

Hamvas Béla

Anthologia humana

THE WISDOM OF FIVE THOUSAND YEARS

Compiled and introduced by
BÉLA HAMVAS

Fifth edition Revised and

edited by

FIFTH EDITION AND

REVISED AND REVISED

BY HARD KATALIN

MEDIO PUBLISHERS

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Published by MEDIO

Publishing Ltd.

2000 Szentendre, Kucsera F u. 1.

Typesetting and editing by Antal

Dúl ISBN 963 79180 00

(Complete Edition)

ISBN 963 85323 6 X

Edited by Antal Dúl

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Introduction

The first edition of the *Anthologia humana* was published in 1946, followed by two further unchanged editions. As Béla Hamvas's notes left behind attest, he intended the fourth edition to be substantially enlarged, while at the same time deleting certain chapters and replacing others. We have therefore included in the new edition some passages that Béla Hamvas had prepared for the fourth edition. In the omissions, replacements, changes and additions, we also followed the guidance of his draft.

Katalin Kemény

* * *

Five thousand years look down on us from these pages. What has happened on the surface during these five thousand years is preserved in the history of the world; the cursed history of wars, of famine, of revolutions, of the destruction of peoples, of bloodshed. It is not the only one. Beneath and behind it is the blessed history of the arts, religions, philosophies and poetry. This is the other, and this is the real one. The lyrics of the true melody of human existence are not the lamentations and curses, the frenzy and cries of decaying Babylon, of lethargic Egypt, of decaying Rome and Byzantium, but the silent knowledge preserved in the pyramids, the Greek statues, the Chinese temples and the Mexican cities. Our true existence lies in what we have created, not in what we have destroyed. In what remains, not in what is ephemeral. But there is no story more blessed, no story greater, no story more faithful and true, more resounding, more profound than that of the written word. The word is the true text of existence; the true content and meaning and decipherment of the whole story.

Anyone who picks up this book is tempted to ask whether, in the five thousand years years, has there been the development or progress of which so much is said? Or are those who claim that there is no progress, that mankind has always stood still and will always stand still, right? The reader will get the distinct impression, on first leafing through the book, that there is no progress to be made. Four or five hundred years ago, in Egypt, someone anonymous wrote *The Lamentations of the Bored*, but someone else could have written it yesterday. And in form? The form of **Su-king** is modern, much more modern than the archaic Walt Whitman of yesterday. The great themes of human existence have not changed. They were always the same: Lao Tzu, Órigenes, Master Eckehart, Emerson. What makes humanity whole is that all the themes of its existence are eternal.

There is no progress, no development; yet there is. There is some mysterious transformation which can be followed almost step by step, some inexpressible, slow, exceedingly slow unfolding and approaching completion. It would be too much to call it progress.

or progress, especially in the sense in which it is made today; it cannot be, if only because there are no tangible outward signs. Human existence is no more perfect today than it was when the first words of this book were written in ancient Egyptian. On the surface, nothing has changed; but beneath the surface we are moving towards something. It is in vain to ask the cursed story of this progress; it cannot answer. Mankind stood five thousand years ago in the same place where it stands today, and probably never has and never will stand anywhere else. Damned history knows no change, no evolution, only meaningless bustle. It hurries in one place. In the blessed story, however, that peculiar movement towards something, which cannot be confessed, but which is all the more directly experienced, is necessarily recognizable.

In the external world, human life has always been like it is today: hunger, war, confusion, disease, strife, misery, suffering. But beneath the externals, in that mystical transition we call the blessed story, five millennia have passed since the first words of this book were written. We may be no more individually, but the whole is more. Somehow softer and sweeter, crumblier and dustier, denser and more fiery. More mature. It's getting harder to live, and harder to let go of life. While men individually have changed neither in value nor in the seriousness of their ideals, nothing has changed, the whole of human existence has, deep beneath the surface, in the real history of mankind, been moving towards its true purpose. What we call the blessed history is nothing other than the uninterrupted, continuous and ceaseless rise of existence. The unstoppable journey of humanity towards glorification. In this process, each later moment is more than the one before; each year is a visible height above the one before. Five thousand years have passed since Hermes wrote the **Tabula Emeraldina of Trismegistus**. Since then, human existence has travelled five thousand miles towards its ultimate goal.

The external story does not, cannot and cannot give any picture of the journey. The road travelled can only be represented symbolically. Symbolically - musically. Music is the secret that helps me understand how I can hear different things, and yet always hear different things, with the same themes. The themes I hear are the same, will remain the same, and can never change; but they always appear in different pitches, variations, rhythmic formulas and time scales: in ever newer and newer inversions, combinations, different accompaniments, different words, different harmonies, and while the fugue of a billion voices is solemnly rolling towards its conclusion, and while the anticipation, the tension is growing, and the excitement is growing, music, as a peculiar means of suggestion, is indicating the final step, can hint at the equilibrium, can make us feel the final goal, and prepares us for it. Only through musical symbols can we experience the stage we are at in the history of the world. Only through musical symbols can we learn that human existence does not progress or evolve, but mysteriously swirls in a perpetual whirlpool of transparency, boiling in itself to its ultimate solution. Only music gives us the idea that change cannot be measured, because it does not take place in a straight line, but according to an order of numbers; not of years, but according to the progressive standards of metaphysical arithmetic inherent in music.

Neither the individual man nor the whole of mankind has become either smarter or better, happier or more intelligent in the course of time. It has matured. Novalis says:

"Man does nothing but return home." Humanity does nothing else. We are five thousand years closer to our final homecoming.

In fact, the whole vast symphony has one main theme. The theme is infinitely simple. It is this: **to be human**. - As if none of us are human yet. As if all we want to be is human, and as if we are now living off the advances of our supposed humanity. Strange creatures! We live alone, alone, in a fatal separation from the animal world, as well as from the winds, we do not hold the kinship downwards or upwards, but we have not been able to reach and realize the being who, in our hearts, we really are, human beings.

None of us live for today and in today and in the moment. We are all living today for tomorrow - tomorrow: tomorrow's tomorrow. We cast our fate into the future, believing that tomorrow we will arrive at a place where we can truly begin to live. Because no one really thinks that what they are doing today is a life worth living. We are embedded in an endless rush and worry towards an unfulfilled human existence. Nothing is satisfying, nothing calms, no sensual pleasure, no wealth, no fame, no power. We want real existence; we want to be real people. The human heart, fertilized by its own image, has been burdened and expectant for countless millennia: with itself. It has been wanting to give birth to itself for a terrible time, with immeasurable agony and poignant perseverance. It is the only important thing in what has happened so far; it is the only interesting thing in what is to happen; it is what I am curious about in the other man; it is the only attractive thing in the book, the picture, the sculpture, the music. That is what I want to hear in the word, that and nothing else. Everything else is dull, uninteresting, indifferent, irrelevant.

The object of the book is this problem, this pregnancy, this persistence, this single and only interesting event; this is the object and the content, the beauty and the seriousness, the grandeur and the excitement of the book. This is the symphony of tenacious moles, this is the symptomatic madness and saintly patience: onwards, onwards, upwards, upwards, always upwards, finally to be born, to starve, to poke the ground, to rage, to grit one's teeth, as one knows how and as one wills.

The subject of the book is the great symphony of human life, the music that plays under the story of the scene, the blessed true music of human existence, with a single desire and purpose, a single theme and passion: to be human, to be truly and genuinely human, and to live humanly.

So much for the subject of the book. But now we must also talk about how to read this book.

The book is not a novel that begins at the beginning and ends at the end, but begins and ends again with each sentence. That is why the book is a page-turner, and should begin where it opens. It is not advisable to read more than three pages at a time, but it is essential to read at least one sentence every day. The best time to do this is early morning or late evening. The texts of the book are not beautiful excerpts quoted in a blind way, nor are they wise teachings, but objects for meditation.

One reads thousands of books in a lifetime, most of which one forgets in a week. One sees and hears many thousands of paintings, musical works, sculptures and landscapes,

and there are ten or twenty or thirty that haunt you longer than a friend or a dear one.

There are very few thoughts in a man's life from which he never gets rid. The many thousands of pictures or books are daily nourishment, which, by giving pleasure for a certain period of time, have done their work. The ten or twenty or thirty pictures or poems that accompany a man for a longer period of time are an intimate companion in life. The few thoughts in the sky from which one never detaches oneself, the object of thought at all times, the eternal and inexhaustible source, the guiding directive: the object of meditation. It is the object of constant contemplation, of ever-changing and ever-changing admiration. One learns to apply it in a hundred different ways, one can gaze at it, perhaps for hours on end, like the ascetics of the East with their mandalas. Like the mystics of the great symbols of the world: the star, the horn or the triangle. The object of meditation is the image or thought that keeps returning to man, which can always remain the same in a new and new form, but always in a peculiar way. Art is full of such objects. It is not necessary that they be great masterpieces. Examples of such objects are Dürer's **Melancholy** or **Ritter Tod und Teufel**. Michelangelo's several Prophecies and **Sybille**. Such a musical object of meditation is the fate motif of Beethoven's Symphony No. V or the Dionysian theme of the scherzo in Symphony No. IX. Van Gogh's self-portrait and most of Velázquez's court jesters. They are a source of inexhaustible inspiration. Here one comes into direct contact with the genius of being. The choice of the object of meditation is the most personal activity in human life. And because it is so personal and must necessarily be personal, and because it does not tolerate any generalisation, the subject matter can only be discussed in personal terms.

personal experiences.

I am not ashamed to admit that among my personal objects of meditation, the most enduring is the Venus of Willendorf, that small, fist-sized, ugly, deformed statue of a woman, a relic of the Neolithic. It has occupied me much, much more than either the Melosian Aphrodite or any other perfectly formed woman. It taught me immeasurably more about woman, mother, matter, mother of the world, the world, myself, beauty, fertility, than any other classical sculpture. This little statue never appears to me without something of substance to say, and over time my relationship with her has grown so strong that for me today it is a vivid sum of thoughts and experiences that cannot be exhausted in a five hundred page book.

This is the nature of any real, well-chosen meditation object. Over years of direct contact, it acquires a wonderful role. It is always a ready object for my contemplation, it places itself at my disposal, it carefully preserves all that I think of it and each time it appears in a new interpretation.

I had a whole series of sentences which, like the image of the Venus of Willendorf, Michelangelo's prophets, Beethoven's scherzo, I kept as meditative objects. One of these was Robert Browning's phrase: God's in his heaven - All right with the world. Whenever I meditated on this phrase, whether in a railway carriage, at home before going to sleep, or lying in the sun on the waterfront, I was always overcome by a feeling of ultimate peace: God lives in the sky - And on earth there is no

nothing is wrong. Such was the object of meditation for me in the Sanskrit *Tat tvam asi* (This or Thou), or *Etad vai tat* (This is not other than that). Such was Heraclitus' saying: *Hen panta einai* (All is One). Such was Ruysbroek's saying: He who knows much and does not live according to it is lost.

One of my meditation objects has a strange story. Hölderlin wrote: *Wo aber Gefahr ist, wächst das Rettende auch* (Where danger is, the rescuer also grows). When I first read it, I immediately took note and knew that I had once again found a thought that would be a faithful model for my ideas and my attachments almost daily until the moment of my death. I had often and deeply studied it, and then one day I read in a medieval author something like this: 'As you draw near to God, so Satan draws near to you. I was so struck by the idea that I forgot even to write down the author and the place. I was completely confused. Behold, I said, how wonderful is the asymmetry of Hölderlin's thought! He says that when there is danger, the saviour approaches, which means that when you approach God, the devil approaches you in the same measure. The two objects are linked. I did not try to bring them into harmony. The meditation object is not for one to exploit in a practical way. No! Not at all! The situation is completely misunderstood by anyone who believes such a thing. It is not a question of life principles that can be applied without further ado. The object of meditation is a permanent and constant object of man's inner contemplation, a magical accumulation point of inner, higher reality, something like the image of the adored being in the heart of the young lover, but even more like the image of the ideal lady in the heart of the knight. Each meditative object is the great and unshakable reality of the Beatrice world.

And now that I had found the medieval phrase to accompany Hölderlin's thought, a wonderfully fertile tension arose from which a whole series of experiences sprang up again: on a walk, in a railway carriage, sitting in the garden or in bed at dawn. Now comes the most surprising: in the letter of the apostle James I find the following: draw near to God, so that he may draw near to you. Behold! Already the third, which seems to say the same thing, but seems to contradict both, perhaps connects the two in some invisible place, though in quite another place than could be checked. I was delighted. The three objects were lit around a single point and proportionately spaced. If I meditate on them now, I stand between three fires, and my depth of thought is tripled. It's like the constellation of three huge stars, an elementally stunning cosmic spectacle that enchants me so many times each time I see it. It is an example of the inexhaustible abundance of existence, which in itself, regardless of the meaning of the thoughts, is moving.

It is not my intention here to talk about all my meditation objects. The aim is this: to say that this book is full of linguistic phrases that are all most capable of becoming meditative objects. Either separately, or by combining the ideas of individual authors, or by juxtaposing one author with another, or in a staggered or centred way, in an umbrella, in a triad, in a quadruple. The book is designed to provide such objects, to offer a permanent object of contemplation for the inner reality, and to make one think about the

crystallise around definite points. The book is meant to convince man that the forces of his life can be grouped not only around the external aspects of validation, livelihood, farming, pleasure, but also around an inner centre, and these centres are immediately marked out. Let each one find the one that suits his personal destiny: Hermes Trismegistus, Drags-po-lha-rje, Augustine, Goethe or Carlyle. Perhaps another. He will find it somewhere. Somewhere he must learn. If he finds one, he will find more. More and more. The few hundred sentences in the book will become more and more inexhaustible. Man discovers what a treasure he has gained by always having an inner object to which he can turn his attention. The main point here is constancy. Meditation objects only begin to show their true power after years. One learns to look for these objects in painting, sculpture, music, great human idols. He who can overcome his natural sluggishness, writes down a few sentences and carries them constantly in his pocket, before a list of his expenses and income, on the first page of his notes, while he is obliged to wait half an hour in some office among tasteless people, he looks at his notes and wonders: what is upstairs is the same as what is downstairs. The introduction of this practice of life not only dispels unnecessary irritation and impatience, but confirms one's real life - the blessed life beneath the cursed life of the surface. The result is unpredictable. One realizes that one does not necessarily have to run around passionately all day; one can remain calm and reflective. One can also be wise. A great painter, poet, sculptor, musician can only be a man of exceptional ability. Artistic creation is a matter of talent. Wisdom is not. There is only one condition for wisdom: a consciously purified way of life.

This book is the textbook for the first elementary class in the school of wisdom. It is the first step in the direction the authors of this book are taking. The first step is to recognize beneath and beyond the eternal meaningless confusion of the cursed history of the surface, the ultimate goal of blessed history: to become human. To realize that in the end, nothing, nothing, nothing can satisfy us completely, neither sensual pleasure, nor wealth, nor fame, nor power, but only this one thing: to be, at last, finally, human.

That is why there is no need to artificially group the ideas in this volume under subheadings such as: God - religion - love - joie de vivre - morality - community. There is no need to group under these headings ideas that only belong there in appearance. In every word of these ideas, God is with love, the joy of life with morality, communion with privacy, bitterness with intoxication, religion with sin, despair with serenity. Every word is a sacrifice on the altar of the joy of life to God, with a religious heart in the faith of morality and thirsting for true love. The order in which the thoughts are arranged is their probable genesis. Chronology because the symphony of human existence is sounded in time, and this is the only external reality of our true history. It begins sometime in the third millennium before Christ and continues to the present day.

Béla Hamvas

ETERNAL AND EAST

TABULA SMARAGDINA

1. True, without lies, sure and true.
2. What is below is the same as what is above, and what is above is the same as what is below. So you understand the only miracle.
3. And as all things came from the One, from the One Thought: so, accepting it, all created things became.
4. Its father the sun, its mother the moon; the wind carried it in its womb; its nurse the earth.
5. This is the source of the first matter of the world.
6. Its power is perfect when it returns to the earth.
7. Separate the earth from the fire, the coarse from the fine, gently, with skill.
8. From the earth it goes to the sky, and then to the earth, receiving the higher and lower forces. Thus you attain the greatest glory in the world. From that time on, all darkness will flee from you.
9. This is the power of great might: for it conquers all air and pervades all solids.
10. This is how the world was created.
11. The result of that which follows this method will be wonderful.
12. That is why Hermes is called Trismegistus, because I possess three parts of the knowledge of the world.
13. I have finished what I was saying about the operations of the Sun.

Hermes Trismegistus

SAYINGS OF PTAH HOTEP

Whom God loves, his ears God opens; whom God hates, his ears God makes deaf. It is the heart that makes a man hear or not hear. The heart is man's life, his health, his salvation. If a man's son accepts what his father says, no intention of his will fail; he will speak to his children just as

as he heard the knowledge from his father. Take heed to what thou utterest, and what thou utterest with thy mouth, that the wise may speak thus: How beautiful is the speech of this man!

THE WISE PEASANT

Truth is immortal. He who has found it will go to the grave with it.

Man is like the scales, and man's tongue is the tongue of the scales. If your mouth is full of lies, these lies will get lost and will not cross the river. He who is in the same boat with a lie will not reach the other shore.

Don't put on a mask for someone who wants to look at you.

Do not push away the one who asks for your help.

He that is dull knows not what is yesterday; he that is deaf to the truth shall find no friend; the greedy shall not live to see one happy day.

THE BORED MAN'S TALK WITH HIMSELF

To whom shall I speak these days? - Brothers are wicked, and friends are not to be trusted.

To whom shall I speak these days? - Everybody's greedy, and people are abusive to each other.

To whom shall I speak nowadays? - Sanity is lost and insolence has taken over. Who do I talk to these days? - Those who seem content are mean, those who seem good is neglected.

To whom shall I speak these days? - No one remembers yesterday, and no one is grateful for the good done him.

To whom shall I speak today? - All cover their faces and hide their faces from each other.

To whom shall I speak these days? - Men are greedy, and he that is counted on has no heart.

To whom shall I speak these days? - There is no more a just man, the wicked shall reign on earth.

To whom shall I speak these days? - The land is overflowing with sin, and there is no limit, no limit.

BABYLONIAN WISDOM

If you set your sights lower, you will stray from the path of truth.

If you are wise, you choose the modest path, you keep silent and speak carefully. If thou open thy mouth, let men look upon thee as opening a treasure-chamber; let insult and blasphemy be strange to thee; let not a defiant word be spoken, never a lie; he that spills the beans is despised.

Give bread to eat, and wine to drink to him that asketh alms; clothe him that is in need, and let not the poor be disappointed: the heart of thy God shall be filled with joy, and he shall be rewarded.

If thou hast promised, give; he whom thou hast encouraged, help him.

TEACHINGS OF AHIKAR

If I smite thee, my son, thou shalt not die: but if I suffer thee to live after thine own head, thou shalt perish. Beat a boy, scold a girl, give a harsh word to a servant - he who does this is doing right.

I have lifted sandbags, I have carried salt, but each was lighter than debt. I have lifted straw, I have carried hay, but each was heavier than a good friend.

There are many stars in the sky, all nameless; there are many people on earth, all nameless.

CHAIN FROM THE AGE

Virtue is the foundation of good government.

Man can defend himself against the calamities of fate, but he is powerless against the misfortunes which his own passions have brought about.

If one does not blush at an involuntary mistake, it is another mistake.

Man is not destroyed by heaven: he kills himself by transgressing the eternal laws.

The advantage is the old among men, the new among tools.

Most men, if they have not yet seen a wise man, desire to see him; and if they have seen him, they gain nothing.

Do not reject the limited, and do not demand that man be perfect in everything.

Everyone thinks he knows the truth, but everyone knows only his own. The return of much light is darkness, and only where there is only one sun there is light.

Su-king

Why should I hide my love? In vain do I hide my heart from others - where can I hide from it?

A stained pearl can be polished and restored to its original lustre, but there is no remedy for a word spoken carelessly.

Beauty and wisdom are in harmony with all other virtues. These two are the key to everything.

When you meet your friend, show neither sadness nor gloom. On the contrary, welcome your friend with a serene face and warm words, but be careful not to burden him with your kindness.

The east wind is warm and light, but when it is gone, there is no plant above the icy peaks that does not wither, no tree that does not wither with its breath. Why teach monkeys how to climb trees?

Meanwhile, the door of my house is a single crossed beam, but my life in this house is not clouded by care.

I am drunk, not with glory, but with a moonbeam.

Si-king

FROM TAO-TE-KING

The great tao was abandoned by the
people: thus arose virtue and duty.
Wisdom and knowledge appeared:
And so the great lies arose.
Relatives grew apart:
and thus arose filial duty and love. The state
became a mess:
so the faithful servants arose.

He who knows others is
wise, he who knows
himself is wise.
He who conquers others is
mighty, he who conquers
himself is strong.

He that attaineth his own
end is hardy, he that is
content is rich.
He who remains steadfast,
steadfast; he who does not perish
in death, lives.

The whole world says the Tao is great, but it seems to be inapplicable.

That is what is great about it,
is that it doesn't seem applicable.
Because applicability leads to smallness. I have three
treasures:
and this I guard and keep: the first is love,
the second is contentment, the third is humility.
Love gives me courage,
contentment makes you generous,
humility makes me capable of world domination.

People today are brave by giving up love, generous by
giving up contentment,
but above all, they give up humility. This
is death.
Only love endures in battle and stands
firm in defence.
Whom heaven wants to save, it guards
with love.

You don't have to cross the
threshold to know the world. You
don't have to look out the window to
understand the meaning of heaven.
The farther you go,
The less you'll know The wise:
Going nowhere, yet arriving at the destination.
He looks not around him, yet he calls all things by their names. He is
inactive, and yet he reaches perfection.

Lao-ce

MASTER KUNG'S TALKS

Morality

Master said:

- Smooth manners and flattering words are seldom a sign of virtue.

Self-examination

The Master said:

- I examine myself daily in three ways: whether I have done anything from the heart for others; whether, in conversation with my friends, I have been faithful in my word; whether I have kept what I have taught others.

Knowledge

The Master said:

- I do not care that people do not know me. I care that I do not know people.

The perfect ending of life

Master said:

- To know the truth in the morning and die in the evening.

The age of parents

The Master said:

- One should never forget the years of a parent: to rejoice in them and to worry about them.

Enough

It was said of Chi, the wise man, that before he acted, he should think three times.

The Master heard and said:

- Thinking twice is just enough.

Self Description

The Prince of Si asked Ce Lu what kind of man Kung-Ce was. Ce Lu did not answer. Later, Master said:

- Why didn't you tell him simply: a man who seeks the truth so much that he forgets to eat, forgets to mourn among his friends, and doesn't even notice when old age comes?

The genius

A minister said to Ce Kung:

- Your master is a man of fire. How many and rich his talents are!

Ce Kung replied:

- True. If Heaven gives him a chance, his flame will be extinguished. And he also has many talents. Master heard him and said:

- How does this minister know me? My youth was austere, and so I acquired some talents. But that is beside the point. Does it mean anything if the wise man is skilled in many things? Many things are not important.

Lao said:

– The Master used to say: I have no job, so I have time to deal with the important things.

The faith of the people

Ce Kung asked how to govern properly. The Master said:

– You must make sure there is enough food, a big enough army and enough faith in the people.

Ce Kung said:

– If a man must give up one more by compulsion, which of the three would he do without most?

The Master said:

– The army.

– If you are forced to give up one of them, which of the remaining two would you rather do without?

The Master said:

– "The food. From all eternity, everyone must die anyway. But if the people lack faith, all government is impossible.

The correct use of words

Ce Lu said:

– Prince Vej is waiting for the Master to take over the government. What should be his first teenager?

The Master said:

– To restore the correct use of words. Ce Lu said:

– Is that all? For once, Master will make a mistake. Why should words be used correctly?

– How simple-minded you are, Yu! A wise man ignores what he doesn't understand. If the use of words is not correct, the meaning of concepts is confused; if the meaning of concepts is confused, one cannot act in a regular way; if one cannot act in a regular way, morality and art do not flourish; if morality and art do not flourish, punishment is meaningless; if punishment is meaningless, the people do not know where to step and what to do. The first business of the wise man is to turn his concepts into words and words into deeds. He will not tolerate disorder in his words. Everything depends on it.

Kung Fu-ce

THE MEANING OF WORLD HISTORY

Sun, the great ruler, asked Chen:

– Can I master the meaning of world history? Chen replied:

– You don't even own your body, how will you make the meaning your own?

Sun said:

– If my body is not mine, whose is it? He said:

– Heaven and earth have measured out this form. Nor is your life yours. It is the balance of forces measured for you by Heaven and Earth. Your nature, your destiny, is not yours. This is the path that Heaven and Earth have destined for you. Your sons and grandsons are not yours either, the Earth and the Sky have destined these offspring for you. That's why we go but don't know where, mara- dunk but don't know where, eat but don't know why: it's all the great power of Heaven and Earth - who can say it's theirs.

THE SIRENS

The seagulls were a favourite with many of the coast dwellers. In the mornings they would go out on the beach and swim after the seagulls. The birds flocked by the hundreds. Someone once said: "I hear so many seagulls swimming after you, catch some and let me play with them.

The next day they swam out to sea again. The seagulls circled in the air, but did not land on the water.

In perfect speech there are no words.

In the perfect action there is no movement. What the wise man knows is a truism.

THE MAJOMBARAT

There lived a man in Sung Province who was very fond of monkeys and kept a whole series in his house. He even got their thoughts right, and the monkeys understood their master's intentions well. He even granted their wishes at the expense of his family.

Suddenly, however, he became expensive and had little food to spare. But lest the monkeys should go wild, he cunningly addressed them in this way:

– 'If I give you three bundles of hay tomorrow morning and four in the evening, will that be enough? The monkeys were furious and went into a rage. Then all of a sudden it turned like this.

He turned the word:

– All right, I'll give you four bundles of hay in the morning and three in the evening. Will that satisfy you? The monkeys were happy and calmed down.

Just as the monkey-lover outwitted the monkey army, so the wise man outwits the fools.

CLEPTOMY

There was a man in the province of Chi. He was very fond of gold. Early in the morning he dressed, put on his hat and went to the market. He stopped in front of the gold collectors' tent, took the gold and left.

The guard caught him and asked:

– How could you take someone else's gold in such a crowd?

And he replied:

– When I took the gold, I did not see the crowd, but the gold.

THE POWER OF MUSIC

When Ven played the zither, the birds flew around him and the fish jumped out of the water. He left home and joined Master Siang. He held the instrument for three long years without playing a single song. Master Siang said:

– Go home now.

Ven put the zither aside and sighed:

– It's not that I don't know how to play the strings, not that I can't remember the melodies. It's not that I don't know how to play the notes, it's not that I don't know how to play the tunes. Until I've lived in the depths of my heart, how can I say what's inside. That is why I dare not move my hand, that is why I dare not touch the strings.

After a while, he stepped in front of Master Siang again. The master asked:

– Well, what about the
citera? Ven replied:

– Now it has happened. Please listen to me play.

Then in the spring he plucked the Sang-string, accompanied by the eighth flute note. At this time, a simple cool wind came up and the grass and trees bloomed. In the autumn, he plucked the Qin string accompanied by the second flute note. The warm air flowed gently, and the plants and trees were in full bloom. Then he plucked the Yu-string to the accompaniment of the eleventh flute note. Now came the slush and the snow, and froze the blinds. Pieces of ice floated down the river. Then he plucked the Chi-string and added the fifth flute note. Now the sun's heat was stinging hot and the hard ice collapsed all at once. But at last he plucked the Kung-string with the other four strings, and the breezes rustled. Fortune-bringing clouds floated in the sky, sweet dew dripped and springs roared.

Lie-Ce

THE SIN OF THE HEARTS

While the horse lives in the field, he eats grass and drinks water. If he is mad at another, he rubs his neck against him; if he is angry with another, he turns and kicks him. That's all there is to know.

If the horse is caught and harnessed, it starts to blink shyly, jump, defy, and bite the oats in secret. That's how he gets smart and learns his tricks. All this is the first sin of a tamer.

In the golden age, the people sat quietly, not knowing what they were doing. He went away, he knew not where; his belly was full, he lived happily, he patted his friend's shoulder and walked.

That was all the people knew, until suddenly the saints came out and began to talk of order and harmony, to regulate the conduct of the world, to set up moral laws, and to make the world dance as they whistled.

Then the people began to hurry, to run, to stumble, to hurry, to chase after knowledge and money until there was no stopping them. All this is the sin of the saints.

THE PILLANGO

Chuang-ce once dreamed that he was a butterfly, happy and healthy, and he didn't even know who Chuang-ce was. When he woke up, he became the real and true Chuang-ce again. Now I really don't know if Chuang-ce dreamed he was a butterfly or if the butterfly dreamed he was Chuang-ce. But there is certainly a difference between Chuang-ce and the butterfly. Things can change that way.

CALM AND PEACE OVER THE WORLD

I know that the world can only be beautiful when it is at peace. I don't know anything about the need to order the world. The world is beautiful when everyone takes care not to disturb nature in it; it is beautiful when everyone takes care not to abandon true life. If nature is not disturbed, and if no one leaves the true life, the world has reached the perfection of fulfilling its rules.

Jao, the holy king, wanted to regulate the world by making it happy. But if people live their joyfulness consciously, tranquility is lost. King Jie wanted to control the world by making it sad. But if people consciously live their sadness, contentment is lost.

The loss of tranquility and contentment cannot be true life. If a situation arises in which true life is lacking, after a certain time everything will dissolve. If one has too much pleasure, the power of clarity is soon consumed. If there is too much sadness for man, the power of darkness is soon consumed. And if these forces are disturbed, the order of the seasons is disturbed. The heat and the cold cannot balance. This, in turn, has repercussions for the physical life of man. Man crosses the boundaries of pleasure-seeking and passionate anger. He is essentially dissatisfied, his thoughts insatiable. Work is abandoned. Thus arises in the world pride, ill-will, ambition, jealousy. This is how villains and virtuous men get their say.

Therefore, by rewarding the good and punishing the bad, the creation of order in the world is nonsense. The world is so infinitely large that reward or punishment does not even concern it. Since the beginning of history, of record, man has seen nothing but

...nothing but excitement. Everyone is constantly concerned with how to reward or punish. So there is no time to rest in the tranquillity of nature.

If one's vision is too sharp, it will highlight the colours. If someone's ears are too sharp, they will pick out sounds. In doing so, he disrupts the primordial order of life. By cultivating truth, he disturbs common sense. Cultivating habits develops hypocrisy. The cultivation of harmony develops intemperance. The cultivation of the holy life develops falsehood. The cultivation of knowledge develops judgment.

When the world is at rest in the primordial state of nature, these things, whether they are there or not, are not felt by anyone. But if the world in the primordial state of nature cannot be at rest, these things begin to be questioned or suppressed, the world becomes disturbed and people begin to either respect or despise them. Humanity is blinded. Let alone pass them by without a word. No. It fasts and renounces and chats about them all day. All his life he sings of them and learns them. What shall we do?

Therefore, when the great man is forced to come into contact with the secular government, non-action is best. Non-action leads to tranquility. It leads to the restoration of the primordial order of nature. Dominion over the world can only be placed in the hands of one whose own spirit is more important than power. If the ruler does not divide his inner world, but keeps it in its primordial unity, if he does not use his intellect, if he is as insensate as a corpse in the midst of circumstances - great things will rise up at once. Its silence is silent as the night, yet it shakes the earth like thunder. It is his spirit that radiates, and nature obeys him. His spiritual powers are loosed; he does not act, yet all creatures flock around him. How would such a man feel like controlling the world?

Chuang-cc

ON WHICH THE EMPIRE RESTS

It is the work of the wise to govern the empire rightly. That is why he must know the source of the disturbance, for only then can he overcome it. If he does not know the cause, he can do nothing. And if you do look for the cause, you will find that it is a lack of love.

If the child and the subject do not respect his father and the ruler, they speak of a corruption of morals. The son loves only himself, but no longer his father; thus he harms his father and benefits only himself. The subject loves only himself, but no longer loves his ruler; thus he harms his ruler and benefits only himself. This is the corruption of morals. How can this be? By the absence of mutual love.

So do the thief and the robber. The thief loves only his own home, not another's, so he steals another's to use for his own. The thief loves only his own property, so he takes the other's by force to use it for himself. How can this be? Because mutual love is missing.

When the lords seek to ruin each other's families, they do just that. When princes seek to destroy each other's kingdoms, they do the same.

If all the citizens of the realm were united in mutual love, would they be evil? Would there be unkind men? Would there be thief and robber? If a man took another's house for his own, would he steal? If another man felt himself to be equal to another, would he abuse him?

That is why Mo-ce said:

– If one state attacks another, if one family quarrel with another, if ruler and subject are cold to each other, if father and son dislike each other - all these are the ruin of the empire.

From ancient times to the present day, no one has ever lifted Mount Taj and leapt over the Yangtze. But this mutual love has been practised by the holy kings of ancient times.

– How do we know that the holy kings practised it? Mo-ce replied:

– I did not live at the same time with them, I did not hear their words, but I saw what they wrote on silk sheets and bamboo, carved in stone and ore and left to their descendants. King Ven was like the sun and the moon, his light shining ceaselessly. Ven's love spread throughout the empire, without favouring one or the other.

THE PEOPLE

Ce-xia asked Mo-ket, could there be a feud among the nobles?

Master said:

– There can be no discord between noble people.

Ce Xia said:

– But dogs and pigs can quarrel. How can there be no quarrel between noble people?

The Master said:

– Do we praise King Ven with our words, but by our deeds we mock the dogs and the pigs? Sad!

THE FOOLISH SERVANT

Vuma-ce objected to Mo-ce's conduct in helping people he did not know, in making offerings to spiritual beings he could not see. This practice is pure folly.

Master said:

– Suppose you have two servants. One works only when you see him, and if you do not see him, he does nothing. The other works even when you cannot see him. Which servant will you prefer?

Vuma-ce said:

– The one who works even when I cannot see him. Master said:

– So you prefer the one who is foolish?

WHICH STATE MUST GO BANKRUPT

The state in which the spiritual man finds no home is doomed to destruction. If a spiritual man appears somewhere and is not received with respect, it is as if the ruler were sacrificed. If the spiritual man is despised, it is as if the welfare of the state were renounced. A state where the spiritual man is forgotten has never been able to survive.

Mo-ce

SAVING THE WORLD

Sun-jü Kun said:

– Is it true that according to the moral rule, if a man and a woman offer each other something, they should not touch each other?

Meng-ce replied:

– That is the rule.

– And if one's sister-in-law falls into the river and is drowning, should she not be touched and pulled out?

Meng-ce replied:

– Whoever does not save his drowning sister-in-law is a dhoul. The rule is that man and woman should not touch each other. If a man's sister-in-law is drowning and he pulls her out by holding her hand, that is an exception.

– The world is drowning today. What is the reason, Master, that you didn't save her? Meng-ce answered:

– When the world is drowning, one must save it by teaching the truth. If one's sister-in-law is drowning, her hand should be grabbed and pulled out of the water. You want me to pull the world out by the hand?

THE HATE BOX

Meng-ce, King of Liang, came to see

Huj. The king said:

– 'You have not dared to travel a thousand miles, old man, to come here; surely you have some advice I can use for my empire.

Meng-ce answered:

– Why talk you of profit, King? Actually, you should talk about humanity and justice. Because if a king says, "What is it that is of use to my empire?" - then the nobles also talk about, "What is it that benefits my house?" - and the people say, "What is it that is good for me?" The high and the low are all seeking benefit, and so confusion reigns in the empire.

Meng-ce

CHINESE CUSTOMERS

He opened his window to the moon - sorrow entered through it.

Girls for sale, do not weep! Who knows? Maybe you'll find a man with a tender heart,
who'll often say: we'll grow old together in silence.

Farewell, lord of my life. No river can return to its source, no rose can grow back on
the tree that dropped it.

The only certainty of life is death. Today thou kissest this mouth, tomorrow the earth;
today I play this harp, tomorrow the hens perch upon it.

The smile of women forgets that spring is short.

Life is a mirage, like a dream. So why torture ourselves?

A rose cannot live without light, a woman cannot live without love.

Li Taj-po

This old man has always been poor, yet he sings; and why do you, who have so
many beautiful memories, complain?

When a cloud glides across the moon, a cloud glides across the river. I feel as if I am
rowing in the sea of the sky, and I think of my beloved, whose face shines in the mirror
of my heart.

A cloud is spreading over us. The storm is coming - I'm writing a poem about the
impermanence of luck.

Tu Fu

THE PARADOXES OF HUI SI

The sky is as low as the earth. The mountain and the sea are on the same level.
The sun sets when it sets, and creatures die when they set.

If you set out for Jüe Province this morning, you will have arrived

yesterday evening. A hen has three legs.

The white dog is black.

The mountains are singing.

Huj Si

THE SOURCE OF THE WORLD

When a man knows something, he speaks the truth. He who does not know does not speak the truth. Only he who knows, speaks the truth. So it is knowledge that must be sought.

Teach, Lord, knowledge.

If a man thinks, he knows. Without thinking, there is no knowledge. Thinking must be sought.

Teach, Lord, thinking.

He who has faith, thinks. Without faith there is no knowledge. Only he who has faith has thought. Faith must be searched.

Teach, Lord, faith.

What man is rooted in is his faith. He who has no root, has no faith. He who is rooted in what is his faith. It is growth that must be sought.

Teach me, Lord, growth.

Man is rooted in creation. Without creation there is no growth. Only from what man creates can he rise. So creation must be sought.

Teach, Lord, creation.

When you are filled with joy, you create. Without joy there is no creation. Only he who knows joy creates. So joy must be sought.

Teach, Lord, joy.

Joy is in the limitless. There is no joy within limits. The limitless is the only joy. The limitless must be sought.

Teach, Lord, the limitless.

He who hears nothing else, knows nothing else, is boundless. He who sees the other, hears the other, knows the other, is boundless. The boundless is the immortal. The boundless is the mortal.

But tell me, sir, of what is the boundless woven?

It is woven of its own greatness, or so I say: it is not woven of its greatness. For greatness in the world hath made many cows, elephants, horses, gold, slaves, wives. But I do not mean such things, for all such things are woven one from another. The boundless place is the depth and the height, the west and the east, the north and the south, the boundless place is this great world. That is why it is said of the self-consciousness: my place is the height and the depth, west and east, north and south, I am the great world. That is why it is said of the soul: the place of the soul is the depth and the height, west and east, north and south, the place of the soul is this great world. He who thus sees, thus thinks, thus knows, who rejoices in playing with the soul, who delights in union with the soul, is a being complete in himself, free in all worlds. But those who see otherwise are the scattered beings. Their salvation is fleeting and for them all the world is a prison.

THE TABLE

The highest form of Brahman is food. For from food comes life. And if a man does not eat, he does not think, feel, see, speak, smell, taste, the life-force leaves him. Thus it is said: if he eats again, the vital force is increased in him, and he thinks again, hears again, feels again, speaks again, tastes again, smells again, sees again. For thus it is said: earthly beings are born of food. Life is given by food, and in food life is divided.

Indeed, as many creatures as there are, they all scurry after food, daily reading the sackcloth. The sun absorbs the food with its rays, it glows in it. The life forces, drenched in nutrients, digest. Food kindles the fire, and Brahman created the world out of the desire for food.

Food is indeed the world-sustaining form of the Most High. The essence of nourishment is life, life is inner perception, inner perception is knowledge, knowledge is beauty. He who knows this will be the fullness of nourishment, of life, the fullness of inner sensations, of knowledge, of beauty. Yes, as many beings as there are that feed here on earth, all of them will dwell within and enjoy nourishment in all who know this.

GOD AND I

There are two Brahman, the formless and the formless, the mortal and the immortal, the stationary and the walking, the here and the beyond.

The shaped is other than the wind, other than outer space. This is the mortal, this is the stationary. The essence of this Brahman in form, mortal, stationary, here, is sparkling in the sky, for it is the sun, the essence of all that is.

The formless Brahman is the wind, the outer space. This is the immortal, this is the going, this is the one who is beyond life. The essence of this formless one, this immortal one, this walking one who is beyond, is the fire spirit that sparkles in the sun there, because the beyond core is the fire spirit.

So much for the Godhead. And now of the divine Self.

That which takes form is other than breath; that which is here is other than the infinite void hidden in the depths of the body. This is the mortal, this is the stationary. The essence of this thing that takes form, this mortal, this stationary thing, is the eye. For the eye is the essence of all that is here.

And the formless is the breath and the infinite void within the body. This is the undead, this is the walking, this is the beyond life. The essence of this formless one, this being beyond life, this being that walks, is the spirit of fire that sparkles in the right eye, the spirit of the one who is beyond.

The image of the spirit of fire is gold, like the saffron robe, white like the lamb's wool, purple like the indragopa beetle, shaped like the flaming fire, like the lotus waxen, like the lightning that suddenly flashes. For in him who understands this, suddenly, like lightning, happiness will sparkle.

But the fire-spirit can only be named thus: not this, not that. No one can call it anything else. Yet its name is the reality of realities, because the spirit of life is reality, and the reality in it is Him.

TAT TVAM ASZI

Uddalaka Aruni said to his son Svetaketu:

– Let me teach you, my dear, what sleep is. When one sleeps, as it is said, one merges into existence and becomes one with existence. When the bees, my dear, make honey, they gather the sap of the many kinds of flowers and gather the many kinds of sap. Just as in honey the taste of the juices of the individual plants blend together and no one can taste the difference between the tastes, so, my dear, when the beings of the world melt into being in deep sleep, they do not feel that they have melted into being. Whether tiger, lion, wolf, boar, worm, bird, beetle, mosquito or anything else here in the world of the senses, it becomes again just being, nothing else. And what this impermanence is, of which this whole great world is made, this reality, this soul, is you, Svetaketu.

– "Teach me further, venerable one," said Svetaketu.

– 'All right,' said Uddalaka Aruni, 'Rivers, my dear, originate in the east and flow eastward, flow westward, flow westward, flow from sea to sea and become sea. But just as in the sea none knows from which river it came, so, my dear, among beings, when they emerge from life, none knows that they have emerged from life. Whether tiger, lion, wolf, wild boar, worm, bird, beetle, mosquito, anything else here in the sensual world, it becomes again only existent, nothing else. And that which is this imperishable, of which this whole great world is made, this reality, this soul, is you, Svetaketu.

– 'Teach me further, venerable one,' said Svetaketu.

– "If you prune this great tree here at the root, my dear, it will drip, for it is alive; if you prune it at the trunk, it will drip, for it is alive; if you prune it at the top, it will drip, for it is alive; so it stands here in its living, alive Self, proud and joyful. But if life forsakes one branch, it withers; if it forsakes the other, it withers; if it forsakes the third, it withers; if it forsakes the whole tree, the whole tree withers. Remember, my dear, if the life leaves the whole tree, the body dies, but the life does not die. And that which is this imperishable, of which this whole great world is made, this reality, this soul, is you, Svetaketu.

– 'Teach me further, venerable one,' said Svetaketu.

– 'Very well,' said Uddalaka Aruni. 'Pick fruit from that njagrodhafa.

– Here it is, venerable one.

– Split it in two.

– I have split it in two.

– What do you see in it?

– Nothing.

– What you don't see, my dear, is the imperishable from which the whole njagrodhafa grew. And what this imperishable is, what this whole big world is made of, this reality, this soul, is you, Svetaketu.

– 'Teach me further, venerable one,' said Svetaketu.

– Here is a grain of salt, put it in water and come to me again tomorrow.

So it was, and then he said:

– Give me the salt that you put in the water last night. He reached into the water and looked for it, but could not find it, for it had melted.

– Taste it on this side. What does it taste like?

– Salty.

– Taste it in the middle. What does it taste like?

– Salty.

– Taste it on that side. What does it taste like?

– Salty.

– Leave it there and sit next to

me. So it was, and then he

said:

– It's gone.

– You're right. So you think life is gone, but here it is. And that which is this invisible, and that which is this imperishable, of which this whole great world is made, this reality, this soul, is you, Svetaketu.

– "Teach me more," said Svetaketu.

– If one is led in blindfolded from the land of the Gandharis and released in the desert, he will wander east or north or south, because he was brought here blindfolded and released blindfolded. But if one comes to him and takes off the blindfold from his eyes and says, "There lies the land of the Gandhars, that way you go," then, going from village to village, asking questions on the way, he will find his way home - so the man who finds a teacher in life will awaken, "I will wander in the confusion of the earth only until my Saviour comes, and then I will return home to the imperishable." This imperishable, of which the whole great world is made, this reality, this soul, this is you, Svetaketu.

– "Teach me more, venerable one," said Svetaketu.

– 'Be it so,' said Uddalaka Aruni. 'The terminally ill man is surrounded by his relatives, and they ask him, "Do you know me, do you know me?" So long as speech is not immersed in feeling, feeling is not immersed in breath, breath in spirit, spirit in divinity, he knows his kinsmen; but if speech is immersed in feeling, feeling in breath, breath in spirit, spirit in the imperishable divinity, he knows his kinsmen no more. This impermanent, of which the whole great world is made, this reality, this soul, this is you, Svetaketu.

– Teach me further, venerable one.

– 'Let it be,' said Uddalaka Aruni. 'They bring forth a man with bound hands, my dear, and cry, 'Stolen, robbed! "Thieved, stolen, robbed! If he is the culprit, he may be saved, for if he denies, he will remain a liar, touch the fiery iron, be scorched, and then be executed; but if he is not the culprit, he will be saved, for he tells the truth, and

he is set free. That by which a man is not scorched is the truth, the imperishable, of which this whole world is made, this reality, this soul, this you, Svetaketu.

Uddalaka taught Svetaketu, the son of Aruni, thus.

Upanishads

FROM THE YOGA OF SANKHYA

There has never been a time when I have not been, you have not been. There will never be a time when we are not.

The bearer of the body is worthy of childhood, of maturity, of old age, equally worthy of the life of one body and the life of another. The wise know this.

From the relationship with the material nature comes the hot and the cold, the joy and the pain; all these pass away. Bear it with patience.

He who is unperturbed by it is wise, he who remains serene and serene in joy and pain is the only one who is ripe for immortality.

The non-existent can never be, the existent can never pass away. He who sees the true knows the difference between the two.

Know that that by which the world is unfolded is impermanent. No one can destroy this impermanence.

The body is impermanent. He who permeates the body is eternal. Immortal and immeasurable...

Whoever thinks that someone kills, thinks that someone can be killed, does not know the truth. Nobody kills, nobody is killed.

It is not born and does not die, it is not created and does not cease to exist, once it exists it is eternal. The body can be killed, it is indestructible.

He who knows of this unkillable, eternal, never born, always existing, how can he believe that anyone kills or is killed?

As a man casts off his worn clothes and puts on new ones, so the being in the body casts off his worn body and moves into another.

It is not wounded by the sword, burned by fire, soaked by water, or dried by the wind.

It is indestructible, incombustible, not touched by water or wind, eternal, omnipresent-

horse, constant, immovable, immortal.

No one sees it, no one can imagine it. It knows no change. When you know this, you must mourn no more.

But if you believe that he is always reborn and dies again, you must still mourn.

Death is certain for the one who is born. Whoever dies, his birth is certain. It's an inescapable necessity. What is inevitable, do not grieve for.

The army of beings emerges from the unseen. The path leads through the visible world, but in the end all beings return to the invisible. Why do you complain about this?

Some see it as a miracle. Some people talk about it as if it were extraordinary. Some take it as if it were barely believable. But no matter how you look at it, no one understands.

The bearer of the body in everyone is eternal and inviolable. Mourn no one, then...

So said the teaching of the Sankhya. Hear now what yoga teaches, for only by this can you be freed from the shackles of action.

The knowledge of the disciplined mind is one. Opposed to it is the infinite possibility of fluctuations.

The ignorant pour forth the words of the Vedas in a flood of words, saying: there is nothing but this, but they are held captive by their deeds, they desire salvation, and they blindly believe the speech that promises new birth as a reward for deeds; and they tie the attainment of wealth and celestial power to rituals.

Those who overcome these false teachings, who cling to heavenly salvation, will never attain enlightenment.

The Vedas speak of the threefold nature of existence. Get rid of these three. Get rid of the opposites, of acquisition and possession, true to the eternal reality, Atman.

For the Brahman who attains enlightenment, the Vedas are like a tank of water in a flood.

Thy vocation is to create the work of thy life, but care not for the fruits of thy deeds. Let not reward be the guide of thy action. But do not be idle.

Do your work with the devotion of yoga, but pay no attention to its consequences. Success or failure is all the same. This indifference is called yoga.

The yoga of action is deeply under the yoga of knowledge. Refuge is found in knowledge. He is pitiable who pursues the reward.

Whoever follows the yoga of knowledge, whether good or bad, transcends both. Therefore devote yourself to yoga. Yoga teaches you right action.

The sages of yoga renounce the fruits of action and, freed from the bondage of birth, reach the place where there is no more suffering.

When your intellect emerges from the confusion of delusions, you will have what you have learned from the holy books and what you can learn from them.

And if your knowledge is already opposed to the teachings of the holy books, and you are rock-solid in meditation, you will attain what is called: yoga.

Bhagavad Gita

THE DREAM OF THE WORLD

As the sun chases the night, so knowledge chases non-knowledge. For things and their actions are like images in a dream. While the dream lasts, the whole world seems real, but the world is no more when the dream ends. The liberated one who has come to this perfect realization sees the whole universe in God. He sees the whole universe as one soul, his own soul dissolving in this soul, as water dissolves in water, as flame merges with flame, as air merges with air. For there is nothing but Brahman, and if there seems to be anything else for us, it is like the fata morgana of the desert.

DAWN MEDITATION

In the twilight of the dawn I recall the shining, self-satisfying seed of my own heart, the fourth, the eternal, the pure spiritual consciousness, the blessing - the goal and salvation of the "Supreme Swan". I invoke the Being who sees the states of dream, wakefulness and deep sleep, the supreme being who is myself. It is indivisible, it is without parts. I am not the union of perishable elements, I am not the body, nor the senses in the body, nor the intellect in the body. I am not the self-function, nor the meeting of the life and breath forces, I am not the inspired intellect. Far from wife, far from child, far from earth and wealth and the like, I am the Witness, the Eternal, the Inner Self, the Blissful and One.

He who does not know the rope, to him the rope appears as a snake; he who does not know the Self, to him the limited, impermanent state and appearance of the individual is the Self itself. But if a trustworthy man reveals the false appearance, the rope becomes a rope; in the same way, my Master has revealed to me: I am not an individual life-monster - I am the Blessed and One.

I was not born; how could birth and death exist for me?

I am not the breath of life; how can there be for me hunger, thirst?

I am not the organ of thought and feeling, I am the intellect; how can there be for me sorrow, disappointment?

I am not the doer, how can there be for me a bond, a release?

I have no hatred and no aversion, I know no passionate attachment, no longing, no disappointment. I am neither selfish nor self-indulgent. The ceremonial laws of life's duties, worldly aims, the multitude of pleasures - all this does not concern me, and even ultimate salvation is indifferent to me. I am Siva, the pure spirit, the complete bliss. I am Siva, unshakable calm, perfect being.

For me there is no death, no fear, no caste distinction. No father, no mother, no relative, no friend.

For me there is no master, no disciple. I am the unshakable peace, whose form is spirit and complete bliss.

I am not a man, I am not a woman, I am not without. I am the peace that is rippling, the One whose form is a mighty radiance shining in the light of itself. I am not a child, I am not a youth, I am not an old man, I belong to no caste, to no stage of life. I am the Holy, the Peaceful, the One, the only Cause of the beginning and dissolution of the world.

Sankara

FROM THE PREHISTORIC LAW BOOK

Now I will tell you, literally and in order, what the punishment is for having committed a sin in one's life.

The great evildoers, after suffering the torments of hell for years, are condemned to the next new births after this time:

The murderer of a member of the spiritual caste is born in the body of a cow, a wild boar, a donkey, a camel, a bull, a goat, a sheep, a deer, or a member of the servile caste, according to the various circumstances of his crime.

The priest, if he drinks intoxicating liquor, is reborn in the form of a worm, larger or smaller, or becomes a moth, or a fly that lives on waste, or some kind of predatory animal.

The man who harms any sentient being is reborn as a cat or other gross carnivore.

He who gluttons himself on forbidden food is reborn as a fly, he who steals common things as some greedy devouring beast, he who has relations with despised women as a wandering ghost.

He who has intercourse with outcasts, who has an affair with a sinner's wife, who steals household goods from a priest, becomes a ghoul.

The evildoer who, out of greed, steals rubies or other precious stones, pearls, or pearls, is reborn as a woodpecker.

He who steals unpolished grain is reborn as a rat; he who steals yellow metal is reborn as a goose; he who steals water is punished as a diving bird; he who steals honey is like a gnat; he who steals milk is like a crow; he who steals pressed juice is like a dog; he who steals clarified butter is like a lizard.

He that steals flesh is born again as a vulture; he that steals any kind of fat is as a swamp bird; he that steals oil as an insect; he that steals salt as a locust; he that steals a hammock as a swinging bird.

If he does not do his duty of the spiritual caste, he is reborn as a demon; this demon is like a fire spewing from his mouth, devouring everything, even that which is spat out; if he breaks his duty of the chivalrous caste, he is reborn as a demon that feeds on mud and carrion.

If the one of the economic caste fails to do his duty, he is reborn into a demon that feeds on rotting corpses; the one of the servant caste who fails in his duty becomes an ugly-bodied ghost that feeds on lice.

Beings who have fallen into the bondage of sensuality will, in their next rebirth, become beings who are more and more addicted to their senses, but the gratification of their sensuality is accompanied by terrible pain.

First they are taken to Tamisra, or Outer Darkness, and other places of horror, forests where the leaves are made of sharp steel swords, places where they are bound in fetters and must live in constant fear of death.

They are subjected to unimaginable suffering: crows and owls burrowing in their flesh, swallowing hot bread, walking barefoot on burning sand and baking in hot ovens.

They have to assume the forms of damned and miserable animals, tormented one minute by freezing cold, the next by searing heat, and live through every horror.

They must be born in torments, live in sad captivity, in slavery, among beings who are their complete equals.

They must be separated from their loved ones, their relatives, spend their lives among godless people, in hard labor, without a single friend or a single goodwill.

In old age, they will be without support, they will fall ill, they will be troubled by conscience, and so inevitable death will follow.

Manu

VACCHAGOTTO

So I have heard. The High Exalted One lingered in the hall of solitude near Vesalius, in the great forest, and Vacchagotto the pilgrim in the hermitage of the White Lotus Rose. The Exalted One arose in good time, took his cloak and cup, and went to Vesali for alms. And the Exalted One thought: 'It is very early in the city to wait for alms, what if I went now to the pilgrim garden of the White Lotus Rose and visited Vacchagotto the pilgrim?

And the Exalted One entered the hermitage of the White Lotus Rose and went to where Vacchagotto the pilgrim was staying. Then Vacchagotto the pilgrim saw the figure of the Exalted One approaching from a distance, and when he saw him, he said to him:

– Come, O Lord, O Exalted One, greet me, O Lord, O Exalted One! O Lord, O Exalted One, you have long since awakened in me the hope that you would one day visit me. Sit here, Lord, O Exalted One, this place is waiting for you.

The Exalted One sat down in the place offered. Vacchagotto, the pilgrim, took a smaller chair and sat down beside him. Sitting next to him, Vacchagotto the pilgrim said to the Magistrate:

– I have heard such things, O Lord: Gotamo, the ascetic, knows everything, understands everything, declares himself to be ever vigilant: 'walk or stand, sleep or wake, I am in full alertness at all times'. Those who spoke thus, Lord, were they not in fact quoting the words of the Exalted One, were they not unjustly invoking the Exalted One, speaking according to that Teaching, so that no false teaching could come from it?

– Those, Vaccho, who said, "Gotamo, the ascetic knows all, understands all, professes to be incessantly vigilant; walk or stand, sleep or wake, I am in full alertness at all times" - they did not quote my words, they referred to me without foundation and without right.

– How then, O Lord, shall we speak so that we may quote the words of the Exalted One, so that we may not refer to the Exalted One without justification, so that we may speak according to the Teaching, so that no false teaching may be derived from it?

– Gotamo, the ascetic, has a threefold knowledge. Thus speaking, Vaccho, my words are quoted. They do not unjustly refer to me, and speak according to the Teaching, so that no false teaching may be derived therefrom. Since, O Vaccho, I am pleased to recall any number of different past lives, such as one life, then two lives, then three lives, then four lives, then five lives, then ten lives, then twenty lives, then thirty lives, then forty lives, then a hundred lives; then

a thousand lives, then a hundred thousand lives, then the time of the creation of many worlds, then the time of the destruction of many worlds, then the time of the creation and destruction of many. I was there, I was called so, I was in such a family, I belonged to such an order, that was my occupation, I experienced such joy and pain, and that is how my life ended; there again I appear in existence in a different form: now I was there, I was called so, I belonged to such a family, I belonged to such an order, that was my occupation, I experienced such joy and pain, and that is how my life ended; then again I appear in existence in a different form. This is how I remember my various old ways of being, each with its own particular trait, its own particular aspect. And, Vaccho, with the celestial eye, the purified one looking beyond human boundaries, I contemplate with pleasure the beings that disappear and reappear, the vile and the noble, the beautiful and the ugly, the happy and the unhappy, I see the beings returning according to their deeds. Those lovely creatures in their deeds have evidently sided with evil, reviled the holy, worshipped the unrighteous, done the unrighteous; when the body is dissolved after death, souls are sent down the false trail into the abyss, into the hellish world. But these lovely beings, in their deeds they are devoted to the good, in their thoughts they are devoted to the good, they do not despise the holy, they honour the righteous, they do the righteous; at the dissolution of the body, after death, they find the good trail in the heavenly world. Thus with the heavenly eye, the purified one, the one who looks beyond human limits, I see beings disappearing and reappearing, the vile and the base, the beautiful and the ugly, the happy and the happy, I see beings returning according to their deeds. And Vaccho, the source of delusion, I have flushed out, and in my lifetime I have manifested and realized the liberation of the mind and intellect from all that is delusion. Gotamo, the ascetic, has a threefold knowledge: so saying, Vaccho, they quote my words, they do not refer to me as lawful, and they speak according to the Teaching, so that no false teaching can come from it.

After these words, Vacchagotto, the pilgrim, thus addressed the Exalted One:

– Is there any, O Gotamo, among those who dwell in our home, who, without first severing the bonds of his body, will at the dissolution of the body come to the end of his sufferings?

– Is there none, Vaccho, among those who dwell in our house, who, without first breaking the house-tie, will at the dissolution of the body come to the end of his sufferings.

– But is there one, O Gotamo, among those who dwell in our home, who, without severing the bonds of the house, will at the dissolution of the body reach the celestial world?

– O Vaccho, there are not only a hundred, or two hundred, or three hundred, or four hundred, or five hundred, but even more among the inhabitants of our homes, who, without breaking the bonds of the house, will at the dissolution of the body enter the celestial world.

– And are there, O Gotamo, any naked penitents who, at the dissolution of the body, come to the end of their penances?

– Is there not, Vaccho, a naked penitent who, at the dissolution of the body, comes to the end of his sufferings?

– But is there, O Gotamo, a naked penitent who, at the dissolution of the body, will reach the heavenly world?

– Counting back ninety-one world ages from this day, as far as I can remember, I know of not one naked penitent who has gone to the heavenly world

except one: but he knew that only his own deeds and his own actions could redeem him.

– Thus, Gotamo, such penance is vain, and not even to the heavenly world can such a man

...in the heaven.

– So, Vaccho, such atonement is vain, nor will it lead to the heavenly world. in the heavenly realms.

Thus saith the Most High. In the words of the pilgrim, Vacchagotto, the pilgrim ...the joy of contentment overflowed.

Gautama Buddha

THE ZEN MASTER'S RIDDLES

Prince Vu asked Bodhidharma:

– Since the beginning of my reign I have built many temples, copied many holy books and helped many friends. How much merit do you think I have accumulated?

– 'No merit, Your Majesty,' Bodhidharma replied.

– "How?" asked Vu.

– 'Lowly deeds. Their merit is at most that he who has done them will be reborn in heaven. Each carries with it its earthly nature and the antecedents of the deeds that follow. Today they seem to exist, but their very nature is empty. The truly worthy deed arises from knowledge and is beyond human reason.

Vu asked again:

– What is the main tenet of holy teaching?

– 'Everything is empty,' Bodhidharma replied, 'and there is nothing here that can be called holy.

– Who is he who opposes me?

– I know not, sire.

*

Hui-neng said:

– There is one in your spirit who sees, and it is he who makes your being real. If there is confusion in you and you see wrongly, no mountain of knowledge will help you, no wise friend will help you, and you will not be able to get rid of it. But if your innate knowledge beyond reason is opened, all your mistakes will be dispelled in the twinkling of an eye.

*

Ji-san said:

– When relations are dissolved, everything disappears, object, thing, self, and the void of power is restored.

Now the friend steps forward and asks:

– What happens when emptiness also dissolves?

Chi-san calls the friend by name.

– "Yes," says the friend, and steps forward.

– "You have told me," says the Master.

*

Master explains:

– In Zen there is perfect freedom. Sometimes he says yes, sometimes he says no, as he pleases.

The friend asks:

– How does he deny?

– The friend says. When winter passes, spring comes.

– And what happens when spring comes?

– You take a stick on your shoulder, tie a bat on it, and wander the lands north or south, east or west, gnawing on the remnants of your decrepit intellect.

*

Xiang-yen said:

– Someone ties a rope to a tree branch over a thousand-foot precipice and hangs onto it with his teeth. Now someone comes along and asks, "What was the point of Bodhidharma coming from India to China?"

