

PLOTINUS ON THE BEAUTIFUL Ennead 1.6 TRANSLATED BY THE EDITORS OF THE SHRINE OF
WISDOM *and* ON INTELLIGIBLE BEAUTY Ennead V.8 TRANSLATED BY THOMAS
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I.—BEAUTY appeals mainly to the sight, but also to the hearing through compositions of words: it is also in all music, for both melodies and rhythms are beautiful. And if we ascend above sense-perception, there are beautiful pursuits, actions and sciences, and the beauty of the virtues. Whether there is also a beauty beyond these will be shown. What therefore is it that makes bodies appear beautiful, that hearing does not judge sounds beautiful, and that makes everything belonging to the soul beautiful in some way? Are all things beautiful through one and the same principle, or is the beauty in a body of one kind, but that in some other thing of another? And what is the nature of these principles or this principle? For some things, such as bodies, are not beautiful through their essential attributes, but through participation in something else; but other things, such as virtue, are beautiful in themselves. Indeed, the same bodies appear at one time beautiful and at another not beautiful, as though their essential natures as bodies were of one kind, but as beautiful, of another. What, then, is it that, when present to bodies, make them beautiful? For this must be investigated at the outset. What is it that strikes the vision of the beholder, fixes his attention on itself, draws him and fills him with delight at what he sees? For if we can find this we can perhaps use it as a ladder of ascent to other discoveries. Most people say that a harmonious proportion of parts to each other and to the whole, with the addition of pleasing colouring, constitutes visual beauty, and that the beauty of all things without exception consists in their being symmetrical and harmoniously proportioned. But it would necessarily follow from this that nothing simple, but only the composite, would be beautiful. Only the whole will be beautiful; the several parts will have no beauty of their own, but will be beautiful only as contributing to the beauty of the whole. But it is necessary, if the whole is beautiful, for the parts also to be beautiful; for beauty cannot arise from ugly things, but all its consistent elements must have their own beauty also. It would follow, moreover, that beautiful colours, like the light of the sun, would, since they are simple and do not derive their beauty from symmetrical proportion, have to be excluded from the domain of beauty. How,

if this argument held, could gold be beautiful, or lightning at midnight, or the spectacle of the stars? In like manner with sounds: those that are simple will have no beauty. Yet in songs which are beautiful in their entirety each single note has a beauty of its own. Furthermore, since, though the same proportion remains, the same face appears at one time beautiful and at another not, how can we avoid admitting that the beauty of that which is harmoniously proportioned is distinct from the harmony itself, and that the proportionate is beautiful through something else? But if attention is transferred to beautiful pursuits and discourses, and it is maintained that the beauty of these consists in their proportion—what is this proportion in beautiful pursuits, or laws, or studies, or sciences? For in what manner can speculations be proportional to each other? If it is replied: Because they harmonize with each other, what of the agreement and harmony between things which are evil? Were it maintained that temperance is folly and justice a generous weak-mindedness, these two propositions would harmonize and be consistent and mutually agree with each other. Furthermore, every virtue is a beauty of the soul, and a truer beauty than those we have discussed. How then can these have proportion? Certainly not in size or in quantity. And since the soul has various faculties, by what method of calculation can that assemblage or combination of faculties or of speculations which is beauty be determined? And lastly, what could be the nature of the beauty of intellect which is unitary and alone?

II.—We must go back again to our beginning and inquire what the beautiful in bodies really is. It is something which in its first appeal affects the senses, which the soul apprehends understandingly and embraces with recognition, being in some way assimilated to it. But on coming in contact with that which is ugly she recoils, and refuses and will have naught of it, as something inharmonious and of a nature foreign to her own. It must be therefore that, since the soul's nature is what it is, and ranks among the highest essences in the order of things, when she sees something akin to herself or even a vestige of kinship she rejoices and flutters her wings, and receives it within her, and remembers her true self and that which is hers. What, then, is the similitude between that which is beautiful here and that which is beautiful yonder? For if there is similitude they must be like. In virtue of what are things both here and yonder beautiful? We say things here are beautiful through their participation in form. For since everything formless is naturally capable of receiving shape and form, in so far as it does not participate in reason and form, it is ugly and apart from the

Divine Reason; and it is in this that ugliness of every sort consists. The ugly is that which is not dominated by its form and reason, when its matter will not allow it to be completely moulded to its form. For when the form approaches the matter, it ordainates that which is to be combined into a unity out of a multitude of parts, and at the same time brings it into a single harmonious completion, and makes it one by virtue of its intrinsic agreement. For since the form is one, so, too, will that which is formed be one, as far as the multiplicity of its nature will permit. Beauty, then, is established in it when it is brought together into unity, and this beauty communicates itself both to the parts and to the whole. But when it encounters a unity the parts of which are alike, it pervades the whole uniformly; for example, sometimes it communicates itself to an entire building together with its parts, and sometimes art gives one kind of beauty to an individual stone and nature another. Thus body becomes beautiful through communion with the Divine Reason descending from above.

III.—The innate power of the soul which is especially concerned with beauty recognizes it, for nothing is more capable of judging its own concerns, especially when the other faculties of the soul concur in its judgment. And perhaps this faculty pronounces by comparing the object with the form which the soul herself contains and using it as a basis for judging, as a rule is used to compare straightness.

But how does that which is of body accord with that which is beyond body? How does the architect compare the external house with the form of the house within himself and pronounce that it is beautiful? Perhaps because the outward building, with its stones taken away, is no other than the interior form divided externally throughout the bulk of the matter, and, though subsisting indivisibly, reflected in multitude.

Whenever, therefore, sense-perception beholds form binding and overcoming the contrary nature of the formless, and sees a form distinguishing itself from other forms by its grace, it collects it together from its dispersed condition in the material, abstracts it, compares it with the indivisible form which the soul has within herself, and presents it to this interior form as harmonious, concordant, and friendly with it.

