

THE IMPROVED SYSTEM OF THE ILLUMINATI, WITH ALL ITS STRUCTURES AND DEGREES

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Hic situs est Phaethon, currus auriga paterni:

Quem si non tenuit; magnis tamen excidit ausis.

Ovid, Metamorphoses, Book II^f

Frankfurt and Leipzig, at Grattenauer's Bookshop,

1787.

THE WORLD
and the
HUMAN RACE.

INTRODUCTION.

I have already frequently mentioned in the Introduction to my *Apologie*,ⁱⁱ that the original Illuminati system was very far from complete and that this was precisely the reason why it was steadily improved to eventually reach such a high level of perfection. Although I return to this theme many times in the main text of that book I can well imagine that, in a matter like this where it is so easy to be deceived in so many different ways, not every reader would wish to accept this statement at face value but would want to see and judge the matter for himself and demand incontrovertible proof. How better to meet this justified request than to present all the Degrees and the entire structure of the Order? So here they are.

If you think I designed this whole system just recently simply to refute my opponents' allegations then you are imputing to me quite exceptional gifts which I certainly do not possess. If I had to I could name several former members of the Order in Bavaria who had already passed these Degrees in their complete form even before the storm broke,ⁱⁱⁱ while even after the Illuminati was banned I myself went on working quietly in Ingolstadt. My readers should remember (and this will have to serve as a substitute for proof) that one of the philosophical systems on which I lectured was my theory of the origin of evil as propounded in the Third Dialogue of my *Apologie des Misvergnügens*, page 217

But even if none of this had happened these Degrees would still substantiate my main argument that I have very much improved on my first rough-and-ready [4] ideas, and that those improvements were inspired by the system's early aberrations. Some of these Degrees are already almost four years old now and I can assure you, gentle reader that I have used that time fruitfully to refine my ideas to produce something quite new. What is more, if I was to be true to my promise then I would like to change a great deal that I present here unchanged.

Though my readers' views might be very varied I hope that they will all agree that the basic principles of these Degrees are capable of producing fine and noble men. A few will perhaps doubt whether it is possible to make these principles sufficiently attractive for them to be used to train people to be subsequently deployed in everyday life, but I can assure you that it is indeed possible, and that I have actually succeeded in attuning certain Members [5] to them. Indeed, if my work had not been suddenly interrupted by the 'breaking storm' then I would have provided even more convincing evidence of this. I believe that my readers will have seen, in my pupils, living embodiment of what I have to say.

I am therefore publishing these Degrees to convince the public that I am speaking the truth; that I have abandoned all my plans to continue with the Order; that my aim has always been to do much good; and that if I have failed in that aim it has only been because of the lack of a better structure.

So now, go forth my more recent ideas, you children of the darkness and the night that cause such great fear, go forth under the watchful gaze of the public and in the light of the Sun. Restore the honour of your [6] creator, whose sole aim in keeping you in this darkness was, as he thought, to make more and better use of you. You gave your well-intentioned father some dark and gloomy times, so now go forth to meet the judgement of the world and remove from those, to whose good fortune you were dedicated their unjustified mistrust and fear. Produce as many happy men as you have created unhappy ones. You must do so, or all belief in your truth will falter. Prove to my fellow-men, friend and foe, known and unknown, that I have not lived for myself but only for them, and that I still cherish and love them. But say to them also that, like all those before me who sought a similar ideal, in return for good I have been repaid with much evil. Tell them that if this system should seem to them to be too idealistic, too Platonic, too extreme, that it is only [7] the good points that I have exaggerated; that their fear and anxiety were wholly unjustified; that they therefore should cease to marvel; and that there were a thousand failures before the actors were thoroughly rehearsed and the performance reached perfection.

Tell them also that, in general, they are right to suspect only bad things of secret societies, but prove to them that even this rule is not without its exceptions. So now fare thee well, and go forth. [8]

SOME IDEAS ABOUT THE NATURE AND STRUCTURE OF A SECRET SOCIETY.

INSTRUCTION FOR MEMBERS OF THE FIRST DEGREE.

The time of your deliberations is past, and your decision to join us is now irrevocable. My friend, you are in real danger of ill-treatment and abuse!

Have you really firmly decided to take on further obligations that will limit your personal freedom even more, even though that freedom is already restricted by your other commitments? Have you really decided to become more mindful of other people's fates than you are of your own, and to be exposed to great danger and persecution through the imprudence, thoughtlessness and passion of those who are under the same obligations as yourself?

You, who think you will be almost immediately shaping and organising this entity and having it at your beck and call, and yet who are yourself so reluctant to take orders, do you really agree to become a small cog in a big machine, a cog no larger and no smaller than is [9] needed to achieve the desired effect?

Given such dangers and apprehensions it is certainly worth our trouble – indeed, the sense of duty and integrity of an honourable man demand it – to describe to every Novice the situation in which he is seeking to place himself so that, should some misfortune subsequently arise that might cause him regret, he would be wasting his time trying to excuse his disobedience by appealing to misjudgement or a lack of wisdom or by complaining that he was tricked into joining. After all, a man can join secret societies with very varying aims and intentions and with very personal and self-interested expectations, and these expectations alone might be enough to explain his eventual failure. Even the best of these organisations therefore should speak not hypocritically but freely and uninhibitedly, so that every new Member is properly and thoroughly informed and is not rushed at all, but is allowed to consider everything carefully and then compare it with his own desires and expectations. So listen and learn!

1.) Every secret society is a group of people who have come together to pursue a certain goal known only to its [10] initiates. The goal is the first and most essential feature of every human association. Without it no such association is possible or even conceivable. The nature of the goal determines the organisation's structure, the means it employs, its legality and its level of civil tolerance,^{iv} its worthiness and unworthiness, its rights and obligations, its durability and decline, its challenges and progress, its degree of internal contentment or dissatisfaction, the loyalty and enthusiasm of its members, its risks or rewards, its relations with the outside world, the goodwill or harm it attracts, and the favourable or unfavourable opinions of those who do not belong to it. Every goal requires that Members be trained and managed specifically and appropriately. And everyone must believe in the goal – indeed, everyone must blaze with passion for it or the society will be wretched, weak and fragmented.

Goals can take many different forms: they differ from one organisation to another, but also from one new Member to another.

2.) From the Society's point of view, those goals are more or less noble, high-minded, general or specialised, self-interested or [11] altruistic, permanent or temporary, good or evil. The goals of the secret societies so prevalent at the present time can be roughly summarised as follows: *investigation of the secrets of Nature; predicting the future; exploiting the higher forces of nature; searching for the Philosopher's Stone; mutual support; commerce; conquest of another country; lust for power; establishing a universal monarchy; the secret propagation of quite specialised aims; political scheming; dissemination of a specific sectarian spirit; superstition and occult nonsense; the spreading of ethical values and enlightenment; the furthering of human felicity; the elevation and education of humanity; passing the time; sensual enjoyment.*

They also take all possible forms and employ every possible Degree-structure.

Despite this tremendous diversity, they all speak the same language: that of enlightenment and the furtherance of human felicity. Often their fraudulence is all the more effective because the most shameful deceit hides behind a venerable name. All without exception claim to be the most perfect of organisations, and all without exception, the best as well as the worst, hide their goings-on so effectively that only later developments reveal their [12] worthiness or unworthiness. And yet, as you can see, they are not all equally good, and they are not all worthy of the cooperation of the nobler type of person.

Amid all this uncertainty, amid the danger of being cheated and led astray, what are the surest rules for everyone to follow who feels the urge and call to join? What characteristics should he look for to minimise the chances of being deceived?

- 1.) If a secret society's goal is known and seems genuine then the following rule applies: the more elevated, general, magnanimous and noble the goal then the more manifest it should be in the actions of its leading members; the more insightful and irreproachable these members are then the more perfect the society is (and, in the opposite case, the worse it is).
- 2.) If the goal is entirely unknown or, as is usually the case, is merely spurious, then the following rule applies: *if there is no joining-fee or only a very modest one and if you know your Sponsor to be a genuinely moral person and the other members to be no less moral then you may safely take the first step towards more closely investigating what the society is all about.* [13]
- 3.) If you are then told about all sorts of 'secrets' which defy all reason and all the forces of nature, if your sensual passions are aroused, if foolish expectations and deceitful hopes are raised, if blind faith and servility are encouraged and all awkward questions forbidden, then look for an open door because you have fallen into the hands of very great deceivers.
- 4.) If what you are told either orally or in writing is full of nonsense, mystical nonsense or vain ceremonial frippery and if all of this is accompanied by 'mysterious' facial expressions and a sanctimonious tone of voice then make your exit even more swiftly.
- 5.) If however the lectures are serious and weighty, if all the orders correspond fully to the goal, if your original obligations are furthered or alleviated thereby, if Members are closely examined before and after joining without distinction of social status and if everything otherwise proceeds with seriousness, frankness and rectitude then you have every reason to remain unless you subsequently become aware of something that conflicts with your higher duties. [14]
- 6.) If things become progressively more interesting with each Degree; if new and wider horizons are repeatedly being opened to you; if you are constantly given new or more stimulating reasons for engaging in right conduct; if the teachings promote the dignity of humanity or make you more contented, more at ease and happier with your fate and social status; if all this is presented without obscurity and sophistry; and if the Members' behaviour and morals are reflective of the order's teachings, then you have joined a worthwhile society deserving of your entire cooperation. Indeed, it becomes your duty to further its intentions and closely follow its regulations. Your moral well-being and your natural obligations compel you to join it and to engage in serious collaboration.
- 7.) Oaths, ceremonies, a modest subscription and claims to antiquity are not in themselves arguments either for or against the worthiness of a secret society.
- 8.) A lack of strictness in enforcing rules, a lack of order and punctuality, prejudice against certain social classes, carelessness [15] in the admissions process, excessive demands, a high-handed attitude on the part of Members, slow processing of the business of the Order and a general atmosphere of indifference and neglect of the educational aspect are certainly faults, but here the error lies more with the people and the implementation than in the society itself. There is still hope that everything will change with new personnel and, perhaps, even through your own participation. All these defects are due either to something being amiss in the initial structuring of the society or to the lack of ability and negligence of

the Superiors, who may be well past their prime even though the organisational structure itself may be very sound.

9.) If there is no support and assistance for Members in proven emergencies then the society will be characterised by unkindness and indifference towards the fate of others. Team-spirit, bonding and cohesion will be extremely weak. The respect of the better members will be lost, the considerable sacrifices required will be foregone, a coolness and indifference towards the organisation as a whole as well as grumbling and discontent will arise, and the society will be heading towards disintegration.

10.) The aims of those joining a society can be as varied as human passions, [16] desires and expectations. Examples include a desire to pass the time or follow the latest fashion, vanity, a desire to meet new people or form friendships with the learned or socially important, a desire for advancement, antiquarian tastes and an interest in the general propagation of knowledge, ambition, lust for power, a desire for support, a liking for mystery and intrigue, the pursuit of commercial gain, the promotion of a business or an eagerness for professional advancement, idle curiosity and inquisitiveness, and so on.

If the organisation has high aims then people who join for these or similar reasons are not only useless but also extremely dangerous. *All these aims cause separation and division whereas the society wants unity.* And yet, of the many thousands who apply for membership there will be scarcely one who will be free of these intentions, although all the Candidates will show you their better side and will boast about the unselfishness of their aims.

Among the better class of person these intentions often work only in the background and are so very much concealed by a concern for the general welfare that even eagle-eyed investigators can be deceived in many different ways. Never therefore trust a person's words: it is only their repeated actions that can enable you to [17] decide. Here *a good preparation before admission and a gradual promotion through the Degrees can uncover the most carefully concealed motivations.* Every Candidate has his own way of seeking admission and his own form of subsequent behaviour, but his secret demands will gradually become more apparent and, depending on the likelihood of him satisfying his desires, his enthusiasm will then increase or diminish. Time catches up with all these people, but many a cheat or hypocrite has only been uncovered some years after his initiation.

No one can be relied on unless good basic principles have become a need for them, unless they have struggled with themselves in many different situations, including those where they were confronted with opportunities and invitations to do precisely the opposite of those principles, and have then expressed those principles through appropriate actions. Isolated urges to do good which pass as fleetingly as they arise tell us very little about a person.

The art of kindling a fire in human souls must therefore be accompanied by a second skill: that of keeping the fire going to a moderate degree, for therein lies all wisdom: *fear makes the hypocrite, and hope [18] produces the flatterer, but only a constant love for the goal of the society ensures stable, reliable, autonomous and staunch collaborators and supporters.*

Now that we have spoken at some length about the preparation of Candidates and the reasons why every Novice joins we must also specify the rules that any society can use to investigate members' reasons for joining. Here are some of them, but when you hear or read these rules place your hand on your heart, apply every rule to yourself, investigate your innermost feelings, and dare to believe the worst of yourself – that way you will find the truth all the more certainly.

1.) Someone who seeks and desires something other than what the society he is associated with wants will never make a good member.

2.) Someone who has the same purpose as the society but does not have as genuine and pressing need for it will be just as little use. [19]

- 3.) Someone who eagerly pursues personal interests, someone for whom there is something more important than the inner perfection of his nature, will never be capable of great deeds and sacrifices. Should these interests clash then he will always prefer to pursue his personal goal.
- 4.) Someone who is a member of another society and retains membership of it will never be an active participant in the new one even though this is obviously essential.
- 5.) Someone who has never or only rarely experienced the misery of human life and who is not keenly convinced of the need for secret societies will only ever be weakly attached to them.
- 6.) Someone who makes frequent demands on the society at an early stage will, through those demands, reveal the intention that has motivated him to join.
- 7.) Someone who, after admission, ingratiates himself with the leading members of the society and is then always crawling to them seeking their favour has been persuaded to join by vanity, a desire for personal advancement and an intriguing spirit. [20]
- 8.) The motivations of someone who is always clamouring for promotion and who becomes impatient and importunate about it are idle curiosity, ambition, inquisitiveness, a lust for power, etc.
- 9.) A convenient way of investigating your Candidates' expectations is to tell them quite openly and sincerely that they should not expect anything from the society except guidance on perfecting themselves; that they are deluded if they expect profound 'mysteries', political intrigue or the furtherance of their personal interests; and that if this self-perfection and this elevation of their nature is not their highest and ultimate goal then they had better turn around on the threshold rather than get involved with a society that displays such poor prospects for the fulfilment of their desires.

Tell them this forcefully and confidently and you will be astonished how everyone, when their enthusiasm suddenly cools, looks around for the door and rushes out now that their nakedness has been revealed. You can also tell these importunate people that they will have to wait years and undergo long and frequent trials, and that they will all be subject to very stringent oversight and regulation against which their impetuosity and high-handedness [21] will be futile. They will then desert you in droves. Do not deviate from this principle: indeed, stick to it with inexorable severity, for it is the surest way of testing unreliable people who would in any case eventually leave us and who indeed would leave us now if we caused them the slightest inconvenience.

Do not let it show that you want them to join, then they will want to join you, and instead of making demands they will submit to your instructions.

10.) To investigate more surely everything about a person you should examine in detail his life to date: his actions, his strongest desires as expressed through those actions, his present relationships, the time and place where he applied for admission, the financial contribution he is making to achieve that, his social status and trade or profession – all this information, when compared, cross-referenced and assessed in the light of the applicant's temperament, must reveal his true and, indeed, his hidden intentions.

11.) Someone who lends an ear to the cries of the unfortunate and who [22] opens his heart in gentle compassion, who is a friend and brother to the distressed, who goes out of his way even to avoid trampling the worm that writhes beneath his feet, who has a heart full of love and amity, is steadfast in tribulation, tirelessly persists with a job once begun, is unflinching in the face of danger and difficulty and does not mock the weak, someone whose soul, responsive to all forms of greatness, can escape from narrow restriction and rise above every base interest, whose greatest and most intense need is the perfecting of his nature, a person to whom everything appears as a means to achieving this end, who eschews the primrose path, who never scorns any kind of knowledge but makes self-enquiry and an understanding of human nature his principal occupation, who does not deny truth and virtue but fearlessly embraces them with wisdom at his side, who has the courage to set himself above the

acclaim both of the common herd and people of importance, and who follows his heart – he and he alone is the person for us, the kind of person we are seeking.