– If the man answers, he has to open his mouth, let go of the rope and fall into the deep. If he does not answer, he is indifferent to the most important question. What would you do in his case?

*

A friend asked Jah-hsien:

– Is it advisable to read the sutras or not? Master said:

– There are no by-ways or cross-ways here. The mountains are fresh and green all year round, and you can walk wherever you like, east or west.

– I'd like to learn something definite from you.

– It is not the sun's fault if the blind cannot see the way.

*

Master was washing his clothes when Tan-gyuan came by and asked:

– What are you thinking of at

this moment? The Master

immediately answered:

– What do you want me to think at this moment?

*

Mu-tsou asked:

– Every day we must dress and eat. How can we get rid of all that?

Master said:

– We dress and eat.

– "I don't understand," replied Mu-tsou.

– If you don't understand, get dressed and eat.

*

Han-tsu asked his friend:

– Vang, Huang, Li, Chao are not real family names. What is your original name? The friend replied:

– The same as yours.

– Let it go. I want to know your original surname.

– When the Han River turns, I'll tell you.

– Why not now?

– Has the river turned?

Han-tsu was satisfied.

*

One winter, when it was extremely cold, Tan-hsin threw the wooden statue of Buddha in the monastery temple on the fire and kept it warm. The temple servant asked:

– How dare you burn my Buddha?

Tan-hsin then began to search the ashes with his wand.

– I am looking for the immortal parts here in the heaps.

– How could the immortal parts of the statue have been burnt?

– If there are none, can I set the other wooden Buddhas on fire?

Later, a friend asked about the circumstances of the burning of the statue. Master said:

– When it's cold, we sit around the fireplace and the wood catches fire.

– Was it a sin or not?

– When it's hot, we go to the riverbank to the bamboo reeds.

*

– "Birth and death are important things, and time waits for no man," said the disciple. Master asked:

- Why do you not grasp what is not born and look into what is timeless?
- Because that which is not born is grasped, and that which is timeless is looked at. The Master nodded.
- That's right.

*

The Master was asked:

- What is Zen?
 - "This is it," he replied.
- And another time:
- Which has no claim.

*

Master spoke:

- When I hear the Buddha's name, I protest.

Lung-tan:

- If you want to see, look inside. If you want to think about it, you will be wrong.

*

Fa-jen asks his disciple:

- What do you mean: if you leave a single inch gap, it will grow so wide that heaven and earth will fall apart?

The disciple answers:

- If you allow a single inch of gap, it will grow so that heaven and earth will fall apart.
- "Please," says Fa-jen, "don't give such answers."

The disciple now says:

- I cannot say otherwise. How, do you understand?
- "If you leave a single inch gap," says Fa-jen, "it will grow so that heaven and earth will fall apart."

*

Chien was asked:

- Is there a difference between Zen and Sutras? The Master replied:
- When cooler weather approaches, birds fly to the trees and wild geese fly to the water.

Fa-jen explained this saying thus:

– The great Master spoke only half the truth. In my opinion, when water is dipped by hand, the moonlight shines on it, when flowers are tended, the fragrance is absorbed into the cloth.

*

Vej was an army officer and invited Master Xuan-sa to tea. The officer asked:

- Where is the entrance to the path of righteousness? The Master said:
- Do you hear the roar of the river?
- I hear it.
- There is the entrance.

*

To Sou-san, the friend said:

- Please play something on the stringless harp.
- Master sat still for a few minutes, then asked:
- Do you hear?
 - I can't hear it. And the
- Master said:
- Why didn't you tell me to play louder?

*

Someone asked Lao-san:

- Where is the master of this threefold world? The
- Master answered:
- Do you know how to eat rice?

*

The disciple asked Taj-su:

- What is my self?
- Taj-sui said:
- This is my self.
 - How can it be that my self is your self?
 - I said, 'My self is your self.

*

San-seng and Yang-sen met. Yang-sen asked, "What's your name?"

San-seng said:

– Yang-sen.

– No! Yang-sen is my name!

– Good. Then let my name be San-seng. And they both burst out laughing.

*

Master did not insist on poverty. When the friend asked him what his school was all about, he said:

– My skin is dry, my bones are showing.

From Chinese and Japanese koan collections

READ MORE

A Hindu prince was held captive by a beautiful woman. He daydreamed of her in the garden by the lake, but when night approached with its dark cloak, he hurried to his beloved and stayed there until dawn.

One night, on his way to his love again, in starless darkness, he came upon a cowering figure on the road. It rose before him like a troubled serpent, and cursed the prince. It was Yogin who had gone deep within himself to see God. The prince was disturbed from his meditation. The ascetic cried out:

– "While I contemplate my inner vision and see God, you tread on my body!"

– 'Forgive me,' replied the loving prince, 'I hasten to a woman who holds all my senses in captivity, my heart sees only her, and therefore I perceive nothing else in my way. But if thou art absorbed in contemplating God, how canst thou still perceive what is outside God? Who has the greater contemplation?'

The ascetic was left without an answer. But the prince in love later became a saint who sacrificed his whole being to God. When he bade farewell to his beloved, he said:

– You have been more than happiness to me, you have been my teacher and my master, you have taught me how to love God.

HAPPY HOLIDAYS

Two fishermen were on their way home from the fair. On the way they were caught in a hailstorm. Luckily, a good gardener invited them into his tent and gave them a place to stay for the night.

The women took a nap next to the flower baskets, but the strong smell in the room kept them awake. One of them had a good idea. She sprinkled the dirty fish baskets with plenty of water from the flowers, and the baskets began to smell of fish.

The fish baskets swallowed the air with satisfaction and soon fell into a deep sleep. They were still snoring when the gardener arrived to open the tent. He coughed back, and suddenly he didn't know where he was, there was such a terrible smell of fish.

HOW CAN ONE CROSS THE WATER WITH DRY FEET?

The disciple's faith in his master's miraculous powers was rock-solid. He could walk on water as on solid ground if he only spoke the guru's name.

The guru heard this and thought, "How? My name alone will do wonders? Then how great and wonderful I myself must be!"

The next day he himself tried to cross the river on dry feet. He whispered, "Me! Me! Me!" But as soon as his feet touched the water, he sank and drowned.

Faith works wonders - narcissism is death.

A GEM IN THE DUST

Tired of the worldly hustle and bustle, the man sought his way to God. He left his house and all his possessions to his children, and he and his wife went on a pilgrimage to the holy places, where he showed himself to the people in the wonderful forms of God. He wandered with great fervour throughout his length and breadth, but he could not find God. His wife patiently followed him.

Once they were walking in the shadeless street in the blazing sun. His wife looked even more tired than he, and stayed back a little while he walked impatiently ahead. Now something suddenly flashed before his feet. He lifted her up. It was a huge gem. He threw it down quickly, but suddenly he thought, "If my wife finds it, she will be tempted to break her vow of celibacy and block the way to God. I had better hide her so she won't notice."

With that, he sprinkled dust on the gem, but just then his wife arrived, looking to see what her husband was looking for on the ground. She bent down, found the gem, took it in her hand, and slowly dropped it on the ground, looked at her husband, and said:

– "Come, my dear, while you are still a long way from God, you will not know the gem from the dust!"

GOLDEN

To King Akbar, whom his people called the shadow of God out of great respect, a beggar friend came asking for alms.

He found the king absorbed in prayer, so he knelt silently at the door of the prayer room and waited patiently until the king's devotion was over.

Then the monk heard Akbar, who had more kingdoms than any man in India, pray thus:

– O Lord, give me more power, more kingdoms, more wealth.

The beggar friend was now about to sneak away unnoticed, but Akbar finished his prayer, rose up and noticed.

– "You came to ask me for something," he said, "and now you leave without a word?"

– 'Sir,' said the friend, 'I have come to beg, but I have heard that you yourself are begging for more wealth, more power and more riches. Beg from a beggar? Then I'll ask God himself, if I have to beg.'

THE SODAFÁ

The wanderer has travelled a long way through the shadowless wilderness. But suddenly a magnificent tree stopped him, standing like a miracle in the glowing desert. Its shade-giving crown spread like a royal tent, its darkening foliage hiding spicy flowers and bright fruits. Exhausted, the wanderer threw himself into its cool shade, and thought to himself, "I could do with a lounge here, with soft cushions, so I wouldn't have to lie on the bare ground."

Before he had even said it, there was a magnificent lounge under the tree, with plump cushions of shiny silk. The tree under which she rested was a miracle tree, the kind that grows in the world of the gods and grants all the wishes of the saved. But who would believe that there is such a thing on earth? The wanderer began to tremble in every part of him. It was some time before his terror subsided, and he ventured again under the miracle tree. And then, as nothing else frightening happened, he pulled himself together, lay down on the tempting kerevet, the soft fluffy body refreshing him, and only now did he really feel how tired he was. "Oh, if a fair maiden would come," he sighed, "and gently rub my feet!"

But he could hardly imagine how beautiful that would be, his tired feet were already being caressed by a beautiful girl. He was a little frightened, then calmly gave himself up to the pleasure. When he was well refreshed, he saw how hungry he was, and said: "My wish is granted, but now I could eat something good!" There was the table before him, with its assorted dishes and drinks, and the full bowls that delighted his eyes. Now he lay back comfortably on the bed, and in the shade of the canopy he mused, "If a tiger should leap out and devour me..." At that very moment, a terrible black and yellow tiger, roaring, leapt at him in one leap and strangled him in one movement.

Thus went the wanderer, whose every wish was granted.

WHAT TO DO?

Three men went through the forest. Across from them walked a tiger. The first one said:

– My brothers, our fate is sealed, death is inevitable. The tiger will devour us all.

Whoever says that is a

fatalist. The second cried:

– My brothers and sisters, three of us together cry out to God for help. The merciful will save us.

Whoever says this is pious.

– "Why should I bother God," said the third, "let us all three climb the tree.

He who speaks like this truly loves God.

Indian tales

CAIN AND ABEL

"And the man knew his wife Eve..."

Rabbi Abba began his explanation with the following sentence:

– Who is he that knoweth the soul of man, that it ascendeth upward, or, like the soul of an animal, descendeth toward the earth?

This sentence has many meanings. But so it is with every word of the Torah. Each has many, many meanings, and each corresponds to its own meaning. For the whole Torah is seventy-fold: it has seventy faces and seventy sides and seventy branches, and so it is with every word of the Torah. And all that comes from each sentence branches out again to each side.

So now note the following: If a man walk in the path of righteousness, he will go to the right and draw to himself a high Holy Spirit, who will always strive upward with his will to unite with the higher, and attain the highest holiness, never to leave it.

If, however, a man treads the path of evil, the downward path, he draws to himself a dark spirit from his left. For thus it is written, "Do not be entangled with them, lest you be unclean. For he who goes among the unclean becomes unclean." But remember this

well: If a man walks in the way of righteousness, and draws to himself and unites himself with a high Holy Spirit, his son whom he begets will also draw to himself such a high Holy Spirit and will also share in holiness. As the scripture says: "Strive to be holy and to become holy.

to become saints."

But if he goes the left way and attracts the dark spirit, his son, who is descended from him, will also attract the dark spirit. For as the scripture says, "Who is he that knoweth the spirit of man, whether it be that it ascend upward, or..."

If a man goes to the right side, his soul will ascend, but if to the left, the dark spirit will pull him down, will take up residence in him, and will not leave him, and the son whom he raises will also receive such a dark spirit.

So it was with Adam, who was joined to a dark spirit, but his wife did it even earlier than he, who received this dark spirit from the elements of sin and shame and impurity, and so gave birth to her son. Thus were born two sons: one from the dark spirit, and the other from Adam, when Adam, terrified, turned back. One son became dark, the other light.

Rabbi Eleazar said, "In the hour when the spirit of impurity, the serpent, gave Eve the darkness, he took hold of her, and when Adam knew him, he bore two children: one from his dark side, the other from Adam's side." Thus, in the image of Abel is the upper world, in the image of Cain is the lower world. That is why they had to go their separate ways. Cain, the son of the dark generation, the son of the serpent, and having thus entered the earth as the servant of the angel of death, slew his brother, and thus became the ancestor of all evil, the ancestor of every pest and evil spirit that can set foot on the earth.

Thus says Rabbi Jose: - Cain is the nest of evil spirits, of those spirits that come into the world from the dark region.

Then they all made a sacrifice. And of Cain it is written, "The day was just ending when Cain brought the produce of the earth."

Rabbi Simon said: "The day was just about over" - which actually means that the journey of the flesh was over. And when the flesh has come to the end of its journey, it means that the Angel of Death will appear. It was from this end of the flesh's journey that Cain brought his sacrifice.

From the produce of the earth - this means that there is a targeting of the fruit of that particular tree.

According to Rabbi Eleazar, it means the fruit of his actions. It is explained by this phrase: "But woe to the wicked, the wicked shall devour him, for the fruit of his deeds shall destroy him."

This is the angel of death, who will be one with him, and the cause of this is darkness and death.

Thus Cain brought sacrifice from his side, and Abel brought the first fruits of the earth, the first, which means the good, that side of the fruit which lies to the right. The scripture says, "And the Lord received him kindly." He accepted Abel's offering, but not Cain's. And Cain was filled with passionate anger and his face grew dark. By this the writer was actually referring to the left side of the face.

Zohar

THE TEACHING OF THE PROPHET

Tradition teaches that Rabbi Jose said: "I was on a journey and I entered one of the ruins of Jerusalem to pray. Then the blessed prophet Eliyahu came to me and waited for me at the gate. He stood there until I finished my prayer.

When my prayer was finished, he said to me: Hail, Rabbi. - And I said, "Welcome, my lord and master. - He asked: Why have you come here among the ruins, my son? - It is to pray. - But you could have prayed in the street. I replied, "I was afraid of being disturbed by passers-by. - And he said, "You could have said the short prayer."

In that moment I learned three things: that one should not step among the people, that one can pray in the street, and that one who prays in the street can say the short prayer.

WHAT IS PROHIBITED?

The Rabbi's wife died. The first night after her death, the Rabbi washed. The disciples said to him:

- You have taught me, Master, that it is forbidden for a mourner to wash. The Rabbi replied:
- I am not like other people: I suffer.

When his faithful servant Tobi died, the Rabbi sighed comforting words. The disciples said to him:

- You taught me, Master, that it is forbidden to utter comforting sayings for servants. The Rabbi said:
- Tobi, my servant, was not like the others.

The Rabbi said, "My servant was not like his son-in-law. Rabbi Shimon ben Gamliel says: "Not everyone who is in the mood is allowed to make a proclamation."

PRAISE TO GOD

Someone once prayed in Rabbi Hemina's presence, "God is great, mighty, mighty, majestic, glorious." The Rabbi waited until the recitation was over and then said: "Have you finally finished the words of praise? What do you want? You are like a king with millions of gold coins being praised for his silver denarii."

"HE THAT JUDGETH WELL HIS NEIGHBOUR IS JUDGED WELL.

Once a man came south from Upper Galilee and was employed by a landowner for three years. The night before their contract was to expire, he said to his master:

- "Give me my wages, I want to go back to feed my wife and children.

The master replied:

- I have no money.

And the other said:

- Then give me

grain. And this:

- I have no grain.

- Then give me a piece of land.

- I have no land.

- Then give me cattle.

- I have no cattle.

- Then give me some bedding.

- I have no bedding.

So the man went upstairs, put his things on his back and went home in a bad mood. After a meal, the farmer took the man's wages, loaded his three donkeys with blankets...

and food, special gifts and precious things, and went to Upper Galilee.

When they had eaten and drunk, and the master had paid the wages, he said:

– What did you suspect when you said, "Pay my wages," and I said to you, "I have no money?"

The man said:

– I thought that there was a good opportunity for you to buy something cheap, and you needed your money.

– What did you suspect when you said, 'Then give me cattle,' and I said to you, 'I have no cattle?'

– I thought you were renting it to someone else.

– What did you suspect when you said, "Then give me a piece of land," and I replied, "I have no land.

– I thought you were giving it to somebody in return.

– What did you suspect when I said I had no grain?

– I thought you hadn't paid your tithe.

– What did you suspect when I told you I had no bedding?

– I thought you had given all your wealth to heaven.

Then the farmer said, "You're right, I offered all my wealth because my son Hiroquanos didn't want to do Torah. But when I went to my relatives, they released me from my vow. And since you have judged me favorably, may the Lord judge you favorably.

TREMBLE WITH JOY.

Rabbi Nachman Yichak quoted, "Serve the Lord with fear and tremble with joy."

What does it mean to tremble with joy?

Rabbi Ada Mathan said, "Where there is joy, there is trembling.

Mar, the rabbi's son, was celebrating the wedding of his son, and when he noticed that the guests were becoming too merry, he took out an expensive goblet, which cost four hundred zuz, and broke it in front of them. Then they were all saddened.

Rabbi Ashi was celebrating the wedding of his son, and when he noticed that the guests were becoming too merry, he took out an expensive white crystal goblet and broke it in front of them. Then they were all sad.

The masters taught, "A man in this world must laugh with his mouth full, for it is written, 'On the day of triumph their mouths will be full of laughter and their tongues full of rejoicing.'"

It is said of Master Laquis that after hearing this, he never laughed with his mouth full again.

Babylonian Talmud

ABOUT KAYIN

"And Cain knew his wife, and she conceived in her womb and gave birth to Enoch. And he built a city, and called it Enoch, after the name of his son" (1. Moses 4:17).

In what follows, we must examine why this same Cain acted as a redeemer and city-builder. A great multitude of people, of course, need a large, spacious city for their dwelling-place, but for the three who lived at that time any small hiding-place or cave would have been perfectly adequate. I said "the three," but it is probable that he founded the town for only one man; for the parents of Abel, who was murdered below me, could not have endured to live in the same town with the murderer who had killed his own brother, and had therefore committed a greater crime than if he had killed another man. Of course, everyone can clearly see that it is not only paradoxical but also incomprehensible that a man would want to build a city on his own. Where to start? After all, even the most insignificant part of a house cannot be built without helpers. Or should one and the same man carve the stone, cut the wood, work the iron and ore, build huge defensive walls around the city, courtyards and fences, sanctuaries, churches, halls, harbours and dwellings, and take away all the other things that have to be done on private and public buildings? And on top of that, laying sewers underground, widening narrow roads, digging wells, water supply, in short, all the work that goes with building a city? And since all this contradicts reality, it is more appropriate to express ourselves in the sense of an allegory; Cain decided to organise his life like a city. And since every city is made up of buildings, and every city has inhabitants and laws, his buildings are the words with which, as from the top of a defensive wall, he fights his enemies, in so far as he makes easily believable fabrications against the truth: his inhabitants are the companions who seem to themselves to be wise: depravity, impiety, self-love, lust of power, and that lying aspect which, in the absence of the knowledge of true wisdom, has combined ignorance, ignorance of education, ignorance of the ways, and all the other evils which go with the above; and the laws: Lawlessness, unrighteousness, unrighteousness, unrighteousness, indiscipline, insolence, madness, usurpation, intemperance in pleasures, unnamed lusts after natural things. The master builder of such a city is every ungodly man in his own happy soul, until God comes to the determination to confound these sophisticated machinations utterly and finally. But this only happens when these wicked ones also build a tower in the city, the top of which reaches to heaven (see Moses 11:4), that is to say, they build a master speech out of wickedness, and of this speech they believe that the top is their own thought, here represented by heaven, for every speech must have as its top and its end the reason which is the opening of it...

Philo

MAKE...

Seek a master whose mind is clear, whose knowledge is great, and whose heart is good.

Seek a solitary and friendly place, conducive to contemplation and contemplation, and there settle down.

Seek a friend whose habits and feelings are like your own, and whose human worth you can be proud of.

CROWD...

Avoid the teacher whose heart is full of ambition, who thirsts for fame, and who hungers for earthly treasure.

Avoid the friend, companion, or disciple whose presence is detrimental to your peace of mind or spiritual development.

Avoid the house and the place where people are unfriendly and where you will find no peace.

Avoid wealth that has been obtained by fraud or theft. Avoid activities that harm and diminish your spirit.

Avoid licentiousness and frivolity which diminishes your value in the eyes of your fellow man.

Avoid activity that has no meaningful purpose.

Avoid words that cover up your own faults but underline the faults of others.

YOU SHOULD KNOW...

Know that all phenomena are mirages and will pass away. Spirit has no independent existence, and no Self, and so must know that it can only be compared to empty space.

It must be known that the mass of thoughts, which to man is spirit, is a series of causes and effects, each feeding on the other, but both are illusions, and so pass away.

It must be known that suffering is hidden in the deeds done. For these actions, no one is responsible except man. And suffering is there to wake man up.

NOT FOR YOU...

He is not wrong who renounces his passions, who abandons his hearth to live without friend, wife and child.

He is not wrong who honours his spiritual guide.

He is not wrong who carefully examines the teachings, judges them, reflects upon them, and forms his own opinion.

He is not mistaken who strives to attain spiritual heights and moral perfection, and yet lives a modest and retired life.

He is not mistaken who thinks generously, and perseveres in his resolution and duty.

He is not wrong who cultivates a penetrating spirit and moderates his pride as much as possible. He is not mistaken who, in his intellectual knowledge, in his perseverance to become a master, in his contemplative and, besides, freedom from vanity.

He is not mistaken who lives in self-denial, sacrifices himself for the sake of others, does not seek his own good and lives for the benefit of his fellow men.

GOOD FOR...

It is good for those who can break the threads of religious superstition and who seek a wise master of high spirit.

Good for those who can resist the temptation of wealth.

Good for the one who can renounce a life of companionship to live in solitude in a place far from man.

Good for the one who can renounce the pleasures of food and drink without ambition.

Good for the one who resolves never to serve the selfish ends of others or himself, and can hold to his resolve.

It is good for him who recognizes that the sensual world is a delusion, from this delusion he can detach himself and devote himself wholly to the spirit.

THERE IS NO NEED...

Once one has understood the meaning of the world, there is no need for penance and repentance.

Once one has walked the path of peace, there is no need to struggle for the forgiveness of sins.

When man has freed himself from the passions, he no longer needs to fight them.

Once one has learned that this world is a mirage, there is no need to reject it, nor to acquire any other knowledge.

Dragsz-po-lha-rje

FRIENDSHIP BETWEEN GOD AND MAN

Know that your companion, who never leaves you at home or on the road, in sleep or day, in life or in death, is your Lord, protector, creator, or whatever you like to call him. He is your companion, for Allah says: "I am a companion to whosoever utters my name." Whenever your heart is broken in your helplessness, He stands by your side, for Allah says: "I stand by those whose hearts are broken because of Me." If

truly know him, you would take him as your companion and neglect people. But if you cannot do this at all times, beware of distancing yourself from him, whether by day or by night, offer yourself to him as a protector and devote yourself to friendship with him. But for this you must know the rules of intercourse with Allah. These are the rules:

Bow down your head, close your eyes, gather your thoughts, be silent
without ceasing, keep your body still,
obey orders quickly,
Avoid the forbidden, don't defy fate,
Say Allah's name often, think of Him without ceasing, pay
no attention to trifles but to truth,
Do not rely on man, do not bow down to authority,
be modest, do not get lost in the maze of acquiring wealth,
trust in his providence, believe in Allah's help, but do not give up your own free will.

Deal with it awake and asleep. For these are the rules of dealing with a friend who never abandons you, and people can abandon you at any time. If you are a man of the spirit, you must keep seventeen rules:

Be persistent.

You must be persistent.

Bow down thy head, be not haughty with other men, but only with the true
to show him his unrighteousness.

In meetings and assemblies be modest.

With your pupils, avoid jesting and familiarity. Be polite to the
rude.

Correct the fool by leading him with kindness, and do not be angry
with him. Don't be ashamed to say, I don't know.

Address the questioner with full interest and try to understand his question.

Protect your student from harmful knowledge.

Prevent him from seeking useful knowledge other than the face of God.

Talk your student into learning the higher before the lower.

Higher and lower, external and internal, have but one purpose: to purify faith in God.

Seek to order yourself in the faith of God, so that your disciple may first follow your
actions and then your words.

al-Gazali

SUFI BIRTHS

Whatever thou wilt give me on earth, divide it among my enemies; whatever thou wilt
give me in heaven, divide it among my friends; I will be content with thee alone.

My life in me has waned, and in him it has risen.

In the hearts of his believers God rests as broad as his

throne. In the mind the spirit is a light of day.

Faith without images, without a veil, can be taught only by the naked tongue.

He that approaches me with a finger, I approach him with an arrow.

Rabia

I am more than my salvation.

Ibn Karram

He who has no master is led by the devil. When
asked how old he was, he said:

– I am four years old.

– How?

– I have lived under the veil of the lower worlds for seventy years, four years since I
was delivered and saw God.

I thought I loved him, but when I woke up, I saw that his love had surpassed mine.

al-Bistami

Time expresses the state of the being who needs enlightenment. He who is not
satisfied with this state has come to know things, that is, with Moha- med it must be said:
I have time with God, when no angel, no cherub, can touch me.

– Which way leads to God?

– Pull back both your feet, one from the earthly life, the other from the afterlife, and
you are with him.

He who seeks God sits in the flood of his own penance, he who seeks God sits in the
flood of his own innocence.

Me, us, you, them, them - it's all one and the same.

The essence of God is love. Before creation, God lived in complete unity with
himself, and in this love he revealed himself to himself. From non-being He brought
forth the image of Himself, and with it all His attributes and names.

Babbling is the result of unbelief.

I am the existent and the non-existent, the perishable and the eternal, I am the imagined and the perceptible, I am the serpent and the eagle, I am the loosed and the rope, the wine and the cup, I am the treasure and the poverty, I am the creature and the creator.

The body is also spirit, it is only to be noticed.

I have all things in me, but I have no room for myself. Miracle is only the first of a thousand steps to God.

If you give God the nothingness of yourself, he will give you his everything.

al-Hallaj

Al-Hallaj and I have adopted the same attitude. I was saved by my madness, he was destroyed by his reason.

To be with God for a single moment is more than the respect of all mankind from creation to the end of the world.

Sibli

What you have in your head, throw out; what you have in your hand, throw away; what you meet with, don't turn away from - that's Sufi.

If God wants to please man, He will show him the way to humility.

Abu-Ssaid

Seventy thousand veils conceal God, the only reality, from the world of matter and the world of the senses. And every soul, before birth, sinks under these seventy thousand veils. The inner half of the veil is light, the outer half dark. Each veil of light reveals a quality of God, each veil of darkness conceals a quality of God, in other words, by passing through these veils the soul forgets, falls deeper in the body. In the wilderness, it sees more and more its original oneness with the Ego. The body is not to be discarded, you must refine it and re-spiritualise it, for it is there to help you and not to hinder you - only the essence of the fire must be changed.

I drank wine in memory of my lover, before the vineyard was created, I drank it down. They say, "you drank sin". I drank of what it would have been a sin not to drink. Before I was born, I was drunk with it, I'll always be drunk with it, even if my bones are rotten.

ibn-al-Farid

The lover knocks at the lover's door.

- Who are you?
- "I am," is the answer. No answer, another knock.
- Who are you?
- I am here.
- The door does not open, a third knock.
- Who is it?
- It's me, it's you. The door opens.

The world is like a well, in every drop a thousand suns sleep.

Every grain of dust is covered by a light veil. If you lift it, a hidden fire comes out.

- Is it right to be initiated by a man?
- Right, provided the second initiation does not require the destruction of the first.

The true saint walks among the people, eats and sleeps with them, and gives and buys and marries and engages in conversation in the marketplace - and never, not for a moment, forgets God.

If you have lost something, do not grieve, it is
nothing. If you have gained wealth, rejoice not, it
is nothing.

In prayer man rises to his own divine being.

Oneness is that which is indivisible and at the same time most divisible.

My prince, thou art a high spirit, tell me, how did the spirit descend into this world? How is it that this free being fell from his throne, and came to this prison?

– Know, it was by magic, the magic word of God, spoken to the spirit, that out of nothingness might be magic, that which was invisible hidden in nothingness, out of it might come forth world. Magic is that which makes being out of nothing, magic that makes real being a shadow. He said these words into the ear of the rose, and the fragrance of the flower flooded the world. To the body he spoke a magic word to become a spirit, to the people of the night to now become the day. Do you know the spell he spoke to the earth that has not been silenced since creation? Every man who is tormented by doubt, The mystery of God's magic is painfully within him. If thou wilt escape from the curse of this delusion, pluck out of thine ears this confusion, and thou shalt see the pure reality, and then thine ears shall accustom the voice of the spirit, the language which the senses cannot hear. The ears and eyes of the spirit are the light of God, which neither reason nor sense can understand.

Jalaluddin Rumi

SIMPLE AND TWICE A FOOL

Hodja Nasreddin took grain to the mill. Turning among the sacks of others, he took a handful from each and put it in his own.

– What are you doing here? - asked the miller. Hodja said:

– I am a fool. I do whatever comes into my head.

– If you're a fool, said the miller, why don't you fill someone else's sack with your grain?

Hoxha said:

– I am a simple fool. I would only do that if I were twice the fool.

IN THE BAG.

A friend asked Hoxha to lend him money on short notice. Hoxha said:

– I cannot give you money. But you are my friend, and I will give you as much time as you want.

THE THIEF

One day a thief swept into Hoxha's house. The woman began to cry out:

– Thief! Thief!

Hoxha shouted:

– Silence! Let's see if he can find something useful. Then we'll take it from him.

WHERE'S BETTER?

In the evening, a guest arrived at Hoxha's house. Soon they went to bed. At midnight, the guest said:

– "The candle is on your right, give it to me, let me light it. Hodja put it out:

– Are you mad? How can I know in this darkness which way is left and which way is right?

ZSÁK DIÓ

Three boys came to Hoxha with a sack of walnuts and said, "Divide this nut among us as if God were dividing it.

Hoxha gave one of them a single grain, another a nut for a handful, and the third all that was left in the sack.

The boys were amazed. Hoxha nodded and said:

– Don't you like it? Good. Then I'll divide it the way the servants would.

Now he counted the nuts and divided them one by one.

THE SERVANT'S MEAL

– "Your wife has lost her mind," they told Hoxha. Hoxha began to think.

– What are you wondering about?

- they asked him. Hoxha replied:

– My wife never had a brain. Now I am wondering, what could she have lost?

THE LOST DONKEY

Hoxha lost his donkey. He kept thanking God as he searched. Sometimes he was asked why he did it.

Hoxha said:

– I thank God that I didn't sit on the donkey. Imagine, if I had sat on it, I would have been lost too.

The legends of Hodja Nasreddin

POETRY - WISDOM

Build huts or proud halls, tart or
sweet fill your cup: from your tree of
life the wilted autumn foliage falls
slowly, in a waltz - till it buries you.
The wild fever of wine kills many a
care: hope and shame! Tomorrow? -
To-morrow shall the centuries, that in
eternal gloom are gone.

Between life and death in my soul's
bed many a sour why has come to
fruit; only Man is an eternal mystery:
"Why lives he if he die? And why does he die if he lived?"

The Great Hand writes, and goes on;
And the dead skies murmur the flaming
cry:
A million tears have not wiped a line,
A million woes have not blotted out a
letter!

The ancient Secret has never been revealed
my mind: I thought I had nothing to
lose with life; and now I say
mournfully, Oh, that I could begin
again!

Omar Khajiam

HELLENISM AND ROME

THE SAYINGS OF THE SEVEN GREEK SAGES

Measure is best. Honour thy father. Be healthy in body and soul. Hear much, speak little. Advise the best. Rule your passions. Beware of violence. Consider the enemies of the people as your enemies. If you are lucky, don't be proud, if not, don't stoop.

Cleobulus

Take no part in the law, for you will be the enemy of the accused. Avoid pleasure from which pain is born. Guard thy honor better than a jury. Speak not the truth, but the truth. Thou shalt have no more right than thy parents had. Thou shalt not be quick to conquer thy neighbours, nor be quick to reject those thou hast. If you have learned to obey, you have learned to rule. Avoid bad company. Say not what you have not seen.

Solon

Know thyself. If you drink, don't talk too much, you'll regret it. Go slowly to your friend's la coma, hurry to his sick bed. Respect your elders. Don't laugh at the unlucky. Do not strive for the impossible. When you talk, don't wave, it's like being a fool. Keep the law.

Khilon

Witnessing - and here's the trouble. Think of your friends, whether they're here or not. Do not amass wealth unjustly. Do not be reluctant to please your parents. It is not hard to know oneself. It is most pleasant to have what one desires. Lack of self-control brings trouble. Illiteracy is a burden. Don't be lazy, even if you have money.

Thales

Recognize the moment you need. Don't talk about your plans too soon: if they fail, you won't be laughed at. What you do not wish for others, do not do for yourself. Give back the goods entrusted to you. Gambling is insatiable.

Pittakos

Most people are worth nothing. Look in the mirror: if you are beautiful, you must do beautiful things; if you are ugly, you must correct nature's defects with beautiful deeds. Take it slow, but stick to what you've started. Thy temper be neither soft nor soft

...nor harsh. Hear all things. Speak only when the moment is right. If you do good, do it for the gods, not for yourself.

Bias

Everything is practice. Calm is beautiful. Haste is dangerous. Pleasures are fleeting, virtues are immortal. Be temperate in fortune, sober in misfortune. Be worthy of your parents. Thy praiseworthy life is the price of thy happy death. Be thou to thy friends equal in their sorrows and their joys. Tell no secrets. Live by fresh food and old laws.

Periandros

THE GOLDEN EPOS

First and foremost: honour the gods and obey their law.

Hold sacred the oath and all the mighty heroes, honour the spirits of the underworld, never forget your parents and your relatives.

Choose as your friend one who is virtuous and noble. and let all thy service be a reward to thee.

For a friend who has committed a small fault, do not be angry, forgive him, for if you resist, you will be cruel.

Follow all this exactly. Learn thoroughly to be master of your stomach, of pleasure, of sleep and of anger.

Never do anything to another that may disgrace you, even in secret, for my shame before yourself is all the more binding.

Take this to heart: be righteous in word and deed; cease not to guard against being overwhelmed by the gloom of stupor; see, there is but one certainty, death; earthly wealth, no sooner is it obtained than it is nothing.

But what the Powers inflict on man, and what thou hast brought upon thee by thy fate, bear with undisturbed pleasure.

Do good wherever you can; but remember that he who is good in heart is not burdened by fate with great suffering.

Much is said of thee, both flattering and unworthy; let neither this nor that disturb thee.

If you are slandered, forgive with a smile and a sober mind.

But now I will say more, that thou mayest attain the highest degree of perfection: in spite of temptation, or enticement by word or deed, do and say only what thou canst not do better.

Before you act, consider, lest you be accused of imprudence, lest you be made to atone for your rash actions. The idler speaks and acts without reason.

What thou understandest not, do not stop at, but first learn what thou must do: so life will be easy for thee.

It is unnecessary to disturb your health by intemperate eating and drinking, by physical exercise: this is the measure that has no counteracting effect.

Keep your body clean, but do not indulge it. Beware of creating envy by luxury.
Wear simple clothes, but let beauty be not wanting.

Be not miserly, for moderation is best in all things.

Do thyself no harm, and as I said, weigh thy actions.

Never let sleep oppress thy weary eyes, before thou hast thrice considered the work of the day: what hast thou omitted, what hast thou done, what sacred duty hast thou failed to perform?

Begin at the beginning, go on step by step, and if thou hast done wrong, be dismayed; but rejoice in the good. Do not depart from the good, do it carefully, for it leads to the path of divine virtue.

Stand firmly in the Being who has placed in our souls the great laws of Being, the eternal source of nature. This gives to your actions the divine power.

Ask the gods to make the end of your life beautiful.

Knowing this, you will know the relation of gods and men, the power that pervades the universe and reigns without limit.

Thou shalt know what is free, what is similar in all things of nature, and it is this that will keep thee from vain hopes and hidden dangers.

You will see how the wretched turn their lives into misery! How near they are to good without noticing, without seeing, without hearing; how few perceive salvation from evil!

Destiny thus confounds their minds: the whirlpool carries them away into boundless madness.

The pit of horrible doubts is invisible to them; and they still lure, instead of fleeing.

Zeus, our father, how much suffering you would save mankind from if you would show everyone the demon that pursues him!

But you hang in there. Man's origin is divine and he learns how to live from his own holy being.

If you share in this descent, you will stand your ground, you will be victorious, and you will save your soul from all this.

Avoid that from which I warned you. Purified, loose the bonds of thy soul. Let high and holy reason be the guide of all your actions.

And if thou leave thy body, and if thou soar into the free ether, thou shalt be an immortal god, not a mortal.

Pythagoras

THE PHILOSOPHER OF FIRE

This is the Measure, but men, neither before they have heard of it, nor after they have heard of it, are in their stupor utterly incapable of comprehending it. Everything lives according to this Measure, but they seem to be unaware of it when they begin to perceive what I am explaining in words and examples, and what I am revealing as it is. For the multitude do not remember what they do when they are awake, as they forget what they do when they are asleep.

They are at a loss to understand the Measure with which they are in incessant contact, and that which they stumble upon all day long seems alien to them.

For the majority do not remember what they encounter, and even if they do become aware of it, they do not know it, or at most they think they do.

The deaf, if they have heard anything, are like the deaf. As the saying goes, they are absent even in the present.

They can neither hear nor speak.

They must not act and speak like sleepers.

The thought that is common to all must be strengthened by that which is universal, as the city must be strengthened by the law, but much more so. For all human law lives from the one God. And he rules as he pleases, defying all and overcoming all.

The body of knowledge teaches no reason.

For what are reason and reasoning to us? They listen to the singers of the rabble, they accept the multitude as their master, not thinking that the many are vile and the few are good.

The greatest virtue is to be sober, and to speak and do what is right by nature.

With a better fate comes a better death. Human

learning is like the play of children.

Next to man, the fairest ape is ugly. Next to divine wisdom, beauty, and other things, the wisest man is a monkey.

I began to search for myself.

Go and tread all paths, you will not reach the limits of the soul, so inexhaustible.

Man's destiny is daimon.

If everything in the world went up in smoke, the nose would be the knower.

It is hard to fight passion, for what it wants, it throws its soul to.

All that we see when we're awake is death, all that we see when we're asleep is sleep.

It must be acknowledged that the universal in existence is war, that truth is nothing but discord, and that everything arises from discord and lack.

Struggle is the begetter of all and the king of all. It has made some gods, others men, some slaves, others free.

The living and the dead, the waking and the sleeping, the young and the old are the same. For this is changed into that by passing from here, and that into this by passing.

The immortal is mortal, the mortal is immortal, he who lives the death of it, he who dies the life of it.

The way up and down is the same.

To God all is good and good and true, only men hold this to be true and that to be false. Hearing not from me, but from the Measure, it is reasonable to see that: all is One.

Heraclitus

THE LAUGHING DEMOCRITUS

Three things flow from understanding: right thinking, right speaking, and right doing. Medicine frees man from the diseases of the body, philosophy frees the soul from the passions.

He who strives for spiritual goods is on the way to divine life, he who strives for physical goods is on the way to earthly life. Avoid sins not out of fear, but out of a sense of duty.

He who does injustice is more miserable than he who suffers it. It is a noble spirit to endure indecency.

It is self-discipline to bow before the superior, the law, and the wiser. It is difficult to obey the inferior.

One should strive for virtuous deeds, not virtuous words. He whose character is orderly, his life is orderly.

A good man is one who not only commits no sin, but one who does not wish to commit sin.

The school of a fool is not words, but trouble.

Many men who seem to be friends are not; many men who do not seem to be friends are friends.

He that hath not one good friend deserveth not to live.

He who loves no one, no one can love him. In reality we know nothing, for truth is in the depths.

Democritus said he would rather find a single piece of evidence than win the Persian throne.

If you open your soul, you will find a veritable treasure trove of evil passions.

A man with a fresh thought every day.

An evil, meaningless, shameless, low life is not a bad life, but a long death.

Don't try to know everything, or you will learn nothing.

Happiness is not in wealth and gold, but in the soul. Education is the ornament of the good man, the consolation of the wretched.

Bad things should not even be spoken of. He who forgets his sufferings becomes insolent.

People who flee from death run after it.

The greedy man bears the fate of the womb: he works as if he would live forever. Man must either be good or imitate good.

Democritus

THE DEATH OF SOCRATES

Socrates. Can you have any other intention in such an action as you are about to take, than to destroy us, the laws, and the whole city, if it is up to you? Or thinkest thou that a city can exist, and not be turned upside down, in which the judgments of the courts have no authority, but can be made void and annulled by private men?" What answer shall we give to this question, Crito, and others like it? For surely there is much to be said by any man, and especially by any man of oratory, in defence of our law, which would be thus annulled, and which orders that the judgments of the courts which have been pronounced shall be valid and executed. Or shall we answer them that the city has acted unjustly against us, and has not rightly decided our suit? Do we say that, or something else?

Crito: So help me, this, Socrates!

Socrates: Then the laws would say, "Socrates, is this what we agree on, and not that you should rest in the decrees of the courts which the city has made?" And if we were to wonder at their words, they might continue, "Do not wonder at our words, Socrates! Rather answer them, for you love such questioning and answering anyway. Well, go on, what complaint have you against us and the city that you want to ruin us? Were you not born among us, and did we not give your mother to your father, and did we not bring you into the world? Tell me, then, whether thou hast any objection to the laws of marriage, and whether there be any which-

Which thou thinkest to be wrong?' - "Not I," I should answer.

"Or have you any objection to the laws for the care and education of the new-born, by which you were brought up? Or were the laws that governed it not right in making it your father's duty to give you a musical and physical education?" - "Yes," I would say... What shall we say to all this, Kritón? Is it true or not what the law might say?

Kritón: It seems to me, indeed, that it is true.

Socrates: 'Consider then, Socrates,' the laws might continue, 'whether we are not right when we say that what you intend to do to us is not just. We, who have brought you into the world, nourished you, brought you up, and given you all the good we could, you as well as all your fellow citizens, have nevertheless declared beforehand that every Athenian is free to... to be moved wherever he wishes.' Believe me, my dear friend Crito, I remember hearing something like that. As the priests of the Korubas think they hear the flute, so I hear the sound of these discourses, and will not listen to any other. Know, then, that in my present opinion, if thou object, thou shalt be deceived in vain. Nevertheless, if thou think'st thou canst do any good, speak.

Crito: But I have nothing to say, my Socrates!

Socrates.

By this time the sun was setting... returning from his bath, he sat down among us, but had not been talking long when the servant of the eleven entered and, standing in front of him, addressed him: 'Socrates, I may not be as with you as with the others, that I am angry and cursed when I order them, by order of the officials, to drink the poison. I have known thee all this time to be the noblest, the most gentle, and the most honest of all men that ever came here, and even now I know you will not resent me, but those who are to blame, for you know who they are. And now - you know what I come to report - God be with you! Bear in peace that which is inevitable.'

With that he turned and went out, bursting into tears. And Socrates, looking up at him, said: "God be with you, I will do as you say."

And turning to us, he added:

"What a humane man! Throughout my imprisonment, he often came to see me, talked to me, and proved to be a very good man. And now, too, how sincerely he mourned me. But come, Kriton, let us obey him, and let some one bring in the poison when it is pressed out. If not, let that man prepare it."

And Crito answered, "But I think, Socrates, that the sun is yet shining on the mountains, that he has not yet sacrificed, and I know that others also drink very late after the summons, and eat and drink well before, and satisfy their other desires. So do not be in haste, there is still time."

But Socrates replied. But I am right too, if I do nothing of the kind: for I would gain nothing by it, I think, if I drank the poison a little later, but only to be ridiculed.

I shall be a laughing-stock to myself for clinging to life, and scrimping on it when it is gone. Go then, obey me, and do no other."

When Crito heard this, he beckoned to the boy beside him. The boy went out and stayed a long time, until at last he returned, and with him the man to whom he had to hand the poison, which he had brought ready in a goblet. When Socrates saw this man, he said to him. For you know how, do you not?"

"Nothing else," said he, "but drink the poison, and then walk till thy feet are heavy. Then lie down, and it will take effect of itself."

At the same time he handed the cup to Socrates. He took it, quite serenely, without a tremor in his hand, nor any change in his complexion or features, but, as usual, looking hard between the man's eyes, he said:

"What think you, is this drink fit for sacrifice? Is it free or not?"

"We will only make as much of it, Socrates," replied he, "as we think fit."

"I see," said Socrates, "but is it only lawful and necessary to pray to the gods that my departure may be a happy one? Behold, then, I pray that it may be so."

With these words he raised the goblet to his lips, and calmly drank out the measure

Up until now, most of us have been able to hold back our tears somehow, but when we see

When we saw him drink the poison and drink it up, we couldn't stand it any longer. I tried so hard, but my own tears just kept flowing. So I covered my face to weep for myself, for I did not weep for him, but for my own misfortune to lose such a friend. Crito had gone away before, for he could not repress his tears. And Apollodorus, who had been weeping, now burst into a loud sob, and wept, and softened the hearts of all but Socrates himself. But he said:

"What have you done, strange men! For it was for this very reason that I sent the women away, that they should not behave like this, for I heard that the man must die in silence. Be silent, then, and martyr yourselves."

We were ashamed when we heard this, and stopped crying; he walked on for a while longer, but then he noticed that his legs were heavy. So he lay down on his back, as the man had recommended, and the same man who had handed him the poison felt his body, examined his legs and feet from time to time, and pressing his feet harder and harder, asked him if he could still feel it. Socrates replied that he did not. Then he pressed his leg, and as he went on, he showed us how his body was cooling and growing. Then he touched him again, letting us know that if he touched his heart, he would die. He had already grown cold below the navel, when suddenly, uncovering himself (for he was covered), he said, and this was his last word: 'Crito, we owe Asclepius a cock! Give it to him, remember!'

"I will," says Kriton, "have you nothing more to say?"

But to this question he answered no more, but after a little while he gave a final shrug. The man scratched him, and behold, his eyes were broken. Crito, seeing this, closed his dead eyes and his mouth.

This was the end of our friend, the man who, of all his contemporaries before us, we may safely say was the most honest, and, besides, the wisest and fairest.

Plato

THE GOOD OF THE KINGDOM OF HEAVEN

In moral matters we must guard against three things: evil of soul, recklessness, and bestiality. The opposite of the first two is obvious: the one is called virtue, the other discipline; the opposite of bestiality is perhaps most aptly called superhuman excellence, which is almost heroic and divine. Priam, for example, says of Hector in Homer's poems that he was a very brave man, 'and as if he had been the son not of mortal man but of a god'. If, then, as is said, a man can be a god only by virtue of the excellence of virtue above all else, then obviously so must be the spiritual character which is the opposite of bestiality: just as we cannot speak of spiritual evil or virtue in the case of the animal, so we cannot speak of it in the case of the god, for the excellence of the god above all else is far more valuable than virtue, but bestiality is something quite different from spiritual evil. And as rare as the 'divine man' is, as the Lacedaemonians call the one whom they regard with great admiration (in dialect they call *him seios anér*), so rare is animalism in man. It is even more prevalent among the barbarians; but it is sometimes developed by disease or deformity; and even those men are called by this pejorative word who are above all in wickedness.

Let us now, then, speak of indiscipline, laxity, and rabble-rousing, on the one hand, and discipline and perseverance, on the other. These forms of spiritual character can neither be said to be identical with virtue or spiritual evil, nor can they be said to be of a completely different sex. Here, as elsewhere, we have to list the generally accepted opinions, and then, after examining the points in dispute, we have to prove, as far as possible, all the generally accepted theorems which apply only to these spiritual processes, one by one; and if this is not possible, at least the greatest and most important ones. For only when all the difficulties have been solved, and the result is that which is then agreed upon by all, can we say that the confidence has been well founded.

Obviously, discipline and perseverance are considered excellent and praiseworthy, while indiscipline and laxity are considered bad and worthy of reproach. The disciplined man always sticks to his convictions, while the undisciplined man is constantly changing them. Besides, the undisciplined man, though he knows that what he does is wrong, does it out of passion. And the disciplined man, knowing that his desires are evil, does not follow them out of good sense. The temperate

man is generally thought to be disciplined and persevering; but the latter is also thought to be temperate by some without exception, and not by others. And, on the other hand, the intemperate man is considered by some to be undisciplined, without any distinction, while others distinguish between them. The clever man is said, on the one hand, not to be undisciplined, and, on the other hand, sometimes, while being clever and skilful, to be undisciplined.

These are the relevant opinions. But one might ask: how is it possible for someone to be right-thinking and yet behave in an undisciplined way? Well, some say that if one knows something, it is not possible. For it would be incomprehensible, Socrates thought, if knowledge were in a man and yet something else ruled him, and this something else led knowledge by the nose as a slave. For Socrates was in complete contradiction to the above view: according to him, indiscipline in general is not even imaginable, for no one acts 'knowing' against the highest good, but 'out of ignorance'. But this view is in direct contradiction with the obvious facts. And if indeed something is done out of ignorance, we must take passion into account, and ask what kind of quality is involved. There are then those who accept this thesis in part and in part not. They also agree that nothing can be stronger than knowledge, but they no longer admit that no one can do the opposite of what he thinks is better. And for this very reason they assert that in the undisciplined man, when pleasure overpowers him, there is no longer any "knowledge" but only "opinion".

Aristotle

CYNICAL WISDOM

Antisthenes was asked, what is a feast? He replied: an occasion for drinking.

It is better to attack the ravens than the creditors, for they devour the dead, and the living the living.

They asked him why he was so rough with his disciples. The doctor does the same to his patients.

When Antisthenes was asked why the wise go to the rich and not vice versa, he replied: Because the wise know what they need, but not the rich; otherwise they too would desire wisdom more than money.

Seek pleasures that come after the work, not before it.

Antisthenes was asked how to deal with politics. Do with it as with fire, he replied, don't go very near it or you'll get burnt, not too far or you'll catch cold.

Antisthenes said that an executioner is a better man than a tyrant. When asked why, he said, "The executioner executes only the guilty, the tyrant also the innocent.

When Antisthenes was told that the poor would be destroyed in the war, he replied, "On the contrary, there will be more of them.

He who contradicts, punish not by contradiction, but teach him, for no man cures a fool by being foolish himself.

As iron rusts, so the envious is eaten up by his own soul.

He must carry a packet that the shipwrecked man may take with him.

Antisthenes

Nor did Diogenes keep silent about what he thought of his teacher: he is like a horn - his great voice does not hear what you say.

Diogenes was accused of going to unclean places. The sun, too, he says, is not defiled.

After the battle of Chironea, he was captured and brought before Philip of Macedonia. Philip asked him: was he a spy? He replied, "Yes, I am a spy for your helplessness.

He saw the guards of the treasury escorting a thief to prison. Big thieves take the baby, he said.

Kalliszthenész was said to be happy before him, for Alexander the Great had invited him to a sumptuous feast. On the contrary, he said, the poor wretch is miserable, for he must have breakfast and lunch when Alexander the Great pleases.

In a rich city and a rich house there is no room for virtue.

Someone said to him, "The Sinopeans have condemned you to leave their city. Diogenes said: "I have condemned them to stay there.

When he was asked what was the proper time to marry, he said, "Not for the young, not for the old.

He once asked a miserly man for something. This delayed him a long time. Finally he ran out of steam and said: "It's for bread, not a funeral.

Diogenes

MEDICAL ADVICE

Life is short, the work is eternal; the moment of need passes quickly, the experiment is deceptive, the judgment is difficult. However, it is not only the doctor who must do his part, but also the people, the environment and the outside world.

Fasting is best for the elderly, then for the middle-aged, least for the young, still less for the child, and especially not for the child of vigorous constitution.

Sleep and wakefulness in excess of the right proportion are harmful.

What one is very used to will protect one, even if it is not quite right. What is alien, what one is not used to, may seem threatening, but should not be avoided.

Some people tolerate winter less well, some summer less well.

Sacredness is revealed only to the holy man; to the layman, until initiated into the mysteries of knowledge, it is forbidden to be revealed.

Hippocrates

THE SCEPTICS

None of us knows anything, not even whether we know something or not, nor whether something exists or not.

Metrodorus

Things are indistinguishable, indeterminable and knowable. That is why neither our experiences nor our opinions can be said to be true, nor can they be said not to be true. We cannot believe in either, but must remain irreducibly aloof from all experience and determination, and say at every turn: a thing is just as much as it is not, that is, not only does it exist, but does not exist, and exists as little as it does not exist.

Nothing is beautiful, nothing is ugly, nothing is true and nothing is false. All this applies only to opinions. Nothing is as opinion claims; people believe it because they are used to it. And the same applies to actions.

Pyrrhus

THE LOVABLE

The lovable man may be defined as one who does not seek to be a person who is pleasing to all at all costs, not exactly drawing from the purest sources.

The lovable one greets you from afar, calls you by name and shouts it:

"My darling, my darling!" - and immediately assures everyone of his deepest respect and devotion, takes both hands, does not even want to let go, accompanies him on his way, asks when he will be lucky enough to see him again, and says goodbye with repeated bows and a flood of words. When he is summoned as a witness in court, he wants to please not only the person for whom he has been summoned, but also his opponent, so that he can be a friend to both parties. When he meets strangers, he swears that their judgment is more important than that of his fellow citizens. When he is invited to be a guest, he inquires after his master's children, and when the little ones enter, he says, "They are exactly like their father!" He calls them to him, embraces them, kisses them and sits them down beside him. Then he makes them play red meatballs, or sits them on his lap and puts them to sleep, even if it makes him feel uncomfortable.

THE EYEBALL

Insolence may be defined thus: contempt of reputation for the sake of vulgar gain.

A cheeky person is someone who goes up to the person he has just cheated and asks him for money. If he has made an offering to the gods, he salts all the meat, puts it away and goes to someone else's house for lunch. Here he sits down at the table, calls his servant, offers him meat and bread, and says with a loud voice, "Eat to your heart's content. If he buys for his table, he reminds the butcher of the advantage he has gained for him, stands close beside him, and throws into the scales another piece of meat, or at least a bone. If it works, good. If not, he snatches a slab of meat from the butcher's knife and runs away laughing. If he buys theatre tickets for his guests, he can arrange to enter himself, and the next day he even takes his sons and his tutor with him. If someone buys something cheap, he demands a share. He will go into a house, borrow grain and hay, and ask the farmer to take it home. In the bath, he can even go to the kettle, draw water and pour it over himself. "Now," he says, "I've had a good bath." Ami-
"I didn't thank you, it's all right!"

Theophras

DO NOT MISTAKE YOUR IMAGINATION FOR REALITY

Man is not troubled by things, but by his ideas about things. So, for example, death is not frightening, because if it were, it would have been frightening for Socrates. It is the image of death that is frightening, and that is what is frightening.

When one encounters obstacles, when one is anxious, when one is sad, never look for the cause in others, but always in oneself, in other words, in one's own imagination. The cultivator disguises himself by reproaching others when things go wrong; the beginner in the science of wisdom disguises himself by reproaching himself. The educated man and the wise man reproach no one.

DO NOT FIGHT WITH FATE

Do not wish for events to happen as you please. Be content to let things happen as they happen, and you will attain inner peace.

WHAT IS THE ACTION?

Sickness is an obstacle to the body; but it is not an obstacle to the will, if it does not want to be an obstacle. Lameness is an obstacle to the members; but it is not an obstacle to the will. And this applies to everything, whatever it may be. If you realize this, you can make it become an obstacle to something else, but not to you.

WHAT IS LOSS?

Don't say of anything: I lost it, but: I gave it back. You gave it back. Did your wife die? You gave it back. Did you lose your property? You gave it back. But the man who took it was bad! What do you care if the one who gave it took it back? While it's yours, think of it as a stranger, as if you were at an inn.

LIFE IS THEATRE

Remember: you have to play a part in a play, and the theatre manager commands you. He gives you a short part or a long part, you can't object. If he gives you the role of the col- dus, you must play it according to the nature of the role, and in a healthy way, if you are crippled, you can play the role of the ruling king or the rich privateer. Your task is only this: to play the role you have been assigned, and play it well. The part is chosen by others.

HOW A WISE MAN BEHAVES IN THE FACE OF SCOLDING AND HUMILIATION

Remember well: it is not the slanderer or the beater who offends you, but your image of them. Therefore, if someone hurts you, remember to look for the image that hurts you. Try not to get caught up in your images. If

you have the time and calmness to be in control of them, you will find it easier to gain self-control.

BE CAUTIOUS IN YOUR JUDGEMENT

Someone washes up in a hurry. Don't say bad, say: they wash in a hurry. A man drinks a lot of wine. Don't say bad, say: drinks a lot of wine. Because how do you know it's bad before you've examined the cause?

Epictetus

THE MESSAGE

One of the most difficult and obstinate diseases that philosophy is called upon to cure is gossip. Why? Because the only medicine, teaching, can only be applied to a man who is silent. But the chatterer listens to no one, but always talks and talks. This inability to listen is the first sin of a gossip. It is like voluntary deafness, for the verbalists, as I suppose, blame nature for giving them two ears but only one tongue. If, then, Euripides very aptly said to a puzzled listener: I can never fill thee, for thou art a bottomless barrel, and in vain dost a fool pour into a man's fool the wisest counsels! - Then I could say it much better of the babbler: 'I can never fill you, for you accept nothing, and pour into a fool the best advice of a man in vain!

Yes! In vain does a man pour out his wisest counsel on him who only winds in and speaks when no one listens to him, and does not listen when others speak. For if sometimes he does hear something, and his power of speech is diminished, he will repay this exceptional moment all the more bitterly afterwards.

In Olympia there is a hall which returns a single sound many times over, a hall which for this property is called the seven-tone hall. This is how chatter echoes back when it is touched by even the softest word, from all sides at once.

One almost thinks that the canals of the ear do not lead to the soul, but directly to the tongue. That is why every warning and every new impression that accumulates in the other person is immediately poured out again in the chatterer. This man is like a pot: empty inside, but all the more boiling.

At certain intervals, however, so that one leaves nothing untried, one can say to him: Be silent, my dear boy, for silence has so many advantages! With the chatterer, this will achieve no result, but only annoyance that what he most ardently desires he is forced to do without. In other diseases of the soul, such as greed, ambition, and pleasure, man's passion may be satisfied. The saddest thing about the chatterer is that he desires nothing so much as a listener, and this is the one he never finds. All are madly fleeing

from him. When friends are sitting in a semicircle together or out for a walk and catch sight of someone like this, the best thing they can do is to scatter immediately.

If there's a sudden silence in company, it's said that Hermes has entered. Likewise, if the chatterer at dinner or a gathering of friends suddenly appears, and though given no opportunity to speak, he immediately begins to talk with his mouth full. And people rush in every direction of the wind, like sailors who, when the north wind rages, leave one another on the waving sea, sea-weary, to lean over the rail and whisper over the water.

Hence the dislike of chatterers at banquets, and the dislike of them on land or sea. For they sit on everyone, teasing the man's clothes and sometimes even nudging his ribs. In such a case, the most vulnerable part of the body is undoubtedly the leg, as Archilochus or the wise Aristoteles himself has said.

For the latter once fell into the clutches of such a chatterer, who stupefied him with tawdry histories. And when he said many times, "Well! Isn't he admirable?" - Aristotle replied, "No, not admirable at all. What is wonderful is that there are men with healthy legs who can endure such things."

On another occasion, in the case of the same unfortunate fool, the babbler asked, "O my great philosopher, have I not been a burden to you in my babbling?" Aristotle replied, "Not at all, for I have not been listening."

No organ of nature is so shut up, so enclosed, so barricaded, as our tongue. He has built his teeth as a fence in front of him, so that, if he does not follow reason, he can retire in peace and set a limit to his intemperance. "Trouble," said Euripides, "never comes to us from open living-chambers and houses, but always from open mouths."

That is why these people can find no credit anywhere, and that is what all speech aspires to. For the very purpose of speech is to inspire in the hearer some faith. But no one believes a talker, even if he is telling the truth.

Every man of modesty and morality abstains from drunkenness. For anger, as some say, is only an ally of fury, but drunkenness dwells in the same house with it. To call a spade a spade, drunkenness is the real frenzy, though it does not last long. And in such a case nothing is so despicable as a sudden torrent of talk. It is the maddening wine that makes even the wisest sing, laugh at the top of his voice, and dance.

Prienei Biast was once mocked and called a fool by a chatterer at a feast when the wise man spoke little.

"How," said Bias, "can a fool keep silent when he drinks?"

A citizen of Athens once entertained royal envoys, and at their request invited some philosophers. Everyone took part in the conversation, and everyone had their say. Only Zeno remained silent and calm. The strangers asked him in a friendly way, "Well, Zeno, what shall we say about you to our king, if

are we returning home?" The philosopher replied, "Nothing, except that there is an old man in Athens who can listen to wine."

Plutarch

THE DESCENT OF THE SOUL INTO THE BODY

Often when I awake from the body to myself and leave out the strange things, and immerse myself in myself, I see a wonderful great beauty. At such times I strangely believe that I have a higher purpose, that I am living the highest life, that I am one with the divine; I rest in him. I have reached the higher activity, and I am enthroned above the whole spiritual world outside of me.

Then, when, after resting in the divinity, I descend from the spirit into the region of rational thought, I wonder how this descent of mine into the washing takes place, and how the soul could once have been within the body, if it is what it seemed to be in itself, though now it dwells in the body.

There is a spiritual striving in individual souls to turn back to where they came from, but they also have power over what comes after. It is like the light of the sun, which, though dependent on the sun above it, is not stingy in its gift to what comes after.

The individual souls, if they remain in the intellectual world with the world spirit, will be free from all pain. But if they abide with the world-spirit in the celestial spheres, they govern them with him, as kings who, being with the Lord of all, govern with him, without descending from the royal blood, because they are together in the same place.

