

## Selections from *The Enneads*\*

### **The Fifth Ennead First Tractate**

#### **THE THREE INITIAL HYPOSTASES**

##### **Introduction: Chapter 1**

*Question: What is the cause of soul's ignorance of God (1, 1-3)?*

*Answer: Reverence for earthly things and lack of respect for itself are the causes of its ignorance (1, 3-22). Remedy: Remind the soul of its parentage and its excellence (1, 22-35).*

1. What can it be that has brought the souls to forget the father, God, and, though members of the Divine and entire of that world, to ignore at once themselves and It?

The evil that has overtaken them has its source in self-will, in the entry into the sphere of process, and in the primal differentiation with the desire for self ownership. They conceived a pleasure in this freedom and largely indulged their own motion; thus they were hurried down the wrong path, and in the end, drifting further and further, they came to lose even the thought of their origin in the Divine. A child wrenched young from home and brought up during many years at a distance will fail in knowledge of its father and of itself: the souls, in the same way, no longer discern either the divinity or their own nature; ignorance of their rank brings self-depreciation; they misplace their respect, honouring everything more than themselves; all their awe and admiration is for the alien, and, clinging to this, they have broken apart, as far as a soul may, and

they make light of what they have deserted; their regard for the mundane and their disregard of themselves bring about their utter ignoring of the divine.

Admiring pursuit of the external is a confession of inferiority; and nothing thus holding itself inferior to things that rise and perish, nothing counting itself less honourable and less enduring than all else it admires could ever form any notion of either the nature or the power of God.

A double discipline must be applied if human beings in this pass are to be reclaimed, and brought back to their origins, lifted once more towards the Supreme and One and First.

There is the method, which we amply exhibit elsewhere, declaring the dishonour of the objects which the Soul holds here in honour; the second teaches or recalls to the soul its race and worth; this latter is the leading truth, and, clearly brought out, is the evidence of the other.

It must occupy us now for it bears closely upon our enquiry to which it is the natural preliminary: the seeker is soul and it must start from a true notion of the nature and quality by which soul may undertake the search; it must study itself in order to learn whether it has the faculty for the enquiry, the eye for the object proposed, whether in fact we ought to seek; for if the object is alien the search must be futile, while if there is relationship the solution of our problem is at once desirable and possible.

##### **Part One: the nature of the soul (Chapter 2)**

*Statement of soul's activity (2, 1-9). Argument (2, 10-51).*

2. Let every soul recall, then, at the outset the truth that soul is the author of all living things, that it has breathed the life into them all, whatever is nourished by earth and sea, all the creatures of the air, the divine stars in the sky; it is the maker of the sun; itself formed and ordered this vast heaven and conducts all that rhythmic motion; and it is a principle distinct from all these to which it gives law and movement and life, and it must of necessity be more honourable than

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\*Selections from *The Enneads* (V.1, V.4 and IV.3, xi) Translated by S. Mackenna and B. S. Page. Headings and summaries for V.1 are taken from M. Atkinson, *Plotinus: Ennead V.1*, Oxford, 1983 (line numbers refer to the original Greek).

they, for they gather or dissolve as soul brings them life or abandons them, but soul, since it never can abandon itself, is of eternal being.

How life was purveyed to the universe of things and to the separate beings in it may be thus conceived:

That great soul must stand pictured before another soul, one not mean, a soul that has become worthy to look, emancipate from the lure, from all that binds its fellows in bewitchment, holding itself in quietude. Let not merely the enveloping body be at peace, body's turmoil stilled, but all that lies around, earth at peace, and sea at peace, and air and the very heavens. Into that heaven, all at rest, let the great soul be conceived to roll inward at every point, penetrating, permeating, from all sides pouring in its light. As the rays of the sun throwing their brilliance upon a lowering cloud make it gleam all gold, so the soul entering the material expanse of the heavens has given life, has given immortality: what was abject it has lifted up; and the heavenly system, moved now in endless motion by the soul that leads it in wisdom, has become a living and a blessed thing; the soul domiciled within, it takes worth where, before the soul, it was stark body- clay and water- or, rather, the blankness of Matter, the absence of Being, and, as an author says, "the execration of the Gods."

The Soul's nature and power will be brought out more clearly, more brilliantly, if we consider next how it envelops the heavenly system and guides all to its purposes: for it has bestowed itself upon all that huge expanse so that every interval, small and great alike, all has been ensouled.

