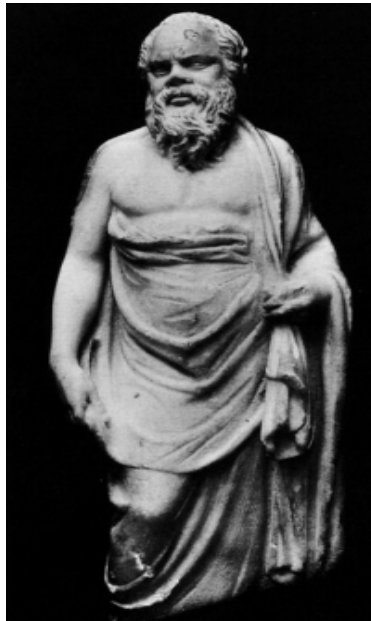


# Proclus Diadochus



## On the Theology of Plato

*Translated by Thomas Taylor,  
with an added seventh book from collected material  
electronic edition, 2010, [meuser.awardspace.com](http://meuser.awardspace.com)*

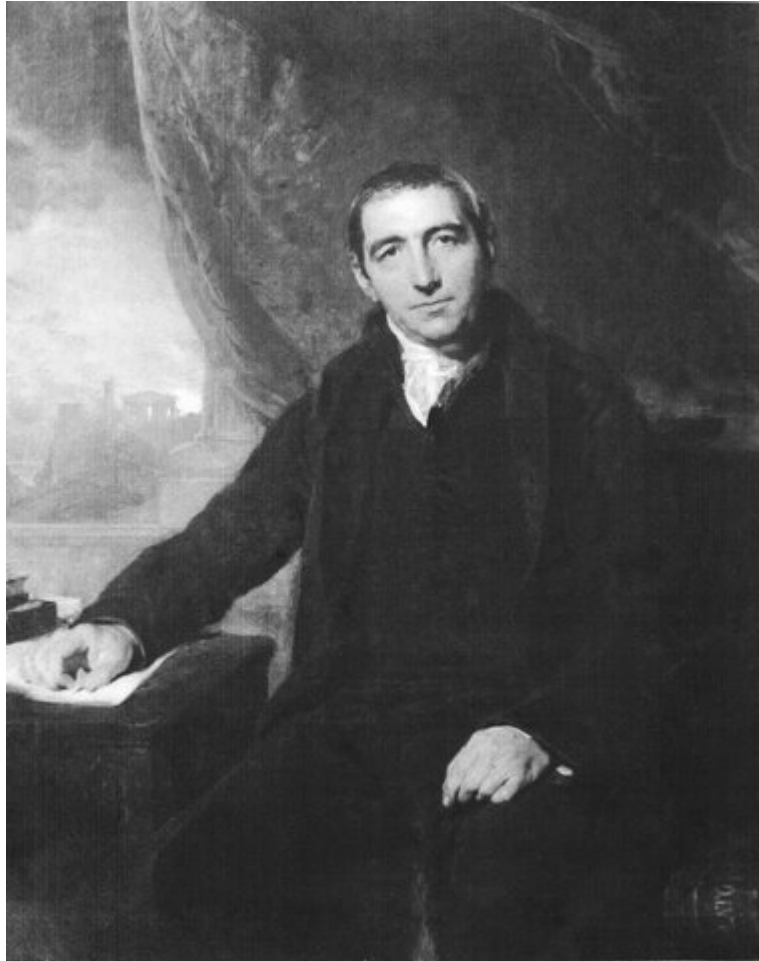
Thomas Taylor's

introduction

to

Proclus

"On the Theology of Plato"



### **Introduction to the electronic edition of Proclus work "On the Theology of Plato".**

The following text pertains to the lengthy *introduction* of Thomas Taylor on Proclus' work "On the theology of Plato".

Taylor gives a nice summary of some key tenets of the universal philosophy of ancient civilization, notably Middle-Eastern and Greek. Those civilizations recognized the universe as an organism that is alive.

They acknowledged The One principle of principles, out of which arises several successive orders of being. These are six in total, as is beautifully outlined in the student edition "Beyond the Shadows", published by [Prometheus Trust](#), an organization that is dedicated to promulgating the translations of Thomas Taylor of the famous Greek and NeoPlatonic authors of old.

The "six causes", mentioned by Proclus in his writings, are also elucidated in the above booklet. Being an important refinement of Aristotle's four causes, these give enough food

for thought to ground a whole new science that is truly holistic in scope and intent!

The knowledge and insights expressed by Proclus cannot be overestimated. When digested properly, it can help reorient our perplexed civilization, so out of touch with nature and deeper feelings, to the Spirit within each of us, and, give help to the lost ones. Without the guiding Light of Reason, or, *true understanding*, the world may very well spiral to self-destruction, caused by wrong beliefs, economic over-exploitation, materialistic philosophy, etc.