So, too, evidences of virtue which are apparent in a youth are delightful to a virtuous man because they harmonize with the true virtue within him. But the beauty of colour is simple in respect of its form, and is victorious over the darkness of matter through the presence of light, which is incorporeal and of the nature of reason and form. It is because of this that fire is more beautiful than other bodies, because it has the relation of form to the other elements. Its region is the highest, and it is more subtle than the other bodies because it is nearer to the incorporeal. It alone

is not interpenetrable by the other elements but itself interpenetrates them all. For it imparts heat to them but is not itself made cold. It is, moreover, the first nature which possesses colour, but other natures receive the form of their colour from it. It shines and gleams as though it were itself form. But when it does not dominate anybody, so that the light in it becomes dim, that body is no longer beautiful because it does not participate in the whole form of the colour. As to sounds, the inner inaudible harmonies produce those which are audible, and cause the soul to receive a perception of beauty, exemplifying the same principle in another medium. For it is the property of audible harmonies to be measured by numerical proportions, yet not by all of these but only by those which serve the purposes of musical composition and contribute to the victory of the form. So much, then, with regard to the beauties of sense, which, proceeding into matter like images and shadows, adorn it and cause us wonder and delight by their appearance. IV.—But, leaving sense perception below, let us ascend higher, and contemplate those beauties, which are beyond and above, which the eye of sense can no longer behold, but which the soul without need of sense-organs beholds and pronounces beautiful. Just as we could never have described sensible beauties if we had never seen them nor recognized them as beautiful—for example, if we had been born blind—so neither can we describe the beauty of pursuits and sciences, and things of this kind, unless we are ourselves intimately familiar with their beauty, nor speak of the beauty of virtue if we have never beheld how fair is the countenance of temperance and justice, more beautiful than the evening and morning stars. But these can be seen only by that eye of the soul which beholds such beauties, and when we behold them we should be affected by delight and astonishment, and by a fluttering of the soul's wings in a far greater degree than in the case of sensible beauties, for we have now reached true beauty. For the experiences which should be produced by that which is really beautiful are wonder, and sweet amazement, and desire, and a pleasant fluttering of the wings of the soul. And all souls, one might say, may be and are affected in this way by invisible beauties, but especially those which are of a most loving disposition; just as in the case of corporeal beauty, all behold it yet are not equally stirred by it, but especially those who are called "lovers." V.—Let us now inquire of those who love beauties not perceptible to sense: In what manner are you affected by those pursuits which are called beautiful, by beautiful manners, self-controlled characters, and in fine by all virtuous works and dispositions and the beauty of souls? What do you experience when you behold yourselves beautiful within, and by what are you

aroused and inspired? Why do you desire to hold converse with your real selves, collecting yourselves together away from bodily distractions? For it is thus that true lovers are affected. What is it that affects them thus? Not some shape or colour or size, but the soul herself, colourless, and possessing a wise temperance equally uncoloured; it is, too, the light of the other virtues, either when you behold them in yourselves or contemplate greatness of soul and a just character, pure temperance, and the manly countenance of fortitude in another, modesty and reverence proceeding serene, intrepid and unperturbed, and, crowning all these, the god-like splendour of intellect. If, then, we love and cherish these, why do we call them beautiful? Beautiful they are and appear, and there is none who has ever beheld them but will say that such things are among those that truly ARE. Why, then, can it be said that they truly ARE? Because they are beautiful.

But reason still desires to know that by virtue of which they cause the soul to be beloved; and what is that which, like light, gleams out through all the virtues. Suppose we consider the opposite of these and compare with them that which is ugly in a soul. For to discover what ugliness is and why we speak of things as ugly will, perhaps, assist us in our search. Let us suppose an ugly soul, intemperate and unjust, teeming with a host of passions, full of tumult, a prey to fears because of her cowardice and to envy because of her meanness, with all her thoughts directed only to things mortal and low in the tortuous windings of her mind, longing for impure pleasures, living the life of the passions of the body and embracing her degradation as sweet. Shall we not say that baseness has invaded such a soul under the false appearance of beauty and has corrupted her, and rendered her impure and adulterated with much evil, so that she is no longer truly alive nor possessed of pure sense-perception; but, because of her admixture of evil she preserves but a flicker of life largely mingled with death, no longer beholding that which the soul ought to behold nor able any more to remain within herself, but continually dragged towards externality, descent and darkness? Such a soul, I imagine, being unpurified and hurried hither and thither by the objects which assail her senses, and having much of the nature of body mingled with her, through associating too vehemently with matter and receiving it into herself, would change her form for another by mingling with an inferior nature. Just as one who wallowed in mire and slime would no longer display the beauty which he had formerly, and would seem to be the mud and slime which clung to him. In this case, he derives his ugliness from the accession of something of a foreign nature and it will be necessary for him, if he is to be beautiful once more, to

wash away his stains and purify himself, so as to become that which he was. If then we say that the soul becomes evil through stooping towards and mingling and confusing herself with body and matter, we shall be right. Ugliness in the soul, therefore, consists in not being pure and unmixed, just as in gold it is caused by the mingling of particles of earth. If these are removed, the gold remains and is beautiful, for it is separated from that which was foreign, and subsists now in the simplicity of its own nature. In the same manner, the soul, separated from the desires which come to her through the body when she associates with it too vehemently, freed from the dominion of all other passions, and purified from the stains derived from her association with the body, remains by herself alone, and puts off all the ugliness which came to her from a nature foreign to her own. VI.—For, as the ancient Oracle declares, temperance, fortitude and every virtue, aye, and wisdom herself, are purifications. Wherefore the sacred mysteries are right when they say enigmatically that he that is not purified shall, when he cometh to the House of Hades, lie in the mud. For, through their baseness, the filthy are friends of the mire, just as swine, whose bodies are unclean, delight to wallow in it. For what is true temperance unless it be not to give oneself up to the pleasures of the body, and to flee from them as being neither pure nor belonging to that which is pure? And fortitude is not to fear death; and death is the separation of the soul from the body. He who desires to become alone will not fear this. Again, great-ness of soul is contempt of mortal concerns, and wisdom is the exercise of intellect turned away from that which is below and leading the soul upward to the heights. When therefore the soul is purified, she becomes form and reason, altogether incorporeal, intellectual, and wholly of the divine order whence is the fountain of beauty and all that is akin thereto. The soul borne upwards towards intellect puts on a marvellous beauty. Intellect, and that which comes from Intellect, is the beauty which truly belongs to her and is not foreign to her; because, when united to It, and then only, is she truly soul. Wherefore it is rightly said that the beauty and good of the soul consist in her assimilation to God; for it is thence that her beauty comes and the gift of a better lot than her present one. Moreover, beauty is that which has real being, but ugliness is the nature opposite to this. It is this that is the first evil; just as beauty is likewise the first of things beautiful and good. Or it may be that goodness and beauty are one and the same. Therefore, we must investigate the beautiful and good, and the ugly and evil, by the same process; and in the highest rank we must place the Beautiful Itself, which is also the Good Itself, of which Intellect is the immediate emanation and the

first beautiful thing. But soul is beautiful through Intellect, and other things are beautiful because they, in turn, are formed by the soul, whether it be in actions or in pursuits and studies. And as to bodies, when these are spoken of as beautiful, it is still the soul that makes them so; for she, as something divine, and as it were a portion of the Beautiful Itself, makes beautiful, in so far as its nature will permit, all that she touches and overcomes.