The material body is made up of parts, each holding its own place, some in mutual opposition and others variously interdependent; the soul is in no such condition; it is not whittled down so that life tells of a part of the soul and springs where some such separate portion impinges; each separate life lives by the soul entire, omnipresent in the likeness of the engendering father, entire in unity and entire in diffused variety. By the power of the soul the manifold and diverse heavenly system is a unit: through soul this universe is a God: and the sun is a God because it is ensouled; so too the stars:

and whatsoever we ourselves may be, it is all in virtue of soul; for "dead is viler than dung."

This, by which the gods are divine, must be the oldest God of them all: and our own soul is of that same Ideal nature, so that to consider it, purified, freed from all accrument, is to recognise in ourselves that same value which we have found soul to be, honourable above all that is bodily. For what is body but earth, and, taking fire itself, what [but soul] is its burning power? So it is with all the compounds of earth and fire, even with water and air added to them?

If, then, it is the presence of soul that brings worth, how can a man slight himself and run after other things? You honour the Soul elsewhere; honour then yourself.

### **Part Two: the nature of Intellect (Chapters 3 - 4)**

*Nature of Intellect from the point of view of its relationship with soul (3, 3-23). The fullness and perfection of the Intelligible World (4, 1-25). The internal life of Intellect (4, 26-43).*

3. The Soul once seen to be thus precious, thus divine, you may hold the faith that by its possession you are already nearing God: in the strength of this power make upwards towards Him: at no great distance you must attain: there is not much between.

But over this divine, there is still a diviner: grasp the upward neighbour of the soul, its prior and source.

Soul, for all the worth we have shown to belong to it, is yet a secondary, an image of the Intellectual-Principle: reason uttered is an image of the reason stored within the soul, and in the same way soul is an utterance of the Intellectual-Principle: it is even the total of its activity, the entire stream of life sent forth by that Principle to the production of further being; it is the forthgoing heat of a fire which has also heat essentially inherent. But within the Supreme we must see energy not as an overflow but in the double aspect of integral inherence with the establishment of a new being. Sprung, in other words, from the Intellectual-Principle, Soul is intellective, but with an intellection operation by the method of reasonings: for its

perfecting it must look to that Divine Mind, which may be thought of as a father watching over the development of his child born imperfect in comparison with himself.

Thus its substantial existence comes from the Intellectual-Principle; and the Reason within it becomes Act in virtue of its contemplation of that prior; for its thought and act are its own intimate possession when it looks to the Supreme Intelligence; those only are soul-acts which are of this intellective nature and are determined by its own character; all that is less noble is foreign [traceable to Matter] and is accidental to the soul in the course of its peculiar task.

In two ways, then, the Intellectual-Principle enhances the divine quality of the soul, as father and as immanent presence; nothing separates them but the fact that they are not one and the same, that there is succession, that over against a recipient there stands the ideal-form received; but this recipient, Matter to the Supreme Intelligence, is also noble as being at once informed by divine intellect and uncompounded.

What the Intellectual-Principle must be is carried in the single word that Soul, itself so great, is still inferior.

4. But there is yet another way to this knowledge: Admiring the world of sense as we look out upon its vastness and beauty and the order of its eternal march, thinking of the gods within it, seen and hidden, and the celestial spirits and all the life of animal and plant, let us mount to its archetype, to the yet more authentic sphere: there we are to contemplate all things as members of the Intellectual-eternal in their own right, vested with a self-springing consciousness and life- and, presiding over all these, the unsoiled Intelligence and the unapproachable wisdom.

That archetypal world is the true Golden Age, age of Kronos, who is the Intellectual-Principle as being the offspring or exuberance of God. For here is contained all that is immortal: nothing here but is Divine Mind; all is God; this is the place of every soul. Here is rest unbroken: for how can that seek change, in which all is well; what need that reach to, which holds all within itself; what increase can that desire, which stands utterly achieved? All its content, thus, is