There are two more books on Proclus that I can recommend. One is from Rosán, also published by Prometheus Trust. The other is the excellent book by Lucas Siorvanes. The latter has published an in-depth study of Proclus. You may be able to procure a second-hand copy of it. It will certainly deepen your understanding of Proclus considerably and make this book easier to digest. The work of G.R.S. Mead should also be mentioned. His study on Orphic theology, which forms the basis of Platonic theology, has been published in electronic format by me. See <http://www.scribd.com/meuser>. and [www.archive.org](http://www.archive.org)

On my scribd channel I also am publishing other works of Proclus.

Lastly, Proclus Elements of Theology can be found on scribd as well.

In that book Proclus systematically develops his ontology.

As a help to understanding the following text, keep in mind that the words:

*Animal* is generally descriptive of an ensouled being; from planets to the simplest organism that can move itself.

*Daemon* or daimon does **not** mean a "demon", but a kind of (half)god. Hence, the word *daimoniactal* pertains to such a halfgod.

*Occult* means hidden to the (outer) senses.

*Intellectual* means *true understanding*, deep insight and direct experience of the essence of things. Not to be confused with the brain-mind which plays a minor role in Platonic philosophy.

Greek text has mostly been omitted, except where deemed important, from this text, since it contributes little to the understanding of this text, except perhaps for specialized scholars, which have their own resources anyway.

A few sparse elucidations have been inserted by me in square brackets. Text has been reformatted for easier reading on computer screens.

Martin Euser. Nov.,2009; May 2010.

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also see: [books.google.com](https://books.google.com) for more Neo-Platonic works.

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## INTRODUCTION.

I REJOICE in the opportunity which is afforded me of presenting the *truly* philosophic reader, in the present work, with a treasure of Grecian theology; of a theology, which was first mystically and symbolically promulgated by Orpheus, afterwards disseminated enigmatically through images by Pythagoras, and in the last place scientifically unfolded by Plato and his genuine disciples.

The peculiarity indeed, of this theology is, that it is no less scientific than sublime; and that by a geometrical series of reasoning originating from the most self-evident truths, it develops all the deified progressions from the ineffable principle of things, and accurately exhibits to our view all the links of that golden chain of which deity is the one extreme, and body the other.

That also which is most admirable and laudable in this theology is, that it produces in the mind properly prepared for its reception the most pure, holy, venerable, and exalted conceptions of the great cause of all.

For it celebrates this immense principle as something superior even to being itself; as exempt from the whole of things, of which it is nevertheless ineffably the source, and does not therefore think fit to connumerate it with any triad, or order of beings.

Indeed, it even apologises for attempting to give an appropriate name to this principle, which is in reality ineffable, and ascribes the attempt to the imbecility of human nature, which striving intently to behold it, gives the appellation of the most simple of its conceptions to that which is beyond all knowledge and all conception. Hence it denominates it *the one*, and *the good*; by the former of these names indicating its transcendent simplicity, and by the latter its subsistence as the object of desire to all beings.

For all things desire good. At the same time however, it asserts that these appellations are in reality nothing more than, the parturitions of the soul which standing as it were in the vestibules of the adytum of deity, announce nothing pertaining to the ineffable, but only indicate her spontaneous tendencies towards it, and belong rather to the immediate offspring of the first God, than to the first itself.

Hence, as the result of this most venerable conception of the supreme, when it ventures not only to denominate the ineffable, but also to assert something of its relation to other things, it considers this as pre-eminently its peculiarity, that it is the principle of principles;

it being necessary that the characteristic property of principle, after the same manner as other things, should not begin from multitude, but should be collected into one monad as a summit, and which is the principle of all principles. Conformably to this, Proclus, in the second book of this work [p. 139] says, with matchless magnificence of diction: "Let us as

it were celebrate the first God, not as establishing the earth and the heavens, nor as giving subsistence to souls, and the generation of all animals; for he produced these indeed, but among the last of things; but prior to these, let us celebrate him as unfolding into light the whole intelligible and intellectual genus of Gods, together with all the supermundane and mundane divinities as the God of all Gods, the unity of all unities, and beyond the first adyta,\* — as more ineffable than all silence, and more unknown than all essence,— as holy among the holies, and concealed in the intelligible Gods."

\* i. e. The highest order of intelligibles.

The scientific reasoning from which this dogma is deduced is the following: As the principle of all things is *the one*, it is necessary that the progression of beings should be continued, and that no vacuum should intervene either in incorporeal or corporeal natures. It is also necessary that every thing which has a natural progression should proceed through similitude. In consequence of this, it is likewise necessary that every producing principle should generate a number of the same order with itself, viz. *nature*, a natural number;

*soul*, one that is psychical (i. e. belonging to soul);  
and *intellect*, an intellectual number.

For if whatever possesses a power of generating, generates similars prior to dissimilars, every cause must deliver its own form and characteristic peculiarity to its progeny; and before it generates that which gives subsistence to progressions far distant and separate from its nature, it must constitute things proximate to itself according to essence, and conjoined with it through similitude.

It is therefore necessary from these premises, since there is one unity the principle of the universe, that this unity should produce from itself, prior to every thing else, a multitude of natures characterized by unity, and a number the most of all things allied to its cause; and these natures are no other than the Gods.