12.) Someone like this, with this spiritual tendency or perhaps with just a predisposition towards it, will join the society to develop that tendency. He [23] will see it as a way of helping humanity achieve maturity and develop perfection into a higher morality, and only secondarily as a way of achieving their own perfection, acquiring a knowledge of his true purpose, obtaining guidance, deploying it to acquire an ever higher and broader knowledge both of himself and others, lightening the burden of existing obligations, and achieving satisfaction and peace.

Such a man will gladly moderate his demands and will see the necessity of order and precision, will understand how vital it is to restrain his passions, how appropriate a certain form of behaviour and compliance with the laws are, how essential it is that everyone confines his attention to his own situation and is unconcerned with other people's mistakes unless required by the relationship with others that his position demands, how a person with a purely utilitarian job should be more content with his lowly social status than another who wants to give orders but fails to cope with the demands of his work and so confuses everything, acquiesces in nothing, and accelerates the collapse of the organisation.

He will be indulgent towards failure and will see that a society of this kind is and remains essentially a creation and an institution of *people*. [24] Though he will discover defects that cannot be remedied overnight he will not then destroy this structure by rebuke or objection or engage in fault-finding simply to make obedient members look disobedient but will instead wait until improvements can be made more discreetly.

He will not lose courage because of other people's failures, for he would prefer to ensure that others do not themselves lose courage.

Even if all others are failing he will remain unflustered and will maintain order within his own circle.

Even if everything is not organised according to the predetermined standard and if other forms and patterns arise he will recognise that the order of Nature infinitely exceeds the wisdom of humans, and that such anomalies are appropriate to the course of Nature because they steer us to where she expects to find us.

He will believe that the form of such a society is irrelevant because it is entirely fortuitous and depends on circumstances, whereas its goal is essentially reached if just one person becomes something better than they were and if the number of good people increases by just one. He strives and works as much he can, and that is the source of his tranquillity. [25]

4.) Given all these secret societies and the myriad of different goals that they pursue it is impossible for all of them to be equally good. Only one perhaps of the many beneficent goals can be the true and ultimate one to which all others serve only as a means. And surely the most perfect human association under the sun is the one that embraces that goal?

This goal must be magnanimous, broad in scope, world-embracing and the ultimate purpose and need of Nature herself. It must not be chimerical or involve the attempted establishment of a Platonic republic, nor must achieving it be an impossibility. The means for achieving it must be evolutionary not revolutionary and should be nothing other than the obligations already incumbent upon us. They must be the purpose of Nature herself, a process in which humanity acts only as the midwife. This secret society must be interwoven into the plan, into the order of Nature and the chain of totalities, and must be the means by which the Godhead disseminates higher morality among humanity to bring our race closer to its perfection.

You must convince yourself of this if your organisation is to earn your respect and co-operation, and you do so using the following rational arguments. [26]

Nature, which is the unfolding of a great and mighty plan founded on the same archetype (which is called by different names only because of its changes, differing forms and gradations) does not progress by leaps and bounds.^v She proceeds from the smallest and most imperfect forms, runs through all the intermediate stages, and then arrives at the final and most perfect expression both of the part and the whole. She begets children to turn them into people, and savages to turn them into moral beings.

The original state of humanity was a rough and wild nature, where the family was the only form of social organisation and the few needs that existed – food and drink, protection against the ravages of the weather, a mate, and relaxation after effort – were easily satisfied.

A lack of sustenance turned these hunters into herdsmen and nomads and then, with increases in population and food shortages, into agriculturalists, binding them to permanent settlements, organisation and laws. Property, as well as the ever more refined customs associated with it, led to new requirements.

This multitude of humans, with so little culture and so unable to govern themselves, were nevertheless forced by their early-emerging needs to see the great advantages of [27] a supreme authority which they would recognise and which would serve to protect and instruct them, and channel their scattered energies in the right direction.

This supreme authority, initially very limited in scope, then became hereditary and absolute, and for that very reason was abused and sometimes made intolerable. Ultimately therefore it was again restricted, being assigned either to just one person, to a small group, or to everybody, and passing gradually through all the possible forms and limitations, which were now given the names of monarchy, despotism, democracy and ochlocracy,^{vi} aristocracy and oligarchy, and which finally gave our present-day nations their current shape and form.

The goal of all these changes was improvement, and arose from real needs and from anticipations of advantage. However, this was scarcely achieved, so a new form of control appeared as a result of the new need that had arisen, just as had happened with the previous arrangement. In this way humanity was brought to a high level of refinement.

But, at the time of writing, how many of even the very best and most perfect of our present-day arrangements still remain imperfect and incomplete? What enormous scope is offered, even in our present condition, not just to foolish ambition but also to fair and [28] reasonable human expectations! How very far short of perfection do we fall, a perfection that cannot possibly be achieved by our current institutions without a still greater refinement! And how far short of true and ultimate refinement does our morality fall also!

But morality is not just a refined enjoyment of the comforts of life or the gentle art of harming others and destroying our opponents under a feigned appearance of rectitude. Morality is restraint with regard to the rights of others, moderation of one's own excessive demands, a drive for inner perfection and for higher and more lasting forms of goodness, and a sufficient knowledge of one's own position and of the obligations it entails. It is, indeed, the rational love of self.

Since this is still rarely found, why is it so surprising that human behaviour is simply a moral and more refined form of savagery? *For the customs and opinions of entire peoples are the customs and opinions of the majority of their members and citizens. As the number of moral humans increases among any given population, so the morality of that people increases in the same measure, and whoever changes individual humans into something, better improves the people, and through this improvement of several peoples thus [29] improves the fate of the planet.*

To promote this morality, which is so very necessary for the well-being of humanity, we also need to improve the ethics of individuals, but it is precisely at this point that we encounter the greatest difficulty, because everything encourages the opposite. Good examples, especially in the higher classes of society, are very rare, and the lower classes follow the higher ones, placing their hopes and fears in them, justifying their

immorality by reference to the example that they set, and so claiming the right to act with impunity or even reward. The already predominant temptations towards debauchery thereby increase and become even more attractive.

Who out of so many people has sufficient strength of character to resist these temptations, to do good for no specific reason, simply to become the object of ridicule, hatred, calumny and persecution? Who will choose the path of goodness if vice and unrighteousness are favoured from the very top of society downwards, perhaps because so many political interests are bound up with such things; who will choose goodness even if every association of people arouses suspicion; if 'divide and rule' is [30] the basic law of government; if the education of our rulers as well as of those closest to them is entrusted to the ignorant and the self-interested, and to those with a keen interest in the very opposite of morality (for there alone perhaps money can be saved, whereas in other areas of government millions can be squandered); if young people are set a bad example; if the highest popular education authority in the land is complacent, not only carefully nurturing all the prejudices and opinions that underlie selfish intentions but even making them an integral part of education so that the younger members of the human race set off on the wrong foot though it might sometimes be the right one for a particular historical period.

Confronted with such circumstances and obstacles, should we and can we be surprised that morality is already so rare among individuals that we cannot find any shred of it among entire peoples across the whole wide world? Should we not perhaps doubt whether virtue is just some hollow concept, and see morality as just a dream of the various human peoples, of the whole human race, and a simple impossibility?

These doubts are further reinforced when our greatest prince himself appears before us as an exemplar, blessed with the best possible insights and showing great courage in the face of evil, and yet ineluctably blocked by unavoidable obstacles, unable to complete his [31] tasks, required by time and circumstance to act against his will, to act in ways against which his conscience and empathetic heart rebel.

As long as he has to be on his guard against other powerful neighbours then all his efforts will be in vain, as all his energies must be directed towards external security above all else. His mind is therefore distracted from his nation's internal peaceful affairs or is focused on them only insofar as he can find within his country the strengths and resources he needs for its defence.

Nurturing the inner moral qualities of his citizens is therefore left to *religion* and its leaders, and yet in every historical period we find sufficient proof of how very much this noblest mainspring of all human activity has been abused, of how the civil government at sundry times and places has acquired, in the form of the clergy, not the support it needed but rather a new internal enemy, how the clergy looked after its own interests, made religion into a charade and trod the state beneath its feet, how humanity corrupted the teachings of God through additions and sophistries, spread strife and misanthropy through ideological conflict, and poisoned the sole remaining source of [32] morality.

Consequently the ruler cannot use his state-forces freely and without hindrance but must give them a direction opposed to his initial intentions. Since security is the principal requirement, the whole structure of his legislation and public administration must, if he is surrounded by unruly neighbours, be based upon it. Even the best laws will then be purely relative, for the laws that are best in themselves would lead to decline, and the state itself would become prey to its greedy neighbour.

But it is not amid the weeping and clamour of war or an equally restless peace nor amid a lack of security or a constant fear of attack that human behaviour is tempered, for it is only in the cool and refreshing shade of the olive-tree, in the lap of peace and abundance, that the gentle and finer social feelings can develop. As long as imminent danger compels humanity to be on the defensive then all other forces will sleep. Martial courage then becomes its first and obligatory virtue, savagery becomes a necessity, and too refined a sociability creates deficiencies and weaknesses, and favours humanity's demise.

Oh, all those of you who are so eager to criticise the [33] failings of every government and the errors of monarchs, look less at what they do and more at what *you* must do! Unfavourable circumstances and

imminent danger often pose threats to both their security and to yours and require the harshest laws to be enacted. Either forsake your security therefore or approve the means of guaranteeing it.

But that guarantee is not your prince, it is not the man who threatens to engulf you in his own concerns, who leads your sons to their deaths in war, who wipes the sweat from your brow, who takes you far from the enjoyment of gentle social pleasures or who increases state expenditure and then taxes you to pay for it. Only the unbridled conquering spirit of an Alexander can set the tone for oppression across the whole Earth, force one people against another like piling wave upon wave, legalise oppression for the sake of defence, destroy the tranquillity of entire parts of the Earth's surface, distract the best princes from focusing on their countries' internal concerns, erect altars to brute force and daring, encourage men to share their savagery with others, and so banish the higher morality from the Earth or, at least, hinder its progress. [34]

Even if circumstances and, in particular, a lack of security prevent even the best princes from contemplating the propagation of the higher morality it is no less essential that this morality – this way of achieving peace and felicity for all people on Earth – continues to gain ground. Other means and structures are therefore needed to fill this gap, to help our otherwise very preoccupied governments, to share their burden of anxieties with others, and to ensure that every state under the Sun is composed of reasonable, enlightened, fair-minded, honest, faithful, industrious and moral citizens. *Secret societies* can be involved in this task and, indeed, they alone can accomplish it thanks to their clandestine nature (which many find attractive), the enthusiasm and team-spirit they inspire, and the exemplary and moral men who are trained within them.

Such societies therefore deserve to receive from every government encouragement, loyalty and support rather than persecution, *for no power on Earth is as permanent and indestructible as that which is built on truth, virtue and morality*. It is moral governance alone that makes all impossibilities possible and which can make a reality of the Platonic ideals and all those political dreams so ridiculed in history. But where there is a lack of morals, [35] loyalty and unselfishness among subordinates, and a lack of high-mindedness, magnanimity and control of the passions then the most easily achievable things become impossible. All the failures of the best and most admirable institutions have featured one or more of these deficiencies. When moral corruption prevails you need provisos and assurances: authority, so often abused, and the generally prevailing self-interest of humanity have aroused general distrust and sealed the hearts of men so much against one other that everyone now has to prove the honesty of their intentions, even though they are rarely able to offer sufficient proof to dispel all doubts and objections. Virtually all our actions and institutions bear the visible stamp of this widespread distrust.

Only moral philosophy can eradicate this distrust. It teaches moderation and sobriety, contentment with meagre resources and the need to reduce the more ignoble needs of the body so as to increase those of the spirit. It also helps mankind to acquire an insight into where its true interests lie, besides teaching it the value of and need [36] for austerity as well as loyalty and faith in civil and every other kind of society.

There are defects (and crucial ones) which public institutions are too weak to rectify, and against which only *secret* societies are sufficiently effective. These defects are both too dominant and widespread or are based on certain very old and deeply-rooted prejudices and national customs such as, for example, the passion for duelling^{viii} which legislation has had such little success in stamping out. To tackle these problems openly would be far too risky, would trigger the opposite effect, would show just how weak the highest authority is, and would undermine entire state institutions. *For morals are changed by morals, and opinions are displaced by the slow and imperceptible development of new opinions*. But this process is too slow and its fruits and visible progress too remote for it to have any effect unless it is implemented according to a deeply thought-out and carefully-considered plan, and its execution entrusted not to a single frail human being but to, as it were, an entire moral body which can then outlive the evil, reproduce itself, strengthen itself, remedy its own deficiencies [37] and – like a phoenix – endlessly rejuvenate itself. Here alone can benevolent principles, which are the only things that can counteract the weakness associated with human ageing and act as immortal opponents of an immortal foe, be eternally and indestructibly stored.

Let the first monarch step forward to assume this role, and let us lay down for him challenging and unusual prerequisites. He should combine in his person insight, strength of will, courage and perseverance. He should unite everything within himself, but he must neither rush things nor leave their further execution to his successor. *In the former case he will, if he uses force, create dissemblers:* he will hew off some of the protruding twigs but the noxious trunk will remain standing, putting forth new branches and defying all his efforts. He will simply have made the authors of evil sharper and cleverer, and the course and progress of evil all the more imperceptible and, therefore, more dangerous.

And what if a new successor appears, can we hope that he will choose to start where his predecessor left off? Will such a person, simply in order to make sure that he goes down in history, not want to change the basic principles of the previous government and launch a new career of his own? Will he really express the same confidence in the true and noble advices of his predecessor [38] and display the same insight, strength of will, courage and determination? Will he shrink just as little from hard work, challenge and hindrance, and will he set about things with an equivalent deliberation, passion or cool-headedness? Will he not have other weaknesses, whether more or fewer, which his enemies will exploit to ultimately conquer him? Will he be as cautious and as skilful at concealing those weaknesses?

If continuing a plan happily begun is made disproportionately more difficult by elective royal houses, minorities,^{viii} or a legitimate line and ruling house becoming extinct; even the best princes and heirs, educated by their predecessors entirely in accordance with the purpose they are to serve, are not precisely the same at the end of their lives as they were at the beginning; if they always have to rely on others and see the world through their eyes, or if they do not always choose unselfish, insightful and appropriate counsellors; if they overindulge in laziness, nepotism, venality or lust for power, or are divided among themselves and, in order to increase their influence and following, promote only their creatures and clients; if, due to excessive ambition, they cannot agree to work according to what are to them strange principles; if they do not have sufficient magnanimity to sacrifice their fame and personal [39] insights; if, even though they may agree to look at something again through different eyes, they are often just as unlucky in their choice of helpers; if they allow themselves to be too easily led astray by the superficially attractive promise of immediate advantage; if they are far too easily discouraged by resentment and calumny and therefore set to work with greater anxiety or anticipate inevitable failure, and therefore always orientate themselves according to the fluctuating mood of the princes; and if we perhaps anticipate all this and accept that civil government, where people without morals, loyalty and faith often hold the highest offices, where birth alone is sufficient entitlement to the most senior positions; where punishments and rewards lose all meaning; where bad examples are so widespread and attractive; where people only look out for themselves; where laws serve only to oppress the more vulnerable and are either never enforced against those of higher rank or are enforced with insufficient rigour; where education is neglected and where freedoms, distinctions and titles are showered like confetti; where the truth is insulted and denigrated and flatterers alone are believed; where, in emergencies, all state-protection is secured from outside the country – can we really deny that, in such [40] circumstances and with such a constitution, the civil government alone, even with the best of intentions and the most effective marshalling of its forces, is in no way a match for such ancient, widespread and deep-rooted evils?

Would it not however be a very different story with a secret society which, precisely because of its clandestine character, would be able to more powerfully resist all obstacles and attacks because the progress of its work is hidden, its collaborators concealed and its chiefs unknown, and because for that reason they are protected against blame, calumny, envy, subversion and persecution?

Such an arrangement ensures that no basic principle ever dies or is lost and that subsequent pupils can build upon and develop the experiences of their predecessors and can start precisely where they left off because a departing member is replaced by an equally intelligent one equally well-attuned to its basic principles, someone who has been carefully trained for many years for just this purpose, who is safe from all

sedition and corruption and who is someone for whom it has become a basic need to think and act in this way and not otherwise.

