

KING ALFRED'S
ANGLO-SAXON VERSION OF BOETHIUS'
Consolation of Philosophy

translated by

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Preface

This work of King Alfred's is an Anglo-Saxon version of a work entitled, *De Consolatione Philosophiæ*, which was written in the sixth century by Manlius Severinus Boethius, a Roman whose attainments and liberality had placed him among the most distinguished names, which grace the annals of the empire. He became known to Theodoric, king of the Ostrogoths, and was applied to by him for assistance in the regulation of his coinage, in order that forgery might be prevented, as he was justly celebrated for his scientific knowledge. His happiness was not confined to the favour of princes; he was also happy in his marriage with Rusticana, the daughter of Symmachus; and he was moreover the father of two sons, who were elected consuls in the year 522. He is said to have reached the height of his prosperity, when, on the inauguration of his sons in the consulate, after pronouncing a panegyric on Theodoric, he distributed a largess to the Roman populace, in the games of the circus. But he was a remarkable instance of the uncertainty of earthly prosperity. His happiness was unexpectedly overcast; and he was suddenly hurled from the eminence he had attained. His unflinching integrity provoked enmity in the court of Theodoric and the boldness with which he pleaded the cause of Albinus, when accused of treason by an informer, appears to have been the ground on which he and his father-in-law, Symmachus, were charged with the intention of delivering Rome from the barbarian yoke which was then oppressing her. A sentence of confiscation and death was passed upon him, without his defence being heard, and he was for some time imprisoned in the baptistry of the church at Ticinum. During his confinement he wrote his treatise on the consolation of philosophy. His imprisonment, however, was not of very long continuance; for the sentence of death was after a few months carried into effect, although there is some doubt as to the manner in which it was executed.

From the absence of any direct reference to Christianity in his "Consolation" it can scarcely be supposed that Boethius had embraced the Christian Religion: still, however, from the deep tone of piety which

pervades the work, it is very evident that he was in no small degree influenced by its refreshing truths.

The version which King Alfred made, has been preserved to us in two very ancient manuscripts. One of these is in the Bodleian Library, in Oxford, and the other is in the Library of the British Museum, having been removed there with the other valuable books and manuscripts, which were saved in the fire which unfortunately destroyed a portion of Sir Robert Cotton's Library. This manuscript was so much injured as to be rendered almost useless; but through the skill and industry of the Rev Jas. Stevenson, assisted by the late John Holmes, esq., it has been made as perfect as the damaged state of the parchment would allow, and may now be read, in most parts, with the greatest ease. This manuscript contains the metrical version of Boethius, in addition to the prose, whilst that in Oxford contains nothing but prose. There are some variations in the texts of these MSS. and the reader will find this translation for the most part following the reading of the one in the Bodleian.

King Alfred entirely altered the arrangement of Boethius; for instead of dividing his work into four books, and subdividing each book into chapters, as his Author had done, he divided the whole work into forty two chapters, alluding occasionally to the books of the original.

Much of the work is in the form of a dialogue between Boethius and Wisdom, which is represented as visiting him in prison, and endeavouring to infuse comfort into his mind. The first six chapters of the Anglo-Saxon version comprise the chief part of the first book of Boethius, together with a short introduction. The next fifteen chapters contain the substance of the second book. The third book is translated in the following fourteen chapters. Four chapters and part of another, viz. part of chapter xl, are devoted to the fourth book, and the remaining portion of chapter xl, together with chapters xli and xlii, completes the whole. Although the work is altogether deeply interesting, yet the most striking portion will be found in the following chapters. In chapter xv there is a lively description of the golden age. In chapter xix the vanity of pursuing fame is pointed out. In chapter xxi the power and goodness of the creator in governing and upholding the universe are displayed. Chapter xxv contains a disquisition on natural disposition. The first part of chapter xxix describes the weakness and unhappiness of Kings; while

the second part illustrates the condition of royal favourites by the treatment which Seneca and Papinian met with. Chapter xxx, part 2, declares the natural equality of mankind. Chapter xxxiii part 4, contains an address to God. Chapter xxxv, part 4, contains the fable of the giants warring against Jupiter, and the history of the tower of Babel; and Part 6 relates the story of Orpheus and Eurydice. Chapter xxxviii, part 1, gives the account of Ulysses and Circe. Chapters xl. and xli, are devoted to an enquiry into divine predestination and human liberty. The last chapter treats of God and eternity.

King Alfred proposed, as he states, to render a correct translation of the Latin work of Boethius, but warming with his subject, he considerably enlarges on his author and displays to great advantage his own originality of thought. Indeed the great value of the present work arises from the insight it affords us into the mind and feelings of one, who was very far in advance of the age in which he lived; and who has ever since been regarded as a model of wisdom. The vicissitudes and hardships which King Alfred encountered would very naturally inspire him with a lively sympathy for a man, who suffered such great reverses as the noble Roman did; for in the sufferings of Boethius, and in the harassing cares which disturbed his mind, he would probably see a type of his own distractions and anxieties; and this would doubtless be a great inducement to overcome the difficulties which must have beset him in mastering a work which presented many difficulties to a mind very imperfectly educated, but endowed with a wonderful spirit for getting the better of them. The imperfection of King Alfred's early education will account for a few mistakes in names and historical facts. These however by no means lessen the value of the translation; and instead of wondering at their occurrence, one should feel surprised that they are not more numerous, and more important. The translation was made, as the Royal Author himself states, amid various and manifold worldly occupations which often busied him both in mind and body. "The occupations," said he, "are very difficult to be numbered which in his days came upon the kingdoms which he had undertaken to govern;" and on this account our wonder should be excited when we meet with literary attainments which in those days were rather to be sought for in the retirement of the cloister, than in the harass and distraction of a

camp, ever moving and often in the immediate neighbourhood of piratical and cruel enemies.

For the first publication of King Alfred's version we are indebted to Mr Rawlinson, who in the year 1698 published at Oxford a very correct transcript of the Oxford manuscript which had been prepared for publication by Junius, and for which that eminent linguist had prepared the necessary types. This was merely the Anglo-Saxon text, without any translation. In the year 1829 a very beautiful edition was published by the late Mr Cardale together with an English translation. The Anglo-Saxon text having been taken from both of the existing manuscripts, gives a popular version, but not such a faithful one as is desirable in a work of this kind. In this, as well as in the other portions of King Alfred's works, the greatest fidelity has been observed in the translation.

Although differing in some passages the translator begs to acknowledge the assistance he has derived from Mr Cardale's labours, and to express his obligation for many acts of kindness which he received from that gentleman, whose friendship he had the happiness of enjoying many years.

ALFRED'S PREFACE.

KING ALFRED was translator of this book, and turned it from book Latin into English, as it is now done. Sometimes he set word by word, sometimes meaning of meaning, as he the most plainly, and most clearly could explain it, for the various and manifold worldly occupations which often busied him both in mind and in body. The occupations are to us very difficult to be numbered which in his days came upon the kingdom which he had undertaken, and yet when he had learned this book, and turned it from Latin into the English language, he afterwards composed it in verse, as it is now done. And he now prays, and for God's name implores every one of those who list to read this book, that he would pray for him, and not blame him, if he more rightly understand it than he could. For every man must, according to the measure of his understanding, and according to his leisure, speak that *which* he speaketh, and do that which he doeth.

TITLES OF THE CHAPTERS.

I. First, how the Goths conquered the empire of the Romans, and how Boethius wished to deliver them, and Theodoric then discovered it, and gave orders to take him to prison.

II. How Boethius in the prison was lamenting his hard lot.

III. How Wisdom first came to Boethius in the prison, and began to comfort him.

IV. How Boethius, singing, prayed and lamented his misfortunes to God.

V. How Wisdom again comforted and instructed him with his answers.

VI. How he related to him a parable of the sun, and of the other heavenly bodies, and of the clouds.

VII. How Wisdom said to the mind, that nothing affected it more than that it had lost the worldly goods, which it before was accustomed to; and spoke to him a parable, how he should act if he should be their servant; and concerning the ship's sail; and how *he* wished to have the reward of all his good works, here in this world.

VIII. How the Mind answered the Reason, and said it perceived itself every way culpable; and said it was oppressed with the soreness of trouble, so that it could not answer him. Then said Wisdom, this is still thy fault that thou art almost despairing; compare now the felicities with the sorrows.

IX. Then began Wisdom again to speak a parable concerning the sun, how she outshines all other stars, and obscures them with her light; and how the raging of the wind troubles the placid sea.

X. How Boethius said, he plainly perceived that it was all true that Wisdom said; and that the prosperity and the enjoyments which he formerly thought should be happiness, were nothing; and how Wisdom, that he might shew that he was happy, said that his anchor was still fast in the earth.

XI. How Reason answered him and said, she thought she had in some measure raised him up, and almost brought him to the same dignity which he before had: and asked him, who had all that he would in this world: some have nobility and have not riches.

XII. How Wisdom instructed him, that if he were desirous to build a firm house, he should not set it upon the highest hill-top.

XIII. How Wisdom said that they might then argue more closely, because the instruction had in some measure entered into his understanding.

XIV. How the Mind said, why should not fair land delight him and how Wisdom asked, what of their fairness belonged to him?

XV. How Reason said, how happy the first age was!

XVI. How Wisdom said, that men would exalt themselves for power, to heaven: also concerning the power of Theodoric and Nero.

XVII. How the Mind said, that power and covetousness never well pleased him; but that he toiled with reluctance.

XVIII. XIX. Of Fame.

XX. Of adverse fortune and of prosperous.

XXI. Of the power of Almighty God, and how he governs all his creatures.

XXII. How Wisdom and Reason had restored the Mind, both with profound argument and with pleasant song.

XXIII. How Wisdom instructed the man who would sow fertile land, that he should first take away the thorns and the furze, and the useless weeds: and how he said, that if a person had tasted any thing bitter, honey-comb seemed the sweeter to him.

XXIV. How men desire by different means to arrive at one happiness.

XXV. How God governs all creatures with the bridles of his power and how every creature tends towards its kind, and desires that it may come thither from whence it before came.

XXVI. How Wisdom said, that men were able to *understand* concerning God, as in a dream, and *asked*, whether wealth could make a man so rich that he should not need more; and whether to Boethius all his condition were agreeable when he was most prosperous.

XXVII. How dignity may do two things to the unwise, *who* is honoured by other unwise *persons*; and how Nonius was rebuked for the golden chair of state; and how every man's evil is the more public when he has power.

XXVIII. Of Nero the Cæsar.

XXIX. Whether the king's favour and his friendship are able to make any man wealthy and powerful: and how other friends come with wealth, and again with wealth depart.

XXX. How the poet sung, that more men rejoiced at the error of the foolish people, than rejoiced at true sayings: that is, that they thought any one better than he was. Then do they rejoice at that which should make them ashamed.

XXXI. How he shall suffer many troubles, who shall yield to the lusts of the body; and how any one may, by the same rule, say that cattle are happy, if they say that those men are happy who follow the lusts of their body.

XXXII. How this present wealth hinders the men who are attracted to the true felicities, and how Wisdom is one single faculty of the soul, and is nevertheless better than all the faculties of the body, and though any one should collect together all these present goods, yet cannot he the sooner be so happy as he would, nor has he afterwards that which he before expected.

XXXIII. How Wisdom, having taught the Mind the resemblances of the true felicities, would then teach it *the true felicities* themselves: also of

the five objects of desire, namely, wealth, and power, and honour, and glory, and pleasure.

XXXIV. How Wisdom, having explained what the highest good was, would then explain to him where it was: and how from the great good come the less.

XXXV. How Wisdom instructed the Mind, that it should seek within itself what it before sought around it, and should dismiss vain anxieties as it best might: and how God directs all creatures, and all good things with the rudder of his goodness.

XXXVI. How the Mind said to Wisdom, that it perceived that God said to it through him that which he said: and *asked*, why the good God suffers any evil to be: and how Reason desired the Mind to sit in her chariot, and she would be its guide: and how she said that will and power were two things; and that if to any man there were a deficiency of either of them, neither of them could without the other effect anything.

XXXVII. Of proud and unjust rulers; and how man should have the crown at the end of the course: and how we should describe every man by the beast which he was most like.

XXXVIII. Of the Trojan war: how Ulysses the king had two countries under the Cæsar: and how his thanes were transformed into wild beasts.

XXXIX. Of right hatred, and of unright, and of just recompence: and how various punishments and manifold misfortunes come to the good, as they should to the wicked: and concerning the predestination of God, and concerning destiny.

XL. How every fortune is good, whether it seem good to them, or whether it seem evil to them.

XLI. How Homer the good poet praised the sun: and concerning freedom.

XLII. How we ought with all our power to enquire after God! every one according to the measure of his understanding.

CHAPTER I.

At the time when the Goths of the country of Scythia made war against the empire of the Romans and with their kings who were called Rhadgast and Alaric¹ sacked the Roman city, and brought to subjection all the kingdom of Italy, which is between the mountains and the island of Sicily: and then after the before mentioned kings, Theodoric obtained possession of that same kingdom; Theodoric² was of the race of the Amali; he was a Christian, but he persisted in the Arian heresy. He promised to the Romans his friendship, so that they might enjoy their ancient rights. But he very ill performed that promise and speedily ended with much wickedness; which was, that in addition to other unnumbered crimes, he gave order to slay John the pope.³ Then was there a certain consul, that we call heretoha, who was named Boethius.⁴ He was in book learning and in worldly affairs the most wise. He then observed the manifold evil which the king Theodoric did against Christendom, and against the Roman senators. He then called to mind the famous and the ancient rights which they had under the Cæsars, their ancient lords. Then began he to enquire, and study in himself how he might take the kingdom from the unrighteous king, and bring it *under* the power of the faithful and righteous men. He therefore privately sent letters to the Cæsar at Constantinople,⁵ which is the chief city of the Greeks, and their king's dwelling-place, because the Cæsar was of the kin of their ancient lords: they prayed him that he would succour them with respect to their Christianity, and their ancient rights. When the cruel king Theodoric discovered this, he gave orders to take him to prison, and therein lock up. When it happened that the venerable man was fallen into so great trouble, then was he so much the more disturbed in his mind, as his mind had formerly been the more accustomed to worldly prosperity: and he then thought of no comfort in the prison: but he fell down prostrate on the floor, and stretched himself, very sorrowful: and distracted began to lament himself, and thus singing said:

CHAPTER II.

The lays which I, an exile, formerly with delight sung, I shall now mourning sing, and with very unfit words arrange. Though I formerly readily invented, yet I now, weeping and sobbing, wander from suitable words. To blind me these unfaithful worldly riches! and to leave me so blinded in this dim hole! At that time they bereaved *me* of all happiness, when I ever best trusted in them: at that time they turned their back upon me, and altogether departed from me! Wherefore should my friends say that I was a prosperous man? How can he be prosperous who in prosperity cannot always remain?

CHAPTER III.

1 When I, said Boethius, had mournfully sung this lay, then came there into me heavenly wisdom, and greeted my sorrowful mind with his words, and thus said: How! art not thou the man who was nourished and instructed in my school? But whence art thou become so greatly afflicted by these worldly cares? unless, I wot, thou hast too soon forgotten the weapons which I formerly gave thee. Then Wisdom called out and said, Depart now, ye execrable worldly cares, from my disciple's mind, for ye are the greatest enemies. Let him again turn to my precepts. Then came Wisdom near to my sorrowing thought, said Boethius, and it so prostrate somewhat raised; then dried the eyes of my mind, and asked it with pleasant words, whether it knew its foster-mother. Thereupon when the mind turned, it knew very plainly its own mother that was the Wisdom that long before had instructed and taught it. But it perceived his doctrine much torn and greatly broken by the hands of foolish people, and therefore asked him how that happened. Then answered Wisdom to him and said, that his scholars had thus torn him when they endeavoured to possess themselves of him entirely. But they gather much folly by presumption, and by annoyance, unless any of them to their amendment return.

2. Then began Wisdom to grieve for the frailty of the mind, and began to sing; and thus said: Alas! into how unfathomable a gulf the mind rushes when the troubles of this world agitate it. If it then forget

its own light, which is eternal joy, and rush into the outer darkness, which is worldly cares, as this mind now does; now it knows nothing else but lamentations.

3. When Wisdom and Reason had sung this lay, then began he again to speak, and said to the mind: I see that there is now more need to thee of comfort than of bewailing.

4. Therefore, if thou wilt be ashamed of thine error, then will I soon begin to bear thee up, and will bring thee with me to the heavens. Then answered the sorrowing mind to him, and said, What! O what! are these now the goods and the reward which thou didst promise to the men who would obey thee? Is this, now, the saying which thou formerly toldest me that the wise Plato said, which was, that no power was right without right manners?⁶ Seest thou now, that the virtuous are hated and oppressed because they would follow thy will: and the wicked are exalted through their crimes, and through their self-love? That they may the better accomplish their wicked purpose, they are assisted with gifts and with riches. Therefore I will now earnestly call upon God. He then began to sing, and thus singing said:

CHAPTER IV.

O Thou Creator of heaven and earth! Thou who reignest on the eternal seat! Thou who turnest the heaven in a swift course! Thou makest the stars obedient to Thee; and Thou makest the sun, that she⁷ with her bright splendour dispels the darkness of the swarthy night. So does also the moon with his pale light, which obscures the bright stars in the heaven; and sometimes bereaves the sun of her light, when he is betwixt us and her: and sometimes the bright star, which we call the morning star; the same we call by another name, the evening star. Thou who to the winter days givest short times, and to the summer's days longer! Thou who the trees by the stark north-east wind in harvest time of their leaves bereavest; and again in spring, other leaves givest, through the mild south-west wind! What! do all creatures obey Thee and keep the decrees of Thy commandments, except man alone, who is disobedient? O Thou Almighty Maker and Governor of all creatures, help now Thy miserable mankind. Wherefore, O Lord, ever wouldest Thou that fortune

should so vary? She afflicts the innocent, and afflicts not the guilty. The wicked sit on thrones, and trample the holy under their feet. Bright virtues lie hid, and the unrighteous deride the righteous. Wicked oaths in no wise injure men, nor the false lot which is with fraud concealed. Therefore almost all mankind will now wend in doubt, if fortune may thus change according to the will of evil men, and Thou wilt not control her! O my Lord! Thou who overseest all creatures, look now mercifully on this miserable earth, and also on all mankind; for it now all struggles in the waves of this world.

CHAPTER V.

Whilst the mind was uttering such sorrow, and was singing this lay, Wisdom and Reason looked on him with cheerful eyes; and he was nothing disturbed on account of the mind's lamentation, but said to the mind, As soon as I first saw thee in this trouble, thus complaining, I perceived that thou wast departed from thy father's country, that is, from my precepts. Thou departedst therefrom when thou didst abandon thy fixed state of mind, and thoughtest that fortune governed this world according to her own pleasure, without God's counsel, and his permission, and men's deserts. I knew that thou wert departed, but I knew not how far, until thou thyself toldest to me by thy lamentations. But though thou art now farther than thou wert, thou art not nevertheless entirely driven from thy country; though thou hast wandered therein. Nor, moreover, could any other man lead thee into error, except thyself, through thine own negligence. Nor could any one thus believe it of thee, when thou wouldest call to mind of what families thou wert, and of what citizens, as to the world: or again spiritually, of what society thou wert in thy mind and in thy reason: that is, that thou art one of the just, and of those who will rightly, who are the citizens of the heavenly Jerusalem. Thence no man was ever driven unless he were willing, that is, of his own good will. Wherever he might be, he had this always with him: when he had this with him, wheresoever he might be, he was with his own kin, and with his own citizens, in his own land, when he was in the company of the just. Whosoever, then, is worthy of this, that he may be in their service, he is in the highest freedom. I shun

not this inferior, and this unclean place, if I find thee well instructed. I am not desirous of walls wrought with glass, or of thrones ornamented with gold and with jewels; nor am I so desirous of books written with gold, as I am desirous of a right will in thee. I seek not here books, but that which books are profitable for, that I may make thy mind perfectly right. Thou complainedst of evil fortune, both on account of the height of unjust power, and on account of my meanness and dishonour: and also on account of the uncontrolled licence of the wicked, with respect to these worldly goods. But as very great trouble has now come upon thee, both from thine anger, and from thy sorrow, I may not yet answer thee before the time for it arrives.

2. For whatsoever any one begins out of season, has no good end. When the sun's brightness in the month of August hottest shines, then does he foolishly who will at that time sow any seed in the dry furrows. So also does he who will seek flowers in the storms of winter. Nor canst thou press wine at mid-winter. though thou be desirous of warm must.

3. Then spake Wisdom and said: May I now enquire a little concerning the fixedness of thy mind, that I may thereby discover whence, and how I may effect thy cure? Then answered the mind and said, Enquire as thou wilt. Then said Reason, Dost thou believe that fortune governs this world, or that aught of good can be thus made without the Maker? Then answered the mind and said, I do not believe that it could be made so full of order: but I know forsooth that God is Governor of his own work, and I never swerved from this true belief. Then answered Wisdom again and said; About that very thing thou wast singing a little while ago, and saidst that every creature from God knew its right time, and fulfilled its right institution, except man alone. Therefore I wonder beyond measure what it can be, or what thou meanest, now thou hast this belief. We must, however, enquire still more deeply concerning it. I do not know very well about what thou still doubttest. Tell me, since thou sayest that thou doubttest not that God is Governor of this world, how he then would that it should be. Then answered the mind and said; I can scarcely understand thy questions, and yet thou sayest that I must answer thee. Wisdom then said; Dost thou think that I am ignorant of the severity of thy trouble that thou art encompassed with? But tell me, to what end does every beginning tend?

Then answered the mind and said; I remembered it formerly, but this grief has deprived me of the recollection. Then said Wisdom; Dost thou know whence every creature came? Then answered the mind and said; I know that every creature came from God. Then said Wisdom; How can it be that now thou knowest the beginning, thou knowest not also the end? for grief may agitate the mind, but it cannot bereave it of its faculties. But I desire that thou wouldest inform me, whether thou knowest what thou thyself art. It then answered and said; I know that I am of living men, and rational, and nevertheless of mortal. Then answered Wisdom and said; Knowest thou anything else to say of thyself besides what thou hast now said? Then said the mind, I know nothing else. Then said Wisdom, I have now learned thy mental disease, since thou knowest not what thou thyself art: but I know how I must cure thy disease. For this reason thou saidest thou wert an exile and bereaved of all good, because thou knowest not what thou wert. Thou shewedst that thou didst not know to what end every beginning tended, when thou thoughtest that extravagant and reckless men were happy and powerful in this world: and moreover thou shewedst that thou didst not know with what government God rules this world, or how he would that it should be, when thou saidest that thou thoughtest that this inconstant fortune governs this world without God's counsel. But it was a very great peril that thou shouldest so think. Not only wast thou in immoderate trouble, but thou hadst well nigh altogether perished. Thank God, therefore, that He has assisted thee, so that I have not entirely forsaken thy mind. We have already the chief part of the materials for thy cure, now thou believest that fortune cannot of herself without God's counsel change this world. Now thou hast no need to fear anything, for from the little spark which thou hast caught with this fuel, the light of life will shine upon thee. But it is not yet time that I should animate thee more highly: for it is the custom of every mind, that as soon as it forsakes true sayings, it follows false opinions. From hence, then, begin to grow the mists which trouble the mind, and entirely confound the true sight, - such mists as are now on thy mind. But I must dispel them first, that I may afterwards the more easily bring upon thee the true light.

CHAPTER VI.

Look now at the sun and also at the other heavenly bodies; when the swarthy clouds come before them they cannot give their light: so also the south wind with a great storm troubles the sea, which before, in serene weather, was clear as glass to behold. When it is so mingled with the billows it is very quickly unpleasant, though it before was pleasant to look upon. So also is the brook, though it be strong in its right course, when a great stone rolling down from the high mountain falls into it, and divides it, and hinders it from its right course. In like manner does the darkness of thy mind now withstand my enlightened precepts. But if thou art desirous with right faith to know the true light, put away from thee evil and vain joys, and also the vain sorrow and the evil fear of this world; that is, that thou lift not up thyself with arrogance in thy health, and in thy prosperity; nor again, despair of any good in any adversity. For the mind is ever bound with misery, if either of these two evils reigns.

CHAPTER VII.

1. Then was Wisdom silent a little while, till he perceived the mind's thoughts. When he had perceived them, then said he, If I have rightly understood thy trouble, nothing affects thee more than this, that thou hast lost the worldly prosperity which thou formerly hadst, and now lamentest because it is changed. I know clearly enough that worldly goods with many an allurements very deceitfully flatter the minds which they intend at last utterly to betray; and then, at length, when they least expect it, scornfully leave them in the deepest sorrow. If thou now desirest to know whence they come, then mayst thou learn that they come from worldly covetousness. If thou, then, wilt know their manners, thou mayest learn that they are not faithful to any man. Hence thou mayest understand, that thou hadst no felicity when thou hadst them; nor again, didst lose any, when thou didst lose them. I thought that I had formerly instructed thee, so that thou mightest know them: and I knew that thou despisedst them when thou hadst them, though thou didst use them. I knew that thou against their will didst often repeat my sayings.

But I know that no custom can be changed in any man, without the mind being in some measure disquieted. Therefore thou art now moved from thy tranquillity.

2. O Mind, what has cast thee into this care, and into these lamentations? Is it something which is unusual that has happened to thee, so that the same before ailed not other men? If thou then thinkest that it is on thy account that worldly goods are so changed towards thee, then art thou in error: for their manners are such. They kept towards thee their own nature, and in their changeableness they show their constant state. They were exactly when they most allured thee, such as they are now, though they flattered thee with false happiness. Thou hast now understood the unstable promises of this blind pleasure. These promises, which are now exposed to thee, are yet to many others concealed. Thou now knowest what manners worldly goods have, and how they change. If thou, then, art desirous to be their servant, and their manners are pleasing to thee, wherefore mournest thou so much? Why changest thou not also with them? But if thou wouldest avoid their deceits, then despise them, and drive them from thee, for they allure thee to thy ruin. The same things which have now occasioned to thee these lamentations, because thou hadst them, would have suffered thee to be in tranquillity if thou never hadst obtained them. The same *things have* now forsaken thee, of their own will, not of thine, which never forsake any man without causing sorrow. Do these things now seem to thee very dear, and very precious, which are neither *constant* to possess, nor yet easy to relinquish: but when they are departing from any one, he shall with the greatest sorrow of his mind relinquish them? Since, then, thou canst not, according to thy wish, have them faithful to thee, and they will bring thee into mourning when they depart from thee; for what else do they come, but for a token of care and unmixed sorrow? The worldly goods are not alone to be thought about which we at the time possess, but every prudent mind observes what end they have, and forewarns itself both against their threats, and against *their* allurements. But if thou choosest to be their servant, then oughtest thou willingly to bear whatever belongs to their service, and to their manners, and to their will. If thou then, art desirous that they should on thy account assume other manners than their will and custom is, dost thou not, then, dishonour

thyself, inasmuch as thou rebellest against the government which thou thyself hast chosen? and nevertheless thou canst not change their custom or their nature. Besides, thou knowest that if thou spreadest the sail of thy ship to the wind, thou then leavest all thy course to the power of the wind. So if thou hast given up thyself to the power of worldly goods, it is right that thou shouldest also follow their manners. Thinkest thou that thou canst turn back the revolving wheel when it moves in its course? No more canst thou alter the inconstancy of worldly prosperity.

