

Meditation

Proclus on Plato

Translated by Thomas Taylor

PROCLUS had evidently this beautiful passage in view,¹ when, in his second book *On the Theology of Plato* II, 11 [TTS Vol. VIII, p. 166], he celebrates the ineffable principles of things, with the following matchless magnificence of diction.

“Let us now, if ever, remove from ourselves multiform knowledge, exterminate all the variety of life, and in perfect quiet approach near to the cause of all things. For this purpose, let not only opinion and phantasy be at rest, nor the passions alone which impede our anagogic impulse to *the first* be at peace; but let the air be still, and the universe itself be still. And let all things extend us with a tranquil power to communion with the ineffable. Let us also, standing there, having transcended the intelligible (if we contain any thing of this kind), and with nearly closed eyes adoring as it were the rising sun since it is not lawful for any being whatever intently to behold him — let us survey the sun whence the light of the intelligible gods proceeds, emerging, as the poets say, from the bosom of the ocean; and again, from this divine tranquillity descending into intellect, and from intellect, employing the reasonings of the soul, let us relate to ourselves what the natures are, from which, in this progression, we shall consider the first god as exempt. And let us as it were celebrate him, not as establishing the earth and the heavens, nor as giving subsistence to souls, and the generations 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.”²

¹ [V.s. *Ennead* V, i ¶ 2 on letting “a certain other soul whose dignity in contemplating is not small, being liberated from deception, and the allurements which fascinate other souls, be established in a quiet condition and survey a mighty soul.” *et seq.*]

² Taylor T. (*Tr. & Annot.*). *Collected Writings of Plotinus*. (Vol. III of The Thomas Taylor Series) Frome: The Prometheus Trust, 2000; [*Ennead* V, i ¶ 2, p. 300 *fn. et seq.*]