perfect, that itself may be perfect throughout, as holding nothing that is less than the divine, nothing that is less than intellective. Its knowing is not by search but by possession, its blessedness inherent, not acquired; for all belongs to it eternally and it holds the authentic Eternity imitated by Time which, circling round the Soul, makes towards the new thing and passes by the old. Soul deals with thing after thing- now Socrates; now a horse: always some one entity from among beings- but the Intellectual-Principle is all and therefore its entire content is simultaneously present in that identity: this is pure being in eternal actuality; nowhere is there any future, for every then is a now; nor is there any past, for nothing there has ever ceased to be; everything has taken its stand for ever, an identity well pleased, we might say, to be as it is; and everything, in that entire content, is Intellectual-Principle and Authentic Existence; and the total of all is Intellectual-Principle entire and Being entire. Intellectual-Principle by its intellective act establishes Being, which in turn, as the object of intellection, becomes the cause of intellection and of existence to the Intellectual-Principle- though, of course, there is another cause of intellection which is also a cause to Being, both rising in a source distinct from either.

Now while these two are coalescents, having their existence in common, and are never apart, still the unity they form is two-sided; there is Intellectual-Principle as against Being, the intellectual agent as against the object of intellection; we consider the intellective act and we have the Intellectual-Principle; we think of the object of that act and we have Being.

Such difference there must be if there is to be any intellection; but similarly there must also be identity [since, in perfect knowing, subject and object are identical.]

Thus the Primals [the first "Categories"] are seen to be: Intellectual-Principle; Existence; Difference; Identity: we must include also Motion and Rest: Motion provides for the intellectual act, Rest preserves identity as Difference gives at once a Knower and a Known, for, failing this, all is one, and silent.

So too the objects of intellection [the ideal content of the Divine Mind]- identical in virtue of the self-concentration of the principle

which is their common ground- must still be distinct each from another; this distinction constitutes Difference.

The Intellectual Kosmos thus a manifold, Number and Quantity arise: Quality is the specific character of each of these ideas which stand as the principles from which all else derives.

### **Part Three: the nature of the One (5, 1 - 7, 27)**

*Introduction (5, 1-6). Relationship between Intellect and the One in terms of Platonic number (5, 6-19). The genesis of Intellect (6, 1-41). Relationship between the One and its product (6, 41 - 7, 4). Interruptions, and restatement of problem of Intellect's genesis (7, 4-26).*

5. As a manifold, then, this God, the Intellectual-Principle, exists within the Soul here, the Soul which once for all stands linked a member of the divine, unless by a deliberate apostasy.

Bringing itself close to the divine Intellect, becoming, as it were, one with this, it seeks still further: What Being, now, has engendered this God, what is the Simplex preceding this multiple; what the cause at once of its existence and of its existing as a manifold; what the source of this Number, this Quantity?

Number, Quantity, is not primal: obviously before even duality, there must stand the unity.

The Dyad is a secondary; deriving from unity, it finds in unity the determinant needed by its native indetermination: once there is any determination, there is Number, in the sense, of course, of the real [the archetypal] Number. And the soul is such a number or quantity. For the Primals are not masses or magnitudes; all of that gross order is later, real only to the sense-thought; even in seed the effective reality is not the moist substance but the unseen-that is to say Number [as the determinant of individual being] and the Reason-Principle [of the product to be].

Thus by what we call the Number and the Dyad of that higher realm, we mean Reason Principles and the Intellectual-Principle: but while the Dyadis, as regards that sphere, undetermined-representing, as it were, the underly [or Matter] of The One- the later

Number [or Quantity]- that which rises from the Dyad [Intellectual-Principle] and The One- is not Matter to the later existents but is their forming-Idea, for all of them take shape, so to speak, from the ideas rising within this. The determination of the Dyad is brought about partly from its object- The One- and partly from itself, as is the case with all vision in the act of sight: intellection [the Act of the Dyad] is vision occupied upon The One.

6. But how and what does the Intellectual-Principle see and, especially, how has it sprung from that which is to become the object of its vision?

The mind demands the existence of these Beings, but it is still in trouble over the problem endlessly debated by the most ancient philosophers: from such a unity as we have declared The One to be, how does anything at all come into substantial existence, any multiplicity, dyad, or number? Why has the Primal not remained self-gathered so that there be none of this profusion of the manifold which we observe in existence and yet are compelled to trace to that absolute unity?