And then they change again, and turn from the whole to the parts, being in themselves - as it were weary of being with another; and each soul retires to its own world. If it does this for a long time, that is to say, if it flees from the whole, separates itself from it through separation, and no longer looks towards the intellectual world, then it itself becomes only a part, remains alone, weakens, looks into all things, looks only at details, and, separated from the whole, gives itself to one thing, and goes away from all others. It comes down, and turns towards the one chosen thing, which is subject to the pushes and pushes of all things. He moves away from the whole, and with great difficulty steers the one with which he now comes into contact. He cares for and is present in external things, and in these he is very pleasantly absorbed.

Then happens to him what is said to be the falling away of his wings (Orpheus), and he enters into the shackles of the body, losing the invulnerability which was given him while he lived with the world-spirit and governed a higher thing. This former state was certainly better for him, who was then still ascending. Now that he had fallen, he was caught and shackled by the hostile and evil powers, as the Gnosis teaches. Now he can only act by sense, for he has been prevented from doing so by reason. That is why he is said to be buried and in prison.

But when he turns back to the insight of the intellect, his bonds are loosed and he moves upwards again, when he begins to contemplate beings by means of recollection. For despite its fall, despite its burial, there is always something transcendent in it. Souls are therefore, as it were, necessarily amphibious, living on the one hand the life above and on the other the life below: those souls which can be more in communion with the Self prefer the life above, and those souls which, by their disposition or fate, are the opposite, prefer the life here, the life on earth.

As for the soul's fault, the punishment was twofold: first, for coming down here, and secondly, for the evil deeds it committed while it was here.

Thus the soul, though originating from divine and higher regions, enters the interior of the body. He, who came down to our world by the last descent of the gods, of his own accord, for the abundance of his power, and to bring order to what follows. If he then succeeds in returning quickly from here, no harm will be done for having acquired the knowledge of evil, for having known the essence of evil, for having helped his powers to manifest themselves, and for having works and creations to show for it. If these had continued to rest aimlessly in the incorporeal world and had never attained manifestation, what dwells within them would have remained hidden even from the soul. For action always brings to light a power that is completely hidden, a power that is as it were invisible and non-existent, and which would otherwise never come to life. If everyone now admires the richness of the inner world, it is only the changing beauty of the outer world that has led him to do so, for he must think what the spiritual world must be like which has created these subtle things.

Plotinus

THE PRAISE OF FRIENDSHIP

Friendship is nothing less than the concord of all things divine and human, imbued with good will and love. I know not whether the immortal gods have given anything more excellent than this, except wisdom.

Some prefer riches to friendship, others health, many even pleasure. But the latter are only fit for the unwise beasts, and the other goods are fickle and fleeting, and depend not so much on our resolution as on blind luck. But those who think virtue their chief good are right in their reasoning, for it is virtue which begets and contains friendship, which cannot be without virtue.

Friendship among excellent men has so many advantages that I can hardly tell you. How can we call life a life that cannot rest in the reciprocal love of a good friend? And what is sweeter than to have one with whom you can discuss all your affairs as you do with yourself? What joy would you find in happiness if you had not some one to rejoice in it as well as yourself? And it would be hard to bear misfortune without a good friend who would feel your pain even more than you do.

The other earthly goods that are desirable to us are only for certain ends; wealth to use, power to be respected, office to be praised, pleasure to be enjoyed, health to be free from pain and your body to be fit for its calling.

Friendship, on the other hand, implies a myriad of things: it is ready to help you in any situation of life, never comes at an inopportune time, never is a burden. That is why it is said that we need fire and water no more than we need friendship. For friendship not only makes happiness more golden, but also makes troubles more bearable by sharing them and asking for a share in them.

Friendship, therefore, has many and great advantages, and it is above all by giving us good hopes for the future, and by preventing us from becoming discouraged and discouraged. He who looks upon his true friend, beholds in him his own self. Therefore he who has good friends is present in his absence, abounds even when he is in need, is strong even when he is overcome by weakness. And what is even more incredible: he lives on after his death, because he is accompanied by the respect, the memory, the grief of his surviving friends. That is why the dead are happy, because they live forever in the memory of their friends, and the living are glorious, because they have kept their love for their friends beyond the grave.

Cicero

LIFE IS SHORT - LET IT NOT BE WASTED ON USELESSNESS

Let us secure peace of mind: let us keep the principles of salvation constantly before us, and let us strive zealously for all that is right and good. Our actions must be such that we do not come into conflict with our conscience. Let us do nothing for the sake of the opinion of our fellow men, let us not care about it, even if it is unfavourable to us, but let us only gain merit in reality. "But the multitude admire the brave," you object, "and respect the bold: they consider the meek as simple-minded."

Perhaps, perhaps at first. But as soon as the steady conduct of the meek proves that it is not a matter of intellectual idiocy, but of calm composure, the same crowd will respect and honour them.

Let us refrain from impetuosity. Let us purge our minds of it, and root out from them the sins which, however insignificant they may seem at first, keep recurring. Let us also not only moderate temper, but root it out altogether. Why should we treat a grievance harshly? If we are serious about something, we can certainly carry it through. Nothing will help us in this more than the thought of death.

Let each say to himself and to others, "What is the use of our hating one another, and wasting our short lives as if we had been born into this world for ever? What profit is it to us if we spend our days, which we have spent in honest

with decent pleasures, are spent in causing pain and suffering to others?" We cannot waste our time on such useless things.

Why do we rush into battle without thinking? Why do we get ourselves into conflicts? Why, forgetting our weakness, do we take upon ourselves the burden of tremendous hatreds? Why do we seek to destroy others when we ourselves are so fallible? Fever or other bodily suffering will soon put an end to the enmity which we so inexorably incite, death will soon divide the most fierce adversaries.

Why do we make noise, why do we disturb life with our rebellion? Above our heads hovers the doom that reproaches us for the days we have lost, and draws ever closer to us. The time of death, which you wish for your fellow man, is perhaps much nearer.

Why not think instead of the brevity of life and try to make it undisturbed for yourself and others? Why not endear yourself to others while you are alive, so that they will want you back when you are dead? Why do you seek to humiliate the proud? Why do you seek to intimidate with your power the one who pays lip service to you, who, though despicable and despised, causes only inconvenience and discomfort to his superiors? Why dost thou hate the slave, or thy lord, or thy king, or thy charge?

Wait patiently: death is coming, which will make us all equal.

The noise of a fire in the neighbourhood will not once put an end to a quarrel; the interposition of a wild beast will separate the traveller from the robber. We don't have time to deal with petty troubles when we have something to fear more.

What good is fighting and warfare? Do you wish more than death for the one you hate? Rest assured: he will still die. You weary yourself to no purpose, because you only want to do what will come of itself.

"I do not wish to kill him," you say, "but I wish him banishment, dishonour, damnation."

I myself would rather forgive him who wishes his enemy a mortal wound than one who wishes him only a pimple, for such a one is not only wicked but petty.

Whether you have execution or a lesser punishment in your mind, how small is the time that he shall suffer, and you shall have your wicked pleasure in it!

How soon we breathe out our souls, though we would so much like to breathe again!

While we are among men, let us practice humanity. Let no man's mind be aroused... Let no man fear, let no man harm.

Let us not care about loss, insult, abuse, stabbing. Let us tolerate short-lived inconvenience with generosity.

For we scarcely look around us, we scarcely turn around - as the saying goes - and death is already here.

Seneca

FROM THE MEDITATIONS OF THE WISE EMPEROR

The time is coming when you will forget everything. The time is coming when everyone will forget you.

As if you were already dead and had lived only so far, live the rest of your life according to the dictates of nature.

All souls, says one, are only unwillingly deprived of justice, and so of righteousness, sobriety, good will, and all the rest. You must keep this constantly in mind, for it will make you more forgiving of all.

Armed against violence, you can live your life in the utmost peace of mind, even if everyone shouts against you to their heart's content, even if the vulnerable parts of your shell are mauled by wild animals. For what is there to prevent you, in spite of all this, from keeping your peace of mind, both by a correct understanding of what surrounds you and by the willing use of the opportunities that present themselves? The perception, for example, says to the events in question: you are essentially so and so, even if appearances make you appear otherwise! And use says to the unexpected occasion: I was looking for you! For I have only the substance of my present situation, that I may exercise some reasonable and public virtue, and in general, some activity worthy of man and God! All events are in an internal relationship with God or man, so that nothing is new, nothing is unresolvable, but is old familiar and easily solved.

It is a part and parcel of moral perfection to live each day without excitement, without effort, without maladjustment, as if it were your last.

Think, as it is not fitting to wonder that the fig tree should produce figs, so it is not fitting to wonder that the universe should produce what it is pregnant with. It would be an ugly thing if the doctor or the helmsman were shocked to find that the patient had a fever or that he had a head wind.

Take things without pride, and part with them with a light heart.

I do not deserve to hurt myself, I who have never deliberately hurt anyone.

With a man nothing can happen that is not human, with an ox that is not fit for an ox, with a vine that is not fit for a vine, with a stone that is not fit for a stone. If, then, everything is only what is common and natural, why grumble? For nature, which is one with you, has not brought you anything unbearable!

He who knows not what the world is, knows not where he lives. He who knows not what he was born for, knows not who he is, nor what the world is. He who neglects one of these things cannot tell his own destiny. And what colour does the man appear to you now, who seeks the applause of those who know not where they are, nor who they are?

How clearly must it appear to your eyes that there is no other form of life so open to philosophy as the one in which you live?

It is madness to chase impossibilities. It is impossible for a despicable man not to behave in a despicable way.

Everything lasts but one day: the exaltation as well as the object of exaltation. How

unfortunate I am that this has happened to me! No, not so. It happened like this: I am happy because, although this has happened to me, I do not fear the future.

Marcus Aurelius

CENTRAL TIME

THE SCATTERED WORDS OF THE LORD

To give is more than to receive.

Be faithful money changers.

As I will find you, so I will judge you.

Ask for the greatest and you will receive the least; ask for heaven and you will receive the earth.

But you will grow from the small, and from the great you will become small. My secret is mine, and the children of my house.

There will be schisms and heresies.

Behold, I will make the first like the last, and the last like the first.

He that is nigh unto me is nigh unto the fire: but he that is far from me is far from the kingdom of God.

For the weak I was weak, for the hungry I hungered, and for the thirsty I thirsted.

I often wished to hear these words, but there was no one to speak them.

Let me save you and save your soul. The weak will be saved by the strong.

Those who were with me did not understand me.

If you do not do the right as the left, the top as the bottom, the back as the front, you will not reach the kingdom of heaven.

The world is a bridge, cross it, but do not build a house on it.

And that day he saw a man working on the Sabbath day, and said to him:
 "Man, if you know what you are doing, you are saved; if you do not know, you are cursed
 and you are a desecrator of the law."

The words of the Lord preserved in oral tradition

WE KNOW THE MAJESTY OF GOD BY HIS WORKS

If you say to me: "Show me what your God is like", this is my answer: "Show me what your man is like and I will show you what my God is like". And you say, "You see, describe what God is like."

Hear me, man: it is not possible to tell, nor to write, nor to see with the naked eye, what God is like. His glory cannot be comprehended by the soul, nor his greatness c o m p r e h e n d e d , nor his majesty conceived.

His power is beyond comparison, his wisdom is beyond measure, his goodness is beyond imitation, his generosity is beyond expression.

For if I call it splendour, I call it his work. If I call it the Word, I call it his first. If I say it is intelligence, I say it is wisdom. If I speak of the Spirit, I speak my own breath in him. If I say wisdom, I say his son. If I say power, I say his might. If I say phenomenon, I say his activity. If I say providence, I say his goodness. If I speak of the world, I speak of its glory. If I say Lord, I say judge. If I say judge, I say just. If I say to the Father, I say to the mon- dom of all things.

Lord, because he rules over all things; Father, because he was first of all, creator and maker, because he created and made all things. He is exalted, because he is above all things; he is mighty, because he holds and embraces all things. For the heights of the heavens and the depths of the abysses are in his hand, and there is no place where he can rest or abide.

The heavens are his work, the earth and the sea are his creation, man is his creation and his image. The sun and the moon and the stars are his elements, which he has set forth as signs, for times, for suns, and for years, to help and serve men. And all things were made by God, for they were not before, that we might know and understand his majesty by his works.

Saint Theophil of Antioch

THE SPIRITUAL DEATH

A single righteous man is worth a whole world, and the unrighteous, however many they may be, are worthless, and therefore count for nothing before God.

It seems that the apostle did not call those 'non-existent' who do not exist in any sense, but rather evil, in so far as he considers evil to be non-existent: 'For, as he says, God called the non-existent into the world as existing:

Accordingly, to be good and to exist are one and the same thing, "for the Lord knows the way of the righteous, and the way of the wicked is perishable." God knows no evil, but knows well the way of the righteous. For "the Lord hath known his own." But the way of the righteous belongs to him who said so: "I am the way..." But he does not know evil, nor is ignorant of it, not as if his knowledge could not embrace and grasp all things - to think such of God would be impiety; but to know evil would be unworthy of him.

Accordingly, we may say without hesitation that the Scriptures testify that God does not know all things. God does not know sin, and the sinner does not know God. That which is foreign to God is beyond his knowledge. Hear the Saviour say, "Depart from me, all ye workers of iniquity; I know you not". And likewise the Apostle Paul: 'Let him who has the knowledge of the future, or the gift of the Spirit, know that what I write is from the Lord. But whoever does not recognize this will not be recognized.'

For dead is the spirit that sinneth, and the serpent was led by a lie when he said, "Ye shall be immortal".

That the devil has the power of death does not refer to that "intermediate" and indifferent death which reaches all creatures composed of body and soul, and which separates soul and body. This is the death that is opposed and hostile to the one who said, "I am life".

Órigenes

ON DEATH

When we pray, dear brothers and sisters, we dedicate ourselves to our requests with a watchful spirit and a whole heart. Let all carnal and worldly thoughts be far from us, and let our hearts be occupied with nothing but the object of our prayer.

Let us close our hearts to our ancient enemies, and open them to God alone. Let not the enemy of God sneak up on us in prayer. For he often sneaks up on us in secret, deceiving us with his cunning wiles, diverting our thoughts from God, so that something else may be in our hearts than on our lips, when we should be calling on the Lord not with our words but with our hearts and our souls. What negligence it is to spend time away and to be a prisoner of useless and unholy thoughts when you pray to the Lord, as if you had more important thoughts than what you are talking to God about! How can you wish God to listen to you when you do not listen to yourself? Do you want God to remember you when you ask Him, when you do not remember yourself?

Those who pray should not come to God with unproductive, useless requests. A request remains useless if our prayer to God is fruitless. For if every tree that bears no fruit is cut down and thrown into the fire, then surely even unfruitful speech cannot win God, because it has not borne fruit in deed. Therefore the divine scripture teaches us thus, 'Prayer is good with fasting and almsgiving' (Tob 12:8), for he who will give out his rewards for our good works and almsgiving on the day of judgment will also today graciously hear him who prays with good works and almsgiving.

with his good deeds. He promises to be present, to listen and to protect those who untie the knot of injustice from their hearts and do good to God's household according to his commandments. As they listen to what God commands them to do, they deserve to be heard by God. The blessed Apostle Paul, who came to the aid of his brothers and sisters in their affliction, calls good works sacrifices presented to God. For as he who has compassion on the poor gives money to God with interest, so he who gives to the poorest gives to God, and presents to him in spirit a sweet-smelling offering.

Caecilius Cyprianus

OF THE BISHOP

Fasting is as old as mankind: it was prescribed in paradise. The first commandment given to Adam, "You shall not eat of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil", is the law of fasting and penance.

If Eve had abstained from the tree, there would be no need for fasting now. For it is not the healthy who need a doctor, but the sick. Sin wounds us, repentance heals us; but repentance without fasting is feeble and fruitless.

Because we have not fasted, we are cast out of paradise. Let us fast, therefore, that we may return to it. Do not imitate Eve's disobedience and turn again to the serpent for counsel, who softens your body with food.

Saint Basil the Great

THE TRUE GOOD

One thing is certain: you can love only good. The earth is good, with the height of its mountains, the depth of its valleys, the flatness of its fields. Good is the land in all its beauty and fertility. Good is the proportioned house in its spaciousness and lightness. Good are the living things with their animate bodies. Good is the gentle, healing air. Good is delicious, wholesome food. Good is health that knows no pain, no weariness, and swells with strength. Good is man's shapely, cheerful cheek, reflecting the colour of life. Good is the trustworthiness of the love of a friend's sweetly compassionate soul. Good is the upright, upright-minded man. Good is wealth that gives without effort. Good is the firmament with sun, moon and stars. Good are the angels in their holy humility. Good is the Word, which gently instructeth and admonisheth them that hear it. Good is the song with its softly ringing beats and deep meaning. What a lot, what a lot more!

Good this and good that. But do not consider this and that, but, if you are able, turn your attention to the real good. Then you will see God, who is not good through something else, but the goodness of all good. Salt, of all the things which I have enumerated, or which otherwise appear before our eyes, or are in our thoughts, we could not properly call one better than another, if we had not the conception of true good living in us.

according to the measure of which we sometimes say yes, and sometimes place something above another. This is how we should love God: not as just any good, as this or that, but as the true good in itself. For our souls have a desire for the good, which no conceptual judgment can surpass, but can only embrace through love: and what is this but God? Not the good soul, not the good angel, not the good heaven: only the good good.

Man is happy only in the supreme good, which we grasp and hold in that species of truth which we call wisdom. Before we attain to this happy life, we find the concept of happiness engraved on our souls, and by it we know and say of ourselves with unquestionable certainty: we want to be happy. Thus, before we become wise, we find engraved in our souls the concept of wisdom, in possession of which each of us, when asked whether he wants to be wise, gives this clear answer without doubt: I do.

CONSOLATION FOR THE DEATH OF OUR LOVED ONES

When we remember our departed loved ones, let us consider what it is that we should remember and what it is that we should fear. We should hope, because the death of his saints is precious to the Lord, but we should also fear, because the death of sinners is evil. So, in the journey of life, let us hold fast to the word of the Gospel: "He who believes in me, even if he dies, lives." What does it mean: "He lives even if he dies"? Though he died in body, he lives in spirit. Then he adds, "And he who lives and believes in me shall not die forever." All things surely die, so what does it mean that he does not die? Although he dies temporarily, he does not die eternally.

With such words, then, let us comfort one another. The human heart can choose not to mourn the death of its loved ones, but it is better to mourn and thus be healed than not to mourn and thus become inhuman. Mary belonged to the Lord and mourned her brother's death. But why are you surprised that Mary was in pain when the Lord himself was weeping? This is why the apostle says of the dead, "I do not want to leave you ignorant of the dead, lest you grieve as the Gentiles do, who have no hope." He did not say not to grieve, but not to grieve like the Gentiles who have no hope. For it is necessary for you to mourn, but when you mourn, let hope comfort you.

How can you not grieve when the body, which the soul animates, becomes soulless with the departure of the soul? He who has just been walking now lies motionless, he who has just spoken now remains silent. Gone is what we have not seen, here is what we see with pain: this is the cause of our sorrow. But if this is the cause of our sorrow, we have consolation in our sorrow. What consolation? That the Lord himself descends from heaven at the call of the archangel, and at his voice with a trumpet, first those who are dead in Christ are raised up, and then the living who are left behind are caught up with them in the clouds to meet the Lord. Is it temporary? No: we will always be with the Lord. Let sorrow die where there is so much consolation, let us wipe out grief from our souls, let faith drive away sorrow! In the face of such great hope, sorrow is not fitting for the temple of God. In him dwells the good comforter, in him dwells,

Whose promise we can keep. Why should we mourn long for our dead? Because death is bitter? The Lord has passed through it. Let him comfort you more abundantly, who shall not depart out of your hearts, and so dwell in him, that he may have mercy to change us also.

Saint Augustine

THE BATTLE OF THE BODY AND THE SOUL

There are many battles within us. The body fights against the soul, the soul rebels against the body. If, in this strife, the desires of the flesh prove stronger, the soul loses its dignity and becomes shameful to serve the one to whom the command was worthy.

But when the soul submits to its master, finds its delight in the higher gifts, tramples underfoot the impulses of earthly pleasures, and does not allow sin to reign in its mortal body, reason will have a well-ordered ascendancy, and its fortifications will not be shaken by any vain imagination of spiritual evil.

For man has true peace and true liberty when, on the one hand, the spirit rules the body as judge, and on the other, God rules the spirit as protector.

Let us understand that the more we zealously strive for our salvation, the more our enemies will oppress us. But he who is in us is stronger than he who is before us, and we are made strong by him in whose strength we trust. For this reason the Lord allowed Himself to be tempted by the tempter, so that we might be instructed by the example of Him on whose strength we rely. He overcame the enemy, not by the power of might, but by the testimony of the law, both to honour man more, and to punish the enemy more severely, for the enemy of the human race was thus overcome, not by God, but by man.

St. Leo

THE CONSOLATION OF WISDOM

Who with a passionate heart seeks only
fame And considers it the highest good,
Let him look up to the wide sky, and see
how small our globe is.

Your name, even if it is so big, does not fill the
size of the arches of our tiny Earth.

In vain, then, do you try proudly to
break out of the narrow circle of your
mortality.

Let your fame spread far and wide, Let
many a people know your name,
Let your bowers shine with honour,
No merit before death,

That doth both small and great alike treat, And
makes the low and the high equal.
Where are thy bones, good Fabricius,
Brutus, and thou stern Cato?
A few miserly words proclaim what lives on: but
a mere name remains.
But are our fine words enough to make us know the dead?
So in the tomb you shall linger,
unknown, and no glorious fame shall
save you.
Do you think your lives will be prolonged by the
mortal light of fame?
A late day will take this away, and a
second death will come.

Boethius

THE MEANS OF GOOD WORKS

Let us first love our Lord our God with all our heart, with all our soul, with all our strength, then our neighbour, then ourselves.

Let us not kill, nor commit adultery, nor steal, nor covet forbidden pleasures, nor bear false witness. Let us honour all our fellow men. Let us not do unto others what we would not do unto ourselves.

Let us deny ourselves so that we may follow Christ. Let us restrain our instincts and not give ourselves over to pleasure. Let us love fasting. Let us feed the poor, clothe the naked, visit the sick, bury the dead, help the afflicted, comfort the sorrowful.

Keep away from the deeds of the world. Let us put nothing in the way of Christ's love. Let us not act out of anger, let us not be angry, let us not harbour deceit in our hearts, let us not feign peace, let us not forsake love. Let us not swear, lest we swear falsely. Let us confess the truth with our hearts and our lips. Let us not pay for evil with evil, let us not be unjust to others, and let us bear injustice done to us with patience. Love our enemies, curse not those who curse us, but bless them. Let us endure persecution for justice.

Let us not be proud, drinkers of much, eaters of much, sleepers of much, murmurers, gnawers of gum. Let us put our hope in God. If we see any good in ourselves, let us ascribe it to God, not to ourselves; but of evil, let us always be persuaded that it comes from within us, and so cast it upon ourselves. Fear the day of judgment, dread the child, desire eternal life with all our soul's longings; and death be ever before us.

Let us watch every hour of our lives, and be sure that God sees us everywhere. The evil that arises in our hearts

Let the evil thoughts in our hearts crumble on Christ the Rock and reveal Him to our elderly pastor. Let us guard our lips from evil and evil speaking, let us not love to speak many words, let us not speak empty and ridiculing words, let us not delight in much laughter or guffawing. Let us gladly listen to sacred readings and devote ourselves often to prayer.

Let us confess our past sins to God in prayer every day, with tears and sighs, and let us strive to repair our faults in the future. Let us not do the desires of the flesh and hate our own will. Let us obey the commands of the ruler in all things, even if he himself would do otherwise, from which God forbid. The word of God says: "What they say to you, do; but what they do, do not do."

Let us not want to be called holy until we are truly holy, but rather let us strive to be holy so that we may be called holy with more truth. Let us fulfill God's commandments by our deeds day by day. Let us love the pure, hate no man, love no quarrel, avoid boasting, respect the elderly, and love the young out of love for Christ. Pray for our enemies, make peace with our enemies before the sun goes down. And let us never doubt God's mercy.

These are the tools of the art of the spiritual life. If we use them untiringly day and night, and can give account of them on the day of judgment, the Lord will give us the reward which he himself has promised: 'Eye hath not seen, nor ear heard, neither have entered into the heart of man, the things which God hath prepared for them that love him.'

St. Benedict

ON THE DIVERSITY OF SINS

It is one thing to sin hastily, and another to sin out of prudence. For we often commit sins in our rashness, which we then condemn ourselves after reflection.

It is mostly out of our weakness that it happens to us that we love to do what is good, but cannot carry it out. But to sin willfully is to neither do the good nor love it.

Just as it is sometimes more serious to love sin than to commit it, so it is more evil to hate justice than not to do it. There are some who not only do not do, but persecute what is good, and what they themselves fail to do, they hate to a great extent. For these do not commit their sin from weakness or ignorance, but with malice aforethought. If they would do what is good, they could not but at least wish it in others, which they themselves fail to do. For if they at least willed to do good, they would not hate others to do it. But because these good things, which they know by hearsay, they despise with their lives, and, if they perceive them, persecute, there is truth in this saying, "They have turned away from God with a willful purpose."

St. Gregory

GOD IS MY HAPPINESS

Our longing for heaven is easily diminished, for a thousand dangers lie in wait for us. Therefore we need constant exhortation, so that as soon as we have slipped, we may be reinvigorated and return to our true and supreme good: God.

The supreme object of my desires, I call upon you! With a loud voice I cry to thee from the depths of my heart! When I call on Thee, I call on Thee from within. For I would not be if you were not in me, and if I were not in you, you would not be in me. You are in me because you are in my thoughts. In them I know you, in them I find you, whenever I think of you and delight in you, Bened, from whom, by whom and in whom everything exists.

Behold, I love you. If I love you little, I want to love you more. I burn with love for Thee, I burn with longing for Thee, in sweet remembrance I find in Thee all my beauty. And behold, while my soul sighs for Thee and ponders Thy inexpressible goodness, the burden of the body is no longer so heavy; the confusion of thoughts is lessened, the weight of transience with all its miseries no longer stuns me as it used to. All is silent, all is still. Only the heart is aflame and the spirits exult. The memory is enlivened, the intellect is enlightened, and the soul suddenly finds itself seized by the love of the Invisible!

Blessed is the soul which, freed from the prison of earth, soars free to heaven, which sees You face to face, sweet Lord, which no longer fears death, but rejoices in eternal, everlasting glory. Calm and carefree, no longer afraid of foes or death. For thou art his, good Lord, whom he sought so long. Whom he has always loved. With singing heavenly arms united, He sings songs of eternal feast sweeter than honey, To thy majesty's praise for ever. He shall be filled with the fullness of thy grace. Thou dost make her drink of thy beautiful stream.

O happy community of heaven's inhabitants! O majestic feast of all those who return to Thee, from this misery of their earthly wanderings, to the fullness of beauty, to the glory of the holy, to the supreme of all dignity - to the place, O Lord, where Thy subjects ever behold Thee! There nothing enters the ear to disturb the soul.

In thy kingdom there is no place for adversity and bitterness. There is no goodness and no evil. No enemy, no aggressor, no occasion for sin. There is no lack, no shame, no strife, no contention, no reproach, no accusation, no fear, no anxiety, no punishment, no doubt, no compulsion, no unevenness. There is the greatest peace, perfect love, exultant, eternal praise of God, unending, unbroken rest, and never-ending rejoicing in the Holy Spirit.

What praise, what thanksgiving, then, can we show to you, our God, who, in the midst of the sea of misery of this life, never ceases to comfort us with the wonderful visitations of your grace? Oh, wretched me, how I am overwhelmed with troubles! But meanwhile I dread the end of my life, and ponder my sins, while thy judgment-

I fear my doom, and think of the hour of my death, while I shudder at the torments of hell, for I know not what strict scrutiny Thou wilt put my deeds under, while it is utterly unknown to me how I shall accomplish my works, while I ponder such and such things - behold, Thou comest to me, and with Thy usual fatherly goodness consolest me. When thus I weep, and my tears are neither number nor number, and I groan to Thee from the depths of my heart, Thou liftest my sorrowful and tortured soul above the ridges of the mountain chains, up to the fragrant flower-beds. You plant me on green lawns beside a gently trickling brook. Thou dost spread me a table with many courses, That my weary soul may be strengthened, my sad heart cheered. And by this beauty I'll forget all my miseries. Rising above the heights of the earth, I find at last rest in Thee, in true peace.

Joannes Fécampiensis

WHY AND HOW SHOULD WE LOVE GOD?

Do you want me to tell you why and how we should love God? Behold, the reason of our love for God is God himself; the measure is love without measure.

I have said that we ought to love God for himself for two reasons: first, because nothing is more worthy of our love, and secondly, because nothing is more profitable to us.

The question why we should love God makes us think two things. For it raises a doubt in our souls as to what should be the chief motive of our love: should we love God for himself, or for ourselves? To both I answer the same thing: I find no worthy reason for our love of God but Himself.

Let us first see, what has He done to deserve our love? He who gave Himself to us who are unworthy has earned much merit for us. For what could even He have given better than Himself? If, then, we seek what He has done to deserve our love, if we seek the motive of our love for Him, we must say that we must love Him first of all because He first loved us.

He is absolutely worthy of our love in return, especially when we consider who He is, who we are, and how much He loved us. God is the one who loved us without return. He even loved His enemies. And how much? John replied, "God so loved the world that He gave His only begotten Son for it", and Paul, "Who did not show mercy to His own Son," he said, "but gave Him up for us". And the Son himself bears witness of himself: 'Greater love has no one than this, that no one lay down his life for his friends'. Thus has the Righteous earned merit with the wicked, the Greatest with the least, the Almighty with the helpless.

I believe that for those to whom this is obvious, it is also obvious why we should love God: because he has earned our love.

No wonder one loves less the one one one knows less. But even so, we know that we are indebted with everything we have to the One who has begotten us from all eternity.

What, then, must I do, who confess my God to be not only the free giver of my life, the most generous director, the most gracious comforter, the most provident governor, but also, moreover, my richest Saviour, my eternal Saviour, my enricher, my glorifier? What shall I give to the Lord for all these things? If I owe him all that I have for having been created, what more shall I add to what he has created me anew, and thus created me anew? When He created me first, He gave me to myself; when He created me second, Himself; when He gave Himself, He gave me back to myself. Because he created and recreated me, I owe myself for myself, and I owe myself twice over. What shall I give to God for Him? For even if I could repay Him a thousand times over, what am I compared to God?

Since the love that is directed to God is directed to immeasurableness and infinity - for God is both immeasurable and infinite; what, I ask, must be the limit and measure of our love? What, since we no longer give our love freely, but out of debt? Infinity loves us, eternity loves us, the all-surpassing love of science loves us; God loves us. Whose greatness is boundless, Whose wisdom is immeasurable, Whose peace surpasses all understanding: and what measure shall we render to Him?

I love you, Lord, my strength, my support and refuge, my deliverer and all that can be called desirable and lovable! O God, my helper, I love you for your gift and according to my measure, which, though less than justice would require, is not less than my talent. For though my talents fall short of my debt, I cannot surpass myself. But I will be more, I pray you, if you will have the grace to give me more, though I can never be worthy of you!

Saint Bernat of Clairvaux

THE SOARING OF THE SOUL TOWARDS GOD

I confess, O Lord, and I bless thee for having created in me an image of thee, that I may meditate on thee in remembrance of thee, and love thee! But this image has been so distorted by sin, so stained by the filth of sin, that it is unable to fulfil its purpose unless You renew and restore it. I dare not, O Lord, penetrate into thy depths - how can my understanding be sufficient? -but I long to understand in some measure your truth, which my heart believes and loves. For I do not seek understanding in order to believe, but I believe in order to come to the understanding of faith.

You are still hidden, O Lord, from my soul in your brightness and happiness. My soul is still a prisoner of your darkness and misery. It looks around but cannot see your beauty. It listens, but does not hear the music of your word. It seeks with its sense of smell, but cannot smell your fragrance. It tastes, but does not know your taste. It touches, but does not feel your softness. For all things are in you, Lord, in your own unspeakable way. For You have given these things to Your creatures in a tangible way. But the senses of my soul have been paralysed, stunned, clogged by the long sickness of sin. What then, Lord, what art thou?

What shall my heart think of? Yes, You are life, wisdom, truth, goodness, happiness, eternity, and all that is truly good.

Awake, my soul, rise with all your mind, and think, as best you can, what and how great is that good? For if you are delighted with each good, think what delight that good must produce which includes the delight of all good! Not such a beauty as is found in created things, but so different from it as the Creator is different from the creature. For if created life is good, how good must the life that creates be?

What, then, and how great will be the joy there where such and such good will be? O thou human heart, thou beggar, thou heart of adversity, and even of the heart created in it, how wouldst thou rejoice if thou didst abound in all these things? Ask your soul, can it embrace the joy of so great a happiness? If one whom you loved fully as yourself were also to share in the same happiness, your joy would be doubled. You would enjoy his happiness as much as your own. And if two or three, or many more, were to share in it, and you loved each of them as yourself, you would rejoice in the happiness of each of them as much as you rejoice in your own. In the same way, each one will rejoice in the happiness of every other soul as much as in his own, in the perfect love of innumerable happy angels and men, in which no one loves any one less than himself.

My God, my Lord, the joy of my hope and my heart! Tell my soul if this is the joy of which you say by your Son, "Ask, and it shall be given you, that your joy may be full." For I have found some fullness of happiness, nay, more than fullness. For this joy is not exhausted even when it fills the whole heart, the whole mind, the whole soul. Tell me, Lord, tell the heart of your servant, is this the joy to which your servants come when they enter into the joy of their Lord? But the joy in which your elect shall share, eye hath not seen, ear hath not heard, nor have entered into the hearts of men. For I have not yet told you, Lord, nor thought how much your saints shall rejoice. They shall rejoice as much as they love. And they will love you as much as they know you. How much will they know me and how much will they love me, Lord? Surely eyes have not seen, ears have not heard, human hearts have not been touched in this life, how much they will know and love you in the next life. Please, Lord, let me know you, love you and rejoice in you. And if I am not able to reach fullness in this life, grant that I may progress in it day by day, so that I may eventually be completely overwhelmed. Grant that my knowledge of you may increase here and be complete there. Let my love grow in me here and be fulfilled there. Let my joy in this life be nourished by hope, and my joy in the next, Lord. By your Son you counsel us to ask and promise to grant our petition, that our joy may be full. And I will ask, O Lord, as Thou dost by Thy wondrous grace. Grant what you promise in your truth, that my joy may be full. Until then, let my mind meditate on this, let my tongue speak of this. Let my heart meditate on it, my lips converse on it. Let my soul hunger for this, my body thirst for this.

Let my whole being long for this, till I enter into the joy of my Lord, who is one God, the ever-blessed Triune. Amen.

Saint Anselm

THE PRAISE OF LOVE

Love, what can I say about you? How can I praise you? How I would honour you if I could taste you, what a price I would pay for you if I knew your worth. But thou art perhaps beyond my poverty, and I could not even raise the purchase price in my own strength. But what I have, I will give for you, I will give all I have, I will exchange all the wealth of my house for you! All that I have in the house of my body and my heart I will give for you, and when I have given all, I will look upon it as nothing. All the pleasures of my body, all the joys of my heart, I will gladly exchange for you, that I may have you alone. Thou alone art dearer to me, more precious, sweeter, more joyful than all I have; thou dost more richly fill me with joy, more abundantly nourish me, more surely save me, more happily keep me!

I will bring news of you to others. Tell me, human heart, what is your answer: to rejoice always with the world, or to be always with God? I'll answer what thou lovest best. Hear me, then, either to correct thy love, or not to delay thy choice; if this world be beautiful, what beauty thinkest thou that reigns where the world's Maker is? Love, then, that thou mayest choose, Love more, that thou mayest choose more joyfully. Love God, that you may choose to be with him: then your choice will be inspired by love. And the more you love, the more quickly you seek to reach Him, and you hasten to take hold of Him: so love drives you, and you take hold of Him by choice. And again, the more you love, the more eagerly you embrace Him, so by love you enjoy God. See how love is all you have: responding, running, finishing, staying, being happy. So love God, run, grasp, possess, enjoy Him!

I have already chosen, you say; which way shall I go to reach Him? God is the way to God. I cannot go alone by a way unknown to me, you answer, give me companions, that I may not go astray. Walk in the way of God with those who walk in the way of God; you can have no better companions on the way than those who have walked it for a long time, and who, through long experience of wandering and habituation to toil, are not afraid of straying or becoming weary. Which, then, is the way of God, and who are those who walk in it? - you ask. The straight paths are the ways of God, and the righteous walk in them. Righteousness is the way, and the righteous are those who walk in the straight path...

See, all your happiness depends on love. By love you choose the way, by love you walk this path, by love you reach your home. Do you want to know if you have chosen the path of truth out of love? "If anyone," says the Lord, "loves me, he will keep my words." And of the same Word elsewhere it is said, "Thy word is truth." And also the psalmist: "I have chosen the way of righteousness, and have not forgotten thy law." If therefore the word of the Lord is truth, then by love the just

the way of truth, in which the word of the Lord is fulfilled. Love, then, chooses the way of righteousness.

So you are the way, love. What way? A way that is uplifting, uplifting, guiding and leading to a goal. Whose way are you? Man's way to God, God's way to man. Bol- dog way, which alone knoweth the exchange of our salvation! You bring God down to man and lead man to God. God descends when He comes to us, we ascend w h e n we come to Him. But neither He nor we can come to any other way but through you. You are a mediator who reconciles opposites to one another, unites those who are divided, and, however different from one another, makes them somewhat alike. You degrade God and exalt us. You bring Him down, you lift us up, but in such a way that His condescension is not condescension but grace, and our exaltation is not presumption but glory. Great is your power, love! You alone can bring God down to earth.

Hugo De Saneto Victore

THE DAILY LIFE OF FAITHFULNESS

– "We are going to preach in Assisi," Francis once called the silent brother Rufinus. They set off. Silently, looking neither to the right nor to the left, they marched through the city. They had already passed the churches one after the other when Rufinus spoke:

– You said, Father, we're going to preach.

– What else have we done? - Francis replied. And with that they turned around and returned home.

They turned and went home.

"He made his whole body into a tongue", Saint Francis would later record of his first life.

Brother Thomas Celano, his first cartoonist.

*

It was during St. Michael's fasting. One night, the brethren were awakened by a wailing cry:

– "I'm starving!" cried a little novice in his sleep. St. Francis is on his feet in no time; he breaks bread and sits down on the ground to eat with the hungry newcomer. The next morning at dawn he takes him out to the vineyard. Bread and grapes: the body and blood of Christ.

*

The Tempter knew that he would tempt Francis with wealth, power and success to no avail. So he attacked him from the angle of love: with the inviting images of human affection and smoking spies.

Our saint responded to the Tempter with humour. In the winter, he made seven snowmen in the courtyard. One big one - this will be the wife - this and six little ones, these children.

"Come on, Francis Frater," he said to himself, "clothe them and keep them! And if you cannot do that, be glad that you can be a servant of God.

The Tempter left with a long nose.

*

One day, three notorious robbers entered the montecasale cluster. They came to Frater Angelus, the Guardian, for relief. He roasted them hard and chased them away in short order. St. Francis immediately took out the gargoyle:

– Our Lord Christ did not come for the righteous, but for sinners, for which reason he often ate with them from the same bowl. You have sinned, brother, against love and against the holy Gospel of Christ. Therefore take this loaf of beggared bread and bottle of wine, and hasten through hill and dale after the barns; confess before them the sin of thy inhumanity, and beseech them in my name to do no more evil.

So it was done. And the hearts of the laths were softened at this unexpected turn of events, that in time all three became friends.

* A beggar

woman introduced me to the Assisi brothers.

– What can we give our mother? - Saint Francis asked Peter of Catania, the waiter.

– 'We have nothing,' Peter looked around, 'except this Gospel book, w h i c h we use at chrism.

– Let us give it to our mother! - said the saint. She can buy food and clothes for the price. It is more pleasing to God to give it than to read it. That's what the book teaches.

*

"Write what I say to you in pen," said Brother Francis Leo. And he sat down and wrote as follows:

"To Brother Setesoli Jakopa, servant of God, Francis Frater, the saint of Christ. Greetings and blessings! Know, my beloved, that the blessed Christ has revealed to me the end of my life, which is soon to come. Therefore, if you wish to see me alive, go and come to the Cloister of the Blessed Virgin. Bring with you a pitchfork and a wax candle for my burial. And some of the almond paste you used to give me when I was ill in Rome'.

No sooner had the letter been written than there was a knock at the door, and Mrs. Jakopa was at the door, bringing with her all that was contained in the letter.

Legends of St Francis of Assisi

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Humility is the splendid flower that springs from the recognition of the greatness of God and the smallness of ourselves before the illuminating and warming rays of grace.

*

Blessed Aegidius of Assisi was once visited by two preaching brothers from Cetona to talk about God. One of them said:

– Reverend Father, Saint John the Evangelist said very great and sublime things about God.

– My dear brother, St. John the Evangelist said nothing about God.

– Dear Father, be careful what you say! For St. Augustine also believes that if St. John had spoken more loftily, no mortal would have understood him. Do not say, then, Father, that he says nothing.

– But I tell you again and again that St. John says nothing of God about God.

His visitors were discouraged at this, and without being edified, they rose up. When they were only a few steps away, Aegidius called them back, pointed to the mountain that towered skywards beside Cetona and said:

– If there were a mountain of millet seeds as big as this, and a sparrow lived at its base and feasted on it, how much would it take away in a day, a month, a year, or even a hundred years?

– In a thousand years, almost nothing. Aegidius continued:

– The eternal deity is so immense and so great a mountain that St. John, who was almost a sparrow, says nothing about God, compared to the greatness of God.

The two preaching brothers, seeing that Aegidius was right, fell to their feet and went away in a holy state, asking for forgiveness and blessing.

*

I knew someone who saw God so closely that all faith was lost.

Aegidius of Assisi

THE DIGNITY OF THE HUMAN SOUL

Consider first of all, my soul, what dignity you have received from nature. This, I think, is that by nature I am adorned with the image of the most holy Trinity. Hence St. Anselm says in the Proslogion: 'I confess with a grateful heart, O Lord, that thou hast created me in thy image, that I may thus remember thee, think of thee, love thee. "Looking at the inner man, there are three kinds of images.

I see in myself three three faculties by which I can recall, contemplate and desire God: memory, reason and will."

For when I recall God, I find my delight in him, for "his memory is sweeter than wine" (Song of Songs 1:8). When my intellect knows Him, I see how elusive He is, for He is the beginning and the end, I contemplate how desirable He is to His angels who long to see Him, how beautiful He is in the eyes of His saints who rejoice in Him continually, how admirable He is in all His creatures whom He has created by His breath, governs by His wisdom, enriches by His grace. As soon as I see these truths, I long for God, Whom I love with my will, I imitate with my life. Confess, then, my soul, what wondrous and immeasurable dignity it gives thee, that thou art not only a footprint of the Creator, like the rest of creatures, but that thou bearest his image, which is the property of beings endowed with reason alone.

If all ends in death, it is certainly not worth much. But you may rejoice with a thankful heart, because, as the crowning glory of what I have just said, 'God has also given you an immortal nature, an incorruptible nature, an unlimited time, and eternal life. You would not be the image of the eternal Trinity, says St. Augustine, if the scythe of death could cut the thread of your life.' Remember, my soul, that your Creator has given you not only life, but a beautiful and eternal life, endowing you with senses and discernment, and also with senses and wisdom. Show me your beauty, that you may learn from it what beauty you should seek.

And if you are not even content with this, my ungrateful soul, know that you have a third, wonderful dignity. This is nothing but a vast simplicity which allows none but the simple purity of the eternal Trinity to enter the abode of your soul. Listen to the words of your Fiancé: "I and my Father will come to him and make our abode with him" (John 14,23). Only God, your Creator, who, in the words of St Augustine, gives you a more intimate existence than yourself, can enter the dwelling place of your soul.

And if even this is not enough to praise your Creator, direct your attention to a fourth good deed. You must admit that your immense needs can be met by no one but God.

The charm, the sweetness, the beauty of creatures may touch the human heart, says Hugo de Sancto Victore, but they cannot fill it. And St Anselm says: All abundance outside of God is to me a want.

O my Lord and my God! Remembering the dignity of my soul, I am now better able to judge the baseness of my sins, my beauty is made to see the ugliness of my sins, and the memory of thy good deeds makes me see my ingratitude. For the greater the sin, the greater is the dignity of him whom we offend, and the more despicable the ingratitude, the more good we receive from him whom we offend.

Bonaventure

CONDEMN NO ONE!

Strive to love and condemn no one. And if you see someone sinning grievously, I do not say that you should take pleasure in him, nor that you should be deterred from him, but I say, do not condemn, do not condemn sinners, for you know nothing of how God judges. Moreover, many whom men think condemned are saved from God, and many whom men think saved, whom God has already rejected and condemned. I could not tell you of one whom you have rejected, but of whom I certainly hope that God has led him by his own hand into the way home...

Blessed Angela of Fulgino

HUMAN HAPPINESS CONSISTS IN CONTEMPLATING GOD

In human beings there is a natural desire to know the causes of things seen. People began to philosophize because the visible world, whose causes were hidden, aroused their wonder (Aristotle, Met. I, 2). They only calmed down when they discovered its cause. But the search does not stop until it reaches the first cause. Only "when we have discovered the first cause do we think our knowledge is perfect" (Aristotle, Met. I, 3). Man, therefore, by nature desires to know the first cause as the ultimate goal. And the first cause of everything is Is-ten. So man's ultimate end is to know God.

Further: it is in the nature of man to wish to know the cause of every known cause. The object of human reason is reality as such. Therefore, by nature, it desires to know its cause, which is none other than God. No man has attained his ultimate end until his natural desire is at rest. Therefore, any intellectual knowledge is not sufficient for man's happiness, which is his ultimate end, unless it is culminated in the knowledge of God, which, as the ultimate end, satisfies his natural desire. So man's ultimate end is knowledge of God himself. The ultimate end of man and of every private being with reason is called happiness. For this is what every rational private being, and that only for himself, desires. Hence the ultimate happiness of every rational private being is the knowledge of God. Therefore the Scripture says, "Blessed are the pure in heart, for they shall see God" (Matthew 5:8), and:

"This is eternal life, that they may know You, the only true God" (John 17:8).

For human happiness does not consist in the pleasures of the flesh. For man's ultimate goal is that by which he comes closest to God. The pleasures of the flesh, however, prevent man from drawing near to God through contemplation, because they submerge him in sensual things and consequently distance him from his spirit.

Happiness is not a matter of respect. Only the good can be honoured, and the wicked can be honoured. So it is better to be worthy of respect than to be respected. Respect, therefore, cannot make a man's chief good.

Happiness does not consist in glory. The chief good of man must be that which is the most permanent among human things, since the permanent permanence of the good is the

is naturally desired. And glory is the most enduring of all things, for there is nothing more changeable than human opinion and glory.

Happiness does not consist in riches. For wealth is not desired for its own sake, but for the sake of others, merely to be used either for the sustenance of our lives or for a similar purpose. But we desire the highest good for its own sake and not for the sake of others. Moreover, wealth may be lost independently of our will; evil men may be found in it, who will necessarily be deprived of the highest good; wealth and similar goods are impermanent.

Nor is happiness in worldly power. For if any power were the highest good, it should be the most perfect. But human power is very imperfect: it is rooted in the will and opinions of men, which are the most immutable. And the greater a power is thought to be, the more it depends on. And this only weakens it, because what depends on many can be decided many times over.

For similar reasons it is obvious that happiness does not consist in the goods of the body: health, beauty, strength. For these, too, are the common goods of the good and the evil, are immutable, and do not depend on our will.

Nor does happiness consist in the moral virtues. For human happiness, if ultimate, cannot be directed to any other end. But moral actions are directed to something else. Thus the acts of valour, which flourish in war, are directed to victory and peace, since it would be folly to fight for war itself; the acts of justice are directed to the maintenance of peace among men, so that each may possess his own in peace.

It follows that man's supreme happiness does not consist in acts of cleverness. When it is directed to other than ends, it cannot be man's ultimate happiness. But the acts of prudence are directed to something other than the ultimate end: on the one hand, because all practical knowledge, including prudence, is directed to action, and on the other hand, because prudence enables man to choose the right means to an end, as is clear from Aristotle's *Ethics* (VI, 16).

Nor does happiness consist in the practice of art. Art is also practical knowledge, and thus directed towards a goal. It cannot therefore be an end in itself.

Nor can man's supreme good consist in sensual cognition. The intellect is superior, better than the senses. The good of the intellect is therefore better than that of the senses, and so it cannot constitute man's supreme good.

Now if man's ultimate happiness consists neither in external goods, which are usually called the goods of fortune, nor in the goods of the body, nor in the goods of the soul - whether we consider the senses or the intellectual faculties which tend to moral activity; then man's ultimate happiness must consist in the contemplation of truth.

For it is this activity alone which is peculiarly human, and in which no other thing is involved.

This activity is directed to nothing but ends, since the contemplation of truth is for its own sake. By this activity man is related to the higher private being by likeness, for it is the only one of human activities which is found in God and in the incorporeal private being.

It is not possible, however, that man's ultimate happiness should consist in a contemplation which is confined to an understanding of the first doubts. This is the least perfect kind of contemplation: it is the most general and embraces the knowledge of things only in the order of their being. It is the beginning, not the end, of human endeavour. This contemplation is our own by nature, not the fruit of our labour in search of truth. Happiness must consist in intellectual activity on the noblest objects that can be known. So the ultimate happiness of man consists in the contemplation of wisdom, in the investigation of divine things.

PRAYER FOR THE WISE ORDERING OF OUR LIVES

Grant, O merciful God, that I may ardently desire, seek, truly understand, and perfectly fulfill the things that please you, to the praise and glory of your name.

Order, O God, my life, and make me to know what You desire of me, and to do what You desire, and to do it as it is due and as it is for the good of my soul.

Grant, O Lord my God, that my strength may not fail, neither in good nor in evil: let not this make me weak, nor this wear me down. Let me rejoice in nothing but that which leads me to You, let me grieve in nothing but that which takes me away from You. Let me not seek another's pleasure but Thine, let me not fear another's displeasure but Thine.

Let all that is fleeting be made waste before me, O Lord, and let all that is eternal be pleasing before me. Let me be filled with disgust for the joy that is without Thee, and let me desire nothing but Thee. May my beauty be found in the work I do for You, and may rest without You be an abomination to me.

Grant, O God, that I may direct my heart towards Thee, and that I may ceaselessly lament my shortcomings with the intention of improvement. Grant, O Lord my God, that I may be obedient without contradiction, poor without despondency, pure without corruption, humble without hypocrisy, cheerful without levity, mature without serious heaviness, active without superficiality, without fearful despair of thee, without truthful duplicity, do that I may do good without pretense, admonish my neighbour without presumption, and be an example to him without pretense.

Give me, O Lord my God, a watchful heart, which no vain thought shall turn from Thee; a noble heart, which no base inclination shall drag down into the deep; a straight heart, which no crooked purpose shall turn out of its way; a strong heart, which no trial shall break; a free heart, which no violence shall possess.

Give me, O Lord my God, an understanding that knows Thee, a wisdom that finds Thee, a way of life that pleases Thee, a steadfastness that waits for Thee with confidence, and a trust that will embrace Thee to the end.

Grant that down here Thy chastisement may be visited by repentance, that on the way I may live in Thy goodness by Thy mercy, and that at home I may enjoy Thy pleasures by Thy glory, who liveth and reignest, O God, for ever and ever. Amen.

Saint Thomas Aquinas

ON THE POOR IN SPIRIT

Opening the mouth of his wisdom, salvation spoke: "Blessed are the poor in spirit, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven." When the eternal truth of the Father thus speaks, all angels, all saints, and all who have ever been born, must be silenced. For the sum of the wisdom of angels and creatures is nothing before the wisdom of God, the inexhaustible.

And this wisdom said, blessed are the poor.

...

There are two kinds of poverty. One is external poverty. It is good and commendable for a man, if of his own will and out of love for our Lord Jesus Christ, he who has walked in poverty on earth takes it upon himself ...

However, I do not wish to speak of this, but of that other poverty to which alone our Lord's words apply: 'Blessed are the poor in spirit.'

Now I ask you to be poor in the spirit, so that you may receive this word. Verily, by eternal truth, I say unto you, unless you identify yourselves with this truth, you will not be able to understand me. Many have asked me what is poverty and who is poor? I wish to answer this question.

According to Bishop Albrecht, a poor person is one who does not find delight in any of God's creatures. He was right, but we are even more right when we look at the higher meaning of poverty. Poor is the man who wants nothing, knows nothing and has nothing.

He is the first who wants nothing. Many, misconstruing this, say that poor are those who, zealous in penance and outward exercises, cling merely to their selfish person, and yet think themselves great. God have mercy on men who know so little of divine truth. Such men are holy in outward appearance, but inwardly they are asses, because they do not grasp the real meaning of divine truth. Poor, they say, are the people who have no will, and they interpret this to mean that they should never do anything according to their own will, but should instead seek to do the will of God. They can do no great harm, for, guided by good intentions, they even deserve praise. Keep them in the grace of God. But I say to my faith, they are not really poor, nor even like them. They have no idea of the poverty of which I am about to speak.

Now, if they ask me, 'What is a poor man like who wants nothing?' I answer them thus: 'So long as there is anything for which man's will is directed, whether it be directed to the doing of God's most high will, such a man can neither be said to be without will nor to be really poor. For true happiness, man must be free from all his innate wills, as free as he was before he was born... It is an eternal truth.'

if you desire anything, whether it be God or eternity, you are not really poor...

In the beginning I had no God, I was the ancestor of myself. I wanted nothing, I longed for nothing, I was a mere being, a knower of my own being. What I wanted was what I was, and what I was I wanted, and there I was free from God, free from all things. But as soon as I flowed out of my free will and (thereby) became a created being, I became God. For before there were creatures, God was not "Is-ten" - he was who he was. And after the creatures became created beings, God did not become God in himself, but became God in the creatures... Moreover, poor is the man who knows nothing...

The poor man without knowledge must live without knowing, without recognizing, without feeling the life of God within himself. For as long as man lived in the eternal being of God, no one else lived in him; he who lived was himself. We say, then, that man should be as unaffected by his own knowledge as he was before he existed, and let it work in him for God's pleasure, while he is perfectly free...

The masters assert that God is being, and that he is intelligent being and all-knowing. But I say: God is neither being, nor intelligent being, nor is he a knower of anything. It is that God is free from all things - and therefore all that is is His. Thus, he who would be poor in spirit must know nothing of God, nor of the creature, nor even of himself... In this way man can be poor - ignorant even of his own knowledge.

An eminent master says that the importance of his first birth is far outweighed by his separation from it. He is right. As I flowed out of God, everything around me said, "There is a God!" How can this make me happy, since it makes me aware of my hope. On the contrary, in my separation, free both from my will and from God's, free from all the works of creation, and even from God himself, I am no longer either creature or God, but I am who I was, and who I shall be for ever and ever! A great impulse then lifts me above the angelic world. And in this impulse I become the possessor of such a treasure that God cannot satisfy me with anything that constitutes his divinity, no, not even with the sum total of his divine works. For in this detachment I realize that God and I are one. Then I am what I was, neither growing nor shrinking, for I am the immovable ancestor that moves the universe. In this place God no longer finds a place in man, for by this poverty man recaptures the self that he has been from all eternity and that he will remain for ever and ever. Here God and spirit are one and the same, and this is the original and ultimate poverty that man can attain.

Let not him who does not understand these words grieve not his heart for them, for until he himself becomes like this truth, he cannot understand these words. It is naked truth, straight from the heart of God.

Master Eckehart

ON THE DIVINE LIGHT

"Where is the King of the Jews who was born? For we have seen his star at sunrise, and we come to do him honour."

The soul knows about God, already in the world of natural light; but who he is and where he is, is unknown to the eye, and it knows nothing about it. But suddenly a tender desire arises in him, and he searches and inquires incessantly to know something of his God, who is so hidden from him. In this persevering search a star rises before him, this luminous ray of divine grace, this celestial brightness, and this light says to him, Behold, he is born, and leads the soul to where this has happened, for there natural light does not penetrate. There are many who grope their way towards this birth in the light of natural light, and they all fall back, they must perish, they will be nothing. For this birth cannot be discovered in this way: the being who points the way to it must also make it clear what kind of birth it is and how it happened. These foolish men cannot and will not wait until the light in which it is found is kindled. Instead, they force their way forward and want to find it in its natural light, and this is impossible, because they have to wait for the time which has not yet come.

This desire makes its coming known, and in some it grows so great that it permeates flesh and blood, marrow and bones, because what nature has willed to give must pay its price, and this desire must be fulfilled, and this birth must indeed be found, but no natural light can lead to it.

There are three things to note here: the first is that what we seek is the wish; the second is the way in which we seek; the third is the way in which we find birth. And there are three things here in such a way that one of them is found in nature, in flesh and blood, that is, in the corporeal reality, and these are the senses of the body. The second is reason. The third is the full and pure substance of the soul. All three are different and all three perceive differently, each in its own way. The light of the sun is one kind in itself, but the same light appears through glass in different ways: one glass is black, another yellow, the third white. The black glass is the glass of emotion, the yellow glass of reason, the white glass of full, pure spirit. If now the light of sensuality is absorbed by reason, and the light of reason is absorbed by spirit, then the black becomes yellow and the yellow white, and thus the purest unity is established, in which this light alone shines and nothing else, and if this light is truly received, then all images, forms and similes fall away, and this light alone shows the birth of truth. Now it appears in the natural darkness of the sky: if it were entirely flooded with the brilliant sunlight, in this light no one could see the image of the other. But when this brilliant light is kindled in the soul, all images and forms recede, and where this light appears, the natural light is overthrown and extinguished for ever. For the star that guided the kings on their journey was not a natural star like the others, nor did it stand naturally among the others. The senses take in the image of natural things, but yet these things live in the senses much more nobly than in themselves. The black glass represents the senses: if the mind can

absorbs reason, and deprives the images of their sensuality, and makes them "rational," the black glass becomes yellow; but if reason rejects and denies itself, and becomes a full and pure spirit, it becomes white. Then this star alone shines. And to this one all human life aspires.

These three things correspond to the three sacrifices which the kings offered.

Johannes Tauler

HOW DOES THE INTIMATE MAN TRAIN HIMSELF TO BE IN DIRECT UNION WITH GOD?

Now I will tell you how and in what way the intimate man, who, however much he may suffer, is always serene and calm, finds direct contact with God.

When such an intimate man, with all his wholeness and all his qualities, has left the earthly world and has ascended and is striving towards God, he feels in the fire of living love that this love is what springs up like a spring from the depths of his soul, and from it flows unceasingly, and that is why he feels boundless and inexpressible joy in life.

And if, then, with its active love, it wishes to penetrate ever deeper into the love of joy and full enjoyment, then all the qualities of the soul must be withdrawn and withdrawn and must give themselves over completely to that Truth and Goodness which is God Himself.

Then it will feel as if the air around it were completely permeated with the purity and heat of the sun, as iron is permeated with the heat of fire, so that it now lives and acts with fire and heat within it, and burns and shines like fire.

I say the same of the air: for if the air had a soul, it would say: I am he that maketh the whole world light.

Nevertheless, each thing retains its own nature, because iron does not become fire and fire does not become iron. Yet the union takes place, because iron is in water and fire is in iron.

Thus is the air in the light of the sun, and the light of the sun in the air. Thus God is eternally at the centre of the soul, and when the most powerful forces in active love enter into the centre of being, they find their direct union with God, they recognize the truth and taste the infinite and boundless goodness.

This simple knowledge of God's being and the experience of his being can only be achieved and sustained by active love. The role of qualities and powers is to lose themselves, that is, to die, in this active love.

With the being itself it is a different matter. For the being enters here with its essence and will live here from eternity.

Let us thus direct our lodging in ourselves, and thus renew ourselves always and forever in this active love, and let our love find nothing but love.

This is what St. John teaches us when he says: "He who dwells in love dwells in God and God in him." Even if this union between the loving soul and God does not have any mediating medium, there is a great difference between the two.

For the creature does not become God, and God does not become the creature, just as iron does not become fire, and air does not become light.

But if the material things which God has created can be united to God by mediation, the creature can, if he will, be united still more to those whom he loves, to those whom grace has ordained and appointed.

It is for this reason that between God and the intimate man (whom God has endowed with virtues and raised to the contemplative state of his life), there can be no other means of man's highest conversion than enlightened reason and active love.

And with these two he cleaves to his God. This is what St. Bernard calls union with God.

In this way, however, he has not only attained reason and love, but has also risen above contemplative reason and active love. And when he rose above this, he became one in spirit and one in love with God, as I have said above.

In this active and substantial and living love he can even rise above his own understanding, because his unity with God helps him to do so. This is the most characteristic feature of the contemplative man's life.

It is in this elevation that the human being becomes capable of being counted worthy by God to know in one face all the wonders of heaven and earth.

But from God's infinity he must retreat and surrender to it. For this no creature can understand and know, not even our Lord Jesus Christ, who has attained the highest union with God among all living creatures.

Ruysbroek

THE MAN OF PEACE

Come, what are you saying, my son? Seeing my sufferings and those of the saints, stop complaining.

You have not yet fought to the last drop of blood!

Your sufferings are very little compared with those who have endured so much, have been tempted with strong temptations, have endured great tribulations, and have undergone many trials and struggles.