According to this theology therefore, from the immense principle of principles, in which all things causally subsist, absorbed in superessential light, and involved in unfathomable depths, a beauteous progeny of principles proceed, all largely partaking of the ineffable, all stamped with the occult [hidden] characters of deity, all possessing an overflowing fulness of good.

From these dazzling summits, these ineffable blossoms, these divine propagations, being, life, intellect, soul, nature, and body depend; *monads* suspended from *unities*, deified natures proceeding from deities. Each of these monads too, is the leader of a series which extends from itself to the last of things, and which while it proceeds from, at the same time abides in, and returns, to its leader.

And all these principles and all their progeny are finally centered and rooted by their summits in the first great all-comprehending one. Thus all beings proceed from, and are comprehended in the first being;

all intellects emanate from one first intellect; all souls from one first soul; all natures blossom from one first nature; and all bodies proceed from the vital and luminous body of the world. And lastly, all these great monads are comprehended in the first one, from

which both they and all their depending series are unfolded into light. Hence this first one is truly the unity of unities, the monad of monads, the principle of principles, the God of Gods, one and all things, and yet one prior to all.

No objections of any weight, no arguments but such as are sophistical, can be urged against this most sublime theory which is so congenial to the unperverted conceptions of the human mind, that it can only be treated with ridicule and contempt in degraded, barren, and barbarous ages. Ignorance and priestcraft, however, have hitherto conspired to defame those inestimable works, \* in which this and many other grand and important dogmas [teachings] can alone be found; and the theology of the Greeks has been attacked with all the insane fury of ecclesiastical zeal, and all the imbecil flashes of mistaken wit, by men whose conceptions on the subject, like those of a man between sleeping and waking, have been *turbid and wild, phantastic and confused, preposterous and vain*.

\* Viz. the present and other works of Proclus, together with those of Plotinus, Porphyry, Jamblichus [Iamblichus], Syrianus, Ammonius, Damascius, Olympiodorus, and Simplicius.

Indeed, that after the great incomprehensible cause of all, a divine multitude subsists, co-operating with this cause in the production and government of the universe, has always been, and is still admitted by all nations, and all religions, however much they may differ in their opinions respecting the nature of the subordinate deities, and the veneration which is to be paid to them by man;

and however barbarous the conceptions of some nations on this subject may be when compared with those of others. Hence, says the elegant Maximus Tyrius, "You will see one according law and assertion in all the earth, that there is one God, the king and father of all things, and many Gods, sons of God, ruling together with him.

This the Greek says, and the Barbarian says, the inhabitant of the Continent, and he who dwells near the sea, the wise and the unwise. And if you proceed as far as to the utmost shores of the ocean, there also there are Gods, rising very near to some, and setting very near to others." [Dissert. I. Edit. Princ.]

This dogma, too, is so far from being opposed by either the Old or New Testament, that it is admitted by both, though it forbids the religious veneration of the inferior deities, and enjoins the worship of one God alone, whose portion is Jacob, and Israel the line of his inheritance. The following testimonies will, I doubt not, convince the liberal reader of the truth of this assertion.

In the first place it appears from the 32d chapter of Deuteronomy, v. 8. in the Septuagint version, that "*the division of the nations was made according to the number of the angels of God,*" and not according to the number of the children of Israel, as the present Hebrew text asserts.

This reading was adopted by the most celebrated fathers of the Christian church, such as, among the Greeks, Origen, Basil, and Chrysostom, and among the Latins, Jerom and Gregory.

That this too, is the genuine reading, is evident from the 4th chapter of the same book and the 19th verse, in which it is said, " And lest thou lift up thine eyes unto heaven, and when thou seest the sun and the moon, and the stars, even all the host of heaven, shouldst be driven to worship them, and serve them, *which the Lord thy God hath divided unto all nations under the whole heaven.*"

Here it is said that the stars are divided to all the nations, which is equivalent to saying that the nations were divided according to the number of the stars; the Jewish legislator at the same time, considering his own nation as an exception, and as being under the government of the God of Israel alone. For in the following verse it is added, " But the Lord hath taken you (i. e. the Jews), and brought you forth out of the iron furnace, *even out of Egypt*, to be unto him a people of inheritance, as *ye* are to this day."

By the angels of God therefore (in Deuteron.32. v. 8.) the stars are signified; and these in the same book (chapter 17. v. 3.) are expressly called Gods; " And hath gone and served other Gods, and worshipped them, *either the sun or moon, or any of the host of heaven, which I have not commanded*" In the 3d chapter also, and the 24th verse, it is implied in the question which is there asked, that the God of the Jews is superior to all the celestial and terrestrial Gods: "For what God is there in heaven, or in earth, that can do according to thy works, and according to thy might?"

As the attention of the Jews was solely confined to the worship of the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, they but little regarded the powers whom they conceived to be subordinate to this God, and considering all of them as merely the messengers of their God, they gave them the general appellation of *angels*; though as we shall shortly prove from the testimony of the Apostle Paul, they were not consistent in confounding *angels* properly so called with *Gods*.