3. I am still desirous that we should discover further concerning worldly goods. Why didst thou just now upbraid me, that thou hadst lost them on my account? Why dost thou complain against me, as if thou for my advantage wert deprived of thine own; either of thy riches, or thy dignity? both of which formerly came to thee from me, when they were lent to thee. Let us now speak before such judge as thou wilt; and if thou art able to prove that any mortal man possessed anything of this kind as his own, I will give thee again all that thou canst say was thine own. I received thee ignorant and uninstructed, when thou first earnest to man's estate, and then taught and instructed thee, and imparted to thee wisdom, whereby thou obtainedst the worldly possessions which thou now sorrowing hast lost. Thou mayest, therefore, be thankful thou hast well enjoyed my gifts. Nor canst thou say that thou hast lost aught of thine own. Why complainest thou against me? Have I in any wise deprived thee of those thy gifts which came to thee from me? All true wealth and true dignity are mine own servants, and wheresoever I am, they are with me. Know thou for truth, if the riches, which thou art lamenting that thou hast lost them, had been thine own, thou couldest not have lost them. O how unjustly do many worldly men act towards me, in that I may not govern mine own servants! The heaven may bring light days, and again obscure the light with darkness: the year may bring blossoms, and the same year take them away. The sea may enjoy calm waves; and all creatures may keep their custom and their will, except me alone! I alone am deprived of my manners and am doomed to manners foreign *to me*, through the insatiable covetousness of worldly men. Through covetousness have they deprived me of my name, which I should rightly have. This name I should rightly have, that I am wealth and dignity; but they have taken it from me, and in their pride they have

kept me, and assigned *me* to their false riches: so that I may not with my own servants perform my service, as all other creatures may. My servants are wisdom, and virtues, and true riches. With these servants was always my delight: with these servants I am encompassing all the heaven, and the lowest I bring to the highest, and the highest to the lowest; that is, I bring humility to the heavens, and heavenly blessings to the humble. But when I ascend with my servants, then look we down on this stormy world, like the eagle, when he soars above the clouds, in stormy weather, that the storms may not hurt him. In like manner I am desirous, O Mind, that thou shouldest ascend to us, if thou art willing, on the condition that thou wilt again with us seek the earth for the advantage of good men. Dost thou not know my manners, how careful I always was concerning the wants of good men? Knowest thou how mindful I was of the necessity of Cæsar,⁸ the Grecian king, when Cyrus, king of Persia, had seized him, and would burn him? When they cast him into the fire, I delivered him with heavenly rain. But thou, on account of thy virtue, wast over confident, and thoughtest that because of thy good intention nothing unjust could befall thee; as if thou wouldest have the reward of all thy good works in this world! How couldest thou dwell in the midst of the common country without suffering the same as other men? How couldest thou be in the midst of this changeable state, without also feeling some evil through adversity? What else do the poets sing concerning this world? What is there *peculiar* to thee that thou shouldest not change therewith? Why carest thou how it may change, when I am always with thee? This reverse was to thee *more tolerable, because this world's goods did not too much delight thee, and that thou, moreover, didst not more confide in them.*

4. Though to the covetous man come as many riches as there are grains of sand by the sea-cliffs, or stars which in dark nights shine; he nevertheless will not cease from complaints, so as not to lament his poverty. Though God fulfil the wishes of wealthy men with gold, and with silver, and with all precious things, nevertheless the thirst of their avarice will not be satisfied, but the unfathomable gulf will have very many waste holes to gather into. Who can give enough to the insane miser? The more any one gives to him, the more he covets.

5. How wilt thou now answer worldly goods, if they say to thee, Why blamest thou us, O Mind? Why art thou angry with us? in what have we offended thee? Indeed thou wast desirous of us, not we of thee! Thou didst set us on the seat of thy Maker, when thou didst look to us for that good which thou shouldest *have* sought from him. Thou sayest that we have betrayed thee; but we may rather say that thou hast betrayed us, since through thy desire, and through thy covetousness, the Maker of all creatures will abhor us. Thou art, therefore, more guilty than we, both on account of thine own wicked desire. and also because through thee, we cannot perform our Maker's will. For he lent us to thee, to be enjoyed according to his commandments, not to fulfil the desire of thine evil covetousness. Answer us now, said Wisdom. as thou wilt: we wait for thine answer.

CHAPTER VIII.

Then said the Mind, I perceive myself every way guilty: but I am so greatly oppressed with the soreness of this trouble, that I cannot answer. Then said Wisdom again, it is still thy fault that thou art almost despairing. But I am unwilling that thou shouldest despair: I would rather that thou wert ashamed of such error, for he who despairs is distracted, but he who is ashamed is in repentance. If thou now wilt call to mind all the honours in respect of this world, which thou hast had since thou first wert born, until this day; if thou wilt now reckon all the enjoyments against the sorrows; thou canst not easily say that thou art miserable and unhappy. For I took charge of thee young, inexperienced, and uninstructed, and adopted thee as my child, and taught thee by my discipline. Who can, then, say aught else, but that thou wert most happy when thou wert beloved by me, ere known; and sooner than thou knewest my discipline and my manners: and I taught thee young such wisdom as is to many other minds denied; and improved thee with my instructions until thou wert chosen *a judge*? If thou now sayest that thou art not happy, because thou hast not the temporary honours and the enjoyments which thou formerly hadst, still thou art not unhappy: for the sorrows wherein thou now art, will in like manner pass away, as thou sayest the enjoyments formerly did. Thinkest thou now that such change

and such sorrow happen to thee alone, and that the like could happen to no other mind, either before thee or after thee? Or thinkest thou that to any human mind there can be anything constant, without change? Or if it for a time to any man firmly remain, death at least will take it away, so that it may not be where it before was. What are worldly goods but an emblem of death? For death comes for nothing else but that it may take away life. So also worldly goods come to the mind, in order that they may deprive it of that which is dearest to it in this world; that is, when they depart from it. Say, O Mind, whether thou judgest more wisely, seeing that nothing worldly can be constant and unchangeable, whether thou despisest them, and of thine own choice canst relinquish them without regret, so that thou canst abide it when they leave thee sorrowful?⁹

CHAPTER IX.

Then began Wisdom to sing, and sung thus: When the sun in the serene heaven brightest shines, then become dark all the stars, because their brightness is no brightness by reason of her. When the south-west wind gently blows, then grow very quickly field flowers; but when stark wind cometh *from the* north-east, then does it very soon destroy the rose's beauty. So often-times the north wind's tempest stirs the too tranquil sea. Alas! that there is nothing of fast-standing work ever remaining in the world!

CHAPTER X.

Then said Boethius: O Wisdom, thou who art the mother of all virtues, I cannot gainsay or deny that which thou hast said to me, because it is all true: for I have now learned that those my felicities, and the prosperity, which I formerly thought should be happiness, are no happiness, because they so speedily depart. But this has most of all troubled me, when I most deeply think about that which I have clearly learned, that it is the greatest infelicity of this present life, that any one is first happy and afterwards unhappy. Then answered Wisdom and Reason, and said, Thou canst not with truth accuse thy fortune and thy

happiness, as thou supposest, on account of the false unhappiness which thou art suffering. It is a deception when thou imaginest that thou art unhappy. But if it has so much troubled thee, and made thee sad, that thou hast lost the false happiness; then may I plainly tell thee, that thou well knowest that thou hast still the greatest part of thy felicities which thou formerly hadst. Tell me now whether thou canst with justice complain of thy misfortunes, as if thou hadst altogether lost thy happiness, since thou hast yet kept entire everything most precious which thou wast anxious about? How canst thou, then, lament the worse and the more unworthy, when thou hast retained the more desirable? Thou knowest, however, that the ornament of all mankind, and the greatest honour yet lives, that is Symmachus, thy father-in-law. He is yet hale and sound, and has enough of every good; for I know that thou wouldest not be unwilling to give thine own life for him, if thou wert to see him in any difficulties. For the man is full of wisdom and virtues, and sufficiently free as yet from all earthly fear. He is very sorry for thy troubles, and for thy banishment. How! is not thy wife also living, the daughter of the same Symmachus? and she is very prudent and very modest. She has surpassed all other wives in virtue. All her excellence I may sum up to thee in few words; that is, that she is in all *her* manners like her father. She now lives for thee, thee alone: for she loves nothing else except thee. Of all good she has enough in this present life, but she has despised it all, beside thee alone. She renounces it all, because she has not thee. Of this alone she feels the want. Because of thy absence everything which she has seems naught to her. Therefore she is through love of thee wasted, and also dead with tears and with grief. What shall we say concerning thy two sons, who are noblemen, and counsellors? in whom is manifest the ability and all the virtues of their father, and of their grandfather, so far as young men may understand, that thou art as yet very happy, since thou still livest and art hale. This, indeed, is the greatest possession of mortal men, that they live and are hale: and thou hast yet in addition, all that I have already mentioned to thee. But I know that this is even more valuable than man's life: for many a man would wish that he himself should die, rather than behold his wife and children dying. Why toilest thou, then, in weeping without a cause? Thou canst not yet blame thy fortune, nor upbraid thy wife: nor art thou altogether brought to naught,

as thou thinkest. No unbearable misery has yet befallen thee, thine anchor is still fast in the earth: that is, the noblemen whom we before mentioned. They suffer thee not to despair of this present life: and again, thine own faith, and the divine love and hope; these three suffer thee not to despair of the everlasting life. Then answered the sorrowful Mind and said; O that the anchors were so secure, and so permanent, both for God and for the world, as thou sayest! Then might we the more easily bear whatsoever misfortunes come upon us. They all seem the lighter to us, so long as the anchors are fast. But thou mayest nevertheless perceive how my felicities, and my dignity here in respect of the world are changed.

CHAPTER XI.

1. Then answered Wisdom and Reason, and said; I think I have in some measure raised thee up from thy sorrow; and almost brought *thee* to the same dignity which thou before hadst. Only thou art yet too full of what thou hast relinquished, and art therefore grieved. But I cannot endure thy lamentations for the little that thou hast lost. For thou always with weeping and with sorrow mournest if there be to thee a lack of anything desired, though it be of something little. Who was ever in this present life, or who is now, or who shall be yet after us, in this world, to whom nothing against His will may happen, either little or much? Very narrow and very worthless are human enjoyments; for either they never come to a man, or they never constantly remain there such as they first came. This I will hereafter more clearly shew. We know that some may have enough of all worldly wealth, but they have nevertheless shame of the wealth, if they are not so noble in birth as they wish. Some are very noble and eminent on account of their birth, but they are oppressed and made sad by indigence and poverty, so that it were more desirable to them to be unnoble than so poor, if it were in their power. Many are, indeed, both full noble, and full wealthy, and are nevertheless very unhappy when they have either of these things; either when they have wives as yoke-fellows with them, or have not yoke-fellows. Many have married happily enough, but for want of children they leave all the riches which they amass to strangers to enjoy, and they are, therefore, unhappy. Some have children enough, but they are sometimes unhealthy,

or evil, or worthless, or soon depart, so that the parents therefore mourn all their life. Hence no man can, in this present life, be altogether suited in respect of his fortune. Though he have nothing at all to sorrow about, this is able to make him sorrowful, that he knows not what is about to happen to him, whether good or evil, any more than thou knewest, and moreover he fears that what he then happily enjoys he may lose. Show me now any man of those who appear to thee the happiest, and who is most distinguished for the enjoyment of his desires. I tell thee at once that thou mayest observe that he is often immediately troubled for very trifling things, if anything happen to him against his will, or contrary to his custom, though it be ever so little; unless he may give his nod to every man to run at his will. Wonderfully little can cause the happiest man of all here in respect of the world, that he should think that his happiness is either much lessened, or entirely lost. Thou now thinkest that thou art very miserable, and I know that to many a man it would seem that he were raised to the heavens, if he had any part of thy felicities which thou hast still. Moreover, the place wherein thou art now detained, and which thou callest thy place of exile, is the country of the men who were born there, and also of those who by their own will dwell there. Nothing is evil until a man thinks that it is evil; and though it be now heavy and adverse, yet it will be happiness if he acts willingly, and patiently bears it. Scarcely any one is so prudent when he is in impatience, as not to wish that his happiness were destroyed. With very much bitterness is the sweetness of this world mingled. Though it seem pleasant to any one, he will be unable to hold it, if it begin to fly from him. Is it not, then, most resemble old men. Therefore I wonder why thou canst not very evident how inconstant worldly goods are, when they are not able to satisfy the poor, inasmuch as he always desires something of that which he has not; neither do they always dwell with the patient and moderate.

2. Why seek ye, then, around you the happiness which ye have placed within you by the divine power? But ye know not what ye do: ye are in error. But I can with few words show you what is the root of all happiness: for which I know thou wilt strive until thou obtainest it: this then is good. Canst thou now discover whether thou hast anything more precious to thee than thyself? I think, though, thou wilt say that thou hast

nothing more precious. I know, if thou hadst full power of thyself, thou wouldest then have something in thyself, which thou never with thine own consent wouldest relinquish, nor could Fortune take it from thee. Therefore I advise thee, that thou learn, that there is no happiness in this time of life. But learn that nothing is better in this present life than reason: because men cannot by any means lose it. Therefore that wealth is better which can never be lost, than that which may, and shall *be lost*. Is it not now clearly enough proved to thee, that Fortune cannot give thee any happiness? because each is insecure. both fortune and happiness; for these goods are very frail, and very perishable. Indeed every one who possesses these worldly goods, either knows that they are about to depart from him, or he is ignorant of it. If, then, he is ignorant of it, what happiness has he in riches, when he is so foolish, and so unwise as to be ignorant of this? But if he knows it, then he dreads that they may be lost; and also is well aware that he must leave them. Continued fear suffers not any man to be happy. If, then, any man cares not whether he have that wealth which he may not have, even when he has it, truly that is for little happiness or none which a man may so easily lose. I think, moreover, that I had formerly with sufficient clearness taught thee by many arguments, that the souls of men are immortal and eternal: and it is so evident that no man need doubt it, that all men end in death, and also their riches. Therefore I wonder why men are so irrational as to think that this life can make man happy whilst he lives, seeing that it cannot after it is ended make him miserable. But we certainly know of innumerable men, who have sought eternal happiness, not by this alone, that they chose the bodily death, but they also willingly submitted to many grievous torments on account of the eternal life: those were all the holy martyrs.

CHAPTER XII.

Then began Wisdom to sing, and sung thus; he prolonged with verse the speech that he before made, and said: He who will build a fine house must not set it upon the highest hill; and he who will seek heavenly wisdom must not *seek* it with arrogance. And again, he who is desirous to build a firm house, should not set it on sand-hills. So also if thou art

desirous to build wisdom, set it not on avarice. For as thirsty sand swallows the rain, so avarice swallows the perishable riches of this middle earth, because it is always thirsty after them. A house cannot stand long on the high mountain, if a very violent wind press on it; nor has it that which may stand on the thirsty sand for excessive rain. Thus also the human mind is subverted, and moved from its place, when the wind of strong afflictions agitate it, or the rain of immoderate care. But he who wishes to have eternal happiness, should flee from the dangerous splendour of this middle earth, and build the house of *his* mind on the firm rock of humility. For thirst dwells in the vale of humility, and in the mind of wisdom. Therefore the wise man ever leads all his life in joy unchangeable and secure, when he despises both these earthly goods, and also the evils, and hopes for the future, which are eternal. For God supports him everywhere, perpetually dwelling in the enjoyments of his mind; though the wind of troubles, and the continual care of these worldly goods blow upon him.

CHAPTER XIII.

When Wisdom and Reason had thus sung this lay, then began he again to make a speech, and thus said; Methinks that we may now argue more closely, and with profounder words; for I perceive that my doctrine, in some degree, enters into thy mind, and thou understandest well enough what I say unto thee. Consider now what is thine own of all these worldly possessions and riches: or what of great price thou hast therein, if thou rationally examinest it. What hast thou from the gifts and from the riches which thou sayest fortune gives you, even though they were eternal? Tell me now, whether in thy judgment this thy wealth is so precious to thee from its own nature. But I say to thee, that it is from its own nature, not from thine. If it, then, is from its own nature, and not from thine, why art thou ever the better for its good? Tell me what of it seems to thee most precious: whether gold, or what? I know, however, gold. But though it be gold, and precious, yet will he be more celebrated and more beloved who gives it, than he who gathers and takes it from others. Riches, also, are more honourable and more estimable when any one gives them, than they are when he gathers and keeps them.

Covetousness indeed makes misers loathsome both to God and to men; and liberality always makes them estimable, and famous, and worthy, both to God and to the men whom they befriend. Since, then, wealth cannot be both with those who give it and with those who receive it, all wealth is therefore better and more precious given than held. If even all the wealth of this middle earth should come to one man, would not all other men be poor, except one? It is sufficiently evident that the good word and good fame of every man is better and more precious than any wealth; for this word fills the ears of all those who hear it, and yet is not the less with him who speaks it. His heart's recess it opens, and the locked heart of another it penetrates, and in the way between them it is not lessened, nor can any one with sword slay it, nor with rope bind; nor does it ever perish. But these your riches, if they were always yours, then does not the sooner seem to you enough of them; and if ye may not give them to other men, ye never the more therewith satisfy their want and their desire. Though thou divide them as small as dust, yet thou canst not satisfy all men equally: and when thou hast divided all, thou wilt then be poor thyself. Are the riches of this middle earth worthy of a man, when no one can fully have them? Nor can they enrich any man, unless they bring another to poverty. Does the beauty of gems attract your eyes to them, to wonder at them? I know that they do so. But the excellence of the beauty which is in gems is theirs, not yours. Wherefore I excessively wonder why the good of the irrational creatures seems to you better than your own good; why ye so immoderately admire gems, or any of the insensible things which have not reason; for they with no justice can deserve that ye should admire them. Though they are God's creatures, they are not to be compared with you. For either it is no good for yourselves, or at least for little good compared with you. We too much despise ourselves when we love that which is beneath us, in our own power, more than ourselves, or the Lord who made us, and gave us all good things. Do fair lands delight thee?

CHAPTER XIV.

Then answered the Mind to Reason, and said; Why should not fair land delight me? Is not that the fairest part of God's creatures? Full often

we rejoice at the serene sea, and also admire the beauty of the sun, and of the moon, and of all the stars. Then answered Wisdom and Reason to the Mind, and thus said; What belongs to thee of their fairness? Darest thou to boast that their fairness is thine? No, no. Dost thou not know that thou madest none of them? -But if thou wilt glory, glory in God. Dost thou rejoice in the fair blossoms of Easter, as if thou madest them? Canst thou then make anything of this kind, or hast thou any part in the work? No, no. Do not thou so. Is it through thy power that the harvest is so rich in fruits. Do not I know that it is not through thy power? Why art thou then, inflamed with such vain glory? or why lovest thou external goods so immoderately, as if they were thine own? Thinkest thou that fortune can cause to thee that those things should be thine own, which their own natures have made foreign to thee? No, no. It is not natural to thee that thou shouldest possess them; nor is it their nature that they should follow thee. But heavenly things are natural to thee, not these earthly. These earthly fruits are created for the food of cattle; and worldly riches are created for a snare to those men who are like cattle, that is, vicious and intemperate. To those moreover they come oftenest. But if thou wouldest have the measure, and wouldest know what is needful; then is it meat and drink, and clothes, and tools, for such craft as thou knowest, which is natural to thee, and which is right for thee to possess. What advantage is it to thee, that thou shouldest desire these present goods beyond measure, when they can neither help thee, nor themselves? With very little of them nature has enough. With so much she has enough, as we before mentioned. If thou givest her more, either it hurts thee, or at least it is unpleasant to thee, or inconvenient, or dangerous,-all that thou dost beyond measure. If thou beyond measure eatest or drinkest, or hast more clothes on thee than thou needest, the superfluity becomes to thee either pain, or loathing, or inconvenience, or danger. If thou think that wonderful apparel is any honour, then ascribe I the honour to the workman who made it, not to thee. The workman is God, whose skill I therein praise. Thinkest thou that the multitude of thy men can make thee happy? No, no. But if they are wicked, then are they more dangerous and more troublesome to thee, had than not had: for wicked thanes are always their lord's enemies. But if they are good and faithful to their lord, and sincere, is not that, then, their good, not thine?

How canst thou, then, appropriate to thyself their good. If thou boastest of it, dost thou not boast of their good, not thine?

2. It is now plainly enough shewn to thee, that none of those goods is thine, which we have already spoken about, and thou didst think should be thine. If, then, the beauty and wealth of this world is not to be desired, why dost repine on account of what thou hast lost? Or wherefore dost thou long for what thou formerly hadst? If it is fair, that is of their own nature, not of thine; it is their fairness, not thine. Why then dost thou delight in their fairness? What of it belongs to thee? Thou didst not make it, nor are they thine own. If they are good and fair, then were they so made; and such they would be though thou never hadst them. Thinkest thou that they are ever the more precious, because they were lent for thy use?. But because foolish men admire them, and they to them seem precious, therefore thou gatherest and keepest them in thy hoard. How, then, dost thou hope to have happiness from anything of this sort? Believe me now I say it unto thee, thou hast naught therefrom, except that thou toilest to avoid poverty, and therefore gatherest more than thou needest. But nevertheless I very well know that all which I here speak is contrary to thy will. But your goods are not what ye think they are; for he who desires to have much and various provision needs also much help. The old saying is very true, which men formerly said, that those need much who desire to possess much, and those need very little who do not desire more than is enough. But they hope by means of superfluity to satisfy their greediness, which they never do. I wot that ye think ye have no natural good or happiness within yourselves, because ye seek them without you, from external creatures. So is it perverted, that man, though he is divinely rational thinks that he has not happiness enough in himself, unless he collects more of irrational creatures than he has need of, or than is suitable for him; whilst the irrational cattle are desirous of no other wealth, but think that sufficient for them which they have within their own skin, in addition to the fodder which is natural to them. Whatsoever, then, though little, ye have of divine in your soul, is the understanding, and memory, and the rational will, which makes use of them both. He, therefore, who has these three, has his Maker's likeness, as much as any creature can at all have its Maker's likeness. But ye seek the happiness of the exalted nature, and its dignity, from low

and perishable things. But ye understand not how great injury ye do to God, your Creator. For he would that all men should be governors of all other creatures. But ye degrade your highest dignity below the meanest creatures of all; and thereby ye have shewn that, according to your judgment, ye make yourselves worse than your own possessions, when ye think that your false riches are your happiness, and are persuaded that all your worldly goods are superior to yourselves. So indeed it is, when ye so will!

3. It is the condition of the life of men, that they then only are before all other creatures, when they themselves know what they are, and whence they are: and they are worse than cattle when they will not know what they are, or whence they are. It is the nature of cattle that they know not what they are; but it is a fault in men that they know not what they are. It is therefore very plain to thee, that ye are in error, when ye think that any one can be made honourable by external riches. If any one is made honourable with any riches, and endowed with any valuable possessions, does not the honour, then, belong to that which makes him honourable? That is, to be praised somewhat more rightly. That which is adorned with anything else is not therefore fairer, though the ornaments be fair with which it is adorned. If it before was vile, it is not on that account fairer. Know thou assuredly, that no good hurts him who possesses it. Thou knowest that I lie not to thee, and also knowest that riches often hurt those who possess them, in many things: and in this chiefly, that men become so lifted up on account of riches, that frequently the worst man and the most unworthy of all, thinks that he is deserving of all the wealth which is in this world, if he knew how he might obtain it. He who has great riches dreads many an enemy. If he had no possessions he would not need to dread any. If thou wert traveling, and hadst much gold about thee, and thou then shouldest meet with a gang of thieves. then wouldest not thou be anxious for thy life? If thou hadst nothing of this kind, then thou wouldest not need to dread anything, but mightest go singing the old adage, which men formerly sung, that the naked traveller fears nothing.¹⁰ When thou, then, wert safe, and the thieves were departed from thee, then mightest thou scoff at these present riches, and mightest say, O how good and pleasant it is for any one to possess great wealth, since he who obtains it is never secure!

CHAPTER XV.

When Reason had made this speech she began to sing, and thus said; O, how happy was the first age of this middle earth, when to every man there seemed enough in the fruits of the earth! There were not then splendid houses, nor various delicious meats, nor drinks; nor were they desirous of costly dresses, for they as yet did not exist, nor did they see or hear anything of them. They cared not for any luxury, but very temperately followed nature. They always ate once in the day, and that was in the evening. They ate the fruits of trees and herbs. They drank no pure wine, nor knew they how to mix any liquor with honey, nor cared they for silken garments of various colours. They always slept out, in the shade of trees. They drank the water of the clear springs. No merchant visited island or coast, nor did any man, as yet, hear of any ship-army, nor even the mention of any war. The earth was not yet polluted with the blood of slain men, nor was any one ever wounded. They did not, as yet, look upon evil minded men. Such ha-1 no honour; nor did any man love them. Alas! that our times cannot now become such! But now the covetousness of men is as burning as the fire in the hell, which is in the mountain that is called Ætna, in the island that is called Sicily. The mountain is always burning with brimstone, and burns up all the near places thereabout. Alas! what was the first avaricious man, who first began to dig the earth after gold, and after gems, and found the dangerous treasure, which before was hid, and covered with the earth!

CHAPTER XVI.

1. When Wisdom had sung this lay, then began he again to speak, and thus said: What more can I say to thee concerning the dignity , and concerning the power of this world? For power ye would raise yourselves up to heaven if ye were able. This is because ye do not remember nor understand the heavenly power and the dignity which is your own, and whence ye came. What, then, with regard to your wealth and your power, which ye now call dignity, if it should come to the worst men of all, and to him that of all is unworthiest of it, as it lately did to this game Theodoric, and also formerly to Nero the Caesar, and

moreover frequently to many like them? Will he not, then, do as they did, and still do? slay and destroy all the rich who are under or anywhere near him, as the flame of fire does the dry heath-field, or as the burning brimstone burneth the mountain which we call Ætna, which is in the island of Sicily? very like to the great flood which was formerly in Noah's days. I think that thou mayest remember that your ancient Roman senator, formerly in the days of Tarquin the proud king, on account of his arrogance, first banished the king's name from the city of Rome. And again in like manner the consuls who had driven them out, these they were afterwards desirous to, expel on account of their arrogance; but they could not; because the latter government of the consuls still less pleased the Roman senators than the former one of the kings. If, however, it at any time happens, as it very seldom does happen, that power and dignity come to good men and to wise, what is there, then, worthy of esteem, except the good and dignity of him, the good king, not of the power? For power never is good, unless he is good who possesses it. Therefore, if power be good, it is the good of the man, not of the power. Hence it is, that no man by his authority comes to virtues and to merit; but by his virtues and by his merit he comes to authority and to power. Therefore is no man for his power the better; but for his virtues he is good, if he be good; and for his virtue he is deserving of power, if he be deserving of it. Learn, therefore, wisdom; and when ye have learned it, do not then despise it. Then I say to you, without all doubt, that ye may through it arrive at power, though ye be not desirous of power. Ye need not be anxious for power, nor press after it. If ye be wise and good, it will follow you, though ye are not desirous of it. But tell me now, what is your most valuable wealth and power which ye most desire? I know, however, that it is this life, and this wealth, which we before spoke about.

2. O, ye beastlike men, do ye know what wealth is, and power and worldly goods? They are your lords and your rulers, not ye theirs! If ye now saw some mouse, that was lord over mice, and set them judgments, and subjected them to tribute, how wonderful would ye think it! What scorn would ye have, and with what laughter would ye be moved! How much greater, then, is man's body compared with the mind? Indeed, ye may easily conceive, if ye will carefully consider and examine it, that no

creature's body is more tender than man's. The least flies can injure it; and the gnats with very little stings hurt it: and also the small worms, which corrupt the man, both inwardly and outwardly, and sometimes make him almost dead. Moreover, the little flea sometimes kills him. Such things injure him both inwardly and outwardly. Wherein can any man injure another, except in his body? or again, in their riches, which ye call goods? No man can injure the rational mind, or cause that it should not be what it is. This is very evidently to be known by a certain Roman nobleman, who was called Liberius.¹¹ He was put to many torments because he would not inform against his associates, who conspired with him against the king, who had unjustly conquered them. When he was led before the enraged king, and he commanded him to say who were his associates, then bit he off his own tongue, and immediately cast it before the face of *the tyrant*. Hence it happened, that to the wise man, that was the cause of praise and honour, which the unjust king appointed to him for punishment. What is it, moreover, that any man can do to another, which he may not do to him in like manner? and if he may not, another man may. We have learned also concerning the cruel Busiris,¹² who was in Egypt. This tyrant's custom was, that he would very honourably receive every stranger, and behave very courteously to him when first he came. But afterwards, before he departed from him, he would be slain. And then it happened, that Hercules, the son of Jove, came to him. Then would he do to him as he had done to many a stranger before: he would drown him in the river which is called Nile. Then was he stronger, and drowned him very justly by God's judgment, as he many another before had done! So also Regulus,¹³ the celebrated consul; when he fought against the Africans, he obtained an almost indescribable victory over the Africans. When he had grievously slain them, he gave orders to bind them, and lay them in heaps. Then happened it very soon that he was bound with their fetters. What thinkest thou, then? What good is power, when he *who possesses it* can in no wise, by his own strength, avoid suffering from other men the same evil which he before did to others? Is not power, then, in that case naught?