In venturing an answer, we first invoke God Himself, not in loud word but in that way of prayer which is always within our power, leaning in soul towards Him by aspiration, alone towards the alone. But if we seek the vision of that great Being within the Inner Sanctuary- self-gathered, tranquilly remote above all else- we begin by considering the images stationed at the outer precincts, or, more exactly to the moment, the first image that appears. How the Divine Mind comes into being must be explained:

Everything moving has necessarily an object towards which it advances; but since the Supreme can have no such object, we may not ascribe motion to it: anything that comes into being after it can be produced only as a consequence of its unfailing self-intention; and, of course, we dare not talk of generation in time, dealing as we are with eternal Beings: where we speak of origin in such reference, it is in the sense, merely, of cause and subordination: origin from the Supreme must not be taken to imply any movement in it: that would make the

Being resulting from the movement not a second principle but a third: the Movement would be the second hypostasis.

Given this immobility in the Supreme, it can neither have yielded assent nor uttered decree nor stirred in any way towards the existence of a secondary.

What happened then? What are we to conceive as rising in the neighbourhood of that immobility?

It must be a circumradiation- produced from the Supreme but from the Supreme unaltering- and may be compared to the brilliant light encircling the sun and ceaselessly generated from that unchanging substance.

All existences, as long as they retain their character, produce about themselves, from their essence, in virtue of the power which must be in them-some necessary, outward-facing hypostasis continuously attached to them and representing in image the engendering archetypes: thus fire gives out its heat; snow is cold not merely to itself; fragrant substances are a notable instance; for, as long as they last, something is diffused from them and perceived wherever they are present.

Again, all that is fully achieved engenders: therefore the eternally achieved engenders eternally an eternal being. At the same time, the offspring is always minor: what then are we to think of the All-Perfect but that it can produce nothing less than the very greatest that is later than itself. The greatest, later than the divine unity, must be the Divine Mind, and it must be the second of all existence, for it is that which sees The One on which alone it leans while the First has no need whatever of it. The offspring of the prior to Divine Mind can be no other than that Mind itself and thus is the loftiest being in the universe, all else following upon it- the soul, for example, being an utterance and act of the Intellectual-Principle as that is an utterance and act of The One. But in soul the utterance is obscured, for soul is an image and must look to its own original: that Principle, on the contrary, looks to the First without mediation- thus becoming what it is- and has that vision not as from a distance but as the immediate next with nothing intervening, close to the One as Soul to it.

The offspring must seek and love the begetter; and especially so when begetter and begotten are alone in their sphere; when, in addition, the begetter is the highest good, the offspring [inevitably seeking its Good] is attached by a bond of sheer necessity, separated only in being distinct.

7. We must be more explicit: The Intellectual-Principle stands as the image of The One, firstly because there is a certain necessity that the first should have its offspring, carrying onward much of its quality, in other words that there be something in its likeness as the sun's rays tell of the sun. Yet The One is not an Intellectual-Principle; how then does it engender an Intellectual-Principle?

Simply by the fact that in its self-quest it has vision: this very seeing is the Intellectual-Principle. Any perception of the external indicates either sensation or intellection, sensation symbolized by a line, intellection by a circle... [corrupt passage].

Of course the divisibility belonging to the circle does not apply to the Intellectual-Principle; all, there too, is a unity, though a unity which is the potentiality of all existence.

The items of this potentiality the divine intellection brings out, so to speak, from the unity and knows them in detail, as it must if it is to be an intellectual principle.

It has besides a consciousness, as it were, within itself of this same potentiality; it knows that it can of itself beget an hypostasis and can determine its own Being by the virtue emanating from its prior; it knows that its nature is in some sense a definite part of the content of that First; that it thence derives its essence, that its strength lies there and that its Being takes perfection as a derivative and a recipient from the First. It sees that, as a member of the realm of division and part, it receives life and intellection and all else it has and is, from the undivided and partless, since that First is no member of existence, but can be the source of all on condition only of being held down by no one distinctive shape but remaining the undeflected unity.

To be all in itself would place it in the realm of Being. And so the First is not a thing among the things contained by the

Intellectual-Principle though the source of all. In virtue of this source, things of the later order are essential beings; for from that fact there is determination; each has its form: what has being cannot be envisaged as outside of limit; the nature must be held fast by boundary and fixity; though to the Intellectual Beings this fixity is no more than determination and form, the foundations of their substantial existence.