Every government in the world has certain general defects that the intelligent and honest people of every time and place [41] would like to rectify. When we see that everyone in this world can be happy but that this happiness is so often undermined by error, ignorance and the passions or by the malice of those who have gone astray; when we see that the wicked are so powerful and, indeed, more powerful than the good; that attraction to vice is too strong and that public institutions do not do enough to counteract it; that it is a waste of time for an individual to struggle against such defects; and that an honourable man can hardly act honourably without being punished, abandoned as he is to calumny, misfortune and persecution simply because he is alone, then a desire naturally arises for nobler and worthier people to come together in permanent alliance to form, along with all the other great souls of the time who feel the same urge, and along with all those yet to come, a single people and family, to live for the benefit of all times and places, transplant their spirit and enthusiasm to posterity, and establish a more mature and moral humanity in an association that would never again be broken asunder or profaned, to terrify the evil ones, to help all good people without distinction, to obtain for itself peace, satisfaction and [42] security, to reduce vice by using the strongest and yet the simplest method available which, at the same time, would encourage virtue and benevolence and make the hitherto only too feeble desire to act with integrity more palpable, more powerful and more attractive. That method would be one based on a higher knowledge of human nature.

This is how God Himself sowed the seed of secret societies into the nobler and more beautiful human souls in order to lead the other laggards to perfection and felicity. But only in later times did this seed bear more obvious fruit through the maturing power of reason and through the shortcomings of governments which awakened new needs within those administrations. This led to some abortive efforts and, in part, even caused new evils to be spread across the Earth until humanity was able to garner the necessary insights and experiences from its frequent failures and so become more astute and lay the foundations of a structure that, despite its frailty, would be a cornucopia of their desires. It was already an essential part of humanity's natural condition to experience needs [43] that could only be satisfied in another and better situation. But humanity had to acquire an insight into these needs so that it could then, starting from this situation, unite to form civil society, thereby bringing it a step closer to its perfection and accelerating the progress of the human spirit towards something better.

But even here, in this more refined situation, the insatiable human spirit of innovation and improvement discovered – after long experience and closer acquaintance – new failings, needs and prospects. These new prospects are a renewed call to cooperation for a human race that has now matured and has outgrown its short-trousers. They are the invitations of Providence to form a more modern, focused and appropriately-tasked organisation and to produce a more refined form of government and statesmanship. In no way however is this new organisation intended to replace or undermine current governmental forms, which are still very appropriate for the majority of humanity.

In its primordial condition, humanity was forced to experience how weak it felt in isolation and how strong in association. A further experience was required to teach humanity (now combined into states) [44] just how much still needed to be done to satisfy these new needs here being brought forth for the first time. *These civil societies as presently constituted are only a way towards and an attempt at improvement, and are not the improvement itself.* And just as every imperfect quest gives rise to new improvements and to better and more intelligent structures, and just as men in civil society have investigated every possible change to achieve this improvement and have in vain run through all possible forms and restrictions and nevertheless still found so much that is defective, so eventually humanity is forced to see the necessity of re-uniting in order to further improve and perfect the mainsprings of the art of government rather than simply standing still on the great ladder of human perfection and just tarrying in the same place. We have had to learn that the human being is infinitely more than just a citizen, that a human being was man's first and original condition, and that people then united in civil society to become more human – indeed, to become a perfect human.

Mankind had to see and experience nothing less than that this association into states had become a peculiar new means of *separation*, and that [45] through the division into nations and the diversity in social status new schisms and sources of hate and discord would be created, that humans would, as a result, become more alienated from one another, and that accordingly a new 'binding-agent' was needed, a new structure that would re-unite the separated and alienated parts in order to remind humanity that people are all of one and the same nature and origin, that they were created to draw near to each other and to love one other, and that the citizen does not surpass the man. Humanity had to learn that it needed an institution in which men could come together from their scattered situations to rediscover themselves as humans and to love each other as such.

Given these preconditions, the nobler secret societies (for we are not concerned here with those based on nonsense and fraud) are therefore *a tool for improving the human race*. Their task is to bring people together who would otherwise be separated by their many different interests and prejudices; to unite them for a higher, worthier and more general purpose; to fill the tremendous gap that resulted from the union of humans into larger societies as well as from [46] the diversity of social statuses; to reduce the sources of schism and mutual hatred that arise from this separation and diversity; to train great and unselfish men who will be responsive to every good; to decrease the number of moral pygmies and small-minded people; to safeguard the seed of virtue; to re-kindle among humanity the now extinguished interest in doing good; to point the way for those who are straying from the strait and narrow; to bring illumination to the weak; to assign to everyone the sphere of activity best suited to his strengths; to imperceptibly impart to the world and the human race that degree of culture that forms the 'manly age of the world';^{ix} to disseminate the higher morality; to work on the ways of thinking both of one's contemporaries and of remote posterity; and to combat, undermine and destroy any basic principles that have become disadvantageous to the tranquillity and felicity of humanity.

But where exactly is this wonderful organisation to be found? *Where is this Order which impinges so little on its members' domestic and other relationships*; which does not arouse and nourish deceitful passions and desires; which focuses only on the instruction and moral improvement [47] of humanity and which, to that end, must certainly have guiding structures which do not undergo any substantial internal alterations caused by the passing of time and changing political relationships; where people are judged only by their inner goodness; where pretence is ineffective and the posturing hypocrite revealed in all his nakedness; where all the tricks of the evil ones are rendered fruitless; where every virtue and even the smallest moral action receives its certain and inevitable reward; where people work solely according to the higher criteria, are rendered insensitive to all base interests, are taught to work only with magnanimity and breadth of outlook, and where the soul is oriented towards every great design in a noble and burning enthusiasm?

Where is that association that can finally solve the problem of how to direct people solely towards goodness, increase their strength of mind, improve their benevolence and then perform the greatest and noblest feat of all, something which, to most people up to now, may have seemed just a dream only possible for the most enlightened – namely, *how to ensure that virtue prevails over vice*?

Where is that association that brings together the most capable minds of each social class, inspires them and revives their depleted courage; strives to work hard, excel [48] and achieve greatness; raises every thinking man from the dust and places him in the limelight; multiplies the paths of knowledge and morality as its membership increases and so unites the greatest minds of all times and nations in a single organisation; where everyone works hand in hand with everyone else; where the weakest pupil is taught by the teacher of the greatest truths; where the insight of one becomes the insight of all; where the ignorant can begin where the learned have left off; and where no knowledge goes to waste but is passed from man to man among the elect? Where do we find this source of all knowledge, of all the ancient and the more recent wisdom, this abode of peace, this refuge of the unfortunate, these cities free of persecution?

How would it be if our Order was of this kind? Was it really worthy of your application for membership, was it really worth you making your greatest possible effort with all your might? Now your admission to the

Order becomes an obligation, and a refusal to cooperate and any infringement of its laws becomes almost a crime against God and man, and against the order of Nature.

The thought of it alone might still excuse you, for such an association with such a purpose might after all be nothing more than a beautiful idea [49] and yet at the same time an utter impossibility. But is it really just a dream that I can grow and increase in perfection and moral goodness and that another person can do the same? Is it really impossible for me to awaken this spirit, this drive for inner perfection, in just as lively a fashion in other people so that they too will join together, slowly but surely increase in number, train other people in great and elevated principles and points of view, and so attack evil at its root? Is this really an impossibility? What, apart from this, do we still lack? What do we lack apart from self-mastery, love for a greater good, love for a higher purpose? What is so impossible here? If the natural obligations to which I am subject and the most exact observance of those obligations are the best and most effective way to achieve this goal, does that mean that fulfilling these obligations must also be an impossibility?

Just follow the rules of the society, depart from them as little as possible, and all your apprehensions will disappear. Certainly if everyone thinks they are already perfect, if they set to work and want to rush to success; if they labour under the false perception that only fully perfected humans could be involved in such a task; [50] if this seed is sown only in those who have no receptivity to it, in people in whom it can never thrive and take root; if we skim superficially across the surface of things and fail to penetrate their innermost essence; if the leader is more interested in everything else than he is in the goal; if the principles of the Order do not penetrate his soul, and if passion and inertia are also present; if the Superiors of the Order are not themselves models and exemplars; if they demand much and yet themselves perform little; if their lectures and instruction show no sign of conviction, and pupils are neglected, then such leaders have nothing more to offer than a dream.

Yet it is a dream which in wiser and more cautious people becomes a reality. Someone who sees the Order as a vehicle for working on people and for disseminating beyond himself sound basic principles with greater vigour will not concern himself with trivia, for to him every form is the same and he will see every good thought and resolution he stimulates in another person as a consequence of this system and an instruction of the Order. But, I hear you ask, if this is something that any individual can do, then why bother to set up an organisation?

We do so because joining forces strengthens our powers and their effects; provides security [51] and encouragement; facilitates the mechanism and means for acquiring knowledge; brings close together men who might otherwise never have met; prevents one-sidedness in their thinking; and provides people with a sphere of activity, an opportunity to express their talents that they otherwise might never have been given.

In such an association the knowledge and strength of all are the knowledge and strength of each. Association makes for courage and confidence, produces fearless followers of the truth and virtue, and reduces the risk associated with being virtuous and with setting an example – and we certainly need good examples and models to impart body, life, action and interest to what would otherwise be only an abstract idea.

5.) In a secret society there is more than one person who wants to achieve its goal. There are, as it were, many people but just one will. Everyone's forces are combined to achieve this goal, as if there was just one force. *The closer an association comes to this moral unity then the more perfect it is* and the more it resembles a single physical person. Conversely, the further removed it is from that unity [52] the more conspicuous is its plurality and the less it represents a single whole or moral person. In the perfect secret society, in addition to the perfection that the goal must have, you should be able to see, among the multitude, one and the same principle, one and the same conviction, one and the same utterance, a wholly identical disposition. Anything that might weaken and diminish this very similar mental disposition must be shunned, for it is the foundation-stone of the entire structure: it makes everything possible, and without it nothing is possible. All structures, rules and the vigilance of the Superiors must be directed towards expressing it to the maximum.

Those who are equal to these demands are also the true and unique Superiors of the Order: they ensure that the enlivening breath, the inspiring spirit, travels into every part of this moral body.

6.) Men act the way they think and the effects they produce are the result of their principles. Not all principles lead reliably to the same goal: some are more favourable to it, others completely contrary to it. If the society's purpose is to produce great and noble people then teachings that lead to this goal must be drafted, taught and made obligatory in the Degrees of [53] the Order. They are a means to the end, and someone who desires this end, who burns with enthusiasm for it, will not in this case complain about being spiritually coerced. They will also find that, with the Order's guidance, they will gradually discover these ideas for themselves and find them expressed in their soul. Nothing will ever be forced upon them.

A Degree or its teachings should therefore never be discussed before a Candidate is ready in the sense that the Candidate, as it were, has these principles already slumbering inside him, intuitively but is unable to give them clear expression, and feels a genuine need for them. The Candidate is then certain to approve them. If these principles are the highest and the most advantageous for our peace of mind then no one will think himself at fault for making an imperceptible re-attunement of their way of thinking for the betterment of the organisation.

This instruction and these teachings that the Order presents must not therefore be simply heard or read: listeners must, to enjoy their full effect, make them a part of their sequence of thought, must make them their own. They must be pondered frequently both in their isolation and interconnection, they must sometimes be related to current events, they must be made vivid and meaningful, and they must become the motivations [54] for our actions. Cursory reading prompted simply by a desire to be fashionable, by vanity or by idle curiosity has no impact on character. If it did then, given the current glut of good books and the prevailing desire to read much and widely, morality would be making great strides. It is sustained thinking, subjective reading of material relevant to oneself as well as to others and to circumstances, a desire to become better informed and the resulting decisions that we make that help us become better and more perfect men.

7.) *Where there is uniformity of basic principles, then uniformity of attitudes and actions will be the inevitable consequence.* In a well-organised body not everyone can act just as he pleases, for not all actions will further its goal. Any actions that impede the furtherance of its goal will no longer be available to him and, indeed, will be forbidden to him. He will however be free to pursue any actions that further its purpose. Only those actions that neither oppose nor favour the society's goal will be freely available to him. Everyone imposes this restriction of action upon himself. Everyone is his own legislator for as [55] long he wishes to pursue this goal, and the more serious he is about achieving it the more emphatically he agrees to engage in a specific form of behaviour.

All instructions governing the relationship between an action and the society's purpose are rules of that society. These rules must be so constituted that each individual would himself have formulated them if pure reason had always been the lodestar^x of his actions and if he had had the goal firmly in view. All these rules are a means of fulfilling the goal, and he who cherishes this goal must also cherish the rules. He therefore obeys them not out of a sense of obligation but from love of the society's goal. In a secret society there is no more certain and more effective way of ensuring that members remain obedient to the rules than to keenly maintain their love of its goal: as this decreases, so does obedience to the rules and to the Superiors. Disobedience and insubordination result from indifference and apathy towards the goal. They arise if the purpose is too weakly defined, is seen as impossible or even inferior to another purpose. Someone who wants to continue to cherish the goal and, therefore, the rules and constitutions of the Order must therefore show respect for [56] these, and must have mastered the art of presenting all other goals as inferior to that of the society, of establishing a connection with the prevailing idea inside every man, of making clear the magnitude of the consequences of a course of action, or of proving that everyone is acting in his own best interests and has displayed the greatest self-love and reasonableness when he cherishes this goal. Anyone who acts against the goal of the order or its rules is not only committing a crime against the society but – *if this goal is true and is the highest goal – is also sinning against himself*, for in doing so he hampers the good that could be done

both to others and to himself. Someone with little or no feeling for the goal of the Order ceases, for that reason alone, to be a member of it, for he does not want what the Order wants and the Order does not want what he requires. A person who is not a keen supporter of such a society with such goals, who depends more on inferior qualities than he should and attaches more value to them than they deserve is less perfect, because his point of view is inferior and restricted.

However, this dependency on the Order can be diminished by other reasonable causes, e.g. a noticeable discrepancy between the Order's teachings and its actions; inconsistencies; [57] disorganisation or a lack of punctuality; everyone wanting to give orders but no one wanting to obey; firm measures and decisions going unimplemented; conspicuous abuses and self-interest; rules being transgressed but transgressors going unpunished; obvious disorder and confusion in everything; and high-handedness on the part of the Superiors. In such cases you can expect the members to say farewell to 'dead letter' principles which, after all, only acquire their true value when they are put into practice! At this point the noble man will withdraw, lamenting that almost all institutions that work for the good of humanity never seem to get beyond the planning stage.

8.) To develop a taste for and to become receptive to certain topics of interest, people need preparation. This takes time: they do not suddenly experience a need for them. Every organisation must therefore have leaders and teachers to provide the necessary step-by-step guidance. Such men oversee the whole system and are therefore also in a position to accurately determine how each incident and action relates to the Order's purpose. This global view, this more accurate knowledge and intellectual superiority [58] also endows them with a higher authority and the right to guide the actions of their subordinates when the society's goal demands it.

The basis of this dependency of the subordinate members on more senior ones lies in the very nature of the society's activities. Submission is voluntary, works to the subordinates' advantage and is, moreover, conditional. It is *voluntary* because no one is forced to join, because everyone can leave the society. It works to the *advantage of the subordinates* because it leads to a goal that has become so dear to them, the implementation of which they perceive as an essential part of their felicity. It is *conditional* because it lasts only as long as the member's connection with the society, and only in so far as the benefits for which everyone hopes are actually achieved and the society keeps its promises.

The Superiors, thanks to their global view, can determine what actions will promote or hinder the society's goal. They are the rightful legislators, but you are not obedient to them but to yourself and to your true advantage. The Superiors need to inform us about this advantage because we ourselves lack the necessary global view or are prevented from acquiring it by our passions and short-sightedness. Everything therefore depends [59] on these Superiors. It is faith in their insights and unselfishness that awakens within us the willingness to obey. These Superiors must therefore try to fully justify this faith in both these qualities. To have the desired effect on their subordinates they must be the wisest and most unselfish of men, and a personification of its theory and its ideal. They must be passionate about its goal and have mastered the art of inspirationally communicating this passion to others. They must be able to empathise completely with the thoughts of their pupils and must match their discourse to their needs. They must believe that their subordinates will be scrutinising the most trivial of their actions and comparing them with their teachings, and that every noted discrepancy may affect their subordinates' outlook and so diminish their eagerness and dedication.

