious attempts to identify and classify the Henads and to show that with some forcing they may be read into the traditional theology. I think the origin of the theory more likely to be what I have indicated already. Some explanation had to be found for the existence of individual minds and souls, some reason why this plurality should be real and why there is not just one Mind, one Soul and one Body. The doctrine of the series of minds and souls is already suggested by Plotinus, who always treats individual human souls as existing, so to say, with the same right, and on the same level, as the *Anima Mundi*. It originates in the justified refusal of the Neo-Platonists to treat personal individuality as a kind of illusion and reduce human persons to the status of "modes" of a single *Deus-substantia*. When the theory had been thus thought out for the case of Mind and Soul, it was a mere exigence of logic to extend it to the first member of the supreme triad. It is thus, as it seems to me, the logical completion of a line of thought inherited by the whole school from Plotinus. It is a rather more difficult thing to feel sure of the interpretation to be placed on the

doctrine. Mr. Whittaker suggests the highly ingenious comparison with the modern conception of the stars as centres of planetary systems, but avoids committing himself to an opinion about Proclus' own intention. I think one may venture at any rate on a tentative suggestion. Just as the Imparticipable One is identified with the Good, Proclus tells us that the various divine Henads or Gods are ἀγαθότητες, "goodnesses," and that each of these "goodnesses," which are all comprised *eminenter*—or, as his own phrase is, κατ' αὐτίαν—in the One, forms one of the Henads or Gods. He also connects the doctrine with the well-known passage in the *Phaedrus* where Socrates speaks of different classes of men, statesmen, warriors, poets, as under the protection of a particular deity. The real meaning of this, according to Proclus, is that each different type of individual mind is linked to the One in a two-fold way; it is a member of the series of minds, and the first term of this series, Mind, is derived from the One; also this special mind is a mirroring or image of a special Henad in the series of "divine numbers," and this Henad belongs to the series headed by the One.

On the strength of such passages, I should suggest that what Proclus has in his mind is a doctrine of the attributes of God like that of Philo, or, again, of the great scholastics. The scholastics speak of a plurality of these attributes,—goodness, wisdom, power,—and say of each that God's wisdom is God, God's power is God, and the like, as may be read at length in the first book of St. Thomas's *Summa contra gentiles*. This, I believe, is how we ought to understand what Proclus says about the gods or Henads and their relation to the One God. They are, I take it, the "perfections" or "excellences" which in God exist, according to scholastic philosophy, in a way compatible with God's absolute simplicity, but in His works are found displayed to a great extent separately, some of the works revealing more particularly the wisdom, others the power, and yet others the goodness of their author. The notion must, of

course, be carefully distinguished from Spinoza's theory in which just what is characteristic of each attribute is that you cannot say "God's extension is God" or "God's thought is God," and cannot conceive God as really simple at all.

Thus finally, including the Henads which are "above being" and bodies which are properly speaking "below" it, we may say that the One or Good appears as the source of four orders, gods, minds, souls, bodies, and that as the four orders form a hierarchy of "images" or "reflections" of the *ens realissimum*, so each order itself is a hierarchy of "reflections" of its own initial member. The whole system is, in modern language, a well-ordered series of well-ordered series.

There remains, however, yet another fundamental doctrine on which I have not yet touched—the theory of ἐπιστροφή or reflection backwards. "Reflection" has commonly been used in English to translate the word, but with us the expression is ambiguous and I have already been obliged to employ it to illustrate what Proclus means by the progression of Henads, Minds, and the rest from the One. "Inversion," especially for some of its mathematical associations, would really be a better word. We have already seen that the One is thought of as being at once the source of all existence and the end or good which all existents tend towards by the law of their being.

Once more, we may remind ourselves that the thought is derived directly from the definition given by Eudoxus, the astronomer, and adopted by Aristotle, that the good is that οὗ πάντα ἐφίεται, that which all things "go for." And the "all things" do not mean simply the "sentient creation." The thought is that in everything, sentient or insentient, animate or inanimate, there is a real *nisus* towards systematic organisation or unity. You see this *nisus*, a Neo-Platonist would have said, at different levels in the cohesion of the particles of a homogeneous body, in chemical affinities, in the attraction of the plant for the insect, in the sexual life of the animal kingdom, the family and social aspirations of man, the lifelong