3. What thinkest thou? If dignity and power were good of its own nature, and had power of itself, would it follow the most wicked men as

it now sometimes doth? Dost thou not know, that it is neither natural nor usual that any contrary thing should be mixed with other contrary, or have any fellowship therewith? But nature refuses it that they should be mixed together; still more that good and evil should be together. Hence it is very manifestly shewn to thee, that this present authority, and these worldly goods, and this power, are not good of their own nature, and of their own efficacy, nor have any power of themselves; since they are willing to cleave to the worst men, and permit them to be their lords. There is not, indeed, any doubt of this, that often the most wicked men of all come to power and to dignity. If power then were good of its own nature, and of its own efficacy, it never would be subservient to the evil, but to the good. The same is to be thought with regard to all the goods which fortune brings in this present life, both of talents and possessions: for they come to the most wicked. We very well know that no man doubts of this, that he is powerful in his strength, who is seen to perform laborious work: any more than if he be anything, any one doubts that he is so. Thus the art of music causes the man to be a musician, and medical knowledge to be a physician, and rhetoric causes him to be a rhetorician. In like manner also the nature of things causes to every man, that good cannot be mixed with evil, nor evil with good. Though they are both in one man, yet is each in him separately. Nature will never suffer anything contrary to mix, for each of them rejects the other, and each will be what it is. Riches cannot cause the miser not to be a miser, or satisfy his boundless desires, nor can authority make its possessor powerful. Since, then, every creature avoids that which is contrary to it, and very earnestly endeavours to repel it, what two things are more contrary to each other than good and evil? They are never united together, Hence thou mayest understand, that if the goods of this present life through themselves had power of themselves, and were in their own nature good, then would they always cleave to him who did good with them, not evil. But whensoever they are good, they are good through the good of the good man, who works good with them, and he is good through God. If, then, an evil man has it, it is evil through the man's evil who doth evil with it, and through the devil. What good is wealth, then, when it cannot satisfy the boundless desires of the miser? or power, when it cannot make its possessor powerful, but the wicked passions

bind him with their indissoluble chains! Though any one give to an evil man power, the power does not make him good nor meritorious, if he before were not; but exposes his evil, if he before were evil, and makes it then manifest, if it before were not. For though he formerly desired evil, he then knew not how he might so fully shew it, before he had full power. It is through folly that ye are pleased, because ye call make a name, and call that happiness, which is none, and that merit *which is* none; for they shew by their ending, when they come to an end, that neither wealth, nor power, nor dignity is to be considered as the true happiness. So is it assuredly to be said, concerning all the worldly goods that fortune brings, that there is nothing therein which is to be desired, because there is nothing therein of natural good which comes from themselves. This is evident from hence, that they do not always join themselves to the good, nor make the evil good, to whom they most frequently join themselves.

4. When Wisdom had thus made this speech, then began he again to sing, and thus said: We know what cruelties, and what ruins, adulteries, and what wickedness, and what impiety the unrighteous Cæsar, Nero, wrought. He at one time gave order to burn all the city of Rome at once, after the example that formerly the city of Troy was burned! He was desirous also to see how it would burn, and how long, and how bright, in comparison of the other; and besides gave order to slay all the wisest senators of the Romans, and also his own mother, and his own brother. He moreover slew his own wife with a sword. And for such things he was in no wise grieved, but was the blither and rejoiced at it! And yet amid such crimes all this middle earth was nevertheless subject to him, from eastward to westward, and again from southward to northward; it was all in his power! Thinkest thou that the heavenly power could not take away the empire from this unrighteous Caesar, and correct this madness in him, if he would? Yes, O yes, I know that he could, if he would! Alas! how heavy a yoke did he lay on all those who in his times were living on the earth! and how often his sword was stained with innocent blood! Was it not, then, sufficiently evident that power of its own nature was not good, when he was not good to whom it came?

CHAPTER XVII.

When Wisdom had sung this lay, he was silent, and the mind then answered and thus said; O Reason, indeed thou knowest that covetousness, and the greatness of this earthly power, never well pleased me, nor did I very much yearn after this earthly authority. But nevertheless, I was desirous of materials for the work which I was commanded to perform; that was, that I might honourably and fitly guide and exercise the power which was committed to me. Moreover, thou knowest that no man can shew any skill, or exercise or control any power, without tools, and materials. That is of every craft the materials, without which man cannot exercise the craft. This then, is a king's material and his tools to reign with; that he have his land well peopled; he must have bead-men, and soldiers, and workmen. Thou knowest that without these tools no king can shew his craft. This is also his materials which he must have beside the tools; provision for the three classes. This is, then, their provision; land to inhabit, and gifts, and weapons, and meat, and ale, and clothes, and whatsoever is necessary for the three classes. He cannot without these preserve the tools, nor without the tools accomplish any of those things which he is commanded to perform. Therefore I was desirous of materials wherewith to exercise the power, that my talents and fame should not be forgotten, and concealed. For every craft and every power soon becomes old, and is passed over in silence, if it be without wisdom; for no man can accomplish any craft, without wisdom. Because whatsoever is done through folly, no one can ever reckon for craft. This is now especially to be said; that I wished to live honourably whilst I lived, and after my life to leave to the men who were after me, my memory in good works.

CHAPTER XVIII.

1. When this was spoken, the mind remained silent, and Reason began to speak, and thus said; O Mind, one evil is very greatly to be shunned; that is, that which very continually, and very grievously deceives the minds of all those men, who are in their nature excellent, and nevertheless are not yet arrived at the roof of perfect virtue. This,

then, is the desire of false glory, and of unrighteous power, and of unbounded fame of good works, among all people. Many men are desirous of power, because they would have good fame, though they be unworthy of it; and even the most wicked of all are desirous of the same. But he who will wisely and diligently enquire concerning fame, will very soon perceive how little it is, and how slender, and how frail, and how destitute of all good. If thou wilt now studiously enquire, and wilt understand concerning the circumference of all this earth, from the eastward of this middle earth to the westward; and from the southward to the northward, as thou hast learned in the book which is called Astrologium; then mayst thou perceive that it is all, compared with the heaven, like a little point on a broad board, or the boss on a shield, according to the opinion of wise men. Dost thou not know what thou hast learned in the books of Ptolemy, who wrote of the measure of all this middle earth in one book? Therein thou mightest see that all mankind, and all earth, do not occupy anywhere nigh the fourth part of this earth, which men are able to go over. For they cannot inhabit it all; some part for heat, some for cold; and the greatest part of it the sea has covered. Take, then, from this fourth part, in thy mind, all that the sea has covered of it, and all the shards which it has taken from it; and all that fens and moors have taken of it; and all that in all countries lies waste; then mayest thou understand, that of the whole there is not more left for men to inhabit, than as it were a small enclosure. It is, then, in foolish labour that ye toil all your life, because ye wish beyond measure to spread your fame over such an enclosure as that is, which men inhabit in this world: almost like a point compared with the other! But what of spacious, or of great, or of honourable has this your glory, when ye think on the fifth part halved of land and desert; so is it narrowed with sea, with fen, and with all? Wherefore desire ye, then, too immoderately that ye should spread your name over the tenth part, since there is not more of it, with sea, with fen, and with all!

2. Consider also that in this little park, which we before have spoken about, dwell very many nations, and various, and very unlike both in the speech and in the manners, and in all the customs of all the nations which now very immoderately desire that ye should spread your name over. This ye never can do, because their language is divided into seventy-two;

and every one of these languages is divided among many nations, and they are separated and divided by sea, and by woods, and by mountains, and by fens, and by many and various wastes, and impassable lands, so that even merchants do not visit it. But how, then, can any great man's name singly come there, when no man there hears even the name of the city, or of the country, of which he is an inhabitant? Therefore, I know not through what folly ye desire that ye should spread your name over all the earth! That ye cannot do, nor even anywhere nigh. Moreover thou knowest how great the power of the Romans was in the days of Marcus, the consul, who was by another name called Tullius, and by a third, Cicero.¹⁴ But he has shewn in one of his books, that as then, the Roman name had not passed beyond the mountains that we call Caucasus, nor had the Scythians, who dwelt on the other side of those mountains, even heard the name of the city, or of the people; but at that time it had first come to the Parthians, and was there very new. But nevertheless it was very terrible thereabout to many a people. Do ye not then perceive how narrow this your fame will be, which ye labour about, and unrighteously toil to spread? How great fame, and how great honour dost thou think one Roman could have in that land, where even the name of the city was never heard, nor did the fame of the whole people ever come? Though any man immoderately and unreasonably desire that he may spread his fame over all the earth, he cannot bring it to pass, because the manners of the nations are very unlike, and their institutions very various; so that in one country that pleases best which is at the same time in another *deemed* most deserving of blame; and moreover worthy of great punishment. Therefore no man can have the same praise in every land, because in every land that pleases not which in another pleases.

3. Therefore every man should be well contented with this, that he be approved in his own country. Though he be desirous of more, he cannot, indeed, bring it to pass; because. it is seldom that aught in any degree pleases many men; on which account the praise of a good man is frequently confined within the same country where he is an inhabitant; and also because it has often very unfortunately happened, through the misconduct of writers, that they from their sloth, and from negligence, and from carelessness, have left unwritten the manners of the men and

their deeds, who in their days were most famous, and most desirous of glory. And even if they had written the whole of their lives, and of their actions, as they ought, if they were honest, would not the writings nevertheless wax old and perish, as often as it was done, even as the writers did, and those about whom they wrote? And yet it seems to you that ye have eternal honour, if ye can, in all your life, earn that ye may have good fame after your days! If thou now comparest the duration of this present life, and this temporal, with the duration of the never-ending life, what is it, then? Compare now the length of the time wherein thou mayest wink thine eye, with ten thousand winters;¹⁵ then have the times somewhat of like, though it be little; that is, that each of them has an end. But compare these ten thousand years, and even more if thou wilt, with the eternal and the never-ending life; then wilt thou not find there anything of like, because the ten thousand years, though it seem long, will shorten: but of the other there never will come an end. Therefore it is not to be compared, the ending with the never-ending. Though thou reckon from the beginning of this middle earth to the end, and then compare the years with that which has no end, there will be nothing of like. So is also the fame of celebrated men. Though it sometimes may be long, and endure many years, it is nevertheless very short, compared with that which never ends.

4. And ye nevertheless care not whether ye do any good on any other account, than for the little praise of the people, and for the short fame which we have before spoken about. Ye labour for this, and overlook the excellencies of your mind, and of your understanding, and of your reason, and would have the reward of your good works from the report of strangers! Ye desire to obtain there the reward which ye should *seek* from God! But thou hast heard that it long ago happened, that a very wise man, and very noble, began to try a philosopher, and scoffed at him, because he so arrogantly lifted himself up and proclaimed this, that he was a philosopher. He did not make it known by any talents, but by false and proud boasting. Then the wise man would prove him, whether he were so wise as he himself thought that he was. He therefore began to revile and speak ill of him. Then the philosopher heard very patiently the wise man's words for some time. But after he had heard his reviling, he then defended himself against him very impatiently, though he before

pretended that he was a philosopher, and asked him again, whether he thought him to be a philosopher or not. Then answered the wise man to him and said, I would say that thou wert a philosopher. if thou wert patient and able to be silent. How long was to him the fame which he before falsely sought? How did he not immediately burst because of one answer? What has it then availed the best men who were before us, that they so greatly desired vain glory and fame after their death? Or what does it profit those who now are? Therefore it were to every man more needful that he were desirous of good actions, than of deceitful fame. What has he from this fame, after the separation of the body and the soul? Do we not know, that all men bodily die, and yet the soul is living? But the soul goes very freely to the heavens, after it is set loose, and liberated from the prison of the body. It then despises all these earthly things, and rejoices in this, that it may enjoy the heavenly after it is taken away from the earthly. Then the Mind will itself be a witness of God's will.

CHAPTER XIX.

When Wisdom had made this speech, then began he again to sing and thus singing said, Whosoever desires to hear vain fame and unprofitable glory, let him behold on the four sides of him. how spacious the expanse of the heaven is, and how narrow the space of the earth is, though it seem large to us! Then may it shame him of the spreading of his fame, because he cannot even spread it over the narrow earth alone! O, ye proud, why are ye desirous to sustain with your necks this deadly yoke? or why are ye in such vain labour, because ye would spread your fame over so many nations? Though it even happen that the furthest nations exalt your name, and praise you in many a language; and though any one with great nobleness add to his birth, and prosper in all riches and in all splendour, death, nevertheless, cares not for things of this sort, but he despises nobility, and devours the rich and the poor alike, and thus levels the rich and the poor.¹⁶ What are now the bones of the celebrated. and the wise goldsmith, Weland?¹⁷ I have therefore said the wise, because to the skilful his skill can never be lost, nor can any man more easily take it from him, than he can move the sun from her place. Where

are now the bones of Weland; or who knows now where they were? or where is now the illustrious and the patriotic consul of the Romans, who was called Brutus? by another name Cassius? or the wise and inflexible Cato, who was also a Roman consul? He was evidently a philosopher. Were not these long ago departed? and no one knows where they are now. What of them is now remaining except the small fame and the name written with a few letters? And it is yet worse, that we know of many illustrious and memorable men departed, of whom very few persons have ever heard. But many lie dead entirely forgotten! Though ye now think and desire that ye may live long here in the world, what is it to you, then, the better? Does not death come, though he come late, and take you away from this world? And what then does glory profit you? at least those whom the second death seizes, and for ever binds?

CHAPTER XX.

When Wisdom had sung this lay, than began he to speak, and thus said; Do not suppose that I too pertinaciously attack fortune. I myself have no dread of it, because it frequently happens that deceitful fortune can neither render aid to man, nor cause any injury. Therefore she is deserving of no praise, because she herself shews that she is nothing. But she reveals her fountain when she discloses her manners. I think, nevertheless, that thou dost not yet understand what I say to thee; for what I wish to say is wonderful, and I can hardly explain it with words as I would. It is, that I know that adverse fortune is more useful to every man than prosperous. For the prosperous always lies and dissembles that men may think that she is the true happiness. But the adverse is the true happiness, though to any one it may not seem so, for she is constant and always promises what is true. The other is false, and deceives all her followers; for she herself shews it by her changeableness, that she is very unstable: but the adverse improves and instructs every one to whom she joins herself. The other binds every one of the minds which enjoy her, through the appearance which she feigns of being good; but the adverse unbinds, and frees every one of those whom she adheres to, in that she discloses to them how frail these present goods are. But prosperity goes confusedly as the wind's storm, while adversity is always faultless, and

is saved from injury by the experience of her own danger. Moreover, the false happiness necessarily draws those who are associated with her from the true felicities by her flattery: but adversity often necessarily draws all those who are subjected to her, to the true goods, as a fish is caught by a hook. Does it, then, seem to thee little gain, and little addition to thy felicities which this severe and this horrible adversity brings to thee: that is, that she very quickly lays open to thee the minds of thy true friends, and also of thine enemies, that thou mayest very plainly distinguish them? But these false goods when they depart from thee, then take they their men with them, and leave thy few faithful ones with thee. How wouldest thou now buy, or when thou wert happiest, and it seemed to thee that fortune proceeded most according to thy will, with how much money wouldest thou then have bought, that thou mightest clearly distinguish thy friend and thy foe? I know, however, that thou wouldest have bought it with money that thou mightest well know how to distinguish them. Though it now seem to thee that thou hast lost precious wealth, thou hast nevertheless therewith bought much more precious that is, true friends, whom thou art now able to distinguish and knowest what of them thou hast. But this is the most valuable wealth of all.

CHAPTER XXI.

When Wisdom had made this speech, then began he to sing, and thus singing said; There is one Creator beyond all doubt, and He is also Governor of heaven and earth, and of all creatures visible and invisible. He is God Almighty. Him serve all those *creatures* which serve, both those which have understanding and those which have not understanding; both those which know it that they serve him, and those which know it not. The same has appointed unchangeable customs, and habits, and also natural agreement to all his creatures, when he would, and so long as he would, which now shall stand for ever. The motion of the moving creatures cannot be stayed, nor yet turned from the course, and from the order, that is set to them. But the Governor has so with his bridle caught hold of, and restrained, and admonished all his creatures, that they neither can be still, nor yet move further than he the space of his rein allows to them. So has the Almighty God controlled all his

creatures by his power, that each of them strives with another, and yet supports another, so that they cannot slip asunder, but are turned again to the same course which they before ran, and thus become again renewed. So are they varied, that contrary creatures both strive with each other, and also hold firm agreement with each other. Thus fire doth and water; and sea and earth; and many other creatures, which will ever be as discordant between themselves, as they are; and yet they are so accordant, that not only they may be companions but moreover that even no one of them without another, can exist. But ever must the contrary the other contrary moderate. So has now the Almighty God very wisely, and very fitly appointed change to all his creatures. Thus spring and harvest. In spring it groweth, and in harvest it ripens. And again summer and winter. In summer it is warm, and in winter cold. So also the sun bringeth light days and the moon gives light in the night through the power of the same God. The same warns the sea that it may not overstep the threshold of the earth, but he has so fixed their limits, that it may not extend its boundary over the still earth. By the same government is ordered a very like change of the flood and the ebb. This appointment then, he allows to stand as long as he wills. But when ever he shall let go the rein of the bridles with which he has now bridled the creatures, that contrariety which we before mentioned if he shall allow these to be relaxed, then will they forsake the agreement which they now keep, and strive, each of them with other, after its own will, and forsake their companionship, and destroy all this middle-earth, and bring themselves to naught. The same God joins people together with friendship, and unites families with virtuous love. He brings together friends and companions, that they faithfully hold their agreement and their friendship. O, how happy would this mankind be, if their minds were as right and as established, and as ordered as the other creatures are! Here endeth the second consolation book of Boethius, and beginneth the third. Boethius was by another name called Severinus: he was a consul of the Romans.

CHAPTER XXII.

1. When Wisdom had sung this lay, then had he bound me with the sweetness of his song, so that I was greatly admiring it, and very desirous to hear him with inward mind; and immediately thereupon I spoke to him, and thus said; O Wisdom, thou who art the highest comfort of all weary minds! how hast thou comforted me, both with thy profound discourse, and with the sweetness of thy song! so much hast thou now corrected and overcome me with thy reasoning that it now seems to me, that not only am I able to bear this misfortune, which has befallen me, but even if still greater peril should come upon me, I will never more say that it is without deserving: for I know that I were deserving of more and heavier. But I am desirous to hear something more of the medicine of these thy instructions. Though thou just now saidest that thou thoughtest that they would seem very bitter to me, I am not now afraid of them, but I am very anxious after them, both to hear, and also to observe; and very earnestly entreat thee, that thou wouldest perform to me, as thou a little while ago promisedst me. Then said Wisdom, I knew immediately, when thou didst so well keep silence, and so willingly heardest my doctrine, that thou wouldest with inward mind receive and consider it. Therefore I waited very well till I knew what thou wouldest, and how thou wouldest understand it; and moreover, I very earnestly endeavoured that thou mightest understand it. But I will now tell thee what the medicine of my doctrine is, which thou askest of me. It is very bitter in the mouth, and it irritates thee in the throat, when thou first triest it; but it grows sweet after it enters in, and is very mild in the stomach, and pleasant to the taste.

2. But when thou shouldest perceive whither I now design to lead thee, I knew that thou wouldest very anxiously tend thither, and be very greatly inflamed with that desire. For I heard what thou before saidest, that thou wert very desirous to hear it. Then said the Mind, Whither wilt thou now especially lead me? Then answered Reason, and said; I propose that I should lead thee to the true goods, about which thy mind often meditates, and is greatly moved; and thou hast not yet been able to find the most direct way to the true goods, because thy mind was occupied with the view of these false goods. Then said the Mind, I beseech thee

that thou wouldest shew me beyond all doubt, what the true happiness is. Then said Reason, I will gladly, for love of thee. But I must by some example teach thee some resemblance of the thing, till the thing be better known, that thou mayest know the true goods, and forsake what is contrary to them, that is, the false goods: and then with the anxious thought of all thy mind, strive that thou mayest arrive at those goods which for ever remain.

CHAPTER XXIII.

1. When Wisdom had ended this discourse, then began he again to sing, and thus said; Whosoever is desirous to sow fertile land, let him first take away the thorns and the furze, and all the weeds which he observes to do injury to the field, in order that the wheat may grow the better. Also this example is to be considered, that is, that to every man honey seems the sweeter, if he a little before taste *anything* bitter. And again, calm weather is the more agreeable if it a little before be stark storms, and north winds, and much rain and snow. And more agreeable. also is the light of the day, for the horrible darkness of the night, than it would be if there were no night. So is also the true happiness much the more pleasant to enjoy, after the calamities of this present life. And moreover thou mayest much the sooner discover the true goods, and arrive at the knowledge of them, if thou first rootest out from thy mind the false goods, and removest them from the ground. After thou then art able to discover those, I know that thou will not desire any other thing besides them.

CHAPTER XXIV.

I. When he had sung this lay, he ceased the song, and was silent awhile, and began to think deeply in his mind's thought, and thus said; Every mortal man troubles himself with various manifold anxieties, and yet all desire through various paths to come to one end: that is, they desire by different means to arrive at one happiness; that is, then, God. He is the beginning and the end of every good, and he is the highest happiness. Then said the mind, This, methinks, must be the highest good, so that man should need no other good, nor, moreover, be solicitous beyond that; since he possesses that which is the roof of all other goods, for it includes all other goods, and has all of them within it. It would not be the highest good, if any *good* were external to it, because it would then have to desire some good which itself had not. Then answered Reason, and said; It is very evident that this is the highest happiness, for it is both the roof, and the floor of all good. What is that, then, but the best happiness, which gathers the other felicities all within it, and includes

and holds them within it and to it there is a deficiency of none, neither has it need of any but they all come from it, and again all *return* to it; as all waters come from the sea, and again all come to the sea! There is none in the little fountain which does not seek the sea, and again from the sea it returns into the earth, till it again comes to the same fountain that it before flowed from, and so again to the sea.

II. Now this is an example of the true goods, which all mortal men desire to obtain, though they by various ways think to arrive at them. For every man has natural good in himself, because every mind desires to obtain the true good; but it is hindered by the transitory goods, because it is more prone thereto. For some men think that it is the best happiness that a man be so rich that he have need of nothing more; and they choose their life accordingly. Some men think that this is the highest good, that he be among his fellows the most honourable of his fellows, and they with all diligence seek this. Some think that the supreme good is in the highest power. These desire, either for themselves to rule or else to associate themselves in friendship with their rulers. Some persuade themselves that it is best that a man be illustrious, and celebrated, and have good fame; they therefore seek this both in peace, and in war. Many reckon it for the greatest good, and for the greatest happiness that a man be always blithe in this present life, and follow all his lusts. Some indeed who desire these riches, are desirous thereof because they would have the greater power, that they may the more securely enjoy these worldly lusts, and also the riches. Many there are of those who desire power, because they would gather over much money; or again, they are desirous to spread the glory of their name.

3. On account of such and other like frail and perishable advantages, the thought of every human mind is troubled with solicitude and with anxiety. It then imagines that it has obtained some exalted good when it has won the flattery of the people: and methinks that it has bought a very false greatness. Some with much solicitude seek wives, that thereby they may, above all things have children, and also live happily. True friends then, I say, is the most precious thing of all these worldly felicities. They are not indeed to be reckoned as worldly goods, but divine; for deceitful fortune does not produce them, but God, who naturally formed them as relations. For of every other thing in this world

man is desirous, either that he may through it attain to power, or else some worldly lust: except of the true friend, whom he loves, sometimes for affection, and for fidelity, though he expect to himself no other rewards. Nature joins and cements friends together with inseparable love. But with these worldly goods and with this present wealth, men make oftener enemies than friends. By these and by many such things it may be evident to all men, that all the bodily goods are inferior to the faculties of the soul; we, indeed, think that a man is the stronger, because he is great in his body. The fairness, moreover, and the vigour of the body rejoices, and delights the man, and health makes him cheerful. In all these bodily felicities men seek simple happiness, as it seems to them. For whatsoever every man chiefly loves above all other things, that he persuades himself is best for him, and that is his highest good. When, therefore, he has acquired that, he imagines that he may be very happy. I do not deny that these goods, and this happiness are the highest good of this present life. For every man considers that thing best which he chiefly loves above other things and therefore he supposes that he is very happy, if he can obtain what he then most desires. Is not now clearly enough shewn to thee the form of the false goods, that is, then, possessions, dignity, and power, and glory, and pleasure? Concerning pleasure, Epicurus the philosopher, said, when he inquired concerning all those other goods, which we before mentioned; then said he, that pleasure was the highest good, because all the other goods which we before mentioned, gratify the mind, and delight it, but pleasure alone chiefly gratifies the body only.

4. But we will still speak concerning the nature of men, and concerning their pursuits. Though, then, their mind and their nature be now dimmed, and they are by that fall sunk down to evil, and thither inclined, yet they are desirous, so far as they can and may, of the highest good. As a drunken man knows that he should go to his house, and to his rest, and yet is not able to find the way thither, so is it also with the mind, when it is weighed down by the anxieties of this world. It is sometimes intoxicated and misled by them, so far that it cannot rightly find out good. Nor yet does it appear to those men that they mistake aught who are desirous to obtain this, that they need labour after nothing more. But they think that they are able to collect together all

these goods so that none may be excluded from the number. They, therefore, know no other good than the collecting of all the most precious things into their power, that they may have need of nothing besides them. But there is no one that has not need of some addition, except God alone. He has of his own enough, nor has he need of anything, but that which he has in himself. Dost thou think, however, that they wrongly imagine that that thing is best deserving of all estimation, which they may consider most desirable? No, no. I know that it is not to be despised. How can that be evil, which the mind of every man considers to be good, and strives after, and desires to obtain! No, it is not evil; it is the highest good. Why is not power to be reckoned one of the highest goods of this present life? Is that to be esteemed vain and useless, which is the most useful of all these worldly things, that is power? Is good fame and renown to be accounted nothing! No, no. It is not fit that any one account it nothing: for every man thinks that best, which he most loves. Do we not know that no anxiety, or difficulties, or trouble, or pain, or sorrow is happiness? what more then need we say about these felicities? Does not every man know what they are, and also know, that they are the highest good? And yet almost every man seeks in very little things the highest felicities: because he thinks that he may have them all, if he have that which he then chiefly wishes to obtain. This is, then, what they chiefly wish to obtain, wealth and dignity, and authority, and this world's glory, and ostentation, and worldly lust. Of all this they are desirous, because they think that through these things they may obtain that there be not to them a deficiency of anything wished: neither of dignity, nor of power, nor of renown, nor of life. They wish for all this, and they do well that they, desire it, though they seek it variously. By these things we may clearly perceive, that every man is desirous of this, that he may obtain the highest good, if they were able to discover it, or knew how to seek it rightly. But they do not seek it in the rightest way. It is not of this world.