#### **Part Four: synthetic conclusion of Chapters 2 - 7 (7, 27-49)**

A being of this quality, like the Intellectual-Principle, must be felt to be worthy of the all-pure: it could not derive from any other than from the first principle of all; as it comes into existence, all other beings must be simultaneously engendered- all the beauty of the Ideas, all the Gods of the Intellectual realm. And it still remains pregnant with this offspring; for it has, so to speak, drawn all within itself again, holding them lest they fall away towards Matter to be "brought up in the House of Rhea" [in the realm of flux]. This is the meaning hidden in the Mysteries, and in the Myths of the gods: Kronos, as the wisest, exists before Zeus; he must absorb his offspring that, full within himself, he may be also an Intellectual-Principle manifest in some product of his plenty; afterwards, the myth proceeds, Kronos engenders Zeus, who already exists as the [necessary and eternal] outcome of the plenty there; in other words the offspring of the Divine Intellect, perfect within itself, is Soul [the life-principle carrying forward the Ideas in the Divine Mind].

Now, even in the Divine the engendered could not be the very highest; it must be a lesser, an image; it will be undetermined, as the Divine is, but will receive determination, and, so to speak, its shaping idea, from the progenitor.

Yet any offspring of the Intellectual-Principle must be a Reason-Principle; the thought of the Divine Mind must be a substantial existence: such then is that [Soul] which circles about the Divine Mind, its light, its image inseparably attached to it: on the upper level united with it, filled from it, enjoying it, participant in its nature, intellectual with it, but on the lower level in contact with the

realm beneath itself, or, rather, generating in turn an offspring which must lie beneath; of this lower we will treat later; so far we deal still with the Divine.

#### **Part Five: doxography (Chapters 8 - 9)**

*Plato (8, 1-14). Parmenides (8, 14-27). Other Presocratics who believed in 'the One' (9, 1-7). Critique of Aristotle (9, 2-17). Conclusion (9, 27-32).*

8. This is the explanation of Plato's Triplicity, in the passage where he names as the Primals the Beings gathered about the King of All, and establishes a Secondary containing the Secondaries, and a Third containing the Tertiaries.

He teaches, also, that there is an author of the Cause, that is of the Intellectual-Principle, which to him is the Creator who made the Soul, as he tells us, in the famous mixing bowl. This author of the causing principle, of the divine mind, is to him the Good, that which transcends the Intellectual-Principle and transcends Being: often too he uses the term "The Idea" to indicate Being and the Divine Mind. Thus Plato knows the order of generation- from the Good, the Intellectual-Principle; from the Intellectual-Principle, the Soul. These teachings are, therefore, no novelties, no inventions of today, but long since stated, if not stressed; our doctrine here is the explanation of an earlier and can show the antiquity of these opinions on the testimony of Plato himself.

Earlier, Parmenides made some approach to the doctrine in identifying Being with Intellectual-Principle while separating Real Being from the realm of sense.

"Knowing and Being are one thing he says, and this unity is to him motionless in spite of the intellection he attributes to it: to preserve its unchanging identity he excludes all bodily movement from it; and he compares it to a huge sphere in that it holds and envelops all existence and that its intellection is not an outgoing act but internal. Still, with all his affirmation of unity, his own writings lay him open to the reproach that his unity turns out to be a multiplicity.

The Platonic Parmenides is more exact; the distinction is made between the Primal One, a strictly pure Unity, and a secondary One which is a One-Many and a third which is a One-and-many; thus he too is in accordance with our thesis of the Three Kinds.

9. Anaxagoras, again, in his assertion of a Mind pure and unmixed, affirms a simplex First and a sundered One, though writing long ago he failed inprecision.

Heraclitus, with his sense of bodily forms as things of ceaseless process and passage, knows the One as eternal and intellectual.

In Empedocles, similarly, we have a dividing principle, "Strife," set against "Friendship"- which is The One and is to him bodiless, while the elements represent Matter.

Later there is Aristotle; he begins by making the First transcendent and intellective but cancels that primacy by supposing it to have self-intellection. Further he affirms a multitude of other intellective beings- as many indeed as there are orbs in the heavens; one such principle as in- over to every orb-and thus his account of the Intellectual Realm differs from Plato's and, failing reason, he brings in necessity; though whatever reasons he had alleged there would always have been the objection that it would be more reasonable that all the spheres, as contributory to one system, should look to a unity, to the First.

