

# *Dissertation on the Hymns of Orpheus*



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<sup>1</sup> *Frontispiece: Orpheus and Eurydice in Hades by Llewllaw.*

# Thomas Taylor on the Hymns of Orpheus

## Analysis and exegesis

Thomas Taylor's Dissertation on *The Mystical Hymns of Orpheus* (or Initiations) *being Invocations used in the Eleusinian Mysteries*. 1<sup>st</sup> ed. 1787; (pp. 276-313 in the Prometheus Trust's revised edition of 2003). Minor corrections and typographical layout by Philaetheians UK. More studies on Orpheus can be found in the same series. — ED. PHIL.

### Preface

**T**HERE IS DOUBTLESS A REVOLUTION in the literary, correspondent to that of the natural world. The face of things is continually changing; and the perfect, and perpetual harmony of the universe, subsists by the mutability of its parts. In consequence of this fluctuation, different arts and sciences have flourished at different periods of the world: but the complete circle of human knowledge has, I believe, never subsisted at once, in any nation or age. Where accurate and profound researches into the principles of things have advanced to perfection; there, by a natural consequence, men have neglected the disquisition of particulars: and where sensible particulars have been the general object of pursuit, the science of universals has languished, or sunk into oblivion and contempt.

Thus wisdom, the object of all true philosophy, considered as exploring the causes and principles of things, flourished in high perfection among the Egyptians first, and afterwards in Greece. Polite literature was the pursuit of the Romans; and experimental enquiries, increased without end, and accumulated without order, are the employment of modern philosophy. Hence we may justly conclude that the age of true philosophy is no more. In consequence of very extended natural discoveries, trade and commerce have increased; while abstract investigations, have necessarily declined: so that modern enquiries, never rise above sense; and everything is despised, which does not in some respect or other contribute to the accumulation of wealth; the gratification of childish admiration; or the refinements of corporeal delight. The author of the following translation, therefore, cannot reasonably expect that his labours will meet with the approbation of the many: since these Hymns are too ancient, and too full of the Greek philosophy, to please the ignorant and the sordid. However, he hopes they will be acceptable to the few, who have drawn wisdom from its source; and who consider the science of universals, as first in the nature of things, though last in the progressions of human understanding.

The translator has adopted rhyme, not because most agreeable to general taste, but because, he believes it necessary to the poetry of the English language; which requires something as a substitute, for the energetic cadence, of the Greek and Latin



Hexameters. Could this be obtained by any other means, he would immediately relinquish his partiality for rhyme, which is certainly when well executed, far more difficult than blank verse, as the following Hymns must evince, in an eminent degree.

And, here it is necessary to observe, with respect to translation that nothing is more generally mistaken in its nature; or more faulty in its execution. The author of the *Letters on Mythology*,<sup>1</sup> gives it as his opinion that it is impossible to translate an ancient author, so as to do justice to his meaning. If he had confined this sentiment, to the beauties of the composition, it would doubtless have been just; but to extend it, to the meaning of an author, is to make truth and opinion, partial and incommunicable. Every person, indeed, acquainted with the learned languages, must be conscious how much the beauty of an ancient author generally suffers by translation, though undertaken by men, who have devoted the greatest part of their lives to the study of words alone. This failure, which has more than anything contributed to bring the ancients into contempt with the unlearned, can only be ascribed to the want of genius in the translators for the sentiment of Pythagoras is peculiarly applicable to such as these that many carry the Thyrsus,<sup>2</sup> but few are inspired with the spirit of the God. But this observation is remarkably verified, in the translators of the ancient philosophy, whose performances are for the most part without animation; and consequently retain nothing of the fire and spirit of the original. Perhaps, there is but one exception to this remark, and that is Mr. Sydenham: whose success in such an arduous undertaking can only be ascribed to his possessing the philosophical genius, and to his occasionally paraphrasing passages, which would otherwise be senseless and inanimate.

Indeed, where languages differ so much as the ancient and modern, the most perfect method, perhaps, of transferring the philosophy from the one language to the other, is by a faithful and animated paraphrase: faithful, with regard to retaining the sense of the author; and animated, with respect to preserving the fire of the original; calling it forth when latent, and expanding it when condensed. Such a one, will everywhere endeavour to improve the light, and fathom the depth of his author; to elucidate what is obscure, and to amplify, what in modern language would he unintelligibly concise.

Thus most of the compound epithets of which the following Hymns chiefly consist, though very beautiful in the Greek language; yet when literally translated into ours, lose all their propriety and force. In their native tongue, as in a prolific soil, they diffuse their sweets with full-blown elegance; but shrink like the sensitive plant at the touch of the verbal critic, or the close translator. He who would preserve their philosophical beauties, and exhibit them to others in a different language, must expand their elegance by the supervening and enlivening rays of the philosophic fire; and, by the powerful breath of genius, scatter abroad their latent but copious sweets.

If some sparks of this celestial fire shall appear to have animated the bosom of the translator, he will consider himself as well rewarded for his laborious undertaking.

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<sup>1</sup> [*Letters Concerning Mythology* published anonymously in 1748 by Thomas Blackwell (1701–1757), Professor of Greek in Marishall College, Aberdeen.]

<sup>2</sup> [Staff of a giant fennel (*Ferula communis*) covered with ivy vines and leaves, sometimes wound with ribbons and always topped with a pine cone.]

The ancient philosophy has been for many years the only study of his retired leisure; in which he has found an inexhaustible treasure of intellectual wealth, and a perpetual fountain of wisdom and delight. Presuming that such a pursuit must greatly advantage the present undertaking, and feeling the most sovereign contempt for the sordid drudgery of hired composition, he desires no other reward, if he has succeeded, than the praise of the liberal; and no other defence if he has failed, than the decision of the candid, and discerning few.



Nymphs finding the head of Orpheus (1900) John William Waterhouse

## Part 1

**T**HE GREAT OBSCURITY AND UNCERTAINTY in which the history of Orpheus is involved, affords very little matter for our information; and even renders that little, inaccurate and precarious. Upon surveying the annals of past ages, it seems that the greatest geniuses, have been subject to this historical darkness as is evident in those great lights of antiquity, Homer and Euclid, whose writings indeed enrich mankind with perpetual stores of knowledge and delight; but whose lives are for the most part concealed in impenetrable oblivion. But this historical uncertainty, is nowhere so apparent, as in the person of Orpheus; whose name is indeed acknowledged and celebrated by all antiquity (except perhaps Aristotle alone); while scarcely a vestige of his life is to be found amongst the immense ruins of time. For who has ever been able to affirm anything with certainty, concerning his origin, his age, his parents, his country, and condition? This alone may be depended on, from general assent that there formerly lived a person named Orpheus, whose father was Œagrus, who lived in Thrace, and who was the son of a king, who was the founder of theology, among the Greeks; the institutor of their life and morals; the first of prophets, and the prince of poets; himself the offspring of a Muse; who taught the Greeks their sacred rites and mysteries, and from whose wisdom, as from a perpetual and abundant fountain, the divine muse of Homer, and the philosophy of Pythagoras, and Plato, flowed; and, lastly, who by the melody of his lyre, drew rocks, woods, and wild beasts, stopped rivers in their course, and ever, moved the inexorable king of hell; as every page, and all the writings of antiquity sufficiently evince. Since thus much then may be collected from universal testimony, let us, pursue the matter a little farther, by investigating more accurately the history of the original Orpheus; with that of the great men who have, at different periods, flourished under this venerable name.

The first and genuine Orpheus was a poet of Thrace, and, according to the opinion of many, the disciple of Linus; who flourished, says Suidas, at the time when the kingdom of the Athenians was dissolved. Some assert that he was prior to the Trojan wars, and that he lived eleven, or according to others nine generations. But the Greek word *γενεα*, or generation, according to Gyraldus,<sup>1</sup> signifies the space of seven years; for unless this is supposed, how is it possible that the period of his life can have any foundation in the nature of things? Plutarch indeed, Heraclitus, Suidas, and some grammarians, assert that this word signifies a space of thirty years: but omitting the discussion of this latter opinion, from its impossibility, we shall embrace the former, agreeable to which Orpheus lived sixty-three years; a period, if we may believe the astrologers fatal to all, and especially to great men, as was the case with Cicero and Aristotle.

Our poet, according to fabulous tradition, was torn in pieces by Ciconian women: on which account, Plutarch affirms the Thracians were accustomed to beat their wives that they might revenge the death of Orpheus. Hence, in the vision of Herus Pamphilus, in Plato, the soul of Orpheus, being destined to descend into another body, is reported to have chosen rather that of a swan than to be born again of a woman;

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<sup>1</sup> Syntag., Poet., p. 54



having conceived such hatred against the sex, on account of his violent death. The cause of his destruction is variously related by authors. Some report that it arose from his being engaged in puerile loves, after the death of Eurydice. Others, that he was destroyed by women intoxicated with wine, because he was the means of men relinquishing their connexion. Others affirm, according to the tradition of Pausanias that, upon the death of Eurydice, wandering to Aornus, a place in Thesprotia, where it was customary to evocate the souls of the dead, having recalled Eurydice to life, and not being able to detain her, he destroyed himself; nightingales building their nests, and bringing forth their young upon his tomb; whose melody, according to report, exceeded every other of this species. Others again ascribe his laceration, to his having celebrated every divinity except Bacchus, which is very improbable, as among the following Hymns there are nine to that Deity, under different appellations. Others report that he was delivered by Venus herself, into the hands of the Ciconian women, because his mother Calliope, had not determined justly between Venus and Proserpine, concerning the young Adonis. Many affirm that he was struck by lightning, according to Pausanias; and Diogenes confirms this by the following verses composed as he asserts, by the Muses upon his death:

Here, by the Muses plac'd, with golden lyre,  
Great Orpheus rests; destroy'd by heav'nly fire.