CHAPTER XXV

When Wisdom had made this speech, then began he again to sing, and thus said: I will now with songs declare how wonderfully the Lord governs all creatures with the bridles of his power; and with what order he establishes and regulates all creatures, and how he has restrained and bound them with his indissoluble chains, so that every creature is kept within bounds with its kind, the kind that it was fashioned to, except men, and some angels, who sometimes depart from their kind. Thus the lion, though she be very tame, and have fast chains, and greatly love, and also fear her master; if it ever happen that she tastes blood, she immediately forgets her new tameness, and remembers the wild manners of her parents. She then begins roaring, and to break her chains; and bites first her leader and afterwards whatsoever she may seize, both of men and of cattle. So do also wood-fowls. Though they be well tamed, if they return to the woods, they despise their teachers, and remain with their kind. Though their teachers then offer them the same meats with which they before grew tame, they then care not for those meats, so that they may enjoy the wood. But it seems to them pleasanter that the weald resound to them, and they hear the voice of other fowls. So is it also with trees, whose nature it is to stand up high. Though thou pull any bough down to the earth, such as thou mayest bend, as soon as thou lettest it go, so soon springs it up, and moves towards its kind. So doth also the sun. Though she after mid-day sink and incline to the earth, again she seeks her kind, and departs by unknown ways to her rising, and so hastens higher and higher, until she comes so far up as her highest nature is. So doth every creature. It tends towards its kind, and is joyful if it ever may come thereto. There is no creature formed which desires not that it may come thither, whence it before came: that is, to rest and tranquillity. The rest is with God, and it is God. But every creature turns on itself like a wheel: and so it thus turns that it may again come where it was before, and be the same that it was before, as often as it is turned round *may be* what it before was, and may do what it before did.

CHAPTER XXVI.

1. When Wisdom had sung this lay, then began he again to speak, and thus said: O, ye earthly men, though ye now make yourselves like cattle by your folly, ye nevertheless can in some measure understand as in a dream, concerning your origin, that is God. Ye perceive the true beginning and the true end of all happiness, though ye do not fully know it. And nevertheless, nature draws you to that knowledge, but very manifold error draws you from that knowledge. Consider now, whether men can arrive at the true goods, through these present goods; since almost all men say that he is happiest who possesses all these earthly goods. Can, then, much money, or dignity, or all this present wealth, make any man so happy, that he may need nothing more? No, no. I know this, that they cannot. Why, is it not, then, from this very clear, that these present goods are not the true goods, because they cannot give what they promise? But they pretend *to do* what they are not able to fulfil, when they promise to those who are willing to love them the true felicities; and tell lies to them more than they perform to them; for they are deficient in more of these *felicities* than they possess of them. Consider, now, concerning thyself, O Boethius, whether thou wert ever aught uneasy *when thou wert most prosperous?* or whether there were ever to thee a want of anything desired, when thou hadst most wealth? or whether thy life were then all according to thy wish? Then answered Boethius, and said, No, O no! I was never yet at any time of so even mind, as far as I can remember, that I was altogether without care: that I was so without care I had no trouble: nor did all that I experienced ever yet please me, nor was it ever with me entirely as I wished, though I concealed it. Then answered Wisdom and said, Wast thou not, then, poor enough and unhappy enough, though it seemed to thee that thou wert rich, when thou either hadst that which thou wouldest not, or hadst not that which thou wouldest? Then answered Boethius, and said, All was to me as thou hast said. Then said Wisdom, Is not every man poor enough in respect of that which he has not, when he is desirous to have it? That is true, said Boethius. Then said Wisdom, But if he is poor, he is not happy, for he desires that he may have what he has not, because he wishes to have enough. Then said Boethius, That is all true which thou

sayest. Then said Wisdom Hadst thou not, then, poverty when thou wert richest? Then answered I, and said, I know that thou sayest truth, that I had it. Then said Wisdom, Does it not appear to thee, then, that all the riches of this middle-earth are not able to make one man wealthy? so wealthy that he may have enough and may not need more? And nevertheless they promise it to every one who possesses them. Then said I, Nothing is truer than that thou sayest.

2. Then said Wisdom, But why, then, art thou not an assenter to this? Canst thou not see every day that the stronger take riches from the weaker? Wherefore else in every day such sorrow, and such contentions, and meetings, and judgments; except that every one demands the spoil which is taken from them, or again exacts that of another? Then answered I, and said, Thou arguest rightly enough: so it is as thou sayest. Then said he, On these accounts every man has need of help in addition to himself, that he may keep his riches. Then said I, Who denies it? Then said he, If he had nothing of that which he fears he may be obliged to lose, then he would not have occasion for any more help than himself. Then said I, Thou sayest truly. Then retorted Wisdom sharply and said; O how inconsistent in every man's custom and every man's will, does that thing appear to me, which I will now mention; that is, that from whence they persuade themselves that they shall become happier, they from thence become poorer and weaker! For if they have any little, then it behoves them to cringe for protection to those who have anything more. Whether they need, or whether they need not, they yet crave. Where, then, is moderation, or who has it, or when will it come, that it may entirely drive away miseries from the wealthy? The more he has, the more *men* he must cringe to. Do the rich never hunger, nor thirst, nor become cold? But I suppose thou wilt say, that the rich have wherewith they remedy all that. But though thou say so, riches cannot altogether remedy it, though they somewhat may. For it behoves them every day to add, what man every day lessens; because human want, which is never satisfied, requires each day something of this world's wealth, either of clothing, of meat, of drink, or of many things besides. Therefore, no man is so wealthy that he needs not more. But covetousness neither knows limit nor ever is bounded by necessity: but desires always more than it needs. I know not why ye confide in these perishable riches, when they

are not able to remove your poverty from you, but ye increase your poverty whenever they come to you.

3. When Wisdom had made this speech, then began he again to sing, and thus singing said: What profit is it to the rich miser, that he gathers an infinite quantity of these riches, and obtains abundance of every kind of jewels: and though he till his land with a thousand ploughs; and though all this middle-earth be subject to his power, he will not take with him from this middle-earth any more of it than he brought hither.

CHAPTER XXVII.

1. Two things may dignity and power do, if it come to the unwise. It may make him honourable and respectable to other unwise persons. But when he quits the power, or the power him, then is he to the unwise neither honourable nor respectable. Has, then, power the custom of exterminating vices, and rooting them out from the mind of great men, and planting therein virtues? I know, however, that earthly power never sows the virtues, *but collects and gathers vices; and when it has gathered them, then it nevertheless shows, and does not conceal them.* For the vices of great men many men see; because many know them, and many are with them. Therefore we always lament concerning power and also despise it, when we see that it cometh to the worst, and to those who are to us most unworthy. It was on these accounts that formerly the wise Catulus was angry, and so immoderately censured Nonius the rich,¹⁸ because he observed him to sit in an ornamented chair of state. It was a great custom among the Romans that no others should sit therein, except the most worthy. Then Catulus despised him, because he should sit therein; for he knew him to be very unwise, and very intemperate. Then began Catulus to spit upon him. Catulus was a consul in Rome: a very wise man. He would not have despised the other so greatly if he had not possessed any rule or any power.

2. Canst thou now understand how great dishonour power brings on the unworthy, when he receives it? For every man's evil is the more public when he has power. But tell me now, I ask thee Boethius, why thou hadst such manifold evil, and such great uneasiness in authority, whilst thou hadst it? or why thou again didst unwillingly relinquish it?

Dost thou not know that it was for no other reason but that thou wouldest not in all things be conformable to the will of the unrighteous king Theodoric; because thou didst find him in all respects unworthy of power, very shameless, and unrelenting, without any good conduct? For we cannot easily say that the wicked are good, though they may have power Yet thou wouldest not have been driven from Theodoric, nor would he have despised thee, if his folly, and his injustice had pleased thee, as well as it did his foolish favourites. If thou, now, shouldest see some very wise man, who had very excellent dispositions and was nevertheless very poor, and very unhappy, wouldest thou say that he were unworthy of power, and of dignity? Then answered Boethius, and said, No, O no! If I found him such, I would never say that he were unworthy of power and of dignity. But methinks that he would be worthy of all that is in this world. Then said Wisdom, Every virtue has its proper excellence; and the excellence and the dignity which it has, it imparts immediately to every one who loves it. Thus wisdom is the highest virtue, and it has in it four other virtues of which one is prudence, another temperance, the third is fortitude, the fourth is justice. Wisdom makes his lovers wise and worthy, and moderate, and patient, and just; and he fills him who loves him, with every good quality. This they cannot do who possess the power of this world. They cannot impart any virtue through their wealth, to those who love them, if they have it not in their nature. Hence it is very clear that the rich in worldly wealth have no proper dignity: but the wealth is come to them from without, and they cannot from without have aught of their own. Consider now, whether any man be less honourable because many men despise him; but if any man be the less honourable, then is every foolish man the less honourable the more authority he has, to every wise man. Hence it is sufficiently clear that power and wealth cannot make its possessor the more honourable. But it makes him the less honourable when it comes to him, if he were not before virtuous. So is also wealth and power the worse, if he be not virtuous who possesses it. Each of them is the more worthless, when they meet with each other.

3. But I may easily instruct thee by an example so that thou mayest clearly enough perceive that this present life is very like a shadow, and in that shadow no man can attain the true felicities. How thinkest thou,

then? If any very great man were driven from his country, or goeth on his lord's errand, and so cometh to a foreign people, where no man knows him, nor he any man, nor even knows the language, thinkest thou that his greatness can make him honourable in that land? But I know that it cannot. But if dignity were natural to wealth, and were its own; or again wealth were the rich man's own, then could not it forsake him. Let the man who possessed them be in whatsoever land he might, then would his wealth and his dignity be with him. But because the wealth and the power are not his own, therefore they forsake him and because they have no natural good in themselves, therefore they go away like shadows or smoke. Yet the false opinion, and the imagination of foolish men persuades them that power is the highest good. But it is entirely otherwise. When the great are either among foreigners, or in their own country, among wise men, then either to the wise, or to the foreigners, is his wealth for naught, when they learn that they were chosen for no virtue, but through the favour of foolish people. But if they in their power, had anything of proper, or natural good, then would they have that with them, even if they should lose the power. They would not lose the natural good, but that would always follow them, and always make them honourable, let them be in whatsoever land they might.

4. Now thou mayest understand that wealth and power cannot make any man honourable in a foreign country. I wot, however, thou mayest think that they always can in their own country. But though thou mayest think it, I know that they cannot. It was formerly through all the territories of the Romans, that consuls, and judges, and the treasurers who kept the money, which they were every year to give to the soldiers, and the wisest senators had the greatest honour. But now, either none of these exists, or they have no honour, if any one of them exists. So is it with respect to every one of those things which have not in themselves proper and natural good. One while it is to be censured, another while it is to be praised. But what of delightful or useful appears to thee then, in wealth, and in power, when they have enough of nothing, nor have anything of proper good, nor can give anything durable to their possessors?

CHAPTER XXVIII.

When Wisdom had made this speech, then began he again to sing, and thus said: Though the wicked king Nero decked himself with all the most splendid clothes, and adorned himself with gems of every kind, was he not nevertheless, to all wise men loathsome, and unworthy, and full of all vice and debauchery? Yet he enriched his favourites with great riches; but what was *it* to them the better? What wise man could say that he was the more honourable when he had enriched him?

CHAPTER XXIX.

1. When Wisdom had sung this lay, then began he again to speak, and thus said; Dost thou think that the king's familiarity and the wealth and the power which he gives to his favourites, can make any man wealthy or powerful? Then answered I, and said, Why cannot they? What in this present life is pleasanter and better than the king's service, and his presence: and moreover wealth and power? Then answered Wisdom, and said; Tell me now, whether thou hast ever heard, that it always remained to any one who was before us? or thinkest thou that any one who now has it can always have it? Dost thou not know that all books are full of examples of the men who were before us, and every one knows concerning those who are now living, that from many a king power and wealth go away, until he afterwards becomes poor? Alas! is that, then, very excellent wealth, which can preserve neither itself, nor its lord, so that he may not have need of more help, lest they should both be lost? But is not this your highest felicity, the power of kings? And yet if to the king there be a want of anything desired, then that lessens his power, and increases his misery. Therefore these your felicities are in some respects infelicities! Moreover kings, though they govern many nations, yet they do not govern all those which they would govern; but are very wretched in their mind, because they have not some of those things which they would have: for I know that the king who is rapacious has more wretchedness than power. Therefore a certain king,¹⁹ who unjustly came to empire, formerly said, O, how happy is the man, to whom a naked sword hangs not always over the head, by a small thread,

as to me it ever has yet done! How does it now appear to thee? How do wealth and power please thee, when they are never without fear, and difficulties, and anxieties? Thou knowest that every king would be without these, and yet have power, if he might. But I know that he cannot: therefore I wonder why they glory in such power. Does it seem to thee that the man has great power, and is truly happy, who always desires that which he cannot obtain? Or thinkest thou that he is really happy who always goes with a great company? Or again, he who dreads both him that is in dread of him, and him that is not in dread of him? Does it seem to thee that the man has great power who seems to himself to have none, even as to many a man it seems that he has none, unless he have many a man to serve him? What shall we now say more concerning the king, and concerning his followers, except that every rational man may know that they are full miserable and weak? How can kings deny or conceal their weakness, when they are not able to attain any honour without their thanes' assistance?

2. What else shall we say concerning thanes but this, that it often happens that they are bereaved of all honour, and even of life, by their perfidious king? Thus we know that the wicked king Nero would hate his own master, and kill his foster-father, whose name was Seneca.²⁰ He was a philosopher. When, therefore, he found that he must die, he offered all his possessions for his life, but the king would not accept of it, or grant him his life. When he learned this, he chose for himself the death that they should let him bleed from the arm, and they did so. We have also heard that Papinianus²¹ was to Antoninus the Cæsar, of all his favourites the most beloved, and of all his people had the greatest power. But he gave order to bind and afterwards to slay him. Yet all men know that Seneca was to Nero, and Papinianus to Antoninus the worthy, and the most dear: and they had the greatest power both in their court and elsewhere, and nevertheless without any guilt they were destroyed! Yet they both desired most earnestly that the lords would take whatsoever they had, and let them live, but they could not obtain it: for the cruelty of those kings was so severe, that their submission could naught avail, nor indeed would their high-mindedness, howsoever they might do, have availed them either, but they were obliged to lose life. For he who does not take timely care for himself, will at length be

destitute. How doth power and wealth now please thee, now thou hast heard that a man neither can have it without fear, nor can part with it, though he wish? What did the crowd of friends avail the favourites of those kings, or what avails it to any man? For friends come with wealth, and again with wealth go away, except very few. But the friends who before for wealth's sake love any one, go away afterwards with the wealth,, and then turn to enemies. But the few, who before loved him for affection, and for fidelity, these would nevertheless love him, though he were poor. These remain to him. What is a worse plague, or greater hurt to any man, than that he have in his society, and in his presence, an enemy in the likeness of a friend?

3. When Wisdom had made this speech, then began he to sing, and thus said: Whosoever desires fully to possess power ought to labour first that he may have power over his own mind, and be not indecently subject to his vices; also let him put away from his mind unbecoming anxieties, and cease from complaints of his misfortunes. Though he reign over the middle earth, from eastward to westward, from India, which is the south-east end of this middle earth, to the island which we call Thule,²² which is at the north-west end of this middle earth, where there is neither night in summer, nor day in winter; though he rule over all this, he has not the more power, if he has not power over his mind, and if he does not guard himself against the vices which we have before spoken about.

CHAPTER XXX.

1. When Wisdom had sung this song, then began he again to make a speech, and said; Worthless and very false is the glory of this world! Concerning this a certain poet formerly sung.²³ When he contemned this present life he said, O glory of this world! Alas! why do foolish men call thee with false voice, glory, when thou art none! For man more frequently has great renown, and great glory, and great honour, through the opinion of foolish people, than he has through his deservings. But tell me now, what is more unsuitable than this; or why men may not rather be ashamed of themselves, than rejoice, when they hear that any one belies them? Though men even rightly praise any one of the good, he

ought not the sooner to rejoice immediately at the people's words. But at this he ought to rejoice, that they speak truth of him. Though he rejoice at this, that they spread his name, it is not the sooner, so extensively spread, as he persuades himself for they cannot spread it over all the earth, though they may in some land; for though it be heard in one, yet in another it is not heard. Though he in this land be celebrated, yet is he in another not celebrated. Therefore is the people's esteem to be held by every man for nothing: since it comes not to every man according to his deeds, nor, indeed, remains always to any one. Consider first concerning birth; if any one boast of it, how vain and how useless is the boast; for every one knows that all men come from one father, and from one mother. Or again concerning the people's esteem, and concerning their applause. I know not why we rejoice at it. Though they be illustrious whom the vulgar applaud, yet are they more illustrious, and more rightly to be applauded who are dignified by virtues. For no man is really the greater, or the more praiseworthy for the excellence of another, or for his virtues if he himself has it not. Art thou ever the fairer for another man's fairness? A man is full little the better, though he have a good father, if he himself is incapable of anything. Therefore I advise that thou rejoice in other men's good, and their nobility; so far only that thou ascribe it not to thyself as thine own. Because every man's good, and his nobility is more in the mind than in the flesh. This only, indeed, I know of good in nobility that it shames many a man, if he be worse than his ancestors were; and therefore he strives with all his power, to reach the manners of some one of the best, and his virtues.

2. When Wisdom had finished this speech, then began he again to sing about the same and said; Truly all men had a like beginning, for they all came from one father, and from one mother: they are all, moreover, born alike. That is no wonder, because one God is father of all creatures: for he made them all, and governs them all. He gives light to the sun, and to the moon, and places all the stars. He has created men on the earth, joined together the soul and the body by his power, and made all men equally noble in their original nature. Why do ye then lift up yourselves above other men, on account of your birth, without cause, since ye can find none unnoble,²⁴ but all are equally noble, if ye are willing to remember the creation, and the Creator, and moreover, the

birth of every one of you? But true nobility is in the mind, not in the flesh, as we have before said. But every man who is altogether subject to vices, forsakes his Maker, and his first origin and his nobility, and thence becomes degraded, till he is unnoble.

CHAPTER XXXI.

When Wisdom had sung this lay, then began he again to make a speech, and thus said: What good can we say of the fleshly vices? for whosoever will yield to them shall suffer great anguish and many troubles. For intemperance always nourishes vices, and vices have great need of repentance, and repentance is not without sorrow and without anguish. Alas! how many diseases, and how great pain, and how great watching, and how great sadness has he who possesses wicked lust in this world? And how much more thinkest thou they shall have after this world *as the* retribution of their deserts? even as a woman brings forth a child, and suffers much trouble, after she formerly has fulfilled great lust. Therefore I know not what joy the worldly lusts bring to their lovers. If any one say that he is happy who fulfils all his worldly lusts, wherefore will he not also say that the cattle are happy, for their desire is extended to no other things but to gluttony and to lust? Very pleasant is it that a man have wife and children. But nevertheless many children are begotten for their parents' destruction. For many a woman dies by reason of her child before she can bring it forth. And we have also learned that formerly a most unusual and unnatural crime happened, that the children conspired together and lay in wait for the father. And moreover, what was worse, we have heard long ago in ancient histories, that a certain son²⁵ slew his father. I know not in what manner, but we know that it was an inhuman deed. Besides every one may know how heavy trouble to a man is the care of his children. I need not, however, say that to thee, for thou hast experienced it of thyself. Concerning the heavy care of children, said my master Euripides, that it sometimes happened to the unhappy that it would be better for him that he had not children, than that he had.

2. When Wisdom had ended this speech, then began he again to sing, and thus singing, said; Alas! the evil desire of unlawful lust disquiets the

mind of almost every living man. As the bee shall perish when she stings anything angrily, so shall every soul perish after unlawful lust, unless the man turn to good.

CHAPTER XXXII.

I. When Wisdom had sung this lay, then began he again to speak, and thus said: Therefore there is no doubt that this present wealth obstructs and hinders those men who are intent upon the true felicities: and it can bring no one where it promised him, that is, to the highest good. But I can in a few words declare to thee with how many evils these riches are filled. What meanest thou, then, by covetousness of money? When thou no how else canst acquire it, unless thou steal it, or take *it* by force, or find *it* hid; and wheresoever it in creases to thee, it decreases to others. Thou wouldest, then, be illustrious in dignity? But if thou wilt have this, then must thou very meanly and very humbly flatter him who is able to help thee thereto. If thou wilt make thyself greater and more honourable than many, then must thou suffer thyself to be inferior to one. Is not this, then, somewhat of misery, that a man so anxiously cringe to him who has the power of giving to him? Of power thou art desirous? But thou never obtainest it without danger, on account of foreigners, and still more on account of thine own men and kindred. Of glory thou art desirous? But thou canst not have it without care: for thou shalt have always something adverse and inconvenient. Thou wouldst, then, enjoy immoderate lust? But then thou art desirous to despise God's servants, inasmuch as thy vile flesh has the mastery of thee, not thou of it. How can any man conduct himself more wretchedly than when he subjects himself to his vile flesh, and will not to his rational soul? If, then, ye were greater in your body than the elephant, or stronger than the lion, or the bull, or swifter than the tiger, that wild beast: and if thou wert of all men the fairest in beauty, and then wouldest studiously seek after wisdom until thou couldest perfectly understand it; then mightest thou clearly perceive that all the powers and the faculties which we have before spoken about, are not to be compared with any one of the faculties of the soul. Indeed wisdom is one single faculty of the soul, and yet we all know that it is better than all the other faculties which we have before spoken about.

2. Behold now the wideness and the firmness and the swift course of this heaven. Then may ye understand that it is absolutely nothing, compared with its Creator, and with its Ruler. Why then suffer ye it not to warn you that ye should not admire and praise that which is less perfect, that is, earthly wealth. Even so the heaven is better and higher and fairer than all which it includes, except men alone; so is man's body better and more precious than all his possessions. But how much thinkest thou then the soul better and more precious than the body? Every creature is to be honoured in its measure and *always the highest in the greatest degree; therefore* is the heavenly power to be honoured, and to be admired, and to be adored above all other things. The beauty of the body is very fugitive, and very frail, and very like the flowers of the earth. Though any one be as fair as Alcibiades, the noble youth, was, if any one be so sharp-sighted that he can see through him, as Aristotle the philosopher said that wild beast was, which could see through everything, both trees, and even stones; which wild beast we call lynx; if, then, any one were so sharp-sighted that he could see through the youth whom we have before spoken about, then would he not appear to him so fair within as he outwardly seemed. Though thou seem fair to any one, it is not the sooner so; but the imperfection of their eyes hinders them, so that they cannot perceive that they behold thee outwardly, not inwardly. But consider now carefully, and enquire rationally, what these fleshy goods are, and these felicities, which ye now immoderately desire. Then may ye clearly understand that the fairness of the body and its strength, may be taken away by three days' fever. I therefore say to thee all that I have before said to thee, because I would openly prove to thee in the conclusion of this chapter, that all these present goods cannot perform to their lovers that which they promise them, that is the supreme good which they promise them. Though they collect together all these present goods, they have not the sooner perfect good therein, neither can they make their lovers as wealthy as they wish.

3. When Wisdom had ended this speech, then began he again to sing, and thus singing said: Alas! how grievous and how dangerous the error is, which seduceth miserable men, and leads them from the right way! The way is God. Do ye seek gold on trees? I know, however, that ye seek it not there, neither find ye it: for all men know that it grows not

there, any more than jewels grow in vineyards. Do ye set your net on the highest hill, when ye are minded to fish? But I know that ye set it not there. Do ye carry out your hounds and your net into the sea, when ye wish to hunt? I think, however that ye then place them upon hills and in woods. Truly it is wonderful that diligent men know that they must seek on the sea-shore, and on river banks both white jewels and red, and gems of every kind: and they know also in what waters, and in what rivers' mouths they must seek fishes, and they know when they must seek all this present wealth, and incessantly seek it. But it is a very miserable thing, that foolish men are so destitute of all judgment that they know not where the true felicities are hid, nor indeed have they any desire to seek them: but think that in these frail and perishable things they can find the true happiness, that is God! I know not how I can their folly all so plainly declare, and so greatly censure as I would, for they are more miserable, and more foolish, and more unhappy than I can explain. Wealth and honour they desire, and when they have it, then think they, so ignorant! that they have the true happiness.

CHAPTER XXXIII.

1. Enough I have now declared to thee concerning the resemblances, and concerning the shadows of the true happiness. But if thou canst now clearly understand the resemblances of the true happiness, then afterwards it is necessary that I shew thee itself. Then answered I, and said; Now I plainly perceive that there is not enough of every good in these worldly riches, nor is perfect power in any worldly authority; nor is true dignity in this world; nor are the greatest honours in this world's glory; nor is the highest pleasure in the fleshly lusts. Then answered Wisdom, and said: Dost thou fully understand why it is so? Then answered I, and said; Though I understand it in some measure, I would nevertheless learn it more fully, and more distinctly from thee. Then answered Wisdom, and said: It is sufficiently clear that good is single and inseparable, though foolish men divide it into many, when they, erring, seek the highest good in the worse creatures. But dost thou think that he has need of nothing more, who has the greatest power in this world? Then answered I again, and said: I do not say that he has need of

nothing more, for I know that no one is so wealthy, that he needs not some addition. Then answered Wisdom, and said: Thou sayest rightly enough. Though any one have power, if another have more, the weaker needs the aid of the stronger. Then said I, it is all as thou sayest. Then said Wisdom, though any one call power and abundance two things, it is nevertheless one. Then said I, So I think. Then he said, Thinkest thou now that power and abundance is to be despised? or again more to be esteemed than other goods? Then said I, No man can doubt of this, that power and abundance is to be esteemed. Then said he, Let us now, if it so seem to thee, make an addition to the power and the abundance; let us add dignity thereto, and then account the three as one. Then answered I, and said, Let us do so, for it is true. Then said he, Does the assemblage of these three things then seem to thee worthless and ignoble, when the three are united together: or whether again does it seem to thee, of all things the most worthy and the most noble? If thou knewest any man who had power over everything, and had all dignity, even so far that he needed nothing more, consider now, how honourable and how eminent the man would seem to thee; and yet though he had the three, if he were not celebrated, then would there nevertheless be to him a deficiency of some dignity. Then said I, I cannot deny it. Then said he, Is it not then sufficiently clear that we should add celebrity to the three, and make the four as one? Then said I, That is proper. Then said he, Dost thou think that he is blithe who has all these four? The fifth is bliss, and *that any one may* do whatsoever he will, and need nothing more than he possesses. Then said I, I can never imagine if he were such, and had all this, whence any trouble should come to him. Then said he, But it must then be considered that the five things which we have before spoken about, though they are separately named in words, that it is all one thing, when they are collected together, that is, power, and abundance, and glory, and dignity, and bliss.