VII.—We must ascend, therefore, once more to the Good, which every soul desires. If anyone has beheld It, he will know what I say, and in what manner It is beautiful, for it is as good that It is desired, and all appetency is towards goodness. But the attainment of the Good is for those who mount upward to the heights, set their faces towards them, and strip off the garments with which we clothed ourselves as we descended hither. Just as those who penetrate into the innermost sanctuaries of the mysteries, after being first purified and divesting themselves of their garments, go forward naked, so must the soul continue, until anyone, passing in his ascent beyond all that is separative from God, by himself alone contemplates God alone, perfect, simple and pure, from Whom all things depend, to Whom all beings look, and in Whom they are, and live, and know. For He is the cause of Being, Life and Intelligence. If, then, anyone beheld Him, with what love would he be inspired, with what desire would he burn, in his eagerness to be united with Him! With what bliss would he be overcome! He that has not yet beheld Him may desire Him as Good, but, to him that has, it is given to love Him as Beauty, to be filled with wonder and delight, to be overwhelmed yet unharmed, to love with true love and keen desire, to laugh at other loves, and to despise the things he formerly thought beautiful. Of such a nature is the experience of those who have beheld visions of Gods or angels—no more do they seek aught of the beauty of other bodies. What, then, shall we think of one who beheld The Beautiful Itself and by Itself, pure and untouched by flesh or body, existing neither in earth nor in heaven, because of Its very purity? For all these are contingent things and mixed, nor are they primary but proceed from It. If, therefore, he beheld That which provides for all things, which, remaining in Itself, gives to all and receives nothing into Itself, and if, remaining in the contemplation of This and tasting of Its bliss, he should be assumed into Its likeness, of what other beauty would he then have need? For This, since It is Beauty Itself and the First Beauty, makes those who love It beautiful and beloved. And this is the greatest and ultimate task which lies before the soul, for the sake of which all her toils are undertaken— not to be left without portion in that most sublime vision, to obtain which is to be blessed by the vision of blessedness, but not to obtain it is

wretchedness. For not he that has no share of beautiful colours or bodies, or of power or dominion or kingship, is unfortunate; but he that lacks this one thing alone, for the sake of which it were well to let go the possession and kingship and rule of the whole earth and of the sea, aye, and of the heaven itself, if a man, by leaving behind all these and looking beyond them, might be converted to This and behold It. VIII.—What, then, is the way? What are the means? How shall a man behold this ineffable Beauty which remains within, deep in Its holy sanctuaries, and proceeds not without where the profane may view It? He that is able, let him arise and follow into this inner sanctuary, nor look back towards those bodily splendours which he formerly admired. For when we behold the beauties of body we must not hurl ourselves at them, but know them for images, vestiges and shadows, and flee to That of which they are reflections. For if a man rushes towards them, seeking to grasp them for Beauty Itself, then it will be as though he should desire to grasp a beautiful image mirrored in water, and, like him of whom the myth tells, should sink beneath the surface of the stream and disappear. In like manner, he that reaches out after corporeal beauties, and will not let them go, will plunge not his body but his soul into gloomy depths abhorred by intellect, will remain blind in Hades, and both here and hereafter will have converse only with shadows. How truly might someone exhort us—“ Let us, then, fly to our dear country.” What therefore is this flight, and how shall we escape, like Odysseus in the story, from the enchantments of Circe and Calypso? There it tells symbolically how he remained unsatisfied although pleasant spectacles met his eyes and he was surrounded with all the beauty of sense. Our Fatherland is that country whence we came, and there our Father dwells. What, then, are the means for our escape thither? Our feet will not take us there, for all they can do is to carry us from one part of the earth to another. Nor will it avail to make ready horses for a chariot or ships on the sea: all these things we must let go. We must not even look, but with our eyes all but closed we must exchange our earthly vision for another, and awaken that, a vision which all possess but few use. IX.—What, then, does this interior vision see? When it is but lately awakened it cannot behold splendours too dazzling. The soul, therefore, must be accustomed first of all to contemplate beautiful pursuits, and next beautiful works, not those which are executed by craftsmen but those which are done by good men. After this, contemplate the souls of those who are the authors of such beautiful actions. How, then, may you behold the beauty of a virtuous soul? Withdraw into yourself and look; and if you do not yet behold yourself beautiful, do as does the maker of a statue which is to be

beautiful; for he cuts away, shaves down, smooths and cleans it, until he has made manifest in the statue the beauty of the face which he portrays. So with yourself. Cut away that which is superfluous, straighten that which is crooked, purify that which is obscure: labour to make all bright, and never cease to fashion your statue until there shall shine out upon you the godlike splendour of virtue, until you behold temperance established in purity in her holy shrine. If you have become this, and have beheld it, and dwell within yourself in purity, and there is now nothing which prevents you from thus becoming one, when you have nothing foreign mingled with your interior nature, but your whole self is true light and light alone, not measured by size nor circumscribed by the limitation of any figure, not to be increased in magnitude because unbounded, but totally immeasurable, greater than all measure and mightier than every quantity – if you behold yourself grown to this, having now become vision itself, take courage and ascend yet higher, for now you need a guide no more. Gaze intently and see! This eye alone beholds that mighty Beauty. But if it approach the vision bleared by vices, unpurified, or weak through cowardice, so that it cannot bear to gaze upon such glory, then it sees nothing, even though another should be at hand to point out that which all may see. For he that beholds must be akin to that which he beholds, and must, before he comes to this vision, be transformed into its likeness. Never could the eye have looked upon the sun had it not become sun-like, and never can the soul see Beauty unless she has become beautiful. Let each man first become god-like and each man beautiful, if he would behold Beauty and God. For he well first arrive in his ascent at the region of Intellect and there he will know all the beauties of form, and will say that this is the beauty of Ideas, for all things are beautiful through these, the offspring and essence of Intellect. But that which is beyond Intellect we call the nature of the Good, from which the Beautiful radiates on every side, so that in common speech it is called the First Beauty. But if we distinguish between the Intelligibles, we may say that Intelligible Beauty belongs to the world of Ideas, but that the Good which is beyond these is the fountain and principle of the Beautiful. Or the Good and the First Beauty may be considered under one principle, apart from the beauty of the world of Ideas.

PLOTINUS ON INTELLIGIBLE BEAUTY Ennead V.8 Translated by **THOMAS TAYLOR** * Introduction and notes by the Editors of the Shrine of Wisdom.

INTRODUCTION. *_The object of this treatise is to point out the way of approach to the vision of the beauty of Divine Intellect, and to the still more glorious realm of

Intelligible Beauty to which It introduces the soul. Beginning with things familiar to the senses, the question is asked: "Wherein lies the beauty of an object: is it in matter, or in form, or in something above both?" It is shown that beauty cannot lie wholly in matter, nor wholly in a form which is only one expression of the beauty dwelling in art, and which is inferior to the original form in the artist's mind, for still more beautiful than these must be the cause of both, the reason which contains art. Turning to nature, it is shown that the beauty of an animal is not merely in flesh or in size of body, but in the form imparted by nature to her works ; furthermore, that the cause of nature must be more beautiful than nature herself. Beauty does not consist in size, because the same form can be given both to a large and to a small object.