Again, the sacred mysteries called Threscian derived their appellation from our Thracian bard, because he first introduced sacred rites and religion into Greece; and hence the authors of initiation in these mysteries were called Orpheotelestai. Besides, according to Lucian, our Orpheus brought astrology and the magical arts into Greece; and with respect to his drawing trees and wild beasts by the melody of his lyre, Palæphatus accounts for it as follows:<sup>1</sup>

The mad Bacchanalian nymphs, having violently taken away cattle and other necessities of life, retired for some days into the mountains. When the citizens having expected their return for a long time, and fearing the worst for their wives and daughters, called Orpheus, and entreated him to invent some method of drawing them from the mountains. But he tuning his lyre, agreeable to the orgies of Bacchus, drew the mad nymphs from their retreats; who descended from the mountains bearing at first ferulæ and branches of every kind of trees. But to the men who were eye-witnesses of these wonders, they appeared at first to bring down the very woods; and from hence gave rise to the fable.

But so great was the reputation of Orpheus that he was deified by the Greeks; and Philostratus relates that his head gave oracles in Lesbos which, when separated from his body by the Thracian women, was, together with his lyre, carried down the river Hebrus into the Sea. In this manner says Lucian,<sup>2</sup> singing as it were his funeral oration, to which the chords of his lyre impelled by the winds, gave a responsive harmony, it was brought to Lesbos and buried. But his lyre was suspended in the Temple of Apollo; where it remained for a considerable space of time. Afterwards, when Neanthus, the son of Pittacus the tyrant, found that the lyre drew trees and wild beasts

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<sup>1</sup> Opusc. Mythol., p. 45

<sup>2</sup> In *Oratione ad Indoctum*

with its harmony, he earnestly desired its possession; and having corrupted the priest privately with money, he took the Orphean lyre, and fixed another similar to it, in the temple. But Neanthus considering that he was not safe in the city in the day time, departed from it by night; having concealed the lyre in his bosom, on which he began to play. But as he was a rude and unlearned youth, he confounded the chords; yet pleasing himself with the sound, and fancying he produced a divine harmony, he considered himself as the blessed successor of Orpheus.

However, in the midst of his transports, the neighbouring dogs, roused by the sound, fell upon the unhappy harper and tore him to pieces. The former part of this fable is thus excellently explained by Proclus in his commentaries (or rather fragments of commentaries) on Plato's *Republic*; a work I would earnestly recommend to the liberal, for the great light it affords to the recondite theology of the Greeks:

Orpheus, on account of his perfect erudition, is reported to have been destroyed in various ways; because, in my opinion, men of that age, participated partially of the Orphic harmony; for they could not receive a universal and perfect science. But the principal part of his melody was received by the Lesbians; and on this account, perhaps, the head of Orpheus, when separated from his body, is said to have been carried to Lesbos. Fables of this kind, therefore, are related of Orpheus, no otherwise than of Bacchus, of whose mysteries he was the priest.

Thus far Proclus, and thus much concerning the first, or Thracian Orpheus.

The second Orpheus was an Arcadian, or, according to others, a Ciconian, from Bisaltia of Thrace; and is reported to be more ancient than Homer, and the Trojan war. He composed figments of fables called (*μυθοποιΐα*) and epigrams; and is, according to Gyraldus, the author of the following Hymns; though I rather choose to refer them, with the Fathers Vossius and Eschenbach, to Onomacritus, or the fourth Orpheus, of Crotonia.

The third Orpheus was of Odrysia, a city of Thrace, near the river Hebrus; but Dionysius, in Suidas, denies his existence.

The fourth Orpheus was of Crotonia, who flourished in the time of Pisistratus, about the fiftieth Olympiad; and is doubtless the same Onomacritus the author of these Hymns. He wrote Decennalia, *δεκαετηρία*, and, in the opinion of Gyraldus, the Argonautics, which are now extant under the name of Orpheus, with other writings called Orphical, but which, according to Cicero,<sup>1</sup> some ascribe to Cecrops the Pythagorean.

The last Orpheus, was Camarinæus, a most excellent versifier; and the same according to Gyraldus whose descent into hell is so universally known. And thus much for the life of Orpheus.

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<sup>1</sup> In I. *De Nat. Deor.*



## Part 2

**L**ET US NOW PROCEED TO HIS THEOLOGY; exchanging the obscurity of conjecture for the light of clear evidence; and the intricate labyrinths of fable for the delightful though solitary paths of truth. And here I must acquaint the reader that I shall everywhere deduce my information from the writings of the latter Platonists; as the only sources of genuine knowledge, on this sublime and obsolete enquiry.<sup>1</sup> The vulgar systems of mythology are here entirely useless; and he who should attempt to elucidate the theology, or Hymns of Orpheus, by any modern hypothesis, would be as ridiculously employed, as he who should expect to find the origin of a copious stream, by pursuing it to its last and most intricate involutions. In conformity with modern prejudices, the author of the *Letters on Mythology*<sup>2</sup> endeavours to prove that the Orphic Hymns deify the various parts of nature, not considered as animated by different intelligences but as various modifications of inert and lifeless matter. This hypothesis is no doubt readily embraced by the present philosophers, a great part of whom, deny the existence of anything incorporeal; and the better sort, who acknowledge one supreme immaterial Being, exclude the agency of subordinate intelligences in the government of the world; though this doctrine is perfectly philosophical, and at the same time consistent with revelation. The belief indeed of the man, who looks no higher than sense, must be necessarily terminated by appearances. Such a one introduces a dreadful chasm in the universe; and diffuses the deity through the world like an extended substance; divided with every particle of matter, and changed into the infinite varieties of sensible forms. But with the ancient philosopher, the deity is an immense and perpetually exuberant fountain; whose streams originally filled and continually replenish the world with life. Hence the universe contains in its ample bosom all general natures; divinities visible and invisible; the illustrious race of daimons; the noble army of exalted souls; and men rendered happy by wisdom and virtue. According to this theology, the power of universal soul does not alone diffuse itself to the sea, and become bounded by its circumfluent waters, while the wide expanse of air and aither, is destitute of life and soul; but the celestial spaces are filled with souls, supplying life to the stars, and directing their revolutions in everlasting order. So that the celestial orbs in imitation of intellect, which seeks after nothing external, are wifely agitated in perpetual circuit round the central sun. While some things participate of being alone, others of life, and others are endued with sentient powers; some possess the still higher faculty of reason; and lastly others, are all life and intelligence.

But let us rise a little higher, and contemplate the arguments by which the Platonists establish the Orphic doctrine of the existence and agency of subordinate intelligences. Thus then they reason:<sup>3</sup>

Of all beings it is necessary that some should move only, that others should be entirely moved; and that the beings situated between these two, should partici-

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<sup>1</sup> In the latter part of this Dissertation, we shall discourse on the agreement between the doctrine of Orpheus and the Platonists.

<sup>2</sup> [Thomas Blackwell, *op. cit.*]

<sup>3</sup> Procl. lib. i, *Theol. Plat.*

pate of the extremes, and both move and be moved. Among the first in dignity and order are those natures which move only; the second, those which move themselves; the third, those which move and are moved; and the fourth, those which are moved only. Now the second class of these, or the self-motive natures, since their perfection consists in transition and mutation of life must depend upon a more ancient cause, which subsists perpetually the same; and whose life is not conversant with the circulations of time, but is constituted in the stable essence of eternity. But it is necessary that the third class, which both move and are moved, should depend on a self-motive nature. For a self-motive being is the cause of motion to those, which are moved by another, in the same manner as that which is immovable, inserts in all beings the power of moving. And again, that which is moved only, must depend on those natures, which are indeed moved by another, but which are themselves endued with a motive-power. For it is necessary that the chain of beings should be complete; everywhere connected by proper mediums, and deduced in an orderly and perpetual series, from the principle to the extremes. All bodies therefore belong to those natures which are moved only, and are naturally passive; since they are destitute of all inherent energy, on account of their sluggish nature, which participates of division, magnitude, and weight.

But of incorporeals some are divisible about bodies; while others are entirely free from such an affection about the lowest order of beings. Hence such things, as are divided about the dead weight of bodies, whether they are material qualities or forms, belong to the orders of nature's moving, and at the same time moved. For such as these because incorporeal, participate of a motive faculty; but because they are also divided about bodies, they are on this account exempt from incorporeal perfection; are filled with material inactivity, and require the energy of a self-motive nature. Where then shall we find this self-motive essence? For such things as are extended with magnitude, oppressed by material weight, and inseparably reside in bodies, must necessarily either move only, or be moved by others. But it is requisite, as we have before observed, that prior to this order, the self-motive essence should subsist. And hence we conclude that there is another certain nature exempt from the passivity and imperfection of bodies, existing not only in the heavens, but in the ever-changing elements, from which the motion of bodies is primarily derived. And this nature is no other than soul, from which animals derive their life and motive power; and which even affords an image of self-motion to the unstable order of bodies.

If then the self-motive essence is more ancient than that which is moved by another, but soul is primarily self-motive, hence soul must be more ancient than body; and all corporeal motion must be the progeny of soul, and of her inherent energy. It is necessary, therefore, that the heavens, with all their boundless contents, and their various natural motions (for a circular motion, is natural to such bodies), should be endued with governing souls, essentially more ancient than their revolving bodies. According to the Platonic philosophers, therefore, these souls which orderly distinguish the universe and its contained parts, from their inherent cause of motion, give life and motion to every inanimate

body. But it is necessary that every motive essence, should either move all things rationally, or irrationally; that is, either according to the uniform and unerring laws of reason, or according to the brutal impulse of an irrational nature. But the constant order observed in the periods of the celestial bodies, the convenience of positions, and the admirable laws by which their revolutions are directed, plainly evince that their motions are governed by a rational nature. If therefore, an intellectual and rational soul governs the universe, and if everything eternally moved is under the directing influence of such a soul; may we not enquire whether it possesses this intellectual, perfect, and beneficent power, by participation, or essentially? for if essentially, it is necessary that every soul should be intellectual, since every soul is naturally self-motive. But if by participation, there must be another nature more ancient than soul, which operates entirely from energy; and whose essence is intelligence, on account of that uniform conception of universals, which it essentially contains. Because it is also necessary that the soul, essentially rational, should receive intellect by participation, and that intellectual energy should be of two kinds; one primarily subsisting in the divine intellect; but the other subsisting secondarily in its offspring soul. You may add too, the presence of intellectual illumination in body, which is received in as great perfection as its unstable and obscure nature will admit. For how is it possible that the celestial orbs should be for ever circularly moved in one definite order, preserving the same form, and the same immutable power, unless they participated of an intellectual nature. For soul is indeed the constant supplier of motion; but the cause of perpetual station, of identity and uniform life, reducing unstable motion to a circular revolution, and to a condition eternally the same, must be more ancient than soul.