struggle of the thinker after an organised and coherent body of knowledge, or of the saint after the disciplined life of holiness. In all these instances, what we discern is marked by two characteristics. The *nisus* is not, as Spinoza, being a mere naturalist, supposed, towards self-preservation, but, to use Dr. Ward's expression, towards *betterment* of some kind, attainment of a good which is the specific good of the creature exhibiting the *nisus*. Dr. Ward's remark that a creature which, as we commonly say, eats to fill its skin gets as a consequence a better skin to fill, exactly hits off this aspect of the Neo-Platonist view of the fundamental conatus or "will to be" in things. Again—and Proclus would say that this is an immediate consequence of the identity of the transcendent One with the Good,—the *nisus*, because it is always a turning back or inversion of the process by which a thing is derived from its cause, is always a movement towards simplification. It is always a tendency towards the assertion of unity and individuality. A vertebrate is more truly *one* creature than a sponge or a starfish, the inner state of cognition in a man of science or of feeling and will in a saint is one of simplicity as compared with the state of a man whose mind is a medley of confused and unsystematised beliefs or the battle-ground for perplexed and divided counsels or passions. This is the ultimate source of the mediaeval conception of growth in grace as a steady "reduction of the soul to its ground." Unless we have the theory of ἐπιστροφή or *inversion* well in mind we are bound to go astray when we try to understand what a writer like Dante or à Kempis really means by extolling *sancta simplicitas* as the highest and best state for a Christian. I suppose we can all feel the beauty of such a line as that famous one about the *anima simplicetta che sa nulla*, or the tenderness of a nameless English mystic's adjuration never to try to melt the "cloud of unknowing that is between thee and thy God," or of Ruysbroeck's description of the "noughting" of the soul, but, apart from Neo-Platonism, we cannot really understand what all this meant.

Two points are specially important in connection with this conception of *ἐπιστροφή*: (1) The fundamental *conatus* of everything is the *nisus* to reverse the process of its production—to return to its immediate source. Macaulay quotes, as typical of the nonsense of "Satan" Montgomery, a badly expressed line, to the effect that "the soul aspiring seeks its source to mount." To Macaulay this seemed unmeaning, but it is only what Donne or Vaughan would have said better about the soul and about everything else. But there is a vital distinction between two classes of things, those which in being reflected back upon their source are also reflected upon themselves, and those which are incapable of reflection or inversion into themselves. This distinction is as fundamental for Neo-Platonic philosophy as the distinction (on which the difference between infinite and finite assemblages depends) between series which can be "mirrored" within themselves and series which cannot is for modern mathematics. The point is that some things contain the principle from which they proceed within themselves in a way in which others do not. "Soul," for example, is thus related to its principle, Mind or Intelligence. As Plato had said in the *Sophistes* and *Timaeus* *νοῦς* always exists in *ψυχή*. Of course it might be said that, on the other hand, there are many *ψυχαί*, those of animals, for example, which do not think. I suppose the rejoinder would be that even animal instinct, as Professor Stout has argued at great length, not only produces results which are justified at the bar of reason, but is found everywhere working under intelligent guidance, as we see from the regular adaptation of instinctive trains of action to the special requirements of the individual situation and the modifiability of instinct by experience. There is intelligence involved in a cat's pursuit of a mouse, though we might hesitate to say that the intelligence belongs to the cat in the same way as my intelligence belongs to me. When, however, you come to deal with bodies the case is altered. Bodies, it is held, are the "images" of souls; and, as Plato had argued, all bodily

movement is produced directly or indirectly by the prior "motions" of a soul. And bodies share in the universal tendency to reflection back into their proximate cause. Body is only seen at its fullest and completest when it is an *animate* body. From the standpoint of ancient physics, it would seem natural and right to look upon inanimate bodies as having the function of feeding and sustaining plant-life, and plants that of providing sustenance for animals, who in their turn minister to the needs of man. And the Platonist view was, of course, that the prime elements of all bodies, animate or inanimate, are the same. A living body does not differ from a lifeless one by being made of ultimately different stuff, but simply by being organic to a soul—by being the body *of* that soul. So that the general facts about the so-called "three kingdoms" of the popular natural histories would be just an example of the process of *ἐπιστροφή* on a grand scale.