Coming then to man, it is pointed out that he may enjoy the beauty of the external world, and yet be unaware of internal beauty, and of that within the soul which is the cause of his delight in the outer form. The inner beauty is to be found in things without magnitude, such as duty, virtue, law, and a beauty of character in soul, so great as to render the observer oblivious to lack of bodily beauty. In order to appreciate fully such formless beauty, man must himself to the same degree become beautiful within. The beauty of nature is the cause of beauty in bodies, and a beautiful reason in soul is the cause of the beauty in nature, but the cause of the beautiful reason in soul is Divine Intellect, which mirrors and contains in terms of Itself the Intelligible World of Divine Wisdom. To this Intelligible Beauty man is privileged to ascend when, devoutly seeking the help of the Immortal Gods, he learns through Them to find it within the innermost depths of his soul. The soul's approach to Intellect must be made through an ascent to the summit of its own purified intellect, for like is truly knowable only to like. Then by Divine aid it may transcend its finite condition and behold the Beautiful Itself. The Intelligible World of resplendent beauty, unity and universality is symbolically described, and two ways are given in which the soul may attempt to view it, first, as different from itself, second, as the same with itself. If the spectator is unable at first to perceive it other than as different from himself he must look within and shape his own nature into the likeness of Divine Beauty, when he will at last behold in the hidden centre of his own essence the Intelligible World, and uniting himself with it, will become one with the Divine. But the goal of the soul is attained when it has become as if another specimen of the object of its search, and so long as it perceives the Intelligible World as something different from itself, it cannot be united to it; therefore, the soul, purified and beautiful throughout its whole nature, should seek to dwell in the Divine

World within its own essence, profoundly merging itself in contemplation of Ineffable Beauty. When first it reaches its true home it will not be aware that its purpose is accomplished, for we are least aware of that which is most allied to our nature, and the Spiritual Realms are as the native land to the deep centre of the soul's being. Thus, when most knowing, the soul will seem in its finite nature to be most ignorant of its blessed state.

ON INTELLIGIBLE BEAUTY

Since we must confess that the soul which contemplates the Intelligible World, and beholds the beauty of true Intellect, may also perceive the Father of this Divine World, Who is superior to Intellect, let us now endeavour to the utmost of our ability to behold and to express to ourselves (as much as such things can be expressed) how we may in the best manner survey the beauty of Intellect, and the world which It contains. Suppose, then, two stony masses placed near each other, one of which is incomposite, and destitute of artificial form: but the other is fashioned by art into some divine or human statue. And if divine, let it be the statue of some Grace or a Muse: but if human, not that of any particular man, but rather of someone which art has collected together from all beautiful forms. The stone then which is disposed by art into the beauty of form will immediately appear beautiful, but not because it is a stone, or the other mass would be similarly beautiful; it is therefore beautiful because it possesses the form which art applies. Matter, therefore, had not this form, but it existed in the thinking artist before it came into the stone. But it was in the artificer, not on account of his possessing eyes and hands, but because he was endued with art. This beauty, therefore, existed in art in a much more excellent manner. For the form itself which abides in art does not proceed into the stone, but this abides in indivisible union, while an inferior form proceeds from this, which neither remains in itself pure, nor is such as the artist wishes, but such as the subject matter is capable of receiving. But if art operates according to what it is, and to what it possesses, it fashions beautiful forms according to the reason by which it acts; hence reason is a much greater and truer beauty, since it contains the beauty of art, and is greater and more excellent than everything which proceeds into external form. For so far as form proceeding into matter is extended, so far it becomes more debile than that which abides in one. Since whatever suffers distance in itself, departs from itself and the integrity of its nature; whether it is strength diffused into some participant; or heat, or power, or beauty extended to some subject, and divided about the fluctuating

receptacle of matter. Again, every efficient, according to itself, ought to be more excellent than its effect: for that which is inharmonious does not form a musician, but this is the work of harmony; and that music which is above sense produces the harmony in sensible sound. But if anyone despises the arts because they operate imitating nature, in the first place, it must be confessed that naturest also imitate other things; and in the next place, that arts do not simply imitate that which is perceived by the eyes, but recur to those reasons from which the energy of nature consists. Besides this they produce many things from themselves, and add something where anything is wanting to the perfection of the whole. because they contain beauty in themselves. Lastly, Phidias himself fashioned his Jupiter, not by imitating any spectacle proper to the senses, but conceiving the God such as He would appear if He should be willing to exhibit Himself to our eyes. But for the present let us neglect the arts, and consider those *beautiful* natural effects which art is said to imitate, i.e., all rational and irrational animals; but especially whatever among these are more exactly finished: I mean where the Demiurgus ruling over matter invests it with the form He desires it should participate. What then is beauty in these? For it is not blood and tissues, but colour and figure different from these; or it is nothing; or something destitute of figure; or it is that which, as it were, contains something simple like matter. From whence arose the beauty of Helen, for which so great a contest ensued? From whence shines the beauty of other forms similar to Venus? And from whence did the form of Venus Herself arise? Or that of any man entirely beautiful, or of some God, whether they are among the number of things subject to our sight, or among those which are not subject, and yet have in themselves a conspicuous beauty? Is not this everywhere form, descending into that which is produced by the artificer, in the same manner as it was said that the beauty of artificial figures proceeded from the arts? What then? Are works beautiful indeed, and reason existing in matter? But is reason (separate from matter) which exists in the soul of the agent, and which is first in dignity and rank, not beautiful, except when reduced into one with its subject-matter? But if bulk is beautiful, so far as bulk, it follows that active reason, because it is not bulk, is not beautiful: though if form, whether contained in a small or large mass, moves and affects in a similar manner the mind of the beholder, certainly beauty is not to be attributed to the magnitude of bulk. Hence, so long as form is external to the soul, we do not perceive, and are not moved by its power: but when it is well conceived in the soul then it affects us with delight. Again, the form of things alone flows through the eyes, otherwise the most ample figures could not penetrate