Body, indeed, and whatever is the object of sense, belongs; to the order of things moved by another. But soul is self-motive, embracing in itself, in a connected manner, all corporeal motions. And prior to this is immovable intellect. And here it is requisite to observe that this immaterial nature must not be conceived as similar to anything inert, destitute of life, and endued with no spirit, but as the principal cause of all motion, and the fountain of all life; as well of that whose streams perpetually return into itself, as of that which subsists in others, and has, on this account only, a secondary and imperfect existence.

All things, therefore, depend upon unity, through the medium of intellect and soul. And intellect is of an uniform essence; but soul of a mental form, νοεῖδης, and the body of the world vivific, or vital, ζωτικός. The first cause of all is indeed prior to intellect, but intellect is the first recipient of a divine nature; and soul is divine, so far as it requires an intellectual medium. But the body which participates a soul of this kind is divine, in as great a degree as the nature of body will admit. For the illustration of intellectual light, pervades from the principle of things, to the extremes; and is not totally obscured, even when it enters the involutions of matter, and is profoundly merged in its dark and flowing receptacle.

Hence we may with reason conclude that not only the universe, but each of its eternal parts is animated. and endued with intellect, and is in its capacity simi-



lar to the universe. For each of these parts, is a universe if compared with the multitude it contains, and to which it is allied. There is, therefore, according to the Orphic and Platonic theology, one soul of the universe; and after this others, which from participating this general soul, dispose the entire parts of the universe into order; and one intellect which is participated by souls, and one supreme God, who comprehends the world in his infinite nature, and a multitude of other divinities, who distribute intellectual essences, together with their dependent souls, and all the parts of the world, and who are the perpetual sources of its order, union, and consent. For it is not reasonable to suppose that every production of nature, should have the power of generating its similar, but that the universe and primary essences should not more abundantly possess an ability of such like procreation; since sterility can only belong to the most abject, and not to the most excellent natures.

In consequence of this reasoning, Orpheus filled all things with Gods, subordinate to the demiurgus of the whole *Δημιουργία*, every one of which performs the office destined to his divinity, by his superior leader. Hence according to his theology there are two worlds, the intelligible and the sensible. Hence too his three demiurgic principles: Jovial, Dionysiacal, and Adonical, *Διος, Διονυσιακή, Αδωναική*, from whence many orders and differences of Gods proceed: intelligible,<sup>1</sup> intellectual, supermundane, mundane, celestial, authors of generation. And among these some in the order of guardian, demiurgic, elevating and comprehending Gods; perfecters of works, vivific, immutable, absolute, judicial, purgative, &c. and besides these to each particular divinity, he added a particular multitude of angels, daimons, and heroes; for according to Proclus, relating the opinion of Orpheus, and the theologists:<sup>2</sup>

About every God there is a kindred multitude of angels, heroes, and daimons. For every God presides over the form of that multitude which receives the divinity.

He likewise considered a difference of sex in these deities, calling some male, and others female; the reason of which distinction Proclus,<sup>3</sup> with his usual elegance and subtilty, thus explains.

The division of male and female comprehends in itself, all the plenitudes of divine orders. Since the cause of stable power and identity, and the leader (*χορηγος*) of being, and that which invests all things with the first principle of conversion, is comprehended in the masculine order. But that which generates from itself, all various progressions and partitions, measures of life and prolific powers, is contained in the female division. And on this account Timæus also, converting himself to all the Gods, by this division of generated natures, embraces their universal orders. But a division of this kind, is particularly accommodated and proper to the present Theory, because the universe is full of this two-fold kind of Gods. For that we may begin with the extremes, heaven

<sup>1</sup> Θεοὶ Νοητοί, Νοεροί, Υπερκοσμοί, Ἐγκοσμοί, Οὐρανοί, Γενεσιουργοί. Et inter hos, αἱετὰ ταῖς φρουρητικῶν θεῶν, Δημιουργικῶν, Αναγωγῶν, Συνεκτικῶν, Τελεσιουργῶν, Ζωογονῶν, Αἰρετῶν, Απολυτῶν Κριτικῶν, Καθαρκτικῶν, &c. Eschenb. Epig., p. 58

<sup>2</sup> In *Timæum*, p. 67

<sup>3</sup> In *Tim.*, p. 290

corresponds with earth, in the order and proportion of male to female. Since the motion of the heavens imparts particular properties and powers, to particular things. But on the other hand earth receiving the celestial defluxions, becomes pregnant, and produces plants and animals of every kind. And of the Gods existing in the heavens, some are distinguished by the male division, and others by the female and the authors of generation, since they are themselves destitute of birth, are some of this order and others of that, for the demiurgic choir is abundant in the universe. There are also many canals as it as it were of life, some of which exhibit the male and others the female form. But why should I insist on this particular? since from the absolute unities, whether endued with a masculine, or a feminine form, various orders of beings flow into the universe.

Thus far Proclus. But that Orpheus was a monarchist, as well as a polytheist, is not only evident from the preceding arguments, originally derived from his Theology, but from the following verses quoted by Proclus.<sup>1</sup>

Hence with the universe great Jove contains  
The aither bright, and heav'ns exalted plains  
Th' extended restless sea, and earth renown'd  
Ocean immense, and Tartarus profound;  
Fountains and rivers, and the boundless main,  
With all that nature's ample realms contain,  
And Gods and Goddesses of each degree  
All that is past, and all that e'er shall be,  
Occultly, and in fair connection,<sup>2</sup> lies  
In Jove's wide womb, the ruler of the skies.

And in the same place, Proclus has preserved to us another copy of Orphic verses, which are also found in the writer (de Mundo); previous to which he observes that the demiurgus, or artificer of the world, being full of ideas, comprehended by these all things within himself, as that theologer (Orpheus) declares. With these verses we have connected others, agreeable to the order of Stephens, Eschenbach, and Gesner, as follows:

Jove is the first and last thund'ring king,  
Middle and head, from Jove all beings spring;  
In Jove the male and female forms combine,  
For Jove's a man, and yet a maid divine;  
Jove the strong basis of the earth contains,  
And the deep splendour of the starry plains;  
Jove is the breath of all; Jove's wondrous frame  
Lives in the rage of ever restless flame;  
Jove is the sea's strong root, the solar light,  
And Jove's the moon, fair regent of the night;  
Jove is a king by no restraint confin'd,

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<sup>1</sup> In *Tim.*, p. 95

<sup>2</sup> I have here followed the correction of Eschenbach, who reads *œîpa* instead of *ouppa* which is I think more expressive and philosophical.

And all things flow from Jove's prolific mind;  
One is the pow'r divine in all things known,  
And one the ruler absolute alone.  
For in Jove's royal body all things lie,  
Fire, night and day, earth, water and the sky;  
The first begetters pleasing love and mind;  
These in his mighty body, Jove confin'd:  
See, how his beauteous head and aspect bright  
Illumine heav'n, and scatter boundless light!  
Round which his pendant golden tresses shine  
Form'd from the starry beams, with light divine;  
On either side two radiant horns behold,  
Shap'd like a bull's and bright with glittering gold;  
And East and West in opposition lie,  
The lucid paths of all the Gods on high;  
His mind<sup>1</sup> is truth, unconscious of decay,  
His eyes, the sun, and moon with borrow'd ray;  
Royal, aitherial; and his ear refin'd  
Hears ev'ry voice, and sounds of ev'ry kind.  
Thus are his head and mind immortal, bright,  
His body's boundless, stable, full of light;  
Strong are his members, with a force endu'd  
Pow'rful to tame, but ne'er to be subdu'd;  
Th' extended region of surrounding air  
Forms his broad shoulders, back, and bosom fair;  
And thro' the world the ruler of the skies  
Upborne on natal, rapid pinions flies;  
His sacred belly earth with fertile plains,  
And mountains swelling to the clouds, contains;  
His middle zone's the spreading sea profound,  
Whose roaring waves the solid globe surround;  
The distant realms of Tartarus obscure  
Within earth's roots, his holy feet secure;  
For these earth's utmost bounds to Jove belong,  
And form his basis permanent and strong.  
Thus all things Jove within his breast conceal'd,  
And into beauteous light from thence reveal'd.

These verses contain what Dr. Cudworth calls the grand arcanum of the Orphic theology that God is all things; which is likewise an Egyptian doctrine, from whence it was derived through Orpheus into Greece: and this sublime truth Plotinus himself proves with his usual sagacity and depth.<sup>2</sup> But here it is necessary to observe that Orpheus and the Platonists do not conceive the Deity to be all things, as if he were a

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<sup>1</sup> His mind is truth, and a little after, His; body full of light; or, *Νους δε αψευδης and Σωμα δε περιφεγγες*, perfectly agree with what Pythagoras affirmed, concerning God; that in his soul he resembled truth, and in his body light.