But that the stars are not called Gods by the Jewish legislator as things inanimate like statues fashioned of wood or stone, is evident from what is said in the book of Job, and the Psalms: "Behold even the moon and it shineth not, yea the stars are not pure in his sight. How much less man that is a worm, and the son of man which is a worm?" (Job. xxv. v. 5. and 6.)

And, "When I consider thy heavens, the work of thy fingers, the moon and the stars which thou hast ordained; what is man that thou art mindful of him, and the son of man that thou visitest him." (Psalm viii. v. 3. and 4.)

It is evident therefore from these passages, that the heavens and the stars are more excellent than man; but nothing inanimate can be more excellent than that which is animated. To which may be added, that in the following verse David says, that God has made man a little lower than the angels. But the stars, as we have shown, were considered by Moses as angels and Gods; and consequently, they are animated beings, and superior to man.

Farther still, in the Septuagint version of verse the 4th of the 19th Psalm, God is said to *have placed his tabernacle in the sun*, which is doubtless the genuine reading, and not that of the vulgar translation, "In them (i. e. the heavens) hath he set a tabernacle for the sun."



For this is saying nothing more of the sun than what may be said of any of the other stars, and produces in us no exalted conception of the artificer of the universe. But to say that God dwells in the sun, gives us a magnificent idea both of that glorious luminary, and the deity who dwells enshrined, as it were, in dazzling splendor. To which we may add in confirmation of this version of the Septuagint, that in Psalm xi. v. 4. it is said, "The Lord's throne is in heaven."

And again in Isaiah lxvi, v. 1. "Thus saith the Lord, the heaven is my throne, and the earth is my footstool." If therefore the heavens are the throne, and the sun the tabernacle of deity, they must evidently be deified. For nothing can come into immediate contact with divinity without being divine. Hence, says Simplicius, \* "That it is connascent with the human soul to think the celestial bodies are divine, is especially evident from those, (the Jews) who look to these bodies through preconceptions about divine natures. For they also say that the heavens are the habitation of God, and the throne of God, and are alone sufficient to reveal the glory and excellence of God to those who are worthy; than which assertions what can be more venerable?"

\* In his commentary on the second book of Aristotle's treatise On the Heavens.

Indeed, that the heavens are not the inanimate throne and residence of deity, is also evident from the assertion in the 19th Psalm, "That the heavens declare the glory of God." For R. Moses, a very learned Jew, says, \* "that the word *saphar*, to *declare* or *set forth*, is never attributed to things inanimate." Hence he concludes, "that the heavens are not without some soul, which, says he, is no other than that of those blessed intelligences, who govern the stars, and dispose them into such letters as God has ordained; declaring unto us men by means of this writing, what events we are to expect. And hence, this same writing is called by all the ancients *chetab hamelachim*, that is to say, *the writing of the angels*."

The Gods therefore, which were distributed to all the nations but the Jews, were the sun and moon, and the other celestial bodies, yet not so far as they are bodies, but so far as they are animated beings.

Hence the Hebrew prophets never reprobate and prohibit the worship of the stars as things which neither see, nor hear, nor understand, as they do the worship of statues. Thus in Deuteron. iv. and 28. "And there ye shall serve Gods the work of men's hands, wood and stone, which neither see nor hear, nor eat, nor smell."

And the Psalmist, "They have a mouth but speak not, &c." These, and many other things of the like kind are said by the prophets of the Jews against the worship of images and statues, but never of the sun and moon, and the other stars. But when they blame the worship of the heavenly bodies, they assign as the cause that the people of Israel are not attributed to them as other nations are, in consequence of being the inheritance of the God that brought them out of the land of Egypt, and out of the house of bondage. This is evident from the before cited passage in the 4th chapter of Deuteronomy, in which it is said that the stars are divided unto all nations under the whole heaven but the Jews.

\* See Gaffarel's Unheard-of Curiosities, p. 301.

Indeed, as the emperor Julian justly observes [Apud Cyril], " unless a certain ethnarchic God presides over every nation, and under this God there is an angel, a daemon, and a peculiar genus of souls, subservient and ministrant to more excellent natures, from which the difference in laws and manners arises,—unless this is admitted, let it be shown by any other how this difference is produced. For it is not sufficient to say, "God said, and it was done," but it is requisite that the natures of things which are produced should accord with the mandates of divinity. But I will explain more clearly what I mean. God, for instance, commanded that fire should tend upward, and earthly masses downward; is it not therefore requisite, in order that the mandate of God may be accomplished, that the former should be light, and the latter heavy? Thus also in a similar manner in other things. Thus too, in divine concerns. But the reason of this is, because the human race is frail and corruptible.

Hence also, the works of man are corruptible and mutable, and subject to all-various revolutions. But God being eternal, it is also fit that his mandates should be eternal. And being such, they are either the natures of things, or conformable to the natures of things. For how can nature contend with the mandate of divinity? How can it fall off from this concord?