through such narrow receptacles. But magnitude is contracted, not from its being great in bulk, but rather because great in species or form. Besides it is necessary that the cause itself of a beautiful effect should be either deformed, or indifferent, or beautiful. If it is deformed, it cannot produce the contrary to deformity. If it is indifferent, why should it rather produce anything beautiful than deformed? But, indeed, it is necessary that nature, the artificer of things so beautiful, should possess a beauty more primary and exalted. But with regard to us, when we behold nothing inward, and are entirely ignorant of internal beauty, we follow what is external, unconscious in the meantime that the cause of motion is profoundly latent in the depths of the soul; just like one who, on perceiving his own image, and being ignorant from whence it came, should follow its shadowy and unreal progression. But that there is something else which allures followers to itself, and that beauty does not consist in magnitude, is sufficiently testified by the beauty inherent in disciplines, offices, and the soul: where certainly a more true beauty flourishes; which is then manifest, when we contemplate the wisdom in a worthy mind, and are delighted with the contemplation, and in love with its beauty; not then surveying the corporeal face, which perhaps is not beautiful, but neglecting the whole form of the body and pursuing inward beauty to its most sacred and profound retreats. But if such a soul does not yet incite you to denominate it beautiful, neither on surveying yourself inwardly, will you be delighted with yourself as with something beautiful. Hence, while so affected you will vainly investigate true and intimate beauty: for you will seek after the purity of beauty, not with something pure, but with that which is base; and hence, too, a discourse on things of this kind is not to be addressed to all men. Because if you behold yourself beautiful, you may obtain a reminiscence of Beauty Itself. The reason, therefore, of the beauty contained in nature is the exemplar of the beauty appearing in body: but the exemplar of natural beauty is a more beautiful reason contained in soul, from which the beauty of nature flows. But this shines brighter in a worthy soul, already advanced in beauty, than in nature herself; since it adorns such a soul, and affords a light, derived from one much greater; and which is no other than the First Beauty. Thus abiding in the soul, it leads it to consider what that superior reason of beauty may be, which is no longer generated nor placed in another, but abides perpetually in itself. Hence it is not reason, but the Author of that reason which is first: since indeed the first reason is a certain beauty subsisting in soul as in matter. But its Author is Intellect Which is always the same, and not sometimes Intellect; because intelligence does not happen extrinsically to this true and original

Intellect. But what image are we able to receive of such an Intellect? For whatever is inquired after externally, is doubtless sought for from something worse than Intellect. An image therefore of Intellect must be obtained from Intellect Itself: so that we must not speak of It through the medium of an image; but we must receive a certain portion of gold as a representative of universal gold. And unless this received gold is pure, we must purify it either in reality, or at least in our discourse, demonstrating that this which is received by us is not universal, but only a particular portion of gold. Thus, then, let us ascend higher from our intellect now purified, to Intellect Itself; and let us begin with the Gods Themselves, contemplating the Intellect which They possess. For all the Gods are venerable and beautiful, and endued with an inestimable gracefulness. But what is the cause of such beauty? It is Intellect, energizing in the most exalted manner, which produces Their divinely beautiful appearance. For it is not because Their bodies are beautiful that They are Gods, but from the possession of Intellect, since the participation of body is not essential to Divinity. For They are not at one time wise, and at another time the contrary; but They are perpetually wise, with a tranquil, stable and pure Intellect, understanding all things, and knowing not human concerns properly, but Their own, * that is such as are divine, and such as Intellect Itself perceives. But the Gods Who inhabit this visible heaven, † for They abound in divine leisure, assiduously contemplate, as if it were above Them, what the primary and Intelligible Heaven contains. But Those Who are stationed in this higher world, contemplate its inhabitants possessing the whole of this diviner Heaven. For all things there are Heaven. There the sea, animals, plants and men. are Heaven. Lastly, every portion of this Heaven is celestial.

* They know all things, not with human knowledge, but with the knowledge proper to Themselves.

† The Gods as here described are aspects of the Essence, Wisdom and Power of the Supreme Principle of Principles Which is One, but Whose operations extend throughout all spheres, so that through the Gods, the ONE permeates the all. The Gods of the visible heavens may be understood as corresponding to the fount of Divine Activity in the realms of form, and though all the Gods are co-equal in essence, power and energy, yet in relation to the spheres of Their activity These can be regarded as hierarchically below the Intelligible Gods, and as rooted in and contemplating the Intelligible World, while Their operations are concerned with a lower realm of existence.

But the Gods Who reside there do not disdain men, nor any other of its inhabitants, because everything there is divine; and They comprehend the whole of this Intelligible Region attended with the most perfect repose. Hence the life of these Divinities is easy, and Truth is Their generator and nurse, Their essence and nutriment: hence They perceive all things, not such indeed as are subject to

generation, but such as abide in essence: They likewise perceive Themselves in others. For all things are there perfectly perspicuous. Nothing there is dark, nothing opposing, but everything is conspicuous to all, intrinsically and universally. For light everywhere meets with light. Each thing contains in itself all, and all things are again beheld in another. So that all things are everywhere, and all is all. There everything is all. There an immense splendour shines. There everything is great, since even what is small is there great. There the sun is all the stars; and every star is a sun, and at the same time all the stars. But one thing excels in each, while in the meantime all things are beheld in each. There motion is perfectly pure: for the proceeding motion is not confounded by a mover foreign from the motion. * Station also there is disturbed by no mutation: for it is not mingled with an unstable nature. † Besides beauty there is Beauty Itself, because it does not subsist in beauty. ‡ But everything abides there not as if placed in some foreign land; for the being of each is its own stable foundation: nor is its essence different from its seat; for its subject is Intellect and itself is Intellect. Just as if anyone should conceive this sensible heaven, which is manifest and lucid to the eyes, germinating into stars by its light. In corporeal natures indeed, one part is not everywhere produced from another, but each part is distinct from the rest. But there each thing is everywhere produced from the whole; and is at the same time particular and the whole. It appears indeed as a part: but by him who acutely perceives, it will be beheld as a whole: by him, I mean, who is endued with a sight similar to that of the lynx, the rays of whose eyes are reported to penetrate the depth of the earth. For it appears to me that this fable occultly signifies the perspicuousness of supernal eyes.

* Motion is here not local motion, but rather a self-activity which is the essential and interior cause of all external motion. Thus the Gods, though eternally intensely active, yet “abound in divine leisure.” Their contemplation is the highest form of inner activity, and far surpasses any external activity.

† Station, or rest, is not in place, but is in the Self-Subsistent, above place.

‡ Beauty Itself is the Source of all beauty and is Self-Subsistent.

Besides the vision of these blessed inhabitants is never wearied, but never ceases through a satiety of perceiving. For there is no vacuity in any perceiver which, when afterwards filled up, can bring intuition to an end. Nor can pleasure ever fall through the variety of objects, or through any discord between the perceiver and the thing perceived. Besides everything there is endued with an untamed and unwearied

power. And that which never can be filled is so called because its plenitude never spurns at its replenishing object. For by intuition it more assiduously perceives. And beholding itself infinite, and the objects of its perception, it follows its own nature as its guide in unwearied contemplation. Again, no life there is laborious, since it is pure life: for why should that labour which lives in the best manner? But the life there is wisdom, a wisdom not obtained by arguments like ours, because it is always total, nor is in any part deficient, from which it might require investigation. But it is the First Wisdom, not depending on any other; and Essence Itself is there Wisdom; yet not in such a manner that Essence is first, and then Wisdom succeeds as secondary and an adjunct. Hence no Wisdom is greater than this, but there science itself is the associate of Intellect, because they both germinate and beam with divine splendours together: in the same manner as by a certain imitation they report that Justice resides with Jupiter. For everything of this kind exists there like a lucid resemblance perspicuous from itself, so as to become the spectacle of transcendently happy spectators. The magnitude and power, therefore, of Wisdom Itself is sufficiently evident from Its containing with Itself, and producing, beings: for all things which are true pursue Wisdom, depend on It for their being, originate together with It, and have one and the same Essence: and, lastly, Essence there is no other than Wisdom Itself. But we do not yet approach to this exalted knowledge, because we consider sciences as certain speculations and rules, and a conflux of propositions, which indeed ought not with propriety to be attributed to the sciences we possess. But if anyone doubts concerning our sciences, we must neglect the discussion for the present, at the same time assuming an occasion from hence, let us dispute concerning that science,* which Plato beholding in the Intelligible World says, that science there is not one thing in another.