Think, therefore, of the grievous sufferings of others, that you may bear your lesser burdens more easily.

And if you do not consider this small, beware lest this also be the cause of your impatience.

But whether your affliction be small or great, endeavour to bear it all in peace.

The more thou art willing to suffer, the more wisely thou actest, and the more is thy merit; but it is easier to bear if thou prearest for it with courage and much practice.

Don't say I can't take it from this man or that man; nor should I have to put up with it, for it has done me great harm, and makes me vomit up things I never thought of; but I'll gladly take from others what I can see fit to put up with.

This is unwise thinking, which looks neither to the virtue of patience, nor to the one who will reward it, but looks rather to persons and the injuries suffered.

There is no real tolerance for the man who wants to suffer only as much as he pleases, and only from those he pleases.

The truly patient has no regard to the person, the superior, the equal or the inferior, the good and holy man, or the wicked and unworthy.

But on the part of any creature, whenever he may suffer any inconvenience, he receives it with thanksgiving from the hand of God, and regards it as a very great gain.

For in the sight of God we are not without merit, however little we suffer for his sake.

Be ready, therefore, to fight, if thou wilt win. Without struggle, you cannot win the crown of patience. If you will not endure, you will not crown. But if you desire the crown, fight like a man and endure in peace.

No work without peace, no struggle without victory.

Lord, make possible by your grace what my nature thinks impossible. Thou knowest that I can bear very little, and that the slightest inconvenience soon makes me pusillanimous.

Let every affliction for thy name's sake be sweet and desirable to me, for to suffer and be afflicted for thy sake is very salutary to my soul.

Thomas Kempis

THE GREATEST AND THE LEAST

Beryl is a shining, white and translucent stone. If its polish is concave and at the same time dome-shaped, by looking through such a stone we can perceive things hitherto invisible to the eye. Likewise, if we polish a spiritual beryl for the spiritual eye, which is the form of both the smallest and the largest, we may approach by means of its mediation the indivisible and primordial beginning of all things. In what way?

First of all, you must constantly bear in mind that the primordial *beginning* of all things is the *One*, which we call the primordial mind, following Anaxagoras. It is through this that everything in existence appears to reveal itself in this way. For the creative intellect finds its pleasure in the shedding and transmission of its semen. This is how the Spirit becomes a creator: being the end of his works himself, his being must be manifested in them - this is why he creates beings imbued with cognition; who can perceive his truth, and to whom he reveals himself as creator in such a way that they can visibly give him up. The knowledge of this is the basis from which all else follows.

Second, you must know that what is not true, and what is not even like the true, is not partaking of existence at all. But what is existent is something different from itself. For in itself it is identical with its true existence, whereas in something else it is only similar to it. Accordingly, the gay is the existence of itself, but in the other it is only similar to the gay. And cognition is possible in three ways: by *sensibilis*, *intellectualis* and *intelligentialis*. To these three ways of cognition, according to Augustine, there correspond three worlds... the world of the senses, the world of the intellect, the world of the spirit...

Thirdly, you must take into account what Protagoras says, that the measure of all things is man. For man measures what he perceives with his senses, what is reasonable (*intelligibilia*) with his *intellectus*, and what is beyond the reasonable he attains by exceeding his cognitive faculty. He does all this on the basis of the former. While he is aware that the object and limit of the cognizing soul (*anima cognoscitiva*) is the actual knowable, his faculty of perception gives him the certainty that the sensible is what he perceives it to be; and in like manner he acquires certainty of things within the range of reason, which must be graspable by his intellect; but what is beyond the limit of these necessarily exceeds the faculty of reason. Thus man finds in himself the measure of all created things.

Fourth, turn your attention to the saying of Hermes Trismegistus: man is a second God. For as well as God is the creator of all that really exists (*entium realium*) and the creator of natural forms, man is the creator of rational things (*entium rationalium*) and of artistic forms, which are nothing but copies of his reason, just as God's creation is the creation of divine reason. Accordingly, man's intellectual faculty is, in the midst of his creative activity, a reflection of the divine intellect, and he creates images in the image of the divine intellect, just as the external artistic forms are copies of the internal natural forms. This explains why man measures his own intellect by his own creations and deduces the divine intellect from them, just as he understands truth in its reflection. This is the knowledge that is the key to solving the mystery. And the unerring and sure eye recognizes in this mystery the hidden image of truth, and, recognizing it, becomes certain that this truth cannot be represented by any mystery.

Our starting point can be no other than the beginning. For the Hindu who conversed with Socrates laughed at those who sought to know anything without God, without God, who is the origin and cause of all things. Let us therefore consider the indivisible beginning. Let our first gaze dive into the contemplation of beryl, and let us seek that which is greater than all possible greatness and less than all possible smallness. Thus we see the origin which precedes all great and small, and is altogether simple, and which no division can divide into parts, but which sets the measure of all great and small. And if through Beryl we behold inequality, the object of our vision becomes indivisible identity, and by that which is similar to this ultimate and unconditioned, we behold indivisible origin, which, however, is divided and varies in the similarity: for this is truth. For the object of such a view is none other than truth itself, which is the object of all that is similar-

In every similarity in which the greatest and the least meet, truth sees the ultimate and first origin of all similarities manifested. If we look through the divided beryl in this way, we shall contemplate the indivisible relation, and the same is true of proportions, ratios, beauty and the like.

Cusanus

RENAISSANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT

FROM THE ARTIST'S DIARY

Seeing that I cannot find any material that is particularly useful or amusing, since those who have lived before me have already seized all useful and necessary objects for their own use, I act as one who, being poor, is the last to arrive at the fair and, having nothing else to offer himself, buys those things which others have already seen and have not taken because of their low value.

Into these stale, abandoned goods, gathered from many stalls, I invest my little money, and do not go to the great cities with them, but sell them in their little villages, content with the price I can get for what I can give.

Let him who is not a mathematician not read me, for I am one in my principles at all times.

Wonderful truth is yours, you First Cause! Thou hast not allowed any force to exempt itself from order and all its necessary effects.

The love of an object, any object - born of knowledge.

Love is the more intense the more certain the knowledge of it: certainty is born of the full knowledge of all the little details which, taken together, give the object to be loved its completeness. If you do not know God, you cannot love him; if you love him for the good things you expect from him, and not for his excellencies, you imitate a dog, which, wagging its tail, leaps for joy at him who gives it bone; if the dog knew the excellencies of man, it could love him better.

Fire consumes lies, or pseudo-knowledge, and draws truth out of the beer. Fire's vocation is to destroy all false knowledge. It is the revealer and teacher of truth, for it is the light, the dispeller of the darkness that hides the essence of the truth.

The fire scatters falsehood and deceit, and reveals only the truth, which is gold.

The contemplative faculty of man is very great, but much of it is false and useless. The animal's is smaller, but useful and true, and worth more than a little certainty in any great misunderstanding.

To the ambitious, who are never satisfied with the blessings of life and the beauties of the world, it is their inevitable punishment never to understand life and to remain insensible to the goods and beauties of the universe.

A life well lived is always long.

Why should beauty and profit not be together, as in castles and man?

To say what is undeservedly good is as much as to say what is good is bad. Theory comes first, then practice.

The first painting was a single line, bordered by the shadow of a man cast by the sun on the wall.

Animals suffer more harm when they lose their sight than when they lose their hearing, for several reasons: first, that they obtain their food by means of their sight, which is essential to all animals; second, that by sight we perceive the beauty of created things, the highest point of that which makes us love. Here the blind-born can get nothing from hearing, for he can never have direct knowledge of any beauty. Hearing is only the revelation of sound, of human speech, in which only the name of all things is found, and in which everything has a name. Without the knowledge of these people we can live happily, as is well seen in the deaf-born and the dumb, who amuse themselves by drawing, especially the dumb.

In conclusion, poetry gives the highest degree of understanding to the blind, and the painter occupies the same place before the non-hearing. It has been said that the painter is superior to the poet in so far as he appeals to a nobler sense, which is thrice nobler by the test of the other three of his virtues: for he who should choose would rather forego hearing, smell, touch, than the one sight.

Whoever loses his sight loses his perception of the beauty of the universe and becomes like someone buried alive in a tomb where he could still live and move.

Do you not see that the eye embraces the beauty of the universe? The master of astrology, the parent of cosmography? All human arts he directs and he improves; he guides man to the various places of the world; he is the king of mathematics; his knowledge is certain; he has measured the height and magnitude of the stars; he has discovered the elements and their positions; he has even been able to divine the things to come from the orbits of the stars. He called forth architecture, perspective and the divine picture.

O Legel of all God's creation, how shall I praise you, to show you your privilege? What race, what language can truly describe thy workings, thou window of the human body, through which the soul looks upon the beauty of the world and rejoices, thus consoling its bodily prison, which without this beauty would be eternal torment

through which the fervour of mortals discovered fire, by the power of vision, which first pierced the darkness.

He even adorned nature with the cultivation of the earth and delightful gardens.

But why should I undertake such a long and lofty speech? Is there anything that is not in the eye? He moves men from East to West, he invented navigation, surpassing even nature, whose powers are boundless.

The work which the eye gives to the hand is infinite, as painting shows, revealing innumerable forms of animal, grass, plant and landscape.

The great bird will take his first flight from the back of a swan; and, filling the universe with wonder and filling all writings with his fame, eternal glory to the nest in which he was born!

Leonardo da Vinci

FOOLISHNESS AND WISDOM OF LIFE

If wisdom is based on experience, which is more deserving of a wise life: the wise man, who, partly from modesty and partly from fear, will do nothing, or the fool, who is not deterred from anything either by modesty, because he knows nothing of it, or by danger, because he cannot think of it? The wise man is absorbed in old books, from which he learns nothing but a mere quibble, whereas the fool, by trying everything, if he is not disappointed, will gain real happiness. Homer saw this, though he was blind, when he said, "The fool learns from the stories. For there are two chief obstacles to the knowledge of things: modesty, which blinds the soul, and fear, which discourages action when danger appears.

But foolishness very prettily removes these. But few mortals realize how many other benefits can be derived from shameless recklessness. If, in the first place, prudence based on prudent judgment is thought to be more valuable, please hear how far those who boast of it are from it.

First, it is certain that every human thing, like the *Silenus* of Alcibiades, has two distinct forms. That which appears death from without is life from within, and likewise that which is life is death; beauty is ugliness, riches poverty, shame glory, learning ignorance, strength weakness, courage cowardice, joy sadness, happiness misfortune, friendship enmity, medicine poison, so that everything changes as soon as one opens the *Silenus*.

Someone might think this is ignorant speech, so I'll express myself more vulgarly. Everyone understands that the king is a rich man and master of his subjects. But if he is rude and uneducated, and if nothing is enough for him, is he not the poorest? And if his soul be full of sin, is he not a lowly slave? Such is he.

But this is a sufficient example. But what is this reasoning really for?, one may ask.

Be patient, you will soon find out.

If one were to tear off the masks of the actors on the stage, and thus show the audience their genuine and natural faces, would not the whole play be turned upside down, and would it not deserve to be chased out of the theatre with stones like a madman? For then a very different situation would arise, and it would be seen that he who was a woman a little before was a man, and he who was a youth, and he who was an old man, and he who was a king, and he who was a servant, and he who was a god, and he who was a god, was a weakling.

And he who deprives the spectators of this illusion ruins the whole performance, for it is this very shapelessness that distracts the spectators. Is not the whole of human life, then, like a play in which everyone plays the part of someone else, and everyone plays his part until the stage manager removes him from the stage?

Besides, the director often puts on the same actor in different costumes, so that he who has just played a king in purple is soon playing the part of a ragged servant. Indeed, all of life is like a play, but performed only once.

If now a wise man should suddenly come out of the sky and say that he whom all men regard as god and ruler is not a man, because, like our chins, he is guided only by instinct, but is at least a servant, since he serves many vile masters; and yet another, mourning the death of his dead father, would console himself by saying that he too has at last begun to live, for this life is nothing but death; and if he who boasts of an old pedigree should soon be called a bastard, because he is far from virtue, which is the only source of nobility, and should speak of other men in the same way, I pray you, would not all think him a mad fool?

There is no greater folly than untimely wisdom, nor more unwise than wicked prudence. But he is a wicked man who, not adapting himself to the circumstances, but avoiding publicity, and not thinking of the law of feasting, which says, Drink or be gone, would spoil the entertainment. In this, real prudence, being human, does not wish to be overly prudent, and, with the rest of mankind, is happy to overlook the weaknesses of the game for the sake of a pleasant game. But this is the very folly, say the wise. Let them alone admit that this is the play of life. Furthermore... immortal gods! Shall I speak or shall I be silent? But why should I be silent, when what I would be silent for is clearer than the sun? Otherwise, I think it might be well, on this subject of great importance, to call to my aid Helicon and the Muses, whom poets are so often wont to chide for pure trifles. Be my companions, daughters of Jupiter, while I show that that excellent wisdom, and, as they themselves say, the bulwark of happiness, can only be attained by the guidance of folly.

Erasmus

THE LATER OF THE POPE

It happened one day that I was a guest, and at the table sat a man well versed in the law. I do not remember what he said in connection with the cruel justice then in vogue for thieves.

He mentioned that he had often seen twenty hanged on a single gallows. And he marvelled that, though they could scarcely escape death for their crimes, so many were still being committed throughout the country.

Then I said:

– 'Marvel not at this, for such punishment of thieves is unjust, and of no public use: it is too cruel to punish theft, and yet it is insufficient to deter it. After all, simple theft is not such a terrible crime that it should be punished by death. But there is no punishment that can deter those who have no other means of subsistence from loitering. Not only you, but in this respect much of the world is acting like a bad teacher, who does not teach, but beats the pupils. You do not care that the thief should die a hard, cruel death: you would rather see to it that everyone should be able to live instead of being forced to steal and then perish.

– "There is ample opportunity for that," he replied. There are industries and agriculture.

You can make a living from these if you don't prefer to sin.

– 'Don't avoid the question,' I retorted. Let us ignore those who come home disabled from many foreign or inland wars, and whose maimedness prevents them from pursuing their old trades, and their age from learning new ones. I say, let us ignore them, for war is a temporary condition. Let us look to what is happening nowadays.

For latons are hard-working mercenaries, and mercenaries know how to be mercenaries. Be this as it may, I see that the keeping of many such people is of no public use, even in the case of war. (And war is only when you want it.) For they disturb the peace, which is more worthy of care than war.

But that is not the only reason why people steal, I think there are other reasons.

– What is it?

– Juhaitok! - I said. - They are modest animals as individuals, and mature with little. But now, as the saying goes, they are so greedy and insatiable that they are starting to eat people. They are making fields, farms, villages desolate and uninhabited. In some parts of the country the wool is finer and therefore more expensive; here the nobles, lords, and even abbots, ordained priests, not content with their regular annual wealth, which their estates have brought since their ancestors and from which they live in splendour to the public's benefit or even to their detriment, do not maintain the arable land, but turn everything into lege- lily: they demolish the farms, they sweep away the villages, they leave only the temples - sheepfolds. A single insatiable prodigal (the scourge of the country!), in order to add a few thousand acres to his possessions, drives the peasants from their land by subtle fraud or force. What else is left for them,

but thievery and the legal gallows? For where can they find peasant work? They cannot, and so they cannot. For in an area that required many hands to plough and sow, only one shepherd or herdsman now grazes his flock. For this reason, food has become much more expensive in many places.

But the price of wool has also gone up. The poorer people who earn their bread from it can no longer buy it. They have stopped working and are sinking into idleness. Although the number of sheep increases, the price does not fall, because if it is not one hand that sells the sheep, but several, it is united in the hands of a few, in the hands of the rich, who are not driven by necessity, and who sell the goods when they want them, and only when they get the price they want. For the same reason, the price of other livestock also rises.

It is the dearness of subsistence that causes each one to reduce his house as much as possible. What, pray, is this but beggary, or - avarice?

And lo, to this miserable poverty and misery is added wanton luxury. The servants of the lords, the artisans, and even the peasants themselves, and all the orders, are given to superfluous and senseless ostentation in dress, and extravagance in food. The tavern, the den of vice, the brothel and brothel again, the wine-bar, the ale-house, and the many vile games of dice, cards, balls, balls, running, and discards, are quick to swallow up money, and to what do they give their victims but to theft? Cast out these vile diseases; order that they who have ruined the villages and the field towns may restore them again, or let them be given to those who would settle there, or build them up. Curb the tyranny of the rich and the freedom of the individual. Let there be less idleness, let the cultivation of the soil and the weaving of wool be renewed, let industry be respectable again, and let the wretched masses who are made thieves by want, or who are now wretched retainers and will certainly be thieves in the future, be profitably employed. Verily, till they have checked their troubles, they have vainly boasted of the justice that is inflicted on thieves: it is more glaring than just and expedient. He whom you have allowed to grow up in wickedness, you have allowed his morals to decay from his earliest years, you now punish, when in human age he is struck with the sin which has been unhindered in him from his infancy. I say, what is this but that you have brought up thieves, and then hanged them?

Thomas Morus

KNOW CHRIST, AND CHRIST CRUCIFIED

My dear brother, know Christ, that is, the crucified one. Learn to praise him, and learn to despair of yourself. And then say to him, "Dear Jesus, you are righteousness to me, but I am sin to you. You have taken what is mine and given me what is yours. What you did not have, you took upon yourself, and gave me what I did not have.

Therefore, beware of ever striving for purity when you no longer want to appear sinful to yourself, when you no longer want to be sinful. For Christ dwells in no other place but among sinners. For He came down from heaven, where He dwelt among the righteous, to make His dwelling among sinners. Take again and again

Consider this love again, and you will receive the sweetest consolation. For if by our own strength, at the cost of our own sufferings, we would seek to attain to the rest of the soul, why should he have died? Nay, in Him alone shall you find peace and consolation, if you despair of yourself and your deeds. And you will learn from him that he has made his righteousness yours, just as he took you and your sins upon himself.

If you believe this firmly - and you must believe it, for all who do not believe it will perish - you shall have fellowship with your brethren; and if they are undisciplined and go astray, bear with them patiently; embrace their sins and let them partake of what is good in you. For the apostle also says, "Therefore receive one another, even as Christ also received us, to the glory of God" (Rom 15:7); and elsewhere, "Therefore let this mind be in you, which was also in Christ Jesus, who, being in the form of God, did not count it a prey" (Philemon 5:6). So then, if you consider yourself better than others, do not regard it as booty, as if it were your own personal property, but rather get over yourself, forget who you are, be like them and accept them.

Pity indeed is the man yet of the truth, who continually compares others with himself, and, finding them inferior, will not have fellowship with them, but thinks of flight and loneliness, when it is with them that he ought to remain, to be their advocate and example, and to serve them: for this is to bury the crown which he has received from the Lord, and to deprive his neighbours of what they owe him. So if you want to be a rose or a lily of Christ, you must know that your path leads among thorns. But be very careful lest you yourself become a thorn through impatience, rash judgment, or hidden pride. The Psalm says: "The kingdom of Christ is among his enemies" (cf. Ps 110:2). So why do you dream of living your life among friends? - Throw yourself at the feet of our Lord Jesus, and you will gain all that you lacked: he will teach you all things; just think what he has done for you and for us all! Then you will know what you have to do for others. For if he had wished to live only among the good, and if he had wished to die only for his friends - for whom, I ask you, would he have died then, and with whom could he have lived then?

Luther

PARADOX

A paradox, my dear friends and brethren, is an expression which is certain and true, but which the whole world and all who live like men hold to be very little true. That, for example, only the wise and faithful are rich, or that a Christian cannot sin and die; likewise: That God's commandments are easy and not difficult to keep; that the cross is the way to happiness, and death the gate and gate of life; and that death itself is the true remedy against the passing away; and that in suffering and sorrow we should praise fortune, but consider the praises of men's happiness as unhappy, and be ashamed of them, etc.

I have therefore called this my philosophy *Paradox*, and I have translated paradox as 'miracle-working' or 'miracle-word', because theology, that is, the true sense of Scripture (which alone is the divine word), is nothing but an eternal paradox, which in its certainty and truth stands in contrast with all the madness, pretense, faith and reverence of the world.

For let no one think that the Gospel is the world, or that the world believes it, and therefore keeps it or suffers for it. All who have been followers of this foolish, deadly miracle-working must have been ruined as heretics and real scoundrels. And this is what the wisest and most pious men all over the world have done, and have devised for themselves a good, merciful, flesh-and-blood God, not so capricious nor so malicious as to require any one to turn against himself and commit suicide. So only the devil can be man's evil-doer, who thus makes him mad, and not God. Out of hence with that hostile God, who would do evil to men, who is so hostile to their flesh and blood, their body and life, as to inspire in men a hatred of their own being, and then to command all to forgive themselves! This can only be the devil. But the other is the almighty, good, merciful God: because he is the friend of men, because he loves them, because he takes us all down from the cross and does not put it on our shoulders, he is the one who brings us happiness and salvation, money, prestige, wealth, long life, a beautiful wife and child, etc. And this is the devil of the New Testament, for this reason the whole world regards him as god and prince, just as the Scriptures themselves call the devil the prince and god of the world, whom the world loves and glorifies, and to whom it prays in its heart. On the contrary, the living God, who is spirit, and therefore by nature opposed to the flesh, is spoken of by the world as if he were the devil, as Christ knew well. Hence, as David makes known in Psalm 14, the whole world says in its heart (not with its mouth, for it speaks much about God, but according to the thoughts and ideas of its own heart) that there is no God. Therefore, the god of the world is an idol, the god of the world is the devil and the product of his heart.

Hence it is that the word of God has no effect on him. In the same way, he does not understand Scripture (the true meaning of which is nothing but miraculous words): for the children of the world hold quite the opposite view, indeed, quite the opposite view. Therefore, for them, this book remains a locked book, sealed with seven seals, seven locks and seven obstacles, which they must first open and put out of the way. Which are the seven seals, there is no space to tell you here. But what is certain is that God deliberately speaks to his children in such strange language and parables that the ungodly who are outside may not understand what he speaks and what he wants for his children. Christ himself makes it clear that he speaks in parables and allegorical language to his disciples (as Pythagoras did to his own) so that his mystery might remain hidden within the school, behind the curtain of words, from the ungodly, to be understood by his children alone. And it is not because God is against them, but because he knows that they are not yet mature and worthy of the truth, yea, that they are swine and dogs that tread under foot the Scriptures. Therefore he withholds from them and hides the spirit, the Spirit of Christ, the meaning of Scripture (which alone is the divine Word) behind an allegory of words which no one is to know or understand in those

except those to whom it is addressed, and who are taught in the school of Christ. Therefore the Scriptures remain an eternal allegory, a miracle, a mystery, a closed book, a murderous letter, and an unintelligible thief's tongue to all ungodly men, but a strange word to the children of God. Therefore, without the light of the Holy Spirit, the Scriptures remain the dark lamp which Paul calls death and the black curtain (2 Cor 3:6,13). It prevents the Pharisees from looking into the eyes of Moses, but this black curtain is drawn aside when we turn to the Lord. For if we do his will, and do it truly, the Lord will make us understand his word (John 7,14).

Sebastian Franck

DO WHAT YOU WILL

When the war ended, there was nothing left to reward but a friend. Gargantua wanted to make him Abbot of Seuilé, but this was not to his liking... the friend told him frankly that he did not want to bother with the supervision of monks:

"For," he said, "how can I govern others who cannot govern myself? If you think that I have done good service, and may do so in the future, let me found such an abbey as may please me.

Gargantua liked the request, and gave him the whole of Thelema's estate on the banks of the Loire... Now the friend asked him to found an order that would be the opposite of all that existed.

– 'Then first of all,' said Gargantua, 'there is no need to build walls around it, for all abbeys boast walls.

– 'It is,' said the friend, 'and not without reason, for where there are walls front and back, there is something to hide behind them: envy, guile, intrigue... Furthermore, since in monasteries all over the world everything is governed by rules, everything is limited and timetabled, here there will be no clock or other kind of time-keeping, but everything will be done when it is time and place. Since, continued Gargantua, the most useless pastime is the measuring of time, what good can come of it? It is the greatest folly in the world to be guided by the stroke of a clock and not by pure reason.

Item: since men are only allowed to sneak into women's convents in secret and in hiding, it is forbidden here by law to have women where there are no men, and men where there are no women.

Item: Since both men and women, once they have entered a monastery, are obliged to remain there forever after the probationary year is over, we decree that both men and women may leave when it is convenient, openly and freely.

Item: Since monks normally take vows of three things, namely, chastity, poverty and obedience, we decree that all shall marry honourably, be wealthy at will and live freely.

WHAT WAS THE LIFE OF THE THELEMITES LIKE?

Their whole life was governed by their free will, their common sense, rather than by law, decree, or regulation. They got up when they felt like it, ate, drank, napped, worked when they felt like it, no one bothered them, no one forced them to do anything. That was the way Gargantua wanted it. It was the only compass in their lives:

DO WHAT YOU WANT!

For a free man of good family, well brought up, and brought up in decent society, is by nature guided by an instinct and tact which constantly impels him to virtuous action, and restrains him from sin: this gives him his human dignity. But if evil violence and power crush and humble him, this noble inclination, which hitherto impelled him to virtue, now impels him to shake and break the yoke of servitude - for we are always after what is forbidden, and desire what is denied. Such liberty urged them on to the noble race, never to do any thing but what is agreeable to others. If one of them said, Let us drink! - Each one raised his cup; if the other said: Let us play! - as many as there were, they all began to play. They were all so nobly educated that there was not a man or woman among them who could not read, write, sing, or play an instrument; they knew five or six languages, and could speak poetry or eloquent prose in each. In all the world there was not a more valiant or valiant knight than these, skilful on horseback, no less on foot, and skilled in the use of arms as none were. And never had they seen a more neat, charming, merry, skilful, and skilful in embroidery, and in all honourable and free womanly arts.

Thus it happened that when one left the abbey, at his parents' request or for any other reason, he took the one of his heart with him, and they were married; and when they had lived in friendship and understanding in Thelema, their happiness in marriage was only increased: they loved each other in the twilight of their lives as they had loved each other on the first day of their marriage.

Rabelais

THE MAGIC

Magic exists so that man can experience and learn to know what his mind cannot know. For magic is the great hidden wisdom, as reason is the great public folly. It is therefore necessary that the theologians should know about it, and learn what the basis of magic is, lest it be unfoundedly and contemptuously called vulgar magic. God has made magic available to man, and this is a sign that we can use it, but also a sign of the importance of our role. For if one practises false magic, one is tempting God. And if he practises false magic, woe to him, poor soul!

All skill and art comes from God, and nothing else can come from anywhere else. That is why no one should ever learn astronomy, alchemy, medicine, philosophy, or even the arts of the gods.

son, no one should desecrate theology, music, poetry. Why should you not do this? What is it that man himself has invented? Is it the stain he puts on his trousers? What can the devil invent? Nothing, nothing at all, not even enough to catch a louse on the head and kill him. But if somebody in some way ignites the great Light within us, the devil begins to play the role of a guide and begins to falsify what God has given.

First of all, the probationary process must be created so that man can distinguish the holy from the unholy. It must be tested whether it is nature or the spirit of God. Learn to discern! First of all, it is necessary to know what divination is and what is derived from divination.

The Scriptures call a magician, and without distinction, a man who has experience of the supernatural, but who is not a saint. This must be well remembered, God wants us to be simple in heart like the apostles, not to split hairs and search for hidden causes. Let us not abuse it and do others harm. But for this very reason, we must not consider everyone whom the Scriptures call a sorcerer. If this were the case, it would follow that the wise men of the sunrise were also magicians, because they were more involved in the supernatural than others of their time. But the Scriptures do not call them magicians, but magicians. How is this to be understood? Only this: these men did not abuse their knowledge of supernatural reality. For magic is knowledge which develops its full power and force on the basis of faith. If one abuses it, magic is the result.

Just as in God the dead are raised to new life, so the saints are given power over nature. For there are saints who work for salvation. There are saints who serve the powers of nature, these are called magi.

Paracelsus

ON THE RAPTURE

I have spoken to many learned men about the Rapture, and from what I have heard from them I want to explain some of its varieties...

One way of being caught up is this: the soul, though perhaps not praying at the time, is seized by a word of God that comes to mind, or is spoken before it. Then His Holy Majesty, as if pitying the fact that he has been so long consumed with desire for it, awakens in the depths of the soul that spark of which I have spoken, so that it is set aflame; and in this flame the soul is completely renewed like an arch-nixx-bird. (It goes without saying that the soul has the disposition necessary to obtain forgiveness of sins, and has used the means for this purpose, as the Church teaches.) When it is thus purified, God embraces it, but how, only you and he know. And even the soul itself does not understand the manner of this, at least not in such a way that it can then tell; but inwardly it is fully conscious.

and is far from being like the unconscious man, who is insensible to all inner and outer impressions.

What I mean to say is that the soul has never been so awake in its life to all things pertaining to God, and has never had so clear a conception of His Holy Majesty. This seems to be a contradiction, for if the faculties of the soul are so paralysed as to be almost dead, and the same is true of the senses, how can the soul understand these mysteries? I do not know, and there is probably no creature that knows, but the Creator Himself; for He alone understands many other things that happen in this state... If, in the course of this rapture, the Lord sees fit to initiate the soul into some mystery, for example, to show it some celestial thing or other, or to give it an imaginary vision, He can tell it when it comes to Himself from the rapture; and these things are so deeply engraved on its memory that it never forgets them. If, on the other hand, he had intellectual visions, he cannot always recount them. For some of them are so sublime that it would not be fitting that a mortal man, while living on this earth, should be able to understand them so well as to be able to tell them. However, there are many other intellectual visions that, once you have come to, you can tell...

You may say to me, if the soul does not recall the gastronomic graces which the Lord bestows on it, what use is it? Oh, my daughters, it is so profitable that it cannot be said. For though the soul cannot utter them, they are written in his soul, and can never be forgotten. You may object, if these things are not formed into a concept, which the spiritual faculties can retain, how can they remain in the memory? To this I cannot answer, but I do know this, that certain truths concerning the greatness of God are so deeply engraven on the soul, that, supposing it had no faith to inform it of the identity of God, and that it was bound to accept Him as its God, it would worship Him from that moment, as it has done ever since Jacob's vision of the stairway. It is probable, indeed, that in this vision the Lord had revealed to him other mysteries, which he was not able to tell; for merely from seeing a staircase, and angels ascending and descending it, he could hardly have understood so great a mystery of faith from this himself... Nor could Moses tell all that he heard in the bush, but he could only tell as much of it as was in accordance with God's purpose. But if God had not revealed certain secrets to him, and thus given him the assurance that He was God, he would never have undertaken the mission that involved so much effort. But he must have heard great things there, among the thorns of that bush, and they must have inspired him to do what he did for the people of Israel.

Therefore, my sisters, let us not meditate in vain on the secret things of God. We believe that He is infinitely great, and on that basis we must also believe that earthly worms of limited minds like ourselves cannot understand His infinitude. Let us praise Him for being so gracious as to tell us at least one or two of His secrets.

Saint Teresa of Avila

HUMAN IMPERMANENCE

We know very well that things do not enter into us by their own power, and do not dwell in us according to their true form and essence, for if they did, we would all receive them in the same way; wine would taste the same in the mouth of a sick man as in a healthy one, and the sore hand or the one whose finger is stiff would find the cultivated wood or iron no harder than any other. So the things of the world depend on man, and live in us as we will. If we would receive something without change, if the human intellect were capable and determined enough to grasp truth by its own means, then, since these means are in every man, truth would pass from hand to hand, from one man to another. There is only one thing in the world, at least, to which everyone would agree to give credence. But the fact that there is not, and cannot be, a proposition on which there is not a dispute and controversy between us, shows that our natural judgment does not grasp things clearly. My judgment is different from that of my fellow-man, that is to say, our perceptions are different, and our judgment is not guided by the natural disposition common to all men, but by something else.

But let us put aside this endless confusion of philosophers' opinions and this constant and general discussion about the knowledge of things. For indeed, it may be supposed that there is nothing on which our most distinguished and profound scholars agree, for there is even a dispute as to whether the sky is above our heads. The doubters of everything doubt this too, and those who preach the limitation of reason say that we cannot really understand the existence of the firmament. Of the many opinions, these two are the strongest.

In addition to the multiplicity and diversity of views, it is easy to see that our balance is rather precarious, simply because of our own confused judgement and our own uncertainty about our own existence. How many different ways do we judge things, how many times do our ideas differ? What I hold and believe to be true today, I believe with all my faith; every spring of my strength and every spring of my soul confirms this opinion and answers for it in every eventuality. No other truth but this one could I more powerfully embrace and hold; I am indeed in it with all my heart. But has it not happened to me, not once, but a hundred times, a thousand times, and every day, that I have in the same way, by the same means, made something else my own, which I have since found to be false? One learns at one's own expense. If I have been often disappointed in the like case, if my touch is usually false, and my discretion unjust and untrue, what certainty can I have of the thing now rather than at any other time. Is it not folly to be so often deceived by the same leader? And yet, though fortune's capriciousness may five hundred times divert us from our place, though she continually pours new opinions into our vessel of reason instead of the emptied ones, yet the last opinion, the one that is always present, is the sure and infallible one. That is why goods, life, honour, salvation, everything, must be abandoned.

...posterior res illa reperta

Petit, et immutat sensus ad pristina quaeque.

Our fallible nature could at least make us bear the changes that come to us with modesty and reserve. It should also remind us that, although our intellect is enriched, it is often enriched by false things, which prove to be both false and deceptive.

It is certain that our perceptions and judgments, and all our faculties in general, depend on the movements and constant changes of the body. Is not our mind more alert, our memory quicker, our speech more vivid, when we are healthy, than when our body is sick? Does not the soul, when it is happy and cheerful, receive things with a different countenance than when it is filled with sorrow and melancholy? Or do you think that the poems of Catullus or Sappho laugh at the miserly and sullen old man as well as at the lively and ardent youth?...

I, who observe myself so closely, always looking at myself, since I have little else to do, would hardly dare to list all the vanity and weakness that is in me. My legs are so unsteady and wavering, and so easily crumbled, my sight so indeterminate, that I feel very different on an empty stomach from after a meal; when my health is jolly and the weather is fine, I am a gentleman without a care; but when a corn presses on my toe, my temper is sour, and I myself am inaccessible. Riding seems sometimes hard, sometimes easy; the same road seems sometimes shorter, sometimes longer. Sometimes I'm ready for anything, sometimes I feel like nothing; what is sometimes a pleasure is sometimes a tiresome burden. I am full of a thousand inexorable and uncertain excitements. Either I am held by a melancholy state of mind, or by a choleric one. If it please him, I am sometimes in sorrow, sometimes in joy. If I take a book in my hand, the exquisite charm of a passage enlivens my soul; if I look at the same book another time, I turn it in vain, turn it in vain, bend it in vain, feel it in vain, and I have an unknown and uninteresting mass in my hand.

Nor do I always find in my writings the voice of my first imagination; I do not know what I meant to say, and I strive to correct and give new meaning to things, having lost the first that meant more. I walk and walk: my judgement does not advance, floating, uncertain...

Montaigne

THE WISDOM OF TRAGEDIES

The whole being of the ambitious is but a shadow of a dream.

With a dreamy face, with a pious practice, the devil himself is

bewitched. In vain does virtue inoculate this old tribe of ours, The

savage savour is smelt upon it. The weaker the body, the stronger the

imagination.

For desperate malady, desperate medicine will help.

We know what we are, but we don't know what we can be.

Nature's love is tender: she always sends some precious gift to the grave of the one she loves.

I love free folly better than locked up moral instruction. Time heals or kills.

The fear of the real is greater than the fear of the imaginary.

We are as the stuff of dreams: the frame of our short life is a dream.

Shakespeare

FROM SHAKESPEARE

Perhaps I should write about myself as a great master of writing or art from the school of this world? I am not. I am merely a foolish, simple-minded man, and what great insights I have, have not come from art or from literature. Nor have I ever sought great art; but since my youth I have sought nothing but the salvation of my soul, and how the kingdom of God might come upon it, and how I might enter into it.

But having found in myself a vast antagonism, the instinct of flesh and blood, I have felt the great struggle between the seed of the woman and the seed of the serpent: I therefore once fought a hard battle against the seed of the serpent and my own corrupt nature, albeit with God's help, and I thought that I would overcome and break this evil inclination that had been born in me, and I would commend myself to God's grace in Christ, hiding myself in God's heart from the terrible storm of God's wrath and the devil's fury, so that the Spirit of God might guide, instruct and lead me.

I am also resolved to regard my natural form as dead, until the Spirit of God be formed in me and I attain to him: that through him and in him I may continue my life.

I am also resolved that I will will nothing without recognizing Him in His light and will: He must become in me will and action. And even if I did not succeed, I had a true will, and I was in a very serious battle with myself.

And let no man know all that hath happened here, but God and my soul; for I would rather part with my life than give it up.

Thus I struggled long with God's help for the crown of triumph, which I then attained to my great joy in the centre of nature, at the bursting of the gate of the abyss, and then that wonderful brightness was kindled in my soul which was alien to the wild nature.

And only then did I come to know what God is, and what man is, and what God has to do with man, which I had never understood before, and had never tried so hard to understand; but like a child hanging on its mother and waiting for it, my soul longed for this light, but I had no foreknowledge of it in my way, but was like a simple-minded child.

I had little understanding of the high doctrines of the faith before, but in a layman's way, and still less of nature, until the light of eternal nature began to shine upon me; and then the desire was awakened in me to record the memories of my enlightenment.

For then the spirit was kindled in me like lightning, and looked into the depths of eternal reality; or as the shower of rain passing through the countryside reaches all it finds; so it was with me. I began to write like a schoolboy, and in my ecstasy I wrote and wrote on, with a fervent desire, for myself alone.

I had no thought of being known by it to one person in my life, but I wanted to keep it as a souvenir all my life; though it was always granted to me to write of things to come, or as if I had been before many, as if it were a work which I was destined to do.

The will of the flaming spirit of light came upon me with a mighty force; but my soul was as a senseless child before and in it. She went out into her mother's rose garden and obeyed like a servant; and I was given the magical power to put it all down on paper.

For I wrote only after my own head, as I understood it there in the depths, and gave no explanation of it: for I did not think it would ever be read - I wanted to keep it to myself; otherwise, if I had known it would be read, I would have written more intelligently.

But the work of my mind was still like a ceaseless exercise. The longer it lasted, the more deeply my soul was immersed in the mystery of eternal nature; like a student who goes to school and exercises himself there.

For the spirit of light exercised my soul fiercely, and the impartial reader will see how the soul exercised itself, recounting some things several times, and the deeper it went, from one degree to another, the more it understood them; it was indeed Jacob's ladder on which my soul ascended, by the will of God, who was pleased thus to try me, and to bring me into the heavenly school, the Ternarium Sanctum.

THE THREE KINDS OF LIFE OF MAN

1. If we think of the beginning of our life, and contrast it with the eternal life in which we are promised to be, we do not say, nor do we experience, that we are at home in this external life, for we see the beginning and end of the external life, and how our bodies are fragile and will eventually perish: but we see nothing, and do not know anything, about whether we shall return to this life, nor have we received any such promise from the supreme and eternal good.

2. Since, therefore, we have in us a life which is eternal and incorruptible, and by which we strive towards the highest good, and a life in this world which is finite and fragile, and also a life in which lies the supreme danger of eternal corruption, torment and misery, we must think back to the beginning of life, from which all things spring, and in which they are (as it were) rooted.

3. And if we then reflect on what life really is, we shall find it to be a burning and devouring fire; and when it has nothing more to devour, it will be extinguished, as all fires are. For the life consumes the body, and the body consumes the food: and when the food of the body is consumed, it is consumed by the fire of life, so that it withers and withers, as the meadow flower withers without water.

4. But there is another life in man, which is eternal and indestructible: this life is itself fire, and needs nourishment just as much as the elemental life (doomed to death); we must know the quality of this life, and what it is that nourishes it eternally, so that it may never die out until the end of time.

5. And thirdly, then, we shall perceive that there dwells in our spiritual life a still greater hunger, a thirst for a higher and better life, for the highest good, which is called the divine life; for the soul is not satisfied with its own food, but with great longing and thirst desires the highest and best good, and desires it not only for its own pleasure, but as food to satisfy its hunger.

6. Great will and true knowledge reveal to us that it desires for its food the mother of all life, from whom life springs; the tree is the mother of fire, and the fire longs for it, and as soon as it is separated from its mother it is extinguished; Likewise the earth is the mother of all trees and plants, and they long for the earth; and water is the mother of the earth with the other elements, without which the earth would be dead, and no ore would be produced in it, nor would trees, plants and herbs grow out of it.

7. Indeed, we see that elemental life is continually boiling, that it is ever boiling; and as soon as it ceases to boil, it is extinguished: in the same way we know that the stars kindle the elements; and while the stars give fire to the elements, the stars are kindled by the sun, that is, the life of the elements boils and boils in each other; but elemental life is finite and fragile, and the life of the soul is eternal.

Jakob Boehme

FROM THE WANDERER OF CHERUB

The rose does not search, it blooms because it
blooms, it does not know itself and does not
question or argue.

It is all a game, animated by the word of the
deity: he has thought out existence for
himself.

They say he has everything, and man is a beggar to
him: good, but what does he want with my poor
heart?

Stop! Where art thou running to? Heaven is in thee, and thou shalt never find God elsewhere.

We pray, Lord, you decide, no one else - and behold, he will not, he is eternal silence.

Man, while thou longest for God in the fire of faith, his power is not yet fully passed through.

To God the heart simply enters;
and mind and spirit wait long to let it in.

A bride's kiss to God may be more than all the work that goes to the grave for a day's pay.

Man, that which thou lovest shall be thy change;
God if thou believest, earth if thou worshipest.

Angelus Silesius

FROM THOUGHTS

Spirituality is a sign of a weak character.

In the difficult moments of my life, knowing a lot will not comfort me because I am morally helpless. On the other hand, my moral capacity will always console me for not knowing something.

Spirit is faith; will is love. If they cannot be directed to a worthy object, they are directed to an unworthy one.

We rush carelessly into the abyss, having put something in front of our face, not to see it.

It does not require some high spiritual faculty to realize that there is no real and permanent contentment on earth. All our pleasures are in vain, our troubles have no end, and then: death, which hovers constantly over our heads - all this in a short time puts us under the necessity of either being irrevocably destroyed or eternally unhappy.

There is nothing more uncertain and terrible. We can play the role of the brave man, but it is the end, even of the most beautiful life in the world. Let us all meditate on it, and then answer: is it not certain that we have no other good in life?

but the hope of eternity, and man can only be foolish in so far as he can approach it. And just as there is no unhappiness for those who believe in eternity with absolute certainty, so there is no happiness for those who are utterly lacking in this belief.

I would have left the pleasures of the flesh long ago if I had faith. And I say, you would have had faith long ago if you had left the pleasures of the flesh. You must begin. If I could, I would give you faith, but I cannot, and I cannot search whether you speak the truth or not. You, however, can leave the pleasures and make sure I am telling the truth.

Nothing is more characteristic of reason than the denial of reason.

Stoic thinkers restrained their passions. What substance can do that?

Anything can destroy us, even things made to serve us, so that in the open air the battlements may crumble upon us, and if we tread improperly, the stairs may cause our death.

The whole of nature feels the slightest tremor, and the sea is changed by the throw of a single stone. So it is in grace: the smallest act affects the whole. So everything is important.

In actions, we must be attentive not only to the deed itself, but also to all that relates to our present, past and future condition, to all those persons affected by the deed, and among these all the implications must be explored. If one does so, one becomes prudent.

There are only two kinds of men: the righteous who thinks he is righteous, and the sinner who thinks he is righteous.

The more intelligent we are, the more genuine people we find. The ordinary soul finds no difference between people.

We never stop at the present. We rush ahead to the future because we find it too slow, and hurry it on its way; or we invoke the past to stop time because we think it is too fast. So foolish are we that we wander in a time that is not ours, forgetting the time that is ours. We are vain to dream of what is no more and miss the only present moment. We do this because the present is often hurtful. We hide it because it is unpleasant; and if it is unpleasant, we mourn its passing. We want to keep the present alive with the future, and we dispose of things we have not yet achieved, for a time we may not reach.

Let each of us do some introspection: see that we are concerned only with the past and the future. We do not care about the present, but if we do, it is only to shed light from here on the future. The present is not an end; the past and the present are only means. The goal is the future. So no one ever lives, only hopes to live, is always preparing for a fate which he is sure he will never attain.

Two men come near to God: the humble man, who, whatever his level of intellect, is willing to bow his head, or the man who has the capacity to see the truth even when he is against it.

The greatness of a man is shown by his recognition of his pitiability.
No tree feels unhappy.

To be unhappy is as much as to feel unhappy; but to be great is to know that man is unhappy.

Pascal

IN A FREE STATE EVERYONE CAN THINK WHAT HE LIKES AND SAY WHAT HE THINKS

If souls were as easy to command as language, then all rulers could rule without interference, and no power would have to resort to violence. For then every one would live according to the will of his superiors, and would judge according to their decision what is right and what is wrong, what is right and what is wrong, what is just and what is unjust. But this is not possible, for the will is under the control of someone else entirely. For no one can transfer to another, nor can anyone be compelled to do so, his natural right, that is to say, the right to think freely and to judge certain things. Hence it is that the power which opposes thought, and seems to commit injustice against its subjects, is considered cruel, and the right of the subjects is usurped by the supreme power, when it seeks to dictate to all what they should hold to be true, what they should beware of as believers, and by what thoughts each should endeavour to stir up his own soul to devotion to God. These things are the rights of the individual, which no man can give up, even if he would. I allow that one may be influenced in his perception in many and almost incredible ways, so much so that, though not directly under the control of another, he is so much a puppet of another's will that he may justly be said to be under his own control. But however far practice may have gone in this respect, it has never gone so far as to leave men without individual reflection, and their opinions as undifferentiated as their tastes.

I believe, therefore, that the supreme authorities have a right to all things, and that they are interpreters of law and piety, but that they can never prevent men from forming their own opinions of particular things according to their own reason.

according to their own reason, and that they may have this or that feeling in comparison. It is true that the supreme power may rightly regard as enemies all those who unconditionally disagree with it in everything, but I am not here discussing the right of power, but what is useful. I grant, therefore, that the supreme authorities have the right to exercise power in the most unjust manner, to put their citizens to death for the slightest reason, but no one will claim that this is done according to the guidance of common sense. Moreover, as they cannot do so without great danger to the whole state, it is deniable that the authorities have the unlimited power to do such and similar things, and consequently the unlimited right.

If, therefore, no man can renounce the freedom to think and feel as he pleases, and if, by the supreme right of nature, he himself is master of his own thoughts, it follows that the attempt in the state always produces only sad results, that men of naturally different and opposite opinions should never say anything which is not in accordance with the decision of the supreme authorities. The cruelest rule, therefore, will be the rule which deprives men of their freedom of learning and speech, and the most gentle will be the rule which grants this freedom to all.

The ultimate aim of the State cannot be domination, to keep men in terror and to place them under the control of others, but, on the contrary, to free each man from terror, so that he may live in safety as far as possible, that is, so that he may exercise his natural right to exist without harm to himself or to others. Mon- dom, it is not the object of the state to make the intelligent man an unintelligent animal or machine; but, on the contrary, it is to enable men's minds and bodies to fulfil their vocation without interference, so that men may freely follow reason, and not be divided by hatred, anger, or malice, or entertain any feeling of enmity towards another. The object of the State is, therefore, liberty.

Where liberty is sought to be taken from men, where disputants are brought to judgment for their opinions and not for their intentions - and it is only the intention that can make a man guilty - there an example of deterrence is set against the just, which is rather like martyrdom, which, instead of deterring, rather excites and moves others to mercy or even revenge. Then good morals and loyalty are lost, and the infidel and the flatterer are exposed. The opponents rejoice that their revenge has been allowed to run free and that those in power have been made followers of your doctrine, of which they are the interpreters. And it follows that they seek to usurp the authority and the right of the holders of power, and do not presume to boast that they are the direct descendants of God, and that their commands are divine, while those of the highest authorities are only human. They therefore wish their commands to be followed - as divine commands. And everyone can see that this will result in the total destruction of the welfare of the state. Nothing will better ensure the continuance of the state than if conscience and faith are confined to the exercise of charity and justice, and the right of administering both religious and civil acts is entirely reserved to the supreme authority of the state.

The right to do all civil acts is vested in the State authorities, and every man is free to think what he will and to say what he thinks.

Spinoza

ON DEATH

It is a daring enterprise to tell people how small they are. All men are vain, and we would rather be blind than see our weaknesses; great men especially demand to be treated with delicacy, and are not pleased to have their faults pointed out; but if there is a fault, let it at least remain hidden. And yet that we are free to speak on this subject, we owe to death. There is not a man in the world who does not see that he is full of wickedness, who does not confess that he is nothing when he thinks of death. But even to admit weakness in ourselves is vain boasting; as if there were anything of importance in us! Long live the Eternal! From wherever I look, O greatness of man, it is only your origin in God and your return to God that is worthy of honour, for in your pure humanity, I repeat, wherever I look, there is nothing in you to be honoured; wherever I turn, I find death always opposite, shadowing all the light and colour of the world, and so I really know not to what I shall apply the glorious name of greatness.

But let us Christians be convinced of this important truth by an indisputable reasoning. The accessory cannot be more noble than the substance, the accessory cannot be more important than the main thing, the building cannot be more secure than the foundation on which it is built, and, finally, that which belongs to our being cannot be greater and more important than our being itself. But what is our being? Let us think carefully, Christians, what is our being? Tell us, death, for the haughty man would not believe me. But death, you are silent, you speak only to the face. Let a great king therefore speak of this, that ye may hear with your ears, and lay up in your hearts the truth that is spoken.

Behold, David, seated on his throne, reasoned thus among his courtiers, *Ecce mensurabiles posuisti dies meos et substantia mea nihilum ante te*. O eternal King of the centuries, thou art always thine own in thyself, thine ever-changing substance neither fadeth nor changeth nor canst thou be measured; 'and behold, thou hast made my days measurable, and my substance is nothing before thee.' No, my essence is nothing before Thee, and everything that measures itself by measure is nothing, for what is measurable has a limit, and when we come to this limit, at a final point everything breaks down as if the thing had never existed before. A hundred years, a thousand years, what does it all matter if a moment ends it? Multiply your days, like the deer that fable or natural history has made live for so many centuries; last as long as the giant oaks under which our ancestors rested, and which still shade our descendants; heap on this seeming giant space rank, riches, and pleasures, what shall ye profit by them, when the last feeble and weary breath of death shall so easily overthrow all this vain splendour, like a house of cards with which the frivolous child amuses himself? And of what use is it that thou hast written so much in this book, that thou hast filled so many pages with fair letters, if one-

one stroke obliterates all? But at least the stroke leaves a trace, at least a trace of itself; but this last moment, which with a single stroke wipes out our whole life, is itself lost with the rest in the whirlpool of destruction; there is no trace left on earth...

What then, great God, is my point? I enter into life in such a way that I must soon pass out of it; I will show myself, like the others, but then I must disappear. Min- den beckons me to death; and nature, as if she envied the good she had done us, often declares and makes known to us that she will not long leave us the little substance she has lent us, for it cannot remain the same, since it must revolve for ever. The material that it reclaims from us is needed to create other forms.

The newer members of the human race, the children who will be born, grow up and seem to shrug their shoulders and say, "Back, it's our turn." As others have gone before us, so they will see us go before them, and our descendants will go before those who come after them. Oh God, I ask you again, what will become of us? When I look before me, what a vast space it is where I cannot see myself! If I turn back, what a frightening line where I no longer exist! And what little space I occupy in this vast abyss of time! I am nothing, such little time does not even distinguish me from nothing. I am sent only to be one more figure, I am not much needed, and the play would be played even if I were backstage.

Bossuet

MORAL SELF-EDUCATION

It was at this time that I conceived the bold and enthusiastic plan to strive for moral perfection. It was my desire to live in such a way that I should never make any mistake, and to overcome all the vices to which natural inclination, habit, and society might tempt me. As I knew, or at least thought I knew, what was right and what was wrong, I could not imagine why I should not always do the former and avoid the latter. But I soon realised that I had cut my axe into harder wood than I thought. For while my attention was awakened to one mistake, and all my efforts were directed to avoiding it, I was surprised at the other. Habit had taken possession of my wavering attention, and was often stronger than common sense. At last I came to this conclusion: the mere rational conviction that we have an interest in perfect virtue is not enough to keep us from stumbling. To break contrary habits, one must adopt good habits, and they must be ingrained before one can trust in their steady, uniform behavior.

For this purpose, then, I have tried the following method: in the various enumerations of virtues, of moral good deeds, which I have come across in my reading, I have found the list of them more or less long, according as the different writers have included more or less moral ideas under the same name. Thus, for example, the concept of moderation was limited by some to eating and drinking, while the

while others extended it to the moderation of all other pleasures, desires, inclinations, passions, even greed and extravagance. For the sake of clarity, I resolved to take more names with fewer ideals rather than few names with many ideals, and under thirteen names I have summarized the virtues which I thought necessary or desirable at this time, and to each I have appended a short precept, fully expressing the scope of the meaning I give to it.

These virtues and moral precepts were as follows:

Don't fill yourself with food, don't drink beyond measure.

Silence.

Order. - Put everything in its place. Give all things their due time.

Resoluteness - Be resolved to do what you have to do, and to carry out with unflinching determination what you have determined to do.

Impatient. - Spend only on things that are for the benefit of others or yourself, that is - waste nothing.

Diligence. - Waste no time: always occupy yourself with something useful; cease from all vain actions.

Honesty. - Do not indulge in harmful deceit; think harmlessly and honestly; when you speak, speak accordingly.

Justice - Do no harm to anyone by unjust action, or by omitting to do what is due.

Self-restraint - Avoid excess; prevent yourself from feeling the injustice you have suffered as deeply as you think you ought to feel it.

Cleanliness. - Do not tolerate filth on your body, in your clothes, in your home.

Don't be upset by anything, common or unavoidable.

Gender moderation.

Humility. - Imitate Jesus and Socrates.

As it was my intention that all these virtues should become my habit, I thought it would do no good to divert my attention by making some of them

I thought it better to divide my attention by attempting all at once, but more advisable to concentrate on one at a time, and when I had mastered it, to pass on to another, and so on, until I had worked through all thirteen. Moderation comes first, because it tends to provide the sober coolness and clarity of mind so necessary where one must be constantly on guard against the incessant temptation of old habits and the power of perpetual temptation. Having achieved and rooted this, listening is easier. And as I wished to add to my virtue my knowledge at the same time, and considering that in society we acquire it by our ears rather than by our tongue, I wished to break with the habit of chattering, mocking, and jesting, I gave the second place to listening. This, and the next, order, I hoped, would give me more time for my plans and studies. Resoluteness, if it becomes a virtue, will surely strengthen me in my ambition to acquire all the following virtues. Unpretentiousness and diligence will relieve me of my remaining debts, give me prosperity and independence, and facilitate the virtues of honesty and justice. I also imagined that, in keeping with the golden verses of Pythagoras, daily spiritual examination would be necessary, and so I devised the following method of doing so.

I prepared a small book in which I devoted a separate page to each virtue. On the pages I have drawn seven columns in red ink for each day of the week, and at the head of each column I have written the names of the days in turn. And in the middle I drew thirteen red lines, and marked the beginning of each horizontal line with the first letter of the name of a virtue, so that on this line, or in the appropriate box, I might mark with a small black cross the day on which my conscience had examined me to have sinned against that virtue.

For the motto of my little book I have chosen several quotations. One from Addison *Catoje*:

"This I insist: if there is a heavenly power over us - and that there is, all nature proclaims with all its works - it must delight in the virtuous, and he in whom it delights must be happy."

Benjamin Franklin

THE MOTHER TONGUE OF HUMANITY

How true it is that Christians have all the means to spread the Gospel. Above all, however, we need a knowledge of our moral self and a certain moral taste. Poets help us to do this, and they are the best examples, revealing the minds and inclinations of men and of whole peoples, and portraying them most faithfully and powerfully. The testimonies of human art, science, and history are all seals, human seals of revelation, and the Christian man has as little reason to miss and invalidate them as Paul had to leave his cloak at Troas. Paul distinguished a poet by calling him a prophet of his people. True poetry is a natural form of prophecy.

Poetry is the mother-tongue of mankind; as gardening was before gardening than sower-sowing (Ex 8:15); painting before writing; singing before speaking; parable before inference; exchange before trade. Deep sleep was the rest of our ancestors (Gen. 2:21), and their movement was a drunken dance. They sat for seven weeks in the silence of thought or wonder - and only opened their mouths to winged mouths.

The senses and passions speak and understand nothing but the image. In images lies the whole treasure trove of human knowledge and happiness. The first outburst of creation and the first impression of its chronicler; the first appearance of nature and its first joy are united in the word: Let there be light! With this begins the perception of the presence of things.

Finally, God crowned the sensuous revelation of his majesty with the masterpiece of man's creation. He created man in the divine form; He created him in the image of God. This decision of the Creator unravels the most complex knots of human nature and destiny. It was blind pagans who recognized the invisibility of man, which he had in common with God. The hooded form of the body, the face on the head, and the skin on the arm, this is the visible semblance in which we walk; but all this is in fact but a single index finger of the man hidden within us.

Exemplumque Dei quique est in imagine parva.

The first food came from the vegetable kingdom; milk for the aged, and wine too; the earliest poetry is called botanical poetry by the wise scribe (according to the story of Jotham and Joash), and man's first clothing was a rhapsody of fig-leaves.

But the Lord God made a garment of fur and clothed our ancestors in it, who were taught shame by the knowledge of good and evil.

What faith is to the realm of religion, art is to the realm of art.

"Oh, this is something living, mobile, active, powerful - something in which not everyone has a part - something that is quite different from law, and that guides and enlightens us more directly, more intimately, more deeply and more surely."

An angel once descended and set in motion the pool of Bethesda, in whose five halls lay the sick, the blind, the lame and the paralytic, waiting for the waters to move. In the same way, the genius must descend to shake the laws; otherwise all remains water: and we must be the first to plunge into the rippling waters if we are to experience the force and power of the laws.

Johann Georg Hamann

I THINK, THEREFORE I AM

At that time I wanted to live only as a seeker after truth, I thought that I must reject as absolutely false everything of which I had the slightest doubt... So, since our senses sometimes deceive us, I wanted to put it up,

that nothing is what our senses tell us it is. And since there are people who, even on the simplest subject of geometry, are mistaken in their reasoning and draw false conclusions, I, judging myself to be as liable to error as anyone else, rejected as false all the arguments which had previously been taken as proofs. Finally, I thought that the same thoughts we think in our waking life can mean in our sleep, without any of them being true in this case. So I decided that all the things that had ever entered my mind were no truer than the deceptive images of my dreams. But I soon saw that, while I was thus trying to make everything false, I, who thought it, must necessarily be something. And since I perceived that this truth, I THINK I AM, was so firm and so certain that the most extreme assumptions of the sceptic should not be shaken, I thought I could accept it without a moment's hesitation as the first principle of the philosophy I sought.

Then I carefully examined what I am. I saw that I could imagine that I had no body, no world and no space in which I was. But I cannot imagine that I am not myself; on the contrary, from the very fact that I think this, from the very fact that I doubt the truth of other things, it follows quite clearly and certainly that I am. On the other hand, as soon as I ceased to think, I should have no reason to believe that I am, even if anything else I ever thought were true. From this I realized that I was a substance whose whole essence or nature was to think, and whose existence did not depend on any place or material thing. So that this self, that is, the soul, by which I am what I am, is entirely distinct from the body, and that it is easier to know than the body, and would be quite what it is even if the body did not exist.

Then I reflected that I doubted, that is, that my being was not quite perfect - for I saw clearly that cognition is a greater perfection than doubt - I asked myself how I had come to the idea of a more perfect being than myself, and I realized evidentially that it could only come from something of a nature that was really more perfect than myself... I could not get this idea from nothing, it was obvious; but since to have the more perfect follow from and depend on the less perfect is no less a contradiction than to have something come from nothing, I could not therefore get the idea from myself. It only remains, therefore, that it was put into me by something of a nature which is really more perfect than I am, and which has all the perfection of which I can have any idea, that is to say, in a word, which is God...

There must necessarily be some other, more perfect being on whom I depend and from whom I have received all that I have. For if I had been alone and independent of all others, so that the few perfections with which I had partaken of the perfect being I had received from myself, I could on the same ground have received from myself the rest, which I know I do not have in myself, and so be myself infinite, eternal, unchangeable, omniscient, omnipotent, and have in myself all the perfections which I can conceive in God... I was sure

that none of the things which would seem to me imperfections were in God, but all the rest were in him. I saw that doubt, stubbornness, sadness, and the like, could not be in him, for I myself would have rejoiced to be free from them. Moreover, I had imaginations of all things sensible and corporeal; for, though I supposed that I dreamed, and that all that I saw or imagined was false, yet I could not know that their imaginings were really in my mind. But as I had already perceived that the thinking nature differed from the corporeal, and seeing that all compounding points to dependence, and dependence is evidently an absence, I concluded that it would not be completeness in God, if he were composed of these two natures, but if there be in the world bodies, or souls, or other beings of a nature not wholly perfect, their existence necessarily depends on his power, so much so that they could not for a moment exist without it.

Descartes

THE ESSENCE OF MAN IS FIRE

Man is fire condensed into a rough shell; his law, like that of all that is made of fire, is to scorch the shell so that it may then be united with the source from which it sprang.