If, therefore, as he ordered that there should be a confusion of tongues, and that they should not accord with each other, so likewise he ordered that the political concerns of nations should be discordant;

he has not only effected this by his mandate, but has rendered us naturally adapted to this dissonance. For to effect this, it would be requisite, in the first place, that the natures of those should be different, whose political concerns among nations are to be different. This, indeed, is seen in bodies, if any one directs his attention to the Germans and Scythians, and considers how much the bodies of these differ from those of the Lybians and Ethiopians. Is this therefore, a mere mandate, and does the air contribute nothing, nor the relation and position of the region with respect to the celestial bodies?"

Julian adds, "Moses, however, though he knew the truth of this, concealed it; nor does he ascribe the confusion of tongues to God alone.

For he says, that not only God descended, nor one alone with him, but many, though he does not say who they were. But it is very evident, that he conceived those who descended with God to be similar to him. If, therefore, not the Lord only, but those who were with him contributed to this confusion of tongues, they may justly be considered as the causes of this dissonance."

In short, that the heavens and the celestial bodies are animated by certain divine souls, was not only the opinion of the ancient poets and philosophers, but also of the most celebrated fathers of the church, and the most learned and acute of the schoolmen. Thus for instance, this is asserted by Jerom in his exposition of the 6th verse of the first chapter of Ecclesiastes.

And by Origen in his book On Principles, who says that the heavenly bodies must be animated, because they are said to receive the mandates of God, which is only consentaneous to a rational nature.

This too is asserted by Eusebius in his Theological Solutions, and by Augustine in his Enchiridion. Among the schoolmen too, this was the opinion of Albertus Magnus in his

book *De quatuor Coaequaevis*; of Thomas Aquinas in his treatise *De Spiritualibus Creaturis*; and of Johannes Scotus *Super Secundo Sententiarum*.

To these likewise may be added, the most learned Cardinal Nicolaus Cusanus. Aureolus indeed strenuously contends for the truth of this opinion, and does not even think it improper to venerate the celestial bodies with outward worship (*duliae cultu*) and to implore

their favour and assistance. And Thomas Aquinas says, that he has no other objection to this than that it might be the occasion of idolatry. Hence, though it may seem ridiculous to most of the present time, that divine souls should be placed in the stars, and preside over regions and cities, tribes and people, nations and tongues, yet it did not appear so to the more intelligent Christians of former times.

I had almost forgotten however the wisest of the ancient Christians, but as he was the best of them, I have done well in reserving him to the last; and this is no other than the Platonic bishop Synesius. This father of the church therefore, in his third hymn, sings as follows: [Greek omitted, ed.]

"Thee, father of the worlds, rather of the aeones \*, artificer of the *Gods*, it is holy to praise. Thee, O king, the intellectual Gods sing, thee, O blessed God, the *Cosmagi*, those fulgid eyes, and starry intellects, celebrate, round which the illustrious body [of the world] dances. All the race of the blessed sing thy praise, those that are about, and those that are in the world, the zonic Gods, and also the azonic,\*\* who govern the parts of the world, wise itinerants, stationed about the illustrious pilots [of the universe,] and which the angelic series pours forth. Thee too, the renowned genus of heroes celebrates, which by occult [hidden] paths pervades the works of mortals, and likewise the soul which does not incline to the regions of mortality, and the soul which descends into dark terrestrial masses."

\* What these are will be shortly explained, when we come to speak of the Apostle Paul.

\*\* Synesius does not here speak conformably to the Chaldean theologians, from whom he has derived these appellations. For the zonic and the azonic pertain to Gods, the former being the divinities of the stars, and the latter [azonos] forming that order of Gods which is called by Proclus in the sixth book of this work *apolusis*, liberated. [note slightly edited, ed.]

Both these orders therefore, are superior to the angelic series. This unscientific manner however of calling both the highest and lowest divine powers by the common name of angels, is not peculiar to Synesius and the Jews, but to all the fathers of the church, and all the Christian divines that succeeded them.

In another part also of the same hymn, he informs us that he adored the powers that preside over Thrace and Chalcedon.

[Greek text omitted, ed.], i. e. " I have supplicated the ministrant Gods that possess the

Thracian soil, and also those that, in an opposite direction, govern the Chalcedonian land."

And in the last place he says (in Hymn I.)

[Greek text omitted, ed.]

The substance of which is, "that incorruptible intellect which is wholly an emanation of divinity, is totally diffused through the whole world, convolves the heavens, and preserves the universe with which it is present distributed in various forms. That one part of this intellect is distributed among the stars, and becomes, as it were, their charioteer; but another part among the angelic choirs; and another part is bound in a terrestrial form."

I confess I am wholly at a loss to conceive what could induce the moderns to controvert the dogma, that the stars and the whole world are animated, as it is an opinion of infinite antiquity, and is friendly to the most unperverted, spontaneous, and accurate conceptions of the human mind.

Indeed, the rejection of it appears to me to be just as absurd as it would be in a maggot, if it were capable of syllogizing, to infer that man is a machine impelled by some external force when he walks, because it never saw any animated reptile so large.