We are obliged also to ask whether to Aristotle's mind all Intellectual Beings spring from one, and that one their First; or whether the Principles in the Intellectual are many.

If from one, then clearly the Intellectual system will be analogous to that of the universe of sense-sphere encircling sphere, with one, the outermost, dominating all- the First [in the Intellectual] will envelop the entire scheme and will be an Intellectual [or Archetypal] Kosmos; and as in our universe the spheres are not empty but the first sphere is thick with stars and none without them, so, in the Intellectual Kosmos, those principles of Movement will envelop a multitude of Beings, and that world will be the realm of the greater reality.

If on the contrary each is a principle, then the effective powers become a matter of chance; under what compulsion are they to hold

together and act with one mind towards that work of unity, the harmony of the entire heavenly system? Again what can make it necessary that the material bodies of the heavenly system be equal in number to the Intellectual moving principles, and how can these incorporeal Beings be numerically many when there is no Matter to serve as the basis of difference?

For these reasons the ancient philosophers that ranged themselves most closely to the school of Pythagoras and of his later followers and to that of Pherekudes, have insisted upon this Nature, some developing the subject in their writings while others treated of it merely in unwritten discourses, some no doubt ignoring it entirely.

### **Part Six: The hypostases are 'in' the soul and may be grasped by us (Chapters 10 - 12).**

*Recapitulation of the theory of three hypostases (10, 1-4). The hypostases exist 'in us', in the inner man (10, 5-10). Soul (10, 10-30). Intellect (11, 1-7). The One (11, 7-15). Apprehension of the hypostases (12, 1-20).*

10. We have shown the inevitability of certain convictions as to the scheme of things:

There exists a Principle which transcends Being; this is The One, whose nature we have sought to establish in so far as such matters lend themselves to proof. Upon The One follows immediately the Principle which is at once Being and the Intellectual-Principle. Third comes the Principle, Soul.

Now just as these three exist for the system of Nature, so, we must hold, they exist for ourselves. I am not speaking of the material order- all that is separable- but of what lies beyond the sense realm in the same way as the Primals are beyond all the heavens; I mean the corresponding aspect of man, what Plato calls the Interior Man.

Thus our soul, too, is a divine thing, belonging to another order than sense; such is all that holds the rank of soul, but [above the life-principle] there is the soul perfected as containing Intellectual-Principle with its double phase, reasoning and giving the power to reason. The reasoning phase of the soul, needing no bodily organ for

its thinking but maintaining, in purity, its distinctive Act that its thought may be uncontaminated- this we cannot err in placing, separate and not mingled into body, within the first Intellectual. We may not seek any point of space in which to seat it; it must be set outside of all space: its distinct quality, its separateness, its immateriality, demand that it be a thing alone, untouched by all of the bodily order. This is why we read of the universe that the Demiurge cast the soul around it from without- understand that phase of soul which is permanently seated in the Intellectual- and of ourselves that the charioteer's head reaches upwards towards the heights.

The admonition to sever soul from body is not, of course, to be understood spatially- that separation stands made in Nature- the reference is to holding our rank, to use of our thinking, to an attitude of alienation from the body in the effort to lead up and attach to the over-world, equally with the other, that phase of soul seated here and, alone, having to do with body, creating, moulding, spending its care upon it.

11. Since there is a Soul which reasons upon the right and good- for reasoning is an enquiry into the rightness and goodness of this rather than that- there must exist some permanent Right, the source and foundation of this reasoning in our soul; how, else, could any such discussion be held? Further, since the soul's attention to these matters is intermittent, there must be within us an Intellectual-Principle acquainted with that Right not by momentary act but in permanent possession. Similarly there must be also the principle of this principle, its cause, God. This Highest cannot be divided and allotted, must remain intangible but not bound to space, it may be present at many points, wheresoever there is anything capable of accepting one of its manifestations; thus a centre is an independent unity; everything within the circle has its term at the centre; and to the centre the radii bring each their own. Within our nature is such a centre by which we grasp and are linked and held; and those of us are firmly in the Supreme whose collective tendency is There.

12. Possessed of such powers, how does it happen that we do not lay hold of them, but for the most part, let these high activities go idle- some, even, of us never bringing them in any degree to effect?