In no way however are they sovereign commanders, but rather the most dependent of humans. On them alone hinge the success or failure of all secret societies. All those of you who want to shine as the head of a secret society, consider all this carefully and seriously: consider what a burden you are shouldering if you wish to fulfil the obligations of your office; consider what damage you yourselves may cause to the society if [60] you do not fulfil such obligations but instead pursue only vanity; consider what sterling qualities are needed in order to prevail, without any external pressure, over wise heads and voluntary subordinates, so that they too enjoy being ruled over, and how very effective this would be at preventing a groundswell of

excessive ambition and vanity and reducing the number of rivalries and fatal disunities to which they give rise! For it is upon this perilous reef that most if not all secret societies have foundered.

In none of these societies has it ever been as difficult to serve as a Superior as in those of the present day. A Superior's soul must be steeped in the principles of the Order. He must be a man of mesmerising eloquence, complete self-mastery, irreproachable morals and an angelic purity of motive, a man who never loses sight of the goal of the Order, who lives and breathes it.

If you wanted to apply to these conditions the measures that are taken in civil society and the treatment that is meted out to people there and adjust your behaviour accordingly then you would fail and fail utterly, for the only driving-forces moving the organisation in a [61] favourable direction are faith in one's leader and love for its purpose. As these two forces decrease (and this has been known to happen quite suddenly) so also does the leader's influence diminish and, ultimately, his authority cease. In this system, with such carefully-attuned souls with such expectations, abuse of one's fellow-man is impossible, for at the first sign of more selfish intentions trust in the leader disappears and with it, his power.

Oh, if only everyone reading or hearing this would just look inwards, question himself, and experience what I am saying with the warmth of those from whose pen it comes then they would find that something quite trivial is enough to upset people who are otherwise so good, so truly receptive towards all goodness and so easily guided on the basis of trust so that their enthusiasm is diminished, they are made timid, faint-hearted and unsociable, and finally become sceptical about the possibility of any improvement and perfection in the human race, mocking every institution established for that purpose as a Platonic chimera or the well-intentioned fantasy of unworldly scholars.

There is only one way out of this, and once again this is to be found in the careful preparation of new members: they must be accustomed from their arrival to the idea that the best arrangement [62] is and always will be a human institution; that everything is just a preliminary exercise to enable you to acquire the necessary experience so that you err less and less; that high ideals are established simply as something to strive towards; that one should make greater demands to acquire yet more; that even the smallest step forward is a genuine advance; that the aim is to show what man would be capable of if he achieved self-mastery; that in our organisational structure there is still very much that is presently still imperfect, unaccomplished and impossible, but only presently; that we Superiors are ourselves only learning, are only practising this activity; that we are trying hard to take it as far as our feeble forces will allow; that we joined this system only in later life with a way of thinking that was already formed; that any defects of ours are the consequences of our previous way of thinking; that for the greater good we show leniency towards defects that are partially involuntary; that in the future the task of reducing the still very common defects should be left to us; and that circumstances often make many things necessary and appropriate which would otherwise be objectionable.

Such a frank admission makes many a defect forgivable. It also tones down the exaggeration of ideas which causes so [63] much harm because the outcome is always below expectations and therefore diminishes respect for the whole society and, with it, the degree of obedience. *Oh, certainly anything can be done with man, and anything can be made out of him!* From the greatest monarch of the Earth down to the humblest beggar there is no one who will resist if he is recruited and treated properly. Everything therefore depends on the character and gifts of him whose task it is to make something of him and on the way he is treated. Show anyone something that might be lacking in him (and is there anyone in whom something is not lacking?), show him in a way he understands, show him clearly and vividly using the full flow of eloquence that this lack is actually a part (and an essential part) of his felicity. Show him that, with your assistance, he can identify the source of this lack which is such an essential part of his felicity and, without fail, rectify it. Do not betray through your character anything that might cause him to mistrust you apart from a natural and unforced concern and a lively empathy with his welfare, but direct what you have to say at this man's individual and subjective way of thinking.

If you can do all this then name me a man who can resist you, for it is an eternal truth confirmed by all experience that *if your man does not become what he can [64] and should become then it is your own fault*, for you have failed to inspire respect and confidence; you have not treated him in his own particular way, or have not approached him at the right and proper time; you have not adequately prepared your lecture or not made it lively and vivid enough, or have not tapped into his ideas to establish the necessary connection. Let me say it again: this man is not beyond persuasion, but you yourself are obviously not heroic enough to achieve this conquest, for these laurels are not destined to wreath every brow.

Now look into yourself, be brave enough to see the errors within you (for it is magnanimous to acknowledge them) and I am sure you will be grateful to me. When I look at the amazing diversity of constitutional structures, both public and secret, religious and political, and the eagerness with which men, often to the point of sacrificing their lives, have adhered to them, if I consider that this devout Jew for example would have become just as devout a Christian or Muslim if circumstances had conspired to make him one then *everything, and everything that people can be turned into, must depend on the way they are treated*. It should not therefore be beyond the bounds of possibility for you to make these men into noble, great, morally enlightened, unselfish and virtuous humans [65] using the stated ways and means whereby they can become anything else without exception. *I see structures being established for all sorts of things, but always for more selfish purposes, and their people become exactly what one wants them to become, and will become such as these more selfish purposes demand*. But serious structures, aimed at true goodness, I only rarely encounter.

9.) If unity is the heart and soul of every moral body then in every secret society, and in none more so than our own, we must avoid and remove anything that divides and separates us and spreads the spirit of disunity. *The sources of this unity are the passions and the more selfish interests*. Where the society's goal is itself made into the strongest passion then all others fall silent, their effect is minimised, they orientate themselves towards this goal and submit. Someone who is more interested in life than in the acquisition of wealth and power can despise these things, can be poor and insignificant, and can enjoy being one or the other, or both. Oh you men of ambition, you inexhaustible sources of discord, place your honour where it should be! [66] You want to shine and to grasp at every wretched opportunity to do so if only it leads where you want to go, but the one thing you do not grasp is what will lead you to it most certainly and most effectively. If you are truly a great man and want to bask in the admiration of your fellow-men then act like one, and act according to great principles. Do things that others will not be able to copy. Everyone, even the poorest in spirit, wants an important job, wealth and sensual enjoyment. The weaker a man is the more he wants them, *but he cannot despise them*.

Herein therefore lies greatness, namely to want what others abhor, to abhor what others want, to refuse and throw away the refreshing cup when your thirst is at its greatest, to be and to remain master of oneself, to serve and follow when you want to command, and all because of a higher goal, and because it is the best way of promoting that goal, to neutralise one's baser pleasures to increase those of the spirit – here alone lies greatness. This is something only heroes can do, the heroes of human nature, the men to whom a vista of higher forms of goodness has been opened.

Struggle with yourself in this way, and defeat yourself if you can. Severe is the battle, and even more severe is the victory, but impossible it is not. To forestall the causes of the discord that arises from the more selfish [67] viewpoints and passions and to bind men together in a common cause to achieve this harmony we must form great and strong souls, and all the Order's structures must have this as their aim.

Nowadays men are acting with greatness, from grand and noble principles that elevate the soul. This means that we need to establish systems where these principles can be demonstrated and emphasised. Grand vistas must be opened up which make it clear to us just how small and insignificant was the goal of our past passions and longings. They must show us that, through this new path, everything we have sought up to now can be reached more quickly, more surely and more lastingly. Then suddenly the fog will pass from our eyes, and small-mindedness and, along with it, discord will disappear like the stars before the dawn.

Then all we need to do is establish those ideas more firmly, make them more vivid, make them into needs, and then the miracle will have occurred: children will become men, cowards become heroes, and moral pygmies grow up to be giants. So much can be achieved by great and similar principles and a shared attunement to higher purposes! Combating [68] passions at the individual level is fruitless and too laborious. All the common ground must be undermined so that, just as the tree falls, so its branches fall and wither also. But you need time and patience for this, for we are concerned with nothing less than changing the whole, and that is not the work of a single day if one wants lasting results.

10.) *The unity of a body or entity is inconceivable without cohesion of its parts.* Each part must stand in its proper place and do no more and no less than the task assigned to it; each cog must mesh with another at the right place; and no part must hinder another. The movement that arises from a single pull or push must communicate with all the parts in the necessary measure and spread from the midpoint as far as the outermost periphery of the goal. The tighter this cohesion the simpler it is, and all the more perfect is the whole. All the individual forces must meet as if at a single focus, and there must therefore be a force that gathers them together and gives them the necessary direction. We must know, and know precisely, who is a part of this body and who is separated [69] from it. He who is cut off from it at one specific point remains separated from the whole, nor must anyone be able to insinuate himself into another place via the back-door if he went out by the front-door and so deserted the colours, whether voluntarily or compulsorily. Every addition to the membership must be posted, proposed and approved to ensure homogeneity of the parts and to prevent lack of uniformity. Favouritism must be banned, and the eyes and attention of everyone focused solely on those between whom the new member stands, i.e. those who directly impart the orientation and those who receive it through me.

This task would be enormous and indeed utterly impossible in such a widely-scattered body if an individual had to operate directly in every part of such an enormous whole, for there would simply not be sufficient time or resources. For these reasons the whole sphere of activity must therefore be subdivided into smaller districts and these then subordinated so that it becomes smaller and narrower as it ascends. This mechanism ensures unity, order, flexibility and vigour in execution, and will be all the more necessary [70] when the society is just starting out in order to achieve a uniform attunement and ensure that the whole machine is working and running properly.

11.) Only when all the members have been trained and a uniform attunement prevails, when the level of cohesion is high and all the parts fit together, and when the innermost and essential core has been organised may the society then acquire lateral branches e.g. a literary one. If these are developed at the beginning they dissipate energy and distract people from essential work; also, at that stage members' intentions are not yet pure enough for them not to be distracted into the pursuit of more selfish intentions by the abuses and degeneracies so common among them. Only when everyone has been trained will everything succeed, only then will a more selfish interest not be so severely abused, and only then will that interest submit to the rules of reason.

12.) To give this grouping even more cohesion, to develop this alliance from being a simple seat of communal delights to the closest possible harmony of spirits, a new kind of struggle and rivalry needs to emerge among all the members: everyone must try to excel everyone else in the kindnesses they perform; put himself as far as possible in the [71] other person's shoes; investigate the other person's reasonable expectations; picture to himself what would please or displease him, consider that it would be no less pleasing or displeasing to others, and act (or refrain from acting) accordingly.

If everyone behaved like this then no one would lose, everyone would win, and everyone would give just once to receive a thousand blessings in return. Everyone would come to understand that proud, self-interested and selfish demands lock up the hearts of others; that loving others is the best way of loving oneself; that a readiness to oblige and a concern for the rights and demands of others ensure one's own rights and open up the hearts of all; that a man who acts like this will never be friendless in his hour of need, and that everything will unite to save a man from whom, in similar cases, all expect (and not without reason) that

he will do the same for another. Then indeed the society will have just one proprietorship as well as just one soul and one heart.

13.) Among us, sworn oaths are superfluous, nor do we ask for character references. The matter itself must have a binding effect: if you are not bound by this alone, then you will swear oaths in vain. If you want to be and will become a traitor to humanity and if you seriously believe that your true advantage lies therein, then go away. [72]

And now my friend, it is time for me to address you personally! I have told you about how a secret society works in, as I believe, so much detail that the new land in which you have chosen to reside can never be entirely strange and unknown to you. If you are still determined to join us then I see you as someone driven to us by need and, as it were, by an inclination to buy. The goods that you seek from us are not given away freely but are received in return for a counter-obligation. We are the salesmen, you are the customer. The goods we offer for sale here are the property that is to be received through this connection, while the counter-obligation we demand from you is a precise observance of our rules. No one is forced to join and everyone is free to leave without fear as and when he wishes.

But, we ask ourselves, does he really not want to be one of us and to enjoy our advantages? What could be more reasonable? How could he possibly refuse to join our Order? How can he command us, how can he force us to share his opinion and his desires? Withdrawing from it, relinquishing his 'purchase', is something he is certainly free to do. But only when he pays the price, when he meets our requirements, will he receive certain rights towards us. [73] Insolence, bullying and threats cut no ice here. No one has the right to criticise our structures, to ask that they be changed or to declare them superfluous. If he does not have an overall view of the society how can he possibly know what the right place would be for any additions to it? He cannot know whether past or present circumstances have required a certain structure which we ourselves would perhaps have liked to dispense with just as much as anyone else. He therefore only has the right to withdraw if a certain structure displeases him.

It all depends on whether it is more convenient for you or for us to be in possession of the commodity. No emergency is forcing us to give it way, and we shall not relinquish it to anybody before our conditions are met. And it all depends on *us*: it is up to us to decide whether someone has sufficiently met these conditions, just as it is up to you to subsequently decide whether we are keeping our word. Since we do not ask for any money except in emergencies, since we do not interfere in people's domestic arrangements, since we demand nothing of anyone which they would not otherwise be already obliged to do, we must assume that our demands are fair and that we shall at the appropriate time keep our word very much [74] to the letter to everyone who persists with us. But what exactly are these demands?

1.) *Loyalty, faith and sacredness of the word once given*: because without these no association of human beings, especially a secret society, can exist at all; because many possibilities become impossible without them; because very many of the greatest evils have their origins solely in a lack of them; and because it is in your interests, when suffering misfortune in other circumstances, to enjoy the trust of your fellow-men so that you may find helpers among them. Guarantors, witnesses and sworn oaths prove nothing except that we are liars: he whom a simple handshake does not bind is at any time ready to betray God as well as man. May a simple Yes or No therefore be your oath, and Amen be your most sacred surety.^{xi}

2.) We insist on *good housekeeping*. Avoidable debts should be an abomination to you. A man who spends more than he earns or who lives off the sweat and wealth of others is often not much better than (and is often even more dangerous than) a thief. His body and his leisure are his idols: in every bad action he offers himself for sale and places his integrity in the pocket [75] of whoever wishes to make himself master of it. Dishonour and contempt await him, and grief and anxiety banish all joy and cheerfulness from his soul. He will snatch at every soap-bubble and clutch at every straw, however meagre, to maintain his existence. Everything that offers temporary respite he will embrace with open arms; he will betray secrets; he will sell his friends and justice; he will encourage and recommend the unworthy, break all his oaths and deceive his masters; and he will open his mouth to lies and his heart to falsehood. Improvidence,

sensuality, vanity, alcohol, sex, gambling, intemperance or gluttony have brought him so far that they have become essential parts of his character. Do not trust such a man, for he has abused the trust of others and has repaid their good deeds with ingratitude or with their undoing. He has increased hatred and mistrust among men and has made more difficult the way and the means to help the genuinely distressed.

3.) *We demand submission and obedience*, but not because we want to exploit people, treat them arbitrarily and needlessly restrict their freedom [76] but because we are leaders throughout the vast expanse of nameless lands and regions; because insight and knowledge are attributed to us and expected of us; because we consequently see further than those whom we lead; because you do not yet know all the means and, due to lack of an overall view, how the actions undertaken in pursuit of the goal are interconnected; because essentially you are obeying not men, not ourselves, not arbitrariness, but the law of reason, in other words you are obeying yourself; because if you would like to be completely enlightened and free of passion then you could and would offer submission and obedience and nothing else to achieve the goal that has become so dear to you; because without submission there can be no social order; because in the strictest systems, societies and constitutions the greatest effects are always produced before all others; because your immediate inclination is to give orders; because long experience is required before you can order well and appropriately; because, for us, giving orders means nothing more than announcing and making comprehensible to another person who is still not seeing with sufficient clarity what their true advantage really is; because in a well-ordered association only one spirit and soul can and should prevail if everybody wants to think rationally, for [77] among many opinions on the same subject only one can be true, only one means can be the most correct, and in these opinions and means all reasonable people should justly share; finally, in every situation a mastery of the art of obedience reveals the possession of a much greater soul than the desire, so natural for all men, to dominate.