<sup>2</sup> *Enn.* 5, lib. vi



divisible, corporeal nature; but that he is all things, because present everywhere, and to every being totally, though more or less intimately present, according to the various gradations and approximations of being. So that he is to be considered as containing all things, and yet as separate and apart from all; as the source of all multitude, yet himself perfect unity; and as immensely prolific, yet divinely solitary and ineffably good. Thus, according to Porphyry,<sup>1</sup> explaining the properties of incorporeal natures, God, intellect, and soul are each of them everywhere, because nowhere. But God is everywhere, and at the same time, in no place of any being posterior to his nature; but he is only such as he is, and such as he willed himself to be. But intellect is indeed in the Deity, yet everywhere and in no place of its subordinate essences. And soul is in intellect, and in the Deity, everywhere and nowhere with respect to body; but body exists in soul and in intellect, and in God. And though all beings, and nonentities, proceed from, and subsist in the Deity, yet he is neither entities, or non-entities, nor has any subsistence in them. For if he was alone everywhere, he would indeed be all things, and in all: but because he is likewise nowhere, all things are produced by him; so that they subsist in him because he is everywhere, but are different from him because he is nowhere. Thus also intellect being everywhere and nowhere, is the cause of souls, and of natures subordinate to soul: at the same time it is neither soul, nor such things as are posterior to the soul, nor has it any subsistence in them; and this because it is not only everywhere in its subordinate natures, but at the same time nowhere. Thus too, soul is neither body, nor in body, but is the cause of body; because while it is everywhere diffused through body, it is nowhere. And this procession of the universe, extends as far as to that nature,<sup>2</sup> which is incapable of being at the same time everywhere and nowhere, but which partially participates of each, And in another place of the same excellent fragment, he tells us that the ancients explaining the property of an incorporeal nature, as far as this can be effected by discourse, when they affirmed it to be one, at the same time add that it is likewise all things; that it is everywhere, and nowhere, and that it is totally present in every whole. He adds, they express its nature entirely by contrary properties, that they may remove from it the fictitious and delusive conceptions of bodies which obscure those properties by which true being is known.<sup>3</sup>

We have before observed that the Platonic philosophers, agreeable to the doctrine of Orpheus, considered fecundity as, in an eminent degree, the property of a divine nature; and from this principle filled the universe with Gods.<sup>4</sup> This opinion a modern philosopher, or a modern writer on mythology, will doubtless consider as too ridiculous to need a serious refutation the one, because he believes the phenomena may be solved by mechanical causes; and the other, in consequence of a system originating from prejudice, and supported without proof. However, prejudice apart, let us hear

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<sup>1</sup> See *Αφορμαι προς τα Νοητα*, Aph. 31, p. 233

<sup>2</sup> Meaning material forms and qualities.

<sup>3</sup> It is remarkable that in the Hymn to Nature, among the following, the Deity is celebrated as all things, yet the poet adds that he is alone incommunicable; which perfectly agrees with the preceding account of his subsisting in all things, and at the same time being separate and apart from all.

<sup>4</sup> If the word Gods offends the ear of the reader, he may substitute in its stead, thrones, dominions; &c. for I do not discourse concerning words.

what the philosophers can urge in defence of this doctrine, in addition to what we have already advanced. To begin then with Onatus the Pythagorean:<sup>1</sup>

Those who assert that there is but one God, and not many Gods, are deceived, as not considering that the supreme dignity of the divine transcendence consists in governing beings similar to itself, and in surpassing others. But the other Gods have the same relation to this first and intelligible God, as the dancer, to the Coryphæus, and as soldiers to their general, whose duty is to follow their leader. And although the same employment is common both to the ruler, and those who are ruled; yet the latter, if destitute of a leader, could no longer conspire together in one occupation; as the concord of the fingers and dancers, and the expedition of the army, must fail, if the one is deprived of the Coryphæus and the other of the captain or commander.

To the same purpose Plotinus shows<sup>2</sup> that it is perfectly philosophical to suppose a multitude of Gods subordinate to the One supreme.

It is necessary that every man should endeavour to be as good as possible, but at the same time, he should not consider himself as the only thing that is good but should be convinced that there are other good men, and good daimons in the universe, but much more Gods: who though inhabiting this inferior region, yet look up to that higher world; and especially that most blessed Soul, the ruling Divinity of this universe. From whence a man ought to ascend still higher, and to celebrate the intelligible Gods, but above all their great King; declaring his majesty in a particular manner, by the multitude of Gods subordinate to his divinity. For it is not the province of those who know the power of God, to contract all into one, but rather to exhibit all that divinity which he has displayed, who himself, remaining one, produces many, which proceed from him and by him. For the universe subsists by him, and perpetually speculates his divinity, together with each of the Gods it contains.

Should it be objected that, if such Gods (or exalted beings) really existed, we should be able to demonstrate the reality of their existence, in the same manner as that of one supreme God; we cannot frame a better reply than in the words of Proclus.<sup>3</sup>

And perhaps you may affirm that souls more swiftly forget things nearer to them; but have a stronger remembrance of superior principles. For these last operate on them more vigorously, through the sublimity of their power, and appear to be present with them by their energy. And this happens with respect to our corporeal sight; which does not perceive many things situated on the earth, yet observes the inerratic sphere, and the stars it contains; because these strongly irradiate our eyes with their light. So the eye of our soul is more forgetful, and sooner loses the sight of principles proximate to its nature, than of such as are more elevated and divine. In like manner all religions and sects confess that there is one highest principle, and men everywhere invoke God as

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<sup>1</sup> Stob. *Ecl. Phys.*, p. 5

<sup>2</sup> *En.* 2, lib. ix, cap. 9

<sup>3</sup> In *Tim.*, p. 286

their helper; but that there are Gods in subordination to this first cause, and that there is a providence proceeding from these to the universe, all men do not believe; and this because the one appears to them more perspicuously than the many.

Indeed in consequence of the Platonic doctrine of the pre-existence of the soul, it is not strange that we should know so little of those divine and exalted beings above us; since from our union with generation and material concerns, we are imbued with oblivion, ignorance, and error. As Porphyry well observes,

We are similar to those who enter or depart from a foreign region, not only in casting aside our native manners and customs; but from the long use of a strange country we are imbued with affections, manners, and laws foreign from our natural and true religion, and with a strong propensity to these unnatural habits.<sup>1</sup>

As, therefore, it is not wonderful that the greatest part of those who inhabit a pestiferous region, should languish and decline, but that a very few should preserve their natural strength; so we ought not to wonder that thus placed in generation, the multitude of mankind are obnoxious to passions and depraved habits; but we ought rather to be astonished if any souls, thus involved in the dark folds of the body, and surrounded with such great and unceasing mutations, are found sober, pure, and free from destructive perturbations. For it is surely astonishing that the soul should live immaterially, in material concerns; and preserve itself uncontaminated amidst such base defilements; that it should drink of the cup of oblivion, and not be laid asleep by the intoxicating draught; that it should elevate its eye above the sordid darkness with which it is surrounded; and be able to open the gates of truth, which, though contained in its essence, are guarded and shut by terrene and material species. But that it is possible to know more of such exalted natures than is generally believed, by the assistance of the ancient philosophy, accompanied with a suitable life, is, I am persuaded, true; and I would recommend the arduous and glorious investigation to every liberal mind.

Let us now consider the nature of sacrifice according to Orpheus and the Platonists; previous to which, I must beg leave to inform the reader that the Greek theologists and philosophers were not (as they are represented by modern writers on mythology) so stupid as to worship the creature instead of the Creator; and to neglect or confound that homage and veneration, which is due to the first cause of all. On the contrary, they considered the supreme Being as honoured by the reverence paid to his most illustrious offspring; and carefully distinguished between the worship proper to the Deity, and to the subordinate Gods, as the following discourse will abundantly evince. How, far indeed, such opinions maybe consistent with revelation, it is not my business to determine. It is sufficient for me, to give the most faithful account I am able of their sentiments on this subject; to free their opinions from misrepresentation; and to show that God has not left himself without a witness among the wise and learned of the heathens. But as I cannot give a better account of the nature and antiquity of sacrifice than from the writings of Porphyry, I shall present the reader

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<sup>1</sup> *De Abstinencia*, lib. i, 30



with the following paraphrase, on part of the second book of his excellent work on abstinence.<sup>1</sup>

The period of time appears to have been immensely distant, from which, as Theophrastus says, a nation the most learned of all others, and inhabiting the sacred region formed by the Nile, began first of all, from the domestic fire to sacrifice to the celestial divinities; not with myrrh or cassia, nor with the first fruits of frankincense mingled with saffron (for these were applied many ages afterwards, from error increasing in certain degrees: I mean at the period when men having surmounted the difficulties of a life, formerly oppressed with the cares of procuring necessities, and from the beginning to the end attended with many labours and tears, sacrificed perhaps a few drops to the Gods). For at first they performed sacrifices, not with aromatics but with the first fruits of the green herb; plucking it with their hands, as a certain soft down or moss of prolific nature. Indeed the earth produced trees before animals; but prior to trees, the annually rising grass, the leaves, and roots, and entire produce of which having collected, they sacrificed with fire: by this sacrifice, saluting the visible celestial Gods, and rendering them through the ministry of fire immortal honours. For we preserve as sacred to those divinities, a perpetual fire in our temples; since this element is most similar to their lucid frames. But with respect to fumigations from herbs produced by the earth, they called the censer or pan, in which the herbs were burnt *θυμιατηριον*, and to perform sacrifice *θυειν*, and the sacrifices themselves *θυσαι* all which we have erroneously interpreted, as if these words were signatures of that error, which afterwards crept in among us; and hence it is that we call the worship consisting from the slaughter of animals *θυσαι*.

Indeed so great was the care of the ancients, in retaining their primæval customs, that they uttered imprecations against those who deserted the old manner, and introduced a new one: and therefore they called those herbs with which we now fumigate *αρωματα*, aromatics. But the antiquity of the above mentioned fumigations will be perceived by him who considers that even now many odorous kinds of wood, cut into fragments, are employed in sacrifice. From whence it happened that the earth now bearing trees together with grass, its earliest production, men at first eating the fruits of oaks, burned only a few of these in sacrifices to the Gods, on account of the rarity of such sustenance; but sacrificed a multitude of the leaves. Afterwards human life passed to a gentle diet, and sacrifices were performed with nuts; from whence the proverb originated, *αλις δρυος*, enough of the oak.

But among the fruits of Ceres, after the first appearance of leguminous barley, mankind were accustomed to sprinkle it, made into an entire mass, in their first sacrifices. Afterwards breaking the barley, and diminishing the nutriment into meal, having concealed the instruments of so great a work which afford divine assistance to human life, they approached these as certain sacred concerns. But they cast the first fruits of the barley (when bruised into meal), and

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<sup>1</sup> *De Abstinencia*, lib. ii, 5-7

which was more esteemed than when whole, into the fire, in sacrifice to the Gods: from whence even now, at the conclusion of the sacrifice, we make use of meal mixed with wine and oil. By this custom indeed we indicate from whence, and from what beginnings sacrifices have increased to the present state: but, at the same time, we do not consider why such things are performed. Mankind proceeding from these small beginnings, and the earth yielding an abundant supply of corn and various fruits, they judged that the first produce of all the rest should be offered in sacrifices, with a view of pleasing the various orders of the Gods: selecting many things for this purpose, and mingling not a few others with these, if they possessed anything beautiful, and on account of its odoriferous nature accommodated to divine sensation. With some of these, formed into garlands, they encircled the statues of the Gods; and others they sacrificed with fire. Likewise to the Gods as the proper causes, they poured forth the divine drops of wine, and honey, and oil, when their uses were first discovered.