* Science, in its highest aspect as Divine Knowledge or Truth, is a unity in the Intelligible World, whereas science as known in the outer world has many aspects, all of which are wholes relative to the unity of Truth, and all of which are interpenetrating. Each, however, has its place in the one Truth.

And this investigation will be proper to us, if we profess ourselves worthy an appellation of this kind. Whatsoever is made by nature or art is produced by a certain wisdom, and everywhere wisdom is the leader of action. But wheresoever a certain wisdom fabricates, there are indeed arts of this kind. But the artificer himself is again referred into natural wisdom, according to which art produces every work; not by being collected from speculations, but as one certain whole; nor as composed

from many into one but rather as resolving itself from one into many. If any one, therefore, places this Wisdom as the first in Intelligible dignity, it will be sufficient, since It does not originate from another, and does not subsist in any other essence. But if he should say that reason is placed in nature, and that the principle of this is nature, we must inquire from whence nature possesses reason. Because if it is said to possess it from another, we again inquire of that other; and if it possess it from itself, our investigation is finished. But if they fly to Intellect, there again we must inquire whether Intellect generates Wisdom. And if they confess it does, we ask from whence. But if It conceives Wisdom from Itself, it could not accomplish this, unless Intellect were Wisdom Itself. True Wisdom, therefore, is Essence, and true Essence is Wisdom; and the dignity of Essence is derived from Wisdom. For it appears that true Essence originates from Wisdom. Hence whatever things are destitute of the Wisdom of Essence, so far indeed as they are made by a certain wisdom, they are essences; but because they do not contain in themselves any wisdom, they are not true essences. No one, therefore, ought to think that in the Intelligible World, either the Gods Themselves or any of Its transcendently happy inhabitants contemplate certain rules of propositions; but that each of the objects there contained offers itself to the beholders, like a beautiful spectacle, such as may be imagined to exist in the soul of a man divinely wise. Not indeed like painted resemblances, but true Beings shining with intellectual splendours; on which account the ancients called Ideas, beings and Essences. But the wise men of the Egyptians, whether from a certain accurate science, or from natural instinct, when they determined to signify to us the mysteries of Wisdom, appear to me not to have used figures significant of letters, discourses and propositions, nor things imitating voices and axioms; but rather by describing and painting the particular images of particular things in their sacred concerns, to have occultly signified the discursive energy of the thing itself. For indeed every image is a certain science and wisdom; it is likewise a subject; and is a spectacle collected into one; and is neither cogitation nor counsel. But afterwards from this image, or wisdom collected into one, an evolved resemblance is produced in something else, speaking in a discursive transition, and finding out the causes why things are thus instituted: while the thing thus beautifully disposed excites admiration. Hence it is said that he will admire Wisdom who considers how, without containing the causes of Her essence, She affords to others which are fashioned according to Her nature their particular mode of existence. This beautiful disposition of things then, which is scarcely manifest from inquiry, if any one should discover,

he must own it requisite that in the Intelligible World, things should subsist previous to all argument and inquiry, as in one great nature which harmonizes the whole.

Can we think that this universe, which we confess to be derived and to exist in this manner from another, was so composed by its Artificer that He thought within Himself concerning the earth; and considered that it ought to rest in the middle? And that after ward He reasoned concerning the connection of water with earth, and the orderly disposition of things as far as to the heavens? But in the next place concerning all animals, and such, and so many forms of particular vital beings, as they are at present; and the disposition as well of the inward as of the external parts and members? And lastly that He began to produce things in energy, as they were disposed in Himself? But such a consideration could not subsist with the Artificer of the universe. For how could it take place in Him, Who had not as yet seen such things in existence Nor is it possible that He could fabricate, by receiving external assistance, after the manner of human artificers, who operate with hands and instruments: for hands and feet were posterior to His Energy. It remains therefore that all things must subsist in their Divine Cause, and since no medium intervenes, that by the propinquity of being itself, to another, its image and similitude should, as it were, on a sudden shine forth whether from itself alone, or through the ministry of soul. For it is of no consequence at present whether or not the world was fabricated properly through a certain soul, if it is but admitted that all things emanated from thence, and subsist there in greater beauty and perfection. For here they are mixed, but there they are pure. But this universe, proceeding from thence, is comprehended by forms from beginning to end. In the first place, matter is the receptacle of the elementary forms and of others in continual succession; so that it is difficult to find matter thus concealed under a multitude of forms. But since it possesses a certain ultimate form, it easily becomes the subject of every form. Hence since the Exemplar of the universe is Form, He produced all forms; and this without any difficulty or violence, because the Artificer there is a divine Universe, and Essence, and Form. Hence, too, His fabrication was easy, and without labour: for there was no impediment; and on this account He now rules over His work with absolute dominion. And although some particulars are everywhere in opposition to others, yet they cannot now oppose the universal fabric, for it abides as the whole. Indeed, I think if we were the first exemplars of things, and at the same time essences and forms, and if the form which operates here was our essence, that our fabrication would rule without labour,* though man as at present should fabricate a form different from himself. For

becoming man he ceases to be the universe: but when he ceases to be man as Plato says, he raises himself on high, and governs the world. *For being made of the whole, he also makes the whole.* But that we may return to our design, you may indeed produce a reason why the earth is placed in the middle, and why it is round; or why the zodiac is situated in a certain place; but in the Intelligible World it was not deliberated so to be, because it was requisite; but rather because it is as it exists, on this account it is constituted as it ought; just as if previous to a syllogistic energy through causes, the conclusion itself should remain indubitably certain, without any propositions. For nothing there depends on consequences, nothing becomes certain from consideration: but it subsists prior to consequence, and all consideration. For all these are posterior, *reason, demonstration, faith.* Since on account of the principle all these exist, and are thus disposed.

* If we were ourselves the primary patterns and at the same time the forms and essences of things, and if the form which is in action here were our essence, all that we constructed would be produced easily and spontaneously.