High social status means nothing to us, and a person who wants to impress us with his worldly advantages should steer well clear. In our milieu we do not recognise any differences in social standing, though we otherwise respect them but without flattery or ‘crawling’. We consider only the difference in the qualities of the spirits and their moral worth; rather, we know that a person of high social standing is all the more closely allied to the example that the Order tries to set because, through the greatness and rarity of the sacrifice that brings him to do the right thing, he gains more attention and respect.

4.) *We demand punctuality and good organisation even in minor matters*. Too often a happy outcome hinges on a single moment, and how can we know that any given moment is not the crucial one? The beauty and harmony of the whole [78] are no less dependent on it, and no commander can appear with his troops on the battlefield to which he has been assigned later than his order requires without jeopardising the whole enterprise. It is impossible for great things to be achieved when the means and the tools are unreliable. ‘No more and no less’, ‘no later and no earlier’, ‘at this place and nowhere else’ are certainly not trivial matters. The punctual man is certainly also the most dedicated, the most industrious and the most reliable. Punctuality is therefore a necessity because time and opportunity once lost can never be regained; because in any planned activities one thing depends upon the other; because if one thing is omitted then nothing else can occur; because a lack of punctuality often means that what should have been the work of an hour is often suspended for years on end; and because one then has to wait to achieve a goal one still fervently desires.

5.) We insist *that all promotions in the Order are our decision alone*. Only we can know what a person is like; what use we can make of him; whether he should be properly prepared for further stages, the content of which is still unknown to the grumbling and dissatisfied member; and whether the ideas necessary for this step have already been set in motion within him, are already active within him, and [79] have become a necessity for him. If someone grumbles about a delay in promotion then his intentions are impure: vanity, a desire to shine, to dominate, to know everything, are the secret mainsprings behind him joining the Order. Everyone must, as it were, promote himself. He who envies another his promotion is begrudging him his better previous training and his considerable benefit to the Order.

6.) We demand *hard work and diligence* because activity is the soul of everything; because the life of the parts is the life of the whole; because keeping busy, toil and hard work are the surest ways of guarding against temptation and boredom; because the inactivity and indifference of one person infect many others; and because most of our work involves meeting the obligations into which we have already entered.

7.) We also require *discretion*, so that we can work more calmly and more securely and can make the pursuit of goodness more attractive by shrouding it in secrecy.

Erudition is most welcome, but we utterly despise it if it is not accompanied by the qualities already mentioned and by goodness of heart. How many noble men would have been completely lost to us [80] if we had stipulated erudition as a basic requirement for our members? We look for men with a good natural and practical intelligence, people who are the friends and disciples of the truth.

8.) Apart from the *burning desire to strive daily for greater perfection* we also ask that you do not read these lectures of ours and all the instruction communicated to you like a newspaper and then lay them to one side. Knowledge alone is of little use to us. Working and putting things into practice is our primary task. You should learn, hear and read *in order then to act*.

This is what makes our school of thought different. Our teachings are not in themselves new and unfamiliar, but the structures for their implementation and the burning and passionate desire to realise them in practice are, and this is our hallmark above all others. Reflect therefore on everything. Apply it to yourself, to others and to circumstances. Always think about abstract principles in terms of examples, consequences and their relationship to yourself, your moral condition and your felicity. Talk frequently and gladly about these matters with your peers and with ourselves, and ponder them in private. Do not take anything for granted just because we have said it. Tell us your doubts and reject everything for which we do not give you a satisfactory answer. Once [81] you have grasped something and have convinced yourself of its truth and importance then open up your entire soul to its profitable absorption, make this knowledge familiar and vivid to you, and act the way you think.

Those are our demands. Do you find them severe, unfair, self-interested, and impossible? I do not think they are, for ‘many are called, but few are chosen’.^{xii} So, once again, here are our demands: they are the price you have to pay if you want to join us. If they strike you as unjust and too demanding then we shall part in peace and then only time will tell which of us two, in departing, followed the surer path to the ultimate goal of our desires: *felicity*. [82]

INSTRUCTION FOR THE SUPERIORS FOR THE TRAINING AND ASSESSMENT OF MEMBERS AFTER THEIR ADMISSION TO THE FIRST DEGREE.

The Order and its Members are there to *work*: the Lecture should therefore focus on motivating them. Rather than simply convincing them of the truth of something it should instil in them a keen desire to cooperate.

The ideas presented should familiarise Aspirants with all the structures, goals and methods of secret societies; present and portray the essence of such societies in the best possible light; make cooperation into an obligation; detail everything they need to avoid in order to achieve the society’s goal; familiarise them with the mainsprings of the secret art of government and how it differs from civil government; and reveal the defects of the latter and thereby emphasise the need for more focused and secretive societies (which is why this Instruction is sent by separate mail).

But how do I know I have achieved these aims? From:

1. The degree of attentiveness shown by the listener during the reading of the Lecture.
2. His reactions.
3. His opinion of the Lecture.
4. His subsequent behaviour. [83]

1.) *From the Aspirant's degree of attentiveness and his reactions.*

- a. If you as the Lecturer are frequently interrupted by inappropriate behaviour on the part of the listener or if you see that he is distracted, e.g. he is counting the pages to see whether the Lecture will be ending soon (especially if he does this right at the start of the lecture) or perhaps even falls asleep or his attention starts to wander in some other way then the impression you have given was as bad as it could possibly be.
- b. Objections raised by the listener that are not in themselves damaging to the lecturer's arguments should be welcomed as they give you a chance to explain the subject-matter in more detail. For the listener these objections are not at all trivial. They are actually quite important to him but they should only be raised at the end of the Lecture.
- c. If however the listener's attention is focused firmly on the Lecturer and he becomes even more attentive at appropriate places (and you should certainly pay close attention to see whether or not this happens, because it is important), and if the listener shows signs of strong agreement or continues paying close attention right to the end then there is hope that the Lecture will have its intended effect.

2.) *From the listener's opinion of the Lecture.*

1. If the listener thinks the lecture was satisfactory but that it did not tell him anything new then this might offer evidence of his [84] convictions, since the fact he did not find anything new in it proves that he understood the Lecture and that it has awakened within him his slumbering ideas, has brought these to the surface and has made them clearer.

Such an opinion can however also mean that the listener was expecting something quite different and that he found the subject-matter relevant but insufficiently weighty: this is a bad sign. A man like this often needs to be fed either more concrete or more abstract ideas if his attention is to be fully engaged.

2. If the listener does not think the lecture was sufficiently relevant and was more appropriate to less well-informed members then, as in the first instance, this might be a sign that his inquisitiveness and curiosity have not been fully satisfied. For him it is more a question of assuaging these needs rather than learning something new and getting down to work.

Alternatively he may have a very high opinion of his own level of insight, or perhaps he is not looking into the subject-matter in sufficient depth. If the latter this may be because he considers reflection upon it to be beneath his dignity.

All these are bad signs, which leave little hope. Both these reactions suggest that the subject-matter is far from being something for which the listener felt any need and that there must therefore have been some failures in preparation. [85]

The types of listener who feel that the subject-matter lacks either novelty or relevance can still be trained if you can show them that, even after the Instruction they have just received, they are still unable to answer the following questions. If they can give appropriate answers to them however then that is proof that they should undergo preparation for a higher degree even though they still lack sufficient insight to see that their ideas are far from being consistent with those of others. Possible questions can include:

1. How can I persuade someone to share my intentions?
2. What reduces a Member's enthusiasm?
3. Why are secret societies necessary?

4. What are the characteristics of the most perfect secret societies?
5. What motivations must underlie one's work in secret societies?
6. How is a love for the society's goal taught and absorbed?
7. Why do people join secret societies? [86]
8. What are the signs that a particular intention, e.g. vanity, has played a part in someone's application for membership?
9. What are the factors that destroy secret societies? What are the greatest obstacles they face? How can these obstacles be removed?
10. Why do members of a secret society have to be similarly attuned?
11. How can this shared attunement be produced? What hinders this process and what facilitates it?
12. What impression should this Lecture make? Why should it make that impression and no other? How do I tell that it has made that impression?
13. What things can corrupt the Superiors? What characteristics should they display to win people's respect and obedience?

Anyone who cannot answer these questions properly is very wrong to think that this Degree is not important or novel enough for him. These questions must therefore be put to the Members of this Class to ensure they are familiar with the principles of the Degree. [87]

3.) *From his behaviour after the Lecture.*

1. A listener who immediately changes the subject, who remains nonplussed, who says the first thing that comes into his head, who raises objections regarding his lack of cooperation or who visits his Sponsor only rarely should first be summoned to discuss his membership of the Order. He may express regret that he had to attend the Lecture for this Degree in the first place: this sort of person has no appreciation of or interest in the subject-matter and it is hard to believe he ever will have if several such conversations with him prove fruitless.

2. A listener who talks spontaneously and enthusiastically about the Lecture, who has obviously been made to think, whose ideas are in ferment, who has identified and developed inferences which were certainly not patently obvious in the Degree, who intends following up these inferences, who is eager for opportunities, who visits his Sponsor soon after the Lecture to tell him about his experiences during the evening in question, who wants to hear the Lecture again and again, who asks for a copy of it so he can reflect upon it at his leisure and who shows other signs of enthusiasm and interest in it is one in whom the seed will most certainly sprout, for it has been sown in precious soil. [88]

Everyone should note the following general rule: those whose minds are tailor-made for these ideas need nothing more than a hint for them to start burning with enthusiasm, and these are certainly the men for us. Those in whom this characteristic is insufficient do not have any feeling for the subject-matter and will hardly ever grasp it unless you find exactly the right moment to present it to them, for it is a spark that can only cause a fire when it encounters a flammable object. Stones it will never ignite: it may warm them up, but the heat will dissipate faster than it develops. You need to appreciate something to be moved by it, but this feeling does not in itself provide any instruction if Nature herself does not provide it. Where this feeling is lacking then Nature will drop a hint that you should not waste your time with the Aspirant and should devote your efforts and powers to others with whom you might enjoy greater success. At best you will be training up a hypocrite who will dissemble until he has what he wants or until he experiences for certain that he will never find in the Order what he needs or desires.

For a listener to experience the truth of a Lecture an immediate connection must be established after every phrase between the [89] vague feeling that he has a large amount of relevant experiences that he has either

already undergone or might easily undergo in the future on the one hand and relevant everyday instances on the others. Anyone who is unable to experience a Lecture in this way will not be able to detect within it the rule underlying a quantity of real-life instances that he perceives obscurely but which he now sees with greater clarity. Such a person will only have half-understood the Lecture or not have understood it at all. No one with any interest in human nature will regard these observations as trivial and insignificant, for the whole of the man's future behaviour depends upon them. [90]

INSTRUCTION FOR THE WORK OF MEMBERS OF THE FIRST CLASS.

1.) There are no admission ceremonies in this Class. They are superfluous in situations such as this where the matter speaks for itself; they also distract attention from the main issue and give rise to unnecessary expenditure and effort; and finally, a thinker does not need to take part in play-acting to understand his obligations.

2.) Social gatherings like those usual in other societies have just as little place in our Order, for they can rarely be held without causing a fuss which might reveal the members' identities and expose them to observation. Instead of such meetings we would rather see the Members enjoying each other's company; gathering enthusiastically around their trainers; discussing the affairs of the Order; reading good books; writing well-crafted, relevant and stimulating essays; and telling each other about anything they might observe at their gatherings which might help disseminate within the society a special form of refinement, a distinctive joy and a higher moral tone. [91]

3.) Of just as little importance among us are signs of recognition. The Conduct,^{xiii} our shared principles and, in the case of strangers, the Credentials^{xiv} (which should be shared with Novices only after the most stringent precautions have been taken) are the decisive and most reliable characteristics. If there must be some sort of sign of recognition then the Superiors would prefer the following because of their moral usefulness in accustoming our Members to deliberation and discouraging them from excessive haste:

1. They should get into the habit of using a rather serious, clear and not too hurried form of speech and discourse,
2. similarly, they should not make any promises or commit themselves to anything without adding something that indicates careful deliberation, such as 'Yes, I would like to come tomorrow but only if nothing stops me from doing so'.

As for those who are prone to behave in precisely the opposite way to that just outlined, the following techniques can be used to familiarise them with the above arrangements:

1. Repeatedly draw the attention of those around you to the fact they are committing these errors.
2. Create visual aids to remind people of these arrangements: these must however be so designed that they achieve their purpose [92] by impressing themselves upon our senses readily and often.

4.) No further Degree is awarded to a Candidate before the above Instruction has become part of his way of thinking. The Superiors should therefore set oral and written examinations on the contents of the Degree.

5.) No one of this Class may act as a Sponsor or even raise another person's hopes that he might be sponsored. He may however propose anyone for membership and propose as many people as he wishes, but he must present a full character reference for everyone he proposes.

6.) Each quarter every Member in the entire Order without exception must hand over to his assigned Superiors a sealed note labelled Q. L.^{xv} in which he states frankly and fearlessly how satisfied he is with the conduct of his Superiors; whether something within this period has caused him to have any negative ideas

about the Order or has diminished his enthusiasm and dedication; whether and in what ways things have not lived up to expectations, etc. Everyone should welcome this procedure. [93]

7.) There is no fixed membership fee, but the Order expects its members to suggest a donation and will then leave it to their discretion as to whether they wish to pay it or not.

The Order wants to produce great men capable of transcending all spiritual adversity and fearless followers of truth and virtue. It wants to impart to virtue itself an external allure above and beyond its inner beauty. Many will be deterred by the sad fates of the followers of truth and their families and will be concerned and fearful about their own fortunes and sustenance. They will therefore often have to crawl to people and dissemble against their will and in order to obtain such sustenance will be forced to take measures of which they themselves disapprove and which can only be excused by the danger they face.

You must free these men from their fear and the need to dissemble. You can do this very easily by, for example, encouraging them to insure each other against any accidents for which they are not to blame. Depending on the advice of the Superiors this can be done as follows:

1.) Everyone joining is told about the donation and the use to which it might be put. His agreement is requested. He can refuse if he [94] wants to, but if he does so then this is always a sign of a very weak social feeling, for what use to us is such a colleague who lacks the most important of all social virtues?

2.) The contribution is only handed over if the case is genuine.

3.) If compensation is to be paid to the extent of the loss then the contribution handed over must be equivalent to the sum for which compensation is requested.

4.) This scheme can also be extended to include widows and children, in which case the contribution must be paid annually.

5.) A Member requesting insurance cover must also supply testimonials from the Superiors and, if necessary, from others confirming that his need has not arisen through indebtedness caused by:

1. imprudence,
2. extravagance,
3. bad housekeeping.

6.) Before admission to the insurance scheme and before joining the Order everyone's domestic circumstances must therefore be closely investigated. Moderation and restraint must be among the person's most prominent virtues. [95]

7.) Through this scheme the Order gains the following:

1. Its goal, to instruct men in virtue, is achieved more quickly.
2. Its members will be less at the mercy of misfortune and the power of evildoers.
3. The Order's cohesion becomes stronger and closer;
4. Loyalty to the Order is increased through the tangible benefits of membership. Approved non-members may also be admitted to the insurance scheme. Through this expedient the Order gains in various ways:
 - a. Strangers not otherwise suited to the Order become an integral part of its interests.
 - b. The insurance scheme can be established in a Province at an earlier stage.
 - c. Each Province can care for its own Members and can survive without the support of the other Provinces.

Everyone will readily imagine the peace of mind enjoyed by men who see that they now enjoy security in the face of the many likely accidents and will note the visible changes in their character and their actions and the degree of independence they achieve thereby. What rich and powerful person fancying himself to be above [96] human misery will refuse, if there is otherwise still some humanity and attention to duty in his soul, to contribute some of the crumbs that fall from his table to ensure the peace of mind of so many, to promote virtue and to provide security to virtue's followers in a way that causes him so little personal inconvenience? Could a man to whom his money is all that matters possibly be a member of such a society without bringing it into dishonour? In this situation, who gives anything without getting it back in the event of need and, in any case, for what purpose does he need what he does give?

So much for the general arrangements: special arrangements for implementation and the more specific safeguards depend on the circumstances and needs of each Province.