The truth of the preceding account appears to be confirmed by the procession celebrated even now at Athens, in honour of the sun and the hours. For in this solemnity grass is carried about, enwrapping the kernels of olives, attended with figs, all kinds of pulse, oaken boughs or acorns, the fruit of the strawberry, wheat, and barley, a mass of dried figs, cakes composed from the meal of wheat and barley, heaped in a pyramidal form, and last of all olives.

Theophrastus then proceeds to show the impropriety of animal sacrifices, after which he adds:

But the utility of fruits is the first and greatest of every production; the first fruits of which are to be sacrificed to the Gods alone, and to the Earth, the prolific parent of every herb. For Earth is the common Vesta of Gods and men, on whose fertile surface reclining, as on the soft bosom of a mother or a nurse, we ought to celebrate her divinity with Hymns, and incline to her with filial affection, as to the source of our existence. For thus, when we approach to the conclusion of our mortal life, we shall be thought worthy of a reception into the celestial regions, and of an association with the race of immortal Gods, who now behold us venerating their divinities with those fruits, of which they are the authors, and sacrificing in their honour every herb of the all-bearing earth; at the same time not esteeming everything worthy or proper to be offered as a testimony of our homage.

For as everything indiscriminately is not to be sacrificed to the Gods, so perhaps we cannot find anything sufficiently worthy, with which we may worship them as they deserve.

Thus far Theophrastus. Porphyry then proceeds to show after what manner those ought to sacrifice who propose an intellectual life, as the ultimate object of their pursuit.<sup>1</sup>

Let us also sacrifice, but in a manner becoming the offspring of intellect, bringing with us the most exalted offerings, with our most exalted powers. To the Di-

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<sup>1</sup> *De Abstinencia*, lib. ii, 34-39

vinity indeed, who is above all things, as a wise man said, neither sacrificing nor dedicating anything sensible or material; for there is nothing subsisting by material concretion, which must not be deemed impure by a nature entirely free from the contagion of body. Hence even the discourse, which is proffered by the voice is not proper to be addressed to a cause so sublime and ineffable; nor the internal speech of the soul, if contaminated with any perturbation, or mixed with any of the sensible phantasms of imagination. But we ought to worship the supreme God, in the most profound and pure silence; and with the purest thoughts concerning his exalted nature. It is requisite, therefore, that having conjoined and assimilated ourselves to him, we should approach this sublime principle with a pious sacrifice, which may redound to his praise, and to our safety. But such a sacrifice can only be performed by contemplating his divinity with a soul free from material affections, and with the rational eye filled with intellectual light. But to the offspring of this first God (I mean the intelligible divinities) we should present the sacrifice of hymns composed by the rational principle. For it is customary to offer the first-fruits of such things as every God bestows upon us; by which he nourishes and supports our existence, and which are subservient to the purposes of sacrifice. As the husbandman, therefore, performs sacred rites by presenting handfuls of pulse and fruits, so ought we to sacrifice our purest thoughts, and other goods of the soul, thanking the divinities for the sublime contemplations they afford us, and for truly feeding our intellectual part with the speculation of their essences; for, conversing with us, and appearing to our mental sight; for shining upon us with divine splendours, and by this means procuring for us true salvation.

But an exercise of this kind is performed in an indolent manner by many who apply themselves to philosophy, and who more sedulously cultivating fame than honouring the divinity, are wholly employed about statues, taking no care to learn after what manner, or whether or not these intellectual beings are to be adored; nor by properly consulting divine concerns, are they anxious to know, in how great a degree we ought to strive after an union with these exalted natures. With such as these we by no means contend; since our only endeavour is to obtain a knowledge of divinity, and to imitate pious and ancient men, by frequently sacrificing of that contemplation which the Gods have bestowed upon us, and by the use of which we are partakers of real salvation.

The Pythagoreans indeed who were very studious of numbers and lines, for the most part sacrificed of these to the Gods; denominating this number Minerva,<sup>1</sup> another Apollo; and again, this Justice, and another Temperance. They proceeded also in a similar manner in geometrical figures. Hence they pleased the divinities by sacrifices of this kind, calling each of them by their proper names, for the purpose of obtaining their particular requests. They often besides made such invocations subservient to the purposes of divination; and if they required the investigation of anything particular they used the visible celestial Gods, also the wandering and fixed stars, of all which the sun ought to be placed as a

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<sup>1</sup> In the latter part of this Dissertation, we shall show the wonderful agreement of the following Hymns, with the names given by Pythagoras to numbers.

leader, next to this the moon; and, as a theologian observes, we should make fire allied to these by a proximate conjunction. But the same person asserts that the Pythagoreans sacrificed no animal, but offered the first fruits of flour and honey, and of the diversified productions of the earth; nor kindled fire on the bloody altar, says he, with other things of a similar nature: but why should I transcribe such relations? For he who is truly studious of piety, knows why he ought not to sacrifice anything animated to Gods; but alone to genii, and other powers superior to man, whether good or bad: he likewise knows to what kind of men it belongs to sacrifice these, and every circumstance respecting those beings, who require such sacrifices to be performed. With regard to other particulars I shall be silent. But what some Platonists have divulged will perspicuously illustrate the subject before us, which I shall relate as follows.

The first God, since he is incorporeal, immoveable, and indivisible, neither existing, in any being, place, or time, nor even circumscribed by, and as it were invested with himself, is in no respect indigent of anything external to his nature, as we have already observed. But this last property of a divine essence is likewise true of the soul of the world, possessing a triple divisibility, and being naturally self-motive, yet so constituted that it chooses to move in an orderly and beautiful manner, and to agitate the corporeal fabric of the world according to the most excellent and harmonious reasons. But it associates to itself and is circularly invested with body, although incorporeal and entirely destitute of passion. But to the other Gods, to the world, and to the erratic and fixed stars, composed from body and soul, and to the visible divinities, testimonials of gratitude are to be offered by sacrificing with inanimate substances. After these there remains that multitude of invisible beings, which Plato indiscriminately calls daimons. Some of these are allotted a peculiar name by mankind, from whom they obtain divine honours and other kinds of religious worship: but others of these are for the most part called by no peculiar name, but are obscurely worshipped by some men, and are denominated according to certain streets or cities. But the remaining multitude are called by the common name of daimons. Concerning all these, a general persuasion obtains that their influence is noxious and malignant if they are once angered because their accustomed worship is neglected; and that they are again beneficent if appeased by prayers and supplications, by sacrifices and convenient rites.

But the confused opinion which subsists concerning these beings, and which has proceeded to great infamy, requires that we should distinguish their nature according to the decisions of reason. After this manner then they are distributed. As many souls as proceeding from the universal soul, administer considerable parts of those places contained under the lunar orb, who are indeed connected with an aerial part, but subject it to the dominion of reason, are to be esteemed good daimons. We ought to believe that all their operations tend to the utility of the concerns subject to their dominion, whether they preside over certain animals, or over fruits assigned to their charge, or over things subservient to these particulars; such as prolific showers, moderate winds, serene weather, and whatever is calculated to promote these, as a good temperament of the seasons of the year, &c. They likewise administer to us the use of music,



and of every discipline, together with the medicinal and gymnastic arts, and whatever else is allied to these. For it is impossible that such daimons can supply what is convenient and proper; and at the same time be the authors of things destructive and improper. In this class the messengers, as Plato calls them, between Gods and men must be numbered, who convey our prayers and pious offerings to the Gods as judges of our conduct, and bring back to us in return divine warnings, exhortations, and oracles. But as many souls as do not properly govern the aerial part with which they are connected, but are for the most part subdued by its influence, and are agitated and hurried away by its brutal power in a rash and disorderly manner, whenever the wrathful irritations and desires of the pneumatic part grow strong; souls of this kind are properly denominated daimons, but ought at the same time to be called malevolent and base.

All these, together with those who obtain a contrary power, are invisible, and entirely imperceptible to human sensation for they are not invested like terrene animals with a solid body; nor are they all endued with one shape; but they possess a diversity of forms. However, the forms impressed on their aerial part, are sometimes apparent, and at other times obscured. Sometimes too evil daimons change their shapes. But this pneumatic part, so far as corporeal, is subject to passion and change; and although it is so confined by the coercive power of these demoniacal souls, that its form continues for a long time, yet it is not by this means eternal. For is reasonable to believe that something continually flows from this aerial part; and that it receives a nutriment accommodated to its nature. Indeed *πνεῦμα*, or the aerial part of the good daimons, consists in a certain commensurate proportion, in the same manner as those bodies which are the objects of our present perception. But the bodies of the malevolent daimons are of a discordant temperament, on which account they inhabit that aerial space proximate to the earth, with a passive affection; and for the most part govern things subject to their dominion with a turbulent malignity. Hence there is no evil which they do not endeavour to perpetrate. For their manners are entirely violent and fraudulent, and destitute of the guardian preservation of better daimons; so that they machinate vehement and sudden snares with which they rush on the unwary; sometimes endeavouring to conceal their incursions, and sometimes acting, with open violence against the subjects of their oppression.

Thus far Porphyry. The length of which quotation needs no apology; both on account of its excellence, and because the unlearned reader will not find it elsewhere in English. I would also add that I wish (with a proper sense of the greatness of the undertaking) to offer this, together with the preceding and subsequent paraphrases, as specimens of that method mentioned in the Preface to this Work; and which I cannot but consider as the best means of exhibiting the Greek philosophy in modern languages.

Having then discoursed so largely from Porphyry concerning sacrifice, and as he particularly recommends the sacrifice performed by contemplation and divine hymns; let

us hear his sentiments concerning the nature of prayer, as they are preserved to us by Proclus in his excellent *Commentary on the Timæus*,

It is requisite before all things that we understand something perspicuously concerning the nature of prayer: I mean in what its essence consists, what its perfection is, and from whence it becomes natural to our souls.