The answer is that all the Divine Beings are unceasingly about their own act, the Intellectual-Principle and its Prior always self-intent; and so, too, the soul maintains its unfailing movement; for not all that passes in the soul is, by that fact, perceptible; we know just as much as impinges upon the faculty of sense. Any activity not transmitted to the sensitive faculty has not traversed the entire soul: we remain unaware because the human being includes sense-perception; man is not merely a part [the higher part] of the soul but the total.

None the less every being of the order of soul is in continuous activity as long as life holds, continuously executing to itself its characteristic act: knowledge of the act depends upon transmission and perception. If there is to be perception of what is thus present, we must turn the perceptive faculty inward and hold it to attention there. Hoping to hear a desired voice, we let all others pass and are alert for the coming at last of that most welcome of sounds: so here, we must let the hearings of sense go by, save for sheer necessity, and keep the soul's perception bright and quick to the sounds from above.

## **The Fifth Ennead**

### **Fourth Tractate**

#### **HOW THE SECONDARIES RISE FROM THE FIRST: AND ON THE ONE.**

##### **Part One: The primacy of the One and the One-Many problem (Chapter 1).**

1. Anything existing after The First must necessarily arise from that First, whether immediately or as tracing back to it through intervenients; there must be an order of secondaries and tertiaries, in



which any second is to be referred to The First, any third to the second.

Standing before all things, there must exist a Simplex, differing from all its sequel, self-gathered not inter-blended with the forms that rise from it, and yet able in some mode of its own to be present to those others: it must be authentically a unity, not merely something elaborated into unity and so in reality no more than unity's counterfeit; it will debar all telling and knowing except that it may be described as transcending Being - for if there were nothing outside all alliance and compromise, nothing authentically one, there would be no Source. Untouched by multiplicity, it will be wholly self-sufficing, an absolute First, whereas any not-first demands its earlier, and any non-simplex needs the simplicities within itself as the very foundations of its composite existence.

There can be only one such being: if there were another, the two (as indiscernible) would resolve into one, for we are not dealing with two corporal entities.

Our One-First is not a body: a body is not simplex and, as a thing of process cannot be a First, the Source cannot be a thing of generation: only a principle outside of body, and utterly untouched by multiplicity, could be The First.

Any unity, then, later than The First must be no longer simplex; it can be no more than a unity in diversity.

Whence must such a sequent arise? It must be an offspring of The First; for suppose it the product of chance, that First ceases to be the Principle of All.

But how does it arise from The First? If The First is perfect, utterly perfect above all, and is the beginning of all power, it must be the most powerful of all that is, and all other powers must act in some partial imitation of it. Now other beings, coming to perfection, are observed to generate; they are unable to remain self-closed; they produce: and this is true not merely of beings endowed with will, but of growing things where there is no will; even lifeless objects impart something of themselves, as far as they may; fire warms, snow chills, drugs have their own outgoing efficacy; all things to the utmost of

their power imitate the Source in some operation tending to eternity and to service.

How then could the most perfect remain self-set- the First Good, the Power towards all, how could it grudge or be powerless to give of itself, and how at that would it still be the Source?

If things other than itself are to exist, things dependent upon it for their reality, it must produce since there is no other source. And further this engendering principle must be the very highest in worth; and its immediate offspring, its secondary, must be the best of all that follows.

### **Part Two: Solution - the two-act theory (Chapter 2)**

2. If the Intellectual-Principle were the engendering Source, then the engendered secondary, while less perfect than the Intellectual-Principle, would be close to it and similar to it: but since the engendering Source is above the Intellectual-Principle, the secondary can only be that principle.

But why is the Intellectual-Principle not the generating source? Because (it is not a self-sufficing simplex): the Act of the Intellectual-Principle is intellection, which means that, seeing the intellectual object towards which it has turned, it is consummated, so to speak, by that object, being in itself indeterminate like sight [a vague readiness for any and every vision] and determined by the intellectual object. This is why it has been said that "out of the indeterminate dyad and The One arise the Ideas and the numbers": for the dyad is the Intellectual-Principle.

Thus it is not a simplex; it is manifold; it exhibits a certain composite quality- within the Intellectual or divine order, of course- as the principle that sees the manifold. It is, further, itself simultaneously object and agent of intellection and is on that count also a duality: and it possesses besides another object of intellection in the Order following upon itself.