2. These five things, when they are all collected together, then, that is God. For all the five no human being can fully have, while he is in this world. But when these five things, as we before said, are all collected together, then is it all one thing, and that one thing is God; and he is single and undivided, though they before were in many, separately named. Then answered I, and said, Of all this I approve. Then said he,

Though God be single and undivided, as he is, human error divides him into many by their vain words. Every man proposes to himself for the supreme good, that which he chiefly loves. Then one loves this, and one another thing. That, then, is his good, which he chiefly loves. But when they divide their good into so many parts, then find they neither good itself, nor the part of good which they chiefly love. When they add it all together, they then have neither all of it, nor the part which they separated therefrom. Therefore every man finds not what he seeks, because he seeks it not rightly. Ye seek where ye cannot find when ye seek all good in one good. Then said I, That is true. Then said he, When the man is poor he is not desirous of power, but wishes for wealth, and flies from poverty. He labours not for this, how he may be most illustrious; nor moreover, does anyone obtain that which he labours not for. But he labours all his life for wealth, and foregoes many a worldly pleasure, in order that he may acquire and keep wealth, because he is desirous of that above all things. But if he obtain it, he then thinks that he has not enough unless he have also power besides: for he thinks that he cannot keep the wealth without power. Nor moreover does there ever seem to him enough, until he has all that he desires. For wealth desires power, and power desires dignity, and dignity desires glory. After he is full of wealth, it then seems to him that he may have every desire if he have power; and he gives all the wealth for power, unless he is able to obtain it for less; and foregoes every other advantage, in order that he may attain to power. And thus it often happens, that when he has given all that he had for power, he has neither the power, nor moreover, that which he gave for it, but at length becomes so poor, that he has not even mere necessaries, that is, food and clothing. He then is desirous of necessaries, not of power. We before spoke of the five felicities, that is wealth, and power, and dignity, and glory, and pleasure. Now have we treated of wealth, and of power: and the same we may say of the three, which we have not treated of; that is, dignity and glory, and pleasure. These three things, and the two which we before named, though any man think that in any one soever of them he can possess full happiness, it is not the sooner so, though they hope for it, unless they have all the five. Then answered I, and said, What ought we, then, to do? Since thou sayest that we cannot in any one soever of these have the highest good

and full happiness; and we do not at all think that any one soever of us can obtain the five altogether. Then answered he, and said: If any one desire that he may have all the five, then desireth he the highest felicities: but he cannot fully obtain them in this world. For though he should obtain all the five goods, it nevertheless would not be the supreme good, nor the best happiness, because they are not eternal. Then answered I, and said, Now I perceive clearly enough that the best felicities are not in this world. Then said he, No man needs in this present life to seek after the true felicities, nor think that here he can find sufficient good. Then said I, Thou sayest truly.

3. Then said he, I think that I have said enough to thee about the false goods. But I am desirous that thou shouldest turn thy attention from the false goods; then wilt thou very soon know the true goods, which I before promised thee that I would shew thee. Then said I, Even foolish men know that full goods exist, though they may not be where they suppose them. Thou promisedst me a little while ago, that thou wouldest teach me them. But of this I am persuaded, that that is the true and the perfect happiness which can give to all its followers permanent wealth, and everlasting power, and enduring dignity, and eternal glory, and full abundance. And moreover I say, that is the true happiness which can fully bestow any of these five: because in every one of them they all are. I say these words to thee, because I am desirous that thou shouldest know that the doctrine is well fixed in my mind; so fixed, that no man can draw me aside from it. Then said he, O child, how happy art thou that thou hast so learned it! But I am desirous that we should still enquire after that which is deficient to thee. Then said I, What is that, then? Then said he, Dost thou think that any of these present goods can give thee full happiness? Then answered I, and said, I know nothing in this present life that can give such. Then said he, These present goods are images of the eternal good, not full good, because they cannot give true good, nor full good to their followers. Then said I, I am well enough assured of that which thou sayest. Then said he, Now thou knowest what the false goods are, and what the true goods are, I would that thou shouldest learn how thou mayest come to the true goods. Then said I, Didst thou not formerly. promise me that thou wouldest teach it me? and I am now very anxiously desirous to hear it. Then said he, What ought

we now to do, in order that we may come to the true goods? Shall we implore the divine help as well in less as in greater *things*, as our philosopher Plato said? Then said I, I think that we ought to pray to the Father of all things: for he who is unwilling to pray to him, will not find him; nor moreover will he pursue the right way towards him. Then said he, Very rightly thou sayest; and began then to sing, and thus said:

4. O Lord, how great and how wonderful thou art! Thou who all thy creatures visible and also invisible wonderfully hast created, and rationally governest them! Thou who times from the beginning of the middle earth to the end, settest in order, so that they both depart and return! Thou who all moving creatures according to thy will stirrest, and thou thyself always immoveable and unchangeable remainest! For none is mightier than thou, nor any like thee! No necessity taught thee to make that which thou hast made, but by thine own will, and by thine own power, thou madest all things, though thou neededest none of them. Very wonderful is the nature of thy good, for it is all one, thou and thy goodness. Good is not come to thee from without, but it is thine own. But all that we have of good in this world is come to us from without, that is. from thee! Thou hast no envy to anything, because no one is more skilful than thou, nor any like thee; for thou by thy sole counsel hast designed and wrought all good. No man set thee an example, for no one was before thee, who anything or nothing might make. But thou hast made all things very good and very fair, and thou thyself art the highest good and the fairest. As thou thyself didst design, so hast thou made this middle earth, and dost govern it as thou wilt; and thou thyself dost distribute all good as thou wilt. And thou hast made all creatures like to each other, and also in some respects unlike. Though thou hast named all these creatures *separately* with one name, thou hast named them all together, and called *them* world. Nevertheless that one name thou hast divided into four elements. One of them is earth; another, water; the third is air; the fourth fire. To every one of them thou hast set its own separate place, and yet every one is with other classed, and peaceably bound by thy commandment; so that none of them should' pass over another's boundary, and the cold suffer by the heat, and the wet by the dry. The nature of earth and of water is cold; the earth is dry and cold, and the water wet and cold. But the air is distinguished that it is either

cold, or wet, or warm. It is no wonder: because it is created in the midst between the dry and the cold earth, and the hot fire. The fire is uppermost over all these worldly creatures. Wonderful is thy counsel, which thou hast in both respects accomplished; both hast bounded the creatures between themselves, and also hast intermixed them: the dry and the cold earth under the cold and the wet water; that the soft and flowing water may have a floor on the firm earth, because it cannot of itself stand: but the earth holds it, and in some measure imbibes, and by that moistening it is lightened, so that it grows and blossoms, and produces fruits. For if the water moistened it not, then would it become dry, and would be driven by the wind like dust, or ashes. Nor could anything living enjoy the earth or the water, or dwell in either for cold, if thou didst not a little mix them with fire. With wonderful skill thou hast caused it, that the fire burns not the water, and the earth, when it is mixed with both: nor again, the water and the earth entirely extinguish the fire. The water's own region is on the earth, and also in the air, and again above the sky. But the fire's own place is above all visible worldly creatures; and though it is mixed with all elements, nevertheless it cannot altogether overcome any one of the elements, because it has not leave from the Almighty. The earth, then, is heavier and thicker than other elements, because it is lower than any other creature except the sky: for the sky extends itself every day outwardly, *and* though it approaches it nowhere, it is in every place equally nigh to it, both above and beneath. Every one of the elements which we formerly spoke about, has its own region separately, and yet is every one mixed with another; because no one of the elements can exist without another, though it be imperceptible in the other. Thus water and earth are very difficult to be seen or to be perceived by ignorant men in fire, and yet they are nevertheless mixed therewith. So is there also fire in stones, and in water, very difficult to be seen, but it is nevertheless there. Thou hast bound the fire with very indissoluble chains, that it may not come to its own region, that is, to the greatest fire, which is over us; lest it should forsake the earth, and all other creatures should perish by excessive cold, if it should altogether depart. Thou hast established earth very wonderfully, and firmly, so that it does not incline on any side, nor stand on any earthly thing; nor does anything earthly held it, that it may not sink: and it is not easier for it to

fall downwards than upwards. Thou also movest the threefold soul in agreeing limbs, so that there is not less of the soul in the least finger than in all the body. I said that the soul was threefold, because philosophers say that she has three natures. One of these natures is, that she has the power of willing; the second is' that she is subject to anger; the third, that she is rational. Two of these natures beasts have, the same as men. One of them is will, the other is anger. But man alone has reason, and not any other creature. Therefore he has excelled all earthly creatures by thought, and by understanding. For reason should govern both will and anger, because it is the peculiar faculty of the soul. So hast thou created the soul that she should always turn upon herself, as all this sky turns, or as a wheel turns round, enquiring about her maker, or about herself, or about these earthly creatures. When she enquires about her maker, then she is above herself; but when she enquires about herself, then is she in herself. And she is beneath herself when she loves these earthly things and admires them. Thou, O Lord, hast given to souls a dwelling in the heavens, and on them thou bestowest worthy gifts; to every one according to its deserving, and causest them to shine very bright, and yet with very varied brightness; some brighter and some less bright, even as the stars, every one according to its desert. Thou, O Lord, bringest together the heavenly souls, and the earthly bodies, and unitest them in this world. As they from thee came hither, so shall they also to thee hence tend. Thou filledst this earth with various kinds of animals, and afterwards didst sow it with various seed of trees and plants! Grant now, O Lord, to our minds, that they may ascend to thee through these difficulties of this world; and from these occupations come to thee; and *that* with the open eyes of our mind, we may see the noble fountain of all goods. That art thou! Grant to us, then, sound eyes of our mind, that we may fix them on thee; and drive away the mist that now hangs before the eyes of our mind, and enlighten the eyes with thy light: for thou art the brightness of the true light; and thou art the soft rest of the just, and thou wilt cause that they shall see thee. Thou art of all things the beginning and the end. Thou supportest all things without labour. Thou art both the way, and the guide, and the place that the way leads to. All men tend to thee!

CHAPTER XXXIV.

1. When Wisdom had sung this lay, and this prayer, then began he again to speak, and thus said: I think that it is now in the first place necessary, that I shew thee where the highest good is, now I have already shewn thee what it was; or which was the perfect good. One thing I would first ask thee; whether thou thinkest that anything in this world is so good, that it can give thee full happiness? For this reason I ask thee, because I am unwilling that any false resemblance should impose upon us for the true happiness. For no man can deny that some good is the highest; as it were a great and deep fountain and from *which* many brooks and rivers flow. We therefore say concerning any good, that it is not full good, because there is in it a deficiency of something; and yet it is not entirely without *good*, for every thing comes to naught if it has no good in it. Hence thou mayst learn, that from the greatest good come the less goods; not from the less the greatest, any more than the rivers may become a fountain. But the fountain may become a river, and yet the rain comes again to the fountain! So every good comes from God, and again to him; and he is the full and perfect good, which is not deficient in any will. Now thou mayest clearly understand that this is God himself. Why canst thou not imagine *that* if nothing were full, then would nothing be *deficient*, and *if nothing were deficient, then would nothing be full*? Therefore is anything full because some is deficient; and therefore is anything deficient because some is full. Everything is fullest in its proper station. Why canst thou not then conceive that if in any of these earthly goods there is a deficiency of any will, and of any good, then is some good full of every will, and is deficient in no good? Then answered I, and said: Very rightly and very rationally thou hast overcome, and convinced me; so that I cannot contradict, or even imagine *anything* contrary to it: but that it is all even as thou sayest.

2. Then said Wisdom, Now I would that thou shouldest consider studiously until thou discover where the full happiness is. Dost thou, then, not know that all mankind is unanimously consenting that God is the origin of all goods and the ruler of all creatures? He is the highest good, nor do any men doubt it, for they know nothing better, nor indeed, anything equally good. Therefore every argument informs us

and all men acknowledge the same, that God is the highest good; for they shew that all good is in him. For if it were not so, then he would not be that which he is called. Or if anything were more ancient, or more excellent, then would that be better than he. But because nothing was more ancient than he, nor more excellent than he, nor more precious than he, therefore is he the origin, and the source and the roof of all goods. It is sufficiently evident that the perfect good was before the imperfect. This *then is* to be acknowledged, that the highest good is fullest of every good, that we may not speak *longer* about it than we need. The same God is, as we before said, the highest good, and the best happiness since it is evidently known that the best felicities are in no other things but in God. Then said I, I am convinced of *it*.

3. Then said he, I beseech thee that thou wouldest rationally understand this, that God is full of all perfection, and of all good and of all happiness. Then said I, I cannot fully comprehend why thou again sayest the same thing which thou saidest before. Then said he, For this reason I say it to thee again, because I am unwilling that thou shouldest suppose that God, who is the Father and Origin of all creatures; that the supreme goodness of him of which he is full, came to him from without. Nor moreover am I willing that thou shouldest suppose that his good and his happiness were one thing, and himself another. For if thou thinkest that the good which he has, came to him from without, then would that thing from which it came to him, be better than he, if it were so. But it is very foolish, and a very great sin, that any one should thus think of God; or moreover think that anything was before him, or better than he, or like him. But we must be convinced that God is of all things the best. If thou, then, believest that God is like as it is among men, *that* one thing is the man, that is soul and body, *and* another is his goodness, which God joins, and afterwards holds together and regulates: if thou believest that it is so with God, then must thou of necessity believe that some power is greater than his, which may join together what belongs to him, as he does what appertains to us. Besides, whatsoever is distinct from another thing is one, *and* the thing another, though they be together. If, therefore, anything is distinct from the highest good, then that is not the highest good. It is however, great sin to imagine concerning God, that any good can be external to him, or any separated

from him; because nothing is better than he or equally good with him. What thing can be better than its Creator? Therefore I say with right reason, that that is the highest good in its own nature, which is the origin of all things. Then said I, Now thou hast very rightly instructed me. Then said he, But then I before said, that the highest good, and the highest happiness were one. Then said I, So it is. Then said he, What shall we then say? What else is that but God? Then said I, I cannot deny this, for I was before convinced of it.

4. Then said he, Perhaps thou mayest more clearly apprehend it, if I again give thee some instance. If, therefore, two goods existed, which might not be together, and were nevertheless both good, would it not then be sufficiently evident that neither of them was the other? Therefore the full good cannot be divided. How can it be both full and deficient? Hence we say, that the full happiness and good are one good, and that is the highest. They can never be separated. Must we not, then, necessarily be convinced that the highest happiness and the supreme divinity are one? Then said I, Nothing is more true than that. We are not able to discover anything better than God. Then said he, But I would still prepare thee by some example, so that thou mayest not find anyway of escaping; as the manner of philosophers is, that they always wish to declare something new and extraordinary, that they may thereby awaken the mind of the hearers.

5. Have we not already proved that happiness and the divinity were one? He, then, who has happiness has both in having either. Is he not, then, full happy? Knowest thou not, moreover, what we say, that any one is wise who has wisdom; and righteous, who has righteousness? So we also say that that is God which has goodness and happiness: and every happy man is a God. And yet there is one God, who is the stem and foundation of all goods, and from him cometh all good; and again, they tend to him, and he governs all. He is, moreover, the origin and foundation of all goods which proceed from him. Thus all the stars are lighted and made bright by the sun: some however, more brightly, some less brightly. So also the moon gives light in such measure as the sun shines upon him. When she shines upon him all over, then is he all bright. When I heard this speech, I was astonished, and greatly afraid, and said: This is, indeed, a wonderful and delightful, and rational argument which

thou now usest. Then said he, Nothing is more delightful or more certain than the thing which this argument is about, and which we will now speak of; for methinks it good that we add it to the preceding. Then said I, What is that?

6. Then said he, Thou knowest that I before said to thee, that the true happiness was good; and from the true happiness come all the other goods which we have before spoken about, and again *return* to it. Thus from the sea the water enters into the earth, and then becomes fresh. It then comes up through the fountain, then runs to the brook, then to the river, then along the river till it returns to the sea. But I would now ask thee how thou hast understood this discourse. Whether thou thinkest that the five goods which we have often before mentioned, that is power, and dignity, and glory, and abundance, and pleasure; I would know whether thou thoughtest that these goods were members of the true happiness, as there are many members in one man, and yet all belong to one body, or whether thou thoughtest that any one of the five goods constituted the true happiness, and then the four *other* goods were its good, as soul and body constitutes one man, and the one man has many members, and nevertheless, to these two, that is to the soul, and to the body, belong all these goods of the man, both ghostly and bodily. This, then, is the good of the body, that a man be fair, and strong, and tall, and broad, and many other goods in addition to these; and yet it is not the body itself, because if that loses any of these goods; it is nevertheless what it was before. Then the good of the soul is prudence, and temperance, and patience, and justice, and wisdom, and many like virtues; and nevertheless the soul is one *thing*, and its virtues are another. Then said I, I wish that thou wouldest speak to me more plainly about the other goods which belong to the true happiness. Then said he, Did I not say to thee before that the happiness was good? Yes, said I, thou saidest that it was the supreme good. Then said he, Art thou now convinced that power, and dignity, and glory, and abundance, and pleasure, and happiness, and the supreme good, that these are all one. and that one is good? Then said I, How shall I deny this? Then said he, Which dost thou then consider these things to be; members of the true felicities, or the felicity itself? Then said I, I now perceive what thou wouldest know. But I rather wish that thou wouldest inform me

somewhile concerning it, than that thou shouldest enquire of me. Then said he, Canst thou not imagine that if the goods were members of the true happiness, they would then be in some degree separated as the members of a man's body are in some degree separated. But the nature of the members is that they constitute one body, and yet are not altogether alike. Then, said I, Thou needest not labour more about that. Thou hast clearly enough proved to me that the goods are in no wise separated from the true happiness. Then said he, Very rightly thou understandest it, now thou understandest that the goods are all the same that happiness is, and happiness is the highest good: and the highest good is God; and God is ever one, inseparable. Then said I, There is no doubt of this. But I wish that thou wouldest now inform me of something unknown.

7. Then said he, it is now evident that all the goods which we have before spoken about, belong to the highest good; and therefore men seek sufficient good when they consider that *which they seek*, the highest good. Therefore they seek power, and also *the other goods*, which we before mentioned, because they think that it is the highest good. Hence thou mayest know that the highest good is the roof of all the other goods which men desire and covet. For no man covets anything but good, or something of that which resembles good. They are desirous of many a thing which is not full good, but it has, nevertheless, something of resemblance to good. Therefore we say that the highest good is the highest roof of all goods, and the hinge on which all good turns; and also the cause on account of which man does all good. For this cause men covet every one of the goods which they covet. This thou mayest very plainly perceive hereby, that no man desires the thing which he desires, nor that which he does, but that which he thereby earns. For he thinks that if he obtain *his* desire, and accomplish that which he has resolved, that then he shall have full happiness. Dost thou not know that no man rides because he lists to ride, but rides because he by riding obtains *some earning*? Some by their riding earn that they may be healthier; some earn that they may be more active; some that they may come to one of the places which they are then hastening to. Is it not, then, sufficiently clear to thee, that men love nothing more earnestly than they do the highest good; because everything which they desire or do, they do for this

reason, that they would have the highest good thereby? But some of them err in thinking that they can have full good and full happiness in these present goods. But the full happiness and the highest good is God himself, as we have often said before. Then said I, I cannot imagine how I can deny this. Then said he, Let us, then, relinquish this discourse, and be so far secure; since thou hast so fully learned that God is ever inseparable, and full good; and that his good and his happiness came to him from nowhere without, but was always in himself, and now is, and for ever shall be.

8. When Wisdom had ended this discourse, then began he again to sing, and thus said; Well, O men, well! Let every one who is free aspire to this good, and to these felicities. And whoever is now bound with the vain love of this middle earth, let him seek freedom for himself, that he may arrive at these felicities. For this is the only rest of all our labours; the only haven which is ever calm after all the storms and billows of our labours. This is the only place of peace, and the only comfort of the wretched, after the calamities of this present life. But golden stones, and silver, and gems of every kind, and all this present wealth, neither enlighten the eyes of the mind, nor improve their sharpness for the contemplation of the true happiness; but rather blind the eyes of the mind than sharpen them. For all the things which give pleasure herein this present life are earthly, and therefore fleeting. But the wonderful brightness which brightens all things, and governs all, wills not that souls should perish, but wills to enlighten them. If, then, any man may behold the brightness of the heavenly light with the clear eyes of his mind, then will he say that the brightness of the sun-shine is darkness, to be compared with the eternal brightness of God.

9. When Wisdom had sung this lay, then said I, I am convinced of that which thou sayest, for thou hast proved it by rational discourse. Then said he, With how much money wouldest thou have bought, that thou mightest know what the true good was, and of what kind it was? Then said I, I would rejoice with excessive gladness, and I would buy with countless money, that I might see it. Then said he, I will then teach it thee. But this one *thing* I enjoin thee: that thou, on account of this instruction, forget not what I before taught *thee*. Then said I, No, I will not forget it. Then said he, Did we not before say to thee, that this

present life which we here desire, was not the highest good; because it was varied, and so manifoldly divided, that no man can have it all, so that there be not to him a lack of something? I then taught thee that the highest good was there, where the goods are all collected as if they were melted into one mass. Then is there full good, when the goods which we before spoke of, are all collected into one good. Then is there a deficiency of no good. Then the goods are all in unity, and the unity is eternal. If they were not eternal, then would they not be so anxiously to be desired. Then said I, That is proved, nor can I doubt it. Then said he, I have formerly proved to thee, that that was not full good, which was not all together: because that is full good which is all together, undivided. Then said I, So methinks. Then said he, Dost thou think that all the things which are good in this world, are therefore good, because they have something of good in them? Then said I, What else can I think; is it not so? Then said he, Thou must however believe that unity and goodness are one thing. Then said I, I cannot deny this. Then said he, Canst thou not perceive, that every thing is able to exist, both in this world, and in the future, so long as it remains unseparated, but afterwards it is not altogether as it was before? Then said I, Say that to me more plainly; I cannot understand after what thou, art enquiring. Then said he, Dost thou know what man is? Then said I, I know that he is soul and body. Then said he, But thou knowest that it is man, while the soul and the body are unseparated. It is not man after they are separated. So also the body is body while it has all its members; but if it lose any member, then it is not all as it before was. The same thou mayest conceive with respect to every thing; that nothing is such as it was, after it begins to decay. Then said I, Now I know it. Then said he, Dost thou think that there is any creature which of its will desires not always to be, but of its own will desires to perish?

10. Then said I, I cannot find any living thing which knows what it wills, or what it wills not, which uncompelled chooses to perish. For every thing, of such as I deem living, desires to be hale and to live. But I know not concerning trees, and concerning herbs, and concerning such creatures as have no souls. Then smiled he and said, Thou needest not doubt concerning these creatures any more than about the others. Canst thou not see that every herb and every tree will grow best in that land

which suits it best, and is natural and habitual to it: and where it perceives that it may soonest grow and latest fall to decay? Of some herbs, or some wood, the native soil is on hills, of some in marshes, of some on moors, of some on rocks, of some on bare sands. Take, therefore, tree or herb, whichsoever thou wilt, from the place which is its native soil and country to grow in, and set it in a place unnatural to it, then will it not grow there at all, but will wither. For the nature of every land is, that it should nourish herbs suitable to it, and suitable wood. And so it does: protecting and supporting them very carefully, as long as it is their nature that they should grow. What thinkest thou? Why should every seed grow in the earth, and turn to germs and to roots in the earth, except because they endeavour that the trunk and the head may the more firmly and the longer stand? Why canst thou not understand, though thou art not able to see it, that all that part of the tree which grows in twelve months, begins from the roots and so grows upwards into the trunk, and afterwards along the pith, and along the bark to the head; and afterwards through the boughs, until it springs out in leaves, and in blossoms, and in fruits? Why canst thou not understand, that every living thing is inwardly softest, and unbroken hardest? Moreover thou mayest observe how trees are outwardly clothed and covered with bark, against the winter, and against the stark storms; and also against the heat of the sun in summer. Who can refrain from admiring such works of our Creator, and still more the Creator? And though we admire him, which of us can declare worthily our Creator's will and power? How his creatures grow and again decay, when the time thereof comes; and from their seed become again renewed, as if they were then newly created? What they then again are, and also in some measure alone are, such they ever shall be, because they are every year newly created.

11. Dost thou now understand that *even* inanimate creatures would desire to exist for ever, the same as men, if they could? Dost thou understand why fire tends upwards and earth downwards? Wherefore is it, but because God made the station of one up, and of the other down? For every creature chiefly tends thither, where its station and its health especially is, and flies from what is contrary, and disagreeing, and unlike to it. Stones, because they are of immoveable and hard nature, are difficult to divide, and also with difficulty come together, when they are

divided. If thou cleavest a stone, it never becomes united together as it before was. But water and air are of a somewhat softer nature. They are very easy to separate, but they are again soon together. The fire, indeed, cannot ever be divided. I just now said, that nothing of its own will would perish; but I am *speaking* more about the nature than about the will, for these sometimes are differently inclined. Thou mayest know by many things that nature is very great. It is through mighty nature that to our body comes all its strength from the food which we eat, and yet the food goes out through the body. But nevertheless its savour and its virtue enter every vein: even as any one sifts meal: the meal comes through every hole, and the bran becomes separated. So also our spirit is very widely wandering, without our will, and without our power, by reason of its nature, not by reason of its will; that happens when we sleep. But cattle, and, also other creatures seek that which they desire, more from nature than from will. It is unnatural to every thing that it should desire danger or death, but still many a thing is so far compelled that it desires both of them; because the will is then stronger than the nature. Sometimes the will is more powerful than the nature, sometimes the nature overcomes the will. Thus lust does. It is natural to all men, and yet its nature is sometimes denied to it through the man's will. All the desire of propagation is from nature, not from will.

12. By this thou mayest plainly know, that the Maker of all things has imparted one desire and one nature to all his creatures, that is, that they would exist for ever. It is natural to every thing that it should desire to exist for ever: so far as it can and may retain its nature. Thou needest not doubt concerning that which thou before didst question, that is, concerning the creatures which have no souls. Every one of the creatures which have souls, as well as those which have not, desires always to exist. Then said I, Now I understand that about which I before doubted; that is, that every creature is desirous always to exist, which is very clear, from the propagation *of them*. Then said he, Dost thou then understand, that every one of the things which perceives itself to exist, desires to be together, whole and undivided; because if it be undivided then it is whole? Then said I, that is true. Then said he, that all things have one will, that is, that they would exist for ever. Through this one will they desire the one good which for ever exists, that is God! Then

said I, So it is. Then said he, Thou mayest then plainly perceive that it is on account of a thing good in itself, that all creatures and all things desire to possess *it*. Then said I, No man can more truly say; for I know that all creatures would flow away like water, and keep no peace, nor any order, but very confusedly dissolve and come to naught, as we before said in this same book, if they had not one God, who guided, and directed, and governed them all. But now, since we know that there is one Governor of all things, we must needs be convinced, whether we will, or whether we will not, that he is the highest roof of all goods. Then he smiled upon me and said, O, my child, how truly happy art thou, and how truly glad am I, on account of thine understanding! Thou hast very nearly discovered the truth; and the same that thou before saidest thou couldst not understand, of that thou hast now been convinced. Then said I, What was that which I before said, I knew not? Then said he, Thou saidest that thou knewest not the end of every creature. But know now that that is the end of every creature which thou thyself hast already named, *that is good*. To this all creatures tend. They have no good besides this to seek, nor can they discover anything either above or beyond *it*.

CHAPTER XXXV.

I. When he had ended this discourse, then began he again to sing, and thus said; Whosoever is desirous to search deeply with inward mind after truth, and is unwilling that any man, or anything should mislead him: let him begin to seek within himself that which he before sought around him; and let him dismiss vain anxieties as he best may, and resort to this alone, and say to his own mind, that it may find within itself, all the goods which it seeks outwardly. Then may he very soon discover all the evil and vanity which he before had in his mind, as plainly as thou canst behold the sun. And thou wilt know thine own mind, that it is far brighter, and lighter than the sun. For no heaviness of the body, or any fault can wholly take away from his mind wisdom, so that he have not some portion of it in his mind; though the sluggishness of the body, and *its* imperfections often prepossess the mind with forgetfulness, and affright it with the mist of error, so that it cannot shine so brightly as it would. And nevertheless a grain of the seed of truth is ever dwelling in

the soul, while the soul and the body are united. That grain must be excited by enquiry and by instruction if it shall grow. How then can any man wisely and rationally enquire if he has no particle of wisdom in him? No one is so entirely destitute of wisdom that he knows no right answer when any one enquires. Therefore it is a very true saying that Plato the philosopher said. He said, Whosoever is forgetful of wisdom, let him have recourse to his mind: then will he there find the wisdom concealed by the heaviness of the body, and by the trouble and occupation of his mind.