But it is rightly said that the causes of the principle are not to be sought after; especially of a perfect principle, which is the same with the end: for that which is both principle and end is at the same time the whole and perfect in every part. Intellect Itself therefore is the First Beauty; it is total, and is everywhere total, without suffering a defect of beauty in any part. What, then, is the Beautiful Itself to be called? Certainly, not anything which is not the whole itself, but either possesses a part only, or is entirely destitute of its participation. Indeed, unless this is the Beautiful Itself, what else can merit this appellation? For That which is prior to Intellect does not will Itself to be beautiful, but is something ineffably more excellent. Hence that which first presents itself to our view, because it is form, and a spectacle of intellect, is by this means lovely, and pleasant to the sight. On this account, Plato, wishing to intimate to us this truth, represents the Demiurgus of the universe, approving His own perfect work; willing from hence to exhibit, by something more manifest to our apprehension, the beauty of the Exemplar, and of His great Idea, as perfectly lovely. For as often as anyone admires a work, fabricated according to an exemplar, he must particularly admire the exemplar itself. Nor ought it to seem wonderful if in the meantime such a one is ignorant of what he suffers ; * since terrene lovers, and those who admire corporeal beauty, are ignorant that they are thus affected, on account of

supernal beauty. But that Plato refers the Demiurgus of the universe loving his work, to the Divine Exemplar, is evident from hence; for he says that He was delighted with the work, and wished to render it still more similar to its Exemplar: evincing from this the beauty of the Exemplar, for, says he, its work is beautiful, because it is the image of its Artificer. For indeed unless that was inestimably beautiful, what would be more beautiful than this universe, which is subject to our corporeal sight? On which account they do not perceive rightly, who detract from the beauty of this sensible world; unless in detracting they perceive that this universe is not the Intelligible World.

* Unaware of the true cause of his admiration.

Let us then receive by cogitation this our sensible world so disposed that every part may remain indeed what it is, but that one thing may mutually reside in another. Let us suppose that all things are collected as much as possible into one, so that each particular object may first present itself to the eyes; as if a sphere should be the exterior boundary, the spectacle of the sun immediately succeeding, and an image of the other stars and the earth, the sea and all animals should appear within, as in a diaphanous globe: and lastly let us conceive that it is possible to behold all things in each. Let there be then in the soul a lucid imagination of a sphere, containing all things in its transparent receptacle; whether they are agitated, or at rest; or partly mutable, and partly stable. Now preserving this sphere receive another in your soul, removing from this last the extension into bulk, take away likewise place, and banish far from yourself all imagination of matter: at the same time being careful not to conceive this second sphere as something less than the first in bulk, for this must be void of all dimension. After this invoke that Divinity who is the Author of the universe, imaged in your phantasy, and earnestly entreat Him to approach. Then will He suddenly come, bearing with Him His own Divine World, with all the Gods it contains. Then will He come, being at the same time one and all, and bringing with Him all things concurring in one. There indeed all the Gods are various amongst Themselves in gradations of power, yet by that one abundant power They are all but one, or rather one is all: for the Divinity never fails by which They are all produced. But all the Gods abide together, and each is again distinct from the other in a certain state unattended with distance, and bearing no form subject to sensible inspection: or one would be situated differently from the other, nor each be in Itself all. Nor again does any one of

these possess parts different from others, and from Itself; nor is every whole there a divided power, and of a magnitude equal to Its measured parts; but It is indeed a universe, and a universal power, proceeding to infinity in a power which is the parent of energy. But this Divine World is so truly great that its parts become infinite. For where can anything be said to exist, with which it is not extended? This sensible world, too, is great, and all powers are contained in its ample bosom: but it would be much greater, and that in a manner perfectly ineffable, if it was free from the diminutive power of body. And if it should be said that the power of fire and of other bodies is great, it must be remembered that true powers are infinite, and that it is only from an ignorance of these that corporeal natures appear to have being, and to operate by corrupting, separating, and ministering to the generation of animals. But these indeed corrupt, because they are themselves corrupted, and they generate because they are generated. But the power which flourishes there possesses being alone, and is alone beautiful, without any external and adventitious qualities which only derogate from the dignity of essence. For where can there be any thing beautiful, deprived of being? And where again can essence abide, if it wants the presence of beauty? For while beauty is taken away essence is destroyed. On this account being itself is desirable, because being and beauty are the same: and the beautiful is lovely because it is being. But it is not proper to inquire which is the cause of the other, since the nature of each is one and the same. The false essences indeed of bodies require a certain image of beauty, extrinsically acceding, both that they may appear beautiful, and that they may inherit an obscure portion of being. For they so far partake of essence as they participate of beauty, consisting in form: and by how much the more they receive of this kind of beauty, so much the more of perfection do they inherit: for by this means a beautiful essence and beauty itself is more peculiar to their nature.

On this account Jupiter Himself, Who is the most ancient of the other Gods Which He leads, proceeds first to the contemplation of the Intelligible World. But afterwards the subordinate Gods, daemons and souls follow Him, who are able to perceive such transcendently lucid objects. And this Divine World shines upon them from a certain occult place, which is no other than the abode of ineffable Unity. But It illustrates all the Divinities with Its Light: and excites to Itself superior souls who are afterwards converted to Its splendid vision, which before they were incapable of perceiving; and which, like the sun, dazzles the eye unaccustomed to Intellectual Light. And while some, with elevated eyes, easily bear its intuition, others who are more distant from its nature are disturbed with the vision. But since each of these

blessed inhabitants perceives according to his ability, all of them indeed behold this Intelligible World, with its various contents, yet they do not all retain the same spectacle, but while they are lost in attentive vision one beholds the lucid fountain and nature of the just itself while another abundantly perceives temperance itself, but not such as that which resides with men when they enjoy its possession. For this our temperance imitates' the Supreme: but that diffusing itself in all things, as if about all the magnitude of its nature, is finally perceived by those who have already beheld many perspicuous spectacles. On this account the Gods behold everything separate and at the same time all things together: They perceive, too, divine souls there, whose vision is universal; and their nature becomes such from unbounded perception that they contain all things from the beginning to the end. These divine objects, therefore, Jupiter Himself and those of us who, together with Jupiter, love the Intelligible World, happily contemplate, together with that universal Beauty shining from all, and whatever participates of the Beauty which there abides. For everything there shines brightly and illuminates the spectators with its light, so that they become beautiful by its lustre: just as it happens to those who ascend the highest mountains, where the earth is yellow: for they are immediately infected with the colour, and become similar to the earth to which they ascend. But the colour which flourishes in the Divine World is Beauty Itself; or rather everything there is wholly colour, and profound beauty. For Beauty there is not like that which flourishes in the superficies of bodies: but among those who do not perceive the whole, that alone which is resplendent in the superficies is considered as beauty. But those who are totally filled with the intoxicating nectar of divine contemplation, since beauty diffuses itself through every part of their souls, do not become spectators alone. For in this case the spectator is no longer external to the spectacle: but he who acutely perceives, contains the object of his perception in the depths of his own essence; though while possessing he is often ignorant that he possesses. For he who beholds anything as external, beholds it as something visible, and because he wishes to perceive it attended with distance. But whatever is beheld as *perceptible*, is beheld externally: but it is requisite we should transfer the divine spectacle into ourselves, and behold it as one, and as the same with our essence: just as if one hurried away by the vigorous impulse of some God, whether Apollo or one of the Muses, should procure in himself the intuition of the God; since in the secret recesses of his own essence he will behold the Divinity Himself. But if any one of us who is not able to perceive himself entirely comprehended by this Divinity should produce a spectacle into his view for the