[Proclus] then proceeds to relate the opinion of Porphyry as follows:

For Porphyry discoursing concerning such of the ancients as either approved of, or exploded prayer, leads us through various opinions, which I shall now summarily relate. Neither those who labour under the first kind of impiety, I mean denying the existence of the Gods, claim any advantage to themselves from prayer: nor yet those of the second class, who entirely subvert a providence; for though they acknowledge the existence of the Gods, yet they deny their provident concern for the affairs of the universe. Nor again those of a third order, who they confess that there are Gods, and that their providence extends to the world, yet consider all things as produced by the divinities from necessity: for the utility of prayer is derived from such things as are contingent, and may have a different existence. But those who both acknowledge the being of the Gods, and their continual providence, and that some events are contingent, and may subsist in a different manner; these men indeed may be truly said to approve of prayer, and to confess that the Gods correct our life, and establish it in safety.

Proclus then proceeds to relate the reasons by which Porphyry confirms its utility:

He adds that prayer in a particular manner pertains to worthy men, because it conjoins them with divinity; for similars love to be united together: but a worthy man is in an eminent degree similar to the divine natures. We may likewise add that, since good men are placed in custody, and confined by the dark bands of the body as in a prison, they ought to pray to the Gods that it may be lawful for them to depart from hence. Besides, since we are as children torn from the bosom of our parent, we ought on this account to request by our prayers that we may return to the Gods our true intellectual parents. If this is the case, do not they who deny that prayers are to be offered to the Gods, and who prevent their souls from being united with the divinities, that is with beings more excellent than themselves, appear similar to those who are deprived of their parents? Lastly, all nations who have flourished in the exercise of wisdom have applied themselves to divine prayers: as the Brahmans among the Indians, the Magi among the Persians, and amongst the Greeks also, those who have excelled in the science of theology: for on this account they instituted mysteries and initiatory rites (*τελεται*). Besides, this consideration is not to be omitted that, since we are a part of this universe, it is consonant to reason that we should be dependent on it for support. For a conversion to the universe procures safety to everything which it contains. If therefore you possess virtue, it is requisite you should invoke that divinity which previously comprehended in himself every virtue: for universal good is the cause of that good which belongs to you by participation. And if you seek after some corporeal good, the world is

endued with a power which contains universal body. From hence therefore it is necessary that perfection should also extend to the parts.

Thus far that most excellent philosopher Porphyry; in which quotation, as well as the preceding, the reader must doubtless confess that Proclus did not without reason admire him, for what he calls his *τα ιεροπρεπη νοηματα*, or conceptions adapted to holy concerns; for surely no philosopher ever possessed them in a more eminent degree.

If it should be asked, in what the power of prayer consists, according to these philosophers? I answer, in a certain sympathy and similitude of natures to each other: just as in an extended chord, where when the lowest part is moved, the highest presently after gives a responsive motion. Or as in the firings of a musical instrument, attuned<sup>1</sup> to the same harmony; one chord trembling from the pulsation of another, as if it were endued with sensation from symphony. So in the universe, there is one harmony though composed from contraries; since they are at the same time similar and allied to each other. For from the soul of the world, like an immortal self-motive lyre, life everywhere resounds, but in some things more inferior and remote from perfection than in others. And with respect to the super-mundane Gods, sympathy and similitude subsists in these as in their most perfect exemplars; from whence they are participated by sensible natures, their obscure and imperfect images. Hence (say they) we must not conceive that our prayers cause any animadversion in the Gods, or, properly speaking, draw down their beneficence; but that they are rather the means of elevating the soul to these divinities, and disposing it for the reception of their supernal illumination. For the divine irradiation, which takes place in prayer, shines and energizes spontaneously, restoring unity to the soul, and causing our energy to become one with divine energy. For such, according to these philosophers, is the efficacy of prayer that it unites all inferior with all superior beings. Since, as the great Theodorus says, all things pray except the first.

Indeed so great is the power of similitude that through its unifying nature all things coalesce, and impart their particular properties to ethers. Whilst primary natures distribute their gifts to such as are secondary, by an abundant illumination, and effects are established in the causes from which they proceed. But the connection and indissoluble society of active universals, and of passive particulars, is everywhere beheld. For the generative causes of things are contained by similitude in their effects; and in causes themselves their progeny subsist, comprehended in perfect union and consent. Hence the celestial orbs impart a copious defluxion of good to this terrestrial region; while sublunary parts, assimilated in a certain respect to the heavens, participate a perfection convenient to their nature.

Hence too, from the progressions of similitude, there are various leaders in the universe. And many orders of angels dancing harmoniously round their ruling deities; together with a multitude of daimons, heroes, and particular souls. There are besides multiform kinds of mortal animals, and various powers of plants. So that all things tend to their respective leaders, and are as it were stamped with one sign of domestic unity; which is in some more evident, and in others more obscure. For indeed simili-

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<sup>1</sup> [attuned]

tude in first productions subsists more apparently; but in those of the middle and extreme orders is obscured in consequence of the gradations of progression. Hence images and exemplars derive their hypostasis from conciliating similitude; and everything through this is familiar to itself, and to its kindred natures.

But it is time to return from this digression to the business of sacrifice and prayer. That we may therefore have a clearer view of the nature and efficacy of each, let us hear the elegant and subtle Proclus, upon sacrifice and magic, of which the following is a paraphrase:<sup>1</sup>

In the same manner as lovers gradually advance from that beauty which is apparent in sensible forms, to that which is divine; so the ancient priests, when they considered that there was a certain alliance and sympathy in natural things to each other, and of things manifest to occult powers, and by this means discovered that all things subsist in all, they fabricated a sacred science, from this mutual sympathy and similarity. Thus they recognized things supreme in such as are subordinate, and the subordinate in the supreme: in the celestial regions terrene properties subsisting in a causal and celestial manner; and in earth celestial properties, but according to a terrene condition. For how shall we account for those plants called heliotropes, that are attendants on the sun, moving in correspondence with the revolution of its orb; but selenitropes, or attendants on the moon, turning in exact conformity with her motion? it is because all things pray, and compose hymns to the leaders of their respective orders; but some intellectually, and others rationally; some in a natural, and others after a sensible manner. Hence the sunflower, as far as it is able, moves in a circular dance towards the sun; so that if anyone could hear the pulsation made by its circuit in the air, he would perceive something composed by a sound of this kind, in honour of its king such as a plant is capable of framing. Hence we may behold the sun and moon in the earth, but according to a terrene quality. But in the celestial regions, all plants, and stones, and animals, possessing an intellectual life according to a celestial nature. Now the ancients having contemplated this mutual sympathy of things, applied for occult purposes both celestial and terrene natures, by means of which through a certain similitude they deduced divine virtues into this inferior abode. For indeed similitude itself is a sufficient cause of binding things together in union and consent. Thus if a piece of paper is heated, and afterwards placed near a lamp, though it does not touch the fire, the paper will be suddenly inflamed, and the flame will descend from the superior to the inferior parts. This heated paper we may compare to a certain relation of inferiors to superiors; and its approximation to the lamp, to the opportune use of things according to time, place, and matter. But the procession of fire in the paper aptly represents the presence of divine light, to that nature which is capable of its reception. Lastly, the inflammation of the paper may be compared to the deification of mortals, and to the illumination of material natures, which are afterwards carried upwards like the fire of the paper, from a certain participation of divine feed. Again, the lotus be-

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<sup>1</sup> As a Latin version only of this valuable work is published, the reader will please to make allowances for the paraphrase, where it may be requisite.



fore the rising of the sun, folds its leaves into itself, but gradually expands them on its rising: unfolding them in proportion to the sun's ascent to the zenith; but as gradually contracting them as that luminary descends to the west. Hence this plant by the expansion and contraction of its leaves appears no less to honour the sun than men by the gesture of their eye-lids, and the motion of their lips. But this imitation and certain participation of supernal light is not only, visible in plants, which possess but a vestige of life, but likewise in particular stones. Thus the sun stone, by its golden rays, imitates those of the sun; but the stone called the eye of heaven, or of the sun, has a figure similar to the pupil of an eye, and a ray shines from the middle of the pupil. Thus too the lunar stone, which has a figure similar to the moon when horned, by a certain change of itself, follows the lunar motion. Lastly, the stone called Heliose-lenus, *i.e.*, of the sun and moon, imitates after a manner the congress of those luminaries, which it images by its colour. So that all things are full of divine natures; terrestrial natures receiving the plenitude of such as are celestial, but celestial of supercelestial essences; while every order of things proceeds gradually in a beautiful descent, from the highest to the lowest. For whatever is collected into one above the order of things, is afterwards dilated in descending, various souls being distributed under their various ruling divinities. In fine, some things turn round correspondent to the revolutions of the sun, and others after a manner imitate the solar rays, as the palm and the date: some the fiery nature of the sun as the laurel, and other a different property. For indeed we may perceive the properties which are collected in the sun, everywhere distributed to subsequent natures constituted in a solar order; that is, to angels, daimons, souls, animals, plants, and stones. Hence the authors of the ancient priesthood, discovered from things apparent, the worship of superior powers, while they mingled some things, and purified with others. They mingled many things indeed together, because they saw that some simple substances possessed a divine property (though not taken singly) sufficient to call down that particular power, of which they were participants.

Hence by the mingling of many things together, they attracted upon us a supernal influx; and by the composition of one thing from many, they symbolised with that one, which is above many; and composed statues from the mixtures of various substances, conspiring in sympathy and consent. Besides this, they collected composite odours, by a divine art, into one, comprehending a multitude of powers, and symbolizing, with the unity of a divine essence. Considering besides that division debilitates each of these, but that mingling them together restores them to the idea of their exemplar; hence the ancient priests, by the mutual relation and sympathy of things to one another, collected their virtues into one, but expelled them by repugnancy and antipathy; purifying, when it was requisite, with sulphur and bitumen, and the sprinkling of marine water. For sulphur purifies from the sharpness of its odour; but marine water on account of its fiery portion. Besides this, in the worship of the Gods, they offered animals, and other substances congruous to their nature; and received in the first place the powers of daimons as proximate to natural substances and operations, by whose assistance they evoked these natural bodies to which the

they approached into their presence. Afterwards they proceeded from daimons to the powers and energies of the Gods, partly indeed from daimoniactal instruction, but partly by their own industry, aptly interpreting symbols, and ascending to a proper intelligence of the Gods. And lastly laying aside natural substances and their operations, they received themselves into the communion and fellowship of the Gods.