But how can the Intellectual-Principle be a product of the Intellectual Object?

In this way: the intellectual object is self-gathered [self-compact] and is not deficient as the seeing and knowing principle must be - deficient, I mean, as needing an object - it is therefore no unconscious thing: all its content and accompaniment are its possession; it is self-distinguishing throughout; it is the seat of life as of all things; it is, itself, that self-intellection which takes place in eternal repose, that is to say, in a mode other than that of the Intellectual-Principle.

But if something comes to being within an entity which in no way looks outside itself - and especially within a being which is the sum of being - that entity must be the source of the new thing: stable in its own identity, it produces; but the product is that of an unchanged being: the producer is unchangeably the intellectual object, the product is produced as the Intellectual Act, an Act taking intellection of its source - the only object that exists for it - and so becoming Intellectual-Principle, that is to say, becoming another intellectual being, resembling its source, a reproduction and image of that.

But how from amid perfect rest can an Act arise? There is in everything the Act of the Essence and the Act going out from the Essence: the first Act is the thing itself in its realized identity, the second Act is an inevitably following outgo from the first, an emanation distinct from the thing itself.

Thus even in fire there is the warmth comported by its essential nature and there is the warmth going instantaneously outward from that characterizing heat by the fact that the fire, remaining unchangeably fire, utters the Act native to its essential reality.

So it is in the divine also: or rather we have there the earlier form of the double act: the divine remains in its own unchanging being, but from its perfection and from the Act included in its nature there emanates the secondary or issuing Act which- as the output of a mighty power, the mightiest there is- attains to Real Being as second to that which stands above all Being. That transcendent was the potentiality of the All; this secondary is the All made actual.

And if this is all things, that must be above and outside of all, so, must transcend real being. And again, if that secondary is all things, and if above its multiplicity there is a unity not ranking

among those things, once more this unity transcends Real Being and therefore transcends the Intellectual-Principle as well. There is thus something transcending Intellectual-Principle, for we must remember that real being is no corpse, the negation of life and of intellection, but is in fact identical with the Intellectual-Principle. The Intellectual-Principle is not something taking cognisance of things as sensation deals with sense objects existing independently of sense: on the contrary, it actually is the things it knows: the ideas constituting them it has not borrowed: whence could it have taken them? No: it exists here together with the things of the universe, identical with them, making a unity with them; and the collective knowledge [in the divine mind] of the immaterial is the universe of things.

## **The Fourth Ennead**

### **Third Tractate**

#### **PROBLEMS OF THE SOUL (I)**

##### Chapter xi

11. I think, therefore, that those ancient sages, who sought to secure the presence of divine beings by the erection of shrines and statues, showed insight into the nature of the All; they perceived that, though this Soul is everywhere tractable, its presence will be secured all the more readily when an appropriate receptacle is elaborated, a place especially capable of receiving some portion or phase of it, something reproducing it, or representing it, and serving like a mirror to catch an image of it.

It belongs to the nature of the All to make its entire content reproduce, most felicitously, the Reason-Principles in which it participates; every particular thing is the image within matter of a Reason-Principle which itself images a pre-material Reason-Principle: thus every particular entity is linked to that Divine Being in whose likeness it is made, the divine principle which the soul contemplated

and contained in the act of each creation. Such mediation and representation there must have been since it was equally impossible for the created to be without share in the Supreme, and for the Supreme to descend into the created.

The Intellectual-Principle in the Supreme has ever been the sun of that sphere - let us accept that as the type of the creative Logos - and immediately upon it follows the Soul depending from it, stationary Soul from stationary Intelligence. But the Soul borders also upon the sun of this sphere, and it becomes the medium by which all is linked to the overworld; it plays the part of an interpreter between what emanates from that sphere down to this lower universe, and what rises - as far as, through soul, anything can - from the lower to the highest.

Nothing, in fact, is far away from anything; things are not remote: there is, no doubt, the aloofness of difference and of mingled natures as against the unmingled; but selfhood has nothing to do with spatial position, and in unity itself there may still be distinction.

These Beings [the Reason-Principles of this sphere] are divine in virtue of cleaving to the Supreme, because, by the medium of the Soul thought of as descending they remain linked with the Primal Soul, and through it are veritably what they are called and possess the vision of the Intellectual Principle, the single object of contemplation to that soul in which they have their being.