But bodies, in being reflected back into their cause, are not reflected back into *themselves*. Self-reflection, inversion into self, is characteristic only of what is bodiless. Proclus offers a curious formal proof of this. The argument is that reflection, or inversion into self, is a relation of a whole to itself as a whole. Whatever is thus inverted, he says, must be in contact as a whole with itself as a whole, that is, it must be directly existentially present as a whole to itself. Yet, this relation cannot hold between wholes which are aggregates of distinct parts. In them, each part is present to itself in a direct way in which no two non-identical parts are present to each other. It is this relation, only possible to wholes which are simple units, in the sense that they are not made of separable parts, which constitutes knowledge. Hence, in being "inverted" into Mind, a soul not only knows Mind, but knows itself. And Mind similarly, when in contemplation it is turned back upon the One or God, is in the very same act reflected into itself and knows itself. Bodies, because they cannot be thus directly present to themselves, know neither

themselves nor their causes. The analogy between this doctrine and Leibniz's distinction between "bare" monads and souls strongly suggests that the one has been modelled on the other. From the same source, I venture to think, comes Locke's well-known language about "ideas of reflection." According to Locke, these are ideas of the mind's own activities got by the mind in taking note of our own "operations about our ideas." That the mind has this power of inversion, by which its own activities become objects for its contemplation, Locke assumes as something which no one will deny. I suggest that both the assumption and the name "ideas of reflection" are due to the same cause which produced the polemic of the first Book of the *Essay* against innate principles,—the general and wide-spread influence of Neo-Platonism on the English philosophical writers contemporary with Cudworth and Henry More. The eighteenth century saw the gradual decrease of this influence; in its latter third, writers like Gibbon had lost all sense of the meaning of Neo-Platonic language, and we thus find the *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire* treating as gibberish doctrines which are referred to, for example, by Bacon as perfectly familiar and intelligible.

One should note that, easy as it would have been to treat the doctrine of ἐπιστροφή as the basis of an anti-rational mysticism—and this, I would suggest, is very much what M. Bergson does in his doctrine of the *élan vital*—it does not occur to the Neo-Platonists to do so. In spite of the familiarity of the school with the psychological facts about "raptures" and "ecstasies," no Neo-Platonist ever regarded these states as revealing philosophical truths. Plotinus expressly compares the state of the ecstatic with the position of a priest who has passed the veil that screens the holy of holies and left all the images of the temple behind him, and dwells on the point that it leaves behind it no memory of what it was. And when Proclus speaks of Mind as reverting in self-contemplation to its principle the One, he is not referring to "raptures" at all.

There is an agnostic side to his doctrine which re-appears in the orthodox schoolmen. Nothing, he says, is *ἄπειρον*, indeterminate, in itself, but everything is *ἄπειρον*, not fully determinable or fathomable, by anything that stands lower in the universal hierarchy than itself. The higher, though more rational in its own constitution, is something of a mystery to the lower, much, we might say, as a man must be a mystery to his dog. Thus, in a sense, the One is unknowable; but this only means that since it is something more than Mind, Mind can only know it by the reflection of itself it has stamped on Mind. The One is, he says, in itself *ἐνταίως* "after the fashion of unity," but in Mind only *νοερῶς*, "after the fashion of Mind." That is, I take it, Mind is not the highest and most perfect type of individuality.

The utter individuality of God, the source alike of Mind and everything else, is proper to God; but Mind, since we have minds, is the most truly individual thing *we* can understand. We can see that God is something even more individual—a more perfectly articulated and yet absolutely individual being—than Mind itself, but *what* it is like to be something more than Mind, we, not having the experience of it in ourselves, cannot say. In general, the higher is only known to the lower by its effects on the lower itself, because it is in self-knowledge that we have to come to the knowledge of what is higher than self. The "negative theology" or "way of negation"—so salutary a protection against the extravagances of ignorant imagination to those who understand its real meaning, so utter a puzzle to moderns like William James and the Pragmatists, who have criticized it without knowledge of its history,—is all contained in this doctrine of the necessary limitations of our knowledge. It is the real defence of sober thought against that "wild licence of affirmation about God," with which Matthew Arnold, in reckless defiance of facts, charged mediaeval theologians, and with which we may more reasonably charge a good many of our popular scientific writers who would

refuse to call their ultimate reality by so old-fashioned a name as "God."