If man neglects the activity corresponding to his essence, and comes under the dominion of this sensual and dark shell, the shell becomes stronger and more durable, in proportion as it gives way to a wider space for man's own weaknesses, inclinations, and pleasures. The dominion of the shell then smothers or buries its fire under its dark veil, and at death man finds himself among the ruins of his bodily form; these ruins accumulate upon him, to such an extent that he is not reborn in the centre of his being - nothing is now *alive* in him enough to break through and destroy his bonds with the lower layers of the corporeal world.

If, on the other hand, according to its original nature, it was not only able to preserve the strength and power of its own fire, but even to intensify it by the action of a more sublime fire, in which case it is not to be wondered at if, at death, the fiery heat does not more quickly consume the impure form which hitherto hindered its free movement, it is not to be wondered at if the disappearance of this form does not take place more violently.

But what happens when this more sublime fire has set the whole man aflame? It destroys even the last trace of the substance; not even the remains of his body are found, for he leaves nothing unclean behind him. Such a man is like those chosen ones who, at the end of their earthly career, have been seen ascending in a fiery chariot to the celestial lands, on that uprising blaze of pure form which is nearer to the very substance of our being than our material covering, and which lives in us without ceasing, even when we are fused with matter.

How then shall we judge the translators who say with Job: "I will see God in my body". For Job, having recognized that his Saviour lives, and that he must rise above the dust, says of his own accord: "When my affliction has broken and destroyed my bodily covering, I will be able to see the Saviour."

I shall see God" - and he does not say in the flesh, as the translators claim, but outside the flesh.

THE SPECIALITY

We search - he possesses, we investigate - he knows, we hope - he rejoices, we doubt - he is certainty, we tremble in fear - his only restlessness is love, and it burns in him more fiercely for man than man for his own thoughts, his own emanations. The one in his greatness multiplies his images in beings and in man - the other often boasts of destroying and eradicating these images. The Creator of all things, for our sake and our own, has not only brought into the world the elements and all the forces of nature which we corrupt, but has also created in us the faculties which should shine forth as signs of his greatness, but which we use to attack and fight against him. Thus it happens that men who ought by vocation to be guardians of the truth are much more persecutors of the truth. The purpose of man's emancipation is to show the Spirit of God, but if we judge him according to the vileness, sin and error in which he is involved, man today is more apt to prove the non-existence of God. When man so often usurps the rights of Deity on earth by the repetition of the first sin, he does nothing but profane his name and degrade it by a new profanation. In the guise of this holy name he judges, he leads astray, he murders and sheds blood. O! Against whom does this strange God claim any more special rights? Against man, against his neighbour, against the creature of his own sex, which therefore has as much right to the rank of God as he.

Thus, by his pride and the contradiction of his actions, man obliterates in himself the glorious name he would dignify himself with. Thus he chooses the surest way of destroying the true idea of God around him, while he himself presents only the spectacle of a weak, raging, destructive being, a being who acts only to twist things out of their reality, to corrupt everything, who proves the superiority of his power only by the superiority of his insane iniquities, his sins and cruelty.

The condition of understanding evil would be its righteousness. But if it met this condition, it would cease to be evil, since there is no difference between the just and the good. To understand something is to grasp the relation of an object to the order and harmony whose laws live in us. But if evil has nothing to do with order, and is the opposite of it, how can we perceive any similarity? - Consequently, is there any way of understanding?

Saint-Martin

INSISTENCE ON THE REPUBLIC AND DEMOCRACY

In the republic, virtue is a matter of sentiment; the virtuous man is not the man of great knowledge, but he who loves the republic. This love is common to both the simple and the great men of the State, for the people are tenacious in their adherence to correct principles, even more so than the great, and corruption is rare in such cases. The common man seems to be a strong and steadfast supporter of the status quo.

In the democratic way of life, the love of the republic goes hand in hand with the love of democracy. And this is none other than the love of equality.

But in democracy there is also a love of moderation. Happiness and the benefits of production are equally shared by all, and joy and hope are equally desirable. But this equality can only be achieved at the price of general moderation.

In the love of the spirit of equality, the only desire and happiness of the ambitious man is to be found in the increased service rendered to his country. All citizens cannot serve their country equally, but all must serve equally. We are in debt to our country from the moment of our birth, and this debt can never be repaid.

It follows from the principle of equality that the only distinction between men is the greater service rendered to the country and the natural talent that is given.

In the spirit of moderation, the principal wealth, apart from that which is necessary for the family, belongs to the country. The citizen cannot enjoy the power of wealth, nor the pleasures of wealth, because this would violate the principle of equality.

Good democracies have created moderation in the home and then opened the door to public spending. In Athens and Rome, splendour and opulence were born of temperance, and just as religious precepts demanded that man's sacrifice be presented with clean hands, so the law required that service to the house should be done with pure morality.

In monarchical and despotic states, no one seeks equality; where everyone desires to rule, the idea does not arise. Those at the lowest level only desire to be higher in order to rise above the rest.

REFLECTIONS

I do not understand the princes who so readily believe themselves to be all that matters, nor the peoples who so readily believe themselves to be nothing.

How painful the human fate! No sooner does our spirit ripen than our body begins to grow thin.

Let us observe: sensible things are very seldom the work of the intellect, and man, as it were, never attains them by the intellect.

Pleasure belongs to the great, pleasure to the people.

He who hunts for wit takes foolishness captive.

Women who were once women in Paris can never be women anywhere else.

I said to Madame Châtelet: "You cannot sleep because you are studying philosophy. You study philosophy more for the sake of sleep."

We have to study a lot to know a little.

Most of the time, princes and ministers are very benevolent, they just don't know what to do with their benevolence.

If you have moderate principles, you are like me. In France I am not considered religious enough, in England I am considered too religious.

The priests, if they cannot become the tyrants of princes, become their sycophants. I fear the Jesuits. If I offend the prince, he will soon forget me, and I him. I'll move to another land, another realm. But if I offend the Jesuits in Rome, I'll see them again in Paris, they'll surround me everywhere. They write letters to each other, and thus foster enmity. The English, when they want to scold a certain vice, say: "It's Jesuit falsehood."

Montesquieu

FROM THE THOUGHTS OF THE ABBÉ SAINT-PIERRE

Most princes, ministers, noblemen have no time to read; they buy books, and one stout book, the graveyard of all common sense, guides their minds.

If they could read, they would spare the world all the evils of superstition and ignorance. If Louis XIV could read, he would not revoke the Edict of Nantes.

The popes and their accomplices were so convinced that their power rested solely on the ignorance of the people, that they forbade at all times the reading of the book which preached their religion; thus they said, "Here is your law, but we forbid you to read it, you shall know so much of it as we shall be gracious enough to tell you. This external tyranny is not quite intelligible, yet it is so, and the Bible is forbidden in Rome in all living languages, and is only available in the language in which no one speaks any more...

If you could read, you would see that religion has brought nothing but trouble to the government; it has brought much trouble to France with the persecution of Protestants, with the inequalities caused by God knows which bull, with the more despicable wording of the street hymns, the ridiculous celibacy of priests, the idleness of monks, all the bad business we have done with the Bishop of Rome...

Theology is to religion what poison is to food.

Build churches where God is worshipped, his good works are sung, his righteousness proclaimed, and virtue glorified: all else is a partisan spirit, strife, imposture, pride, greed, which must be cast down forever.

Nothing could be more useful to the community than a parish priest who keeps accurate birth registers, gives alms to the poor, comforts the sick, buries the dead, brings peace to families, and is nothing but a preacher of virtue. But he can be useful only if he has no troubles, if his litigation against his landlord or his parishioners does not make him unworthy of his calling, as it happens with so many village parish priests; the province must provide them with sufficient income according to the number of their parishioners, and they must have no other care than to fulfil their duties.

Nothing is more superfluous than a cardinal. What is this foreign dignity which a foreign prelate bestows? A dignity without a task, which almost always means an income of a hundred thousand thalers, while a village priest cannot help the poor, or even himself.

The best government is undoubtedly that which authorizes only the necessary number of clerical posts; for an excess of numbers can only be a dangerous burden. The best government is that which permits priests to marry, because they are better citizens, give children to the state, and bring them up with honour; the good government is that under which priests dare preach only on morality, because if they preach on controversy they foment civil war.

Honest men read the history of religious wars with horror; but they laugh at theological controversies like an Italian farce. Let us have a religion, then, which does not make us tremble, but which does not make us laugh...

The mob created superstition; honest men destroy it. We strive to mend laws and crafts; why forget
Why should we forget religion?

Who should start the clean-up? Thinking people. The rest will follow them.

Voltaire

FROM THE REVERIES OF THE PRIVATE WALKER

"I grow old while I learn." Solon often repeated this poem in his old age. It makes such sense that I could say it in reference to mine. But it is indeed a very sad find that experience has made me: ignorance is worth more than this. Adversity is undoubtedly a great master teacher, but this teacher pays for his teachings dearly. And the profit we can draw from them is often not equal to the price we pay for them. Besides, before we have acquired all this knowledge by such late lessons, the moment for its use passes. Youth is the time to study wisdom, old age is the time to apply it. Experience, I admit, is always instructive, but it is only useful for the arcane time ahead. Is it not too late to learn how we should have lived only at the moment of death?

Eh, what use to me of my fate and the outpouring of it, the enlightenments of the passions of others so late and so painfully acquired? For I have only learned to know men better, that I might feel better the misery into which I have been plunged; but that knowledge, though it has revealed to me all the snares, has not been able to make me avoid any of them. Why did I not remain in that simple but sweet confidence, which for so many years had made me the prey and plaything of my loud-mouthed friends, without the least suspicion of their intrigues, and without being entangled in all their intrigues! I was their misguided fool and victim, true, but I thought they loved me, and my heart enjoyed the friendship they did not inspire, attributing to them the same friendship for myself. The sad truth, which time and discretion have unveiled to me, while they have made me feel my misfortune, has shown me that it cannot be helped, and that there is nothing for me to do but to rest in my lot. So all the affectations of my age do nothing to change my situation at this time, and are as futile for the future.

We enter the battlefield when we are born, and leave it when we die. What is there to learn, how we should have steered our car better, when we have reached the end of the race track? All that's left now is to work out how we're going to get out of it. The study of an old man, if he has time, can only be to learn how to die, and that is the least done at my age. They think of everything but this. All old people cling to life more than children, and leave it with a heavier heart than young people. This is because, after all their work has been directed to this life, they see at the end of it that all their efforts have been in vain. All their cares, all their goods, all the fruits of their bitter vigils, all they leave behind when they pass away. They have not thought of acquiring anything during their lives to take with them when they die.

Rousseau

POLITICAL PRINCIPLES OF RULERS

Count authority or the desire to command among the things that disgust men, and inflame their envy.

Justice in small things must never be lacking, for it gives us the right to transgress in great things with impunity as a compensation: it is a solemn directive, for we must be just in great things as well as in small. In the latter, because it is easier to do justice to them in the great things.

Doing one thing and pretending to do another can be dangerous or useful, depending on what you are doing, the circumstances and the ruler.

Often not knowing what we know, or pretending to know what we don't know is very crafty, but I don't like craftiness.

To know how to make criminals is the only resource of cruel ministers to bring ruin on the good people who are their burden.

To crucify the innocent when necessary: there is no decent man who is not terrified by this policy, which they never fail to make public.

Never separate the ruler from the person. Whatever intimacies the great may bestow on us, whatever licence they may seem to give us to forget their rank, they must never be taken literally.

To call a slave a fellow-citizen is very well, but it would be better still if they were not slaves at all.

I like the concern of that pope who would not allow his children to be ordained prematurely, but made them bishops. A ruler only accuses himself before God, for he alone sins against him: that is clear.

Speaking priest on occasions when it is proper to blame heaven for the event: this is a sure enough device, but it always assumes a superstitious people. It would be far better to cure the people of superstition, and not to deceive them.

To attribute the salvation of the state to one person: a popular prejudice which carries with it all the rest. To attack this prejudice is a gross insult to the sovereign.

Everything that is an honour only in monarchy is merely the privilege of slavery.

To hasten to order what would be done without our consent. By this policy we at least disguise our weakness. That's why the decemvirate must be postponed, before Appius Claudius would demand it.

We need slaves for ourselves, free men for the nation.

The partisans are waiting for a time of calamity, of misery, of unfortunate wars, of religious disputes. They find the people prepared for such times.

In order to impoverish the people, I must create men who will plunder them, and then plunder them, thus obtaining the glory of avenging the people, and the benefit of the plunder.

Satire and complaint must be allowed: repressed hatred is more dangerous than open hatred.

We need to be praised, and this is easily achieved. It costs so little to corrupt literary men. A lot of coaxing and cajoling and a little money.

To form alliances only to make hatreds.

To inflame and make war lasting between my neighbours. To exploit disturbances to carry out our plans, to hold our allies' enemies in our pay.

No ministers outside, but spies. No ministers at home, but clerks.

To make our subjects believe that the evil we do is for their good. - To make our citizens believe that the evil we do to our neighbours is for the good of our subjects.

ABOUT UNDERSTANDING NATURE

If our concepts do not grow out of the soil of nature, they will be like some northern forests with no roots for trees. A little breeze, a single fact, and trees and ideas are strewn on the ground.

People have no idea, in fact, how strict are the laws of the search for truth and how few are the means at our disposal. In the end, what we have to do is to turn from senses to thinking, from thinking to senses. We are constantly going inside ourselves and stepping outside ourselves; it is the work of the womb. We wander uselessly through the heavens and the earth if we do not return to the wax-ridden hive. It's no use to pile up wax if we can't make spleen out of it.

Unfortunately, it is easier and simpler to turn to ourselves rather than to nature. That is why reason is reluctant to go out into the world, while instinct watches, tastes, touches, listens, and perhaps more practical physics would be filled into our heads by the study of animals than by the lectures of a professor. Animal behaviour lacks pretense. They follow their purpose and are not interested in the world around them. There is nothing deliberate in their occasional surprise. Important phenomena surprise the observer at first sight: it is the task of science to dispel this surprise.

Our amazement is often caused by the fact that we assume several miracles where there is only one, and that we imagine a separate creative act behind each phenomenon in the natural world, when nature may have performed only one such act. In fact, it seems that if nature had needed more than one such act, they would have led to different results in themselves; groups of phenomena would have been created which were completely independent of each other, and the all-embracing chain which philosophers regard as continuous would have been broken in several places. The complete independence of a single fact is incompatible with the idea of the whole, and without the idea of the whole there is no philosophy.

Diderot

MORALISTS

MAXIMUMS

If great men become petty under the influence of persistent misfortune, it is not a sign of spiritual strength, but merely of ambition, and of the fact that the only thing that distinguishes heroes from other men is greater vanity.

The evils we commit do not arouse so much hatred and persecution as our good deeds.

Truth does not do as much good as the appearance of truth does evil in the world.

The only error that cannot be atoned for is weakness.

The witty man would often be embarrassed if there happened to be no fools in his company.

Virtues are swallowed up by interest, like rivers by the sea.

There are several kinds of curiosity: there is that which is prompted by interest, and which prompts us to learn things that may be of use to us; there is another kind which arises from pride: we wish to know what no one else knows.

Love is persevering for two reasons: first, because the lover finds something to love in the one he loves; and secondly, because one makes a matter of honour out of perseverance.

There are some people who are well suited to a fault, and others who are repulsed by their good possessions.

In all his roles, a man puts on a peculiar countenance and appearance, that he may be seen as he would like to be seen. It is true that the world is a mask.

Youth is an incessant frenzy, a feverish state of the mind.

The vanity of others is intolerable to us because it offends our own.

We enter the different ages of life like beginners, often inexperienced, as if the number of years were nothing.

Lest a young woman be seen as flirtatious or a man of mature age as ridiculous, it is advisable not to speak of the love in which they may be involved.

Few people can be old well.

It is not less passion than usual, or more virtue than average, that makes a great man, but the greatness of the plan he has conceived.

La Rochefoucauld

THE RICH AND THE POOR

Giton's complexion is fresh, his face full, his cheeks firm, his gaze steady and determined, his shoulders broad, his belly swelling, his gait calm and measured. His words betray his self-confidence; he says twice what is put to him, and listens with a droll air to what others say. He blows his nose loudly into his handkerchief, spits far away and sneezes loudly. His sleep is deep during the day as well as at night, and he snores in company. If he sits at table or goes for a walk, he takes more seats than any other, and if his companions are of equal rank, he takes the middle; if he stops, the others stop, and if he starts, the company stops. Every one is adjusted to him. He interrupts the speakers, and corrects their words, but his speech is not interrupted by any one, and they listen patiently as long as it blows in. Everyone shares his views, and readily believes what he says. He sits down, that is to say, he throws himself into a stool, crossing his legs; he frowns, and pulls his hat down over his eyes, so that no one need see him, and when he tips his hat, he shows his brow proudly and defiantly. His temper is good and sardonic, but he is sometimes impatient, presumptuous, quick to anger, otherwise free-thinking, shrewd, and sometimes secretive in his affairs. He believes himself to be talented and witty. Giton is a rich man.

Phaedon's eyes are sunken, his complexion is bright, his body lean, his cheeks thin; he sleeps little and is wakeful; his mind wanders dreamily, and though witty, he looks like a fool. Nor does he tell what he knows, and is silent, though he could tell things; and if he does sometimes speak, his speech is clumsy and stumbling; he thinks he has room for men. His speech is dry and short, and does not engage a man, for it has no spirit. At the word of another, he shares his opinion with enthusiasm and smiles and readiness. He runs, flies, to do small services to men, and his conduct is servile, flattering, and eager. He likes to be mysterious in his affairs, sometimes lying, otherwise superstitious, doubtful and fearful. His gait is soft and light, as if he feared to tread very lightly on the ground; he walks with a glance, and dares not look into faces. He does not join the conversationalists in the company, but stands behind them, stealthily, to listen to their words, but he departs in haste if he is noticed. As if he were not taking a seat at all, or as if he had no need of one; he hunched his shoulders, folded his coat, and, to avoid being seen, he tipped his hat over his eyes. There is not a crowded street or busy hall where he does not slip through unnoticed.

When offered a seat, he sits on the edge of his seat, speaks softly and flawedly, though he is frank about public affairs, justly angry with the age, and justly dissatisfied with ministers and government. He opens his mouth only to answer, but he coughs first, and blows his nose under his hat; if he spits, he almost hits himself, and if he sneezes, he waits till he is alone, but if it happens to him in company, no one notices. No one greets him, nor does he ever receive a toast. Phédon is a poor man.

The pictures of earthly misery are such that one's heart is broken. There are those who have no food, who fear life and shudder at the thought of winter. Man treads the earth, and forces the seasons to give him their delicacies. Mere wealth is title enough for the common citizen to gobble up the food of a hundred families in one bite. Let him who pleases rebel against these extremes; I, if possible, will neither be happy nor unhappy; I prefer to let go of today and choose the middle way of life as my class.

All over the world there are wild beasts, male and female, black and pale, with sunburnt faces, and clinging to the ground, which they poke and twist with invincible stubbornness; their voices are like articulate speech, and when they stand on their feet they show a human face; they are indeed human. At night they retire to their dens, where they live on black bread, water and roots. They spare other men the trouble of sowing, tilling, and harvesting, and deserve therefore to have no scarcity of the bread they have sown.

Man is seized with a kind of shame, if he is happy when he has to see misery.
nia.

La Bruyère

TITUS, THE ACT (from the *Portraits* series)

Titus wakes up alone, and in winter he doesn't even need heating. When his servants enter his room, there is a pile of letters on his desk waiting to be delivered. He starts several jobs at once, and finishes them all with incredible speed, but his impatient spirit does not allow him time to polish them. Once he has begun something, he cannot delay it any longer. If he were to put a matter aside, he would have no rest till he had taken it up again. Full of serious cares, and yet he gives the world the appearance of idlers. He belongs to no society, but has seen many. He has no number of connections within the kingdom or without. He travels, he writes, he has access to court, he has been to war, he excels at more than one trade, he knows everyone and every book, and he uses his hours in society to plot and to cultivate friendships. He doesn't understand how people can talk just to talk, and work just to hustle and bustle. You can see how much he suffers when he is forced to be somewhere without the need to be forced and without decency. When it is a matter of pleasure, he is no less artful than when he has serious business to attend to, and artfulness is much more

...than the pleasure itself which he seeks to attain. In health or in sickness, his activity is never abated; the day he calls for a doctor, he is engaged in litigation, and writes his poems in a feverish fever. At other times, when he is asked to spare himself, he exclaims. In fact, he invented all his own affairs. He dresses himself up in his clothes to tidy up his writings. He thinks of Vespasian's words, and, like the Roman emperor, wants to die standing.

BE TRUE TO OUR OWN NATURE

When we adapt ourselves to the nature of others, let us be careful not to betray our own. Such a thing is intolerably ridiculous and we are not forgiven. What a foolish vanity to live in the belief that we can play any role, that we can put on any costume. Let it be anyone, if he does not behave in accordance with his character, he arouses distrust and offends our sensibilities with his false superiority. If possible, let us be simple, modest and even-handed. Talk to people only about what interests them and what they are willing to listen to. Don't burden others with questions. Be tolerant of their faults, attentive to their abilities; consider their weaknesses and prejudices. Here is the natural behaviour of the superior man, by which he adapts himself to the nature of others without any effort. Excessive refinement is no special skill; the source of art is the imperfection of nature.

THE MOST COMMON ERROR

The fault of most things, be they poetry, painting, eloquence, philosophy or otherwise, lies in the fact that something is out of its proper place. Hence the false enthusiasm, or pomposity in speech, dissonance in music, confusion in pictures, and backward politeness and cold mockery in society. Let us examine the morality itself: is not exuberance a kind of inappropriate excess here too? What is extravagance but inappropriate generosity; vanity is inappropriate prudence; avarice is inappropriate care; recklessness is inappropriate courage, and so on. Things are generally in their proper place neither strong nor weak; neither sinful nor virtuous. Most people would have nothing left if everything that does not belong were to be stripped from their lives. And this failure does not come from lack of judgment, but from an inability to order things according to their nature.

THE SENSE

On my travels, my young lackeys told me that I had just dined with a man of very keen mind. I asked him what made him think that someone had a sharp mind.

The answer was: - By always speaking the truth. - Does that mean that he is not deceiving anyone? - No, sir, it means that he does not deceive himself. I believe this young man was more perceptive than Voiture and Benserade. Certainly, no one so beautiful could have answered so aptly.

Vauvenargues

THE NATURALIST'S DREAM

I felt as if I were floating high in space, above the earth, facing an Aggastian whose vision filled me with something more than simple awe. Every time I turned my eyes towards him, I was seized by an irresistible feeling of awe and trust, and I was just awakening the desire to throw myself on the ground before him, when he addressed me with indescribable gentleness: - "You liked the study of nature," he said to me. - As he said this, he handed me a bluish-green ball of a greyish colour, which he held between his forefinger and thumb. It was like a child's toy ball. - Look at this mineral, he continued, "examine it and tell me what you find. Here is everything you need for such an examination. I'm leaving now, but I'll be back in due time.

When I looked around, I saw a large room full of instruments that were not as alien in my dream as they are when I'm awake. It seemed as if I had been here several times before, and I found what I needed as quickly as if I had just set it down. I looked at the ball, felt it, smelled it, shook it and put it to my ear. I licked it, and wiped off the barely perceptible dust I saw on it with a cloth, then I twisted it and checked its electricity. I determined its specific gravity and found it to be between four and five. The tests showed that the bullet was not worth much, and I remembered getting three of them for a penny at the Frankfurt fair as a child. Finally, I got to the chemical test and cut off a hundredth of a part. I found nothing special here either. A little clay, about the same amount of lime but more quartz, then iron, traces of kitchen salt and some unknown substance. I regretted that I did not know the name of Aggastyan, because then I would have given this unknown substance its name. Anyway, I did the test quite accurately, because when I added up the properties, they added up to a hundred. I had just reached the end of my calculations when Aggastyan returned. He looked at the paper, read it with a gentle smile, then turned to me with infinite kindness and asked. His whole tone was supernatural, and I answered. The Spirit said, "Know that it was nothing but the earth. Great God! And where is the great sea with all its inhabitants? - The Aggastian: - Thou hast wiped it with that handkerchief. - Me: - And the ocean of air and the continents? - The Aggastian said, The air? - That probably disappeared during the distillation. And the land? How can you ask such a question? You rubbed it with the sleeve of your coat, and it must be there.

It's there. - I said: - But I found no trace of the silver or gold! - He said, "That's bad enough. I see you need help. When you heated and fanned it, the flame burned this line from Switzerland through Italy, through Sicily, all the way to Africa, and now it's all lying here on this piece of glass. And on the other side, there are the Cordilleras with the Chimborassos.

I understood and I listened. I would have given nine-tenths of the rest of my life if I could see the earth whole again: - What should I do? Do I ask for another? - 'Oh, alas,' I cried; 'great and immortal Being, give me something instead! Give me a mustard seed, like the earth, that I may examine all its secrets! - What good would it be to thee?' was the question; "for on thy planet where thou hast dwelt, thou hast seen the earth a thousand times magnified. But if you want something, you have this. Examine it carefully, and then tell me what you find. He handed me a bag. When he left, he said, almost jokingly, "Examine it well, chemically. I'll come back.

I was delighted to have something to investigate again. This time, I thought to myself, I'll be more careful, because maybe the Sun is in it, or some other stationary star. When I opened the bag, despite my expectations, there was a book inside. Not a fancy book. In a plain binding. I didn't know the writing, none of it was human. The only thing I could read on the title page was, "Examine this, my boy, but chemically, and tell me what you have found." I don't deny that I was pretty clueless in the big laboratory. H-how so? How could I chemically test the contents of this book? After all, the content of the book is the point of the book! And as I pondered this for a moment, suddenly a light flashed in me, yes, a light flashed, and I blushed with shame. I see! I understood! - I exclaimed. O Immortal Being, forgive me, I understand you now fully. Thanks to you, I now understand that which is eternal. I was shaken to the depths of my heart, and at that moment I awoke.

Lichtenberg

THE OBSERVATIONS OF A MORALIST

The best philosophy of life is that which is sarcastically cheerful and contemplative of life.

The would-be philosopher should not shrink from the first devastating discoveries he makes in his knowledge of man. To truly know man, one must overcome disappointment, just as the surgeon triumphs over nature, his senses and his hatred, in order to become the master of his profession.

Life is a sickness, soothed every sixteen hours by sleep; but sleep is, after all, only a palliative, the true remedy is death.

The day when we do not laugh is lost to us.

There are two things we must get used to, or life is unbearable: the harshness of the times and the injustice of humanity.

Society, what we call the high life, is a battlefield of a thousand conflicting interests, of vanities that cross and clash, hurting and humiliating each other. Sometimes victorious, sometimes recovering from defeat, we atone for yesterday's victories. I would rather live alone, and not a wounded casualty of a miserable battle, than a victim of evil passions. To be alone is said to be an imperfect existence. Poor humanity!

Can the spiritually and morally perfect man, if there be such a man, live with any man? By living together, I do not mean that two people barely tolerate each other and do not get along. What I mean is being together in a mutually agreeable, loving, and affectionate way.

The man of the spirit is lost if the spirit is not accompanied by strength: it is not enough to have the lamp of Diogenes, we need his staff.

No man has so many enemies in the world as the upright, proud, and wise man, who takes things and men as they are, and does not seek in them what he would not find in any case.

There are people who like to be lulled into illusions, who sometimes see reality flash before their eyes, but turn their backs on it as quickly as a child running after the masked man, who runs away as soon as the masked man turns his back.

Enjoy and let others enjoy, without getting yourself or others into trouble; that, in my opinion, is the moral.

If we are to love our neighbor as ourselves, we are justified in loving ourselves at least as much as our neighbor.

Love is like a contagious disease: the more we guard against it, the more easily it comes.

Love comes to us through self-love. How can we resist it when it makes beautiful what we have, gives back what we have lost, and even gives us what we did not have before?

Love does not seem to seek the truly perfect, and even avoids it, as if it fears it. It loves only that which it creates, either in fact or in imagination; it is like a king who recognizes only the greatness of his own making.

Evil is that which is harmful. The trouble with human society is that this definition is perfectly applicable to morality and politics, but its opposite, that good is that which is useful, is not a suitable principle in practice. What is useful at one moment may be harmful over a long period or permanently.

The poor are the Negroes of Europe.

Chamfort

LIFE EXPERIENCE

If fools knew how much we suffer because of them, they would certainly pity us.

The belief that time passes is an illusion. Time is a coast, and though man moves on, it seems as if the coast were moving.

We are less forgiving of those we know than we can be of those we don't know.

The envy of the loud and loquacious is not touching, only the envy of the silent is half-silent envy.

In literature, after all, everything becomes

commonplace. Common sense is rarer than

reliability.

The most tender friendship springs from intimate intercourse, but from it also springs the strongest hatred.

There is only one creature that knows fire: man. That is why the world has become ...of the world.

Reason leads the philosopher where the ordinary man can only reach through the goodness of time.

The philosopher is more an anatomist than a doctor: he dissects, but he does not cure.

Speech is thinking out loud. I can judge anyone by their speech, and I can judge the people by their language.

For a genius, many languages are a great burden, And eat up much of a short life. Let us not give thought too many clothes. For it is well to wander in the land of languages, but let us shut ourselves up in the house of the mother tongue, after we have tasted the savour of the finest.

Nineteen out of twenty men speak ill of us, and the good is ill spoken by the twentieth.

Grammar being the art that unloosens the difficulties of language, let not the hoist be heavier than the weight.

In dictionaries there are worn-out words that wait for the great writer who will restore them to life.

Rivarol

MAN AND WORLD

The body has a kind of weakness due to the strength of the spirit, and the spirit has a kind of weakness due to the strength of the body.

Some people recite their thoughts, some recite them like a lesson, some sing them. Others recite it, read it or say it to themselves.

Keen thinkers skip the antecedents and neither stop themselves nor stop others at the limits of the questions.

I don't like philosophy and metaphysics that walk on four legs or two, but that fly and sing.

I came to truth through poetry, to poetry through truth. Taste is the poetic conscience of the soul.

Dance is the expression of almost disembodied lightness and charm. The sole merit of the arts - and the aim of all - is the physical representation of the soul.

Seeing the world is like judging judges. God wants us
to love even our enemies. Religion is the poetry of
the heart.

Superstition is the only religion that lowly souls believe in.

I prefer him who makes sin lovable to him who degrades virtue.

My motto: love of man and repentance.

What is it that I have created? - The dream
of a shadow.

TRUTH AND ERROR

Truth is the light of the soul. Sometimes we see nothing true and we see truth, sometimes we see nothing beautiful and we see beauty.

The colour of truth is clear, transparent and self-evident.

I like to see two truths at the same time: that is the advantage of all good metaphors.

To see and recognize the truth everywhere, in objections, in reproaches, even in falsehood itself. To see and recognize that which is just in unrighteousness.

What is true is not yet truth, and what is not true is not yet wrong. A good deed is not virtue, and a mistake is not sin.

"Only truth is lovable." That's right. But taken alone, it is not enough.

Truth is to the spirit what light is to the eye. Certainty is to our soul what solid ground is to our feet. Doubt is a state of vacillation and vacillation.

Historical truth is of interest only to scientists, the physical only to our bodies, while moral truth is of importance for the soul, for life, for death.

When we knock in vain at the door of truth, we must try to enter through the window.

Illusion is a complementary part of truth, an essential part of it, like the effect of the effects.

Time and truth are friends, yet there are moments that are lost with the truth.

What is true in the light of the lamp is not necessarily true in the light of the sun.

Universal truths are God's truths. Specific truths are merely human opinions. The name of truth should be applied only to that which is true of nature and being.

things, and never what we do not necessarily need to know. Only truths that enlighten the heart and principles that guide actions are worthy of this beautiful name. To apply the word truth to material things is to obscure its purity. All other than moral principles and abstract concepts are aptly called *facts*.

Everything is for God's good, even our disappointments. The source of our disappointments is heaven, and the source of our errors is ourselves.

Gullibility comes from the heart and does not harm the spirit.

He who never retracts his opinion loves himself better than he loves the truth.
than the truth.

Above all, let us be concerned not with right and wrong, but with evil and good, for it is not error that is fearful, but evil.

Wrong is upsetting, truth is comforting.

Joubert

THE FORMER KNOWLEDGE

That which we know completely and naturally is perfect.

For the spirit, nothing is so easily accessible as infinity.

THE MOST HIGHLY

The highest is the most accessible, the nearest the most indispensable.

It is only the not knowing ourselves, only the distance from ourselves that causes the incomprehensible, and - that is the incomprehensible.

REALITY

Reality: the whole. Only that which is no longer a part can be completely real.

The whole rests on itself, as a man playing a game of turkey rests on his crossed knees instead of a chair.

PHILOSOPHY

To philosophize is to cherish, to cherish is to prove the most intimate soul of thought, to cherish is to find in wisdom the infinite joy.

Philosophy is homesickness: if only we could be at home everywhere.

Philosophy is vigilance: to philosophize is to be doubly, triply alert, awake, aware.

LIFETIME

There is no modification attached to pure being, no concept to be opposed to it, at most literally non-being. But this is merely an appendage tacked on pro forma - a mere semblance, it merely captures a handful of darkness.

In order to define the self, it has to be related to something. And the relation is based on the theorem of the two absolute spheres of existence. These two spheres are pure existence - or chaos.

A higher sphere than these would be between being and non-being - floating between the two - an ineffable, and here we can grasp the concept of life. Life can be no other - man dies - matter remains - the intermediate, if I may so call it, between matter and destruction is destroyed - the function of matter ceases - it fits in according to all its faculties.

Philosophy stops here, and it must stop here, because life is precisely that which cannot be understood.

THE WORD

Every word has a magic power: what spirit it evokes, that spirit appears.

PHILOLOGY

If the power of the spirit is sanctifying, then every true book is a Bible. Perhaps the most excellent book is like the alphabet.

Perhaps books have replaced tradition. The true letter is poetry by its very nature.

Poetry dissolves alien existence in itself.

Poetry is the true, the absolute reality. This is the core of my philosophy. The more elaborate, the truer.

SOUND AND DANCE

Sound is broken movement, like colour is broken light.
Song and music are most closely related.
Sound is intrinsically linked to movement.
Colour is the neutralised state of matter and light.
Matter wants to be light, the aspiration of light is the opposite. It is possible that all qualities are broken states in the above sense.

QUESTIONS

The goal of sin and love is unconditional union with the deity. Dithyrambs
are genuine Christian products.

For the truly religious man, nothing is sin. Our whole
life is one worship.

When a man sees a giant, let him first examine the position of the sun and see if he
has not seen the shadow of a dwarf.

Man may lay his honour on everything - but let him lay it not on one.

The fortunate men are those who meet God everywhere.

The future is not for the sick. Only the healthy don't lose sight of the miraculous.
Misfortune is the call of God. Only misfortune makes you a saint. That's why all the
saints ran into misfortune.

Novalis

ROMANTICISM AND CLASSICISM

MESSIAH

Someone jokingly asked the rabbi:

– What will the Messiah be, a true believer or a heretic?

– "I think he will be a heretic," he replied, "because if he were a true believer, the heretics would not believe him, but the true believers, whatever he is, will believe him."

DOWNLOAD

Rabbi Salman was asked by his grandson before his death:

– Do you see anything?

He looked at him in amazement.

– 'I see only the eternal nothingness,' he said, 'that animates the world.'

WHAT DO YOU WANT.

Rabbi Salman once interrupted his prayer and cried out:

– 'I don't want your paradise, I don't want your future world, I only want you.'

MAKE ME

Rabbi Bunam said to his khasids:

– He who is nothing but kind among you is a lurker, he who is nothing but shrewd is a rascal, he who is nothing but clever is an infidel.

THE SIGN OF FORGIVENESS

– How shall we know, Rabbi Bunam asked his disciples, in this age without a prophet, when our sins have been forgiven?

The disciples gave several answers, but the rabbi did not like any of them.

– We will know it, he said at last, when we no longer sin.

THE LANGUAGE

Yelmdi walked with his disciples through a meadow where grazing cows were bellowing and a gaggle of geese gurgled by the stream.

- 'Oh,' said a disciple, 'if one could understand all this!
- 'If you will understand at the root,' replied the rabbi, 'what you yourself breathe in, you will understand the language of all creatures.

THE FATE OF THE ANGEL

After the death of a Khasid, he was brought before the heavenly tribunal, and his strong defenders were so numerous that a favourable verdict seemed certain. Then a great angel spoke up, accusing him of omission.

– Why did you do this? - they asked him, and he could find no answer other than, "I was seduced by my own fear". The angel laughed:

– Excellent defence! Could you not resist the voice of a woman?!

The sentence was passed: the man was to be punished for his omission, and the angel was to return to earth to get married.

VICTORY

From his birth, Rabbi Sushia lived a life of deprivation and suffering that was unprecedented. Rabbi Smelhe and his brother once went to their master, the holy Maggid, in Messrits, and said to him:

– The teachings of our Sages do not leave us in peace, for we do not understand them in any way. According to this doctrine, one should praise the Lord for evil as well as for good, and give thanks with joy. Tell us, Master, how are we to understand this?

The Maggid replied:

– Go to the room of the disciples, there you will find a man who smokes a pipe, he is called Sushya. He will tell you.

They did indeed go, and their question was answered. Rabbi Sushya began to laugh.

– You have chosen well! You must look for someone else, because nothing bad has ever happened to me in my world.

THE SOVIET

When he was young, the Maggid and his wife lived in great poverty. They lived in a poor house outside the city, for which they had to pay no rent. She gave birth to her son there. They did not complain for all this time, but when the midwife asked for a few pennies to buy chamomile tea, and they had no money, the woman sighed:

– See, this is how the Lord rewards our service! The Maggid heard and said:

– I will now go out and curse Israel for leaving us in such poverty.

He went to the gate, raised his eyes to heaven, and cried out:

– Children of Israel, may abundance shower you!

The woman cradled the child in a mute voice. The Maggid sighed for the first time. Suddenly there was a voice: "You have lost your share of the world to come". The Maggid spoke:

– So be it. No more reward, now I can truly serve.

COPY

A follower of the Lublin rabbi fasts from Sabbath to Sabbath. On Friday afternoon he was so thirsty that he thought he would die. He saw a well, went there and wanted a drink. But at the same time he woke up, and thought that he had only one hour to endure, or he would lose all his strength. He did not drink, and the difficult test was passed. But when he woke up to this, he thought, "It is better to go and drink than to be overcome by pride." He turned back and went to the well. He was bending over the water to take a dip when he felt that he was no longer thirsty. At the hour of the beginning of the Sabbath day, he entered his master's house. "Mending," cried the master as he came to the believers.

Buber: Hassidic stories

PROVERBS OF HELL

Learn in sowing, teach in harvest, rejoice in winter.

Drive thy chariot and thy plough through the bones of the dead. The path of debauchery leads to the Palace of Wisdom.

A rich maiden of mischief is knowledge, for whom inertia makes beauty. He who desires but does not act, summons plague.

The worm cut in two forgives the plough.

Throw him in the river who loves the water.

The fool sees not the same tree as the wise. He whose face does not shine will never be a star.

Eternity's love for the creatures of time. The eager bee has no time to suffer.

The minutes of foolishness are measured by the clock, but the minutes of wisdom are not measured by the clock. All nourishing food is available without net or trap.

Number, weight, measure, in the years of scarcity, thou shalt take. No bird soars too high while on its wings it soars. The corpse no longer avenges injustice.

There is no purer deed than to put another before you. If the fool would persist in his folly, he would become wise.

Foolishness is the cloak of villainy.

Shame is the cloak of pride.

Prisons are built of the stones of Law, brothels of the bricks of Religion.

The pride of the peacock is the glory of God.

The lust of the goat is the waste of God.

The wrath of the lion is the wisdom of
God. The nakedness of woman is God's
work. The fullness of sorrow is
laughter. The fullness of joy weeps.

The roar of the lion, the howl of the wolf, the roar of the stormy sea, the murderous
blade, all bear the proportions of eternity and are too great for the human eye.

The fox throws the trap, not himself. It is
the beauty that impregnates. But suffering
gives birth.

Give a man the skin of a lion, a woman the fleece of a sheep.

A nest for a bird, a web for a spider, a friend for a man.

Let us call the smiling fool wise, and the sinister, murderous fool, a n d we'll make
a whip of them.

What is now a reality was only a fantasy yesterday.

Rat, mouse, fox, rabbit guard the root; lion, tiger, horse, elephant guard the fruit.

The pool gathers, the spring pours. One thought
fills the universe.

Be always ready for honesty and the weeds will escape. All
that can be believed - a face of truth.

The eagle could not waste his time worse than to learn from the magpie. The fox
takes care of himself, but God takes care of the lion.

Wake up in the morning. At noon, act. In the evening, eat.

Sleep at night. He who tolerates your deception knows you.

As the plough is moved to the word, so God is moved to prayer.

The tigers of rage are wiser than the steeds of reason.

From standing water hope not poison.

You cannot know what is enough until you know what is more than
enough. Listen to the disapproval of the sucker! It is a royal praise!

The eyes of fire, the nostrils of air, the lips of water, the
beard of earth. Weak in courage, strong in cunning.

The apple-tree asks not the beech how to grow tall; nor the lion the horse how to
drop his prey.

To him that hath a grateful help, his harvest is
plenteous. Were there no other fool, we would
be fools. Thou shalt not defile the soul of
sweet joy.

When thou seest an eagle, thou seest part of Genius, lift up thy head.

As the caterpillar chooses the fairest leaf to lay his eggs on, so the priest casts his
curses on the fairest joys.

The creation of a tiny flower is the work of a long
time. Damnation binds. Blessings tear us apart.

Wine if old, water if fresh.

Beggars cannot be choosers! Praise
cannot reap! Bliss cannot laugh! Sorrow
shall not weep!

The head is the Majesty, the heart is the Passion, the genitals are the Beauty, the
hands and feet are the Proportion. What is air to the bird, and sea to the fish, is
contempt to the contemptible.

The crow wants everything black, the owl wants everything white.
Abundance is beautiful.
If the lion would take the fox's advice, he himself would be cunning.
Correction makes the road smooth; but bumpy road and unimproved is the path of
Genius.

Breath Better murder the babe in its cradle, than feed unfulfilled desires.
e. Truth cannot be told, that he who understands it, may not believe it.
Enough! Or very much too much.

William Blake

MAN AND NATURE

Man, however attracted by the thousand and thousand phenomena of the earth, fixes his gaze searchingly and wistfully on the sky, which arches above him in infinite spaces, for he feels deeply and clearly within himself that he is on the shelf of that spiritual realm in which we are neither able to refuse nor to abandon faith. It is in this premonition that the secret of our eternal pursuit of an unknown goal lies; it is also the stimulus of our research and thought, and the subtle link between poetry and reality. Morality is a perpetual attempt at reconciliation between our personal needs and the laws of this unseen realm.

Every man of worth feels, especially as he grows in culture, that he has a double role in the world, a true and an ideal, and in this feeling is to be found the foundation of all that is noble. That which is real to us as a class, we feel very distinctly; that which is real to the other, we seldom come to know. Man may seek his higher destiny on earth or in heaven, in the present or in the future, and yet he remains inwardly in a certain perpetual vacillation, subject to ever more disturbing influences from without, until he comes to the determination to decide what is right and proper for him.

Without my efforts in natural science, I would never have known people in their true form. In no other way can pure outlook and thinking, nor defects of character and good qualities, be controlled; all this is more or less elastic, more or less changeable, and more or less tolerant of arbitrary treatment; but nature knows no jokes, is always true, always serious, always severe, always right, and the errors and mistakes are always those of man against her. It despises the untalented, and yields and reveals its secrets only to the intelligent, the true and pure.

Mere cleverness is not enough; man must be able to rise to the highest wisdom, to touch the divinity in the moral and physical phenomena which originate in him and behind which he dwells. And the divinity can only be active in the living and not in the dead; in the living, in the changing

and not in the finished and rigid; therefore the inquiring intellect, attuned to the divinity, is always concerned with the living, the living - while the practical intellect is concerned with the knife, the rigid.

It is precisely in this that the divine power of love lies, of which they never cease to sing and to tell: that it recreates at every moment the beautiful qualities of the object it loves, elaborates it in its smallest details, embraces it in its entirety, does not rest by day nor rest by night, is enraptured by its own work, dreams over its own ceaseless activity, always discovers as new what is already known, because it is reborn at every moment in the most delightful activity. Yes, the image of a beloved being never grows old, for every moment is the hour of its birth.

The most beautiful state is voluntary dependence, and how would this be possible without love. The memory of good people has a greater influence on our lives, our character, our destinies. and our destiny than is otherwise attributed to the stars.

Goethe

THE CRIMINAL

... Suppose, therefore, that Providence had stopped him at this stage, man might have become the happiest and most cheerful of all animals - but he would never have escaped from the tutelage of natural instinct. His actions would never have been free and therefore moral, he would never have transcended the threshold of animal existence. He would have lived his eternal childhood in complete tranquillity, and the circle in which he moved would have been as small as possible: from desire to pleasure, from pleasure to rest, from rest to desire again.

But man was destined for a very different thing, and the forces within him called him to a very different kind of salvation. What nature had done for him in infancy, he had to do for himself when he came of age. He had to work out his own salvation, and the extent to which he himself took part in working out his salvation determined the extent of his salvation. He had to learn to recover by his reason the state of innocence which he had now lost, and to return, as a spirit of free reason, to the place from which he had started as a plant and as an instinctive being; from the paradise of ignorance and servitude he had to struggle his way up, even if it be after the lapse of millennia, to the paradise of knowledge, of freedom, where he would obey the moral law that dwelt in his bosom as steadfastly as he had first served the self, and as the plant and the animal still serve it. What then was inevitable? What had to happen if he was to go forward to this far-reaching goal? No sooner had he tried the first powers of his reason, than nature had released him from her nurturing arms, or, more correctly, he himself, driven by some instinct which he himself knew not, and not knowing what great deed he was doing at this moment, had himself broken off the treadmill, and, with his tender wit, his instinct only remotely accompanying him, had taken the

he threw himself into the wild game of life, embarking on the dangerous road to moral freedom. If, therefore, we change the word of God in Eden, which forbade him from the Tree of Knowledge, into the word of his own instinct, which drew him back from that tree, his supposed disobedience to the divine command is nothing else than a departure from his own instinct, and is therefore the first manifestation of his self-determination, the first daring of his intellect, the first beginning of his moral existence. Man's departure from his instinct, which but fearlessly brought moral evil into creation only to make moral good possible, is undoubtedly the most fortunate and greatest event in the history of mankind; from this moment his freedom begins, here he has laid the first, distant foundation-stone of his moral edifice. The popular teacher is perfectly right in treating of this event as the first man's fall into sin, and in drawing from it, wherever possible, useful moral lessons; but the philosopher is no less right in wishing human nature in general good luck in this great step towards its own perfection. The first is right in calling it a fall, for man has been transformed from an innocent creature into a sinner, from a perfect pupil of nature into an imperfect moral being, from a happy instrument into a foolish one; an artist.

The philosopher is right when he calls this a giant step for mankind. For man has thus been transformed from a slave of natural instinct into a free creature, from an automaton into a moral being, and by this step he has reached the first stage of that existence which will make him, after many thousands of years, his own master...

Schiller

THE STARRY SKY AND THE MORAL LAW

Two things fill my soul with admiration again and again, the more and the longer I reflect on them: the starry sky above me and the moral law within me. Neither of them I have to look for beyond my vision, veiled in mist, in vague exaggerations, and merely suspect: they are clearly before me, and are united with my consciousness of existence. The one begins with the place I occupy in the sensory world and widens the network of connections in which I stand, in the immeasurable dimensions of worlds and worlds, planetary systems and planetary systems, and above all, in the infinite time of their periodic movement, their creation and duration. The other begins with my invisible self, my personality, and sets me in a world whose infinity, though real, is perceptible only to the intellect, and with which (and thus also with those visible worlds) I recognize my relation not merely as possible there, but as general and necessary. The first sight, that of the innumerable worlds, destroys almost all its significance as that of some animal being, which must give back again to the planet, a speck of the universe, the substance of which it has become, after this substance, it is not known how, has for a time a vitality. The second, on the other hand, raises my value as an intelligence infinite by my personality, in which the moral law manifests a life independent of the animal and of the whole sensuous world, at least as

from the determination of my being by these laws, which is no longer limited to the conditions and limits of physical life, but extends to infinity, this may be inferred.

Obligation! Thou sublimely great name, in which there is no flattering kindness, but thou dost demand obedience, yet not in a threatening way, which would create natural opposition in the mind, frightening to move the will, but only to establish a law which finds its way into the mind of its own accord, and willfully wins respect, if not always compliance, before which all inclinations are silenced, even if they are secretly resisted: what is thy worthy origin, and where is the root of thy noble descent, which proudly excludes all affinity with the inclinations, and from which root to be derived is the indispensable condition of the worth which man can give to himself.

The dignity of duty has nothing to do with enjoyment: it has its own law, and its own peculiar tribunal, and even if the two were to be forced together, to serve as the medicine of the sick soul, they would soon separate from each other, and if they did not, the first would have no effect at all, but if the carnal life were thus given a certain strength, the moral would be irredeemably destroyed.

The moral law is an imperative which categorically commands, because the law is absolute.

The categorical imperative is absolute, and is expressed as such:

a. Act in such a way that every action you take serves as a general moral law.

Every action you take is a general rule of law.

b. Act as if the principle of your action were, by your intention, a general moral principle.

...as a general law of nature.

c. Act in such a way that you always use humanity in your person as well as in the person of others as an end and never as a mere means.

Kant

INTRODUCTION TO THE METHOD OF THINKING

The main feature of our age is that life has become historic and symbolic, but the reality of life itself is rarely encountered. Thinking is a not insignificant component of life. Where the whole of life has faded into alien history, thinking has been no different. You have no doubt heard and noticed that human beings can think, among other things; yes, there are probably many of us here who have thought that one man thinks this way, another that way, and a third and a fourth another way, and what the reason is; but the decision to put this thinking to the test in our own persons for once is not easily reached. He who thinks that an age such as ours can make up his mind to do so, finds himself, among other things, in the uncomfortable position of not knowing where to look for his human

and how to access them. Whoever he accuses, he is ready to reply, 'Yes, that accusation may be made against others, but not against me'; and he is right in his mother's opinion that, in addition to his crippled mind, he knows the others, the opponent, just as well in his sheer historicity; and if he had been caught by someone who had fled to this, which he has just denied. And if, for example, one were to speak as I have just spoken, that is, to denounce the flatness of history, the dispersion of many contradictory views, the uncertainty of everything, and the perfect indifference with which men generally regard truth: so everyone would assure the reprover that he does not know himself in this picture, because he knows very well that only one statement can be true, and that everything contrary to this one is necessarily false; the same man would assure us of this, who, if he were accused of one-sidedness, of dogmatic rigidity, would immediately boast of sceptical versatility. And since this is the case, we have no choice but to state it briefly but decisively, once and for all: that there is a truth which is in itself uniquely true, and all that is outside it is necessarily false; and that this truth is indeed knowable, because it is directly illuminating in its truth; but no spark of this truth can be historically conceived as the decision of a mind alien to our own, and so cannot be communicated; on the contrary, he who would make it his own must himself create it. The speaker can only indicate the conditions of cognition; these conditions must now be made real by each one himself, and then cognition will be self-evident without any further contribution. It is not a matter which has been encountered elsewhere, but something entirely new and unheard of, and utterly unknown to one who has not yet dealt with the foundations of the theory of science; no one can arrive at this unknown except by its being born in him; but it can only be born on condition that he himself, the person, creates the conditions for the conception of cognition. He who does not do this is not in possession of the object which is here to be discussed, and since all that is to be said applies only to this single object, he will have no object at all; looking at it, therefore, all that is here to be said can only mean nothing, that is, it will be to him no more than a mere sound, a mere scattering, like the vibration of the air. And so be it, what we have said here, with all the weight of words and in their strictest sense, the first prolegomenon.

Fichte

ON RELIGIOUS EROTICISM

Man, says Saint-Martin, wanted to be man without God, but God did not want to be God without man. For God to create the world and man, all that was necessary was that he should freely unfold his power and glory and manifest himself in his essence, but for the sinful

redeem man who had fallen into sin. For he had to give up his own genius so that we, in our weakness and depravity, could receive and bear his help. Only love can understand and accept this sacrifice.

The trader records everything he receives from his customer under his own debit heading "owed", and everything he gives to his customer under his debit heading "receivable". In the same way, love keeps its own accounts. For when the beloved gives himself to me, I become indebted to him with myself, and when I (believing in him) give myself to the beloved, he becomes indebted to me - with himself. And not even God can give himself to me, if I do not give myself to him, if I do not surrender myself to him, if I do not trust in him, or if I do not believe in him. But neither can he withdraw himself from me, if I, believing in him, give myself to him, by which he also becomes my debtor.

In so far as the beloved is mine, I have power over him and am his master. And if I am his, he has power over me and is my mistress. If I can give pleasure to the one I love, I am freed from a wish, from a pain, and if I can take his pain upon myself, it gives me pleasure. In both cases, I owe the beloved as much gratitude as he owes me, and looking at it this way, we must say that love always writes with double chalk.

And therefore we may even say that the lover can be grateful to the beloved being simply because he allows himself to be loved by him. But if we look at this more closely, it becomes clear that I can only love, and can only let myself be loved by me, by the one who loves me. It is in this sense that God complains so often in Scripture that so few people allow themselves to be loved, and that therefore he who is love himself can love so few people, and, through their own fault, can love them so little, however much he may wish to.

From all this it follows that nothing is really so lovable as love itself; for in the realm of the spirit and the heart, merit, receptivity, and merit are one.

Both the godly and the god-denying bear unceasing witness to God. For just as in his good fortune he praises God and gives thanks to him, and in his misfortune he prays to him, so the wicked in his misfortune and sorrow embraces God, and in his good fortune defies him.

The giver is not the same as the receiver, nor vice versa, and yet, if he loves, every giver gives himself in the gift, and the receiver in the gift, if he loves, receives the giver. If I do not give myself (my heart) in what I give to you, I do not love you, and if you do not accept me in what I give to you, you do not love me.

Baader

OF THE SOUL

The soul is the truly divine in man, that is to say, the soul is the impersonal, the truly being, to which the personality is subordinated as a kind of non-being. The doubts that arise against this:

a. It is common to talk about mental illness. There is, however, no such thing per se. There is often talk of mental illness, but there is no such thing.

b. In everyday life, it is also said of certain people: they are evil, lying, false spirits. Just as false virtue is said to be false. On the other hand, no one can say that a man who has acted sinfully or wickedly has acted with a spirit. (In the same way there are spiritual errors, but there are no spiritual errors.)

So the soul is impersonal. The spirit knows, the soul does not know, but the soul is the act. The spirit, because it has the propensity to evil, is only capable of good, that is, it can be part of goodness, but the soul is not good, but the soul is goodness.

The temper, then, and that from its deepest desires, is bound up in a continuous series with the soul. The health of the spirit and of the soul rests on the continuity of this sequence, and therefore this continuous line must also lead from the soul to the deepest layer of the spirit. For it is the soul through which man is connected with God, and without this connection the creature, and man in particular, cannot exist for a moment. As soon, therefore, as the wire is broken, there is sickness, and sickness of the temper, especially when desire overcomes feeling, which is the soul within the temper. So:

1. If the wire is broken in the emotion, then there is a disease of the mood.

2. If the wire is broken in the intellect, then there is feeble-mindedness. Such people often have a very great spiritual power, and a particularly great willfulness, but the latter, not being guided by the intellect, is mostly harmless, and is in fact directed only to pleasure or the like.

3. But when the wire between the emotion and the soul is broken, then comes the most dreadful phenomenon, madness. In fact, it should not have been said that it comes into being, but that it comes forward. To shed some light on this, I note the following.

What is the human spirit? The answer is: the existent that becomes out of the non-existent, that is, the intellect that arises out of the non-intelligent. What, then, is the basis of the human spirit, in the sense in which we are accustomed to speak of the basis? Answer: that which is without reason. And since the human spirit is also relatively non-existent in its relation to the soul, it is also relatively without reason. If, therefore, we consider the human spirit in its abandonment of the soul and therefore of God, its deepest being is in madness. Madness, therefore, does not arise, but only comes into being when that which has hitherto been essentially non-existent, that is to say, without reason, becomes actualized, when it wants to become existent and present.

The basis of reason is therefore madness. Madness is thus an indispensable element, but one that must never come to light, that can never be realized. What we are accustomed to call reason is, if it is real, living, acting reason, then it is proper

is nothing more than orderly madness. Reason can only show itself and manifest itself in its opposite: without reason it is real. People who have no madness are empty-headed, unproductive people. Hence the reverse saying: *Nullum magnum ingenium sine quadam dementia*; hence the divine madness of which Plato and the poets speak. For if this madness is governed by the power of the soul, then it is indeed divine madness, then it is the basis of inspiration and of power in general. But, in general, the mere intellect itself, if vigorous and lively, is in fact nothing else than a controlled, disciplined, and orderly madness. There are, however, cases in which the intellect is unable to control the madness that lies dormant in the depths of our being. In such cases, the intellect is unable to provide comfort even in the midst of intense pain. In this case, therefore, when the spirit and the temper are abandoned by the gentle influence of the soul, the primitive, dark being bursts forth and seizes the intellect as a relative non-entity in relation to the soul: madness comes forward as a deterrent, showing what will become of the mind if it is separated from God.

Schelling

THE HISTORY OF THOUGHT

In the thought which we first encounter in the history of philosophy, we discover an internal contradiction. For philosophy seeks to know that which is unchanging, eternal and for its own sake. Its aim is truth. History, on the other hand, speaks of something that at one time was, but at another time has disappeared and been eclipsed by something else. If we assume that truth is eternal, then it cannot fall into the realm of impermanence, and so cannot have a history. If, however, it has a history, and is only in history, that is to say, it is no more than a host of forms of megism, then, on the other hand, it cannot contain truth, since truth cannot pass away.

It might be said that this general consideration would not only affect the other sciences, but also the Christian religion itself, and that it is self-contradictory that the Christian religion has a history and the sciences have a history. It is, however, superfluous to examine this idea further, since it is already directly justified by the fact that it does have a history. But in order to come closer to the meaning of this contradiction, one must distinguish between the history of the external destiny of a religion and the history of the thing itself. Furthermore, it must be borne in mind that the history of philosophy is different from other histories, precisely because of its specific subject. For it is immediately apparent that the contradiction does not relate to the external history, but only to the internal content. The history of Christianity is nothing else than the history of its expansion, its religious destiny, etc., etc. And when it has built up its being into a church, this church is an external being, to which the manifold phenomena of time apply, and which is affected by a manifold destiny, and so has a history. But so far as Christian doctrine itself is concerned, it is not entirely outside history. It has necessarily reached a certain stage of development and has acquired a certain form. This ancient creed has been valid at all times, and is still unchanged as truth

valid, - if this validity were no more than an appearance, and his words were no more than empty formulas of lips. The subsequent history of this doctrine, however, shows only two things: on the one hand, a great many additions and deviations which add to or depart from this solid truth, and, on the other, a series of struggles against aberrations and the purging of the ancient foundation of its additions and its return to its original simplicity.

It has an external history, like religion, of the other sciences and of philosophy; this history includes its origin, its spread, its flowering, its decline, its rebirth; it is the history of the teachers, of the callers, of the opponents; it contains its external relation to religion, sometimes to the state.

In its content, the other sciences also have a history. This history is also a part of science, which is concerned with the change of science, with the establishment of theorems. In fact, the greater half of science is such a part of history, what has arisen and what has arisen is not a changed form of something that has gone before, but something more. These sciences proceed by superimposing new principles on old ones. There are results which stand alongside the older results of mineralogy, botany, etc., and most of the theorems of science are of this kind. Without change, they are merely enriched by new theorems. In a science such as mathematics, history, as far as its content is concerned, is particularly gratifyingly enriched by constant expansion. Elementary geometry - roughly in the outline sketched by Euclid - can be regarded from this moment on as historical.

The history of philosophy, on the other hand, does not present this picture at all. It does not survive without addition in a more ancient and simpler form, nor does it accumulate newer and newer treasures which it associates with the old. It is like a play in which the whole is always renewed each time and in which, in the end, there is no longer any aim of tying all the philosophies together with a single thread. It is the abstract object, the meaningful cognition, that seems to be slowly disappearing, and the building of science must finally take the place of the vain and empty *pretension* of philosophy.

Hegel

DIOTIMA LEAF FOR HYPERION

For a long, long time I had to live without you giving even a single sign of yourself. You wrote to me of the fateful days you lived under Mysistra, and I replied immediately: you did not receive my letter. You wrote to me again, briefly, darkly, and said you were determined to join the Russian navy. I replied again, but this letter did not reach you either. I waited from early May till the end of summer, when suddenly your letter arrived, telling me to give you up, my dear.

You counted on it, you trusted that this letter would not hurt me. I was glad of your confidence, in the midst of my grief, I was glad.

Poor tall soul! I have grasped you too tightly. How natural it is that you should no longer wish to love, for your greater passions are dying of thirst. Must you not abstain from food if you intend to die of thirst?

I did not need much time to know this; I could not be All for you. Have I been able to loose the bonds of thy mortal being? Could I quench the flame that burns in thy heart, which knows neither cool spring nor refreshing vine? Could I give you all the joys of the world in one cup?

That's what you want. That's what you need, and you can't want it any other way. Your life has been robbed from you by the unfeigned stupor of your contemporaries.

He who once, like you, has been wounded in his whole soul, can no longer rest in one joy; he who once, like you, has lived through a pale void, finds himself again only in the most earthly world; he who, like you, has died, is revived only among the gods.