The sagacious Kepler, for so he is called even by the most modern writers,\* appears to have had a conception of this great truth; but as he was more an astronomer than a philosopher, he saw this truth only partially, and he rather embraced it as subservient to his own astronomical opinions, than as forming an essential part of the true theory of the universe. But from what I have seen of the writings of Kepler, I have no doubt, if he had lived in the time of the Greeks, or if he had made the study of the works of Plato and Aristotle the business of his life, he would have become an adept in, and an illustrious and zealous champion of their philosophy. Kepler then (in *Harmonices Mundi*, lib. 4, p. 158) says, "That he does not oppose the dogma, that there is a soul of the universe, though he shall say nothing about it in that book, He adds, that if there is such a soul, it must reside in the centre of the world, which, according to him, is the sun, and from thence by the communication of the rays of light, which are in the place of spirits in an animated body, is propagated into all the amplitude of the world."\*\*

In the following passages also he confidently asserts that the earth has a soul. For he says, "That the globe of the earth is a body such as is that of some animal; and that what its own soul is to an animal, that the sublunary nature which he investigates will be to the earth"\*\*\*

\* Dr. Gregory, in the 70th proposition of the first book of his *Elements of Astronomy*, says of Kepler, "That his archetypal ratios, geometrical concinnities, and harmonic proportions, show such a force of genius as is not to be found in any of the writers of physical astronomy before him. So that Jeremiah Horrox, a very competent judge of these matters, though a little averse to Kepler, in the beginning of his astronomical studies, after having in vain tried others, entirely falling in with Kepler's doctrine and physical reasons, thus addresses his reader: *Kepler is a person whom I may justly admire above all mortals beside: I may call him great, divine, or even something more; since Kepler is to be valued above the whole tribe of philosophers. Him alone let the bards sing of.—Him alone let the*

*philosophers read; being satisfied of this, that he who has Kepler has all things.*

I quote this passage, not from the justness of the encomium it contains; for it is extravagant, and by no means true; but that the reader may see what an exalted opinion some of the greatest of the moderns have had of the genius of Kepler.

\*\* "Et primum quidem de anima totius universi etsi non repugno, nihil tamen hoc libro IV. dicam. Videtur enim (si est talis aliqua) in centro mundi, quod mihi sol est, residere, indeque in omnem ejus amplitudinem commercio radiorum lucis, qui sint loco spirituum in corpora animali propagari."

\*\*\* "Denique terrae globus tale corpus erit, quale est alicujus animalis: quodque animali est sua anima, hoc erit telluri haec, quam quaerimus, natura sublunaris."

He adds, "That he sees for the most part every thing which proceeding from the body of an animal testifies that there is a soul in it, proceeds also from the body of the earth. For as the animated body produces in the superficies of the skin hairs, thus also the earth produces [on its surface] plants and trees; and as in the former lice are generated, so in the latter the worms called erucæ, grasshoppers, and various insects and marine monsters are produced. As the animated body likewise produces tears, mucus, and the secretion of the ears, and sometimes gum from the pustules of the face, thus also the earth produces amber and bitumen. As the bladder too produces urine, thus likewise mountains pour forth rivers. And as the body produces excrement of a sulphureous odour, and crepitus which may also be inflamed, so the earth produces sulphur, subterranean fires, thunder, and lightning. And as in the veins of an animal blood is generated, and together with it sweat which is ejected out of the body, so in the veins of the earth, metals, and fossils, and a rainy vapour are generated."\* And in cap. 7, p. 162, after having shown that there is in the earth the sense of touching, that it respire, and is subject in certain parts to languors, and internal vicissitudes of the viscera, and that subterranean heat proceeds from the soul of the earth, he adds, "That a certain image of the zodiac is resplendent in this soul, and therefore of the whole firmament, and is the bond of the sympathy of things celestial and terrestrial."

Bishop Berkeley also was by no means hostile to this opinion, that the world is one great animal, as is evident from the following extract from his *Siris*, (p. 131).

"Blind fate and blind chance are at bottom much the same thing, and one no more intelligible than the other. Such is the mutual relation, connection, motion, and sympathy of the parts of this world, that they seem, as it were, animated and held together by one soul: and such is their harmony, order, and regular course, as shows the soul to be governed and directed by a mind. It was an opinion of remote antiquity that the world was an animal. If we may trust the Hermaic writings, the AEgyptians thought all things did partake of life. This opinion was also so general and current among the Greeks, that Plutarch asserts all others held the world to be an animal, and governed by providence, except Leucippus, Democritus, and Epicurus. And although an animal containing all bodies within itself, could not be touched or sensibly affected from without; yet it is plain

they attributed to it an inward sense and feeling, as well as appetites and aversions; and that from all the various tones, actions, and passions of the universe, they supposed one symphony, one animal act and life to result.

"Iamblichus declares the world to be one animal, in which the parts, however distant each from other, are nevertheless related and connected by one common nature. And he teaches, what is also a received notion of the Pythagoreans and Platonics, that there is no chasm in nature, but a chain or scale of beings rising by gentle uninterrupted gradations from the lowest to the highest, each nature being informed and perfected by the participation of a higher. As air becomes igneous, so the purest fire becomes animal and the animal soul becomes intellectual, which is to be understood, not of the change of one nature into another, but of the connection of different natures, each Lower nature being, according to those philosophers, as it were, a receptacle or subject for the next above it to reside and act in.