Thus far Proclus, and thus much for the theological doctrine of Orpheus, as contained in the works of the latter Platonists. I persuade myself enough has been said in this Dissertation to convince every thinking and liberal mind that the Greek theology as professed and understood by the Greek philosophers, is not that absurd and nonsensical system, represented by modern prejudice and ignorance, as the creed of the ancients. In consequence of a blind and mistaken zeal it is common to ridicule the opinions of the ancient philosophers, in order to establish the certainty of the Christian religion. But surely revelation does not require so unwarrantable and feeble a support, which in reality only betrays the cause it endeavours to defend, by giving infidels occasion to suspect, either weakness in its evidence, or obscurity in its fundamental doctrines. Besides, the generality of these uncandid opponents know nothing of the Platonical writers, from whom alone genuine information can be derived on this sublime and intricate subject; and from whose works the preceding Dissertation has been so abundantly enriched. Were these invaluable books more generally known and understood, if they did not refine our taste, at present so depraved, they would at least teach us to admire the strength which human reason is capable of exerting, and to be more modest in our pretensions to wisdom; they would silence ignorant declaimers, and stop the immense increase of books on modern philosophy, which are so rapidly hastening to the abyss of forgetfulness, like streams into the ocean from which they originally flowed.



### Part 3

**B**UT IT IS NOW TIME TO SPEAK of the following Hymns, of which, as we have before observed, Onomacritus is the reputed author. And first, with regard to the dialect of these Hymns, Gesner well observes it ought to be no objection to their antiquity. For though, according to Iamblichus,<sup>1</sup> the Thracian Orpheus, who is more ancient than those noble poets Homer and Hesiod, used the Doric dialect; yet the Athenian Onomacritus, who, agreeable to the general opinion of antiquity, is the author of all the works now extant, ascribed to Orpheus<sup>2</sup> might either, preserving the sentences and a great part of the words, only change the dialect, and teach the ancient Orpheus to speak Homerically, or as I may say Solonically: or might arbitrarily add or take away what he thought proper, which Herodotus relates was his practice, with respect to the oracles. Gesner adds that it does not appear probable to him that Onomacritus would dare to invent all he writ, since Orpheus must necessarily, at that time, have been in great repute, and a variety of his verses in circulation: and he concludes with observing that the objection of the Doric dialect ought to be of no more weight against the antiquity of the present works, than the Pelasgic letters, which Orpheus used according to Diodorus Siculus.

The Hymns of Orpheus are not only mentioned by Plato in his Eighth Book of *Laws*, but also by Pausanias,<sup>3</sup> whose words are translated as follows by the author of the *Letters on Mythology*.<sup>4</sup>

The Thracian Orpheus [says Pausanias] was represented on mount Helicon, with TEAETH (*Initiation* or *Religion*) by his side, and the wild beasts of the woods, some in marble, some in bronze, standing round him. His Hymns are known by those who have studied the poets to be both short and few in number. The Lycomedes, an Athenian family dedicated to sacred music, have them all by heart, and sing them at their solemn mysteries. They are but of the second Class for Elegance, being far out-done by Homer's in that respect. But our RELIGION has adopted the Hymns of Orpheus, and has not done the same honour to the Hymns of Homer.

To the testimony of Pausanias may be added that of Suidas, who, among the writings of the Libethrian Orpheus mentions *τελεται*, or initiations, which he says are by some ascribed to Onomacritus.<sup>5</sup> And Scaliger well observes, in his notes to these Hymns, that they ought rather to be called initiations, because they contain only invocations of the Gods, such as the initiated in mysteries are accustomed to use; but they do not celebrate the nativities, actions, &c. of the divinities, as it is usual in hymns. It is on this account we have entitiled them mystical initiations, which is doubtless their

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<sup>1</sup> *De Vita Pythag.* c. 34, p. 169, Kuft.

<sup>2</sup> Philoponus observes, in his Commentary on Aristotle's books of the Soul, that Aristotle calls the Orphic verses reputed, because they appear not to have been written by Orpheus himself, as Aristotle affirms in his book concerning philosophy. For the Dogmata contained in them were indeed his, but Onomacritus is reported to have put them into verse.

<sup>3</sup> In *Bæoticis*, p. 770

<sup>4</sup> *op. cit.*, pp. 167-68

<sup>5</sup> It is remarkable that Sextus Empiricus more than once mentions Onomacritus in the Orphics. Ονομακρίτης ἐν τοῖς Ὀρφικοῖς.

proper appellations. The author too of the Allegories in the Theogony of Hesiod,<sup>1</sup> relating the powers of the planets on things inferior, expressly mentions these hymns, or rather initiations, and many of the compound epithets with which they abound.<sup>2</sup> From all which it is evident that the following Hymns were written by the Athenian Onomacritus, and are the same with those so much celebrated by antiquity. Indeed it is not probable they should be the invention of any writer more modern than the above period, as it must have been so easy to detect the forgery, from the original initiations which were even extant at the time in which Suidas lived.

In the former part of this Dissertation, we asserted that we should derive all our information concerning the Orphic theology, from the writings of the Platonists; not indeed without reason. For this sublime theology descended from Orpheus to Pythagoras, and from Pythagoras to Plato; as the following testimonies [from Proclus] evince:

Timæus being a Pythagorean, follows the Pythagoric principles, and these are the Orphic traditions; for what Orpheus delivered mystically in secret discourses, these Pythagoras learned when he was initiated by Aglaophemus in the Orphic mysteries.<sup>3</sup>

Syrianus too makes the Orphic and Pythagoric principles to be one and the same; and, according to Suidas, the same Syrianus composed a book, entitled the *Harmony of Orpheus, Pythagoras and Plato*.<sup>4</sup> And again Proclus:

It is Pythagorical to follow the Orphic genealogies; for from the Orphic tradition downward by Pythagoras, the science concerning the Gods was derived to the Greeks.<sup>5</sup>

And elsewhere,

All the theology of the Greeks is the progeny of the sacred initiations (*μυσταγωγίαι*) of Orpheus. For Pythagoras first learned the orgies of the Gods from Aglaophemus; but Plato was the second who received a perfect science of these, both from the Pythagoric, and Orphic writings.<sup>6</sup>

Now in consequence of these testimonies, our hymns ought to agree with the doctrine of Pythagoras; especially since Onomacritus, their Author, was of that school. And that they do so, the following discovery abundantly evinces.

Photius, in his *Bibliotheca*, has preserved to us part of a valuable work, written by Nicomachus the Pythagorean, entitled *Theological Arithmetic*;<sup>7</sup> in which he ascribes particular epithets, and the names of various divinities to numbers, as far as to ten. There is likewise a curious work of the same title, by an anonymous writer, which is

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<sup>1</sup> p. 267

<sup>2</sup> See Fabric. Bib., p. 124

<sup>3</sup> In *Timæum*, p. 291

<sup>4</sup> Συμφωνία Ὀρφεως, Πυθαγορου, και Πλατωνος.

<sup>5</sup> In *Tim.*, p. 289

<sup>6</sup> In *Theol. Plat.*, p. 13

<sup>7</sup> [See translation into English by Martin Luther D'ooge in the same series.]



extant only in manuscript. From these two, and from occasional passages respecting numbers according to Pythagoras, found in the Platonic writers, Meursius has composed a book, which he calls *Denarius Pythagoricus*; and which is an invaluable treatise to such as are studious of the ancient philosophy. On perusing this learned book, it seemed to me necessary that as the divinities, ascribed to each number, had a particular relation to one another, they should also have a mutual agreement in the following Hymns. And on the comparison I found the most perfect similitude: a few instances of which I shall select, leaving a more accurate investigation of this matter to the learned and philosophical reader.

- 1 In the first place then, among the various names ascribed to the monad or unity, are those of the following Gods; *viz.* the Sun, Jupiter, Love, Proteus, Vesta. Now in the Hymn to the Sun we find the epithet *Αθανατε Ζευ*, O immortal Jove. In that to Love *πυριδρομος*, or wandering fire, which is likewise found in the Hymn, to the Sun. In the Hymn to Love, that deity is celebrated as having the keys of all things;<sup>1</sup> *viz.* of aither, heaven, the deep, the earth, &c. And Proteus is invoked as possessing the keys of the Deep.<sup>2</sup> Again, Vesta, in the Orphic Hymns, is the same with the mother of the Gods; and the mother of the Gods is celebrated as “always governing rivers and every sea”;<sup>3</sup> which perfectly agrees with the appellations given both to Love and Proteus.
- 2 Again, among the various epithets ascribed to the duad, or number two, are, Phanes, Nature, Justice, Rhea, Diana, Cupid, Venus, Fate, Death, &c. Now Phanes, in the Orphic Hymns, is the same with Protogonus; and Nature is called *πρωτογενια*, or first-born, and *δικη*, or Justice, as also *πεπρωμενη*, or Fate. Likewise Rhea is denominated *θυγατηρ πολυμορφου Πρωτογονου*, or daughter of much formed<sup>4</sup> Protogonus; and in the same hymn the reader will find other epithets, which agree with the appellation given to Nature. Again, both Nature and Diana are called *ωκυλοχεια*, or swiftly bringing forth; and Love as well as Nature is called *διφυης* or two-fold. In like manner Rhea and Venus agree, for [Meursius] says of Venus *παντα γαρ εκ σεθεν εστιν*, for all things are from thee; and of Rhea, *Μητηρ μεν τε Θεων ηδε θνητων ανθρωπων*, or mother of Gods and mortal men. After which he expressly says that earth and heaven, the sea and the air, proceed from her divinity. Besides this, he celebrates Venus as governing the three Fates, *και κρατεις τρισσων μοιρων*. And lastly he says of Love, after representing that Deity as invested with the keys of all things thou alone rulest the governments of all these;<sup>5</sup> which he likewise affirms of Death in the same words. And thus much for the duad.
- 3 The triad, or number three, they denominated Juno, Latona, Thetis, Hecate or Diana, Pluto, Tritogenia or Minerva, &c. Now Latona and Thetis, are each of them

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<sup>1</sup> παντων κληιδα εχοντες  
Αιθερωσ, ουρανιου, κ.λ.