2. Then said I, I am convinced that it was a true saying, which Plato said. But hast thou not again twice reminded me of the same argument? First thou saidest that I had forgotten the natural good which I had within myself, through the heaviness of the body. At another time, thou saidest to me, that thou hadst discovered that it seemed to myself that I had altogether lost the natural good which I should have within myself, through the immoderate uneasiness which I had on account of lost wealth. Then said he, Since thou now rememberest the words which I said to thee, in the first book, thou mayest by those words clearly enough call to mind what thou before saidest thou wert ignorant of. Then said I, What was that? What did I say that I was ignorant of? Then said he' Thou saidest in that same book, that thou knewest that God governed this middle earth; but thou saidest that thou couldest not discover in what manner he governed it, or how he governed it. Then said I, I very well remember mine own folly, and I have already acknowledged it to thee. But though I know it in some measure, I would yet hear more concerning it from thee. Then said he, Thou formerly hadst not any doubt that God ruled and governed all the middle earth. Then said I, Nor do I now doubt it, nor ever shall doubt it. I will, moreover, at once tell thee by what I was first convinced of it. I perceived that this middle-earth was composed of very many and various things, and very firmly cemented and joined together, If these, such contrary creatures, had not been united and reduced to order, then they would never have been formed nor joined together, and if he had not bound them with his indissoluble chains, then would they all be dissolved. Neither would their station and their course be formed so wisely, and so orderly, and so suitably in their places, and in their times,

if one unchangeable God did not exist. Good, therefore, directed whatever is. This I call God as all creatures call *it*.

3. Then said he, Since thou hast so clearly understood this, I need not now greatly labour, in order that I may instruct thee further, concerning good; for thou art now almost come into the city of the true happiness, which thou some time ago couldest not discover. But we must nevertheless consider what we have already proposed.

Then said I, What is that? Then said he, Have we not before agreed that sufficiency was happiness, and happiness, God? Then said I, So it is as thou sayest. Then said he, God needs no other help besides himself to govern his creatures with, any more than he before needed for the creation: for if he had need of any help in anything, then would he himself not have sufficiency. Then said I, So it is as thou sayest. Then said he, By himself he created all things and governs all. Then said I, I cannot deny it. Then said he, We have before shewn to thee; that God was of himself good. Then said I, I remember that thou so saidest. Then said he,

Through good, God created every thing, for he governs by himself all that, which we before said was good: and he is the only stable governor, and pilot, and rudder: for he directs and rules all creatures, as a good pilot *steers* a ship. Then said I, Now I confess to thee that I have found a door, where I before saw only a little chink, so that I scarcely could see a very small ray of light in this darkness. And yet thou hadst before pointed out to me the door, but I could not ever the more discover it, though I groped for it whereabout I saw that little light twinkle. I said to thee some time ago, in this same book, that I knew not what was the beginning of all creatures. Thou didst then inform me that it was God. Then again I knew not concerning the end, until thou hadst told me that it was also God. Then said I to thee, that I knew not how he governed all these creatures, but thou hast now explained it to me very clearly, as if thou hadst opened the door which I before sought. Then answered he me and said, I know that I before reminded thee of this same argument, and now methinks that thou understandest, as the later, so the better concerning the truth. But I would yet shew thee some example as manifest as that was, which I before mentioned to thee. Then said I, What is that?

4. Then said he, No man can doubt this, that by the proper consent of all creatures, God reigns over them, and bends their will conformably to his will. By this it is very evident that God governs everything with the helm, and with the rudder of his goodness. For all creatures naturally of their own will endeavour to come to good, as we have often before said in this same book. Then said I, Indeed I cannot doubt it, for God's power would not be entirely perfect if creatures obeyed him against their will: and again, the creatures would not be worthy of any thanks, or any honour, if they unwillingly obeyed their Lord. Then said he, There is no creature which attempts to contend against its Maker's will, if it desire to retain its nature. Then said I, There is no creature which contends against its Maker's will except foolish man: or again, the rebellious angels. Then said he, What thinkest thou? If any creature determined that it would contend against his will, what could it do against *one* so powerful as we have proved him? Then said I, They cannot do anything, though they will it. Then wondered he, and said, There is no being which can or will oppose so high a God! Then said I, I do not imagine that there is anything which opposes, except what we before said. Then smiled he, and said, Be assured that that is the highest good which so powerfully does everything, and has created all things, and so widely over all extends, and so easily without any labour disposes everything. Then said I, I well liked what thou before saidest; and this pleases me still better, but I am now ashamed that I did not know it before. Then said he, I wot thou hast often heard tell in old fables,²⁶ that Jove, the son of Saturn, should be the highest god above other gods; and he should be the son of heaven, and should reign in the heavens; and the giants should be the sons of earth, and should reign over the earth, and then they should be as if they were sisters' children, for he should be the son of heaven, and they of earth. Then should it appear to the giants that he possessed their kingdom. Then were they desirous to break the heaven under him. Then should he send thunders and lightnings, and winds, and therewith overturn all their work, and slay them. Such fictions they invented, and might easily have related true history if the fictions had not been more agreeable to them, and yet very like to these. They might have related what folly Nimrod the giant wrought. Nimrod was the son of Cush; Cush was the son of Ham; *and* Ham of Noah. Nimrod gave order to erect

a tower in the field which is called Shinar, and in the country which is called Dura, very near to the city, which men now call Babylon. They did it for these reasons, that they wished to know how high it was to the heaven, and how thick the heaven was, and how firm, or what was over it. But it happened, as was fit, that the divine power dispersed them before they could complete it, and overthrew the tower, and slew many a one of them, and divided their speech into seventy-two languages. So happens it to many of those who strive against the divine power. No honour accrues to them thereby, but that is diminished which they had.

5. But see now whether thou art desirous that we should still seek after any argument further, now we have discovered what we before sought. I think, however, if we again strike our words together, there may spring out some spark of truth of those things which we have not yet observed. Then said I, Do as thou wilt. Then said he, No man doubts that God is so mighty that he is able to work whatsoever he will. Then said I, No man doubts this who knows anything. Then said he, Does any man think that there is aught which God cannot do? Then said I, I know that there is nothing which he cannot do. Then said he, Dost thou imagine that he can do any evil? Then said I, I know that he cannot. Then said he, thou sayest truly, for it is nothing. If evil were anything, then could God do it. Therefore it is nothing. Then said I, Methinks thou deceivest and deludest me, as any one does a child: thou ledest me hither and thither in so thick a wood, that I cannot find the way out. For thou always, on account of some small matter, betakest *thyself* to the same argument, and again leavest that before thou hast ended it, and beginnest a fresh one. Therefore I know not what thou wouldest. Methinks thou revolvest about some wonderful and extraordinary argument concerning the oneness of the divine nature. I remember that thou formerly madest to me a wonderful speech, wherein thou toldest me, that it was all one, happiness and the highest good: and saidest that the felicities were fixed in the highest good, and the highest good was God himself, and he was full of all happiness. And thou saidest that every happy man was a God. And again thou saidest, that God's goodness, and his happiness, and himself, that this was all one, and was consequently the highest good: and to this good all creatures which retain their nature tend and are desirous to come. And moreover, thou

saidest that God governed all his creatures with the rudder of his goodness: and also saidest that all creatures of their own will, uncompelled, were subject to him. And now at last thou saidest, that evil was nothing And all this thou hast proved for truth very rationally, without any ambiguity. Then said he, thou saidest just now that I deceived thee: but methinks I have not deceived thee, but have stated to thee a very long and wonderful argument very rationally, concerning that God to whom we sometime ago prayed; and I still intend to teach thee something unknown concerning the same God. It is the nature of the divinity to be able to exist unmixed with other beings, without the help of other beings, in such a way as nothing else is capable of. No other thing is able to exist of itself. Thus formerly Parmenides, the poet, sung,²⁷ and said; the Almighty God is Ruler of all things, and he alone remains unchangeable, and governs all changeable *things*. Therefore thou needest not greatly wonder, when we are enquiring concerning what we have begun, whether we may prove it with fewer words, or with more. Though we should produce many and various examples and fables, yet our mind always hangs on that which we are enquiring after. We do not betake ourselves to examples and fables, for love of fictitious speeches, but because we desire therewith to point out the truth, and desire that it maybe useful to the hearers. I called to mind just now some instructions of the wise Plato,²⁸ how he said, that the man who would relate a fable, should not choose a fable unlike the subject of his discourse. But hear now patiently what I shall further say, though it formerly appeared to thee unprofitable, whether the end may better please thee.

6. He began then to sing, and said, Happy is the man who can behold the clear fountain of the highest good, and can put away from himself the darkness of his mind! We will now from old fables relate to thee a story: It happened formerly that there was a harper, in the country called Thrace, which was in Greece. The harper was inconceivably good. His name was Orpheus. He had a very excellent wife, who was called Eurydice. Then began men to say concerning the harper, that he could harp so that the wood moved, and the stones stirred themselves at the sound, and wild beasts would run thereto and stand as if they were tame; so still, that though men or hounds pursued them, they shunned them not. Then said they, that the harper's wife should die, and her soul

should be led to hell. Then should the harper become so sorrowful that he could not remain among other men, but frequented the wood and sat on the mountains both day and night, weeping and harping, so that the woods shook and the rivers stood still, and no hart shunned any lion, nor hare any hound; nor did cattle know any hatred or any fear of others, for the pleasure of the sound. Then it seemed to the harper that nothing in this world pleased him. Then thought he that he would seek the gods of hell, and try to soften them with his harp, and pray that they would give him back his wife. When he came thither, then should there come towards him the dog of hell, whose name was Cerberus; he should have three heads; and began to wag his tail and play with him for his harping. Then was there also a very dreadful gate-keeper, whose name should be Charon. He had also three heads, and he was very old. Then began the harper to beseech him that he would protect him while he was there, and bring him thence again safe. Then did he promise that to him, because he was desirous of the unaccustomed sound. Then went he further, until he met the grim goddesses, whom the common people call Parcæ, of whom they say, that they know no respect for any man, but punish every man according to his deeds; *and* of whom they say, that they control every man's fortune. Then began he to implore their mercy. Then began they to weep with him. Then went he further, and all the inhabitants of hell ran towards him, and led him to their king; and all began to speak with him, and to pray that which he prayed. And the restless wheel which Ixion, the king of the Lapithæ, was bound to for his guilt, that stood still for his harping. And Tantalus the king, who in this world was immoderately greedy, and whom that same vice of greediness followed there, he became quiet. And the vulture should cease, so that he tore not the liver of Tityus the king, which before therewith tormented him. And all the punishments of the inhabitants of hell were suspended, while he harped before the king. When he long and long had harped, then spoke the king of the inhabitants of hell, and said, Let us give the man his wife, for he has earned her by his harping. He then commanded him that he should well observe that he never looked backward after he departed thence, and said, if he looked backwards, that he should lose the woman. But men can with great difficulty, if at all, restrain love. Wellaway! what! Orpheus then led his wife with him,

till he came to the boundary of light and darkness. Then went his wife after him. When he came forth into the light, then looked he behind his back towards the woman. Then was she immediately lost to him! This fable teaches every man who desires to fly the darkness of hell, and to come to the light of the true good, that he look not behind him to his old vices, so that he practise them again as fully as he did before. For whosoever with full will turns his mind to the vices which he had before forsaken, and practises them, and they then fully please him, and he never thinks of forsaking them; then loses he all his former good, unless he again amend it. Here ends the third book of Boethius, and begins the fourth.

CHAPTER XXXVI.

1. When Wisdom had very delightfully and wisely sung this lay, then had I as yet some little remembrance in my mind of the sorrows which I formerly had, and said, O Wisdom, thou who art the messenger, and forerunner of the true light, how wonderful methinks is that which thou declarest to me! Therefore I am persuaded that all which thou before saidest to me, God said to me through thee. And I also knew it before in some measure, but this sorrow had distracted me, so that I had entirely forgotten it. And this besides is the chief part of my unhappiness, that I wonder why the good God should suffer any evil to exist; or if it yet must *exist*, and he wills to permit it, why he then does not speedily punish it. Indeed thou mayest thyself know that this is to be wondered at. And also another thing seems to me even a greater wonder, that is, that folly and wickedness now reign over all the middle earth, and wisdom and also other virtues have no praise nor any honour in this world, but lie despised like dirt on a dung hill; and in every land wicked men are now honoured, and the good have manifold punishments. Who can forbear lamenting and wondering at such a marvel, that ever such evil should take place under the government of Almighty God, when we know that he sees it, and wills all good. Then said he, If it is as thou sayest, then is this more dreadful than any other prodigy, and is endless wonder, most like to this; that in a king's court gold and silver vessels should be despised, and men should esteem wooden *ones*. It is not as

thou supposest. But if thou wilt call to mind all that which we have before said, then, with the help of God, concerning whom we are now speaking, thou wilt be able to understand that the good are always powerful, and the wicked have no power and that virtues are never without praise, or without reward; nor are vices ever unpunished; but the good are always happy, and the wicked unhappy. I can shew thee very many examples of this, which may encourage thee, so that thou mayest not know what thou any longer shouldst lament, But I will now teach thee the way which will lead thee to the heavenly city whence thou formerly camest, since thou knowest through my instruction, what the true happiness is, and where it is. But I must first give wings to thy mind, that it may the sooner raise itself up, before it begins to fly on high: in order that it may, sound and untroubled, fly to its native country, and leave behind it every one of the troubles which it now endures. Let it sit in my chariot and be conducted in my path; I will be its guide.

2. When Wisdom had ended this speech, then began he again to sing, and said; I have very swift wings, so that I can fly over the high roof of heaven. But I must furnish thy mind with wings that thou mayest fly with me; then mayest thou look down upon all these earthly things. When thou art able to fly over the sky thou mayest behold the clouds under thee, and mayest fly over the fire which is between the sky and the air; and mayest go with the sun between the stars, and then be in the sky, and afterwards near the cold star which we call Saturn's star. It is all icy. It wanders above other stars, higher than any other heavenly body. After thou art elevated far above it, then wilt thou be above the swift sky, and wilt leave behind thee the highest heaven. After this thou mayest have thy portion of the true light. There reigns one king, who has power over all other kings. He regulates the bridle, and the rein of all the circuit of heaven and earth. The only judge is steadfast and bright. He directs the chariot of all creatures. But if thou ever comest into the path, and to the place which thou hast now forgotten, then wilt thou say; This is my proper country; hence I formerly came, and hence was I born: here I will now stand fast: I will never go hence. But I wot, if it ever happen to thee, that thou wilt or must again explore the darkness of this world, then wilt thou observe unjust kings, and all the proud rich to be

very feeble, and very wretched exiles: the same whom this miserable people now most dreads!

3. Then said I, O Wisdom, great is that, and wonderful, which thou dost promise: and I moreover doubt not that thou canst perform it. But I beseech thee, that thou wouldest not any longer hinder me, but teach me the way, for thou mayest perceive that I am desirous of the way. Then said he, Thou must first understand that the good always have power, and the wicked never *have* any nor any ability; for none of them comprehends that good and evil are always enemies. If, therefore, the good always have power, then the wicked never have any, because good and evil are entirely contrary. But I would inform thee somewhat more distinctly concerning each of them, that thou mayest the better believe what I shall sometimes tell thee, concerning the one, and sometimes concerning the other. There are two things which every man's intention requires, that is, will and power. If therefore there is to any man a deficiency of either of the two, he cannot with the other effect anything. For no one will undertake what he is unwilling, unless he needs must: and though he fully wills he cannot perform it, if he has not power of that thing. Hence thou mayest clearly know, when thou seest any man desirous of that which he has not, that to him power is wanting. Then said I, That is true: I cannot deny it. Then said he-, But if thou seest any one who can do what he desires to do, then there is no doubt to thee, that he has power. Then said I, I have no doubt of it. Then said he, Every man is powerful so far as he exercises power; he has no power when he does not exercise power. Then said I, Of that I am convinced. Then said he, Canst thou now call to mind what I before told thee, that is, that the mind of every man desire, to arrive at the true happiness, though they pursue it differently? Then said I, That I remember; it is clearly enough proved to me. Then said he, Dost thou remember that I before said to thee, that it was all one, good and happiness? He who seeks happiness seeks good. Then said I, I have *it* sufficiently fixed in *my* memory. Then said he, All men, both good and evil, desire to come to good, though they desire it variously. Then said I, that is true which thou sayest. Then said he, it is sufficiently evident that good men are good because they find good. Then said I, it is evident enough. Then said he, the good obtain the good which they desire. Then said I, So methinks. Then said

he, the wicked would not be wicked if they found the good which they desire; but they are wicked because they do not find it; and they do not find it because they do not seek it rightly. Then said I, So it is as thou sayest. Then said he, therefore there is no doubt that the good are always powerful, and the wicked have no power, because the good seek good rightly, and the wicked wrongly. Then said I, He who thinks that this is not true, then believes he no truth.

4. Then said he, Whether dost thou think? if two men are going to one place, and have equally great desire to arrive there, and one has the use of his feet, so that he may go where he will, as it were natural to all men that they could, and the other has not the use of his feet, that he can go, and yet is desirous to go, and begins to creep the same way, whether of the two dost thou think the more powerful? Then said I, there is no comparison. He is more powerful who goes, than he who creeps, because he can more easily come whither he will than the other. Say what else thou wilt, every man knows that. Then said he, in like manner it is with the good and with the wicked. Each of them desires naturally that he may come to the highest good. But the good is able to come whither he desires, because he desires it rightly, and the wicked cannot come to that which he desires, because he seeks it wrongly. I know not but thou mayest think differently. Then said I, I do not think at all differently from what thou sayest. Then said he, Very rightly thou understandest it; and that is also a token of thy health, as it is the custom of physicians to say, when they see a sick man, if they perceive in him any healthy token. Methinks now that thy nature and thy habit contend very powerfully against error.

5. I have now found that thou art prompt to understand my doctrine: therefore I am desirous to collect for thee many arguments and many examples, so that thou mayest the more easily understand what I am about to say. Observe now how feeble wicked men are when they cannot come thither, where *even* irrational creatures are desirous to come: and how much more feeble they would be if they had no natural inclination to it. Behold with how heavy a chain of folly and unhappiness they are bound! Even children, when they can first go, and also old men, as long as they can go, are desirous of some honour, and some praise. Children ride on their sticks, and play at various sorts of play, wherein they

imitate old men. But the unwise are not willing to attempt anything from which they may expect to themselves praise or rewards. But *they* do what is worse; *they* run erring hither and thither under the roof of all things; and that which irrational creatures know, unwise men do not know. Therefore the virtues are better than the vices. For every man must be convinced, whether he will, or whether he will not, that he is the most powerful who is able to arrive at the highest roof of all things, that is God; whom nothing is above, nor anything beneath, nor about, but all things are in him, and in his power. God is greatly to be loved. Didst thou not before say, that he was most powerful in walking, who could go if he would to the end of this earth, so that no part of this earth were beyond it? The same thou mayest conceive with regard to God, as we before said; that he is most powerful who can come to him, because he no where beyond that can come.

6. From all these arguments thou mayest understand, that the good are always powerful and the wicked are destitute of all power and all ability. Why then thinkest thou that they forsake virtues and follow vices? But I suppose thou wilt say, that it is through ignorance that they are not able to distinguish them. But what wilt thou then say is worse than this ignorance? Why do they suffer themselves to be ignorant? Why will they not enquire after virtues, and after wisdom? But I know that drowsiness oppresses them, and overcomes them with sloth, and covetousness blinds them. We have before said, that nothing was worse than ignorance. But what shall we now say, if the intelligent have vices, and will not enquire after wisdom and after virtues? I know, however, that thou wilt say, that luxury and intemperance oppress them. But what is weaker than the man who is utterly subdued by the frail flesh, unless he afterwards desist and contend against vices as he best may? But what wilt thou say if any creature will not contend against *them*, but with full will forsakes all good and does evil, and is nevertheless intelligent? I say that he is feeble, and moreover altogether nothing. For whosoever forsakes the universal good of all goods, without doubt he is nothing. But whosoever desires that he may be virtuous, desires that he may be wise. Whosoever, then, is virtuous, is wise, and he who is wise, is good: he then who is good, is happy; and he who is happy, is blessed; and he who is blessed, is a God, so far as we have before mentioned in this same

book. But I rather think that foolish men will wonder at that which I have just now said, that is, that wicked men were nothing; because there is a greater number of them than of the others. But though they never believe it, yet it is so. We can never reckon the wicked man pure and sincere, any more than we can call or esteem a dead man living. Nor indeed is the living better than the dead, if he repent not of his evil. But he who lives recklessly, and will not preserve his nature, is not he nothing?

7. I think, however, thou wilt say that this is not altogether so likely, because the wicked can do evil though he cannot *do* good and the dead do neither. But I say to thee, that the power of the wicked does not come from any virtues, but from vices. But if the evil were always good, then would they do no evil. It is not from power that any one is able to do evil, but it is from weakness. If that is true, which we some time ago asserted, that evil is nothing, then he works nothing who works evil. Then said I, Very true is that which thou sayest. Then said he, Did we not prove before that nothing was more powerful than the highest good? Then said I, So it is as thou sayest. Then said he, Yet it cannot do any evil. Then said I, That is true. Then said he, Does any one think that any man can be so powerful that he is able to do all that he wills? Then said I, No man thinks it, who has his senses. Then said he, But wicked men nevertheless can do evil. Then said I, O that they were not able! Then said he, It is evident that they can do evil, and cannot *do* any good. That is because evil is nothing. But the good, if they have full power, are able to do whatsoever good they will. Therefore full power is to be reckoned among the highest goods, for both power, and the other goods and excellencies which we long ago mentioned, are fixed in the highest good. As the wall of a house is fixed both to the floor, and to the roof, so is every good fixed in God, for he is both the roof and floor of every good. Therefore is the power that man may do good, ever to be desired: for that is the best power, that any one is able and willing to do well, whether with less means or with greater, whichsoever he may have. For whosoever wills to do good is desirous to have good, and to be with good. Therefore is Plato's saying very true, which he said, The wise alone can do the good which they desire: the wicked can only attempt what they desire: I know not, however, but thou wilt say, that the good

sometimes begin what they cannot accomplish. But I say that they always accomplish it. Though they may not perfect the work, they have nevertheless full will, and the sincere will is to be reckoned for the perfect work. Therefore they never fail of rewards either here or there, or both. If the wicked have will to work what they list, though it is not now perfect, they lose not also the will, but have its punishment either here, or elsewhere, or both. So greatly does the evil will control them. For this reason they cannot obtain the good which they desire, because they seek it through this will, *and* not through the right way. The evil will has no fellowship with happiness. When Wisdom had finished this speech, then began he again to sing and thus said:

CHAPTER XXXVII.

1. Hear now a discourse concerning proud and unjust kings, whom we see sitting on the highest thrones; who shine in clothes of many kinds, and are surrounded by a great company of their thanes, who are adorned with belts and golden-hilted swords, and with manifold weapons, and terrify all mankind with their greatness. And he who governs them, regards neither friend nor foe any more than a mad hound; but is inconceivably lifted up in his mind, through unbounded power. But if any man should strip off from him the clothes, and deprive him of the retinue and the power, then wouldest thou see that he is very like to any one of those, his thanes, who serve him, unless he be worse. And moreover, if by chance it happen unto him, that he at any time is deprived of the retinue and of the clothes, and of the power, then it seems to him that he is brought to prison, or to chains. Because from excess, and from immoderate clothing, and from dainty food, and from various drinks of the cup, the fury of lust is excited, and disquiets their minds very greatly: then increases also arrogance and wickedness; and when they are offended, then is their mind scourged with the heat of anger, until they are distracted with unhappiness, and so enslaved. After this takes place, the hope of revenge begins to deceive them, and whatsoever his anger wills, his recklessness promises him. I said to thee long before, in this same book, that all creatures were naturally desirous of some good; but unjust kings can do no good, for the reason I have

now given thee. That is no wonder, for they subject themselves to all the vices which I have already named to thee. *Every one of them* therefore necessarily must *submit* to the judgment of the lords to whom he has already subjected himself; and what is still worse, that he will not even strive against them. If he were willing to attempt it, and then were able to persevere in the contest, then would he be free from his guilt.

2. When Wisdom had sung this lay, then began he again to speak, and thus said; Seest thou in how great and in how deep and in how dark a sink of vices the unwilling are involved, and how the good shine brighter than the sun? For the good are never destitute of the rewards of their good, nor the wicked ever of the punishments which they deserve. Everything which is done in this world has recompence. Let any one work what he may, or do what he may, he will ever have that which he earns. Moreover it is not unmeet, as was formerly the custom of the Romans, and still is in many nations, that man should have a golden crown, at the end of some course. Many people come thereto and all run equally; those who have confidence in their running, and whichsoever arrives first at the crown, then may he have it to himself. Every one desires that he may first arrive, and have it, but nevertheless it falls to one. So does all mankind in this present life,—runs and hastens, and is desirous of the highest good. But it is offered to no one man, but *is offered* to all men. Therefore it is needful to every one that he strive with all his power after the reward. Of the reward no good man is ever deprived. A man cannot rightly call himself good, if he be destitute of the highest good, for no good servant is without good rewards. Let the wicked do what they may, the crown of good reward will always be possessed by the good for ever. The evil of the wicked cannot deprive the good of their good, and of their excellence. But if they had that good from without them, then might some one deprive them of it; either he who formerly bestowed it, or another man. But a good man then loses his rewards when he forsakes his good. Understand, then, that to every man his own good gives good reward: that good which is in himself. What wise man will say, that any good man is destitute of the highest good, for he always labours after it? But meditate thou always on the great and the fair reward, for that reward is above all other rewards to be loved; and add. that reward to the before-mentioned goods, which I formerly

recounted to thee in the third book. When they are added together, then mayest thou perceive that happiness and the highest good are all one, and that is God. And then thou mayest also perceive that every good man is happy, and that all happy men are gods, and have eternal reward of their good!

3. Therefore no wise man needs to doubt that the evil have also eternal recompence of their evil, that is, eternal punishment. Though thou mayest think that any of them is happy here, in respect of the world, he nevertheless has always his evil with him, and also the recompence of the evil, *even* whilst it gives him pleasure. There is no wise man who is ignorant that good and evil are always discordant between themselves, and always are at variance in their wishes. And as the goodness of the good is his own good, and his own reward, so is also the evil of the wicked his own evil and his reward, and his own punishment. No man if he has punishment, doubts that he has evil. What! do the wicked think that they are exempted from punishments, and *yet* are full of all evil? Not only are they foul, but almost brought to nothing. Understand, therefore, from the good, how great punishment the wicked always have; and hear, moreover, an example, and well retain those which I before mentioned to thee. Whatsoever has unity, that we say exists while it remains together; and this unity we call good. Thus a man is a man whilst the soul and the body are together. But *when they are separated* then is he not that which he was before. The same thou mayest conceive concern the body, and concerning its limbs. If any of the limbs is off, then is it not full man as it was before, So if any good man depart from good, then is he not any more fully good, if he altogether depart from good. When it happens that the wicked leave off what they before did, *they* are not what they before were. But when men forsake good and become wicked, then are they nothing but a resemblance; so that one may see that they formerly were men, but they have lost the best part of humanity, and kept the worst. They forsake the good of their nature, that is, human manners, and have nevertheless the likeness of man while they live.