Blessed are those who do not understand! He who understands must share his greatness with you. Your greatness and your despair. I saw you as you were. I was driven by the first curiosity of my life to this admirable being. I was inexpressibly drawn to the tender soul, and like a child, fearlessly, innocently, I played with the raging fire. - I was tamed by the fair pleasures of our love, wicked man, to make me more mad. I have been tamed, I have been comforted, I have been persuaded that you cannot be comforted after all, and I myself have been far from being inconsolable since I saw into you and into your heart, so dear to me!

Silence! Silence! It was my dearest dream, my first and last. Thou art too proud to care for this vile generation. You are right. Oh, dear Hyperion! I have not been a gentle maiden since I knew it! The indignation drives me upwards, so high that I can scarce see the ground, and my wounded heart trembles incessantly.

We will divorce. You are right. I will have no child; I will not give slaves to the slave world. Farewell, dear youth, go where thou thinkest thou must go, for thou wilt give thy soul. The world is a great battlefield: all depends on resolution and choice; the world is a great altar. Here thy destiny is fulfilled. It would be a pity if all-that is good and great power, like the dream-image, were thus dissipated. But when you come to the end, you will return to the gods, back to the holy, the free, the young nature, to the place from whence you came, and from which you were born - and that is all you wish, and all I wish.

Hölderlin

OF LOVE

What is love? Ask the living what life is; the believer what God is.

I know not other men's bense, nor even yours, to whom I am now speaking. I see that they resemble me in one outward feature or another, but whenever, tempted by this appearance, I have sought to suggest something in common, and to share with them the very essence of my soul, I have always been answered with the incomprehension of one who speaks among a remote and savage people. The more opportunities of experience were given, the greater seemed the distance between us, and the farther back the points of sympathy were drawn. No

with a soul bred to stand such trials, trembling with tenderness and timidity, I looked everywhere for kindred spirits, but found only failure and disillusionment.

You ask me now what love is. It is the powerful attraction to all that we perceive, the fear or hope in us when we find a gap in our thought world and want to awaken in all that is a communion with what we have recognized in ourselves. If we think, we wish to be understood; if our imagination soars, we wish that the air-born children of our brain may be reborn in another; if we feel, we wish that the nerves of others may vibrate with ours, that the rays of their eyes may soften and melt into ours; that lips frozen into ice may not respond to the voice of lips burning and trembling with the heart's most fervent blood: this is Love. That bond and that holiness which binds man not only to man, but to all that lives. We were born into this world, and there is something in us that, from the moment of our existence, thirsts for its counterpart. This is probably connected with the law that a baby sucks milk from its mother's breast; and this tendency then develops as our nature develops. We vaguely imagine in our minds a diminished image, as if it were our whole being, only just stripped of all that we condemn and despise, an ideal specimen of all that is amiable and excellent which we are willing to regard as belonging to man's nature. Not only the image of our outward being, but the whole collection of the minutest details which constitute our nature, (these words are inadequate and figurative; but when, pain!, most words are such!): a mirror whose surface reflects only purity and beauty, a separate soul within our souls, drawing a charmed circle round its little paradise, which sorrow, trouble, sensibility cannot pass. Towards it we then fly with all our feelings, thirsting to be heard, to be agreed. The discovery of our opposition, the discovery of that understanding which can give us our purest appreciation; an imagination which can reveal our innermost subtle qualities, which we cherish and mature in secret beauty; an organism whose nerves, like the strings of two fine lutes to a beautiful melody, tremble with the reverberations of our nerves; and a combination of all these in the proportion which our constitution requires: that invisible and unattainable point towards which Love strives, and to which man exerts all his strength, to catch even the palest shadow of that which without which he has no rest, nor stay for the heart he has lost. And so, in solitude, or in that desolate state when we are surrounded by people but they do not feel us, we begin to love flowers, grass, water and sky. In the rustle of the spring leaves, in the blue sky, we feel a connection with our hearts. And then the tongueless wind becomes eloquent, and the gurgling brook and the reeds that swirl on its banks become melody, which, entering into an intangible contact with a part of our soul, take our spirit into a dance of breathless intoxication and bring tears of mysterious tenderness to our eyes, like the rapture of patriotic success or the song of a beloved being that speaks only to us. Sterne writes that, if he had to live in the wilderness, he would prefer a cypress. Once this longing or capacity is dead, man becomes a living tomb of himself, and what survives of him is but the ashes of what was before.

Shelley

TWO LETTERS FROM THE POET

My dear Hesseym, it is very kind of you to send me the *Chronicle* articles, and very unkind of me not to have thanked you sooner for this kindness; please forgive me. As luck would have it, the paper came into my hands every day. I saw it today. I can only express my deepest gratitude to all those who have stood by me. So at least I'm slowly getting to know my strengths and weaknesses. Praise or grief can have only a momentary effect on a man whom the ultimate love of beauty makes a strict judge of his own works. The self-criticism of myself is incomparably more tormenting than that which *Blackwood* or the *Quarterly* can inflict; and when I feel myself to be right, no external praise can so much heat me as the lonely recognition and assurance of what is good in myself.

J.S. is absolutely right about the "slant-tailed" *Endymion*. That it is so is not my fault. No! Paradoxical though it may sound, it's as good as I can make it. If I had toiled to make it perfect, and in that effort had sought advice, trembling over every page, it would never have been written; tampering being not in my nature. I want to write independently. So far I have written independently, without criticism. Henceforth I want to write independently, despite criticism. The Genius of Poetry itself must win its redemption in one man. It cannot be matured by rule, by prescription, but only by our own inner sense and full readiness. What creates must create itself. In *Endymion*, I took a plunge into the sea, and thus became more intimately acquainted with the roar, the waves and the rocks, as if I were staying on the green shore, blowing my silly flute and listening to comfortable advice while drinking tea. I never shrank from making mistakes; for I would much rather risk making a mistake than not be among the best. But I am afraid I am about to enter into self-praise; so I prefer to remain your most sincere adherent, and to ask Taylor Woodhouse to convey my gratitude:

John Keats

My dear Woodhouse,

your letter has been a great pleasure to me, chiefly because of your hearty voice, and not that

"genus irritabile" is to my taste. The best reply I can give you is some formal observations on the two main points which, as an index, point to the very centre of the pro and con of the whole question of genius, intention and success and ambition, etc.

First, as to the character of the poet himself (I mean the kind to which, if you are a poet, you would be accustomed to belong), I have to say that the poet is a poet of a very different kind.

I, if I am anything at all, belong to myself; the kind which is to be separated from Wordsworth or the egocentrically refined, which exists *per se* and consists in itself), it has no self, no self at all, no character, it rejoices in light and shadow alike, it lives by outbursts, whether ugly or beautiful, high or low,

rich or poor, vulgar or exalted: he imagines a Jago with the same beauty as an Imogen. What offends the virtuous philosopher is a delight to the chameleon poet. It does him no harm to love the darker side of things, any more than it does to love the lighter, for in the end both turn to contemplation. The poet is the most impertinent of all beings, as he has no individuality; he consistently takes and fills the form of another being. The sun, the moon, the sea, men and women, who are creatures of instinct, are all poetic and have an indivisible quality; the poet is not, he has no individuality. He is certainly the least poetic of all the creatures of God. If the poet has no identity, and I am a poet, where is the wonder that I once found myself saying that I no longer wished to write? Could I not in that holy moment have thought of the character of Saturn or Ops? It is a miserable thing to admit, but it is a truth that I have not a single word ever uttered which can be calmly regarded as an authentic opinion of my nature. How can it be, when I have no nature? When I am in a room with people and I am not pondering over the productions of my own brain, it is not myself who dwells in it, but the people in the room gradually impose their nature on me, and after a short time I am almost annihilated, and not only among adults; the same thing happens to me in the children's room. I do not know whether I can make you fully understand today: I will be content if you will see how nothing I may have said at the time should be made dependent on it.

Secondly, I want to tell you about my intentions and how I see life for myself. My ambition is to do something good for the world: if I remain, that will be a matter for later years - in the meantime, I want to reach as high a level of poetry as I can with the strength I have. My vague notions of my future poems often chase the blood in my face. All I hope is that I do not lose all contact with human things - and that the abandonment and indifference I feel from the best of them will not dull the vividness of my visions. I would like to write of the deep longing and love for beauty that lives in me even if I always burn in the morning what I have made at night and never see the light of day. But perhaps even at this moment I am not speaking for myself, but for someone else in whose soul I am living.

But I am sure that this last sentence is mine. I feel most deeply your concern, your good opinion, your friendship, and I trust most sincerely yours:

John Keats

FROM THE DIARY OF THE SON OF THE WORLD

Almost all my life I have had the rare pleasure of doing what pleases me. So I could not complain of fate.

I often find myself happier than when I was twenty. But now I'm approaching forty.

There are philosophers who, when it rains on a sultry June day, complain that the thunderstorm is damaging the grapes. I am not one of them. I like the rain because it soothes my nerves, freshens the air and ultimately brings me joy. Tomorrow I may not be alive, and I may never drink again of the wine whose blossoms perfume the hills of the Gold Coast.

All the philosophers of the eighteenth century try to tell us that the great lords were immoral and harmful. For my part, I am passionately fond of the well-bred and cheerful grand seigneur. Society - this kindly, lovable widow who survives people who take nothing seriously - is like a year deprived of its spring. Reason, however, suggests that these people without power have even unconsciously caused trouble. My dear prudence, I am not a king, nor the head of the people, nor a legislator; I am a simple, grey, petty citizen, and very little qualified to influence anybody: day after day, as best I can, I seek pleasure and happiness. I love company, and despair of it, and find in it signs of stagnation and confusion.

The only trouble is when you live your life in boredom.

In 1803 I had many things that seemed pleasant: though all was pleasant only to the good house, to elegant young men perhaps older than myself, I had little pleasure in it. That's why I'm happier in 1822, now I only do what really pleases me.

Life is so short that one should not deprive oneself of pleasure, even if pleasure is fraught with danger.

To increase happiness is a virtue, to increase trouble is a sin. All else is hypocrisy or bourgeois monkeying. Let us seize every opportunity to teach our youth to do this.

He who has passions cannot be bored; life without passions is dull.

If we cannot satisfy our existing passions, we must look for others. I would like to

see you on the road. You have to shake up life, otherwise it will tear you to pieces.
...the man.

Only the real is worth striving for in this world.

I felt happy not to know anyone, not to have to talk to anyone. The architecture of the Middle Ages fascinated me, I felt like I was living with Dante, in his time. Of my many ideas, there were ten or so that were not struck by a line from this great man. I am ashamed of this account, which makes me seem to worship myself.

Four or five times a day I am on the point of suffocating; but my lunch somehow restores me, and my sleep is satisfactory. A hundred times I have gone to bed as one who loves himself because I did not think I would wake up. But I hid my trouble well. Perhaps it's not so ridiculous to die in the street, only not willingly.

It's not the death that's great, it's the pain.

Stendhal

ABOUT WHAT SOMEONE

That it is more essential to a man's happiness than what he has or what he imagines, we have generally known. Everything depends always on what he is, and what he can do in himself: for his individuality is constantly and everywhere in him, and on it depends all that he experiences. Above all, in everything and always he enjoys only himself: this is true of physical pleasures, how much more of spiritual ones. The English phrase *to enjoy one's self* is therefore very apt, for example, *he enjoys himself at Paris*, not 'he enjoys Paris', but 'he enjoys himself in Paris'. However, if the individual is bad-tempered, then enjoyment is like pom-pom wine in a stale mouth. Thus, then, in good or bad, except in the case of serious misfortunes, it is not so much what is good for whom something is good for, but the manner and degree of his susceptibility in every respect. What a man is in himself, in short, his personality and its worth, is the only direct means to his happiness and prosperity. Everything else is indirect, and therefore its effect can be neutralized, but never that of personality. It is for this reason that envy of personal advantage is the most inescapable, though the most carefully concealed. Furthermore, only the nature of consciousness is permanent and unchangeable, and only the personality is permanent and constant, more or less at every moment: in all other cases it is only periodically effective, occasional, transitory, and, moreover, itself subject to changeability and transience; hence Aristotle says: *hé gar physis bebaia ou ta khrémata* (*nam natura perennis est, non opes*) *Eth. Eud. VII, 2*. It is on this ground that we bear misfortunes which are wholly external to us with greater composure than those which we ourselves have brought about: for fate may change, but our own endowment never does. Hence, therefore, subjective goods, such as a noble character, a talented mind, a happy temper, a cheerful spirit, and a strong and perfectly healthy body, that is, in general *mens sana in corpore sano* (Juvenal. Sat. X. 356), are first and most important to our happiness, and for this reason we must take much more care to obtain and preserve them than to possess external goods and offices.

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A man of superior intellectual powers is capable of the most lively interest, and even requires it, by mere cognition, without any application of the will. This interest then brings him at the same time into the world of the gods of the happy life, *theón rheia dzoontón*. Thus, while the life of the average man is passed in dullness, and while all his thoughts and actions are wholly devoted to the petty interests of personal well-being, and thus to all misery, he is then oppressed by unbearable boredom, as soon as his preoccupation with these ends ceases, and he is left to himself, and only the wild fire of passion can produce any movement in the stolid mass; by contrast, the man of great intellectual powers lives a life rich in thought, vivid and meaningful: worthy and interesting subjects occupy him as soon as he can turn to them, and he has within himself the fountain of the noblest pleasures. The works of nature and the vision of human endeavour, and the achievements of the talents of various ages and peoples, are the external stimulus to him, as being for him alone to enjoy in their entirety; to him they are really alive, in fact he is his master, while others are only accidental eavesdroppers. Of course, in all this, one need is stronger than that of others, and that need is the need to learn, to see, to study, to contemplate, that is to say, to have the leisure to do so, precisely because, as Voltaire rightly observed, *il n'est de vrais plaisirs qu'avec de vrais besoins*, so that this need is the condition of the enjoyments open to him which are denied to others, for whom artistic and natural beauty and the various works of the spirit, even when he heaps them around him, are no more than the hectares of an old man's mouth. In addition to his personal life, such an excellent man lives another life, namely an intellectual life, which gradually becomes his end in itself, for which he regards the former as a means, while for the others this empty sad existence must be an end in itself. Above all, it is the intellectual life which will occupy him, and which, through ever-increasing initiation and knowledge, will show such growing organicity, such constant elevation, such ever-growing completeness, as the work of art which is being realized, in contrast to which the other life, the life of mere practicality, of mere personal well-being, capable of growth only in external extension and not in deepening, is sadly inferior, yet for them it must be regarded as an end in itself, while for him it is a mere means.

Schopenhauer

EQUALITY

We see with our eyes and feel with our hearts the poverty. But I say, even with an oath, though I mean to minimize nothing, that of the many kinds of misery, the misery of the spirit is the most wicked. I am thinking of the incredible incomprehension in which the man of practice and the man of theory are opposed to each other. The main reason for this incomprehension is that we do not know each other; our tools are mechanical and soulless.

of our instruments makes the knowledge of man superfluous, as if it were enough to know that he is only a force or a number... The mechanics of the mechanical age seem to replace the vitality of action, man becomes a number and an abstraction, he is seized by a sense of decay, his value becomes nothing.

A hundred times I have had the opportunity to observe how strangely people live side by side, how they do not see each other and do not want to know each other.

Here, for example, we, the educated minds: how difficult it is for us to admit that there are good traits in the people. We write a thousand things against them, such as their situation brings with it: their shabby and dirty clothes, their immodesty, their drink, when it is long since seen, their rude words and rough hands, and many other things! What would we be if these hands were less rude? We are shocked when we look at the misery from without, but fail to see the good and noble heart that often beats beneath the bad exterior.

And people do not suspect that in a weak body there may be an energetic soul. The life of the crippled man is a laughing-stock; in his eyes the man of the spirit is a lazy idler. He does not realize the power of thought and contemplation, and does not measure the strength of scientific work, which is enriched by patience. Yes, we misunderstand each other on both sides. They misjudge the power of study, of persevering thought, which is the inventor's own, and we do not sufficiently appreciate the instinct, the impulse, the energy, which form the hero.

This is surely the world's greatest evil. We hate and despise each other because we do not know each other's business.

We try to remedy the problem, but the remedy we use is mostly local, and the real remedy must work everywhere. It is the soul that must be healed.

The poor believe that if the rich are bound by law, all will be well. And the rich man wants to consolidate social peace by converting the people to old religious forms that have been dead for two centuries. As if political or other religious forms were a cabalistic force to keep the world in check, and not the main influence of whether they were in harmony with the heart or not!

The heart is the problem! So let the cure be in the heart. Let us leave the old recipes. Let us open the heart and the arm... After all, are we brothers, or have we forgotten?...

THE POWER OF EDUCATION

How long should education last? Exactly as long as life.

What is the first thing politics should do? Education. And the second? Education. And the third? Education... I have learnt from many historical experiences in my life, and therefore I do not believe in the power of unprepared laws. And to prepare it is to educate people over a long period of time to love and desire laws. We ask for fewer laws, but the principle of the law must be reinforced by education, making it applicable and possible. Form men, and all will be well with the world!

Michelet

THE PHILOSOPHY OF SILENCE

Peace and quiet! An altar should be built to these two - if our age could build an altar - so that all may pay homage to it. Silence is the element of the world in which great things are born, so that they may come to life and reign in their full dignity, ready and clear. Not only William the Silent, but every man of note I have ever known, was neither a diplomat nor a strategist, and never prattled on about what he had done and what he had created. In your own daily confusion, shut up for one day and how much clearer your intentions and duties will be in the morning! The dumb workers of silence, if one keeps the intrusive noise away, what ruins and what rubbish they sweep up! Speech is often, not, as the French say, the concealment of thought, but that which stifles thought altogether so that there is nothing left to conceal. Talking is great, but not the greatest. As that certain Swiss inscription says: to listen is gold, to listen is silver. Or as I like to say: speaking is time, listening is the eternal child.

Bees can only work in the dark. Thoughts can only live in silence, just as virtue can only unfold its effects in hiding. Your right hand knows not what your left hand does. Tell not even to your own heart, not once, those secrets, "which everybody knows anyway". Or is not modesty the mother of all morals and morals? Like other plants, virtue does not grow unless the eye of the sun sees it. If the light shines on it, or if you cast your eye on it, even if you glance at it stealthily, the root withers, and no more flowers grow on the plant.

In literature, we may come to the point where writers are paid to the extent to which they keep something silent. In all seriousness, is this not more true of all speech and action? Value is not decided by what is above the ground, but by what is below. Behind all speech that is worth anything, there is silence that is worth more. Silence is deep as eternity; speech is shallow as time. Strange? Woe to age and woe to man if he forgets this ancient truth.

The babblings of the clumsy are not about what has really happened, but only about what they have failed to do, and what they have failed to do. The clumsy tale (which is nothing more than a more or less truncated form of this pathetic belief as laid down in writing) knows little that is worth knowing. Attila's invasion, the Crusades, the Sicilian exchange, the Thirty Years' War: all sin and misery. Not work, but obstacles to work. While the war raged, the grass was green every spring and the grain ripened every summer. The worker's hand and the thinking mind never rested. And despite all the sin and misery, the land still flourishes. Poor, poor story! He asks in wonder: where did all these flowers come from? It knows nothing of what is rose, work, spring, thought; but it knows all the more of what seeks to destroy them all. That is why this peculiar phrase is of such great importance: happy people, who have no history!

Carlyle

THE TITLE OF TITLES

It is above us... We feel that He is, but how can we grasp Him?

We cannot even penetrate our friends; we call even them strangers, intangible - but what is that compared to the intangibility of the Eternal? In fact, only S is intangible, who not only lives in eternity without beginning, but who has lived all eternity with Himself alone, and has not grown weary of His solitude...

From everlasting, ever active, and yet from everlasting stillness. At times he enjoys an undisturbed tranquillity, a profound, ineffable peace, yet he feels alive, alert...

Self-possessed, colour conscious. Source of self, purpose of self, vision of self, happiness of self. And if it is elusive that he has lived an eternity in solitude, is it not even more elusive that he has abandoned this solitude and has chosen to surround himself with creatures?

Why did He create people who had nothing to add to their happiness, and were not even sure of their own happiness? Why did he give them a gift which they could do good or evil, work out their salvation or their damnation, as they pleased? Why did he create a world such as we see before our eyes, which at best reflects poorly on his glory, and at worst is a scene of sin and evil?

For he could have made a far better world than this, he could have put sin out of it, but he - oh, shuddering mystery! - He surrounded himself with the wailing of fallen souls, and opened the gaping abyss; he resolved to allow, after the eternal world of peace, the eternal reality of rebellion, pride, blasphemy, sin and self-hatred, and the worm that will not perish...

He is everywhere on earth and sees every evil deed that is done in the light of day or the darkness of night; moreover, He is the sustainer of those who commit them...

He is in the closest proximity to every soul, even the most innocent.

He is in the midst of the eternal prison, but nothing touches Him, though He touches everything.

The rays of the sun penetrate into the most filthy nook, but retain their brilliance and purity; thus the Almighty sees and tolerates evil, and yet is not touched by the defiance, pride, impurity or unbelief of creation.

The pleasures of the earth and the curses of hell do not obscure his purity, nor diminish his majesty...

Thus does the great God stand, self-sufficient, radiant, transcendent, untamed, unapproachable.

Who can see Him? Who can measure Him? Who can move Him? Who can change Him?

And who can speak of Him?

John Henry Newman

A FOOL'S PARADISE

Travel is a fool's paradise. Yet our very first journeys reveal to us how indifferent places are. At home, I dream that Naples and Rome will breathe beauty into me and make me drown my sorrows. I take my travel bag, hug my friends, go to sea; then one fine day I wake up in Naples and behold, sitting on the tea- of my bed, the grim reality, the same merciless reality, the sad self I wanted to escape. I visit the Vatican, the palaces. I feel as if great visions and inspirations had been implanted in me, though they were never conceived. The giant of my bosom goes with me wherever I go.

THE MASTER

He who can obey better than I, becomes my master, though he does not lift a finger. I must revolve around him by the law of spiritual gravity.

SIN AND PUNISHMENT

You cannot commit injustice without suffering injustice. "No man can boast of anything that has not brought him harm," says Burke. Those who live the high life do not see that they exclude themselves from pleasure by pursuing it. The sufferers of religious impatience do not see that they are slamming the gates of heaven against themselves, when they would shut them against others. If you forget the hearts of others, you lose your own. The senses want to objectify every person, women, children, the poor. The saying, I'll take it out of your pocket or I'll rip it out of your skin, is a deep philosophy.

Any violation of love and justice in our society is quickly punished. Its punishment: fear. As long as I am in simple contact with my fellow man, I am happy to be in contact with him. We come into contact as water with water, as one air current with another, with a natural and complete flow and penetration. As soon as we have departed in any degree from simplicity, and have entered into a half-relationship, if I seek any good that is not good for him, my neighbour perceives the injustice, he shuns me far away, as I shun him far away; his eyes no longer seek mine. We are at war, hatred in him, fear in me.

... A similar retribution is meted out to all the ancient abuses of society, both in general and in particular cases: the unjust accumulation of wealth and power. Fear is a very wise teacher and the harbinger of all revolutions. Its lesson is this: something rots where it rears its head. Fear is a raven, and though you can't see clearly what it's staring at, it's certain that there's a corpse somewhere. Our capital is fearful, our laws are fearful, our educated classes are fearful. For centuries, fear has threatened government and property with a roar and a growl. This bird of alarm does not squawk in vain. It heralds great injustices that must be reviewed.

THE PERSONALISM

Personality captures you with the face that it has had enough. I respect his riches; I cannot imagine him abandoned, poor, outcast, unhappy, bound, servile, but only a perpetual master, benefactor and fool. Personality is something central: the impossibility of being displaced or overthrown. The real man gives us the impression of a great mass.

Emerson

"YES, BUT THERE IS NOTHING LIKE FREEDOM."

And how does having freedom help you? I mean... I don't want to talk about those crumbs you call freedom - total freedom? Then you would be free of everything, everything that annoys you. And there would be nothing left to burden and bother you even once in your life. And for whose sake do you want to get rid of everything? Perhaps it is for your own sake, because these things are in your way. But if something were not inconvenient to you, but on the contrary very dear to you, for example, the gentle but irresistibly commanding gaze of your beloved, would you want to get rid of that too for the sake of freedom? And why would you not? Again, for your own sake! So your own person is the measure and judge of all. You are happy to leave freedom to the devil, if you like the bondage, the sweet service of love. And the next time you reach for your freedom again, if that's what you like best...

Why don't you have the courage to make yourselves the centre and the main thing? Why are you rushing towards your dream of freedom? Are you yourselves the dream? Don't ask your dreams, your concepts, your thoughts first, because it's all just empty theory - ask yourself and about yourself, that's the root. And you are so eager to be practical!

... And if you do break free with your aspirations, draw your conclusions. Who is he that shall be free? You, I, We. Free from what? From all that is not Thou, not I, not We. It is I, then, who shall be freed from all wrappings, from all shells of oppression. What then remains if I have him freed from all that is not Me? Only I, nothing else, only I. But freedom for this I can give nothing. What is to happen after I myself have become free, freedom is silent about, just as our governments only release prisoners after they have served their sentences and cast them out into desolation.

So why don't we choose ourselves. Our Self, if we want freedom for the sake of the Self anyway, why not make ourselves the beginning, middle and end of everything? Am I not worth more than freedom? Am I not the one who makes myself free, am I not the first? Even without liberty, bound in a thousand fetters, I am I, and I am not only in the future, or only in the re-

I am present, even as the most wicked of slaves.

Think well, then, and decide: are you writing on your banner the dream of freedom or the determination of egoism, of selfishness. Freedom arouses your anger against what is not you; egoism calls you to enjoy the pleasure of yourselves. Freedom is and will remain a mere desire, a romantic wail, a Christian hope for an afterlife and a future; selfishness is a reality that removes as many obstacles from your path as it blocks its own. What does not bother you, you do not want to get rid of; and when it starts to bother you, you will know that you have to serve yourselves rather than people.

Freedom teaches you only to make yourselves free, to shake off everything that is a burden; it does not teach you who you are. - is his motto. And you, eager to follow his call, will also be freed from yourselves: 'deny yourselves'. But selfishness calls you back to yourselves. It says: "return to yourself!" Under the aegis of freedom, you are freed from many things, but again something new is pressing you: "You have been freed from evil, but evil remains." As selfish people, you have really got rid of everything, and what is left you have taken up, you have chosen for yourselves, according to your own pleasure. The selfish is the born free spirit. It is inherently free. The free, on the other hand, is only the one who desires freedom: the dreamer and the enthusiast.

Max Stirner

WE ONLY LIVE ONCE

We often hear the words, "We only live once; therefore, before I die, I want to see Paris, or I want to accumulate wealth as quickly as possible, but I must at least achieve some high rank in this world - because we only live once."

It is rare, but it does happen, that someone has only one wish, and definitely only one wish. "I only have this one wish," he says, "if only this one wish could come true, because ah, we only live once!"

Imagine such a man on his deathbed. His wish has not been granted, and yet his whole soul hangs on to that one wish, even now, when fulfilment is no longer possible. Then he sits up in bed; with a passion of pain he gives expression to his desire once more: "Ah, despair that it will not be fulfilled; despair, for we only live once!"

It's devastating, it is, but not in the way she means. For it is not the fact that his desire is not fulfilled that is devastating, it is the passion with which he clings to it. His life was not aimless because his wish was not fulfilled, no, not at all; if his life was aimless, it was rather because he could not give up his desire; that he wanted to learn from life no more than how his one wish could be fulfilled, as if everything depended on whether this wish of his was fulfilled!

But what was really devastating was something quite different. If, for example, one were to realize on his deathbed, or if only here he were to fully understand what had been obscured in him all his life, but which he had never wanted to understand: that we in this world had to suffer for the sake of justice if we wanted to attain eternal happiness, and that we live only once, only once, and that for him this life is now over forever! And this was within his power; and eternity is not changed by man, the eternity which he is about to pass from the threshold of death as a future.

We live but once. If you have lived your life rightly up to the moment of your death, that is, by directing it to eternity, then thanks and praise be to God for ever; if not, it is irredeemable for ever. We only live once!

We only live once. That's how it is here on earth. And while you spend your only life, and while the time of that life is passing with each passing hour, the Lord of love sits up in heaven, loving you in his love. Yes, loved; therefore he desires so much that thou shouldst desire at last what he desires of thee for eternity: that thou mayest therefore be able to bring thyself to suffer, that is, to love him; for only at the cost of suffering can thou love him, or if thou love him as he would have thee loved, then thou must suffer. Think of it: we only live once. If you let it go, if you do not come to suffering because you have avoided it, it can be redeemed for ever. To force you, oh no, the lord of love doesn't want that in any way. That would achieve something quite different from what he wants. How could love ever think of forcing you to love! But because he is love, he wills of love that you should conform to his will. And in his love he suffers, as only infinite and omnipotent love can suffer. Man cannot understand how he suffers if you do not yield to his will.

God is love. There has never been a man who has not been overwhelmed with indescribable happiness when he has been able to give full personal meaning to this thought: "God is love, which means God loves you." (The next moment, however, when reason realizes that to be loved by God is to suffer: awesome!) "Yes, but God wants this out of love, because he wants you to love him; and that he wants to be loved by you is his love for you": yes, yes! "Yes, but it is out of love; you have no idea that he is suffering, because he knows well that suffering hurts; yet he cannot become anything else, for then he could no longer be love": yes, yes!

Be careful, be careful! Lest time pass uselessly between useless sufferings; remember: we only live once. And if it may help you, try to look at it this way: God, in his love, suffers more than you, without being able to be otherwise. But above all, remember: we only live once! And the irredeemable omission threatens, after which (to your greater horror!) the memory of the lost in eternity will never again be forgotten for a moment, but eternity itself will become a perpetual memory, a memory of the lost.

THIS IS THE OUTRAGE!

That the Christianity of the New Testament is for us men above all things (to the Jews, a vexation; to the Greeks, folly); that it seems to be deliberately to incite men to hatred, so much so that its very proclamation is a sign of passionate hatred and the most terrible persecutions: all this the New Testament itself does not conceal, and even says in the most decidedly decisive manner. Whenever Christ speaks to the apostles, the admonition is always given to them to avoid wrath; he always again and again binds their souls to prepare themselves for what is to follow; and the words of the apostles testify plainly enough that all that was foreknown had happened to them.

If, therefore, any man understand himself in the sense of Christianity, it cannot occur to him to be angry with others for having incurred their bitter hatred by realizing the essence of Christianity. No, by no means. If he understands himself in the sense of Christianity, he should find it much more right.

But even he whom he has thereby so much angered, even he must understand him, and give him justice; if he for his part finds it outrageous that a whole generation of generation after generation of living creatures should live by the fact that, as professional teachers, sworn to the New Testament, they, in their own minds, are making a mockery of mankind under the name of Christianity, by something which has nothing to do with New Testament Christianity; that these parasites proclaim and feed on the reverse of New Testament Christianity as Christianity; and that they even claim their state application, which from the Christian perspective is as ridiculous as if one were to play trumps with a common suit in a card game, or as if one were to declare oneself a shepherd with a certificate from a wolf.

This is the outrage. It is perhaps a unique example in history of a religion having to cease to exist by flourishing - and now everyone in the cross- fact the opposite of what the New Testament meant by it. Thus the religion of suffering became the religion of the joy of life, but it kept its name.

It is outrageous that the difficulties of realising Christianity are now, if possible, once again as great as they were when it entered the world. For it is no longer Gentiles and Jews who are now opposed to him, whose despair he must arouse, but Christians, and these Christians he must incite against himself in the same way as he once incited the Gentiles and Jews, having been deceived by the guild of the impostors of the world, that they are the Christians, and that Christianity sounds to the tune of a bordal melody, and is even more amusing than this song, which, alas, will soon die away, while the gay Christian ball of life, as the priests promise, 'will last for ever'.

Kierkegaard

NATURE

I have sometimes found some natural phenomena to be sweet, innocent, and brave company even to the unhappy, melancholy misanthrope. He who lives in the lap of Nature, and his mind is still sound, his melancholy cannot be so very black. The nearest storm is like an echo to the innocent, unprejudiced ear. Nothing can move the simple and brave man to trivial melancholy. As long as I am friends with the seasons, life can never, in no way, become a burden to me.

The gentle rains that water my baby-field, and force me within the four walls, are not dreary and melancholy, but pleasant and useful. It prevents my scraping, but it is worth more than scraping. Even if it should take so long as to rot my bean-sowing and ruin my potatoes in the flats, it would be good for the upland pasture, and if it is good for the grass, it is good for me. Sometimes, when I compare myself with others, I seem to be more favoured of the gods, I know not indeed what for my merits: as if they had my chief care, and would guard and direct me, more than any man. I do not flatter myself, but if possible they flatter me. I've never felt alone, I've never felt lonely.

When we think, we can be outside ourselves, but in a healthy sense of the word. With a conscious effort of reason, we can look outside ourselves at our actions and their consequences; good and bad, everything flows past us like a raging torrent. We are not all caught up in Nature. I can be a dry branch drifting with the tide; I can be Indra looking down from the sky above. It may happen that I am upset by a performance; but it may also happen that I am not upset by a current event that is visibly more intimate. I know myself only as a single personality, as a stage for ideas and emotions, and I am also aware of a certain duality that allows me to see myself as much from the outside as from the inside. As intimately as I experience events, I am aware that a part of me is judging them, and this part of me is as if it were not a part of me, but an outside spectator, not living the events, merely taking note of them; it is no more my part than yours is. When the spectacle or perhaps the tragedy of life is over, the spectator goes home. From his point of view, what he has seen is an invention, a play of the imagination. This duality can often make us bad lovers, unfaithful friends.

How inexpressibly beneficent and kind Nature is - sun and wind and rain, winter and summer! How cheerful, how health-giving always and in all; and so sympathetic to our human kind, that its whole mood would change, the sun's half-light would dim, the wind sigh with a human voice, the rain shed tears, the forest in the midsummer shed its foliage and put on mourning robes, if but one man would mourn for a just cause. How could I not live in harmony with the earth? For I too am partly a leaf, a plant residue!

Where is the pill that promises me constant health, peace, contentment? Not in the prescriptions of our great-grandmothers, but in the universal herbal medicines of our great-grandmother Nature, who keeps herself eternally young with these

with these easily decomposed foods to nourish her health, to outlive even the longest living. As for me, I do not want to drink the suspicious mixtures of Akheron and the waters of the Dead Sea, which are brought in those long, black, flat wagons of the well-known shape of the bottle, but rather I want to take a long draught of the undiluted morning air. Dawn air! If people are not willing to drink it from this source, then we will be forced to supply it in bottles and sell it in the shops for the benefit of those who have lost their season tickets for dawn. But let us not forget: even in the coolest cellar it will not last till noon, but will shoot its cork and slip away westwards, following in the footsteps of Aurora. I do not worship Hygieia, that old pot-doctor, daughter of Aesculapius, who is represented as holding a serpent in one hand and a cup in the other, from which the serpent sometimes drinks - but rather Hebe, the cup-bearer daughter of Jupiter, who was the child of Juno, and could restore her youthful strength to god and man by her power. She was probably the only perfectly healthy, robust, flawlessly fit young lady who ever walked the earth; and wherever she went, spring followed.

Henry David Thoreau

THE PERSON

I have found a definition of beauty - my beauty. Beauty is something glowing and sad, a little uncertain, with a wide scope for conjecture. I can, if I like, apply my thought to some sensuous object; take, say, one of the most interesting in society, a woman's face. A charming and beautiful head, a woman's head makes you think - vaguely and indefinitely - of beauty and sadness; it carries with it the idea of sorrow, of languor, even of ennui, when, on the contrary, it is full of glowing, eager desire to live; it is accompanied by a certain sadness that seems to emanate from desperation or despair. Mystery and pity are also characteristics of beauty.

A beautiful man's face need not contain, except perhaps to female eyes - let us understand it well, to human eyes - this idea of beauty, which in a woman's face is all the more attractive and stimulating the more sad the face as a whole is. But there will also be something glowing and sad in this head - spiritual needs, darkly repressed ambitions - a murmur, but useless power - at times, some annoying callousness (for on this subject we must not forget the ideal type of the dandy) - at others - and this is one of the most interesting characteristics of beauty - mystery, and finally (so that I may finally have the courage to admit fully how modern I consider myself in aesthetics) - unhappiness. I do not pretend that Joy cannot be associated with Beauty, but I must say that it is only its most elegant ornament; while Sorrow is, so to speak, its most noble companion, to such an extent that I cannot imagine (is it an enchanted mirror that my brain is?) any kind of Beauty in which there is not Unhappiness. To insist on these thoughts, others would say: tempted by them, it is to be seen that

it would be difficult for me not to conclude that the most perfect embodiment of masculine Beauty is Satan - in the manner of Milton.

Baudelaire

THE WRITER'S SELF-CONFESSION

For us writers, who are always at work on our art, who have little contact with nature except through our imagination, it is only right that we should sometimes look at the moon or the sun. Through our long, single-minded gaze, we take the sap of the trees into our hearts. Just as sheep that graze on thyme in the meadow have more succulent flesh afterwards, so the fragrance of nature will permeate our spirit if we bathe in it well. I have barely a week left to live in peace and enjoy all I see before me in a simple way. At the beginning of my rest I felt only confusion, then sadness, boredom: and now that I am well, I must go away. I walk a great deal, I am in lust, and I, who have not seen the rain, have just been soaked to the skin, and have not even put on my clothes, and when I go I shall be very sad again: this is my eternal story. Yes, my self and my memories are slowly peeling away. The reed that beats my shoes in the evening as I go home over the dune, interests me more than any old reverie. (Madame Bovary is so far from me as if I had never written a line about her!)

Here my mind was bound up in great internal reckonings, and the result of these four weeks was this: I said goodbye to all that is individual, intimate, and relative. I have also given up my old plan to write my memoirs some day. I am no longer interested in anything that has to do with my person. I don't even see the flare-ups of youth as beautiful anymore, although they are embellished by the perspective of remembrance, and in the Bengali fire of style they look like a beauty in advance. What is all this for? I have buried all, and nothing shall rise again. Man is no more than a flea, our joys and pains must be purified in our works - we do not recognise in the clouds the dewdrops that the sunbeam has thrown up there. Evaporate earthly raindrops, tears of days gone by, and arch the skies in sun-drenched giant arches.

I am now preoccupied with metamorphoses. I would like to write everything I see, not as I see it, but in its full colour change. I would be incapable of accurately narrating even the most magnificent event, if it were real, I would even have to embroider on it.

To write nothing and to dream of beautiful things (as I do now) is a truly lovely occupation. But how dearly we pay later for these lustful pleasures! And I could have learned (but nothing can mend me). Mrs. Bovary, though she began for me as an excellent exercise, will later, in retrospect, perhaps have a mournful effect on me, by turning me away from commonplace subjects (though this is a weak and foolish thing). That is why I am having such difficulty in writing this book, I can only imagine my characters with great effort and can hardly make them speak, I am so numbed by them. But when I write something in my blood, it's all the more

faster. But therein lies the danger. When one writes about oneself, the sentence can ring, the rhythm can swing; and lyrical natures are already impressive if they follow their natural tendency; but there is a lack of unity, repetition, clichés, banalities, follow one after another. If, on the other hand, we are writing about an imaginary subject, then every detail must flow from the plan of the work, and the smallest comma depends on the outline of the whole. And the writer's attention is constantly divided in two directions: on the one hand, he must not lose sight of the horizon, and on the other, he must look at his feet...

Flaubert

THE ROUTE TO INDIA

But, soul, trust, the original intention remains and will be fulfilled! Perhaps now is the time.

When all the seas have been crossed (and it seems to have come to pass),
When the great captains and engineers have done their work
After the eminent inventors, the scientists, the chemists, the geologists,
the ethnologists, At last the poet may come, worthy of the name,
The true son of the Lord, singing his songs.

For it is not only your deeds, O travellers, scientists, inventors, that must
be justified, But this feverish child must be calmed,
All their affections must be answered with a good heart, and the secret told, All
differences and gaps must be blotted out, bridged, bound together.

H
er This whole cold, indifferent, dumb earth must be perfectly justified,
e, The divine trinity must be crowned and sealed with the poet, God
the true son of God,
(He must but truly cross the straits and conquer the mountains, Round
the degrees of Good Hope to reach his goal!)
Let nature and man be no more separated, no more divided, Let the
true Son of God bind them together for ever.

Year whose door my song has opened!
Year of dreams come true, thou!
The year of continents, of skies and oceans in wedlock!
(It is not only the Venetian Doge that now merges with the Adriatic.)
O year, in thee I see the all-giving globe of sea and land, Europe joined to Asia
and Africa, and all these to the New World, Countries and earth-abysses dance
before thee, bearing a festal wreath,
Brides and grooms, hand in hand,

Journey, soul, back to the ancient thought
Not to continents, nor seas but to thine own freshness, To
tender ripeness of flower that sows,
To the land of budding bibles.

Fly, soul, free, I and you, Let us now begin to sail
round the earth,
The man's - and his mind's turning back
To the ancient Eden of reason,
Back, back to the birth of wisdom, To the innocent conjecture, To
the fair dawn of creation.

We can wait no longer, Let us too, O
soul, embark,
And we'll wake to the uncharted waters with joy,
To soar and soar to unknown lands,
On the wings of the drifting winds (Thou shalt cling to me, and I to thee, O
soul) Singing merrily to our God,
A loud song of happy discovery.

Laughing between many kisses,
(Soul, I love thee, and I thee.
And more than all priests, we believe in our God, But
dare not tamper with the mystery of God.

Walt Whitman

ART AND MORALITY

The love of beauty is the innate property of healthy human nature, and though it persists in sinful and pernicious manifestations of life, it is good itself, the enemy of base greed, envy, and the cares of the gray world, and above all, the enemy of cruelty and violence. It is death to him if these should take complete dominion. Those in whom this instinct for beauty is most strongly alive are always gentle, compassionate and just, discoverers and the first proclaimers of all that is conducive to the happiness of mankind. Just as in love, so in the passionate love of beauty, ascension and ennoblement are brought about by the involvement of the imagination, which awakens them and dominates them. For to suppress the passions, which are mistakenly considered a duty to them, is not so difficult for the dull complacent indifference. But to awaken them, to set them on the right course, and train them in active labour for the good, is the work of unselfish imagination.

They never cease to say that humanity is heartless. Do not believe it. It's basically full of goodness and wants to love, it's just blind and limited, so it's rarely

It is rarely able to perceive and feel anything beyond what is immediately around it and in contact with it. People would be more loving and helpful if they could see into others as they see into themselves. They don't have the imagination.

All that we do, all that we can become and all that we can accomplish depends on the mastery of two artistic instincts, order and goodness, that great imagination which provides us with the heritage of the past, the knowledge of the present and the readiness for the future.

To live without spiritual and physical activity is a vice. Activity, if it lacks the artistic touch, is coarseness. The words "good" and "bad" applied to man "creator" and "destroyer" can be substituted. Creators fight step by step to bring order out of chaos, and with their help all things are preserved and spread. Their action is art, and the mark they leave behind is beauty.

Art is far from being immoral, but there is little else in reality that is moral.

And it will be the fullness of time when men realize that in work and rest alike there must be the most sacred beauty. Yes, as much as possible, even more so in work, in strength rather than in fatigue: we do our six days' work to get it done by evening rather than for the seventh day's wages. Many a time we have gone to the house of the Lord with the multitude that feasted that day, there to pray for blessings in vain imagination. The few who labour according to the Lord's will have no need to seek his blessing in this way, and wide is this world their home of grace. Surely goodness and blessing shall be with them all the days of their life, for they shall dwell in the house of the Lord for ever.

John Ruskin

THE MARRIAGE OF THE INDIVIDUAL SOUL AND THE UNIVERSAL SPIRIT

Psychology, poetics, philosophy of history, morality - the wings of the invisible Pegasus - I have flown through all these circles of thought today. The general impression: rebellion and anxiety, restlessness and temptation.

I like to throw myself into the ocean of life, but I often lose my bearings and lose myself, and feel my nature and the nature of all I am called to do wavering. I am caught up in the Jewish vortex of the planet - which spins me around in all realms of the human spirit as I cross the threshold of my family's small circle. When I voluntarily surrender myself to the universal, the universal, the infinite, my personal self vanishes like a drop of water on a glowing stove, and only condenses into a drop of water again when the air cools, that is, when the enthusiasm has died out and reality returns.

Expansion and densification, devotion and recovery of the self, conquest of the world and deepening of consciousness: this is the play of the inner life, the microcosmic spiritual orbit, the marriage of the individual soul and the universal spirit, the finite and the infinite - and this is the true evolution of man. There is another relationship which unites the soul with God, but this belongs to the world of the will. That which precedes the will is feeling; and that which precedes feeling is the will.

is the feeling. Man is what he evolves into. Great truth! But he only becomes who he is. And that's an even greater truth.

Who art thou? A question of questions. Predestination, birth, freedom: - the dark and deep abyss. Man must dive, and I dove. I listened to Bach's Prelude, and it made me receptive to understanding the step: the tortured soul that cries out for Jesus, takes hold of Him, and with a flaming fire living outside itself, gives itself to the end and to peace.

Henri Frédéric Amiel

MYSTICAL THOUGHTS

ON HELL AND THE FIRES OF HELL

I ask you, my fathers and masters, what is hell? And so I say, "Suffering for what can no longer be loved". In an infinite existence, immeasurable neither in time nor in space, a spiritual being was once granted, in his appearance on earth, to say: 'I am and I love. Once, just once, he was given a moment of actual, living love, and for this purpose he was given life on earth, and with it time and the ages - and what happened? This being disrespected this priceless gift, did not appreciate it, did not love it, despised it and received it with callousness. Thus it left the earth and went into the bosom of Abraham; it converses with Abraham - as it is said in the parable of Lazarus and the rich man - and sees Paradise, it may appear before the Lord, but it is grieved that it does not appear before the Lord in love, that it comes into contact with those who love it, but whose love it has not received. He sees clearly and says to himself: "Now I know all things, but though I thirst to love, my love will have no appearance; neither shall there be any appearance of my sacrifice, as that my life on earth is ended, and Abraham can come no more with but a drop of living water (but another gift of the former, actual life) to quench the fire of my thirst for spiritual love, which now burns within me, and which I have sown on earth; there is no more life, and no more time. Even if I would gladly give my life for the sake of many, I cannot, for the life I could have offered to love is gone, and there is a gulf between that life and the present state."

They also speak of hell-fire in material terms: I do not dwell on this mystery, I am afraid of it, but I think that if this fire were really material, they would really go mad, because I think that in material suffering they could forget, even for a moment, the spiritual suffering that torments them. But these spiritual sufferings cannot be taken off us, because they are not external, but internal. But even if they could be taken away, I think they would be even more unhappy. For even if the righteous in paradise, in their infinite love, were to forgive them and invite them into their midst, they would increase their suffering, because they would sharpen the fire of genuine, noble love, which is thirsting for reciprocation, and this love is no longer possible. But in my humble heart, I believe

that the realization of this impossibility would finally bring them relief, because they would accept the love of the righteous, even though they are unable to return this kindness and forgiveness with something similar, they would finally show some copy of the true love they despised on earth, and do something similar... I am sorry, my friends and brothers and sisters, that I cannot say this more clearly. But woe to those who destroy themselves on earth, woe to those who commit suicide! I think there can be no more unhappy than these. They say: it is a sin to pray to God for them. But the Church does not openly excommunicate them, and I secretly believe that they could be prayed for. For Christ is not angry if we love them. I have prayed for such people all my life: I confess this to you, my fathers and masters, and I still pray for them every day. Oh, there are also in hell those who are prideful and cruel, in spite of the fact that they undoubtedly know the absolute truth; there are those who have given themselves over to the prideful spirit, to Satan. They have already willingly and eagerly chosen hell, they are now voluntary tormentors. For in denying God and life, they have cursed themselves. These feed on their own pride, as if a hungry man wandering in the wilderness began to suck his own blood. But they never live well, they despise the scapegoat, they curse the God who calls them. They cannot look on the living God without hatred, and would have no god of life, that God himself should destroy and destroy what he has made. Such will forever burn in the fires of their pride, pleading for death and non-existence. But they will not touch death.

Dostoevsky

THE SAYINGS OF RAMAKRISHNA

Do not talk of brotherly love! Love me! Do not speak of doctrines and religions. There is only one religion. The rivers all flow into the ocean. Let them go, and let the others go. The great water spills out, tears itself from its bed and flows according to the law of the ages, of the races, of the different souls. The riverbed is different, the water is the same - flow into the ocean.

There are Christians and Brahmins who see in sin all the reason of religion. "O Lord, I am a sinner, look down upon me and forgive me my sins." They forget that guilt is only the first and lowest step of spirituality. People do not reckon with the power of habit! If you go on forever saying, "I am a sinner," you will be a sinner for eternity. I am not a prisoner, I am not a prisoner, who can bind me? I am the child of the King of kings, the child of God. Free your will, and you will be free. Only the fool repeats incessantly: I am in bondage. And indeed he becomes a slave. I am a sinner, and he will be a sinner. I am free. Is not the Lord my Father? Only the spirit can be a slave. Only the spirit can be free.

Vivekananda said to Ramakrishna, "Sir, have you seen God?"

Ramakrishna replied:

- Yes, my son, I have seen. I see him much more clearly, and I can show him.

To work freely is to expect no reward, to fear no punishment, in this world or the next.

God cannot be lured into the net of ritual.

I do not like controversy. God is beyond reasoning. In everything I see, I see God. What good is reason? Step into the garden, eat the sacred mango and leave. You did not enter to count the leaves of the mango tree. Why waste your days arguing over rebirth? Does it mean anything whether your calculation is correct or not?

Ramakrishna says: Those who cling to earthly things are afraid of death. But he who is not stupefied by the world does not see death. More than once, in the heightened alertness of meditation, I have contemplated the two abodes, life here and life beyond, rising to the boundaries of the worlds. And the death that separates the two was nowhere to be found. Free yourself, then, from attachment to things, and you will discover at once that life is One. That interruption of life which is called death is untruth.

Ramakrishna

FROM THE GARDEN OF EPICURUS

I know a nine-year-old maiden who is wiser than the wise. She said to me the other day: 'In books we see what we cannot see in reality because it is too late or because it is already past. But what we see in books we see wrongly and sadly. And young children should not read books. There are so many good sights they have not seen; the mountains, the lakes, the rivers, the villages and the towns, the sea and the ships, the sky and the stars.'

I'm very much of his view. We have one hour to live, why burden ourselves with so much today. Why study so much if we know we don't know anything. We live too much in books and not enough in nature, and we are like that simple-minded Pliny the Younger who studied some Greek orator while he covered five cities in ashes before the eyes of Vesuvius.

We have nothing to do in this world but resign ourselves. But noble creatures can give resignation the fair name of contentment. The great souls take things with holy joy. In the bitterness of doubt, in the general troubles of existence, under the empty sky, they can preserve the ancient virtues of the righteous. They believe, they want to believe. They are fired by the charity of the human sex. That is not all. They zealously preserve that virtue which Christian theology, in its wisdom, has exalted above all others, because they presuppose or substitute for it: hope.

Let us hope, not in humanity, which, in spite of its noble efforts, has not been able to eradicate evil from the world, but in those elusive beings who will one day continue the human race, as the human race continued from the brute. Let us welcome these spirits of the future! Let us trust in the general unrest which is the material law of racial selection. Let us cherish this fruitful restlessness as it develops in us; it is inevitable and drives us towards a divine goal.

All that is valuable only for its novelty or artistry quickly becomes obsolete. Artistic fashions pass away like all the rest. There are affected phrases that want to be as new as the clothes that come out of the workshops of famous tailors; they do not survive a season. In Rome, in the days of declining art, the statues of the empresses were combed after the latest fashion; these hairstyles soon became ridiculous; they had to be changed, and marble wigs were put on the statues. It would be fitting that the style combed in the manner of these statues should also be combed again every year. So it is that in these times, in which we live so fast, even our schools of office last only a few years, sometimes only months. I know young people whose style is two or three generations old and looks old-fashioned. This is undoubtedly the product of the astonishing progress of industry and of the machines that have captivated a society in awe. In the days of the railways and the Goncourt, it was still quite possible to live with an artistic way of writing. But since the telephone, literature, which depends on habit, has been changing its formulae with crushing speed. So we agree with Ludovic Halévy that the simple form is the only one that can peacefully survive not centuries, which would be too many, but years.

The only difficulty is to establish the simplicity of style, and we must admit that this is a great difficulty.

Nature, at least in the form in which we can know it, and in the circumstances suitable to life, shows nothing simple, and art can claim no more simplicity than nature. Yet we understand one well enough if we say that this style is simple and this style is not.

I would say, then, that even if there is no simple style per se, there is a style that appears to be simple, and that it is this style, so to speak, that preserves its youth. All that remains is to examine where he gets this happy appearance. And we shall surely find that it is not because it is less rich in the various elements than the others, but because it is so well formed as a whole, in which all the parts are so blended that they cannot be distinguished from one another. Good style is, in a word, like the sunshine which is creeping into my room this moment as I write at the window, and which owes its pure world to the intimate union of the seven colours which make it up. Good style is like white light. It's put together, but it doesn't show. It is only a picture, and we know how little pictures are worth unless it is the poet who weaves them together. But I only wanted to make it known that the beautiful and desirable simplicity of language is only an illusion, rooted in the correct and economical arrangement of the parts of speech.

Unable to conceive of the beautiful apart from time and space, I can only find pleasure in the works of the mind if I can find the connection which makes them to life

to life. The coarse tiles of Hisszarlik have made me more fond of the *Iliad*; and I find more beauty in *the Divina Commedia*, to know the life of thirteenth-century Florence. I seek man and man alone in art. The most beautiful poetry is nothing but a relic. Goethe has a profound saying: 'Only occasional works are lasting'. But in the end there is nothing but an occasional work, because everything depends on the place and the moment in which it was conceived. We cannot understand them and love them by reason if we do not know the place, time and circumstances of their birth.

It would be presumptuous simplicity to think that we have created a work that is sufficient in itself. Only the relations of the most excellent with the old give it its value. The more I can grasp this connection, the more I am interested in my work.

The more I think about human life, the more I find that its ta- nua and its judge must be called Irony and Mercy, just as the Egyptians called the goddesses Isis and Nephthys to their dead. Irony and Mercy are two good counsellors; the one makes our lives pleasant by smiling, the other makes them miserable by weeping. The Irony to which I refer is not cruel. It does not mock either beauty or love. It is gentle and benevolent. His laughter soothes vexation, he teaches us to laugh at the wicked and the foolish, without whom we would be weak enough to hate.

The love of books is truly a commendable love. The lovers of books have been much mocked, and at last it may be fit to mock them; so it is with all sorts of spirits. But they ought rather to be envied, for they have a peaceful and prolonged delight in their lives. We think to embarrass them by telling them not to read their books. But one of them answered without any difficulty, "And do you eat of your old faience?" Is there a more noble thing to do than to put books in a cupboard. It's very similar, I tell you, to the kind of woodwork that children use to build sandbanks on the seashore. They work in vain, and all they have put together will soon collapse. This is undoubtedly the case with collections of books and pictures. But only the evils of life and the brevity of existence are to blame. The sea carries away the mound of sand and the bailiff scatters the collections. And yet we have nothing better to do than to make sandhills at ten - and collections at sixty. Nothing we have created will survive, and the love of bookworms is no more vain than any other love.

Anatole France

A MAGIC OF WORDS

It is the glory of the human race to embrace in its womb the self-derived and self-contained metaphysical anxiety of eternity, which is quite different from that of human consciousness.

To spend is to destroy a day of life, to die a little. To spend is to dedicate life to that one task which is different from all other pursuits of life.

From now on, I am impersonal... I am a potentiality of the spiritual universe, contemplating and unfolding itself, with the means that was once my self. I must take on the task of unfolding, it is essential for the universe to know my identity.

I need the final, solitary silence of the soul and a hitherto unknown forgetting to hear the hidden voices within myself.

To cling to the whiteness offered by the sheet of paper, the inaugurator of its innocence, forgetting even the title: it would be too loud - and when a line of fragments, a grain of it, is born, as if waving, and overcomes the incident from one word to the next, the whiteness returns, suddenly, as a gift, invulnerable, and with it the absolute certainty that beyond it is nothing - returns to authenticate the silence.

I maintain that there is a secret affinity between the old methods and what remains of them, the magic of poetry - to evoke in deliberate obscurity the silenced object, the words that refer to it, never direct, which become with it the same silence. This is the operation that leads to creation: until at last, within the limits of the idea hovering before the wizard of words, the magic image surely gleams in his eyes. *The poem, a bewitching flash.*

The eternal myth: communion through the book. A full part for everyone.

Whenever the first issues of some literary journal appeared, I, with the patience of alchemists, ready to sacrifice all ambition and pleasure, as I had ever done to feed the hearth of Magnum Opus with their chattels and to fire the beams of their dwellings, always dreamed of something else and attempted something else. That is difficult to answer. It is quite simply a book, a single book built up in several volumes and thought out in advance, not a collection of random inspirations, however wonderful... I say more, and I say BOOK, because I am convinced that there is only one at bottom, whether it haunts anyone who has ever written, even a genius. The orphic explanation of the earth, this is the only task of the book, this is the true literary game: for even the rhythm of the book, though living and impersonal, is, up to the numbering of the pages, a subsidiary part of the equivalents of this dream or Ode.

On one of those exceptional mornings when the spirit, having washed away the alcohol of the weekdays, awakens in Paradise, and too saturated with immortality, there is no pleasure from which it does not shrink, but rather looks round with the serenity of exile. The whole environment desires my purity. The sky itself does not oppose me, and for a long time no cloud has obscured the irony of Azure's rejected beauty, a beauty that spreads naked and delightful in the distance. Dearest hour - its state of grace with all the more care

the more I must prolong it, the more I sink day by day into a more cruel but more powerful force that chains me to folly, rather than to the heights of the magic of personal reverie, for which I would pay with my life, I turn to Art...

An imperceptible transformation takes place, and the lightness of the moment slowly melts into a feeling of completeness. My whole spiritual being - the treasury of correspondences, the Arabian harmony of colours, the memory of the rhythm of the former and the knowledge of the Word - awakens and I am seized by the rare poetry that I recall with such astonishing precision that the interplay gives birth to clarity itself, the only one.

And now to write... what to write, for I refuse the intoxication I feel for my happiness as a vile insult and a rude insult. (Remember, I do not delight in beauty, I live in it.) Shall I praise my redemptive reading? No! - when, in fact, a great hymn is sounded from the confession, and without it I should have been unable to preserve the supernatural harmony in which I dwell; all other earthly aids would not violently destroy, by the shock or excitement of opposition, that other equilibrium which immerses me in divinity. I can only be silent - not in some ecstasy akin to passivity, but because the human voice would here be misplaced - and the lake under the motionless azure, on which even the white moon of summer dawns does not stain, is content with the silent admiration with which it reflects the light, and which the rapture would disturb.

Long contemplation is necessary: translucent and perfect art alone is virginal enough to be shaped with religious devotion.

Beauty, Pulcheria is always a yarrow-life, born from Nothing, from Space - and there it returns.

The imperfection of languages, inasmuch as they are mostly devoid of the ultimate: being writing thought, without incidental incidentals and whisper, the still silent and immortal speech; the diversity of idioms on earth is an obstacle to man's uttering words that would otherwise hit the truth with a single blow.

Stéphane Mallarmé

THE PARADOXES OF SEBASTIAN MELMOTH

The only thing we know for sure about human nature is that it is variable. it changes.

A man who does not think in his own way is not thinking at all.

The man who is furthest removed from his own time reflects it most faithfully.

I consider life more important than anything I can talk about seriously.

The real basis of marriage is mutual misunderstanding.

There are only two kinds of tragedy in this world. One is when you don't get what you want, the other is when you do. The latter is much worse - that is the real tragedy.

Something is not necessarily true for which a man dies. Everybody calls his own blunders an experience.

The soul is born old, but it is rejuvenated. That's the comedy of life. The body is born young but grows old. This is the tragedy of life.

As long as we don't talk about something, it never happened. It only becomes real by saying it.

A cynic is a man who knows the price of everything but the price of nothing.

It's only a dreary man who doesn't judge by appearances. The true mystery of the world is what is visible, not what is invisible.

What art really reflects is not life, but the viewer.

Every woman becomes like her mother: that is her tragedy. A man will never be like that: that is his tragedy.

Oscar Wilde

THE POET FROM THE POET

I replace melancholy with courage, doubt with certainty, despair with hope, evil with good, complaint with duty, doubt with faith, sophisms with cool calm, pride with modesty.

The poetic groans of our century are all sophisms. Let not the fundamental theorems be questioned.

I accept Euripides and Sophocles, but I do not accept Aeschylus. Bear no witness against the Creator: by indecency, by bad taste. Cast away unbelief: do this for my sake.

Two kinds of poetry are not possible - there is only poetry.

There is a not-so-silent understanding between the author and the reader. According to this, the first calls himself a patient and accepts the other as a nurse. The poet is humanity's consoler. The roles are exchanged arbitrarily.

I don't want to be labelled a poseur. I leave no memorial. Poetry is not a storm,
but a fertile, majestic river.

From words to ideas in a single step.

Those who are firmly resolved to hate their fellow man cannot.
They must begin the hatred with themselves.

Your spirit incessantly spills out of its pool and falls into the trap of darkness, the roughly forged trap of selfishness, of ambition.

Taste is the fundamental virtue that encompasses all other virtues. It is the pinnacle of intelligence.