8.) These structures of communal contribution can also be used, with a few modifications, to lift poor people of talent and genius out of the gutter so that they can be instructed in an appropriate branch of knowledge. Thanks to their tremendous enthusiasm such men, who will owe all their knowledge and existence to such a connection, will be more capable than anyone of furthering the aims of the society, for [97] no one will have experienced the advantages of such an association to a greater extent than they have done.

9.) All arrangements that give our Members the opportunity to practise eloquence in oral or written form are very relevant because we need speakers to attune people to the requirements of the Order.

10.) Each Aspirant receives, on admission to this Degree, his own special name which, where feasible, is taken from the history of the nation concerned. Only Superiors are given Greek or Roman names, or names from the history of ancient and exotic peoples. It would please the Superiors to receive from each Member a biography of the person whose name he has taken.

11.) To avoid titular ostentation within the Order, Members will introduce themselves in the Roman manner, e.g. M. T. Cicero Attico S., and place at the top of each item of correspondence a good moral dictum taken from an ancient or modern writer which will be all the more appropriate the more relevant it is to the contents of the letter. Everyone will readily see the great usefulness of these sayings.

12.) No one may be admitted to this Class at a location which he is just [98] passing through or where he will be spending only a short time. Any admissions and promotions outside the home-town or sphere of authorisation of the local Superior and his Special Requisition are strictly forbidden due to the confusion that might arise and a lack of sufficient knowledge of the circumstances, but

13.) All admissions and preparations for admission can only take place through each Province's own Manuductors^{xvi} after the Aspirant has been gazetted for this specific purpose throughout the entire Province, accepted by all the Superiors of the Province, registered by the heads of their Co-provinces, and authorised from there. In future therefore there will be only two days in the year on which Members and Aspirants can be accepted, i.e. January 1st and July 1st. Inquiries about membership can be made in the interim. Gazettings and authorisations must arrive some days before either of these two dates.

14.) The present Instruction will be sent only to the Superiors and to no one else.

15.) Before someone is actually accepted into this Class he will be asked whether he would like to eventually become part of the administration of the Order and even a leader of others, [99] in which case it will have to be explained to him that he must undergo a strict training.

16.) In the admissions process no special consideration should ever be shown towards the wealthy, people of high social standing or the learned. Power, wealth and learning will eventually manifest spontaneously but if they are not native plants then they very rarely flourish and do more harm than good. If an organisation favours these characteristics in its admissions process then the underlying intentions are primarily selfish, i.e.

the desire to stand out, suddenly achieve greatness, acquire political influence and insinuate oneself. In this case the essentials are neglected, achieving the vital harmony among Members becomes impossible and the society starts to decline, although there are also rare exceptions to this rule.

17.) Even more dangerous is when a person who wants to attract other people to the Order allows this intention to show too clearly or even reveals through his behaviour just how much the Order stands to gain from him becoming a Member. In this case he has renounced all claims to authority: all [100] obedience stops and he must now agree to have certain conditions imposed upon him which he himself should have prescribed for others.

18.) One or two days before the actual admission the Aspirant should be sent a passage from page 192 of the 1772 Berlin edition of Abbt's work *Die Abhandlung vom Verdienste*^{xvii} for his mature reflection, and his interpretation of it awaited. [101]

THE SECOND CLASS.

THE PHILOSOPHY OF GOOD FORTUNE AND WORLDLY PEOPLE.

We hear and read incessantly that human enlightenment has reached its peak. The description our contemporaries provide of such enlightenment asks us to believe that the end of the world is nigh, that Nature has finally reached its goal, and that at school we should imbibe the unadulterated wisdom of all the sages of antiquity. Certainly at no previous time has so much good writing appeared with such frequency on all the various subjects of human knowledge; never has the human spirit been explored so profoundly in works of the highest abstraction; never have there been so many good books in people's hands; never have there been so many useful inventions of such variety; never have so many harmful prejudices been attacked and refuted with such vigour; and never have manners been gentler and more polished, the social tone more select, and taste in the arts and entertainment of all kinds more delicate and refined.

While conceding this, let us suppose that true enlightenment does not consist in the theoretical and lifeless knowledge of more abstract (albeit greater) [102] truths, in mockery and extravagance, in making daring and outspoken judgements about the state and religion, in flashes of subtle wit and the gift of expressing oneself plainly, eloquently and comprehensibly, and just as little in a refined social tone or feeling, but rather in the correct understanding of one's true and enduring interests, an understanding of the subordination of goals,^{xviii} the shrewd selection of the means that will lead most directly to the highest of those goals (but not to every one of them), in acting rather than just knowing, in a vividly burning desire to behave at all times and under all circumstances in accordance with great and just principles, to express those principles in deeds rather than just in words, and to express them in practical convictions, in one's motivations, in the lively inner feeling, in the sharing of the heart and will, in the ceaseless striving to act in accordance with the purest and noblest of motives, in the greatest of the sacrifices that one could wish to make on behalf of a higher purpose and of a higher duty and perfection. Similarly, if the truly enlightened man welcomes pure truth without embellishment even in those cases where it is disadvantageous to him, where it is not a question of keeping up appearances or of winning honour or acclaim, where [103] injury, contempt, persecution and mockery are its result and reward, where age, social status and personal standing have no bearing upon the opinions that one expresses and, indeed, diminish their impact – if these are and must be the postulates of an 'enlightened spirit' then I think everyone should compare this description with what he actually is. If furthermore the most harmful prejudices still remain (albeit not completely and perhaps unnoticed); if, for the sake of a more selfish goal, new prejudices have been substituted for those that have been eliminated; if the obstacles to truth and virtue have merely changed and in all other respects are still working as powerfully as they ever did; and if the extrinsic encouragements to goodness are so few and so weak then, my friend, those who eulogise our century can clamour all they want, for in that case, regardless

of our theoretical progress, we are still great fools, and though we may edify ourselves with the great but so little imitated deeds of antiquity our present work remains but a fragment, and perfection is something reserved for a later and more mature generation.

In that case it also remains true that all the present moral decay has its roots in a wrong [104] way of thinking, in false and erroneous principles that determine every man's actions and which are the predominant ones among them; that men at all times and places who have acted in accordance with their thoughts have *acted wrongly* precisely because they were *thinking wrongly*; that consequently, when the cause, i.e. the way of thinking, changes then so in the same measure do the consequences and the actions; that we should be sufficiently convinced by the experience we so frequently encounter among so many peoples, religions and sects, i.e. that it is possible to change men's basic principles by working on their heads and thereby on their hearts; that despite all this no one makes any serious efforts to investigate the erroneous principles of his nation or his age which give rise to these wrong actions in order then to undermine, weaken and replace them with something better; and that this alone might be the surest and least harmful way of promoting a higher degree of morality.

Is it not therefore worth the trouble to investigate these principles which determine our current way of thinking so as to better understand the origins of our wrongdoing? For people boast about enlightenment and yet at the same time complain about the [105] irremediable ruination of the world. But how can those two things possibly co-exist? If the world is indeed ruined then the level of enlightenment cannot possibly have reached its peak and we have, at best, progressed to the point where we think according to good principles and have these clearly in mind and yet act according to bad ones. The latter are still the most common among us, the ones that have become associated with the most ideas and which are seen by us as the most excellent, the most vivid, the most easily grasped and, precisely for that reason, the most powerful, because they are active within us without us being aware of them and without us knowing that we are acting in accordance with them.

So what exactly are these principles? I do not think I am mistaken when I simply state that the way of thinking of our contemporaries is identical to that of the so-called *Sophists* and to their ethics as well; that almost all the princely courts and all worldly people as well as everyone living in comfortable circumstances are more or less infected with it; that it is therefore no surprise that even the better sort of man acts in the crucial incidents of his life just as these Sophists would have in similar circumstances; and that every man who acts sophistically, whatever he may have to say about such a statement and however he may protest against it, would, at least in [106] this case and indeed every time that he acts in such a way, have also been *thinking* sophistically.

I think the best way to prove my argument is to present the system of the Sophists, with all its implications, in its strongest formulation. Should anyone hearing or reading this feel that he is himself not too virtuous and so go into himself and scrutinise himself more closely then I will wager that, if he is willing to be sincere, he will and must find that many of these principles have slumbered in his own soul and, precisely for that reason, might have irresistibly compelled him to act inappropriately. So superficially attractive are these principles that he will have trouble resisting them. He will find that everything is infected by this system, and that all perversity results from it.

I think the following is the best way of presenting the system of the Sophists and delineating it in such a way that its foundations are clearest and its basic propositions most coherent.

The Sophists seem to me to proceed from a basic proposition which they share with all other systems and which is actually fundamentally very true, namely that *man is compelled to every action by a preceding desire, and that this desire or absence of desire [107] is the result of an anticipated good or evil, i.e. pain or pleasure*. The structure of human nature, in its essence and origins, is such that man seeks out pleasant states of mind, or pleasure, just as much as he flees and abhors unpleasant ones, or pain. The Sophists however immediately branch off from the main ideological trunk and thus from all other systems through their basic argument, which is the key to their entire theoretical edifice, by arguing that *all pleasure and displeasure are essentially*

physical. They then very speciously try to derive from this claim all the various kinds and genres of pleasure and displeasure.

This is also the point where we need to launch our first and main attack on their system if we are not to be forced to wholly accept their views, for it is almost impossible – in such a way that all specious objections and concerns are satisfactorily removed – to extricate oneself from the series of experiences which they cite in support of their very simple proposition and from the sophistries and pitfalls of which their teachings are full and by which their audience is engulfed. [108] For it is around two main questions that all the systems that investigate human felicity rotate: *Is all pleasure as well as all pain basically physical?* and *Is the pleasure in this world an end or a means?*

The Sophists use the following arguments to prove that all pain and pleasure are basically physical and can be attributed to sensation, and that physical sensibility and bodily desire are the ultimate mainsprings of all human actions.

An aversion to physical pain, hunger, cold and thirst as well as the anticipation of sensual pleasure helped restrain the tendency towards inertia of the first Earth-dwellers, made them more active and inventive, and encouraged them to combine in large social units. This is the source both of our present refinement and of that yet to come. If, as rarely happens, a man willingly undergoes real physical pain then that is always with the intention of avoiding greater pain, or a pain that he imagines to be worse and more intense. If he spurns an opportunity for physical pleasure, e.g. through acting moderately, then this will always be with the intention of receiving a greater pleasure – not immediately and not so intensively perhaps – but one that he seeks [109] to enjoy all the more frequently and for longer. This is why man shoulders the burden of labour, acts with restraint, and practises thrift to the point of avarice despite the greatest dangers, all with the intention of removing an anticipated and, for him, far more grievous physical evil.

It was an aversion to physical pain that transformed the first caves and human dwelling-sites into more comfortable homes and caused them to be improved as far as the level of today's relative magnificence. An aversion to the same physical pain covered man's bare skin with clothes, animal skins, wool, linen and silks, and so imparted value to many objects because they were suited to the satisfaction of his physical needs. This greatly increased the level of human activity besides developing various branches of nutrition. A lack of sustenance and the resulting physical discomfort turned savage hunters and robbers into more gregarious herdsmen, who shortly thereafter were themselves transformed into peaceful agriculturalists. This also familiarised man with fixed dwelling-sites, introduced the concept of private property, necessitated the establishment of civil order and the restriction of natural human freedom, and brought weaker men under the yoke of the law out of fear of the violence of the [110] strong. It led mankind to tacitly agree among themselves that they would refrain reciprocally from infringing the rights and property of others and from doing to others what they did not want others to do to them – all with the aim of preserving their property and so maintaining their means of sustenance and their resources against hunger and physical pain. This quantity of new and more refined needs, all of which can be collectively traced back to the first needs of nature, has also encouraged man to look beyond the present and his bare necessities and taught him to set aside a store and to produce a surplus in order to subsequently exchange this against the surpluses of others to satisfy newer and later needs.

It was physical suffering therefore that gave rise to trade, and to facilitate this a further refinement created certain favoured means of exchange which were capable of being substituted for all other exchangeable items. It therefore also introduced *money*, which has no value apart from its ability to be substituted and bartered for absolutely anything and so facilitate the satisfaction of man's physical needs. Love of wealth and money is therefore, if we trace it back to its origins and to [111] its true value and basis, really a love of sensuous enjoyment and, therefore, an actual aversion to physical pain. Every son of the Earth therefore, even the miser, loves in the form of money, the means and capacity to remove this pain and enjoy the opportunity for sensual satisfaction.

Similarly a love of honours and power is a love of and a proclivity towards a degree of influence with which one can obtain the means to enjoyment with assurance and ease and can immediately distance oneself from pain. The love of power is the desire to use others as the instruments and servants of one's pleasure, for only the powerful man can do that, and can do it all the more, the more powerful he is. External honour (and therefore also internal honour, for the latter follows from the former) is, no less than money, a way of more readily obtaining sensual enjoyment and of making those who respect us, through the predominance we therefore have over them and the influence we retain over them, more obedient and obliging towards our intentions, while these intentions are forms of sensual enjoyment, either proximate or distant, direct or indirect. A people that did not want to reward useful actions with distinctions, promotions and honours would have to reward them instead with money or [112] food, property, slaves or women to encourage people to undertake great deeds. Honour represents all this just as money does, and is worth just as little if it cannot help its possessor acquire all these things, for it is a way of obtaining pleasure and of keeping pain at bay. Without money and honour all the allure of activity is lost, and what purpose do these two things serve if they are not means to satisfy the most elementary bodily needs? For the mainsprings of all human actions are either immediate sensual indulgence; peace and quiet; or a love of money, honour and power. In pleasure all the others are contained, and all of them lead more distantly to sensory pleasure. *Sensory pleasure is therefore the highest and ultimate goal of man.* If this goal is more concealed and more remote then the enjoyment is termed 'spiritual' and man's moral and intellectual pleasures are of this kind.

Even the various branches of knowledge are only cherished and pursued in so far as they provide us with relaxation or a livelihood. Hunger and idleness invented them and wrote our books for us, and their seat is to be found more in the stomach than in the head. If you stop the pursuit of learning as a way of acquiring public office, honours, money and [113] fame, then look who will apply themselves to them. You will find evidence of this in every country: branches of learning blossom only to the extent that they lead to one or the other of these things. In the days of our forefathers, when this was not the case and physical strength and martial prowess or other occupations exclusively opened up the path to great fortune, learned people would have been found exclusively in the church, but only in so far as the church needed them. This is still true today in the Orient and under despotic regimes, where only physical advantages are procured and men are whatever you want them to be – wise or foolish, murderers or heroes, good or evil, learned or ignorant, timid or courageous – in fact, whatever their sensual advantage demands. In these situations it is all a matter of the stronger and more powerful members of society and to what sphere of action they allocate their energies, to what interests they allocate their drives, to what direction they allocate their strength, and for what type of activity they sell pleasure or displeasure.

From this foundation the local customs, virtues and morality take their direction according to the prevailing taste, the will of the stronger and the prospects that they afford. Make vileness and slander feel at home and make smooth the road to great good fortune and [114] all the world is vile, all the world is slandered. Let frugality and every other virtue be mocked and then even your teachers of morality will join in the mocking. Then they only follow their own teachings if following them makes them agreeable and ensures their good fortune and are ashamed of those pupils who bring their teachings to fulfilment, pretending not to know them when they meet them to avoid awkward questions, and happy to sacrifice them to their peace and quiet and their political life.

If you spend little but allow outward display to be the means by which you achieve social mobility then the contempt in which you will be held will force you sooner or later to approach those who despise you and to become more like them. The shame and ridicule generally associated with this form of behaviour force the whole world to outwardly differentiate itself: everything then fashions itself after the vulgar herd, the higher social classes or the will of the rulers, who do just what they like because they can do it with impunity and because their situation and their power protects them from physical harm.

All virtue is thus orientated towards the advantage that it affords: take this advantage, attach it to the opposite, and vice then becomes the virtue and morality of man. Virtue then becomes the subtlety and the

skill to provide oneself with the greatest amount of sensory enjoyment while suffering the least amount of pain. All [115] virtues without exception lose their identity when they are seen from this perspective. Justice becomes an aversion to all the physical suffering associated with injustice but this aversion and consequently justice itself can only last as long as the evils associated with them: remove these, as is the case with the great and powerful, associate certain advantages with justice, and who then is still just?