purpose of assisting his vision, he should produce himself; and he will then perceive an image of the Intelligible World, now become more beautiful and divine. But afterwards neglecting the image although beautiful, and conspiring with himself into one, and no longer separating his essence, he will become *one all* together with that Deity, Who silently flows into his soul; and he will be present with Him as far as he is able, and as much as he desires. But if he should return from this divine union into two, and is in the meantime pure, he will nevertheless dwell proximate to its essence; so that by conversion he may again be present and become united with his Divinity. But the gain of the soul will consist in this ineffable conversion. Indeed, when it first attempts this union, it perceives itself, as long as it is different from the God: but when it has penetrated into its most intimate recesses, it will then find itself in possession of the Intelligible Universe; and casting sense behind, fearing lest it should become different, it will be one with this Divine World. And if it desires to perceive as something different, it will place itself external to its object. But it is requisite that the soul which is about to perceive a Divinity of this kind should possess a certain figure of His nature, and assiduously persevere, while it endeavours perspicuously to know Him; and thus well understanding the importance of its pursuit, and trusting it is about to enter on the most blessed vision, should profoundly merge itself in contemplation, till instead of a spectator it may become another specimen of the object of its intuition; such as it came from thence, abundantly shining with intellectual conceptions. But how can anyone reside in the Beautiful Itself, unless he perceives It? Indeed, if he perceives It as something different, he will not as yet abide in beauty. But becoming beautiful, he will thus especially exist in beauty. If then vision is directed to something external, it is not proper that vision should be there, or if it is it should become one with the object of perception. But a doubt of this kind is like a certain consciousness of someone fearing lest, if he wished to perceive more vehemently, he should depart from himself. For thus disease more vehemently impels and excites our sensation; but health dwelling with us more quietly, exhibits a truer knowledge of itself, since it is present with silence and tranquillity, as something familiar and allied to us; and conspires into one with our composition. On the contrary, disease possesses nothing domestic, but is entirely foreign from our nature; and hence its presence is more manifest on account of its diversity: but such things as are peculiarly our own are present with us without any manifest sensation. So that when we are in this condition, we are then most of all known to ourselves; since our science in this case is one and the same with our essence. Hence, in the

Divine World, when we are most knowing according to intellect, we appear to be ignorant, expecting the passion of sense, which says it does not perceive; nor indeed does it see; nor can it ever attain to the intuition of such exalted objects. That which distrusts its vision then is sense: but it is something else which perceives. And if this, too, should doubt, it is no longer its true self. For neither can this last, when it places itself externally, behold that which is intelligible, as if it were sensible, and to be seen with corporeal eyes. But it has been shown how the soul may be able to accomplish this as different from its object, and how when the same. But what will the perceiver relate whether abiding as different, or the same? He will tell us that he saw this God, Who is the same with the Intelligible World, generating a beautiful Son, and producing all things in His Essence without any labour and fatigue. For this Deity being delighted with His work, and loving His progeny, continues and connects all things with Himself, pleased both with Himself, and with the splendours His offspring exhibit. But since all these are beautiful, and those which remain within are still more beautiful, Jupiter the Son of Intellect alone shines forth externally, proceeding from the splendid retreats of His Father. From which last Son, we may behold as in an image the greatness of His Sire, and of His brethren those Divine Ideas, who abide in occult union with their Father. But this ultimate progeny does not affirm in vain that He proceeds from His parent Intellect: for He is another world, proceeding from this first, and becoming beautiful, like an image of Beauty. For it is not lawful that the image of Beauty and of Essence should not be beautiful. Hence, He in every respect imitates His Exemplar. For He possesses life, and the gift of essence as a certain imitation of stable essence, and life ever vigilant: He possesses also beauty, so far as He proceeds from thence; and perpetual duration, as a moving image of the eternity of Intellect abiding in one: for if this is not admitted, He would at one time exhibit His image and not at another. But He is not an image fabricated by art; and every image formed by nature lasts as long as its exemplar endures. Hence they do not conceive rightly who think this world may be destroyed, that which is divine remaining in the full perfection of its essence, and thus imagine the world generated, and that its Author on a certain time consulted concerning its production. Such as these indeed neither wish to understand, nor are at all acquainted with the mode of its formation, and are ignorant that so long as the splendours of that Divine World endure, so long will this visible universe beam forth from thence, and will never be destroyed, since the original of each is the same. But the Intelligible World always was, and always will be: appellations of this kind being adopted from

necessity, for the purpose of conveying the conceptions to our minds. Saturn, therefore, Who according to poetical fable is feigned bound, because He always perseveres in the same divine energies of His nature: Who is also reported to have delivered the government of this universe to His Son Jupiter (for it was not proper that He, having dismissed His government, should follow a nature junior and posterior to Himself, since He comprehends in Himself the plenitude of all beauty); Saturn, I say, omitting all subordinate natures, established in Himself His Father Caelum, and raised Himself on high as far as to this ineffable Principle. He likewise established succeeding natures originated posterior to Him, from His Son. And thus He possesses a middle situation between both, through a diversity of section from that which is above Him, and from His abstaining from inferior concerns, while He is fabled by a subordinate care to be bound in chains; thus obtaining a middle situation between His greater Father, and His inferior Son. But since His Father Caelum is something greater than beauty, hence Saturn or Intellect is the First Beauty, though soul is likewise beautiful: yet Intellect is more beautiful than soul, because soul is only its vestige; and is naturally beautiful through this, though it is far more beautiful when it beholds the perfect nature of Intellect. If then the soul of the universe (that we may use words more generally known), and Venus Herself are beautiful, what must be the beauty of Intellect? For if soul and Venus possess this from themselves, how great must be the splendour of Intellect? But if from another, from whom does soul possess the beauty as well acceding, as natural to her essence? Indeed, whenever we are beautiful, we become so from the possession of our own nature alone: but we are base when we are precipitated into an inferior nature. So that we are beautiful when we know, but base when we are ignorant of ourselves. Beauty, therefore, shines in Saturn or Intellect, with primary splendours. But are these considerations sufficient to a knowledge of the Divine World, the Intelligible Place? Or must we proceed another way in our investigation?