The novel is a false genre, because it describes passions for the sake of passion: the moral lesson is missing. To describe passion is nothing; it is enough to be born a little jackal, a little vulture, a little panther. It is not important. But to describe passion, to subordinate it to high morality, as Corneille does, is something else.

Real pain and hope are incompatible. No matter how great the pain, hope is a hundred cubits higher. Well, let me remain calm with those who seek the truth. Down with the hoofs, down with the ridiculous bitches, down with the embarrassing blowhards. Those who suffer, who disrupt the mystery around us, have no hope. Poetry that challenges absolute truths is less beautiful than poetry that does not challenge them. The exaggeration of uncertainty is a talent badly used, a waste of time: nothing is easier than to prove.

Melancholy and sadness are the beginning of doubt. Doubt is the beginning of despair. Despair is the beginning of various degrees of evil. Anyone who wants to be convinced of this should read *the testimony of the child of the century*. Once stepped on, the slope is fatal. It is certain to lead to evil. Trust not in the slope. Destroy the evil at its root. Do not cultivate such adjectives as: indescribable, ineffable, glittering, incomparable, colossal - these lie unashamedly to the noun they falsify. It is like lewdness.

When one thinks of truth, the source of all truth, the perfect goodness of God, his perfect inaccessibility to evil - sophisms dissolve of themselves.

Doubt has always been in the minority. In this century it is in the majority. We absorb the violation of duty through our pores. It happened only once - and will never happen again.

We are susceptible to friendship, to justice, to compassion. O my friends, what is it that we lack for virtue?

As long as my friends are alive, I will not speak of death.

The beauty of death can only be understood by the beauty
of life.

One says serious things when one has nothing special to say. Do I have to write in verse to separate myself from other people?

The ruler of the human sex is order. Justice, virtue are not the strongest.

The best way to persuade is not to persuade. Despair is the least of our errors.

A little is comforting. Much makes us sad.

To fight against evil is to have too much respect for evil. If I allow people to buy it and not forget it, that's all I can do for them.

The phenomenon will pass. I seek the law.

The young listen to the advice of the mature. They have boundless confidence.

The virtues of the heart are assured by the genius of the flame.

Man is no less immortal than the soul. Great
thoughts come from understanding.

I will not accept evil. Man is perfect. There is progress. Good is irrevocable. Antichrists, rebel angels, eternal torments, religions - all are the product of the two ends.

Lautréamont

FROM THE SUN

The debate is more about obscuring the truth than revealing it. Truth must mature in solitude. When it has matured, it becomes so clear that it is accepted without debate.

It is not necessary to suppress reason, as false teachers preach, in order to know the true religion, but to purify and crucify it, so that everything that is put before it may be examined with it.

True religion is not a religion of reason; but true religion cannot be opposed to

reason. Man's life is only meaningful if he understands it as a service.

Man's true strength is not in passionate ambition, but in unimpeded joy.

That the sole aim of man's life is the perfection of his immortal soul is true, if only because all other aims are meaningless in the face of death.

Thought in its true nature is the explanation of truth; there is only one wrong thought: the unthought thought.

Everyone can conceive of God in his own way. But God's law must be fulfilled by all of us equally.

Everything we can see and imagine has its origin in our spiritual nature.

It is enough for man to regard himself as a mere physical being, and he becomes an insoluble mystery, an inextricable contradiction.

There is nothing greater than the humble man: he who frees himself from his own selfhood is united with God.

If you do good, be grateful.

Among people who live evil lives, every effort to do good brings not love but persecution.

You have entered into life without knowing how, but you know that you, like this little me that you are, have grown, progressed, then progressed still further, reached the halfway point and suddenly, you cannot tell, possessed by joy or fright, you are staggering along, and you do not want to move, you do not want to go any further, because you are not

you know what's there. But you haven't seen the place you came from, and yet you keep coming. You came in the entrance and you don't want to go out the exit. Your whole life has been a meandering through physical existence, you have gone, you have gone in a hurry and now all at once you regret that what you have always done is happening. You are frightened by the great change in your bodily state that comes with bodily death, but an equally great change has come with your birth, and not only has nothing bad come of it for you, but on the contrary, something so good has come of it that you do not want to part with it.

He who recognizes the ray of divine power in the smallest thing in the world is a man of lofty conception and elevated aspiration. Such a man cherishes himself. He will respect other men and will not despise petty matters, but will regard them as objects of divine honour.

There is no outstanding feat in life that cannot be accomplished. Let our whole life be such a feat.

The less contented man is with himself and his inner life, the more he will strive for manifestations in the outer social life.

To punish in Russian is to teach. To teach, however, is only by example. To punish evil with evil does not teach, but demoralizes.

A man has dropped a precious pearl into the sea, and to get it back he has set to work with a bucket to exhaust the water. The spirit of the sea came up from the depths and asked. The man said, 'Until I have exhausted the sea and found the pearl.'

Don't seek the love of men. Don't let their lack of love deceive you. Men are often loved for what is wrong and hated for what is right. Seek not to please men, but God.

Heaven is angry with us for our sins, the world for our virtues.

It is impossible not to believe in a theoretical doctrine, the practical application of which is the easiest way to salvation for all. There is no better test of whether a doctrine is true. The doctrines of Christianity are such.

Reason leads men to transcend the laws of life. These transgressions, however, men find so agreeable, and are so accustomed to them, that they endeavour to stifle reason, so that it may no longer mock them.

Tolstoy

ABOUT THE BAR

"Always one, very many around me," thinks the hermit.

The I and the me are too quickly half for each other: how would it be endurable if there were no friends.

For the hermit, the friend is always the third: and the third is the cork that prevents the conversation of the two from sinking into the abyss.

O, many depths lie in wait for every hermit. That's why they long for a friend and the heights of their own.

Our faith in others betrays what we would believe in ourselves. Our longing for a friend is our betrayer.

And love is very often a way to leap envy. And often man attacks, and makes himself an enemy, to cover his own attacking self.

"At least be my enemy!" - So says true respect, which dares not beg for friendship.

If a man wants to be a friend, he must know that he must be at war for it, he must be a double enemy.

In our friend we must honour our enemy. Can't you get close to your friend without turning on him?

In a friend, one must have one's best enemy. You must be most closely united with his heart when you oppose him.

Wilt thou not wear a shroud before thy friend? Does it honor your friend to see you as you are? He will wish hell for it!

He who makes no secret of himself will stagger you: you have such serious reason to fear being naked. Yes, if you were gods, you would be ashamed of your clothes.

You cannot adorn yourself pretty enough for your friend: you must be an arrow to him, a desire for the superhuman.

Have you ever seen your friend sleeping - to find out what it's like? By the way, what is your friend's face? Your own face in a rough and imperfect mirror.

Have you ever seen your friend sleeping? And are you not alarmed that your friend is like that? Oh, I'll bet man is something to be surpassed

The friend must be a master in concealment and concealment: thou must not want to see him. In your sleep you must realize what your friend does in waking life.

Your condolence should not be a guess: to know first whether your friend wants condolence.

He may love in you the unbroken eyes and the look of eternity.

Let the love that sympathizes with thy friend hide itself under a hard crust, let its teeth be broken in its penetration. So shall its delicacy and sweetness be found.

Are you fresh air, solitude, bread and medicine for your friend? There are some who cannot unlock their own fetters, and yet are a saviour to their friend.

Are you a slave? You cannot be a friend. Are you a bully? You cannot have friends.

For a very long time, the slave and the tyrant were hidden in the woman. Therefore the woman is not yet capable of friendship: she knows only love.

In woman's love there is injustice and blindness to all that she does not love. And in the woman's love of recognition there is still storm and lightning and night beside the light.

Woman is not yet capable of friendship: women are still cats and mada- rakes. Or at best cows.

Woman is not yet capable of friendship. But tell me, men, who among you is capable of friendship?

Oh, your misery, men, and your shrivelled souls! As much as you give to a friend, I will give even to an enemy, and I will not be the poorer for it.

There is friendship: let there be

friendship! Behold, lo, the word

of Zarathustra.

ON LOVE OF ONE'S NEIGHBOUR

You huddle round your neighbour, and find fine words for it. But I say to you, that love of neighbour is the wrong love of yourselves.

You run away from your neighbour, and want to make a virtue of it; but I see through your 'unselfishness'.

Thine is older than the I: Thine was pronounced holy before the I was pronounced; so man hasteth to his neighbour.

Am I preaching to you the love of neighbour? Rather, that you should run away from the proximity of the half-friend, and I proclaim the love of the distant one!

Higher than the love of the near is the love of the far and the love of the future; above the love of men I place the love of things and phantoms.

The ghost that runs behind you, my brother, is more beautiful than you are: why do you not give him your flesh and your bones? But you are afraid, and run to your neighbour.

You do not hold fast enough to yourselves, and do not love yourselves enough: you seek to entice your neighbour to love you, and to gild yourselves with your own error.

I would not have you be content with some of your neighbours and their neighbours; you must make of yourselves the friend and his overflowing heart.

You call a witness, if you would speak well of yourselves; and if you succeed in misleading him to think well of you, you think well of yourselves.

He is not only a liar who speaks in spite of his knowledge, but only truly he who speaks in spite of his ignorance. And so you speak of yourselves in company, and you deceive your neighbour with yourselves.

Thus saith the fool, "To associate with men corrupts the character, especially when one has none."

One goes to his neighbour because he seeks to find himself, and the other because he wishes to lose himself. Your false love for yourselves turns your loneliness into captivity.

It is the distant ones who pay for the love of the near neighbour; and if five of you are together, a sixth must always die for that.

Nor do I like your feasts: I have seen many actors there, and the spectators have often behaved like actors.

I do not proclaim you a neighbour, but a friend. Let the friend be to you the feast of the earth and the herald of the superhuman.

I proclaim to you the friend and his overflowing heart. But man must know that he is
a thirsty sponge, if he would be loved by a heart overflowing with love.

I proclaim to you the friend in whom the world is ready, the cup of goodness, the creative friend who always has a world ready to give away.

And as the world is scattered for him, so it is in the turning together, as the realization of good by evil, and as that of ends by chance.

Let the future and the distant be thy cause: in thy friend thou must love the superhuman as the cause of thyself.

My brethren, I do not preach to you the love of the near neighbour: but the love of the far.

Behold the word of Zarathustra.

Nietzsche

TWENTIETH CENTURY

FOR THE BLUE BLUE

To think honestly, even if you act against everyone, is to act for everyone. Mankind needs those who love it to confront it and rebel against it when necessary. You do not save humanity by falsifying your conscience to flatter it, but by defending your conscience and the integrity of your intellect against their abuses of power: for these too are of their voices. And you betray him if you betray yourself. The essence of freedom is that free man is himself the law of the universe, a self-conscious law, which alone is destined to serve as a balance to the all-crushing machine. I see the General Being, still three-quarters stuck in the clay or shell or stone, and subject to the inexorable law of the matter in which it is embedded. Only his eyes and his breath are free. "I hope," says the gaze. I will, says the breath. And supported by these two, it strives to unfold. The gaze and the breath are us: the free man.

Death rules the world! Living, shake off your yoke. It is not enough that it destroys the peoples. It wants you to praise it and run singing to your death; its masters wish you to celebrate their own sacrifices... "This is the most beautiful and most glorious destiny!". - They lie! Long live life! Life alone is sacred. And the love of life is the supreme virtue. But man today does not have it. You do not love life, you who know no better use for it than to throw it to the sword of death. You have your own lives to bear: you, the rich, the bourgeois, the servants of the past, the conservatives, who, out of lack of appetite, moral dyspepsia, bitter-heartedness, boredom, sulking, stand aside - and you also have your own lives to bear, you proletarians, the poor, the unfortunate, who are discouraged by the fate that has fallen to you. In the bitter pettiness of your life, in the hopelessness of change (you little faithful!), your only desire is to escape it by some violent act that will lift you above the mire, at least for a moment - for the last pill.

To die and to destroy. Glorious thing! We should live! And you don't know that. You are not worthy. You've never tasted the blessing of the living moment, of joy in a beam of light. Dying souls who wish that everything should die with them; sick brothers and sisters whom we reach out to save, and who frantically drag us down with them to the bottom of the whirlpool...

Woe to you, scribes and Pharisees, woe to you, hypocrites! Politicians and priests, artists, writers, choristers of death, you are all full of bones within

and rottenness. Verily you are the sons of those who killed Christ. Like them, you are breaking men's shoulders with terrible burdens, which you yourselves have not touched with your little fingers. You crucify them as they crucify you; and those who seek to help the unfortunate people who come among you with peace, blessed peace, in their hands, you throw into prison and revile them, and as the Scripture says, you persecute them from city to city, until only the blood that is shed on the ground falls back on you like rain.

It is not true, men, that you are slaves of the dead, and that they chain you to the earth like serfs. You are the sons of living men, and you yourselves are alive. Be free! Each one of you is Man himself - not the decaying flesh that stinks in the tombs, but the crackling fire of life that cleanses the rot, devours the lying corpses of the centuries, and as ever-new, as ever-young fire, girds the earth with its burning arms. Be free!

Romain Rolland

SINCE THE WORLD WAS THE WORLD...

I wonder what line of time and what world view we have in mind when we say: "since when the world was the world"...? Thought and emotion may have been born at the beginning of time, but in any case it has been alive since time immemorial, because "since the world was the world", man has always done this and that, and believed things one way or another. The stone-breaker believes that the ways of the Old and New Worlds have always been broken in the same way as he has. This is the stonemason's conception, and that of those who are no better than he. This is the mindset of the judge, for example, who cannot imagine that there has ever been a time in the course of a century when there was no penal law and no executive army. What we are seeing now has always been visible, and it is being blown by society large and small at every rung of the ladder. We search in vain for the hidden meaning of this cliché. Obviously, what we see in the past and all the time will not be hidden from us in the future, and so God is not given permission to create new things.

But even if we resign ourselves to the unchangeable, we remain uncertain about what kind of world we dare to speak of so resolutely. According to the Gospel, there will be a great sickness, the like of which has never been seen since the world began, and never will be. It will not make the stone-breaker or the stiff judge any wiser, but the text is a warning that refutes our faith in the permanence of the world and its *non-varietur*. For it only takes a moment for the world to turn around and lose its old face.

If we return from Paradise Lost, foolish and humbled, and examine the meaning of the old words that loom menacingly and mysteriously inconvenient on the steps of the road to Thebes, the above truism is at once revealed. The mystical understanding is that the world is Satan's realm. That makes it clear.

"Since Evil is Evil", there are duties and people in the world, and there are fools, and the street belongs to everyone. There is the great world and the world of little men, there is the world of scholars, the literary world, the Catholic world and the half-world, and there are men who are hero-

isms, and because digestion doesn't bother them, they think they'll never die.

Léon Bloy

A VOICE FROM INDIA

Have you not heard his silent
footsteps? It comes, it comes, it
always comes.

At every moment and at every age, every day and every night - he comes, he comes,
he always comes.

I have sung many, many songs, in my mind's many moods, but every voice has said:
it comes, it comes, it always comes.

In the fragrant days of sunny spring on the forest path: it comes, it comes, it always
comes. Nyári éjszakák esős homályában, a felhők mennydörgő szekerén, jön, jön,
min-
always comes.

In all my sorrows His footsteps weigh heavy on my heart, And the sweet touch of
His feet shines in my joy.

I have not remembered the moment when I first crossed life's threshold.

What a power had prompted me to open my being to this great mystery, like a bud in
the depths of a midnight wood! When I lifted my eyes to the light on the morning of my
life, I felt at that moment that I was no stranger to this world, that I was taken into the
arms of the Mysterious, without name or form, in the image of my mother.

The same unknown would appear to me in death in the same way: as if I had known
it from all eternity. And because I love life, I know that I will love death just the same.

The little child cries out as his mother takes him from her right breast, only to find
comfort in her left the next moment.

Rabindranath Tagore

THE PAVED ROAD

Is there a God or not? Today this is about the most uninteresting question.
Recently, someone tried to kill God. That's fucking crazy - killing a dead man!

Besides, whether God is alive or dead, what do people care about God? What is God
to them? They are naked - God has not clothed them; servants - God has not freed them;
hungry - God has not fed them. The animal has no God, but man lives worse than the
animal. First make man a man, then you can talk to him about God.

How shall man answer this? By words - he must be ashamed of that; and by deeds -
where are religious deeds in our day? How can we, not prove, but show that religion is
the most important of human actions? If something has been irretrievably and
irretrievably taken out of religious experience, it is the religious

sense of religious action. As long as we are talking about religion as an ideal, everyone agrees, or at least: no one disagrees; otherwise, it is probably because everyone is indifferent. But we hardly ever try to connect religion with real reality, either we stand there like fools or like scoundrels, because as far back as modern humanity can remember, the only social reality of religion is the stupidity of the deceived and the mischief of the deceivers.

God died in humanity but not in man; in society but not in the individual, in the whole but not in the individual. Religious feeling is the highest metaphysical limit to the physical sense of self-preservation - a limit reached only by man: the only animal that knows death. I know I am going to die; but I want to live after death - that is the beginning of religion. It is religion that distinguishes the human species from all other animals: man is the religious animal.

Even men from whom all religion is alien are forced to admit that the aim and meaning of life is happiness, and that happiness is love. To love is motherly, as is to rejoice that the object of our love is: to have, and to want always to have. Not to want to have, to resign oneself not to have, is to not want to be. Love is a real and transcendental affirmation of being. Death is a real and transcendental denial of this being, an annihilation of personality. All life is defeated by death. To give meaning to life, we must affirm in love the eternal existence of personality; but death, which destroys personality, destroys love, the only meaning of life possible for man. To grasp this compelling antinomy, we need the experience of love and death. At a certain moment in his conscious life, every man is forced by religion to face the two greatest realities of his existence: love and death. Each man knows more or less what God is because he knows more or less what love and death are.

If the loved being dies, the lover does not cease to love. It is either a miracle or madness. How can I love a dead person or a person who can die, who must die? Is not the same individual existence which death unquestionably denies, just as unquestionably denied to me by love? I know that love is the essence of my life, and I live only because I love. But if I admit that death destroys the personality, and yet I love the dead, the mortal - then I affirm with my will what I deny with my mind; I affirm that there is something, I will that there will always be something that I know is no more, or will not be tomorrow. I deny and affirm the same thing - for that is madness! I love and live as long as I am mad: but if I return to reason, I cease to live. My life denies my reason, my reason denies my life. So there is only one of two things to do: either to resign oneself to this senselessness, to renounce reason and surrender to incurable madness; or, without bowing to the empirical possibility of finding a way out, to seek a way out that is no longer empirical but transcendental.

Religion shows us this way out.

Merezskovsky

ON THE SPIRIT

The man of every age holds that the spirit, though it is only an emanation of the body, yet survives the physical world.

It is unwise to see an illusion in what everyone believes, and it would be prejudiced to brand general conviction as ignorance and credulity. It is not precisely in the wake of criticism that faith ceases to exist, and it is mediocre thinking to believe things not understood to be non-existent. In the world of waves, for example, our perception is less than nothing.

Even if I do not believe in things, even if I doubt everything, I do not lose faith in myself, because I feel in myself the darkly powerful element that defies all doubt, and whatever we call this essential core of consciousness: whether we call it a living spirit or a doubting monad, we cannot doubt its existence, because life here does not tolerate doubt. And love leads to knowledge, because it is the passion of leaving our world and pouring into the other.

The ego often longs to throw off the burdens of the body and yearns fiercely for a liberating change. Love, like so many passions, desires death when the passion reaches its goal. The scientist in the laboratory would say that this is merely the weakness of a tired body. Yet this impulse comes from the depths of love, at the moment of love's fullness, before the body is limp, and in the hearts of the strong. For strong are those who claim the rare power of true passion.

We do not know whether the spirit and the body live separate lives, and the way in which the spirit emanates is unknown. But in any case it is more difficult to believe in the destruction of the spirit than in the decay of the body. Love believes itself eternal. Whether this word eternity has any meaning, I do not know. But the testimony of feeling is in itself, like that of life. How wretchedly empty, depthless, and barren is the consciousness the world has destined for us! The scientists may laugh at the ghost, but we shall laugh at their evidence. But are we really fooled, and if so, who makes us fools? The eternity of the soul is certainly an illusion, but perhaps there is also a truth in the eternal present. To the pure soul, everything is present. Time is an illusion of embodied thought, a figure of the body's earthly movement. Goethe thought of this one evening, when he contemplated eternal life at the suggestion of Schiller's melody.

There is a trade in spirits, as there is in the body. There are cheats and fools everywhere. It disgusts me to think that the greatest souls are forced to yield to money-grubbing swindlers and foolish experimenters who attribute false notes to Beethoven and fecal thoughts to Shakespeare.

But that is not the point. Nor can clowns and dirty-handed conmen dispel the belief that the sublime mystery beyond the grave is anything but nothing. Such folk are as unworthy of the eternal soul, if there be such, as the great poets are unworthy of the contingent.

Perhaps not so simple-minded is the simple soul that dances the table and communes with the spirits by means of fatherly knocks. Many such souls are animated by hope, many by generosity. They are not afraid to die. I know more than one simple man who prefers the thought of annihilation to eternal life, and if he could,

he would know what to choose. Eternity, especially that of the spirit, is a shudder to such a man. If we cling to life, we love the body and its pleasures, and fear only the transience which leads to the end, but not death.

André Suarés

FROM THE MOTTOES

ANYONE who approaches art through history or thought cannot avoid the danger of seeing both the worst and the best as material. In this case, what is only appearance and accident is shown to be of equal value to what is essential and primordial. Thus a science - which is life - can become a bloodless arithmetic.

Without a high degree of sophistication, without a high degree of polish, it is impossible to recognise the subtlety and rhythm of the dissections. Conceptual aesthetics is only practised by barbarians.

NEVER such domination of the masses, NEVER such barrenness of the action of man in the world! There are times and occasions when the artist feels motivated to take up the hatchet with the others, but today, as the guardian of eternal fires, he is above the turmoil of worlds, states, societies.

THEY complain that the artist does not submit to the prevailing generalities that apply equally to all, and that he ought to obey only the true laws of nature. What is common today is no longer the result of the force of essential norms, nor of inner impulses, but of chance and economic necessity. In an Empire where the supreme law is laid down by the Spirit, the Artist alone can now live, and with him perhaps those observers who have made themselves independent. Art today is indeed a "break with society".

ARTISTS are often flogged for their perverse tendencies. But we also wonder at the many small and big things that the citizen likes. What an abundance of depravity and perversity there is in the tasteless and senseless "equipment" which he piles around himself to deceive himself.

GREAT PRIORITIES in art have been given the power of erecting a edifice of perfection over their pristine, virginal world. Hence their unapproachable, often exemplary greatness. We can only follow in their footsteps with the most extreme emotion, a more loving approach and a more concentrated elaboration. What they have found in the forest of the wild, in the soil of the deep, we must draw from the deep.

The SPIRIT, as long as it moulds distance and the past into its most intimate image, arrives in the realm of the immediate present and the personal. It is only essential to shape life artistically. What life? - That is in any case irrelevant.

ART cannot win the wider society for itself as long as people cannot distinguish between the essential impact of the work and the vulgar excitement of its narrative subject. Only those who are able to grasp the rhythm of the work of art can have an understanding of it.

GREAT WORK has a double effect on the mind. On the one hand, it gives rise to an intense enthusiasm which is momentary and irretrievable, and often goes hand in hand with incomprehension; on the other hand, it gives rise to a pure pleasure which can be revived at any time by penetrating from one degree to the next.

An EVENT is the highest and ultimate expression of an event: it does not convey a thought but a mood. In painting it is articulation, line and colour; in poetry: selection, scale and tone.

They are mediocre craftsmen who, in expressing ideas and telling fractions, impose time-measure and rhyme on the words that cover the facts. Would it be worthy of a rational being to play with rhymes and verse verses, if they did not burst forth as the melody of some irresistible song? Rhymes, thoughts and even images often serve only to give flesh to this melody.

It is a fact that an enterprise can only be promoted by the great thoughts of great minds. It is of infinite importance to educate and guide the smaller ones. They must be led into the atmosphere in which they can nourish the breath of great thoughts.

Stefan George

TO THE UNKNOWN FRIEND

1.

Do not be offended, Nathanael, by the harsh title I have chosen to give this book; I could have given it to Menalkas, but Menalkas, like yourself, never lived. The only human name under which this book could hide itself is my own; but how could I have dared to write it over it?

I began it simply, without any preparation, without any consideration, and if I sometimes write in it of landscapes I have not seen, of odours I have not smelt, of deeds I have not done - or of you, Nathanael, whom I have never met - it is no hypocrisy, and these things are no more lies than this name, Nathanael, my future reader, which I give you, not yet knowing yours.

And when you have read it, throw away this book - and go away. I would that it would quench in thee the desire to be absent - to be gone, wherever from, from thy city, from thy family circle, from thy room, or from thy thoughts.

2.

Now, Nathaniel, throw this book away. Shake it off. Let me go. Let me go, you're tiring me, you're setting me back. The love I had for you is now a burden. I'm tired of pretending to raise someone. Have I ever told you that I wished you to be like me? I love you because you differ from me; I love you only for what you differ from me. Educate me. Who can I educate but myself? Nathanael, shall I tell you? I have educated myself continually. Now I continue. I have nothing else to honour in myself but what I shall do next.

Throw my book away, Nathanael, don't be satisfied with it. Do not think that anyone else can find your truth; be more careful of that than of anything else. If I chose your food, you would not be hungry to eat it; if I made your bed, you would not be sleepy to lie in it. Throw away my book; think of it as only one of a thousand possible resolutions to the world. You find your own. Do not do what others might just as well do. What others might just as well say, don't say - what others might just as well write, don't write. Cling to nothing in yourself but what you feel is nowhere to be found but in yourself, and impatiently, or patiently, but, oh, create the most irreplaceable being of yourself.

André Gide

THE ABSENCE OF VIOLENCE

He who would be non-violent must not feel anger towards his offender. He must not wish him ill. He must not curse. You must not cause him bodily harm. He should take calmly whatever evil his persecutor does to him. Nonviolence is therefore complete harmlessness. Total non-violence is the total absence of all ill will towards anything or anyone that is or who is alive. It includes life inferior to that of man, and does not exclude even wild beasts and noxious vermin. It is not meant to fuel our destructive impulses. If we knew our Creator's intentions, we would recognize a place for these creatures in the work of creation. Non-violence, therefore, is nothing but good will towards all life. A pure role. I found it in the Hindu scriptures, the Bible and the Qur'an.

Non-violence is a state of perfection. It marks the goal towards which humanity is naturally, if perhaps unconsciously, moving. Man does not become a god when he reaches the stage of being the embodiment of impeccability. Perhaps only then does he become truly human. At the stage we are at today, we are part man, part animal, and in our ignorance and hubris we claim to be faithfully fulfilling the purpose of our being if we return the blow with a blow and let the anger necessary for it boil. We profess our faith that retaliation is the law of being. But we find in the scriptures that retribution is never prescribed for us,

...at most, it is permissible. The prescription is: the conquest of self. The law of our being is to conquer ourselves. Without it, the highest degree of perfection cannot be attained. According to this, the supreme characteristic of the human race is found in suffering.

And the goal is getting further and further away from us. The more progress we make, the more we become aware of our disability. Satisfaction lies in the pursuit, not in the achievement. The highest aspiration is the greatest triumph.

And even if I realize more clearly than ever how far I am from the goal, the law of perfect love remains the law of my being. And every ballet must only spur my aspirations the stronger.

A certain application of this law becomes a policy, if it is made real in time and space. The highest politics, then, would consist in its highest realization. Honesty as a practical policy, in the time of its application, is in no way different from honesty arising from inward conviction.

The political lack of violence of the non-cooperative believer does not, in most cases, stand the test. It entails prolonging the struggle. No one should blame the stubborn, intransigent nature of the English for this. Even the hardest iron must melt in the flames of love. No one can dissuade me from this conviction, for experience has taught me. If the British or any other quality cannot be softened, then the fire is not glowing enough, if perhaps one has the fire.

Gandhi

THE BODY

Can there be a lighter gesture than a handshake? I will hold you and you will hold me. I feel your strength and you feel my strength. A handshake is a feeling of equality, or perhaps more correctly, a handshake is a will to equality. Hence the well-known heart attack. And what a fine art it is for the stronger not to go a hair's breadth beyond equality. More here is rudeness, but less is refusal and contempt, or even fear and avarice. To give a finger is an insult. Pulling back the arm is defence, because the arm protects the ribs. That's why the Roman salute is so brave: a challenge to the killer. These gestures all reveal and emphasise a sane point. On the other hand, to greet someone lightly with the hand, as if in a rush, is to express detachment. How well little children understand this!

The farandol is a dance in which the feet obey the hands. The farther one is from the leader, the more the weight of the chain is on him. The farandol is thus an image of tyranny and the fury that is the law of tyranny itself. Sometimes, in the passionate play, the last dancer spins like a slingshot. I understand well the slow circle dance of the Bretagne, in which the moderate rhythm of the steps is somehow indicated by hand. This very gentle compulsion is the fuse. Here, the unity of society is created by the good taste of the leader, imitated by the others. This sign language has a moderating effect on all passions - even the

even pleasure! It is the love song of the hands that is as disciplined as a choir.

But let me speak of the little girls' circle dance. It is nothing but the dance of the palms. Here, the passions are aroused and restrained by the fact that the circle has neither head nor tail. He who is drawn is equally drawn. But they must be equally strong. A child who is too small is pulled from both sides, and so the shape of the curve is broken. If, on the other hand, they are of equal strength, a circle, the most compact of the curves, is formed. And one understands at once that, as the Pythagoreans said, the circle is the truth. The ellipse of men is not true, at either end tyrants rule. These symbols were clear at the time when the charioteers studied the curve of the dance and its written trace. I believe we have moved away from the circle, and we have also moved away from harmony in song. I suppose that the elementary circle was present in all the curves, at a time when dance was the most powerful, expressive language, that is, a vision for the dancers, but also, in the process of calming down, a self-knowledge. The king participated in the dance and everyone was king. Today, the king sits in the armchair and pays to be entertained. The dance was sold.

The little girls' circle dance made me realize that those who derived geometry from a social source were on the wrong track. They had forgotten the arts and the festivals, which in their original purity are cults without god or leader and without any constraint or obligation. And this may have happened because sociologists are bileful fellows who research society in their private seclusion. Joy cannot captivate their thoughts. The more miserable the need, the more acceptable it is to them. They tirelessly recreate Hobbes's *Leviathan*, which depicts the citizen as a prisoner of the state, in which order is the order of war, and the curve the opposite of law. As sociologists say, everything goes in a straight line. Power determines the signs, and the word itself: line, stands for pawn. Curves, like the famous failures and accidental successes of wars, indicate weak points and fractures. The serpentine columns represent the order distorted by sad necessity. It is no coincidence that the snake is a symbol of the insidious power, literally the power of the devil, the corrupter of our noble plans. In contrast, the serpent biting its tail, imitating the dance of the circle, symbolises the triumph of the spirit and the eternal ruler over the animal. Thus, charm and joy reveal to us what is most free and beautiful in geometry.

I see clearly that such images have formed the ancient thoughts of nations, and I suspect - the original causes being always the same; such they are for ever. For, apart from the fact that man always starts from infancy (and we know well that it has not yet been solved to be born a polytechnician), it is clear that man lives under the dominion of the heart, the lungs, the stomach; and these are animals in perpetual ambush, so much so that only thinking according to the dance can be right. Man makes no progress by drawing a circle with a compass. Certainly a fifteen-horse carriage is a very civilised thing, but it is often some mad beast that holds the wheel. The image is doubly repulsive: the animal that steers and the geometry that obeys. Oh, a thought! Oh, junk!

Alain

THE WITCH

We have seen that man and people are suffering from life today as much as they suffered from their religion, that human courage is capable of what religious courage was before, and that the degree of human dignity is not lower than that of religious dignity in the past. The results of experience are confirmed by the analysis of the soul. Man has not changed, so his readiness to suffer has remained the same. The man who lives in the present sees his misery perfectly and completely; his impressions are not partial, like those of the non-miserable outsider; he does not see the world as the sociologist does. The wretched man is in his wretchedness, even the look he gives his wretchedness is wretched; in his life, wretchedness is not a detail or a condition to be examined or a handicap: in his life, everything is wretchedness, eternal service. It is not the familiar series of privations, illnesses, uglinesses and despairs, ingratitude and deaths, this misery is living death; as if Antigone's torment were a constant torment, and as if death flowed into life. All her life she tastes death. For the sage of antiquity, death is the ultimate liberation, but for the wretched, it is the fullness of bitterness, defeat and despair. If the wretch destroys himself and his whole family one day, his last day will be the most terrible. *Dies irae*, the day of wrath.

To experience death as a joyful release would require a whole civilisation, a whole culture and a great philosophy, in short, everything that misery does not have.

The miserable must be dragged out of misery and the wealth must be equally distributed. But the two tasks are not of the same order. The first is an urgent duty, the second a fitting equity. The triple slogans of the republic, liberty, equality, fraternity, are different aims, and although the two last are close to each other, they are very different. Fraternity demands that our brothers and sisters be lifted out of poverty: this task is more important than anything else. Achieving equality is less urgent. For as much as I am excited and disturbed by the knowledge that people live in poverty, I am equally indifferent to the fact that those who do not know poverty claim a greater or lesser fortune; I am not excited when the notorious problem is raised of who will own the champagne bottle, the racehorse and the chateau by the Loire in the future state; We will come to some sort of agreement; the important thing is that there should be such a State, that is to say, that there should be no one who, as an outcast of the State, is forced to live in economic poverty and exile. Then it will be less important what job people have, because they will be distracted by other problems. But it is enough to keep a single person deliberately destitute, or, increasingly so, deliberately forget him, to render the social contract as a whole worthless. As long as one man is outside, the closed door remains the door of a state of injustice and hatred.

Charles Péguy

REFLECTIONS ON OLD AGE AND DEATH

To grow old is to grow up.

To me, old age is not a grim harbinger of death, but the life after life, which was an overworking of the senses, emotions and spirit, something of a great freedom.

The essence of wisdom. After having enjoyed the work of creation, we are led back for ourselves and in ourselves to the "nothingness" from which it started from the hand of God.

What a satisfaction and what a relief to think of the earth as something beyond, without having left it, to think of the pleasures as some enchanted continent which, thanks to God, I have come to know, and to which I have no further connection except in memory.

Sometimes I feel so far away that my privacy is a part of me. This is the state of living death, which I know well. In fact, in order to die, it is not necessary to assume the form of death. We can evoke and feel our death without making an attempt on life. Death is nothing but a state of mind.

I will be less dead after my death than I am now, because I will not know it, and because I know it.

To live is to be born all the time. Death is the last birth. The blindfold is our last veil.

We care for nothing of ourselves but our desires, but we do not choose our desires. Our desires choose us and define us, and the day we wake up free of those desires, we can't help but wonder what they have done to us.

In the end, our poor lives seem worth no more than an anecdote.

Look, I say to myself, what am I becoming? As if I were threatened with some metamorphosis, but certainly not the cessation of existence.

To die is to live a moment before annihilation. The last movement. Before taking this last step, we can't know anyone.

If I have to look back and see all the lies, deceptions, wickedness, brutality, I say: here is a continent that was never mine. I leave a strange land.

Marcel Jouhandeau

THE INDISCREET MAN

The fact that modern man is so indiscreet through and through does not call into question his considerable capacities: his intuition, his instinct, his sense of humour and adaptability, his sensitivity to moods, and a certain imagination which enables him to be in the mood of those capacities rather than to be transformed by them. But it is not suited to greatness. The indiscreet man cannot be made great, whatever the circumstances in which he is placed. His inner being is cracked, empty, split. Therefore what he creates, however attractive, has no form or law, it moves but does not set definitive limits.

The disorder of this indiscreet man flows outwards from his innermost being, and therefore all means are in vain, his powers are a wreck. He is unable to represent himself, he collapses again and again. His being lacks foresight, inner law, consistency, and so his life is in a state of flux, and somewhere he always stops, somewhere he is rejected.

The indiscretion of which I speak is a miscalculation, a mistake, not a vice, but something disorderly, a deep-rooted impiety, and in some respects much worse. It is born with modern man. It is, I might say, that disease of the soul by which the human personality is at its best, like certain diseases of the heart which the uninitiated, looking only on the good side of the sick, fail to recognize. Thus the indiscreet man is deep and yet not deep, subtle and yet not subtle, witty, and in the depths, where things are decided, he is witless, great and yet small. Then, though not without all intimacy, he envies the one who is light, superficial, and therefore, if I may say so, makes his fortune, would be fortunate. Is not this a perfect lack of moderation: to be so deep and to flirt with the superficial? Is it not the very lack of greatness and vocation - to stagger myself over and over again? And all this is the consequence of the unhappy inner state in which the indiscreet man can never leave himself without betrayal, and of the fact that his being is somehow plundered, some gallantry, yes, some shamelessness, has fallen upon him.

Who has not encountered this featureless, unsatisfied, loose, rare creature of the hair, this creature without sensuality, this lustful fellow, this man full of contradictions, of fissures, yet without tension? Who does not know the belly-man with no taste, the sad eroticist, the aesthete with a sulky aesthetic, the patriot of unconvinced despair and the unbeliever? Who does not encounter these dead yet surviving daily? These fugitives crying out in joyful rapture? All those who are right in words rather than in things, and who would rather be wrong about a book than right about a single sentence.

This man is indiscreet because he lacks material reality (the very place of reality is empty in him) and devotion. He will never understand that the world is a tangible and objective reality only to him who can surrender to it. I would prefer to call this discreet man a degenerate pedant who one night, without any reason or pretext, suddenly becomes prodigal; something inhospitable and unrealistic

unreal pedant of an unreal world, who is hungry for everything that is different, alien, whose insides are lined with anxiety and fear of death.

I say: there is no devotion in him. And it could well be that his tragedy took root only when he wanted to give himself and felt himself devalued, and that this made him become, in the end, a gambler, melancholic and at the same time frivolous in a world of mysterious goals.

The player is necessarily indiscreet. That is to say, after things have been handed to him, he depreciates the value of everything, like the man who hunts for the root, who plucks things from their roots. His soul is immoderate, he does and feels much, but not the One, and anxiety does not leave him, so much so that one might almost say that his measure is fear. "The One is necessary" - Jesus' words are directed against the playful, against the indiscreet. Perhaps Martha was the diligent one in the Middle Ages, when the way of serving God was quite precisely defined. Martha today is the image of the indiscreet, the disorderly, the one whose measure is fear. Whatever-whatever she does is excessive, dissipated, whatever she does is wasted and wasted, because fear cannot contain, cannot hold us together, can only lose us. His good intentions are all swallowed up by a strange world, and so the good he has done, the good he has felt, is no longer his, and stands there without value or measure. The measure is Mary's, and she is the measure, and she is the great.

The indiscreet man is known by his deed, a deed in which there is no real quality, and therefore no pure form. The indiscreet never rises above the antithesis, and therefore never gets the true taste of things. The antithesis is in fact the form of one whose interior is filled with fear, of the degenerate pedant, of the deep man who is not deep, of the great man who is not great.

I say: the antithesis is the form of the Marsyas whom Apollo the god has flayed. Marsyas was indiscreet, Greek style, big style, intemperate, and therefore he was flayed. This is the correspondence.

If I say that the indiscreet man is not capable of greatness, I do not say that he lacks the desire for greatness. Rather, I mean to say that he has a constant false hunger for the great, the heroic, the great personality, the great event, the beauty. And his desire, his hunger, is never quenched. What he longs for, what he respects, is always something quite different, something foreign, something from a foreign land, something that comes and goes and commits him to nothing, what he longs for and respects is only the comic. What I mean is that he betrays his vulgar and arbitrary and mediocre origins no more clearly than by the fact that he can perceive greatness only in the actor and greatness only through the medium of the actor. Or else he has an American ideal of greatness: the extraordinary man, the supreme, the expert, the intemperate, the star of the day, the tenor, Roosevelt, the billionaire, the boxing champion, the generally quite disintegrating, and he reveres his heroes by aping them. The caricature is a reverse mono- mentality, and perhaps the only original art of the indiscreet man, the only way of expressing the indiscreet and profoundly formless by nature.

Rudolf Kassner

BOSSUET

In the order of writers, I see no one whom I can raise above Bossuet; no one more sure in his words, more powerful in his verbs, more eloquent and decisive in his eloquence, more daring and fortunate in his sentence-formation, in short, more master of language and of himself. This complete and intrinsic faculty, which ranges from intimacy to great majesty, from perfectly articulated clarity to the most powerful and concentrated effects of art, demands from the mind an extraordinary consciousness, or rather a foresight, of all the means and all the operations of the word.

Bossuet always says what he wants. He is fully intentional, like all those we call classics. He works by editing while we work by chance; he builds on the expectation you evoke, while the moderns build on surprise. He steps out of the silence with a mighty force, gradually building, swelling, lifting, folding his sentence, sometimes arched, relying on subordinate clauses that leap up and down in a page after page of the moment, revealing and emphasising its contingencies, only to step over them and finally grasp the key, and after the miracles of juxtaposition and balance, find the precise expression of its forces and the solution to its gaps.

The ideas that we find in Bossuet, it must be confessed, seem little able today to excite our minds. On the contrary, we ourselves must breathe some life into them, by means of our perception and our knowledge. Three centuries of very profound changes and revolutions in all fields, and the vast number of events and ideas that have come in between, necessarily make the material of the works of an age so different from our own so naive, alien, and sometimes almost incomprehensible to us, the young. But other parts of it are intact today. The widest range of readers attach greater and immeasurably greater importance to what they call content than to what they call form. However, there are those who feel that this is in stark contrast to this notion, which they regard as mere superstition. They are forever insisting that the meaning of an expression may well be a reality, while its meaning or idea is a mere shadow. The value of the idea is only very indefinite; it varies from person to person and from age to age. What one person considers profound, another considers a trite certainty or an intolerable fantasy. One only has to look around to see that what is of interest to moderns from the literature of the ancients is not a series of ideas but a series of examples and models.

For these lovers of form, a form, though always evoked and brought to life by some idea, may be full of more value, and even more meaning, than all the ideas of the world. In form they get the fervour and excellence of action; in thought they find only the impermanence of events.

Bossuet is to them a veritable repository of interlocking shapes, concatenations, operations. They can gaze passionately at its highest style of architecture and admire the architecture of the church, now that its sanctuary is deserted and the emotions and reasons for which it was built have long since been abandoned. The arch remains.

Paul Valéry

LETTER TO A YOUNG POET

Paris, February 7, 1903.

Dear Sir,

I received your letter only a few days ago. I thank you for your deep and gratifying confidence. I can hardly do more. I cannot discuss your poems in detail, for I am very far from any intention to criticise. One can hardly approach a work of art with judgmental words: from this there are always more or less fortunate misunderstandings. No thing is as tangible and explicable as most would have us believe; most events are unspeakable, and take place in a space where no word has ever been spoken, and more than anything else, the works of art, those mysterious factors whose existence is more permanent than our fleeting lives, are unspeakable.

In anticipating this comment, let me also tell you that your poems have no character of their own, but are rather a silent and hidden appendage of personal existence. I see this most clearly in the last poem, *My Soul*. Something specific wants to be expressed in it and to be expressed in song. And in the beautiful poem to Leopardi, perhaps a kind of kinship opens up with this great loner. Nevertheless, these poems do not stand alone, neither the last one nor the one to Leopardi. *Ked ves's* covering letter helps me to discover some of the shortcomings that I felt while reading the poems and could not name.

You ask me if your poems are good. You ask me. You have asked others before. You send your poems to periodicals. He compares them with other poems and is uneasy when editors' attempts are rejected. Well, (since you have allowed me to advise you) I ask you to stop all this. You are looking outwards, and that, above all, is what you must not do. You can't get advice and help from anyone, no one. There is only one tool that will help you: go deep within yourself. Search for the reason that makes you write, examine whether your roots go to the very depths of your heart, confess whether it would kill you not to write. This is the most important thing: in the quietest hour of your night, ask yourself: do I need to write? Dig deep into your heart. And if it were to be in the affirmative, if you could face this serious question with a strong and simple answer, "I must write", then shape your life according to this necessity; make even the most ordinary, insignificant hour of your life a sign and a testimony of this compulsion. Then let him approach Nature. Then try to tell what you see, experience, love and lose as if you were the first man. Do not write love poems; avoid at first the too light and familiar forms: these are the most difficult, for only with great and mature strength can we offer the individual where we have a mass of good, even largely excellent traditions. Therefore, turn from the general motifs to those which your own daily life offers; describe your sadness, your desires, your fleeting thoughts, your faith in something beautiful - portray all this with intimate, quiet, humble sincerity, and express yourself in a way that is

use objects, dreams or memories from their environment. Do not blame your everyday things if they seem poor; blame yourself, say rather that you are not poetic enough to conjure up treasures; for there is no poverty and indifferent, barren place for the creator. And even if you were in prison, even if no noise of the world could penetrate your senses through these walls, would not you still have with you your child, this precious, royal wealth, this treasure-house of memories? Turn your mind in that direction. Try to bring out the sunken wonders of this distant past; your individuality will be solidified, your solitude expanded and made a shimmering home from which the din of others will rumble far away. And if from this introspection, from this immersion in his own world, poems are born, he will not think of asking anyone whether they are good poems. Nor will he try to arouse the interest of the journals in these works: for he will feel in them a dear, natural possession, a piece of his life and voice. A work of art is good when it is born of necessity. It is in this character of its origin that it can still be judged, not otherwise. Therefore, my dear Sir, I can only give you this one advice: delve into yourself, examine the depths from which your life springs, and at this source you will find the answer to the question of whether you must create. Accept it as it sounds, and do not dwell on it. Perhaps you'll prove that you have an artistic vocation. Then take up your destiny and carry it with all its burdens and greatness, without ever being interested in the rewards that await you from outside. For the creator should be a world complete in himself, finding everything in himself and in Nature to which he is attached. However, after this absorption and immersion, you may have to give up being a poet (it is enough, as I said, to feel that you could live without writing, and then you must not write at all). But this turning inwards, which I ask you to do, is not in vain. In any case, from now on, your life will take its own course, and I cannot tell you how much I wish you that it may be good, rich and far-reaching.

Rainer Maria Rilke

THE IDEAL STUDENT

... The ideal student is a representative of humanity. It is perhaps the most subtle and at the same time the most powerful element of the prose writer's impulse that he uses to draw him into the sphere of his vision, to create him. The listener must be so sensitive, so quick-witted, so incorruptibly discerning, so receptive, so attentive, so unified in mind and heart, that he is almost superior to the person who speaks to him, otherwise he would not be worth the trouble of being written to. Still, he who has created it must know its imperfections, or at least feel a certain imperfection in it, which needs to be pointed out to him first and foremost. He needs to detect in him a kind of strong naivety, so that what he offers through the book may really surprise him and give him something of substance. All books, perhaps, but teachers in particular, could be ranked if they could find a measure of the subtlety and genuineness of the relationship with the listener: we can also see how the fate of declining books and writers is so well observed.

the confused, careless and sloppy idea of this invisible listener that they carry within them.

... Two are always present: there is the one who speaks or writes to someone, and there is the other who responds, and between the two there is a link; but while on the one hand this link is the more significant, the higher the sphere in which it can act, the more preponderant is the one who gives - on the other hand, the one who receives, without, of course, his presence being broken, becomes ever more light and dim in these high spheres.

Goethe says that every time he picks up a page of Kant, it's as if he's entering a clear space. In this way he shows us a spirit full of light, in touch with the ultimate source of all facts. But as here we feel the quality of being able to become light, so in other great writers we feel other higher qualities of the spirit; a power inseparable from inner order; a true self-respect which unites with humility; a strange fervour of intellectual passion. In the creation of such a spirit, it is as if we really received the world into ourselves, and in fact we receive it into ourselves, not only in the things it mentions, for in them all that remains unmentioned is somehow contained. It is this very strength and superiority which makes a great culling of the surplus of things - not by forgetting them, which would be the sign of an absent-minded and feeble spirit, but by consciously keeping them out of the way; Not to mention the unexpected associations, the multifaceted flexibility, the sudden manifestations of all-round attentiveness; and finally, the amusement and the alcoholism that occasionally charms us, all of which are part of the writer's intellectual image, the image that we take in today, along with the reflections of the world. Like a tightrope walker on a thin rope, he moves before us on the heights of the towers; the fears of the abyss - he could fall at any moment - he sees them as if they were not there. The iron heaviness that weighs us all down loses its power on his body. Our rapture to watch his footsteps grows the more he seems to walk on solid ground. This is precisely how the good writer's pen moves to its own rhythm, which is as delightful as a human figure, as peculiar as the unerring dance of his steps in the world, amidst all the attractions and horrors - and his beautiful word is nothing other than the revelation of the inner balance preserved in the most wonderful adversities against a thousand threats, temptations and attacks.

Hofmannsthal

CHRISTIAN ART

The concept of Christian art is not to be understood as 'ecclesiastical art' defined by a certain subject, a certain purpose or fixed rules, which is nothing more than a partial and specific application of art. This designation describes an art which has the character of Christianity. In this sense, Christian art is not a branch or genre of art, nor is it referred to as painting or poetry, as a pointed arch or Byzantine style, nor is it referred to as a school where Christian art is taught.

Christian art. Art is Christian above all in its motive and in the spirit from which it develops. We talk about Christian or Christian art as much as we talk about bees or people. It is the product of a changed humanity. It is planted in the Christian soul, on the shores of living waters, under the aegis of the theological virtues, in the atmosphere of the seven gifts of the Holy Spirit. Naturally, it bears cruciform fruit.

It embraces all that is profane as well as all that is holy. Everything is at home, whether human industry or human joy. In symphony or ballet, film or novel, landscape or still life, opera or puppet theatre, it can be everywhere, as well as in the church.

But is this Christian art not just a myth? - one might ask. Can it be understood in itself? And is art not pagan from its birth, and is it not linked to sin? Just as man is born a sinner. But grace heals the wounded nature. Do not say that Christian art is impossible. You may say with confidence that it is difficult, doubly difficult, or even more so, multiplied by six, because it is difficult to be an artist and very difficult to be a Christian, and because the total difficulty is not the simple sum of the two, but the product of one and the other; two absolute values must be brought together. It may be said that this difficulty becomes bloody when the whole age lives apart from Christ, for the artist is largely dependent on the spirit of his age. But has courage ever been lost from the earth?

It may be added that art, if it has ever and anywhere risen to a certain degree of greatness and purity, whether Egyptian, Greek, or Chinese, has been Christian, hopefully Christian, because of the promise of the divine proportions of the Gospel in all its forms of spiritual splendour.

"Inspiration" is not just a mythological dowry. The real inspiration is not the grace of the Muses, but that of the living God: a strange stirring of the system of nature, by which, if it pleases Him, the supreme Intelligence sets up in the artist a creative movement beyond measure, which, while it lifts them up, also releases all the traditional energies of art, so that by them man has the power to follow or change the direction of this impulse. This inspiration from God the creator is almost a version of supernatural inspiration. Without the secret union of the two, no art can unfold which, not merely in hope, but actually redeemed by grace, is already Christian in its entirety.

The work cannot be Christian, it cannot bear in its beauty the intimate radiance of the light of grace, unless it is overflowing with the heart that lives in a state of grace. The power which directly shapes art acts precisely by directing all the soul's affections towards the beauty of the work. If the beauty of the work is Christian, it means that the artist has all his affections for such beauty, as Christ is present in his soul through love. The main value of his creation is therefore the love that arises from it, and that treats the forces of talent as an instrument. The Christianity of this art is thus essential to its development, because its development is through love.

It is futile to seek a technique or style, or a system or method of rules and procedures which is specifically Christian. From Christian humanity, infinite varieties spring and grow. Yet these particular forms of art belong to a common family nest and are all essentially different from non-Christian forms of art. The flora of the mountains also differs from that of the plains. The liturgy is the transcendent, most sacred type of Christian form: it is created by the Holy Spirit for his own pleasure.

And the liturgy is not immutable. It follows the passage of time, it reflects eternity. Maronite or Orthodox liturgy is not the same as Roman liturgy. There are also many regions of heaven. Nothing can be more beautiful than the High Mass: a slow dance in front of the chapel, more majestic than the procession of starry hosts. There is no beauty in it, because the Church does not give in to decorative motifs, she does not want to lose hearts. It wants nothing but to adore and unite with its Saviour, and yet this loving adoration overflows in beauty.

Jacques Maritain

REVIEW OF THE BOOK

Wizards could only control their spirits, good and bad, if they knew their names. This is the origin of all literature. The word is a magic verb, the I thus exercises its power; first on itself, then on others, and finally, as far as we can guess, on the forces of nature.

After the creation and regulation of being, it is the task of words to exercise judgment. Numerous attempts have been made to codify and classify the various forms of the vast literature now available through the recent development of book printing and publishing.

We hear of scientific and propaganda literature, interpretative and escape literature. But if we boil it all down to its essence, it would be hard to find a better definition than Matthew Arnold's solution, according to which all true literature is a critique of Life.

Even a book like Grimm's Fairy Tales, which dwells on the fabulous mysteries of fortune, is a critique in the strongest sense; on the other hand, we have Hegel's Logic, which explores the fantastic mysteries of reason. For there is no lyric poetry of the most serene kind, no comedy of the gayest kind, no adventure novel of the most exciting kind, which, in its own quality and character, does not serve to explain something, to awaken some mood, to stir up some idea, to set some significant fact, theory or feeling in tone, or to criticise our life on earth by its own particular context, tone, emphasis and measure.

Indeed! To return to the basics, in this case, it is quite impossible to separate one style of writing from another.

All literature is "propaganda literature". All literature is "scientific literature". All literature is "escape literature". Spinoza's single comment is an example of propaganda and knowledge and escape in the same sentence.

The human self, confronted with ever-changing facts, ambiguous laws, confronted with its emotions that rush through the experience of being, collects data, theorizes, divines, submits to inspiration, points out errors, creates myths, tells stories, proposes reforms, excites revolution, demands reaction, admits his weaknesses, flaunts his eccentricities, boasts of his insights, laments his ignorance, squanders his knowledge, reveals his loves, hates, hopes and doubts, suggests, asserts, denies, discriminates: and above all, he cries out to his fellow men, "Look at my data! Look at this theory of mine! Let me guide you with my magic, free you with my imagination, seduce you with my charms, lift you above your boredom with my whims, my fancies, my humour!"

This phrase "fiction" is just as silly as "l'art pour l'art". There is much more art in some impressive system of philosophy than in the whole of the *Thousand and One Nights*, and more fiction in the black covers of any Bible than in the over-tasteful editions of the book-lovers.

But one thing is certain. While books may, as Milton says, be balm to mighty spirits, they are also resurrectors of evil, fanatical, rebellious, and reactionary spirits! All the devils and angels of the human mind dwell in books. This is why the book trade, and especially the antiquarian bookshop, is an arsenal of explosives, an arsenal of revolutions, an opium den of reaction.

And it is precisely because the book is the depository of the divine anarchy of the soul, of all redemption and damnation, that it is now, as always, an object of suspicion in the eyes of all kinds of ruling regimes.

The antiquarian is a refuge, a refuge for all the outcast ideas of humanity. Here, like a desperate thief, the whole of our wild, dark, self-consumed heart of our nation hides. The bookstore is an ammunition depot, a dynamite chamber, a narcotics shop, a liquor store, an opium den, an island of sirens.

Of all the "public houses" in front of which the tyrant, the bureaucrat, the propagandist, the moralist, the champion of law and order, the man who keeps the people ignorant of their own interests, hurries by with quick steps, glaring or threatening his henchmen, the bookshop is the most notorious.

Plato, the enemy of this poet of poets, would surely recommend to his philosopher kings that the antiquarian bookshops should be destroyed. Antiquarianism can skyrocket the centuries-old machinations of cunning politicians. It confronts the prophet with the priest, the prisoner with society, the penniless with the plutocrat, the individual with the universe. It is as full of the charming mischief of gender issues as a railway station or the imagination of St Anthony.

Here are the poisons that kill, the drugs that soothe, the fiery waters that madden, the divine ichor that inflames, the nectar that glorifies. Here rests the endless passions of all generations, their wall-pushing, their desperate escapes, their agonizing reconciliations. In the beginning was the Word, and the Word was with God - and the devil stole the Word out of the cradle. The eternal conflict that started the world boils and ferments in the books, in every book; and the books are frozen ice-

From the icy ice of the books, the death-waves of ultimate denial rain down, plunging us all into the abyss.

*

And every reading, even the most base, brings us into contact with the wide current of humanity's backward thoughts about its fate under the sun.

That's the point. Beneath the formless confusion of chance and chance and blind chance, beneath the meaningless jolts, the meaningless jolts, the rough patchwork, the endless un- dor, the unspeakable collisions, the intolerable monotony and the dreary pauses, there lies forever, wide and deathless, rejecting no one, welcoming all, the boundless ocean of books.

Here our human intentions are fulfilled, our human aspirations are triumphantly, heroically, gloriously human. Gathered, mingled, scattered, rising and falling like the waves and ripples of the vast sea, here all the philosophies, redemptions, hopeless hopes of our race roll forth, carrying with them human thought into the unknown cosmic future. In the poorest, the most ironic, the most melodramatic, the most profound books there is something, some shade, some essence, some hint of the wisdom of the ages, merged in the tide.

The book is our reasonable protest against the unreasonable, our compassionate protest against the ruthless, our ideal against the reality of the world, man's word against cosmic silence, our life against planetary death, our revelation of the God who dwells within us, our response to the God who lives without us. Whoever touched a book touched not "a man" but Man. Man is an animal that cries, laughs and writes. If the first Prometheus brought fire from heaven in a stem of aniseed, he brings it back in the last book.

John Cowper Powys

WHAT IS MAN?

If we rank in order of dignity the questions that man can ask himself, the most noble of them is the one that begins the *Summa of* St. Thomas Aquinas: What is God? It is the eternal question on the answer to which all other possible questions - not only humanly possible - depend, down to the most seemingly insignificant. The second question, which immediately follows the first in dignity, is this: What is man? With this second question we are not only on the ground of spirituality, as with the first, but also on the ground.

The correct understanding of man's being cannot be achieved without an explanation "from above" - from revelation - "from below" - whether this explanation comes from myth, poetry, science, or even metaphysics itself. All these explanations either run aground in the pages of material existence, or they flash up and plunge back into darkness in our unredeemed psychic world.

of our unchanged psychic nature, or they drift away and dissipate like lamb's clouds in the thin atmosphere of some anaemic idealism. At the beginning and at the end of every answer that can be given to the question, What is man, there is the answer of revelation: *Faciamus hominem ad imaginem et similitudinem nostram!*

But what does this mean: created in the image of God? Well, first and foremost and unforgettably, that we are created, that we are creatures, that we are not of ourselves, that we are not an emanation of God, still less God himself, that we are not everything that for centuries the voices of this world have been claiming, in theory and in practice, that we are or would like to be, but then also that we are originally, even in the midst of material existence and being, conceived of as spiritual, that we are endowed with spirituality. For God is spirit, and whoever is made in his image is a created spirit. Even though creation began from below, with the miracle of matter and the body, and man cannot be without a body in eternity, for his body will also be raised. The spirit, the natural, created spirit, even within the bounds of nature, elevates man, as it were, above the bodily-spiritual 'nature', that is, above its finitude, because the naturalness of the spirit implies the possibility of infinity, however small an aspect of it, elevates him, if not into the supernatural, then into the possibility of being directly grasped by God, if he so pleases, and of being able to grasp God directly: He raises him to the heights of human nature, which, as "nature", is nothing other than this very possibility: to be partaker of God.

What does it mean, then, that man is the image of God? The answer is partly contained in the few words that man is "*quodammodo omnia*", somehow min- den. Is man not so subject to the laws of physics, mechanics and chemistry that there have been philosophers who have declared him a machine? Does it not contain so many plant life elements that the religions of the East and the West have made it a poetic plant? Does it not bear so much resemblance to animal life that Spengler declared it to be a predatory creature and nothing more? And is there not, finally, so much pure spirituality in him that Descartes made him a synthesis of angel and machine, that German thinkers made him the creator of knowledge and even of things, the absolute free master of himself, and even the creator and redeemer of God?

The proposition that man is *ad imaginem Dei*, created in the image of God, was uttered at the beginning of man's existence and will remain valid until the end of time. All true philosophy, all true science, affirms it today, as always before homo rectus, that is, before man who thinks with reason and is of good will.

If you stop at the first batch, you stay in one place. But this secretly encourages you to keep going. The first proposition, that man *ad imaginem Dei* is created, is an eternal proposition, but in a static, dormant state, just as the picture, even if painted by restlessness, is in itself something static, dormant. The purpose of creation is to return to God, by preserving and divinely sanctifying the nature of creation - but man, as the image of God, is the measure, the representative and the responsible master of creation. By the Incarnation, that is, by God Himself, in the second person, assuming humanity for all eternity, an unparalleled life and dynamism have been brought into this creation. It is not only the existence and purpose of man that now marks the beginning and end of this planetary

but also marks the beginning of the fulfilment of man's inexorable, mysterious desire: to be like God - but not in the human way, but according to God's will. Man in the created nature, as the image of God, can from then on only through man share in the uncreated nature of God, who is no longer merely the image of God, but God himself.

Theodor Haecker

I AND YOU

Not the I is, but I am.

As the I is realised in its relation to the Thou, it is in this reality that man's spiritual life is truly revealed, and not in what we most like to see it: in poetry and art, in philosophy and mythical religions. In these, however magnificently, we dream of the spirit. No culture has ever been, and can never be, anything but a dream of the spirit, and man, in the ultimate solitude of his existence, far from the spiritual reality of life, dreams this dream, the inner lawfulness of which he has recognised above all in the 'concept of the idea'.