4. But as the goodness of men raises them above human nature so far that they are named Gods; so also their wickedness depresses them below human nature, so far that they are called evil, which we say is nothing. Therefore if thou shouldest meet a man so debased, that he is

turned from good to evil, thou canst not rightly name him man, but beast. If, then, thou observest with respect to any man, that he is a rapacious man and a spoiler, thou shouldest not call him a man, but a wolf. And the fierce man who is a brawler, thou shouldest call a hound, not a man. And the deceitful, crafty *man*, thou shouldest call a fox, not a man. And the immoderately proud and angry *man* who has great malice, thou shalt call a lion, not a man. And the dull *man* who is too slow thou shouldest call an ass more than a man. And the excessively timid *man* who is more fearful than he needs, thou mayest call a hare more than a man. And to the inconstant and the light thou mayest say, that they are more like the wind or restless birds, than modest men. And to him whom thou observest that he is lying in the lusts of his body, *thou mayest say*, that he is most like to fat swine, which always desire to lie in foul mire, and will not wash *themselves* in pure water; but if they sometimes rarely are made to swim, then cast they *themselves* again into the mire and wallow therein. When Wisdom had ended this speech, then began he again to sing, and thus said.

CHAPTER XXXVIII.

1. I can relate to thee from ancient fables a story very like to the subject which we have just now spoken about. It happened formerly, in the Trojan war, that there was a king whose name *was* Ulysses,²⁹ who had two countries under the Cæsar. The countries were called Ithaca and Retia, and the Cæsar's name was Agamemnon. When Ulysses went with Cæsar to the battle, he had some hundred ships. Then were they some ten years in that war. When the king again returned homeward from the Cæsars and they had conquered the land, *he* had not more ships than one; but that was a *ship* with three rows of oars. Then opposed him a great tempest and a stormy sea. *He* was then driven on an island out in the Wendel sea.³⁰ Then was there the daughter of Apollo, the son of Jove. Jove was their king, and pretended that he should be the highest god, and that foolish people believed him, because he was of royal lineage, and they knew not any other God at that time, but worshipped their kings for Gods. Then should the father of Jove be also a god, whose name was Saturn; and likewise all his kindred they held for Gods. Then

was one of them the Apollo, whom we before mentioned. Apollo's daughter should be a goddess, whose name was Circe. She, they said, should be very skilful in sorcery; and she dwelt in the island on which the king was driven, of whom we before spoke. She had there a very great company of her servants, and also of other maidens. As soon as she saw the king driven *thither*, whom we before mentioned, whose name was Ulysses, then began she to love him, and each of them the other beyond measure; so that he for love of her neglected all his kingdom, and his family, and dwelt with her until the time that his thanes would no longer remain with him; but for love of their country, and on account of exile, determined to leave him. Then began false men to work spells. And they said that she should by her sorcery overthrow the men, and cast them into the bodies of wild beasts, and afterwards throw them into chains and fetters. Some, they said, she should transform to lions, and when *they* should speak, then they roared. Some should be wild boars, and when they should lament their misfortune, then they grunted. Some became wolves. These howled when they should speak. Some became that kind of wild beast that man calls tiger. Thus was all the company turned into wild beasts of various kinds; each to some beast except the king alone. Every meat they refused which men eat, and were desirous of those which beasts eat. They had no resemblance of men either in body or in voice, yet every one knew his mind, as he before knew *it*: That mind was very sorrowful through the miseries which they suffered. Indeed the men who believed these fictions, nevertheless knew that she by sorcery. could not change the minds of men, though she changed the bodies. How great an excellence is that of the mind in comparison of the body! By these *things* and the like, thou mayest learn that the excellence of the body is in the mind; and that to every man the vices of his mind are more hurtful. *Those* of the mind draw all the body to them, and the infirmity of the body cannot entirely draw the mind to it.

2. Then said I, I am convinced that that is true which thou before saidest, that is, that it would not be unfit that we should call evil-willing men cattle, or wild beasts, though they have the resemblance of man. But if I had such power as the Almighty has, then would I not let the wicked injure the good so much as they now do. Then said he, It is not permitted to them so long as thou supposest. But thou mayest be assured that their

prosperity will very soon be removed, as I will shortly inform thee, though I have not leisure now on account of other discourse. If they had not the vain power which they think they have, they would not have so great punishment as they shall have. The wicked are much more unhappy when they are able to accomplish the evil which they list, than they are when they are unable to do it, though these foolish men do not believe it. It is very wicked that any man wills evil, and it is still much worse that he is able to do it: for the evil will is dispersed like incense before the fire, if man is not able to accomplish the work. But the wicked have sometimes these misfortunes; one is, that they will evil; the second, that they are able *to do it*: the third, that they accomplish it. For God has decreed to give punishments and miseries to wicked men for their wicked works. Then said I, So it is as thou sayest; and yet I would wish, if I might, that they had not the unhappiness of being able to do evil. Then said he, I think, however, that that power will be lost to them sooner than *either* thou or they would expect. For nothing is of long duration in this present life, though it seem to men that it be long. But very frequently the great power of the wicked falls very suddenly, even as a great tree in a wood makes a loud crash when men least expect: and through fear they are always very miserable. But if their wickedness makes them miserable, is not then the long evil always worse than the short? Though the wicked never died, I should still say that they were most miserable. If the miseries are all true, which we long ago discoursed about, that the wicked should have in this world, then is it evident that those miseries are infinite, which are eternal. Then said I, that is wonderful which thou sayest, and very difficult to be understood by foolish men. But I nevertheless perceive that it appertains well enough to the discourse which we were before holding. Then said he, I am not now speaking to foolish men, but am speaking to those who desire to understand wisdom: for it is a token of wisdom that any one is willing to hear and understand it. But if any of the foolish doubt any of the reasonings which we have already uttered in this same book, let him shew, if he can, some one of the arguments which is either false, or inapplicable to the subject about which we are enquiring: or thirdly, let him then understand and believe that we argue rightly. If he will do none of these *things*, then he knows not what he means.

3. But I can still teach thee another thing, which to foolish men will seem more incredible, and is nevertheless suitable enough to the argument which we are holding. Then said I, What thing is that? Then said he, It is this, that those wicked persons are much happier who in this world have great misery, and manifold punishments, for their evil, than they are who have no suffering and no punishment in this world for their evil. Let no one, however, think that I speak thus because I would reprove vices and praise virtues and by the example urge and persuade men to good conduct through fear of punishment; but I speak it still more for other reasons. Then said I, For what other reasons wouldest thou speak it, except what thou hast just mentioned? Then said he, Dost thou recollect what we before said, that is, that the good always had power and happiness, and the wicked never had either? Then said I, That I remember. Then said he, But what thinkest thou if thou seest any man very unhappy, and yet perceivest something of good in him; is he as unhappy as the man who has no good *in him*? Then said I, He appears to me happier who has something *of good*. Then said he, But what then dost thou think concerning him who has no good, if he has some addition of evil? He, thou wilt say, is still more unhappy than the other, through the addition of evil. Then said I, Why should not I think so? Then said he, Consider that it so appears to thee, *and* understand with inward mind that the wicked have always something of good among their evil, that is, their punishment, which we may very easily and justly reckon to them as good. But those whose evil is all unpunished in this world, have an evil heavier and more dangerous than any punishment in this world is; that is, that their evil is unpunished in this world, which is the most evident token of the greatest evil in this world, and of the worst recompense after this world. Then said I, I cannot deny this. Then said he, Therefore the wicked are more unhappy, because their wickedness is undeservedly forgiven them, than they are if their wickedness is recompensed according to their deserts. Therefore it is right that evil should be inflicted on the wicked, and it is wrong that they should be suffered to go unpunished. Then said I, Who denies this? Then said he, No man can deny that every thing is good which is right, and everything evil which is wrong. Then said I, I am very much troubled with their discourse, and wonder why so righteous a judge should bestow any unjust gift. Then

said he, Wherefore sayest thou that? Then said I, Because thou before saidest that he did wrong, inasmuch as he left the wicked unpunished. Then said he, That is his glory that he is so bountiful, and bestows so abundantly. It is a great gift that he waits till the wicked are sensible of their evil and turn to good. Then said I, Now I understand that it is not an eternal gift which he gives to the wicked, but is rather the delay and waiting of the highest Judge. On account of *his* waiting and forbearance, methinks he is the more contemned; and yet this argument pleases me well enough, and seems to me like enough to what thou before saidest.

4. But I beseech thee, now, that thou wouldest tell me whether thou thinkest that the wicked have any punishment after this world; or the good any reward for their goodness? Then said he, Did not I say to thee before, that the good have recompence for their goodness, both here and for ever; and the wicked also have recompence for their evil, both here and also for ever? But I will now divide the wicked from the wicked in two parts. For one part of the wicked shall have eternal punishment, because they have deserved no mercy; *and* the other part shall be cleansed and proved in the heavenly fire, as silver here is, because it has some deserving of some mercy, wherefore it may come after these troubles to everlasting honour. Still I could instruct thee more both concerning the good and concerning the evil, if I now had leisure. But I fear that I should neglect what we were before seeking after, that is, that we would argue so that thou mightest perceive that the wicked have no power, nor any honour, either in this world or in that to come. For formerly this appeared to thee the worst of all things, that thou thoughtest they had too much; and thou always didst lament that they were not always punished: and I always said to thee that they never are without punishment, though it appear not so to thee. But I know, however, that thou wilt lament that they have so long time permission to do evil; and I have always said to thee, that the time is a very little while; and I now say to thee, that the longer it is, the more unhappy they are; *and* it would be to them the greatest unhappiness of all, that the time continued till doomsday. And I said to thee also, that they would be more unhappy if their evil were unjustly passed over, than they would be if their evil were justly punished. Yet it so happens, that thou thinkest those who have impunity are happier than those who are punished.

5. Then said I, Nothing ever appears to me so true as thy arguments appear to me at the times when I hear them. But if I turn myself to the judgment of this people, they not only are unwilling to believe this thy doctrine, but they will not even hear it. Then said he, That is no wonder. Thou knowest that the men, who have unsound eyes cannot very easily look at the sun when she shines brightest, nor indeed do they choose to look on fire, or anything bright, though the apple *of the eye* be left. In like manner the sinful minds are blinded by their evil will, so that they are not able to behold the light of bright truth, which is the highest wisdom. But it is with them as with the birds and the beasts which can see better by night than by day. The day blinds and darkens their eyes, and the darkness of the night enlightens them. Therefore the blinded minds think that this is the greatest happiness, that a man should be permitted to do evil, and his deed should be unpunished. For they are not desirous to enquire after every instruction, until they know what is right, but turn to their evil will and seek after it. Therefore I know not to what purpose thou teachest me to the foolish men who never enquire after me. I never speak to them, but I speak to thee, because thou art inclined to seek after me, and labourest more in the pursuit than they do. I care not what they judge. I approve thy judgment more than theirs, for they all look with both eyes, as well with the eyes of the mind, as with *those* of the body, on these earthly things which excessively delight them. But thou alone sometimes lookest with one eye on the heavenly things, *and* with the other thou lookest as yet on these earthly *things*. For the foolish think that every man is as blind as they are, and that no man is able to see what they cannot behold. Such folly is most like *to this*; that a child should be born full sound and full healthy, and so flourishing in all excellencies and virtues during childhood, and afterwards throughout youth, that he becomes capable of every art; and then a little before his middle age, *he* should become blind in both eyes; and also the eyes of the mind should become so blinded, that he remembers nothing which he ever before saw or heard: and nevertheless he should think that he is so capable of everything as he was *when* most capable: and should think that it is with every man as it is with him; and that it seems to every man as it seems to him. But though he were so foolish as to think so, should we all think as he thinks? I think, however, that we should not. But *I* wish to

know what thou thinkest concerning the men of whom we before said, that it appeared to us that they were more like wild beasts than men? How much wisdom had they? Methinks, however, they have none.

6. I would now utter to thee a true observation, but I know that this people will not believe it; that is, that those *persons* whom men injure are happier than those are who injure them. Then wondered I at this, and said, I wish that thou wouldest explain to me how it can be so. Then said he, Dost thou understand that every evil-willing man, and every evil-doing *man is* deserving of punishment? Then said I, Clearly enough I understand that. Then said he, Is he not then evil-willing and evil-doing who injures the innocent? Then said I, So it is as thou sayest. Then said he, Dost thou think that they are miserable and unhappy who are deserving of punishment? Then said I, I not only think it, but I know *it* very well. Then said he, If thou wert now to judge, which wouldest thou judge more deserving of punishment, him who injured the innocent, or him who suffered the injury? Then said I, There is no comparison. I would fain help him who was innocent, and oppose him who injured him. Then said he, then in thy opinion, he is more miserable who does the evil than he who suffers it. Then said I, This I believe, that every unjust punishment is the evil of him who inflicts it, not of him who suffers it: therefore his evil makes him miserable. And I perceive that this is a very just observation which thou now makest, and very like to those which thou madest before; but I nevertheless know, that this people will not think so.

7. Then said he, Thou understandest it well. But advocates now-a-days plead for those who have less need of it. *They* plead for those who are injured, and do not plead for those who do the injury. It were more needful to those who injure others, *who are* innocent, that some one should plead for them before the magistrates, and pray that as great hurt might be done to them as they had done to other innocent *persons*. As the sick man has need that some one should lead him to the physician, that he may cure him; so has he who does evil, that some one should lead him to the magistrates, that they may cut off and burn his vices. I do not say that it is wrong that men should help the innocent and defend him, but I say that it is better that we should accuse the guilty; and I say that the defence does no good either to the guilty or to him

who pleads for him, if they wish that their evil should not be punished in proportion to its guilt. But I know that if the guilty had any spark of wisdom, and in any measure knew it, they would make amends for their crimes by punishment, which might be inflicted on them here in this world. They would not then say that it was punishment, but would say that it was their purification and their amendment, and would seek no advocate, but they would cheerfully suffer the magistrates to punish them according to their own will. Hence no wise man ought to hate any one. No one hates the good except the most foolish of all. Nor is it right that we hate the wicked, but it is more right that we have mercy on him. This, then, is mercy to them, that we punish their vices according to their deservings. No one ought to afflict a person grievously sick, but we should lead him to a physician, that he may cure him. When Wisdom had finished this discourse, then began he again to sing, and thus said:

CHAPTER XXXIX.

1. Wherefore vex ye your minds with evil hatred, as waves through the wind agitate the sea? Or wherefore upbraid ye your fortune, that she has no power? Or why cannot ye wait for natural death, when he every day hastens towards you? Why cannot ye observe that he seeks every day after birds, and after beasts and after men, and forsakes no track till he seizes that which he pursues? Alas! that unhappy men cannot wait till he comes to them, but anticipate him as wild beasts wish to destroy each other. But it would not be right in men, that any one of them should hate another. But this would be right, that every one of them should render to another recompense of every work according to his deserts: that is, that we should love the good, as it is right that we should do; and should have mercy on the wicked, as we before said; should love the man, and hate his vices, and cut them off as we best may.

2. When he had sung this lay, then was he silent for some time. Then said I, Now I clearly understand that true happiness is founded on the deservings of good men, and misery is founded on the deservings of wicked men. But I will yet say that methinks the happiness of this present life is no little good, and its unhappiness no little evil. For I never saw, nor heard of any wise man who would rather be an exile and

miserable, and wandering and despised, than wealthy and honourable and powerful, and eminent in his own country. For they say that they can the better make their wisdom perfect and preserve it, if their power be ample over the people that are under them, and also in some measure over those who are in the neighbourhood round about them; because they are able to repress the wicked, and promote the good. For the good is always to be honoured, both in this present life, and in that to come; and the wicked, whom man cannot restrain from his evil, is always deserving of punishment both in this world, and in that to come. But I very much wonder why it should so fall out, as it now often does; that is, that various punishments and manifold misfortunes come to the good, as they should to the wicked; and the blessings which should be a reward to good men for good works, come to wicked men. Therefore I would now, know from thee, how that course of events were approved by thee. I should wonder at it much less, if I knew that it happened by chance, without God's will, and without his knowledge. But the Almighty God has increased my fear, and my astonishment, by these things. For he sometimes gives felicities to the good, and infelicities to the wicked, as it were right that he always did. Sometimes again he permits that the good have infelicities, and misfortunes in many things; and the wicked have happiness;³¹ and it frequently happens to them according to their own desire. Hence I cannot think otherwise but that it so happens by chance unless thou still more rationally shew me the contrary. Then answered he, after a long time, and said, It is no wonder, if any one think that something of this kind happens undesignedly, when he cannot understand and explain, wherefore God so permits. But thou oughtest not to doubt that so good a Creator and Governor of all things, rightly made all that he has made, and rightly judges and rules *it* all, though thou knowest not why he so and so may do.

3. When he had made this speech, then began he to sing, and said: Who of the unlearned wonders not at the course of the sky and its swiftness: how it every day revolves about all this middle earth? Or who wonders not that some stars have a shorter circuit than others have, as the stars have which we call the waggon's shafts? They have so short a circuit because they are so near the north end of the axis, on which all the sky turns. Or who is not astonished at this, except those only who know

it, that some stars have a longer circuit than others have; and those the longest which revolve mid-ward about the axis, as Boötes does? And that the star Saturn dares not come where it was before, till about thirty winters? Or who wonders not at this, that some stars depart under the sea, as some men think the sun does when she sets? But she nevertheless is not nearer to the sea, than she is at midday! Who is not astonished when the full moon is covered over with darkness? Or again that the stars shine before the moon and do not shine before the sun? At this, and many a like thing, they wonder, and wonder not that men and all living creatures have continual and useless enmity with each other. Or why wonder they not at this, that it sometimes thunders, and sometimes begins not? Or again at the strife of sea and winds, and waves, and land? Or why ice is formed, and again by the shining of the sun returns to its own nature? But the inconstant people wonders at that which it most seldom sees, though it be less wonderful; and thinks that that is not the old creation, but has by chance newly happened. But they who are very inquisitive, and endeavour to learn, if God removes from their mind the folly with which it was before covered, then will they not wonder at many *things* which they now wonder at.

4. When Wisdom had sung this lay, then was he silent a little while. Then said I, So it is as thou sayest. But I am still desirous that thou wouldest instruct me somewhat more distinctly concerning the thing which has chiefly troubled my mind, that is, what I before asked thee. For it was always hitherto thy wont that thou wouldest teach every mind abstruse and unknown things. Then began he to smile, and said to me, Thou urgest me to the greatest argument and the most difficult to explain. This explanation all philosophers have sought, and very diligently laboured about, and scarcely any one has come to the end of the discussion. For it is the nature of the discussion, and of the enquiry, that always when there is one doubt removed then is there an innumerable multitude raised. So men in old tales say, that there was a serpent which had nine heads, and whenever any one of them was cut off, then grew there seven from that one head. Then happened it that the celebrated Hercules came there, who was the son of Jove. Then could not he imagine how he by any art might overcome them, until he surrounded them with wood, and then burned *them* with fire. So is this argument

which thou askest about: with difficulty comes any man out of it, if he enter into *it*. He never comes to a clear end unless he have an understanding as sharp as the fire. For he who will enquire concerning this ought first to know what the simple providence of God is, and what fate is, and what happens by chance, and what the divine knowledge is, and the divine predestination, and what the freedom of men is. Now thou mayest perceive how weighty and difficult all this is to explain. But I will nevertheless endeavour to teach thee a little of it, because I have conceived it to be a very powerful remedy for thy sorrow, if thou learn something of this, though it belong for me to teach. For it is near the time when I had intended to begin other work, and I have not yet finished this; and methinks, too, thou art rather weary, and these long discourses appear to thee too lengthy, so that thou art now desirous of *my* songs. I know, too, that they give thee pleasure. But thou must nevertheless bear *with me* for some time. I cannot so readily sing it, nor have I leisure, for it is a very long argument. Then said I, Do as thou wilt.

5. Then began he to speak very far about, as if he intended not that discourse, and nevertheless approached thitherward, and said, All creatures, visible and invisible, still and moving, receive from the immoveable, and from the steadfast, and from the singly-existing God, order, and form, and measure; and therefore it was so ordained, because he knew wherefore he made all that he made. Nothing of that which he has created is useless to him. God dwells always in the high city of his unity and simplicity. Thence he distributes many and various measures to all his creatures, and thence he governs *them* all. But that which we call God's providence and foreknowledge is *such* while it is with him in his mind, before it is fulfilled, *and* so long as it is designed, but after it is fulfilled then we call it fate. Hence may every man know that these are both two names and two things, providence and fate. Providence is the divine intelligence which is fixed in the high Creator, who foreknows all, how it shall come to pass before it happens. But that which we call fate is God's work, which he every day works, both what we see and what is invisible to us. But the divine providence restrains all creatures, so that they cannot slip from their order. Fate, then, distributes to all creatures, forms, and places, and times, and measures. But fate comes from the

mind, and from the providence of Almighty God. He therefore works after his unspeakable providence whatsoever he wills.

6. As every artificer considers, and makes out his work in his mind, before he executes it, and afterwards executes *it* all: this varying fortune which we call fate, proceeds after his providence and after his counsel, as he intends that it should be. Though it appear to us complicated, partly good, *and* partly evil, it is nevertheless to him singly good, because he brings it all to a good end and does for good all that which he does. Afterwards, when it is wrought, we call it fate; before, it was God's providence, and his predestination. He therefore directs fortune, either through good angels, or through the souls of men, or through the life of other creatures, or through the stars of heaven, or through the various deceits of devils; sometimes through one of them, sometimes through them all. But this is evidently known, that the divine predestination is simple, and unchangeable, and governs everything according to order, and fashions everything. Some things, therefore, in this world are subject to fate, others are not at all subject to it. But fate, and all the things which are subject to it, are subject to the divine providence. Concerning this I can mention to thee an example, whereby thou mayest the more clearly understand which men are subject to fate, *and* which are not. All this moving and this changeable creation revolves on the immoveable, and on the steadfast, singly-existing God; and he governs all creatures as he at the beginning, had, and still has determined.

7. As on the axle-tree of a waggon the wheel turns, and the axle-tree stands still, and nevertheless supports all the waggon, and regulates all its progress; the wheel turns round, and the nave *being* nearest to the axle-tree goes much more firmly, and more securely than the fellies do; so that the axle-tree may be the highest good, which we call God, and the best men go nearest to God, as the nave goes nearest to the axle-tree; and the middle class *of men* as the spokes. For of every spoke one end is fixed in the nave, and the other in the felly. So is it with respect to the middle class of men. One while he meditates in his mind concerning this earthly life, another while concerning the heavenly: as if he should look with one eye to the heavens, *and* with the other to the earth. As the spokes stick, one end in the felly, *and* the other in the nave, *and* the spoke is midward, equally near to both. though one end be fixed in the nave

and the other in the felly; so are the middle class of men in the middle of the spokes, and the better nearer to the nave, and the most numerous class nearer to the fellies. *They* are nevertheless fixed in the nave, and the nave on the axle-tree. But the fellies depend on the spokes, though they wholly roll upon the earth. So do the most numerous class of men *depend* on the middle class, and the middle class on the best, and the best on God. Though the most numerous class turn all their love towards this world, they are not able to dwell there, nor do they come to anything, if they are not in some measure fastened to God, any more than the fellies of the wheel can make any progress if they are not fastened to the spokes, and the spokes to the axle-tree. The fellies are farthest from the axle-tree, therefore they go the most roughly. The nave goes nearest to the axle-tree, therefore it goes the most securely. So do the best men. As they place their love nearer to God, and more despise these earthly things, so are they the more free from care, and are less anxious how fortune may vary, or what it may bring. Provided the nave be always thus secure, the fellies may rest on what they will. And yet the nave is in some measure separated from the axle-tree. As thou mayest perceive that the waggon is much longer secure which is less separated from the axle-tree, so of all men those are most untroubled with the difficulties either of this present life, or of that to come, who are fixed in God; but as they are farther separated from God, so are they more troubled and afflicted both in mind and in body. Such is what we call fate.

8. With respect to the divine providence, as argument and reasoning is, compared with the intellect, and such the wheel is, compared with the axle-tree. For the axle-tree regulates all the waggon. In like manner does the divine providence. It moves the sky, and the stars, and makes the earth immoveable, and regulates the four elements, that is, water, and earth, and fire, and air. These it tempers and forms, *and* sometimes again changes their appearance, and brings *them* to another form, and afterwards renews *them*: and nourishes every production, and again hides and preserves *it* when it is grown old, and withered; and again discovers and renews *it*, whensoever he wills. Some philosophers however say, that fate rules both the felicities and the infelicities of every man. But I say, as all Christian men say, that the divine predestination rules over him, not fate. And I know that it decrees everything very

rightly; though to unwise men it does not appear so. They think that every thing which fulfils their desire is God. It is no wonder, for they are blinded by the darkness of their sins. But the divine providence understands every thing very rightly, though it seems to us, through our folly, that it goes wrongly; because we cannot perfectly understand it. He however, ordains all very rightly, though to us it sometimes does not appear so.

9. All men, the good as well as the wicked, seek after the highest good. But the wicked are unable to come to the high roof of all goods, for this reason, that they do not seek after it rightly. I know, however, that thou wilt on some occasion say to me, What injustice can be greater, than *that* he should permit it to come to pass, as it sometimes does, that to the good unmixed evil happens in this world, and to the wicked unmixed good, and at other times both mixed, as well to the good as to the wicked? But I ask thee whether thou thinkest that any man is so discerning, that he is able to know aright, what he is, so that he may be neither better nor worse than he thinks him? I know however, that they cannot. Yet it is very often improperly the custom for some persons to say that *a man* is deserving of reward *while* others say that he is deserving of punishment. Though any one may observe what another does, he cannot know what he thinks. Though he may know some part of his disposition, yet he cannot *know* it all. I can, moreover, relate to thee an example whereby thou mayest more clearly understand *this*, though unwise men cannot understand it. That is, Why does the good physician give to this healthy man mild and sweet drink, and to another healthy *man* bitter and strong? And sometimes also to the sick; to one mild: to another strong to one sweet; to another bitter? I know that every person who is unacquainted with the art will wonder at it, why they do so. But the physicians wonder not at it, because they know what the others are ignorant of. For they know how to discover, and distinguish the infirmity of each of them; and also the arts which should be *used* with respect to it. What is the health of souls but virtue? or what is their infirmity but vices? Who then is a better physician of the soul than he who made it, that is, God? He honours the good and punishes the wicked. He knows what each is deserving of. It is no wonder, because he

from the high roof sees it all; and thence disposes and metes to each according to his deserts.

10. This, then, we call fate, when the wise God who knows every man's necessity, does or permits anything which we expect not. And yet I may give thee some examples in few words, so far as human reason is able to understand the divine nature. That is, then, that we sometimes know man in one wise, *and* God knows him in another. Sometimes we judge that he is the best, and then God knows that it is not so. When anything comes to any person, either of good or of evil, more than it appears to thee that he deserves, the injustice is not in God, but the want of skill is in thyself, that thou canst not rightly understand it. Yet it often happens that men know a man in the same manner that God knows him. It often happens that many men are so infirm both in mind and body, that they cannot of their own accord do any good, or avoid any evil; and are moreover so impatient, that they cannot with resignation bear any troubles. Therefore it often happens that God, through his mercy, wills not to impose on them any intolerable affliction, lest they should forsake their innocence and become worse, if they are moved and troubled. Some men are full virtuous in all virtue, and full holy and righteous men. Then seems it to God unjust that he should afflict such; and moreover death, which is natural to all men to suffer, he makes more tranquil to them than to other men: as formerly a certain wise man³² said, that the divine power saved his darlings under the shadow of his wings, and protected them as carefully as man does the apple of his eye. Many so earnestly endeavour to please God, that they desire of their own accord to suffer manifold troubles, because they desire to have greater honour, and greater fame, and greater dignity with God, than those have who live more pleasantly.