(2) The other point on which there may be room for a word or two is also an example of Neo-Platonic sobriety. The doctrine of *ἐπιστροφή* must not be interpreted in the light of modern theories of the *Deus-substantia* type about the unreality of finite selves and finite things in general. The existence of a plurality of finite individuals of different types is to the Neo-Platonists, as to Plato himself, an ultimate premiss. Each individual has his good or end and "reverts" to it, but the process is conditioned throughout by the specific nature of the individual. He "reverts," or unites himself with his Good, in the way *his* nature permits. The bonds of individuality are not burst in the process. Bodies, in the process of inversion, do not cease to be bodies or souls to be souls. So with Mind; Mind in attaining full knowledge of itself also discerns its immediate source, God, the One,—but it does not become God or a God. "Every thing is what it is and not another thing," and in the process of *ἐπιστροφή* it does not cease to be what it is, though no doubt it may discover that it is much more than it had at first supposed. The reversion or inversion of Mind into the One does not mean that Mind *becomes* God, but that in self-contemplation it learns to *know* God, so far as God is comprehensible to any of His creatures. There is no question of an Absolute in which finite individuality of any kind is transmuted and transformed into the irrerecognisable. Proclus, in fact—though limits of time will not permit me to follow him—professes to be able to prove the everlastingness, both *a parte ante* and *a parte post*, of every individual capable of self-inversion, that is of every individual which is not a body. The demonstration follows the usual lines of the old rational psychology, attacked by Kant, and need not delay us. What interests me more personally is a reflection suggested by the Neo-Platonic insistence on transitive causality.

It is frequently said now-a-days that the fault of the old

orthodox theology lay in its devotion to a "transcendent" deity. To be in earnest with transcendence, we are commonly told, means to exclude all possibility of any real relation between God—or whatever else a man likes to call the Supreme—and other beings. Religion, as a personal matter, because it means intimate personal relation with the Supreme, requires a doctrine of "immanence." Against this fashionable view, I wish to suggest that it is, in point of fact, just the "immanence" philosophies which have always found it impossible to have any theory of the relation of their *ἐν καὶ παύ* with the individuals we know. Either the *Deus-Substantia* has to become an empty name for a mere aggregate, without any individuality of its own, or the individuals have, by elaborate logical sophisms, to be made into mere illusions.

It is palpable, as it seems to me, that this inability to recognise the reality of individuals other than the *ens summum* is certain to be fatal to the philosophies of Mr. Bradley and Professor Bosanquet as they stand. I do not, of course, mean that these philosophies ought to be rejected or will be rejected because we do not like their reduction of our own individuality to an illusion. I mean rather that on careful scrutiny the arguments of these distinguished philosophers reveal themselves as variations of one single contention which turns out, on close examination, to be a *petitio principii*. My own growing feeling is—and I believe it is by no means peculiar to myself—that if Mr. Bradley and Professor Bosanquet discover their own individuality to be unreal, the reason is that they set out from the start with a *parti pris*. Naturally they do not find what they are unconsciously determined not to see. To myself it seems obvious that if there is a real supreme *principium individuationis*, it must be, as the Neo-Platonists held, an end as well as a source, and must, therefore, *of course*, stand "outside the Universe," and that it is just because it is "outside" that direct and intimate personal relations with it are possible to all of us, if indeed

they are possible. This means, of course, that I feel bound to hold as a point of general theory that transitive causality and transitive asymmetrical relations are ultimate in logic. I can see no vestige of ground in logic for the assumption, tacitly or expressly made in so much of the thinking of the generation before my own, that there are no relations of one-sided dependence. Herbart's protest against Kant's assumption about the ubiquity in the universe of "reciprocal action" seems to me as unanswerable as it has remained unanswered. To be more precise, the particular doctrine about which I feel the greatest difficulty in Professor Bosanquet's system of thought is his theory of causality. What gravels me is not so much his assertion that the relation of cause and effect is at bottom identical with that of antecedent and consequent. The ancients, who called both cause and reason *αἴτιον*, in a sense accepted this, and I could make shift myself, perhaps, to regard causality as a special case of the more general relation. My difficulty is with the further assertion that in a really true hypothetical proposition antecedent and consequent are simply convertible. This, of course, means that there are no ultimate and unanalysable relations of one-sided dependence. But why should there not be?

So, again, the assertion that *time* is not real is, I suppose, a consequence of the same view, since, if time is real (unless it can be shown that events recur in cycles) the relation before-after is transitive and asymmetrical, as all relations which generate series appear to be. This is why I feel that, if we are not to declare ourselves frank irrationalists, we must hold that a philosophy of the general type of Neo-Platonism is at least nearer the truth than Spinozism or those versions of Hegelianism which have had the widest currency in our Universities for the last generation.