Similarly, empathy becomes revulsion and pain when faced with the undeserved suffering of others, while charity becomes the effort to avoid the sight of someone suffering. Moderation becomes an aversion to illness and death, and intelligence the anticipation of the pain that accompanies unintelligent behaviour. Bravery becomes the determination to deflect from oneself a forthcoming danger, nourished and reinforced by the prospect of honour and acclaim. Gratitude becomes a demand for new pleasures and advantages, and all the so-called pangs of conscience and internal anxiety arise from the anticipation of the physical evils that accompany our frailties. Even Christian virtue becomes merely a fear of Hell and an anticipation of the Heaven on which everyone sets his hopes.

At this point let us pause to examine the consequences and practical outcome of this [116] theory and the resulting experiences. Be honest, is this not precisely the way our courtiers and worldly people think, and all those blessed with good fortune? I must confess that these principles are very appealing to those who are content with snap judgements, but whoever accepts these ideas must also agree *that something is good only in so far as it does not cause me any physical pain, that accordingly nothing is absolutely good; that, on the contrary, all goodness and virtue are oriented towards convenience and impunity, that the right of the stronger is the only right that matters, but only for as long as he remains the stronger*. Then it would simply be 'Goodbye to ethics!' and the end of any sort of higher morality.

So let us pause awhile. Be honest, for this is something that relates to your own healing. Be honest with yourself, and do not dissemble. Admit it, do your own experiences not remind you of your own experiences? Indeed, have they not formed part of your own personal philosophy? Can you say they have never ever determined your intentions and actions? Have money, honour, power, sensual enjoyment and relaxation never been the mainsprings and ultimate foundations of your actions?

If they have, then you were a [117] Sophist without knowing it, and the more a Sophist, the more often you acted like one. I am so sure that everyone is to a greater or lesser extent a Sophist, that their corruption stems from that fact, and their improvement depends on forsaking these foundations and aiming for higher ones, that I would refuse to believe you even if you were to assure me of the opposite. If you want to insist that this way of thinking has never been your own then please respond to these propositions and let us see to what extent you can refute them. If you cannot do so, or only very superficially, then I wager that you have always been your own man and still are, that you still have power over yourself and that this will long remain the case, but that you are not firmly rooted in goodness and run the risk of being overwhelmed at any moment by the eloquence of a Sophist, of giving your approval to all the conclusions of this system and of then living and dying by them.

Here the Lecturer pauses to give the Candidate time for reflection and to encourage him to refute the arguments orally or in writing. [118]

Continuation.

To adequately disprove the system of the Sophists and, therefore, that of our more worldly people we must attack it on its strongest flank and seek to undermine its foundations.

Its *basic premise is that all pleasure is sensual, i.e. a means of assuaging physical needs, and that it can always be traced back to them*. We have to set against this a premise of our own, which we must then prove, namely that *every pleasure is a means of satisfying a need of the soul and is to that extent spiritual and not sensual, and that this statement also applies to physical pleasures*.

For what exactly is pleasure? It is *an activity of the soul raised to a high degree*. And what is displeasure, what is pain? It is *an inhibited activity of the soul*. All our experiences confirm this. Anyone who is willing to reflect impartially upon his pleasures and displeasures will find that all without exception stem from mental activity. What hurts us more in the failure of our plans, than the stagnation of ideas, all of which we wanted to go in a particular direction but were suddenly stymied? [119] What is it that makes every form of contradiction so unpleasant other than our inability to reconcile an idea with our own? What is the source of our annoyance about something we cannot accept or prove? What is the source of that mute sadness caused by the death of someone we adored other than the emptiness that suddenly arises within our mind because we no longer encounter the idea of this person, which we were formerly used to encountering as a sequel to so many other ideas along with and with respect to certain objects, because the mind can no longer think of and process such objects in the same order and with the same degree of ease as it previously could? What is the source of the joy we feel regarding the death and ruin of an enemy, other than the unhindered progress that our own favourite ideas will now enjoy of which this enemy, so long opposed? What is so attractive about gambling other than the alternation of ideas effortlessly presenting themselves, and the ease with which we arrange and handle them according to a pre-determined rule? What is it about money that gives us such pleasure other than the amount of prospects and opportunities it offers us and makes it feasible for us to engage with and use? What do we find so diverting about the discovery of a new rule or general proposition other than the quantity [120] of instances we can now suddenly survey and arrange, and the anxiety and doubt that we remove thereby? What do we enjoy so much about acquiring a major perspective on something other than the large number of lesser perspectives of which we can simultaneously obtain an overall view? What do we like so much about great deeds other than the large number of consequences to which they lead? What is every pain other than a frustrated interest and therefore an inhibited flow of ideas? Why do people feel such annoyance about the way the world is organised other than through an encountered and observed contradiction with our own thoughts, desires and longings? What awakens the desire for power other than a longing to implement one's own ideas and plans? What is so annoying about doubt and indecision other than the way basic arguments are propounded on one side to oppose those on the other and so counter them with equal force to block their progress? What do we hate about our enemies other than that they oppose our wishes? What do we love about our friends other than their similarity to us and the anticipated fulfilment of and participation in their desires? Even sensual physical longing: what is it other than a perceived well-being of our body and – because our mental operations are improved by its proper attunement – an anticipation of the body's co-operation with [121] a well-functioning mind?¹

A multitude of further experiences will confirm the truth of these ideas, and teach us that the basic human impulse is of a higher nature, that it is concerned with the enlightenment and broadening of our way of thinking, and that everything that is *pleasant for us is what favours this original drive, and whatever is unpleasant is that which hinders it*; that it is accordingly untrue that all pleasures and displeasures are fundamentally sensual and that, indeed, they are precisely the opposite; that man was therefore created for something more than sheer sensual enjoyment; that the goal is the perfection of his spirit, and that this consists in having as many correct and clear ideas as possible of the highest possible quality and in being able to perceive as many objects as possible with ease and without resistance and so, through that very process, enjoy as much spiritual pleasure (and as little displeasure) as possible and thus become more and more perfect and, through that perfection, enjoy ever greater [122] felicity.

[1.]) The system of the Sophists is therefore a *groundless* system. It is also however:

2.) a system *that offers no hope*. It is not for everyone, but only for those blessed with good fortune. It is certainly not for those who have nothing. It is not a shield against the slings and arrows of outrageous fortune, and yet outrageous fortune is all too common, and requires consolatory arguments to too great an

¹The reader should consult the following texts for further enlightenment: 1) *Mendelsohn's philosophical writings*; 2) *Johann Georg Sulzer's Untersuchung über den Ursprung der angenehmen und unangenehmen Empfindungen* (Investigation into the origin of pleasant and unpleasant sensations); 3) *Leonhard Cochiu's, Über die Neigungen* (On the inclinations); 4) *Johann August Eberhard's Allgemeine Theorie des Denkens und Empfindens* (General theory of thinking and feeling).

extent for anyone to be able to dispense with them. On the other hand it is an advantage and indeed an essential characteristic of worldly wisdom that it elevates its devotees, and for this reason alone any system that offers this prospect, enhances the value of human beings and increases their strength has, all others things being equal, a stronger claim to being the truth.

Even if I am one of the many whom misfortune has assailed, if everything forsakes me, if all the ties which bind me to the world are broken, even if I know from this that pleasure is the goal (and indeed the ultimate goal) of man and the basic impulse of my nature, and I cannot see any means or any form of help by which I might achieve that purpose, and yet I see so many men morally inferior to me living in clover while I myself am forgotten and rejected, then what in that situation am I to think of God, whose blessings I do not enjoy? What [123] am I to think of a world whose cohesion and organisation seek to torment me? What am I to think of the force that vitalises me? I suffer without aim and purpose, I suffer simply in order to suffer. Where do I find courage amid all the danger? Where do I find patience in my suffering and steadfastness in my misfortune? I am just a shadow, I am there simply to increase the light of another, I am the ladder upon which he climbs to felicity. Power and force are not for me, but only for the favourites of good fortune. Pleasure is only for the strong, but I am weak. Pleasure is the inheritance only of those whom I must make stronger simply so they can abuse me. For justice I dare not hope, for how will a weak man resist the strong? And yet nonetheless I am one of these weaklings, I share the same origin as them, I feel all the same impulses, and feel them to the point of torment! Were there a life after death then perhaps this would be some compensation for me. But even that would not address the basic principles by which I live. If all pleasure is sensual, is simply bodily pleasure, and therefore that which does the thinking in me is simply matter, do I therefore have no further purpose, do I stop suffering, do I stop being, do I not know what God is for? Alternatively the principles by which I live are false and there is a higher kind of pleasure.

These thoughts, which must arise amid the turmoil of life [124] to an equal extent in every Sophist, should Fortune turn her back on him, are sufficient proof that to be consistent, a Sophist must deny the incorporeality and immortality of his soul and deny them generally and that we therefore need to prove both of these soul-qualities, if we are to refute this system in its fundamentals, and that not all systems are purely theoretical and therefore superfluous, but very often have and exert a very great, though remote influence on acting and living.

If therefore the Order wants to improve men and eliminate the obstacles to their moral perfection, and if the means to achieve this is to undermine Sophistry and eradicate it utterly, then there must certainly be a system that more satisfactorily explains these contested teachings and which leads every sceptic correctly to a revelation.

In all other organisations it is *religion* that steps into the limelight at this point. Religion submits to everyone the principles of reason but spares them the need for proof by appeal to authority, declaring them to be utterances of the deity in order to thereby achieve calm and oppose them as such to the enemies of His peace. To that extent positive religion is a genuine blessing and human need. He who by sowing doubts [125] about religion causing its reputation to waver, robs man of the sole foundation of its reassurance and deprives him of his only weapon and argument against the disturbers of his peace, without offering as familiar and appropriate a replacement in return. He also deprives him of all the reasons for right conduct, exposes him to the attacks of the Sophists by whom he is surrounded, and forces him due to the lack of a counterpoise to allow himself to wander from the path of virtue. What is more, this greatest blessing has now developed into a genuine school of Sophistry of a new kind due to the poor behaviour and self-interest of many teachers, as well as arbitrary interpretations, unjustified additions and a relaxation of the means of atonement.

3.) What is pain for? The Sophist will answer, 'to make pleasure more attractive by gradation and to encourage man to step forth from a world of pain into one of pleasure and to prepare himself for that process. But this pleasure is not always achieved, and with most people it very rarely is. If everything has its purpose then what purpose is served by the human impulsion towards pleasure and felicity? [126] The Sophist system

does not adequately answer this question. Any system that can suggest a further and higher purpose is therefore more coherent and extensive and, therefore, better.

Pleasure, if the proposition is rightly understood and precisely defined, can still be a purpose and indeed even *the ultimate human purpose* but that does not necessarily mean that it is the *ultimate purpose of Nature*. In Nature's plan it is simply a means, a means to a higher purpose, and that higher purpose is the perfection of sentient beings, which would never approach or even seek this perfection if Providence had not associated with this purpose alone the purest and the most enduring pleasure.

Pleasure is therefore the goal of man, presented to and established for him by Nature because it is a way of perfecting and ennobling him. But can this perfection and ennoblement not have a further purpose? They certainly can. God and Nature have need of them as a means to an even higher purpose which we do not yet know, about which we presently know only as much as we need to know to reach the appointed goal. This new insight begins when we have actually reached the end of that goal: only a being that is perfected in its particular species [127] can lay claim to this new insight.

4.) What ultimately do all the experiences of the Sophists as cited so frequently above and other experiences beside prove other than that mankind's Creator has arranged human nature in such a way that the pain we feel is an unpleasant condition, a condition of imperfection, and that freeing ourselves from pain, expressing an aversion to pain, is tantamount to freeing ourselves from imperfection, and that accordingly an aversion to pain is an actual expression of the drive to perfection, that Nature uses pain as a way of prying men away from their imperfection, of reducing a negation within man and enabling a reality and perfection to develop in its stead; that Nature has linked to every perfection a degree of pleasure corresponding to that perfection to awaken man's appetitive faculty, make him more active, set his exploratory spirit in motion, develop his as yet slumbering powers to see into the future, and to encourage him to see and to seek in food something rather more than a means of satisfying his sensual needs, to see it also as a satisfaction of his spiritual wants, and as material for ideas and plans; [128] and that accordingly pain is the means by which man will progress to his spiritual perfection, while pleasure is to be the goal that acts as the stimulus to accelerate that progress? Even the Sophists' own experiences confirm that the opposite of Sophistry is true, and they show and prove what we need to prove here. Pain makes for inventiveness, inventiveness is a perfection of the spirit, and perfection of the spirit is, at the same time, the perfection of our higher nature.

5.) The acts of violence and the injustice meted out by the stronger members of society are part of the world-plan in order, through the unpleasantness that they cause its weaker members, to stimulate the latter to think of the opposite, to think up ways of strengthening themselves in the same way and so eventually surpass the stronger. Such antidotes have always been found up to now, and to that extent it is incorrect that 'might is right' and should create the most pleasure, because this pleasure is of no duration and must bring forth mechanisms for its destruction. These mechanisms may succeed or fail, but they always achieve their purpose and to a greater or lesser extent refine the soul in which they arise.

It is not correct to state that what we can do unpunished and [129] what brings pleasures and removes displeasure is a right, for the pleasure, if it is to be beneficial to man, must be of such a nature that it does not entail far greater displeasures, and even if a man should succeed in circumventing every evil that could befall him in every one of his still wrongful actions he is still far from being the happiest of men. He is held back in the realm of spirit by the error in his understanding (which knows so little about the true relationships of things) and the defective character of his very self-interested will. The unfortunate man has the opportunity to surpass him in this respect, for during those moments when the inner worth alone is decisive he sinks back into the mass, just as the lowly man, the man whom he persecutes, rises, and he can never achieve the position or ever acquire the purer, more enduring and more vivid pleasure which those spirits experience whose understanding or will is so refined that they everywhere discover good and nowhere find evil. This does not just apply to the future, for even this life is not without great cares for him who can lose everything simply because he possesses everything.

The man who does not experience any physical evil is afflicted by the torments of his imagination, including boredom; the drive towards ever higher and ever more intense pleasures but ones that will never [130] be attained; by plans that go wrong; by a fear of losing what he actually has; by the prospect of one day being separated from everything; by the constantly intruding thought that he is only an isolated individual who can stop being everything that he is if others unite and allow him to feel that they are many who know their strength, who know how little an isolated person can achieve against everyone else, how necessary it is therefore for this one person to make use of his strength in such a way that it is of use to others rather than a source of injury to them. These apprehensions and consequences go hand in hand with great good fortune and are no less tormenting than physical evils: one can certainly combine in oneself all the external characteristics of good fortune and still be consumed with internal grief.

We have now provided as much explanation as was necessary to indicate the point of view from which these teachings should be considered in order to provide material for separate and further contemplation. It will now also be easier for everyone to provide his own response to the following implications of the main Sophist argument: if all pleasure is sensual and if this sensual enjoyment is man's goal then his duty [131] demands (and his destiny is) to provide himself with as much sensual pleasure of as many different kinds as possible. Consequently, everything is only good, right and worthy of desire if it provides this; everything else, which distances a person from it, is therefore folly; and accordingly everything is only good or bad in so far as it achieves this.

Nothing therefore is absolutely good or absolutely bad. Virtue and vice are conditional upon the circumstances, time and place, and conditions in which we live; if the use and benefit change then harm will take the place of utility, pleasure will replace displeasure, virtue will become vice, and vice will become virtue.

Accordingly there is no state of man which increases his motivation more than that which elevates him above misfortune and displeasure and which provides the means and power to provide pleasure for oneself without hindrance, or to effortlessly remove these hindrances. *This state is strength, power and impunity.* Great wealth and political power provide this strength and must therefore be the ultimate goal of every action. Whatever leads to that goal is good and whatever makes it more distant is bad. The virtue and true perfection of man is the skill to control others and to make them servants of one's desires. Felicity is [132] the art of awakening in oneself as many desires of as great a strength as one can in order to satisfy them unobstructedly with pleasure. Unselfish virtue is foolishness because it does not bestow upon us anything at all of what we acquire by strength and in other ways. Strength is the greatest law, to which Nature has made all weak creatures subject. Strength alone raises one above every obligation, above all the laws which were devised only for the weak so that they could protect themselves, along with others, against the violence of the stronger.