"It is also the doctrine of Platonic philosophers, that intellect is the very life of living things, the first principle and exemplar of all, from whence, by different degrees, are derived the inferior classes of life; first the rational, then the sensitive, after that the vegetable, but so as in the rational animal there is still somewhat intellectual, again in the sensitive there is somewhat rational, and in the vegetable somewhat sensitive, and lastly in mixed bodies, as metals and minerals, somewhat of vegetation. By which means the whole is thought to be more perfectly connected. Which doctrine implies that all the faculties, instincts, and motions of inferior beings, in their several respective subordinations, are derived from, and depend upon intellect.

"Both Stoics and Platonics held the world to be alive, though sometimes it be mentioned as a sentient animal, sometimes as a plant or vegetable. *But in this, notwithstanding what has been surmised by some learned men, there seems to be no atheism. For so long as the world is supposed to be quickened by elementary fire or spirit, which is itself animated by soul, and directed by understanding, it follows that all parts thereof originally depend upon, and may be reduced unto, the same indivisible stem or principle, to wit, a supreme mind; which is the concurrent doctrine of Pythagoreans, Platonics, and Stoics.*"

Compare now the Newtonian with this theory, that the heavenly bodies are vitalized by their informing souls, that their orderly motion is the result of this vitality, and that the planets move harmonically round the sun, not as if urged by a centripetal force, but from an animated tendency to the principle and fountain of their light, and from a desire of partaking as largely as possible of his influence and power. In the former theory all the celestial motions are the effect of violence, in the latter they are all natural. The former is attended with insuperable difficulties, the latter, when the principle on which it is founded is admitted, with none. And the former is unscientific and merely hypothetical; but the latter is the progeny of the most accurate science, and is founded on the most genuine and unperverted conceptions of the human mind.

I have said that I should prove from the testimony of the Apostle Paul, that the Jews were

not consistent in confounding *angels* properly so called with Gods. And this appears to me to be evident in the first place from the following passage in Hebrews ii. v. 3. [Greek text omitted, ed.] This in the English version is erroneously rendered; "Through faith we understand, that the worlds were framed by the word of God, so that things which are seen, were not made of things which do appear." I say this is erroneously translated, because in the first place, *the worlds* is evidently a forced interpretation of *Aionas* [Aeons]; and even admitting it is not, leaves the passage very ambiguous, from the uncertainty to what worlds Paul alludes. If we adopt ages, which is the general sense of the word in the New Testament, we shall indeed avoid a forced and ambiguous interpretation, but we shall render the meaning of the Apostle trifling in the extreme. For as he has elsewhere said, "that all things were framed by the word of God," what particular faith does it require to believe, that by the same word he framed the ages?

In the second place, from the definition of faith, given in the first verse of this chapter, that it is "the evidence of *things not seen*" it is clear, that Paul is speaking in this passage of something *invisible*. Since then *aionas* is neither *worlds* nor *ages*, what shall we say it is? I answer, the *aeones* of the Valentinians. And agreeably to this, the whole passage should be translated as follows: "By faith we understand, that the *aeones* were framed by the word of God, in order that things which are seen, might be generated from such as do not appear (i.e. from things *invisible*)"

Every one who is much conversant with Greek authors, must certainly be convinced that *eis to* means *in order that*; and Bishop Pearson translates as I have done the latter part of this verse.

Now we learn from the second book of Irenaeus against the heretics, that according to the Valentinians, all created things are the images of the *aeones*, resident in the *pleroma*, or *fulness* of deity. And does it not clearly follow from the above version, that according to Paul too, the aeones are the exemplars of visible or created things? To which we may add, that this sense of the passage clearly accords with the assertion that "faith is the evidence of things not seen." For here the things which do not appear are the *aeones*; these, according to the Valentinians, subsisting in deity. So that from our version, Paul might say with great propriety, that "we understand by faith, that the *aeones* were framed by the word of God, in order that things which are seen, might be generated from such as do not appear," for this naturally follows from his definition of faith.

I farther add, that among these *aeones* of the Valentinians were nous, bythos, sige, aletheia, sophia, i.e. *intellect, a profundity, silence, truth, and wisdom*, which as Gale well observes in his notes on Iamblichus de Mysteriis, &c. prove their dogmas to be of Chaldaic origin. For these words perpetually occur in the fragments of the Chaldaic oracles. And the middle of the Chaldean intelligible triad is denominated aeon,\* i. e. *eternity*, and is also perfectly conformable to the theology of Plato, as is very satisfactorily shown by Proclus in the third book of the following work. According to the Chaldeans therefore, the aeones are Gods; and considered as the exemplars of the visible universe, they are analogous to the ideas of Plato, which also are Gods, as is evident from the Parmenides of that philosopher.\*\* According to Paul too, as the aeones are the fabricators of the visible world, they must be beings of a much higher order than

angels, and consequently must be Gods; productive power being one of the great characteristics of a divine nature.