11. Frequently also the power of this world comes to very good men, in order that the power of the wicked may be overthrown. To some men God gives both good and evil mixed, because they earn both. Some he bereaves of their wealth very soon, when they first are happy, lest through long felicities *they should too much exalt themselves and thence become proud*. He permits some to be vexed with severe trouble, that they may learn the virtue of patience by the long affliction. Some fear difficulties more than they need, though they may easily bear them. Some purchase

the honourable fame of this present life by their own death, because they think that they have no other price worthy of this fame, except their own life. Some men were formerly unconquerable, so that no one could overcome them with any torment. These set an example to their successors, that they should not be overcome by torments. In these it was evident that they, for their good works, had the strength that man might not overcome them. But the wicked, for their evil works, have been punished beyond measure, in order that the punishments might restrain others from daring to do so, and also might amend those whom they then afflict. It is a very clear token to the wise, that he ought not to love these worldly goods immoderately, because they often come to the worst men. But what shall we say concerning the present wealth, which often comes to the good? What is it else but a token of the future wealth, and a beginning of the reward which God has decreed to him for his good disposition? I suppose also that God gives felicities to many wicked men, because he knows their nature and their disposition *to be* such, that they would not for any troubles be the better, but the worse. But the good physician, that is, God, heals their minds with the wealth, until they learn whence the wealth came to them, and *the man* obeys him, lest he take away the wealth from him, or him from the wealth, and turns his manners to good, and forsakes the vices and the evil which he before through his troubles did. Some indeed are the worse if they have wealth, because they become proud on account of the wealth, and enjoy it without moderation.

12. To many men also these worldly felicities are therefore given, that they may recompence the good for their good, and the wicked for their evil. For the good and the wicked are ever at variance with each other, and also sometimes the wicked are at variance between themselves; and moreover, a wicked man is sometimes at variance with himself. For he knows that he does amiss.' and bethinks himself of the retribution, and yet will not cease therefrom, nor indeed stiffer himself to repent of it; and therefore through perpetual fear he cannot be reconciled with himself. Frequently it also happens that the wicked forsakes his evil for hatred of some other wicked man, because he would thereby upbraid the other, by avoiding his manners. *He* labours, then, about this as he best may; that *is*, he takes care to be unlike the other; for it is the custom of

the divine power to work good from evil. But it is permitted to no man that he should be able to know all that God has decreed, or indeed to recount that which he has wrought. But in these *things* they have enough to understand that the Creator and the Governor of all things, guides and rightly made, all that he made, and has not wrought, nor yet works any evil, but drives away every evil from all his realm. But if thou wilt enquire concerning the supreme government of the Almighty God, then wilt thou not perceive evil in anything, though it now seems to thee that here is much in this middle earth. Since it is just that the good have good reward for their good, and the wicked have punishment for their evil; that is, no evil which is just, but is good. But I perceive that I have wearied thee with this long discourse, wherefore thou art now desirous of *my* songs. And now accept them, for it is the medicine and the drink which thou hast long wished for, that thou mayest more easily receive the instruction.

13. When Wisdom had ended this speech, then began he again to sing, and thus said: If thou desirest with pure mind to understand the supreme government, behold the stars of the high heaven. The heavenly bodies preserve the ancient place in which they were created: so that the fiery sun does not touch that part of the heaven in which the moon moves; nor does the moon touch that part in which the sun moves so long as she is therein. Nor does the star, which we call Ursa, ever come into the west, though all other stars go with the sky, after the sun to the earth. It is no wonder, for it is very near to the upper end of the axis. But the star, which we call the evening star, when it is seen westwardly, then betokens it the evening. It then goes after the sun into the earth's shade, till it runs off behind the sun, and comes up before the sun. Then we call it the morning star, because it comes up in the east, and announces the sun's approach. The sun and the moon have divided the day and the night very equally between them, and they reign very harmoniously through divine providence, and unweariedly serve the Almighty God till doomsday. God does not suffer them to be on one side of the heaven, lest they should destroy other creatures. But the peace-loving God regulates and adapts all creatures when they exist together. Sometimes the wet flies *from* the dry. Sometimes he mingles the fire with the cold. Sometimes the light and bright fire goes upwards, and the heavy earth is

stationed beneath by the king's command. The earth brings yearly every fruit, and every production; and the hot summer dries and prepares seeds and fruits; and the fruitful harvest brings ripe corn. Hails, and snows, and frequent rain moisten the earth in winter. Hence the earth receives the seed, and causes it to grow in spring. But the Creator of all things nourishes in the earth all growing fruits, and produces *them* all; and hides when he will, and shews when he will, and takes away when he will. While the creatures obey, the Supreme Creator sits on his throne. Thence he guides with reins all creatures. It is no wonder; for he is King, and Lord, and Fountain, and Origin, and Law, and Wisdom, and righteous Judge. He sends all creatures on his errands, and he commands *them* all to come again. If the only steadfast king did not support all creatures, then would they all be dissolved and dispersed, and all creatures would come to naught. But they have in common one love in serving such a Lord, and rejoice because he rules over them. That is no wonder, for they could not else exist, if they served not their author. Then ceased Wisdom the song, and said to me:

CHAPTER XL.

1. Dost thou now perceive whither this discourse tends? Then said I, Tell me whither it tends. Then said he, I would say that every fortune is good, whether it seem good to men, or whether it seem evil to them. Then said I, I think that it perhaps may be so, though it sometimes appears otherwise to us. Then said he, There is no doubt of this, that every fortune which is just and useful is good; for every fortune, whether it be pleasant, or whether it be unpleasant, comes to the good for this reason, that it may do one of two *things*, that it may either admonish him, in order that he should do better than he did before; or reward him because he before did well. And again, every fortune which comes to the wicked, comes on account of two things, whether it be severe, *or* whether it be pleasant. If severe fortune come to the wicked, then it comes for retribution of his evil, or else for correction, and for admonition, that he should not do so again. Then began I to wonder, and said, This is a perfectly right explanation which thou givest. Then said he, it is as thou sayest. But I am desirous, if thou art willing, that we should

turn ourselves a little while to this people's speech, lest they say that we speak above man's comprehension. Then said I, Speak what thou wilt.

2. Then said he, Dost thou think that that is not good which is useful? Then said I, I think that it is. Then said he, Every fortune is useful which does either *of two things*, either instructs or corrects. Then said I, That is true. Then said he, Adverse fortune is good for those who contend against vices, and are inclined to good. Then said I, I cannot deny it. Then said he, What thinkest thou concerning the good fortune which often comes to good men in this world, as if it were a fore-token of eternal blessings? Can this people say that it is evil fortune? Then smiled I, and said, No man says that, but *every one* says that it is very good, as it moreover is. Then said he, What thinkest thou of the more invisible fortune which often threatens to punish the wicked? Does this people think that this is good fortune? Then said I, They do not think that this is good fortune, but think that it is very miserable. Then said he, Let us beware that we think not as this people think. If we in this respect think what this people think, then shall we forsake all wisdom and all righteousness. Then said I, Why shall we ever the more forsake them? Then said he, Because vulgar men say that every severe and unpleasant fortune is evil. But we should not believe it, since every fortune is good, as we before said, whether it be severe, *or* whether it be pleasant, Then was I afraid, and said, That is true which thou sayest. I know not, however, who dares to mention it to foolish men, for no foolish man can believe it.

3. Then replied Wisdom sharply, and said, Therefore no wise man ought to fear or lament in whatever wise it may happen to him, or whether severe fortune or agreeable may come to him, any more than the brave man ought to lament about this, how often he must fight. His praise is not the less; but the opinion is, that it is the greater. So is also the wise *man's* reward the greater if more adverse and severe fortune come to him. Therefore no wise man should be desirous of a soft life, if he make account of any virtues, or any honour here in this world, or of eternal life after this world. But every wise man ought to contend both against the severe fortune and against the pleasant, lest he, through the pleasant fortune should be presumptuous, or through the severe, despair. But it is necessary for him that he seek the middle way between the

severe fortune and the agreeable; that he may not desire more agreeable fortune or greater security than is fit; nor again, too severe *fortune*, because he is unable to bear excess of either. But it is in their own power which of them they will choose. If, therefore, they desire to find the middle way, then ought they themselves to moderate to themselves the pleasant and the prosperous fortune. Then will God moderate to them the severe fortune, both in this world and in that to come, so that they may easily bear *it*.

4. Well, O wise men, well! Proceed ye all in the way which the illustrious examples of the good men, and of the men desirous of honour, who were before you, point out to you. O ye weak and idle! why are ye so useless, and so enervated? Why will ye not enquire about the wise men, and about the men desirous of honour, what they were who were before you? And why will ye not, then, after ye have found out their manners, imitate them as best ye may? For they strove after honour in this world, and sought good fame by good works, and set a good example to those who should be after them. Therefore they now dwell above the stars, in everlasting happiness, for their good works. Here ends the fourth book of Boethius, and begins the fifth.

5. When Wisdom had ended this discourse, then said I, Very right is the doctrine. But I would now remind thee of the manifold instruction which thou before promisedest me concerning the predestination of God. But I wish first to know from thee whether that be aught, which we often hear, that men say concerning some things that it will happen by chance. Then said he, I would rather that I hastened towards this, that I might perform to thee, what I before promised thee, and might teach thee as short a way as I shortest might find, to thy native country. But this is so far out of our way, out of the way which we intended to travel, that it would be more expedient to return and understand what thou before askedst me. But I *also* fear I should lead thee hither and thither in paths out of thy way, so that thou mightest not again find thy way. It is no wonder if thou shouldest grow weary, if I lead thee beside the way. Then said I, Thou needest not fear that; but I shall be very glad if thou leadest me whither I desire thee. Then said he, I will instruct thee by discourses, as I always did; and I will say to thee, that it is naught that men say, that anything may happen by chance. Because everything comes

from certain things, therefore it has not happened by chance: but if it had come from nothing, then it would have happened by chance.

6. Then said I, But whence came the name first? Then said he, My beloved Aristotle has explained it in the book called *Physica*. Then said I, How has he explained it? Then said he, Men said formerly, when anything happened to them unexpectedly, that it happened by chance; as if any one should dig the earth and find there a hoard of gold, and then say that it had happened by chance. I know, however, that if the digger had not dug the earth, or man had not before hid the gold there, then he would not have found it. Therefore it was not found by chance. But the divine predestination instructed whom he would, that he should hide the gold, and afterwards whom he would, that he should find it.

7. Then said I, I perceive that this is as thou sayest; but I would ask thee whether we have any freedom or any power what we may do, and what we may not do? *or whether* the divine predestination, or fate, compels us to what they will? Then said he, We have much power. There is no rational creature which has not freedom. Whosoever has reason is able to judge and discern what he ought to desire, and what he ought to shun. And every man has this freedom, that he knows what he wills, *and* what he wills not. And yet all rational creatures have not equal freedom. Angels have right judgments and good will; and whatever they desire they very easily obtain, because they desire nothing wrong. There is no created being which has freedom and reason, except angels and men. Men have always freedom; the more as they lead their mind nearer to divine things: and *they* have so much the less freedom, as they lead the will of their mind nearer to this worldly honour. They have not any freedom when they, of their own accord, subject themselves to vices. But as soon as they turn away their mind from good, so *soon* do they become blind with folly. But one Almighty God exists in his high city, who sees every man's thought, and discerns his words, and his deeds, and renders to every one according to his works. When Wisdom had made this speech, then began he to sing, and thus said

CHAPTER XLI.

1. Though Homer, the good poet, who with the Greeks was the best, he was Virgil's master; Virgil was with the Latin men the best, though Homer in his poems greatly praised the nature of the sun and her excellencies, and her brightness, yet she cannot shine upon all creatures, nor those creatures which she may shine upon, can she shine upon all equally, nor shine through *them* all within. But it is not so with the Almighty God, who is the Maker of all creatures. He beholds and sees through all his creatures equally. Him we may call without falsehood the true sun.

2. When Wisdom had sang this lay, then was he silent a little while. Then said I, A certain doubt has troubled me. Then said he, What is that? Then said I, It is this, that thou sayest God gives to every one freedom as well to do good as evil, whichsoever he will; and thou sayest also, that God knows everything before it comes to pass; and thou sayest also, that nothing comes to pass unless God wills and permits it; and thou sayest that it must all proceed as he has ordained. Now I wonder at this, why he permits that wicked men have the freedom that they may do either good or evil, whichsoever they will, since he before knows that they will do evil. Then said he, I can very easily answer thee this enquiry. How would it please thee if there were some very powerful king, and *he* had not any free man in all his realm, but all men slaves? Then said I, I should not think it at all right, or moreover suitable, if men in a state of slavery should serve him. Then said he, How much more unnatural would it be if God had not in all his kingdom any free creatures under his power? Therefore he created two rational creatures free, angels and men. To these he gave the great gift of freedom, that they might do either good or evil, whichsoever they would. He gave a very sure gift, and a very sure law with the gift, to every man, until his end. That is the freedom, that man may do what he will; and that is the law which renders to every man according to his works, both in this world and in that to come, good or evil, whichsoever he does. And men may attain through this freedom whatsoever they will, except that they cannot avoid death. But they may by good works delay it, so that it may come later: and moreover, they may sometimes defer it till old age, if they do not cease

to have good will to good works, that is, good. Then said I, Well hast thou set me right in the doubt, and in the trouble wherein I before was, concerning freedom. But I am still disquieted with much more trouble, almost to despair. Then said he, What is this great disquiet? Then said I, It is concerning the predestination of God. For we sometimes hear say that everything must come to pass as God at the beginning had decreed, *and* that no man can alter it. Now methinks that he does wrong when he honours the good, and also when he punishes the wicked, if it is true that it was so ordained to them that they could not do otherwise. In vain we labour when we pray, and when we fast, or give alms, if we have not therefore more favour than those who in all things walk according to their own will, and run after their bodily lust.

3. Then said he, This is the old complaint, which thou hast long bewailed, and many also before thee; one of whom was a certain Marcus, by another name Tullius, and by a third name he was called Cicero, who was a consul of the Romans. He was a philosopher. He was very much occupied with this same question; but he could not bring it to any end at that time, because their mind was occupied with the desires of this world. But I say to thee, if that is true which ye say, it was a vain command in divine books which God commanded, that man should forsake evil and do good: and again, the saying which he said, *that* as man labours more, so shall he receive greater reward. And I wonder why thou shouldest have forgotten all that we before mentioned. We before said, that the divine predestination wrought all good and no evil; nor decreed to work, nor ever wrought any. Moreover, we proved that to be good, which to vulgar minds seemed evil: that is, that man should afflict or punish any one for his evil. Did we not also say in this same book, that God had decreed to give freedom to men, and so did; and if they exercised the freedom well, that he would greatly honour them with eternal power; and if they abused the freedom, that he would then punish them with death? He ordained that if they at all sinned through the freedom, they afterwards through the freedom should make amends for it by repentance; and that if any of them were so hard-hearted that he did not repent, he should have just punishment. All creatures he had made servile except angels and men. Because the other creatures are servile, they perform their services till doomsday. But men and angels

who are free, forsake their services. How can men say that the divine predestination had decreed what it fulfils not? Or how can they excuse themselves that they should not do good, when it is written, that God will requite every man according to his works? Wherefore, then, should any man be idle, that he work not? Then said I, Thou hast sufficiently relieved me from the doubting of my mind, by the questions I have asked thee. But I would still ask thee a question, which I am perplexed about. Then said he, What is that? Then said I, I am well aware that God knows everything beforehand, both good and evil, before it happens, but I know not whether it all shall unchangeably happen which he knows and has decreed. Then said he, It need not happen unchangeably. But some of it shall happen unchangeably, that is, what shall be our necessity, and shall be his will. But some of it is so arranged, that it is not necessary, and yet hurts not if it happen; nor is there any harm if it do not happen. Consider, now, concerning thyself, whether thou hast so firmly designed anything, that thou thinkest that it never with thy consent may be changed, nor thou exist without *it*. Or whether thou again in any design art so inconsistent, that it aids thee, whether it happen, or whether it happen not. Many a one is there of the things which God knows before it may happen, and knows also that it will hurt his creatures if it happen. He does not know it because he wills that it should happen, but because he wills to provide that it may not happen. Thus a good pilot perceives a great storm of wind before it happens, and gives orders to furl the sail; and moreover, sometimes to lower the mast, and let go the cable, if it before beat against the adverse wind, *and so* provides against the storm.

4. Then said I, Very well hast thou assisted me in this argument; and I wonder why so many wise men have so greatly laboured with the question, and found so little certain. Then said he, What dost thou so greatly wonder at, so easy as it is to understand? Dost thou not know that many a thing is not understood according as it is, but according to the measure of the understanding which enquires after it? Such is wisdom, that no man in this world can comprehend it such as it is. But every one strives according to the measure of his understanding, that he might comprehend it if he could. But wisdom is able to entirely comprehend us such as we are, though we cannot entirely comprehend it such as it is. For wisdom is God. He sees all our works, both good and

evil, before they are done, or even thought of. But he does not compel us the more, so that we necessarily must do good, nor prevent us from doing evil, because he has given us freedom. I can also shew thee some examples, whereby thou mayest more easily understand this discourse. Thou knowest that sight and hearing and feeling perceive the body of a man, and yet they perceive it not alike. The ears perceive that which they hear, and yet they perceive not the body altogether such as it is. The feeling may touch it, and feel that it is a body, but cannot feel whether it be black or white, fair or not fair. But the sight in the first instance, as the eyes look thereon, perceives all the form of the body. But I would still give some explanation, that thou mayest understand that which thou wert wondering at.

5. Then said I, What is that? Then said he, It is that the same man perceives in separate ways what he perceives in others. He perceives it through the eyes separately; through the ears separately; through his imagination separately; through reason separately: through intelligence. Many living creatures are unmoving, as for instance, shell-fishes are, and have, nevertheless, some portion of sense, for they could not otherwise live, if they had no particle of sense. Some can see, some can hear, some *can* feel, some *can* smell. But the moving beasts are more like to men, because they have all which the unmoving have, and also more: that is, that they resemble men; love what they love; and hate what they hate; and fly from what they hate, and seek what they love. But men have all that we before mentioned, and also in addition thereto, the great gift of reason. But angels have intelligence. On this account are the creatures thus formed, that the unmoving may not exalt themselves above the moving, or strive with them; nor the moving above men; nor men above the angels; nor the angels against God. But it is wretched that the greatest part of men do not look on that which is given them, that is, reason; nor regard that which is above them, that is, what angels and wise men have, namely, intelligence. But most men imitate cattle, inasmuch as they follow worldly lusts, like cattle. But if we had any portion of undoubting intelligence, as angels have, then might we perceive that that intelligence is much better than our reason. Though we contemplate many things, we have little understanding free from doubt. But to the angels there is no doubt of any of the things which they know;

therefore is their understanding as much better than our reason, as our reason is better than the understanding of cattle is, or any portion of that intellect which is given them, either to prone³³ cattle, or to those not prone. But let us now elevate our minds, as we highest may, towards the high roof of the supreme intelligence, that thou mayest most readily and most easily come to thine own country, whence thou before camest. Then may thy mind and thy reason see plainly that which it now doubts about, in everything, both concerning the divine foreknowledge, which we have often discoursed about; and concerning our freedom; and concerning all things.

6. When Wisdom had ended this speech, then began he to sing, and thus said; Thou mayest perceive that many an animal moves variously upon the earth, and *they* are of very dissimilar form, and go differently. Some lie with their whole body on the earth, and so go creeping, because neither feet nor wings support them; and some are two-footed, some four-footed, some flying, and all, nevertheless, are inclined downwards towards the earth, and there seek either what they list, or what is needful for them. But man alone goes upright. This betokens that he ought more to direct his thoughts upwards than downwards, lest the mind should be inferior to the body. When Wisdom had sung this lay, then said he:

CHAPTER XLII.

Therefore we ought with all our powers to enquire concerning God, that we may know what he is. Though it may not be our lot that we should know what he is, we ought, nevertheless, according to the measure of understanding which he gives us, to strive *after it: for*, as we have already mentioned, man must know every thing according to the measure of his understanding, since we are not able to know everything such as it is. Every creature, however, whether rational or irrational, testifies this, that God is eternal. For never would so many creatures, and so great, and so fair, submit themselves to an inferior being, and to less power, than they all are, nor indeed, to equally great. Then said I, What is eternity? Then said he, Thou askest me about a great *thing*, and difficult to understand. If thou wouldest understand it, thou must first

have the eyes of thy mind clean and clear. I cannot conceal from thee anything which I know. Knowest thou that there are three things in this middle earth? One is temporary which has both beginning and end; and I nevertheless know nothing of that which is temporary, neither its beginning nor its end. Another thing is eternal, and has beginning, and has no end; and I know when it begins, and I know that it never will end: that is angels, and men's souls. The third thing is eternal, without end and without beginning, that is, God. Between the three is very great dissimilarity. If we should enquire into the whole of it, then should we come late to the end of this book, or never! But one thing thou must necessarily first know, why God is called the highest eternity. Then said I, Why? Then said he, Because we know very little of that which was before us, except by memory and by enquiry; and still less of that which shall be after us. That alone is truly present to us, which at the time is; but to him all is present, both what was before, and what now is, and what after us shall be; it is all present to him. His riches increase not, nor moreover do they ever diminish. He never recollects anything, because he never forgets anything. He neither seeks nor enquires after anything, because he knows it all. He searches for nothing, because he has lost nothing. He preserves not anything, because nothing can fly from him. He fears nothing, because he has none more powerful, nor indeed any like *him*. He is always giving, and nothing of his ever decreases. He is always Almighty, because he always wills good, and never any evil, where is not need to him of anything. He is always seeing, he never sleeps. He is always equally gracious. He is always eternal, for the time never was when he was not, nor ever will be. He is always free: nor is he compelled to any work. By his divine power, he is everywhere present. His greatness no man can measure; yet this is not to be understood bodily, but spiritually, even as wisdom is, and righteousness, for he is that himself. But what are ye then proud of, or why lift ye up yourselves against so high power? For ye can do nothing against him. For the Eternal and the Almighty always sits on the throne of his power. Thence he is able to see all, and renders to every one with justice according to his works. Therefore it is not in vain that we have hope in God; for he changes not as we do. But pray ye to him humbly, for he, is very bountiful, and very merciful. Lift up your minds to him, with your

hands, and pray for that which is right and is needful to you, for he will not refuse you. Hate, and fly from evil as ye best may. Love virtues, and follow them. Ye have great need, that ye always do well, for ye always in the presence of the Eternal and Almighty God, do all that ye do. He beholds it all, and he will recompense it all. Amen.

O Lord God Almighty, Creator and Ruler of all creatures, I beseech thee by thy great mercy, and by the sign of the holy cross and by the virginity of Saint Mary, and by the obedience of Saint Michael, and by the love of all thy saints, and their merits; that thou wouldest direct me better than I have done towards thee; and direct me to thy will, and to my soul's need, better than I myself know; and make steadfast my mind to thy will, and to my soul's need; and strengthen me against the temptations of the devil, and remove from me impure lust and all unrighteousness; and defend me against mine enemies, visible, and invisible: and teach me to do thy will, that I may inwardly love thee before all things, with pure mind, and with pure body for thou art my Creator and my Redeemer, my Help, my Comfort, my Trust, and my Hope. To thee be praise and glory now and for ever, world without end. Amen.

NOTES

1. Early in the fifth century, two immense armies of Goths under the command of Rhadgast and Alaric invaded Italy, and after laying the country in ruins as they advanced, sacked the city of Rome. They, however, soon retreated, partly through the defeats which they sustained from the forces of the Emperor Honorius and his allies, and partly through an unaccountable panic which pervaded the troops of the Gothic leaders.

2. Theodoric, king of the Goths, who had established themselves in Italy, and who are commonly called Ostrogoths, lived in the sixth century and was remarkable for his wisdom and learning, but unhappily he imbibed the Arian heresy, which was prevalent at that time. He was however by no means disposed to promote his views by persecution, and even went so far as to behead one of his officers for becoming an Arian, saying, "If thou couldest not continue true to thy God, how canst thou prove faithful to me who am but a man?" The latter part of his life was stained by bloodshed, he having caused the death of Pope John, and condemned Boethius and his father-in-law Symmachus.

3. John, the first Pope who bore that name, was sent on an embassy by Theodoric to the Emperor Justin, at Constantinople, and on his return Theodoric confined him in a dungeon at Ravenna, where he died of want.

4. Boethius was a noble Roman, and was distinguished for his many and varied accomplishments. For some time he was in high favour with Theodoric; but in consequence of being detected in his correspondence with the Emperor Justin, at Constantinople, he was imprisoned with his father-in-law Symmachus, and after being confined six months, he was beheaded at Pavia.

5. The Cæsar here alluded to was the Emperor Justin.

6. This opinion of Plato was earnestly enforced by him in his dialogue de Republica.

7. In all the northern dialects "sun" is feminine, and "moon" is masculine.

8. This was Cræsus king of Lydia, who having been taken captive by Cyrus king of Persia and placed on a pile to be burned, is said to have

been delivered from his danger by a shower of rain, which Apollo sent at his earnest intreaty. Herodotus 1, 87.

9. This chapter ends abruptly, and is evidently incomplete.

10. *Cantabit vaacuum coram latrone viator.*—Juvenal, x: 22.

11. It is very doubtful who this Liberius was. Some affirm that Boethius is here referring to Zeno, who was put to death by Nearchus, while others maintain that he is speaking of Anaxarchus.

12. King of Egypt, said to have been son of Neptune and Lybia, and altogether a mythical personage. The cruelty attributed to him is said to have been perpetrated by the Egyptians at the tomb of Osiris, near which they sacrificed men. The whole statement, however, is contradicted by Herodotus.

13. Regulus committed very great devastations after landing in Africa, but not more than was usual with conquerors in those days: and when at length he was taken captive by the Carthaginians, and sent on an embassy to Rome, his patriotic advice to the Roman senate, and his sense of honour towards those who sent him, exposed him to a lingering and cruel death on his return to Carthage.

14. Cicero shews in his “*Somnium Scipionis*,” that the Romans occupied a comparatively small part of the earth, and that thereupon the glory of the Roman name was very limited in its extent.

15. Northern nations reckon their years by winters, and the shorter divisions of time by night: a mode of reckoning which is still very common in this country, as instead of seven days, we say, *se’nnight*; and instead of fourteen days, we say *fortnight*.

16. *Pallida Mors æquo pulsat pede pauperum tabernas Regumque turres*—Horace *Odes* 1, 4.

17. Weland was the Vulcan of northern mythology.

18. Nonius having been created a curule magistrate by Julius Cæsar, of which he appears to have been unworthy, Catulus indignantly exclaimed, *Quid est Catulle, quid moraris emori? Sella in curili struma Nonius sedet!*

19. Dionysius the elder, tyrant of Syracuse.

20. Seneca is called the foster-father of Nero, because he was his tutor and instructor.

21. Papinian was highly esteemed by Marcus Antoninus, and it was Caracalla who put him to death.

22. Thule is supposed to have been Iceland, but it is very questionable what locality is indicated by this name.

23. Euripides in *Andromache*.

24. "Unnoble." It has been necessary to invent a word to express the meaning of the original. "Ignoble" would convey a very false impression of what is meant, both here and in other passages.

25. Œdipus slew his father Laius

26. This portion is entirely the production of King Alfred, who has considerably enlarged on a passing allusion of Boethius.

27. Parmenides was a distinguished Greek philosopher, and flourished about the same time as Socrates: and like other philosophers of that period, expressed his notions in poetry. The poem here alluded to was entitled, "On Nature."

28. The passage here alluded to was the remark made by Plato in his *Timæus*, viz. that Discourses, in those matters of which they are the interpreters, should always have a certain relationship to the subject.

29. Ulysses is called by Boethius, Neritius Dux, this name being derived from Nerites, a mountain in Ithaca. King Alfred evidently mistook his author's meaning, and considered Retia, or Neritia as a distinct country over which Ulysses ruled.

30. The Wendel sea was probably the whole of the Mediterranean sea, or that part of it called the Adriatic.

31. The prosperity of the wicked caused a perplexity to the royal Psalmist, and almost shook his confidence in God's superintending providence, until, as he tells us, he was further instructed on this subject. See Psalm lxxii.

32. See Psalm xvii. 8. "Keep me as the apple of an eye," &c.

33. By "Prone Cattle" are meant those animals which have their faces turned towards the earth.