The concept of the second person is the concrete man. The ideal of humanity is man's descent from himself. - The spirit of humanity was reared on the milk bottle of idealism. - Man as a spiritual being also comes into the world starving. - The word born of the spirit is the bread for the sustenance of spiritual life. Without this bread, man would perish in the spiritual desert of this world.

WORD

... First of all, we need to shed light to know that the miracle of the Word and the 'miracle of creation' coincide: in the Logos of which the Gospel of John speaks. For the Logos is not only the precondition of speech - man does not speak because he has words, as Max Scheler says - but also, in the deep sense of the Gospel, the Logos is the precondition and the manifestation of being.

He who is called by name is. For the word is not added to being by man. It is our divine origin that contains it, and so the word is the creation and creature of being itself.

In the word, spirit and life are united. To live is to breathe, and the word is the formed air.

The word, which was in the beginning, creatively filled the void and the void in the universe.

ART

No one is a genius before God.

Yet the great artists remained children at heart, and of children Jesus said, "Let the little children come to me." So He will not send the artists away on their own. "Such is the kingdom of heaven." And the "philosophers"? They are no longer children, of course. But they can become contemplators of the word, and then they too will have a place in the kingdom of God... "In my Father's house are many mansions."

In a given case, a landscape can be more reverent and "God-filled" than the most intimate holy picture.

No one can understand the essence of beauty until they grasp the tragedy of the experience of beauty.

We must take the dilettantes of poetry and art seriously. For dilettantism is not merely a playful pastime, but a spiritual and moral disease. There is something in the patient's being which is not true, and this excludes him from all possibility of sound and right judgment.

SOCIETY

Once the poor have been left to starve and destitute in the "name of God" in the good Christian way, they now claim their human rights in an ungodly way. There is really nothing to wonder about.

Well-off citizens tend to be 'idealists'. But the starving proletarians should not be reproached for the "materialism" of their outlook on life.

The bourgeois man is the type of man who faces the social problem with perfect understanding. But what other question, problem or value of life is there that he does not face with the same incomprehension?

The jealousy of the bourgeois man and the jealousy of the hungry proletarian - these two show very different psychological physiognomy.

Ferdinand Ebner

THE ACTIVE APPROACH

The philosophy of existence is a reflection on the possibilities of human existence, starting from the present and based on tradition, and aiming at transcendence. The ultimate meaning of all philosophical thought, however, is philosophical life, and that is nothing other than the inner activity of the individual human being which makes each one who he is. Thought, spoken and consolidated in a work of art into doctrine, is the result of such inner activity and at the same time its awakening. Since philosophical thought is the most lifelike, and has its origin in existence as man's own being, it is here that the greatest deception and delusion is possible, and then it can become the most lifeless, the most false thinking.

If I want to come to myself, I cannot do so by thinking of myself as the goal of objective knowledge, but neither can I do so by using a certain technique as a disciplined attitude of consciousness, an isolated rigor within myself. I would only have my being as an object, which I would look at and conceive of as a stopped being. But neither can I come to myself by means of a reinterpretation of concepts created by philosophers. Philosophical thinking, as mere thinking and re-thinking of what has already been thought, has not yet reached itself. It all depends on making philosophical thinking an activity independent of any conditionality. The fulfilment, truthfulness and insight of thinking are one and the same only with this activity of elevating the self within.

Thinking about myself as psychology, as technique, as life regulation, as philosophically definable existence, is either the consequence of genuine philosophical thinking or a preparation for it. It becomes unconditional only in the transfiguration of the self as the simultaneous knowing and grasping of absolute consciousness: this is the source of what is no longer a means but the fulfilment of the consciousness of being.

The transcendence of the human self is found as an example in the great philosophers. It is their self-illumination that will fire ours, if the torch is passed from hand to hand. But the touching of the philosopher's existentialism becomes a reality only at the moment when the meaning of the thought becomes perfectly united with the being of the self, or when it is transposed into the reality of today.

To think philosophically is to judge myself every day. Thought is a thorn: in its ambiguity it has the role of an appeal; if it slips, it stops; it brings transcendence and, by evoking it, makes it present. All this, however, is reality only in the independent existence of the self, which is what it must be for thought to be actually thought: this thinking cannot be realized by perception or givenness, only if I am really what I now become by thinking.

It seems to me that I succeed more easily in preserving myself in the continuity of existence than in undergoing great sufferings and determination; it lifts me up while I am crushed in its grip, because it pulls me out of the everyday. But the continuity of existence can only be preserved in the ordinary. The single shock constitutes the extreme, the foundation of all that follows. But what is created is only real and real if, over the years, in the repetition of memory, one grasps the same in the unforeseen consequences.

Philosophy therefore turns as much to great shocks as to everyday life. The unconditionality of the one is an echo of the other, the one without the other remains a question mark...

In philosophical thought, the specific fulfilment of the active approach is possible as an inner activity guided by the idea of transcendence. It is similar to religious action, excluding the arousal of an effect in the world that seeks to achieve an end. Its characteristic feature is that it is unconditional and therefore different from fixed contemplation, reflection and objective research: it results in the filtering and purification of the self by the consciousness of transcendence. Even if it does not have a real relationship with God and does not speak to God's tangible presence in it, this contemplation is nevertheless a contemplation towards the hidden transcendence

freely finds its way... This contemplation is the pinnacle of philosophical thought, the certainty of absolute consciousness by finding oneself in transcendence.

What I am always remains a question, yet a certainty that holds and fills all else. My intrinsic self can never become a *bir-tocom*, but always only: the possibility of my life. Philosophical thinking as an active approach can therefore never be finished, can neither be a dogma, nor a proposition, nor a principle, but: a constant inner activity. If in philosophical thinking I want to attain a conscious goal to which I can and will constantly hold myself if I want to know instead of believe - if I want to acquire technical prescriptions instead of exalting myself in the flare of the whole of everything: then I actually want psychotherapeutic instructions instead of the freedom of my being, and then philosophy will leave me in the lurch. Philosophy speaks only where knowledge and technique have already failed. It shows, but it does not give. It comes forward with a flash of light, but it does not reveal anything.

What is needed is a philosophy that is more profoundly meaningful and that knows what reason is, as reason that encompasses the world and not reason that closes itself off;

One that is as open to all reality and validity as it is sober in its contemplation, as passionate and sober in its transcendence and in its listening to the signs of hidden transcendence;

which recognises the compelling certainty and yet understands it in its own majesty;

which gives space to modern natural science and its consequences and refrains from universalizing them;

which grasps scientific possibilities in a firm way and yet knows the limits of the possible;

which embraces all realistically verified worldviews, but is itself without a worldview, in the knowledge that none is One and Absolute;

for which all material knowledge is a means to an end, which it takes possession of without seeing in it an ultimate end;

which, in the depths of existence, springs from historical time, has eyes and ears for other existences, ignores none, scatters none, dares to know none;

which dares to touch the substantive in all its forms, because it has grown out of the substantive possibility of itself;

which opens up to limitless communication without knowing where it leads and what the Whole is;

which does not become dogma, and yet is not lost in the ground;

which sheds light on the absolute, which is known to flow from history, and is therefore not universal, and at the same time takes the universal into itself, which, being universal, is not absolute but relative;

which does not consider transcendence to be known, and does not take it exclusively for itself - and therefore the unconditional unity of the world is historically and existentially

and existentially, rather than considering the Absolute One as being valid for everyone and everything.

Karl Jaspers

PARTIAL TRUTH AND ABSOLUTE TRUTH

The particularity of the being, its individual determination, is not an obstacle to the grasp of truth, but precisely the organ with which it can glimpse the part of reality that is due to it. In this way, every individual, every generation and every age is an irreplaceable, self-sufficient organ of cognition. Only by reconciling our own vision with the vision of the one who looks at the same thing we see from the nearest point of view, and so on, can we achieve the full truth. Each individual is a point of essence-relation. All the partial views, placed side by side, would provide the complete and absolute truth. This sum of individual perspectives, this cognition of what each individual sees and knows, this omniscience, this true "absolute rationality," is the supreme calling we can attribute to God. God is also a point of view; but not as if he had any point of view outside the human domain, from which he could see straight to the universal truth, like some old rationalist. God is not a rationalist. His point of view belongs to all of us.

Our partial truth is also truth for God. That is how true our perspective and real our reality is! Only God, as the catechism says, only God is everywhere and stands on all perspectives, and all our perspectives unite and harmonize in his boundless vitality. God is the symbol of the vital stream, through whose innumerable net-holes the universe flows in such a way that he embraces and consecrates the whole of life, all that is in life - sight, thought, hate, suffering and conquest.

Malebranche said that if we know something to be true, it is because we see things in God, from God's point of view. For me, the opposite is more likely: that God sees things through man, that man is God's eye.

Ortega y Gasset

FROM A MODERN DIARY

We don't respect our shadow enough - we don't think about it enough... But I, aware of this fault, want to make amends, I greet him, I talk to him, sometimes I go out to where he stands out most, just for his sake, and I make him walk.

In the evening, the sun closes his eyes. Now he sees that the white sheet has its own light, its true light.

There are nights when the moon merges uniformly with the whole night, the merging being done by some very skilled hand.

One would never believe that the hand missing a finger had actually taken it, not merely hidden it.

There is something unnatural about museums, and it is a breeding ground for sin, for simple-minded and cowardly sadism, for distrustful and evil selfishness, for degenerate depravity. Of all the museums, the archaeological museum is the most ossified, full of serious classification, darkness, anxiety, blindness. Here, the vanquished, the subjugated, the repressed lose their charm, their meaning from the forest, they dry up. Oh, if only the day were one hour longer, one exception, one addition, this would be the twenty-fifth!.... If we only had that one hour, we'd have finished everything.

How surprising! It always surprises me that the heart is on the left. Wouldn't it be less fragile if it were on the right?

The hunchback is like the comedian who makes fun of us, but we can't make fun of him because that would be undignified.

The hypocrites! - what a dried cod smell they have!

It is amusing to think how doctors fix the puppets, and the puppets tell them: Doctor!

The way children say good night is ideal. When the children go to sleep, the night is benevolent, and hearty and dreamy: the children's dreams are fulfilled.

Lies: It is forbidden to talk to the coachman. - The court carrier of the royal house. - My humble pen, my humble words, my humble person. - The perpetrator of the assassination is a poor madman. - Business trips. - Deadly duel. - Literal translation. - The last word is romantic. - Free entry is suspended. - We wish our new colleague a long life. - We're sure the government will do all it can to keep this work of art out of Spain. - A perpetual license to X., the distinguished writer, as a token of his admiration. - Irrevocable resignation. - List of authors used for the work. - Young woman. Decent. Of good family.

To work, one must put off one's ring, like a chain of forced labour, which restrains us and interferes, leaving us no complete freedom. My free prose cannot even bear this ring.

Never be the dancer's true love, the love of her tears, her private moments, for then she will never be yours: you will be her divine husband and nothing more.

The keys always seem to be lost. And the keys to suitcases are more permanent than all the rest.

The man who goes to and fro in the city, and does not like the journey itself as the end of the journey, is a miserable creature, his journey will end in fanaticism, cruelty, rage.

The morning has always been the same since the world began. There is a power in its meaning, in its abundance, in its innocence, that neither the ages, nor the cities, nor the character of the buildings, can alter.

We don't look in the mirror enough. We almost never look at ourselves. And perhaps we should look at ourselves more often, not out of vanity but out of friendship, because we may think at the hour of death that we have not seen enough of this face, that we have not looked at it enough.

Let the images come to us. We can approach the objects, but never the images. No deliberate step can be taken towards the images.

Ramón Gómez de la Serna

SUFFERING AND FORM

In the Christian man, the forces that otherwise seem to be in balance intersect. On the contrary, it absorbs all the opposing forces and places the Christian man at their centre, and this centre, for the one who stands there, is also the beginning. The cross neither denies nor annihilates opposites, but transforms them into form. Form cannot be created by a word of power, because form is not an external constraint, but requires shaping, construction. Form is waiting to be formed. The journey of the Christian man is at every moment a crossroads. With the Jewish life, which has always been at the goal, the State is competing with its incessant objectives and with the battle cry it has always repeated in space and time: so far and no further! The eternity of the eternal people is overwhelmed by the armed ages of other peoples. The Christian man's crossroads is rivalled in the soul by another power, the only one that also seeks to overcome opposition not by denial but by form: art. From the very beginning, it helped the soul to enter the crossroads. For it was half a millennium before Prometheus was hanging on the rock wall when the cross was raised on Golgotha.

Art, too, conquers suffering only by shaping it, not by giving it away. The artist knows himself as the one who has been given the opportunity to say what he suffers from. And at the same time, the silence of the first man lives in him. He does not try to "silence" his suffering, nor does he want to "shout it out into the world": he makes it visible. And the suffering

resolves the contradiction that he and suffering are both present. He resolves it without diminishing it in the slightest. In its content, all art is tragic because it depicts suffering; even comedy is created by the constant misery of life, by the constant sense of lack in our existence. Art is tragic in content, but all art is comic in form, because it represents even the most miserable with a certain romantic-ironic lightness - only just. Art as representation is both tragic and comic. And the great displayer is indeed what Agathon's triumphal feast reveals him to be in the twilight of dawn: both comic and tragic. The Janus nature of art, which makes life's sufferings difficult and at the same time helps man to endure them, is what makes it the companion of our lives. It teaches man how to overcome suffering without forgetting it. Because man cannot forget, he must always remember in his soul. It is part of his class to be in constant suffering and constant consolation. God comforts him along with all those who are in need of consolation. He wipes the tears of the mourner from his face and from every face. But there those tears continue to shine in the eyes until the day of the great deliverance of all things. Till then comfortlessness is man's consolation. Until then the soul is refreshed in suffering. Until then, renewal is in self-preservation. Till then he gathers new strength from the memories of the old days. It is not from past joys, but only from past sufferings, that the soul draws its happiness at all times. Thus it is renewed in itself. And this ring of life is forged by art itself.

Indeed, it seems as if art were taking the place of the cross. What need has the soul of the cross if it draws strength and renewal from itself? Yes, it wears within itself the ring that art has alloyed for it, but it wears it like a hard metal wreck around its heart. This tyre must pop so that the soft heart can beat again with the rhythm of all hearts. For art has given each man only his own particular cross. And even he who drank not hate from the depths of love, was taught only to gaze with wondering eyes on the thousands of springs beside the thirsty in the wilderness. But he did not make visible to him the thousands of those who thirst in the same wilderness with him. He did not teach him the common cross. This the lonely soul of pagan origin, whose blood does not circulate the ultimate unity of the community of our being, can only glimpse at Calvary. Only under that cross can he realize that his soul is one with all souls. Then the artistic wreckage which had clasped him with great pain would crack around his heart; for some precious treasure had lain all this time, cursed at the bottom of the well. And now, when his own pain is replaced, and in every man his own pain is replaced, by the one incomparable pain, the wreck is woven from soul to soul. And the soul, which, standing under the cross, has gained eternal salvation from eternal pain, forgets to seek the cycle of being and renewal only in its own heart, where art gives it its rhythm. In his inner being, he himself now participates in the cycle of eternal suffering and eternal bliss which pervades the heart of him who suffered on the cross for so many, and for himself.

Franz Rosenzweig

THE METAPHYSICAL QUESTION

Philosophy, from the point of view of healthy human reason, is, according to Hegel, the "inverted world". The specificity of our enterprise therefore requires a preparatory explanation. This in turn arises from the double specificity of metaphysical enquiry.

First, every metaphysical question always embraces the totality of the problematic of metaphysics. It is always about the whole itself. Then, every metaphysical question can only be asked in such a way that the questioner as such is inseparable from the question, i.e. stands within it.

From this we draw our guidance: a metaphysical question must always be asked with the whole in mind and starting from the essential situation of the being of the questioner. We ask the question, here and now, for ourselves. Our existence - in a community of researchers, teachers and educators - is determined by science. In the depths of our lives, what profound things happen to us when science becomes our passion?

The fields of science are widely divergent. The way in which their subject matter is processed is quite different. Today, the technical organisation of universities and faculties is the only thing that holds together this wide variety of disciplines. Only the distinction between disciplines according to their practical objectives gives it some meaning. By contrast, there is no longer any sense of the rootedness of the sciences in their foundations.

And yet: in all sciences, if we consider their most intrinsic purpose, we are confronted with existence itself. Precisely from the point of view of the sciences, no one field has priority over another. Neither nature over history, nor vice versa. No way of discussing one subject is superior to another. Mathematics is no more perfect than linguistics or history. Mathematical knowledge is characterised only by 'exactness', by precision, but this does not mean perfection. To demand exactness from history would be to sin against the idea of the intrinsic perfection of the human sciences. The predominant aspect of the world in all sciences as such encourages the search for the existent itself, so that it may be the subject of a thorough investigation and a reasoned definition in accordance with its respective nature and mode of being. The purpose of the sciences - the ideal - is to work towards our approach to the essence of all things.

It is the freely chosen attitude of human existence which carries and guides this relation of the human being to the world of being itself. All of man's pre-scientific and extra-scientific actions are related to the existent, but the excellence of science lies in the fact that it gives, in principle, explicitly and exclusively, the first and last word to the thing itself. In this objectivity of questioning, defining and justifying, there is a surrender to the existent itself, so that its self-revelation depends on the existent itself. This servant position of inquiry and teaching is extended into a basis for the possibility of a separate, albeit limited, domination of the whole of human existence. Of course, the special relation of science to the world and man's attitude guiding this relation can only be fully understood if we see and understand what is happening in this relation. Man - one being among many - 'deals with science'. In this

activity is nothing less than the intrusion of an existent - called man - into the whole of existence, in such a way that the existent unfolds in and through this intrusion into what it is and what it is now. The initial penetration raises the existent in its own way primarily to itself.

This triad - relation to the world, conduct, penetration - in its radical unity, plunges the inspiring simplicity and vividness of being into scientific existence. If we take possession of scientific existence thus illuminated for ourselves, we have to say this: what is the aim of relating to the world is being itself - and nothing else.

Martin Heidegger

READING

The contradictions that the spirit encounters are the only realities, the criteria of reality. In the world of imagination there are no contradictions. Contradiction is the touchstone of necessity.

The contradiction that penetrates to the depths of our soul, this is the tearing apart, this is the cross.

When the contradiction becomes apparent, when the attention is strongly focused on something, the separation takes place. If we persevere on this path, we will reach the point of sanctification.

The representable relation of opposites is the image of the transcendent relation of opposites.

Everything that is truly good contains contradictory elements - and is therefore impossible. He who truly focuses his attention on this impossibility and yet acts, acts well.

This word *good* takes on a very different meaning in its relation between good and evil than when it points to the essence of God himself.

The great suffering of man, which begins in childhood and lasts until the grave, is that to contemplate and to eat are two different operations. In the state of eternal salvation, looking and eating are no different.

What we are contemplating down here is not real, it is just a decoration. What we eat is destroyed, not real.

This separation in us is born of original sin.

The simultaneous presence of the irreconcilable in the behaviour of the soul is the scale tipping from one to the other: it is holiness, the realisation of the microcosm, the following of the order of the world.

Opposites and contradictions. Just as the relation of opposites can touch the natural being, so can the totality of opposing thoughts touch God.

A divinely inspired person is one whose behaviour, thoughts and emotions are bound together by an uncommunicative thread.

There is a reality beyond the world, beyond space and time and beyond man's mental universe. Beyond all that the human intellect can touch. The counterpart of this reality is the hunger for absolute goodness at the core of the human heart, which lives incessantly there but never finds its nourishment in this world. This absolute good manifests itself down here in the absurdities, in the insoluble contradictions, in those which human thought, while it circulates in this world, is constantly running into.

Just as the reality of the world is the sole basis of facts, so that other reality is the sole basis of good.

When the clear concept collides with the incomprehensible, we come to the point of collision of reality.

One thinks truly only when the object of one's thought is hidden from the final conclusion.

LOVE

Love is the sign of our need. God can only love himself - we can only love what is different.

God is not to be loved because He loves us. Because God loves us, we must love ourselves. What other motive is there for self-love? Without this detour we are incapable of loving ourselves.

If I am blindfolded and my hands are fixed to a stick, this stick separates me from the things, but through it I experience them. I only feel the stick, I only see the wall. This is how creatures are with the capacity for love. The supernatural love only concerns creatures and is directed only towards God. It loves only creatures (and is there anything else to love?) as mediators. As such, it loves all creatures equally, and does not exclude itself from among them. To love the stranger as myself is already to love myself as the stranger.

It is a sign of the purity of divine love if joy and suffering *are alike* a sign of gratitude.

For Plato, physical love is a degraded image of true love. Pure human love (conjugal fidelity) is a less blurred image of it. The idea of sublimation could only have arisen from the folly of the present age.

The belief in the existence of another human being as a human being is love itself. Only love can recognize someone in the fullness of his being.

Nothing compels the spirit to believe in the existence of anything (subjectivism, absolute idealism, solipsism, scepticism: see the *Upanishads*, the Taoists, Plato, who live by this intellectual attitude for the sake of purification). Therefore, the only organ of contact with being is acceptance, love. This is why beauty and reality are identical. This is why joy and the sense of reality are identical.

The need to be the creator of what we love is the compulsion to imitate God. But this is the attraction to a false deity - provided we do not appeal to the image of the other side of heaven...

Love for creatures: not love in God, but love that has passed through God as through fire. Love that completely detaches itself from creatures to rise to God, and then descends back into God's creative love. Thus the two opposites that tear human love apart are united: love of the dear being as it is and the will to recreate it.

Imaginary love for creatures. Man is bound by a bond to all the objects of his affection, but the bond can always be broken. The same bond binds the imaginary God, the deity for whom love is also a bond. We are not bound to the real God, and therefore there is no rope that can be broken. And it penetrates us. He alone has access to us.

The beings I love are creatures. Born of chance. Our meeting is an accident. Everything they think, feel and do is limited and a mixture of good and evil. To be fully aware of all this and not love them less. To imitate God, who loves infinitely finite things in their finitude.

The only good that is not at the mercy of chance is that which is outside the world.

The destruction of Troy. The falling of the petals of fruit trees in blossom. To know that the ultimate value is not rooted in existence. It is what is beautiful. Why? It transcends time.

God can only be present in creation in the form of absence.

Evil and the innocence of God. God has to be placed at an infinite distance to be perceived as untouched by evil, and vice versa: evil warns us that God must be placed at an infinite distance.

This is the world as the total absence of God, God himself. Necessity, as something totally different from good, is good itself. This is the reason why in misfortune all consolation distances us from love and turns us away from truth.

This is the mystery of the mysteries. If we understand this, we are safe.

"In the desert of the East..." We must be in the desert because the one we must love is not present.

Whoever puts his life in his faith in God may lose his faith. But he who puts his life in God himself will never lose his faith. To place our lives in the untouchable. It is impossible. This is death. That is what is necessary.

"He laughs at the misery of the innocent": The silence of God. The earthly noises imitate this silence. They mean nothing.

When we need, to the depths of our being, a sound that says something, when we cry out for an answer and it is not given to us, that is when we touch the silence of God.

Our imagination usually scatters words into the noise, and we playfully see shapes in the smoke. But when we are too exhausted, when we no longer have the courage to play, we need real words. The cry rips open our insides. We get nothing but silence.

Some, having got here, speak foolishly to themselves. Whatever they do after that, we must have mercy on them. Others, few, give their whole hearts to silence.

This world is a closed gate. This is the barrier. And this is the gateway.

Love is not comfort - love is light.

Simone Weil

CROSSING THE WATERS

Ananda Coomaraswamy has pointed out that in both Buddhism and Brahmanism, the Pilgrim's Journey, which represents the journey, has three relationships with the symbol of the life and death streams. The journey can be made against the current, towards the source, or by crossing it to the other side, or by following the course of the river to the sea. As you have rightly pointed out, these apparently different symbols do indeed have the same spiritual meaning, and this is in keeping with the nature of metaphysics, which, although perfectly unified, is never "systematic"...

The first, 'going against the tide', is in some ways perhaps the most significant, because in this case the river is to be understood as the world axis: it is the 'celestial river' that descends to earth, and which Hindu tradition calls Ganga and Saraswati, each of which is an aspect of Shakti. In the Hebrew Kabbalah, the counterparts of this life-stream are the channels of the sefirah tree; these are the conduits of the influence of the higher world to the lower world, and are directly related to the Sekina, the counterpart of Shakti. In the Kabala there is also mention of 'water flowing upwards', which means returning to the celestial source...

Another similarity - and difference - can be observed when the latter is compared with the symbolism of the four rivers of Paradise on earth. These extend horizontally on the surface of the earth, and not vertically in the direction of the axis; their source is at the foot of the Tree of Life, which is, of course, as much the World Axis as the Sefirot Tree of the Kabala. We may say, therefore, that the celestial influences flow out through the four rivers as they pass through the Tree of Life to the centre of the earthly world, or, as they enter the Tree of Life, they divide and flow out from there along the directions of space. In this case, two phases of "going against the current" can be considered. The first is horizontal, leading to the centre of the world: the second starts from the centre and spreads vertically along the world axis... Note here that these two alternating phases have their own correspondence, from the point of view of initiation, in the "small mysteries" and the "great mysteries".

The second case - the symbol of "crossing the river" - is undoubtedly the more widespread and generally known. The crossing of the bridge (or ford) appears in almost all traditions, and in particular in certain initiation rites. It can also be crossed by raft or barge, the latter being closely linked to the general symbolism of navigation. The river crossed in this case is specifically the 'river of death'; the shore from which they start: the world subject to change, i.e. the realm of manifested existence (most often conceived in its human and corporeal state, since this is in fact the one from which they must leave). The other shore is Nirvana, the pseudo-state of being that is definitively freed from death.

As for the third case, the 'descending current', the ocean here does not mean some vast expanse of water that has to be crossed. On the contrary, the ocean itself is the goal to be achieved, the representation of Nirvana. The symbolic meaning of the two shores thus changes from what it was before, and it is also an example of the double meaning of symbols: it is no longer a question of getting from one shore to the other, but of avoiding both. The two coasts are, respectively, the 'world of men' and the 'world of gods', in other words, the worlds of microcosm and macrocosm. To reach the destination, other dangers in the watercourse itself must be avoided. These dangers are symbolized by the crocodile, which "goes against the current"... This open-jawed predator represents death and as such is the "gate-keeper", while the estuary is the symbol of the gate.

THE ALL-SEEING EYE

One of the common symbols of Christianity and Freemasonry is the Hebrew tetragram (*jhvh*) written in a triangle, or sometimes just a yod, the first letter of the tetragram as an abbreviation of the whole, which in its essential meaning is itself a divine name, and even, according to some traditions, the first one. The iodine is sometimes replaced by an eye, usually called *the all-seeing* eye. The similarity of the iodine and the eye is indeed apt for this association.

First of all, it should be stressed that the triangle in question is always central and, moreover, in Freemasonry, it is located exactly between the sun and the moon. It already follows that the triangle he-

It follows from this that the eye in the triangle cannot be shaped like the ordinary right or left eye, since in the Universal Man (if he is identified with the Macrocosm) the sun is in fact the right eye and the moon the left eye. To interpret the symbol correctly, therefore, this eye must be "frontal" or central, in other words it is the "third eye", whose resemblance to the iodine is even more striking. It is the third eye that sees everything in the perfect simultaneity of the eternal present...

The upright triangle actually refers to the Principle, but when it is manifested by reflection in a reversed manner, it appears to be directed towards the eye within it, i.e. the Principle is turned towards manifestation; in this case the

"the general sense of 'omnipresent' is accompanied by the meaning of 'providence'. Otherwise, if we consider this reflection in relation to man, we must notice that the inverted triangle is nothing but the geometrical scheme of the heart; in its context, the eye is precisely the "eye of the heart" (*aynul-qalb* in Islamic esotericism), with all its implications. What is more, another familiar expression should be added to the above: that of the "open heart". This arrow, or eye, or yod can be symbolically represented as a wound. Recall the radiating heart of Saint-Denis d'Orques... whose wound is visibly in the form of an iodine.

But that's not all. At the same time, when the yod represents the "eye of the heart", another hieroglyphic meaning is "germ", which is symbolically transformed into a germ in the heart; this can be understood in both its macrocosmic and microcosmic meanings. According to the latter interpretation, applied to man, the 'third eye' can be related *to the luz*, in which the 'frontal eye' and the 'heart-eye' represent two different localisations, and which represents the 'seed' or 'germ of immortality'. It is also significant that the Arabic term *aynul-khuldb* has two meanings. One means "the eye of immortality", the other 'source of immortality'. Legend has it that this liquid of immortality was conceived by Joseph of Arimathea in the Grail. Finally, we recall that the chalice itself is an equivalent symbol of the heart, and like the heart, the chalice is traditionally represented by the inverted triangle.

René Guénon

FAREWELL TO PHILOSOPHY

I turned my back on philosophy when I was unable to detect in Kant any trace of human weakness, or even a shadow of real sadness, either in Kant or in the other philosophers. In music, in mysticism, in poetry, philosophizing is a degraded life-affair, betraying a dubious depth, and such things have authority only in the eyes of the cowardly and lukewarm. Philosophy, moreover, being an impersonal excitement and an escape into the shelter of anaemic ideas, is the salvation of all who shrink from the unbridled impulse of life. Most philosophers have generally done *well*: this is the main argument against philosophy. There is nothing tragic about the death of Socrates.

Socrates' death is not tragic: a misunderstanding, the end of a teacher. And Nietzsche, whose mind was a mess: the poet and the visionary, atoned for his ecstasies, not his conclusions.

Existence cannot be evaded by explanations, for it can only be borne, loved or hated, idolized or dreaded, in the alternation of happiness and horror that is the rhythm, the ebb and flow, the dissonance, the sometimes bitter, sometimes exultant passion of existence itself.

Who has not been surprised or forced by an irrefutable surprise when he has raised his hand in prayer, only to drop it back more hollowly than the answers of a philosopher.

We may say that the vocation of philosophy is to protect us - as long as we are not thrown into confusion by the forces of fate, but it leaves us in a quagmire as soon as we are forced to throw ourselves into it. Can it be otherwise when we see how little the suffering of mankind has penetrated philosophy? The cultivation of philosophy is not productive, it is merely obligatory. One can always be a philosopher with impunity: a fateless occupation that fills neutral, empty hours with voluminous thoughts, hours that defy the Old Testament, Bach, Shakespeare. And are these thoughts, embodied, worth a single page of Job's Lamentations, the horror of Macbeth, or the majesty of a cantata? Man does not *dispute* the universe - man *says it*. Philosophy does not say it. The real problems begin only when man has reviewed and exhausted philosophy, when he comes to the last chapter of this vast volume, where, as a sign of renunciation before the Unknown, there is the end point - there, before the Unknown, in which every moment is rooted and with which we must struggle, because it is of course more urgent, more important than daily bread. Here the philosopher leaves us in a quagmire: the enemy of misfortune, sober and cautious as reason. And here we are left in the company of an old plague-keeper, a poet who knows all the raptures, a musician whose genius penetrates the spheres of the heart. It is really only when philosophy is over, above its ruins, that we begin to live, when we have understood its dreadful nothingness, and that it is vain to seek its shelter, it will offer no help.

FIRST STEP TOWARDS LIBERATION

To gain essential experience, or to become free from the mere appearance of things, it is not necessary to pose the great problems; anyone can discuss God or put on a metaphysical cloak. Reading, talking, doing nothing all help. Nothing is more general than the sleepless - for everything can be learned, even restlessness.

But there is also the truly restless, the naturally restless. It can be recognised by the way it reacts to words. Does he recognise their shortcomings, does he first suffer from their failure and then rejoice? If so, there is no doubt that we are dealing with a spirit liberated or ready to be liberated. Since words are attached to things, we cannot get rid of them unless we first break with them. He who relies on words, though he may know all wisdom, remains in bondage and ignorance. On the contrary, if he rebels against them and turns away from them in horror, he approaches the appointed time.

to the lungs. This abhorrence cannot be learned, it cannot be transmitted, it germinates from the very depths of our being. A poor lunatic who, in the turmoil of his ordeal, suddenly becomes aware of it, comes closer to real knowledge and is 'liberated', as the philosopher who cannot be shocked. For far from eliminating the essential, philosophy assumes and revels in it: is not all its effort directed towards preventing the realisation of the double nothingness of the word and the world?

E. M. Cioran

INFORMATIVE NOTES

(The names of the translators are given in brackets).

ANCIENT AGE AND EAST

HERMES TRISMEGISTOS a The three times great Hermes is the Greek name of Thoth, the Egyptian god of wisdom. *Tabula smaragdina* is a cosmogonic initiatory writing. Its origin is dated to the fifth millennium BC. (Béla Hamvas)

The author of the sayings of PTAH-HOTEP, the vizier of King Ases, around 2450 BC, in Egypt (Béla Hamvas)

THE PEOPLE'S PARASTS around the second millennium BC, Egypt (Béla Hamvas)

THE LIFETIME CONCEPTS 2nd millennium BC, Egypt (Béla Hamvas)

BABYLON'S CELEBRATION CIRCULATION c. 1000 BC (Béla Hamvas)

THE LESSONS OF AHIKAR Syria, 500 BC (Béla Hamvas)

SI-KING *is the Book of the Ancient of the Five Classical Books of Ancient China*. 600 BC (Katalin Kemény)

SU-KING of the Five Classics is the *Book of History*. Compiled by Kung Fu-ce from K. e. c. 600 BC. (Katalin Kemény)

LAO-CE (6th c. BC). One of the main branches of Chinese philosophy, the father of Taoism (Béla Hamvas)

KUNG FU-CE (551-179 BC). is the name of "Confucianism", a philosophy of morality and state that has been influential in China for thousands of years.

LIE-CE (500 BC). Chinese Taoist philosopher (Béla Hamvas)

CHUANGCE (c. 450 BC). Next to Lao Tzu, the most prominent figure in Taoism (Béla Hamvas)

MO-CE (500-420 BC), a popular humanitarian philosopher with a practical orientation.

MENGCE (371-289 B.C.), practical practitioner of Kung Fu in pseudo-theory (Béla Hamvas)

LI TAJ-PO (c. 701-762 BC), Chinese poet (Katalin Kemény)

TU-FU (c. 712-770 BC), Chinese poet (Katalin Kemény) HUJ

SI (380-300 BC?), Chinese philosopher (Béla Hamvas)

UPANISADOK (c. 2nd millennium BC), India. The oldest known metaphysics. (*The source of the world, The food, God and I* - Katalin Kemény, *Tat tvam assi* - Béla Hamvas)

BHAGAVAD GITA (15th - 16th c. BC). The self-evaluation, philosophical part of the great Hindu epic *Mahabharata* (Béla Hamvas)

SANKARA (c. 800), founder of the so-called "non-two" (*Advaita*) school; *his commentary on the Upanishad* is of unique importance in the history of Eastern philosophy (*The Dream of the World* - Béla Hamvas, *Dawn Meditation* - Katalin Kemény)

MANU, the law writer of prehistoric India (Béla Hamvas)

BUDDHA or Sakyamuni (c. 560-480 B.C.). The founder of Buddhism (Katalin Kemény)

THE MESSAGES OF THE MASTER OF ZEN, the Zen (Chinese: chan) Chinese Japanese Buddhist monastic practice. One of its tools is the *koan*: a paradoxical "riddle question" with which the master awakens the sleeping consciousness of the disciple.

INDIAN FAIRYTALES, tales of uncertain date, taken from several collections (Katalin Kemény)

ZOHAR (c. 2nd c.), cabalistic document (Béla Hamvas)

BABILON'S TALMUD (partly B.C., partly medieval), a work in Hungarian describing the Old Testament (Béla Hamvas)

PHILÓN (20 BC - 54 AD), Alexandrian Hebrew-Greek philosopher (Stefánia Mándy)

DRAGS-PO-LHA-RJE, better known as **Szgam-po-pa** (1079-1153), Tibetan Buddhist philosopher (1079-1153), Tibetan Buddhist philosopher (1079-1153).
(Béla Hamvas)

RABIA (713-801), Iraqi mystic poetess. (Béla Hamvas) AL

BISZTÁMI († 874), Persian mystic. (Béla Hamvas) AL

HALLÁDZS (857-922), Persian poet. (Béla Hamvas) SIBLI
(861-945), Iraqi mystic. (Béla Hamvas)

ABU-SZAID (967-1049), Persian poet (Béla Hamvas)

AL-GAZALI (1058-1111), Persian theologian (Béla Hamvas)

IBN-AL-FARID (1182-1235), Arab mystic (Béla Hamvas)

DZSELÁLUDDIN RUMI (1207-1273), mystic poet of Asia Minor (Béla Hamvas)

NASSREDDIN HODZSA (14th c.), legendary folk hero of Asia Minor (Béla Hamvas)

OMAR KHAJJAM (1017?-1124?), Persian poet; from the volume *Our Eternal Friends*.
(Lőrinc Szabó)

HELLENISM AND ROME

THE SEVEN GREEK BELLS, sayings recorded from oral tradition of the 7th and 6th centuries BC (Béla Hamvas)

PÜTHAGORAS (540?-500? BC), Greek sage, mathematician, author of the *Golden Epic* (Béla Hamvas)

HEROACLEITOS (576?-480? BC), Greek philosopher of fire (Béla Hamvas)

DEMOCRITOS (460?-370? BC), atomistic Greek philosopher (Béla Hamvas)

PLATÓN (428-347 BC), disciple of Socrates, master of Aristotle; the result of his dialectical method: the reality of things is in their ideas; a decisive influence on European philosophy (Gyula Gyomlay).

ARISTOTLE (384-322 BC), founder of the 'Peripatetic school'; built up his system in the opposite direction to Plato, as the development of raw nature to the point of reason; incorporated elements of the philosophy of scholasticism into Christian doctrine. From the *Nikomahkosian Ethics* (Miklós Szabó)

ANTISThenes (444-366 B.C.), disciple of Socrates, head of the Cynic school (Károly Sebestyén)

DIOGENES (413?-323 B.C.), disdainer of material goods and conventions, nicknamed "Cynic", disciple of Antisthenes (Károly Sebestyén)

HIPPOCRATES (460?-375? BC), Greek physician, considered the founder of medicine (Béla Hamvas)

PÜRRHÓN (BC B.C. 360?-270?), the first Greek sceptic, the *ataraxian* (Béla Hamvas)

METODOROS, CHIOS († 388 BC), sceptical Greek philosopher, disciple of Democritus (Béla Hamvas)

THEOPHRASTOS (372?-287? BC), headed his school after the death of Aristotle; his satirical characters were the genre of the modern moralists (Béla Hamvas)

EPICTHETOS (50?-130?), freed slave, Stoic philosopher (Béla Hamvas)

PLUTARKHOSZ (48-120), Greek historian (Béla Hamvas)

PLOTINOS (204-270), philosopher of the Alexandrian school who taught in Rome, the last great Greek thinker, credited with Neoplatonism; from *Plotinus in Reflections* (Margit Magyariné Techert)

CICERO (106-43 BC), Roman politician, eclectic philosopher, master of rhetorical Latin prose (József Zoltán)

SENECA (2 BC - 65 AD), Stoic moral philosopher, great master of Latin prose (József Zoltán)

MARCUS AURELIUS (121-180), emperor, Stoic philosopher; from the volume *The Meditations of Marcus Aurelius* (József Huszti)

CLOSED TIME

THE PRAYERS OF THE LORD, apocryphal sayings collected from various places and times (Béla Hamvas)

ANTIOCHIAI SZENT THEOPHIL († 190), apologist, church father. (József Zoltán)

ÓRIGENÉSZ († 254), the first church writer, the most important hittu-
(Katalin Kemény)

CAECILIUS CYPRIANUS (220?-258), apologist, martyr (József Zoltán)

GREAT ST. VAZUL (329-378), confessor and apologist (József Zoltán)

SAINT AGOSTON (354-430), church father, Christian thinker, the last Latin classic.

POPE LEO ST. LEO (440-461), in his sermons and letters of faith, proclaims the primacy of Rome (József Zoltán)

BOETHIUS (480?-524), poet and philosopher; his famous work is *The Consolation of Wisdom*.

HOLY BENEDIC (late 5th century-550), founder of the Western monasticism.

SAINT GERGELY (540?-604), Pope, who is credited with the Gregorian liturgy.

JOANNES FÉCAMPIENSIS (990-1078), Italian Benedictine, researcher into the common tra- dition of East and West.

ANSELM OF SAINT CANTERBURY (1033-1109), creator of the ontological argument for God (József Zoltán)

BERNÁT THE HOLY, CLAIRVAUX (1090-1153), orator and moral theologian.

HUGO DE SANCTO VICTORE (1096-1141), the first Victorian mystic.

ST. Ferenc of Assisi (1181-1226), "Poor of God", perhaps the most beloved figure of the College of Saints, founder of the Franciscan Order (Dénes Szedő)

AEGIDIUS OF ASCENSUS († 1262), follower of St. Francis of Assisi, recorder of his legends (Béla Hamvas, József Zoltán)

BONAVENTURA (1221-1274), Franciscan monk, teacher of the Church (Joseph Zoltán)

ANGÉLA BOLDOG, FULGINÓI († 1309), one of the most outstanding exponents of Franciscan mysticism (József Zoltán)

TAMÁS AQUINÓI SZENT (1225-1274), "doctor angelicus", creator of Thomistic philosophy on the basis of Aristotle and the Church Fathers (József Zoltán)

MESTER ECKEHART (1260-1327), the greatest German mystic of the Middle Ages.

TAULER, JOHANNES (1300-1361), disciple of Master Eckehart (Stefánia Mándy)

RUYSBROEK, JOHANNES (1293-1381), Flemish mystic (Béla Hamvas)

TAMÁS KEMPIS (1379-1471), monk of the Order of St. Augustine; from the volume entitled *The Imitation of Christ* (Boniface Platz)

CUSANUS, NICOLAUS (1401-1461), German cardinal, the "last scholastic". His non-terrestrial epistemological ideas would place him in the Renaissance, but his method and dogmatics still link him to the Middle Ages (Katalin Kemény)

RENAISSANCE AND ENLIGHTENMENT

LEONARDO DA VINCI (1452-1519), painter, sculptor, architect, writer, the model of Renaissance man (György Somlyó)

ERASMUS, ROTTERDAMI (1469-1536), encyclopaedic humanist wit. (András Szabó)

MORUS TAMÁS (1478-1535), surname Becket, English statesman philosopher, From his volume *Utopia* (László Geréb).

LUTHER MÁRTON (1483-1546), reformer. Principles: justification by faith, universal priesthood, conscientious responsibility instead of authority. He made the Scriptures accessible to the people through his Bible translations (Stefania Mándy).

FRANCK, SEBASTIAN (1499-1542), natural philosopher, pietist (Stefánia Mándy)

RABELAIS, FRANCOIS (1494?-1553), French writer who embodied the Renaissance ideal by exposing hypocrisy, demanding a broad education and a joie de vivre (Katalin Kemény)

TERÉZ, SZENT, AVILAI (1515-1582), mystic, innovator of the Carmelites, classic of the Spanish language (Father Ernő)

PARACELUS, (1493-1541), alchemist and mystic, forerunner of modern medicine and chemistry (Béla Hamvas)

MONTAIGNE, MICHEL DE (1533-1592), French thinker, creator of the essay genre (László Báti)

SHAKESPEARE, WILLIAM (1564-1616), English dramatist (Mihály Vörösmarty, Sándor Petőfi, János Arany)

BÖHME, JAKOB (1575-1624), Europe's foremost mystic and traditional thinker (Stefánia Mándy)

DESCARTES, RENÉ (1596-1651), philosopher, mathematician, the Cartesian method of rationalism is a turning point in European philosophy: it accepts only arguments that are in accord with pure reason as the measure of truth; it separates theology from science. *Selected philosophical works*. (Samu Szemere)

ANGELUS SILESIUS (1624-1677), German mystic poet.

PASCAL, BLAISE (1633-1662), French mathematician, physicist and philosopher. The morals and style of his work, *Reflections*, paved the way for French classicism (Béla Hamvas).

SPINOZA, BARUCH (1624-1677), Dutch-Jewish philosopher, religious rationalist.

Tractatus theologico-politicus (Árpád Posch and János Rencz) BOSSUET,

JACQUES (1627-1704), French religious orator and writer of meditations (Báti, 1624-1924).

László)

FRANKLIN, BENJAMIN (1706-1790) American statesman, physicist, thinker; the
From the *Autobiography of Franklin Benjamin* (Oedön Wildner).

HAMANN, JOHANN GEORG (1730-1788), "Magician of the North", German mystic, great influence on the poets of *Sturm und Drang*, Goethe and Schiller (Stefánia Mándy)

SAINT-MARTIN, LOUIS-CLAUDE (1743-1803), the "unknown philosopher", French traditionalist thinker (Katalin Kemény)

MONTESQUIEU, CHARLES DE (1689-1755), French historian, statesman (*The Republic of France* - László Báti, *Comments* - Katalin Kemény)

VOLTAIRE, (François-Marie Arouet) (1694-1778), author of novels, dramas, heroic poems and pamphlets. His name is remembered for his anti-ecclesiastical works promoting natural morality and tolerance (Albert Gyergyai and Nándor Szávai)

ROUSSEAU, JEAN-JACQUES (1712-1778), whose basic idea of 'returning to nature' defines both his novels and his reflections and sets the tone for French Romanticism. (Lajos Rácz)

DIDEROT, DENIS (1713-1784), writer, founder of the *Encyclopaedia*, promoter of the Enlightenment (*Political Principles of the Sovereigns* - János Győry, *On the Interpretation of Nature* - János Csatlós)

MORALISTS

LA ROCHEFOUCAULD, FRANÇOIS DUC DE (1613-1680), maxims of interest (Katalin Kemény)

LA BRUYÈRE, JEAN DE (1645-1696), His characterizations of human frailty and fascinating drawings of his time; stylistic innovator (László Báti)

VAUVENARGUES, LUC DE CLAPIERS (1716-1747), His maxims are an expression of confidence in human nature (Katalin Kemény)

LICHTENBERG, GEORG (1722-1801), German moralist (Béla Hamvas)

CHAMFORT (Nicolas-Sébastien Roch) (1741-1794), French moralist, whose focus was on the contrast between natural justice and social injustice (László Báti)

RI VAROL, ANTOINE DE (1753-1824), caustic conservative writer (László Báti)

JOUBERT, JOSEPH (1754-1824), French moralist, master of finely polished ideas (*Man and the World* - Béla Hamvas, *Truth and Error* - Katalin Kemény)

NOVALIS (Friedrich von Hardenberg) (1772-1801), German Romantic poet (Katalin Kemény)

ROMANTICISM AND CLASSICISM

HASZIDOK (17th-19th c.), meaning 'pious': the name given to the Jewish religious communities in Ukraine, Poland and the monarchy which prepared for the coming of the Messiah by means of physical, spiritual and mental purification (Béla Hamvas)

BLAKE, WILLIAM (1757-1825), mystical English painter and poet (György Somlyó)

GOETHE, JOHANN WOLFGANG VON (1749-1832), "German poet prince"; his researches in natural science are on a par with his literary works (Baránszky-László Jób)

SCHILLER, FRIEDRICH (1759-1805), his friend and, along with Goethe, the outstanding dramatist of *Sturm und Drang*, author of aesthetic treatises, poet of the ideal (Anna Hajnal)

KANT, IMMANUEL (1724-1804), German philosopher, founder of critical idealism: beyond the surface, the nature of things is unknowable, but moral virtue presupposes freedom and an immortal soul.

FICHTE, JOHANN GOTTLIEB (1762-1814), student of Kant, master of Schelling; his name is associated with subjective idealism: the basis of existence is activity; the only reality is the recognition of the self, which is the absolute.

BAADER, FRANZ XAVER VON (1765-1841), German philosopher, teacher of Catholic dogmatics, harmonized Kantian speculative philosophy with the Boehme-Saint-Martin line; influenced German Romanticism (Stefánia Mándy).

SCHELLING, FRIEDRICH WILHELM (1775-1854), German philosopher, his "theory of identity" influenced classical German philosophy, especially Hegel (Mándy Stefánia)

HEGEL, GEORG WILHELM FRIEDRICH (1770-1831), only the universal absolute exists, world history is the unfolding of human consciousness, i.e. freedom; the inner contradictions of the stages of the process are balanced by *the dialectical method* which is associated with Hegel (Béla Hamvas).

HÖLDERLIN, FRIEDRICH (1770-1843), German Romantic poet in the classical Greek form; his lyric poetry is related to the spirit of the Greek tragedies (Béla Hamvas).

SHELLEY, PERCY BYSSHE (1792-1833), English Romantic revolutionary lyricist: metaphysical questions, a fascination with nature, and faith in the redemptive power of art inspire his airy images (György Somlyó)

KEATS, JOHN (1795-1821), English Romantic poet, "Beauty is truth, truth is beauty" (György Somlyó)

STENDHAL, real name Henri Beyle (1783-1842), in his studies and novels, a ruthless analyser of passion and calculating ambition; his writings, rooted in Romanticism, are the ancestors of the later naturalistic, psychological and later impressionist novel.

SCHOPENHAUER, ARTHUR (1788-1860), German philosopher, whose pessimism was based on the contradiction between the "unknowable world" and the only certain thing, the will; the insatiable will to the world is a source of eternal suffering, from which only renunciation can release one.

MICHELET, JULES (1798-1874), French historian, the lyrical inspiration of his works is of lyrical importance (László Báti)

CARLYLE, THOMAS (1795-1881), English mathematician, essayist, historian, orator; his ethical conduct, peculiar humour, pathetic style, heroic cult have had a suggestive influence on Hungary (Béla Hamvas)

NEWMAN, JOHN HENRY (1801-1890), English cardinal, creator of a new kind of apologetics (József Zoltán)

EMERSON, RALPH WALDO (1803-1882), American didactic poet; the basic idea of his optimistic essays: the power of faith in truth as the basis of individual and social happiness; from *Man and Nature* (Oedön Wildner)

STIRNER, MAX (1806-1856), German teacher, journalist, early Hegelian, representative of solipsism: the self and its content alone is existent (Anna Hajnal)

KIRKEGAARD, SØREN ABYE (1813-1855), Danish theologian and philosopher; in some respects a forerunner of Nietzsche in his criticism of academic philosophy; the first representative of what later became known as existentialism (Stefánia Mándy)

THOREAU, HENRY DAVID (1817-1862), classic of American literature, friend of Emerson, whose picturesque descriptions express a Puritan morality and an intimate relationship with nature. From *Walden* (Klára Szöllösy)

BAUDELAIRE, CHARLES (1821-1867), French poet, aesthete; symbolists, par-nastics, decadents alike recognize their predecessor in the great form artist who expanded the field of artistic perception; his prose verses are still the inspiration of modern lyricism.

FLAUBERT, GUSTAVE (1821-1880), the most prolific master of the French novel of the 19th century; from the volume *Letters of Flaubert* (Zoltán Komor and András Komor)

WHITMAN, WALT (1819-1892), the poet who called himself 'the son of the cosmos', 'the most extraordinary product of all the inspiration and wisdom that America has yet produced' (Emerson). His free verse, expressing the spirit of life, patriotism and universal brotherhood, sheds all poetic forms except rhythm of tone and thought. From the volume "*The Needles*" (Zoltán Jékely)

RUSKIN, JOHN (1819-1900), his works on the history of art are socially-minded and bear witness to a passion for culture; he was an advocate of the Pre-Raphaelites (László Baránszky-Jób)

AMIEL, HENRY FRÉDÉRIC (1821-1881), Swiss idealist aesthete; a sensitive account of the external and internal history of his *Confidential Diary* of almost half a century (Béla Hamvas)

DOSTOYEVSKY, Fyodor Mikhailovich (1821-1881), the subject and setting of his great novels is almost exclusively the Russian land, but he sheds light on such abysses of social and individual existence that neither fiction, nor psychology, nor public thought can escape his influence, even to the present day; from the volume *The Brothers Karamazov* (Endre Szabó)

RAMAKRISHNA (1834-1886), India; priest of the temple of the goddess Kali; universal values of the religions; after his death, his disciples founded the Order of Ramakrishna (Katalin Kemény).

FRANCE, ANATOLE, (1844-1924), a broadly erudite satirist whose novels, written in translucent language, are more akin to the moralists; forerunner of the modern essay novel. From *The Garden of Epicurus* (Géza Helvéth).

MALLARMÉ, STÉPHANE (1842-1898), innovator of French poetry after Baudelaire; he saw the culmination of the achievement of the spirit in "pure poetry" (poésie pure), in which language acquires metaphysical and musical meaning; the Symbolists considered him their master (Katalin Kemény)

WILDE, OSCAR (1856-1900), English poet and comic playwright, whose aestheticism, typical of the end of the century, is mainly expressed in his fables; from the volume *Wilde's Breviary* (Andor Cserna)

LAUTRÉAMONT, COMTE DE, real name Isidore Ducasse (1846-1870), French poet of mysterious life, considered by the surrealists as their forerunner (Katalin Kemény)

TOLSTOY, LEV NIKOLAIEVICH (1828-1910), Russian realist novelist; in both his novels and his reform projects, he sought to achieve evangelical simplicity: 'there is no greatness without simplicity, goodness and truth'; he saw civilisation as the obstacle to a pure life (Béla Hamvas)

NIETZSCHE, FRIEDRICH (1844-1900), German philosopher; by "revaluing all values" he not only opens a new era in the history of philosophy, but also elevates its language to an artistic level (László Baránszky-Jób).

TWENTIETH CENTURY

ROLLAND, ROMAIN (1866-1944), French music historian, essayist and novelist; 'the conscience of Europe': his entire oeuvre is dedicated to the cause of high morals and peace. From the volume *Clerambault* (Marcell Benedek).

BLOY, LÉON (1846-1917), French poet, essayist, novelist; his warrior prose, written before his opportunistic age, alternates with visionary poetic images (László Báti)

TAGORE, RABINDRANATH (1861-1941), Hindu poet; combines the values of Eastern tradition and Western culture; from *Rabindranath Tagore* (Ervin Baktay)

MEREZSKOVSKY, DMITRIY SERGEYEVICH (1866-1941), Russian poet, re-writer, his essays have proved to be timeless. From the volume *Winter Rainbow* (Marcell Benedek).

SUARČS, ANDRÉ, real name Yves Scantzel, (1868-1948), his "platonic" writings on the greats of world literature are masterpieces of essay writing (László Báti)

GEORGE, STEFAN (1867-1933), German neo-romantic poet, stiffened Mallarmé's poetic ideas into a stylised poetic; the motto of *Blätter für die Kunst*, founded in the spirit of aristocratic poetry: "The strictest measure is the same as the greatest freedom" (Iván Rozgonyi)

GIDE, ANDRÉ (1869-1951), one of the founders of the *Nouvelle Revue Française*, the leading French literary journal of the turn of the century; his novels, written in classical style, question the validity of universal moral laws in the name of aesthetic hedonism. His work in literary theory had a great influence on his time. (György Somlyó)

GANDHI, MOHANDAS KARAMCSAND (1869-1948), was the Mahatma (great soul), a Hindu hero of freedom, whose wisdom and action is based on non-violence. From *The Selected Writings of Mahatma Gandhi* (Ervin Baktay)

ALAIN, (Émile Auguste Chartier) (1868-1951), professor of philosophy, heir to the French Moralists; confidence in reason and nature and anti-intellectualism characterise his essays, '*propos*', in disciplined form.

PÉGUY, CHARLES (1873-1914), French poet of religious inspiration, critic with a sharp logic, whose journal *Cahiers de la Quinzaine* is a collection of poets of the turn of the century (László Báti)

JOUHANDEAU, MARCEL (1888-19??), writer, an idealist of the French moralistic tradition (Katalin Kemény)

KASSNER, RUDOLF (1873-1959), Austrian essayist, 'philosopher without system'. The result of his world view: existence and idea are inseparable (Katalin Kemény)

VALÉRY, PAUL (1871-1945), a student of Mallarmé, his poetry, which is related to symbolism but intellectually charged, is a classic example of "*poésie pure*"; his essays are masterpieces of French prose (György Somlyó).

RILKE, RAINER MARIA (1875-1926), the most original Austrian poet of the turn of the century, sometimes described as an impressionist, sometimes as a neo-romantic. He cannot be classified in any current; the drama of his poetry's metamorphosis curves from the "never-heard- before murmur of words" to the "final place of the word", the "peak of pure negation" (Ede Szabó)

HOFMANNSTHAL, HUGO VON (1874-1929), Austrian Impressionist poet, playwright and narrator, who started out in the Georgian circle (Iván Rozgonyi)

MARITAIN, JACQUES (1882-1973), French neo-Tomist thinker (Iván Rozgonyi)

POWYS, JOHN COWPER (1872-1963), English writer of world literary importance; his novels continue the tradition of the broadly flowing English novel, combining English *common sense*, passionate humanism, broad vision and humour in the grand style of his essays (Boldizsár Ábrányi)

HAECKER, THEODOR (1879-1945), German religious thinker (József Zoltán)

EBNER, FERDINAND (1882-1931), poet, essayist on the existential prob-
(Stefánia Mándy)

JASPERS, KARL (1883-1969), psychologist, philosopher; alongside Heidegger, the most important representative of existentialism; in search of the primordial experience of existence; the key to transformation, an active approach leads to the freedom of conscious life.

ORTEGA Y GASSET, JOSÉ (1883-1955), Spanish writer, essayist; from The Task of Our Time (Lajos Puskás)

GÓMEZ DE LA SERNA, RAMÓN (1888-1963), Spanish writer, author of prose verse and aphorisms (Katalin Kemény)

ROSENZWEIG, FRANZ (1886-1927), outstanding modern figure in Jewish religious philosophy (Stefánia Mándy)

HEIDEGGER, MARTIN (1889-1976), German existentialist philosopher; in his analysis of the relationship between being and nothingness, he makes existence a purely ontological question: nothingness and being (and our finite existence) are inseparable, 'this is only manifested in the transcendence of being as nothingness' (József Zoltán)

WEIL, SIMONE (1909-1943), French philosopher; her deep faith, expressed in her writings, is embodied in her practice of life (Katalin Kemény)

GUÉNON, RENÉ (1886-1951), French traditionalist philosopher, the first to formulate the universality of metaphysical science (Katalin Kemény)

CIORAN, E. M. (1911-1995), Romanian-born writer and essayist, living in France from 1937; "negative theologian"; his aphoristic, polemical elegance of style is reminiscent of the wit of the French moralists (Katalin Kemény)

NEWSLETTER

Quotations from the following are included in the book:

Abu-Ssaid	Descartes Diderot	Huj Si
Aegidius	Diogenes	Ibn-al-Farid
Ahikar	Dostoevsky	Ibn-Karram
Al-Bistami	Dragsz-po-lha-rje	Indian tales
Al-Gazali	Dzseláluddin	Jaspers
Al-Hallage	Ebner	Joannes Fécampiensis
Alain Amiel	Master Eckehart's	Joubert
Angéla	Discourses of the Life	Jouhandeau
Angelus Silesius	of Emerson	Kant
Antisthenes	Epictetus	Kassner
Aristotle Baader	Erasmus	Keats
Babylonian wisdom	Fichte	Kempis Tamás
Baudelaire Bhagavad	Flaubert	Khilön
Gita	France	Kierkegaard
Bias	Franck	Kleobulosz
Blake	Franklin	Kung fu-ce
Bloy	Gandhi	La Bruyère
Boethius	George Gide	La Rochefoucauld
Bonaventura	Goethe	Lao-ce
Bossuet	Guénon	Lautréamont
Boehme Wise	Haecker	Leonardo da Vinci
peasant	Hamann	Li-tai-po
Buddha	Hassids	Lichtenberg
Caecilius Cyprianus	Hegel	Lie-ce
Carlyle	Heidegger	Luther
Chamfort	Heraclitus	Mallarmé
Cicero	Hermes	Manu
Cioran	Trismegistus	Marcus Aurelius
Cusanus	Hippocrates	Maritain
Chuang-ce	Hoffmannsthal	Meng-ce
De la Serna	Hölderlin	Merezskovsky
Democritus	Hugo de S. Victore	Métrodóros
		Michelet
		Mo-ce

Montaigne	Seneca	Zohar
Montesquieu	Shakespeare	
Thomas More	Shelley	
Nazreddin Hoxha	Si-king	
Newman	Sibli	
Nietzsche	Spinoza	
Novalis	Stendhal	
Omar Khajjam	Stirner	
Origen Ortega y	Su-king	
Gasset	Suares	
Paracelsus	Saint Augustine	
Pascal	Saint Anselin	
Péguy	Saint Benedict	
Penandros	Saint Bernard	
Philo Pittakos	Saint Francis	
Plato Plotinus	Saint Gregory	
Plutarch	Saint Leo Saint	
Powys	Thomas Saint	
Ptah Hotep	Teresa Saint	
Pürrhón	Theophile Saint	
Püthagorasz	Theophilus	
Rabelais	Saint Basil	
Rabia	Solon	
Ramakrishna	Tagore	
Rilke Rivarol	Talmud	
Rolland	Tauler	
Rosenzweig	Thales	
Rousseau	Theophrastos	
Rumi Ruskin	Thoreau	
Ruysbroeck	Tolstoy	
Saint-Martin	Tu-fu	
Sankara	Upanishads	
Schelling	The scattered	
Schiller	words of the	
Schopenhauer	Lord Valéry	
	Vauvenargues	
	Voltaire	
	Weil	
	Whitman	
	Wilde	
	Zen masters	