\* Proclus begins the sixth book of the following work with observing that he has celebrated in the preceding book the hebdomadic aeon of the intellectual Gods. The *aeones* therefore, though the cense of them exists in the intelligible, properly belong to the intellectual order; and the Demiurgus or artificer of the universe subsists at the extremity of that order. But the demiurgus according to Orpheus, prior to the fabrication of the world absorbed in himself Phanes the exemplar of the universe. Hence he became full of ideas of which the forms in the sensible universe are the images. And as all intellectual natures are in each, it is evident that *things which are seen were generated from the invisible aeones*, conformably to the assertion of Paul.

\*\* I refer the reader who is desirous of being fully convinced of this to the notes accompanying my translation of that dialogue, in vol. 3 of my Plato.

Again, in the Epistle to the Ephesians, chap. i. v. 21. Paul says that God has exalted Christ "far above every principality, and power, and might, and dominion," [Greek text omitted, ed.]. And in the 6th chapter and 12th verse he conjoins with principalities and powers, *the rulers of the world*, i. e. the seven planets.[Greek text omitted, ed.]

Augustin \* confesses that he is ignorant what the difference is between those four words, (principality, power, might, and dominion,) in which the Apostle Paul seems to comprehend all the celestial society. "Quid inter se distent quatuor illa vocabula, quibus universam ipsam coelestem societatem videtur Apostolus esse complexus, dicant qui possunt, si tamen possunt probare quod dicunt; ego me ista ignorare fateor." Ignatius also (in Epist. ad Trallianos) speaks of the angelic orders, the diversities of archangels and armies, the differences of the orders characterised by might and dominion, of thrones and powers, *the magnificence of the aeones*,\*\* and the transcendency of Cherubim and Seraphim," [Greek text omitted, ed.]

\* Ad Laurentium, c. 58.

\*\* Here we see the *aeones* are acknowledged by Irenaeus to be beings of an order superior to angels.

The opinion of Grotius\* therefore, is highly probable, that the Jews obtained the names of Powers, Dominations, and Principalities, from their Babylonian captivity; and Gale in his notes on Iamblichus\*\* says, that certain passages of Zoroaster and Ostanus cited by the author of Arithm. Theolog. confirm this opinion of Grotius. Indeed, the appellation of *Archai* principles, which are the first of the four powers mentioned by Paul, was given by the Chaldeans to that order of Gods called by the Grecian theologians *supermundane* and *assimilative*, the nature of which is unfolded by Proclus in the sixth book of the following work; and Proclus in the fourth book of his MS. Commentary On the Parmenides of Plato



shows that the order of Gods denominated *noetos kai noeros*, *intelligible and at the same time intellectual*, is according to the Chaldean oracles\*\*\* principally characterized by domination. In proof of this, the two following oracles are cited by him, the first, concerning the empyrean, and the second concerning the material Synoches.\*\*\*\*

[Greek text omitted, ed.] i. e. All things yield ministrant to the intellectual presters of intellectual fire, through the persuasive will Of (he father."

And [Greek text omitted, ed.] i. e. " But likewise such as are in subjection to the material Synoches."

Further still, Paul in the Epistle to the Romans, chap. viii. v. 38, says, " For I am persuaded that neither death nor life, nor *angels*, nor *principalities*, nor *powers*, nor things present, nor things to come, nor *height*, nor *depth*, nor any other creature, shall be able to separate us from the love of God, etc."

From this arrangement therefore, it is evident that principalities and powers are not the same with angels; and as according to Paul they are beings so exalted, that in his Epistle to the Ephesians, he could not find any thing more magnificent to say of Christ, than that he is raised even above them, it follows that they must be Gods, since they are superior to the angelic order.

It is remarkable too, that he coarranges *height* and *depth* (*upsoma kai bathos*) with principalities and powers; and bythos is one of the aeones according to the Valentinians.

\* Ad Cap. 18. Matthaei.

\*\* De Myst. p. 206.

\*\*\* See my Collection of these Oracles in the old Monthly Magazine.

\*\*\*\* The Synoches form the second triad of the intelligible, and at the same time intellectual order of Gods.

In the first Epistle to the Corinthians likewise, chap. viii. v. 5. Paul expressly asserts that there is a divine multitude. For he says, "Though there be that are called Gods, whether in heaven or in earth, (as there be Gods many and Lords many;)" in the parenthesis of which verse, it is incontrovertibly evident that he admits the existence of a plurality of Gods, though as well as the heathens he believed that one God only was supreme and the father of *all* things. Nor am I singular in asserting that this was admitted by Paul. For the Pseudo-Dionysius the Areopagite in the second chapter of his treatise On the Divine Names observes concerning what is here said by Paul as follows: "Again, from the deific energy of God, by which every thing according to its ability becomes deiform, many Gods are generated; in consequence of which there appears and is said to be a separation and multiplication of the one [supreme] God. Nevertheless, God himself, who is the chief deity, and is superessentially the supreme, is

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