<sup>2</sup> ποντου κληιδας εχοντα.

<sup>3</sup> Σοι ποταμοι κρατεονται αι πασα θαλασσα.

<sup>4</sup> [Multiform, i.e., Protean]

<sup>5</sup> In the Hymn to Love, *Μουνος γαρ τουτων παντων οηκα κρατυνεις*. And in that to Death, *οι παντων θνητων οηκα κρατυνεις*.

called in these initiations, *κυανοπεπλος*, or dark-veiled; and Minerva and the Moon, who is the same with Diana, *θηλυς και αρρην*, female and male.

- 4 The tetrad or number four, they denominated Hercules, Vulcan, Mercury, Bacchus two-mothered, Bassarius, key-keeper of nature, Masculine, Feminine, the World, (which in these initiations is the same with Pan) Harmony, Justice. Now Onomacritus calls Hercules and Vulcan, *Καρτεροχειρ*, or strong-handed; and he celebrates Hercules and Mercury as “having an almighty heart,” *παγκρατες ητορ εχων*. And so of the rest.
- 5 The pentad or number of five they called Nature, Pallas, Immortal, Providence, Nemesis, Venus, Justice, &c. Now Nature is called in these hymns, or rather initiations, *πολυμηχανη μητηρ*, or much-mechanic<sup>1</sup> Mother, and *παντοτεχνης*, or universal Artist; and Minerva is denominated *μητηρ τεχνων*, or Mother of Arts. Likewise Nature is expressly called *αθανατη τε προνοια*, or Immortal, and Providence.
- 6 The hexad or number six, they denominated, Venus, Health, the World *Εκατηβελεις*, or far-darting,<sup>2</sup> (because compounded of the triad, which is called Hecate), Persæa, triform, Amphitrite, &c. Now Venus, as we have already observed in the names of the duad, is said to be the source of all things and Health is expressly called *μητηρ απαντων*, or Mother of all things.
- 7 Again the heptad, or number seven they called Fortune, Minerva, Mars., &c. And Fortune, in these initiations, is the same with Diana or the Moon, who is called male and female as well as Minerva; and Minerva and Mars are each of them denominated *οπλοχαρης*,<sup>3</sup> or armipotent, and Minerva *πολεμοκλονη*, or full of warlike tumult.
- 8 The ogdoad, or number eight, they called Rhea, Love, Neptune, Law. And the Mother of the Gods, who is the same with Rhea, is represented as we have observed on the monad, as governing rivers and every sea; and Love is said to have the keys of all things; of heaven, the deep, &c.
- 9 The ennead, or number nine, they denominate Ocean, Prometheus, Vulcan, Pœan (*i.e.*, Apollo or the Sun), Juno, Proserpine, &c. Now Saturn (who is called in these initiations Prometheus) and Ocean, are each of them celebrated as the source of Gods and men: and Vulcan is expressly called *ηλιος*, or the Sun.
- 10 And lastly they denominated the decad, Heaven, the Sun, Unwearied, Fate, Phanes, Necessity, &c. Hence Heaven is called in these initiations *φυλαξ παντων*, or Guardian of all things; and the Sun *πιστοφυλαξ*, or faithful Guardian; and *ακαμα* or Unwearied, is an appellation of the Sun, in the Hymn to that Deity. The reader too will find many epithets in the Hymn to Protogonus or Phanes, corresponding with those of the Sun.

And thus much for the agreement of these hymns with the Pythagoric names of numbers. The limits of the present work will not permit me to be more explicit on

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<sup>1</sup> [resourceful]

<sup>2</sup> [shooting a hundred arrows, but perch. originally, hitting the mark at will.]

<sup>3</sup> [delighting in arms]

this particular; but he who wishes to understand the meaning of many of the preceding appellations, may consult the valuable book of Meursius, already cited, where he will meet with abundant matter for deep speculation. But before I conclude this Dissertation, I must beg leave to acquaint the reader with another discovery which I have made respecting these hymns, equally curious with the former.

Ficinus, on Plato's Theology,<sup>1</sup> has the following remarkable passage, translated most likely from some manuscript work of Proclus, as I conjecture from its conclusion; for, unfortunately, he does not acquaint us with the author:

Those who profess the Orphic theology, consider a two-fold power in souls and in the celestial orbs: the one consisting in knowledge, the other in vivifying and governing the orb with which that power is connected. Thus in the orb of the earth, they call the nostic power Pluto, the other Proserpine.<sup>2</sup> In water, the former power Ocean, and the latter Thetis. In air, that thundering Jove, and this Juno. In fire, that Phanes, and this Aurora. In the soul of the lunar sphere, they call the nostic power Licnitan Bacchus, the other Thalia. In the sphere of Mercury, that Bacchus Silenus, this Euterpe. In the orb of Venus, that Lysius Bacchus, this Erato. In the sphere of the sun, that Trietericus Bacchus, this Melpomene. In the orb of Mars, that Bassareus Bacchus, this Clio. In the sphere of Jove, that Sebazius, this Terpsichore. In the orb of Saturn, that Amphietus, this Polymnia. In the eighth sphere, that Pericionius, this Urania. But in the soul of the world, the nostic power, Bacchus Eribromus, but the animating power Calliope. From all which the Orphic theologers infer, that the particular epithets of Bacchus are compared with those of the Muses on this account, that we may understand the powers of the Muses, as intoxicated with the nectar of divine knowledge; and may consider the nine Muses, and nine Bacchuses, as revolving round one Apollo, that is about the splendour of one invisible Sun.

The greater part of this fine passage is preserved by Gyraldus in his *Syntagma de Musis*, and by Natales Comes in his *Mythology*, but without mentioning the original author. Now if the Hymn to the Earth, is compared with the Hymns to Pluto and Proserpine; the one to Ocean, with that to Thetis; and so of the other elements agreeable to the preceding account, we shall discover a wonderful similitude. And with respect to the celestial spheres, Silenus Bacchus, who, according to the preceding account should agree with Mercury, is called in these initiations τροφη, or Nourishment, and Mercury, Τροφιουχος, or Nourisher. Venus, who should agree with Lysius Bacchus, is called κρυφια or Occult, and ερατοπλοκαμος,<sup>3</sup> or lovely haired, and σεμνη Βακχοιο παρεδρη, or venerable attendant of Bacchus; and Lysius is denominated κρυπιγονος, or an occult offspring and καλλιθεира, or fair-haired. In like manner Trietericus Bacchus is called παιαν χρυσεγχης or Apollo pouring golden light, which evidently agrees with the sun. Again, Bassarius Bacchus is celebrated as rejoicing in swords and blood, ος ξιφεσιν χαιρεις, ηδ' αιμασι, κ.λ., which plainly corresponds with Mars, as the

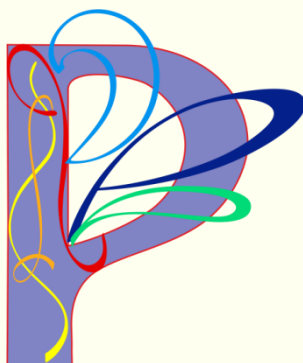
<sup>1</sup> Lib. iv, p. 128

<sup>2</sup> The reader may observe that this two-fold power is divided into male and female; the reason of which distribution we have already assigned from Proclus.

<sup>3</sup> [Cf. ερασιπλοκαμος, decked with lovelocks.]

Hymn to that Deity evinces in a particular manner. Sebazius and Jupiter evidently agree, for Sebazius is expressly called *υιος Κρονου*, son of Saturn. And Amphietus is celebrated as moving in concert with the circling hours, *ευαζων κινων τε χορους ενι κυκλασι ωραιας*, which corresponds with Saturn, who is called in these Hymns *Τιταν*, or the Sun.<sup>1</sup> And lastly, Dionysius who is called in these Initiations Eribromus, is denominated *δικερωτα* or two-horned, which is also an epithet of Pan, or the soul of the world.

And thus much for the doctrine of these Hymns, so far as is requisite to an introductory Dissertation. What farther light we have been able to throw on these mysterious remains of antiquity, will appear in our following Notes. If the valuable Commentary of Proclus on the *Cratylus of Plato* was once published, I am persuaded we should find them full of the most recondite antiquity:<sup>2</sup> but as this is not to be expected in the present age, the lovers of ancient wisdom will I doubt not, gratefully accept the preceding and subsequent elucidations. For on a subject so full of obscurity as the present, a glimmering light is as conspicuous, and as agreeable to the eye of the mind, as a small spark in profound darkness is to the corporeal sight.



<sup>1</sup> I have omitted a comparison between the eighth sphere and Pericionius from necessity, because there is no hymn among the following to that orb. And I have not contrasted Licnitan Bacchus with the Lunar Sphere, because the resemblance is not apparent; though doubtless there is a concealed similitude.

<sup>2</sup> This is evident from the following epistle of Lucas Holstenius to P. Lambecius, preserved by Fabricius in that excellent work, his *Bibliotheca Græca*, tom. i, p. 117:

“Habeo et Orphei exemplar non contemnendum, ex quo Argonautica plurimis locis emendavi. Auctor ille huc usque a Criticorum et Correctorum vulgo derelictus tuam exposcere videtur operam. Hymni autem reconditæ antiquitatis plenissimi justum commentarium me entur, quem vel unius, Procli scripta *ανεκδοτα* tibi instruent, ut ex notis meis as Sallustium Philosophum prospicies: ne quid de cæteris, quos apud me habeo, Platoniciis nunc dicam, in quibus *της μυθικης θεολογιας* thesaurus latet.”

[Tr. I have also a copy of Orpheus which is not to be despised and from which I have emended the Argonautica in several passages. This author, who has so far been neglected by the body of Critics and Emendators, seems to demand your attention. Moreover, the hymns are steeped in remote antiquity, and deserve an adequate commentary which even the unedited writings of Proclus alone will provide for you, as you will see from my notes on Sallust the Philosopher — to say nothing at the moment of the other writers on Plato I have with me, in whom there is a great wealth of mystical theology.]



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