These laws are a middle way between the ability to do wrong and escape punishment and the inability to defend oneself against a wrong that one has suffered. They are a tacit agreement among mankind: an enforced renunciation of doing justice an injustice in order to experience less in return. They are born of weakness and powerlessness and extend only to this case, which means that princes and whole peoples are not bound to obey any laws. No sentient being therefore with any self-awareness will have any qualms at all, in a situation where he might go unpunished, about tearing apart these weak bonds with which weaker men have fettered better ones, and asserting all natural rights, which extend as far as we our powers are sufficient to remove the feared resistance.

Every [133] positive right^{xix} is therefore a purely human invention and an iniquitous restriction of the only law that Nature knows which subjects the weak to the strong. This positive right can only be binding upon every person as long as he lacks the power to infringe that right with impunity. Yet remove this compulsion from your virtuous and unselfish ways; just free a person from any fear of adverse occurrences; spy on him from behind the curtains; observe him in thoughts and deed in situations where he can bank upon concealment and impunity and then watch how he acts, watch how he adheres to his former principles and unselfish virtue.

Poor man! You are weak and so you preach virtue, you are poor and so you denounce wealth, the world does not respect you as you would like and so you shriek about the world's contempt. Your strict ethics are but a silent revenge against good fortune which obviously does not spend enough time thinking about you. Your concealed and intensely humiliated pride cannot bear the sight of these great men, these millionaires, these children of good fortune. The very sight of them offends you because it reminds you of your weakness. You are naive [134] and trusting enough to believe or, indeed, hope that your dreams and sophistries can shield you from this object that is so hateful to you by persuading these favourites of good fortune to bring themselves down to your level, to be equal to you, to sit beside you, and benevolently leave to you the situation in life that causes you to envy them. Go within yourself. Tell me frankly, does not your eagerness and your role as censor and moraliser go with you? Your principles are the result of your situation and are just fantasies you have created so you can dream where others enjoy, in order to assuage by means of ideas your no less visible hankering and hungering for pleasure.

But why not be rich and powerful, why not rid yourself if you can of what currently offends you about other people! Why not go forth into the world, lonely dreamer, and there reform your ideas, observe the course of nature, and teach yourself something better – or else your more intelligent contemporaries will simply laugh at and pity you. Look around you at humanity, look around also at the animal kingdom. Look how the eagle tears the dove to shreds, as does the wolf with the gentle good-natured sheep.

For as long as the world and mankind have existed the weaker have surrendered to the stronger without demur. This indomitable will of the stronger was the only law to which everyone submitted. It would be madness to [135] obey where one can oneself command or to allow ourselves to be restricted by those who are in our power. In such circumstances, justice would come to be associated with disadvantage and only the weaklings to whom justice is of benefit could call it virtue or extol its advantages. Justice is good to him for as long as he is weak because it protects him from abuses he cannot repel, but it would harm him as soon as he becomes self-aware. Injustice can only be or rightly be termed a vice when mankind misjudges its powers, believes itself stronger than it really is, and proceeds to claim and exercise its rights at an earlier stage than its powers permit. Excessive haste, imprudence, lack of foresight, failed attempts at freedom or achieving mastery over others – these alone are vices and crimes, because they have evil consequences and because they cause displeasure instead of the anticipated pleasure and a new and even worse servitude rather than the promised supremacy.

An evil-doer is therefore someone who misjudges his strengths and the likely resistance to them. A fortunate injustice however is a virtue, and all the world shows it the respect that is usually due to it. Even your philosophers revere the powerful evil-doer and are even happy to beg a livelihood from him. The world even praises lucky rebels [136] and sets them up as legitimate rulers. Just look at Pepin the Short and then, by way of contrast, Childerich III.^{xx} Only unlucky Emperors lose their freedom and their lives. In modern states circumstances are rarely so accommodating, and attempts to seize a crown are rarely successful. Everyone knows this, and it is this knowledge alone that keeps them tied by the apron-strings of civil society, but in no one has this inclination entirely disappeared. It is only slumbering and lies in wait for more favourable circumstances.

That is why everyone nowadays is making plans to be the *second in command* because it is far too dangerous to acquire all the power of the ultimate leader. This is the general direction of our everyday activities in all states and countries, this is the game we are playing. Everyone is trying to soar, to rise from one level of good fortune to a higher one and, if circumstances permit, to become merely the 'first after the first': the leader then has the title but we have the power. That is why we gather round the great: a mere hint from them becomes our law, we warm ourselves in their Sun's rays, we talk and act so as to fit in with their feelings, flatter their passions and desires, deny that we ourselves possess any insight, ignore our former friends, slander our rivals, hate whatever our idols hate, love [137] whatever they love, and crawl to them to achieve promotion.

Suffer and be silent therefore as long you are weaker and flatter and show indulgence towards anyone who can harm you. Appear to the world in all the shapes and forms that the more powerful love, and shrink from contradicting or acting against their interests in every situation. For what purpose do justice and duty serve? Leave these things to others to whom they pose less risk. Do not rush to protect anyone who has stumbled – just leave him to his fate. If you want to be stupid enough to do him a favour and fight for justice, if you want to expose yourself to the dangers of betrayal, then at least do so in secret. Would he always be your friend, he who is closer to you than you are to yourself? How can it be of any use to him if you go to perdition with him? Adapt to the circumstances therefore and save your help and pity for more favourable times. Why take the trouble to ensure the presence of that which is of value to someone with whom you wish to form a connection? You would be better off considering what use he can be to you.

Do not therefore disdain any means that lead to the end, *for the end justifies the means*. Never waste your time with the setting sun, but frolic instead in the noontide rays. Try to offload anything disagreeable through which you might offend others onto the shoulders of others who are worth less than you, but miss no [138] opportunity to stand out from the crowd or win the loyalty of others. Bear the insults of your superiors with patience; guard against exceeding the limits of your weakness; do not, in their presence, seek to shine; be humble if you are appearing before an Alexander, but never relinquish your eagerness and your wrath; disarm your worst enemies with complaisance and friendliness, for these are two things no one can resist; remember that all your virtuous friends, who defied the greatest dangers, have still foundered on the reefs of luck, flattery and exaggerated politeness.

That is how one achieves good fortune! That is the path that leads to the favour of the great, to wealth and power. And if I have won the favour of the great and all this wealth and power then what need have I of your insight and virtue? Oh wretched man! What all these thorny paths should lead you to and never do are all things that I actually enjoy while you only seek these things. What more could you possibly want? I eat at all the best tables laden down with all sorts of delicacies; everything is at my command; I am shown every possible token of respect; my ante-rooms are teeming with clients; I enjoy all the outward signs of inner merit; I can distinguish myself from others by the way I dress; I love and I am loved; I have free admission into the apartments of the great, and tumble from one pleasure to [139] another: while you, kind-hearted fool, allow your life to pass by unsavouried while you chase after moonbeams, live in misery, and are misjudged by all the world, you who are perhaps the foremost among your spiritual friends – and the least and most despised among men.

Do not be a fool therefore – enjoy life. All the good things of the Earth lie before you, and are available to you if only you have the ability to become master of them. Exercise your powers in that direction, for here alone lies wisdom. Seek advantage in the present situation and do not count on the future or upon posthumous fame.

So many incomparably better men than you have lived before you and have been obliterated from human memory by an eternal night, yet you are still foolish enough to count on the praise and gratitude of posterity, which you will not enjoy, which cannot bring you back to life, which is just an empty shell, which is just an idea that the stronger have thought up to sedate the weaklings and make them more obedient to their intentions, and to reward them for the sacrifices they have made with – in the absence of current coin – nothing. And if, a thousand years from now, someone should mention your name, or someone else read your biography, or yet another [140] person suggest you as a role-model to someone just as weak and vain then he would say that there, in that country, in such-and-such a year, a fool renounced all the pleasures of life so that we today, a thousand years later, should say in his praise something he cannot hear. This man wanted us to be just as foolish as he was in order to enjoy just as little benefit from life.

If all this happened then what conceivable use would it be to you? Would you be any happier or more satisfied because, after thousands of years, people are still mocking you and laughing at you all the more heartily the older the world becomes? It is your fate to be forgotten. Just as you depart and your role comes to an end so new actors will come onto the stage who will capture the attention of their times because they

have understood the art of entertaining people better than their predecessors. Leave your sacrifice to the remaining few – and what are they compared with the many? Do you really want to be so uncivil as to insist that they spend the whole of the rest of their lives perpetually mourning you and renouncing all other pleasures? No, my friend! It is only natural for mankind to avoid and try to diminish unpleasant feelings, such as the thought of a friend's death. To do this we seek distractions. [141] New images present themselves, something quite trivial comes along and suddenly the 'unforgettable' friend is forgotten. Look at this young man here, lying in the arms of this beautiful girl! Can you tell from his eyes that he is mourning for a dead lover after whose death he simply did not want to go on living? If love, this closest and warmest of all spiritual unions, is so little inclined to want to haunt the graves of departed 'other halves' then how can you expect others whose relationship with you is not nearly as passionate, as to mortify themselves and forgo pleasure on your account? If a tree withers up and dies in your garden then you replace it with another, because the first one is no longer of any use to you – and that is the fate of all men. Once death has uprooted you they will throw you into a corner of their minds, and only with a tremendous effort will any memories of you be rekindled. In short, what use can it be to you that some starving writer or splenetic moralist is seeking you out from among the piles of forgotten humanity just because his biliousness needs you to help him grumble about the age in which he lives?

The ultimate foolishness however would be for you to dedicate yourself to improving the world and mankind, [142] and making this your primary task in life. Let the world and all other men be what they are, and worry about yourself instead, for that is exactly what other people do. What exactly is 'the general welfare' for example, and who experiences it? Is it not just the welfare of a mere idea, an abstract concept, an entity that is real only in the brains of those who directly experience absolutely nothing of it? Alternatively you can be stupid enough to sacrifice yourself for the welfare and rights of others and let the results miscarry. You counted on honour and gratitude and now look at the rewards they have brought you. Take a look at what you are dedicating yourself to. People call you a fantasist, they accuse you of stupidity, they criticise your behaviour and find a thousand faults in you. You thought people would want to imitate you, and yet what do you find? Your failure has made you shy and fearful, you withdraw into your shell, you make your enemies stronger, then you join forces with them and the evil becomes worse than it was before. Do not rely on other people therefore, for they are fair-weather friends and disappear as soon as the luck runs out. For danger separates even the closest of friends. Only advantages unite, and how fleeting is that? Men have always stuck with their existing advantages, with good fortune, with the part that is winning, and never with the underdog. [143] What a strange figure you would cut, as a citizen of the world surrounded by egoists! Everything around you lies in wait for you to display your weakness so as to achieve mastery over you; everyone seeks to exploit you for the purposes he encounters on his way, and to infringe your rights, and yet you alone forget this, you live for others, are mad enough to devote yourself to their interests, to work in vain, and to receive ingratitude in return for your unsolicited services. Other equally well-intentioned fantasists have gone before you and sought something similar, and look what happened to them. Let the injuries suffered by others be your teacher.

Let me go carefully through all the various structures which have been established for the betterment of mankind, let me examine precisely what the educational system, the state and religion have done in pursuit of this ultimate goal, and ask myself in what respect they are better. The same old people, the same old passions, the same old interests – the same plays just with different actors in different costumes. And there you are all alone, without any outward obligations, without being able to arouse any hopes or fears, or offer any support and assistance, choosing to get involved with the world and with human nature. Try to see things as they really are: judge your powers accurately and do not lose yourself in the realm of 'impossible [144] possibilities' and Platonic ideas, which are beautifully conceived and expressed but are never anything more than just notions.

In the meantime, go forth and find just three men to convert to your point of view, and only then join forces with a few others to pursue goals which have no other purpose than to make you miserable. As long as listening to or reading through your plan is their only duty, as long as the goal is close at hand and the

means to achieve it is merely to satisfy a lively curiosity, as long as no passions are involved and no more attractive interests arise, as long as no competitor emerges against whom you have to struggle continuously and riskily, as long as everyone can act as he pleases – then your ambition may yet succeed.

But consider for a moment how impossible these preconditions are. You have to deal with people – but how easily everything can change, and where then will your purpose be, and where then your desire to help? Yes, if men were foolish enough to renounce their present advantage, if they were only able to stop being human, then your pious wishes would certainly be very achievable. But run through all of history and find me a single example that supports your proposals, and then I will admit that I am wrong. Your good-natured passion makes all obstacles disappear; a lack of worldly experience [145] maintains you in this illusion; the passion of your youth blazes within you, and you can see past all difficulties. Alternatively, renounce in the ardour of your youth everything you have and what you might one day receive; make this the price of anxiety, enmity, suspicion, vexation, slander and persecution; struggle in vain against levity, betrayal, imprudence, hot-headedness, excessive haste, inertia and every passion within other people; and make meddling in other people's business and misfortunes your own.

You, who cannot even establish lasting peace and unity within your own family, do you really think you are strong enough to bind so many people together in the indissoluble bond that such great purposes demand? Do you really think that men – every one of whom wants to be first and no one the last, every one of whom wants to be the purpose of the whole of Nature and no one a tool or instrument of it, every one of whom has enjoyed the closest bonding join public organisations that offer every possible form of association, every possible advantage and prospect – will want to sacrifice their little remaining time and energy to join an organisation that promises them no satisfaction at all for their present interests and wishes and no compensation for the sacrifices they have to make? Do you really think you can achieve power and mastery by following this thorny path, [146] for that is the one your superficially cosmopolitan and philanthropic plans follow? Admit it to yourself even if you will not admit it to us, that with us you are hastening towards a goal, that of mastery and power. It is only your means that are false and dangerous. Leave men to their stupidities, for these are the steps by which the more intelligent man ascends to power. Indeed, the maintenance of entire social classes rests upon them.

Ask yourself, for you know yourself better than anyone, what would become of you, what sustenance would you find and from whom would you expect to find it if there were no fools, if there was no one who misjudged their advantage? For it is on the blindness of the teeming multitude that our strength is based: take this away and what then are we? Make everyone instant paragons of justice and then what purpose would our judges and their entire advisers serve? Enable everyone to behave in an orderly and reasonable manner in all the eventualities of life, enable them to always follow their reason and never their passions, and then what purpose would our rulers serve? Just as the doctor lives off the diseases of the body so the clever man and the statesman live off the defects of the soul. Human faults and blindness have to exist, for the allure and good fortune of the most important members of society rest [147] upon them. Even the great unwashed see the advantages of it. The gluttony and extravagance of the rich and powerful give back with one hand what they take with the other: they encourage the masses to work by holding out to them the prospect of acquisition, and indeed many who currently live in abundance would starve if it were not for the existence of extravagance and luxury.

It is precisely this that makes ethics so despised. It has enemies on all sides, of every social status, for it undermines their advantages. As long as it remains purely theoretical, as long as it does not cross these borders then it may win forbearance and patience, but uniting men for this ultimate purpose and establishing actual institutions for its expansion and implementation would involve an uprising against the good fortune of all mankind, hostility towards its sustenance and power, and crimes against the state and against every present-day human association, something that would have all the social classes rebelling and arming themselves against each other. This is always the result, and each new attempt should not expect anything less.

So leave the world as it is, for it will be like that for all eternity. The performances are always the same: only the times of the performances and the cast-lists change. Everything goes round in an eternal circle and we cannot [148] change anything in its course. Accidents and fate decide everything. Men are there to enjoy life – a fool is someone who wastes his time, and fails in his purpose.

Those, therefore, are the ghastly principles of a School that has no equal in terms of infamy. They are also the basic principles of our contemporaries and of all worldly people, and the perspective that informs their actions. That is why these principles are the source of all corruption and the greatest obstacles to virtue. Few people are entirely free of them – perhaps no one is. All our false moves can be traced back to them. We had to present them here to convince every novice and every person who might be in any way sceptical about virtue that we are all too familiar with this very highly praised ‘wisdom of our age’; that it does not satisfy us; that indeed we abhor it; and that we reject it with all possible indignation.

We are not asking you to do the impossible: we know what the human limitations are, that no one can be entirely free of such principles, and that the man who acts according to them to the least extent is a perfect man. We did however need to point out the sources of the evil and the driving forces of human actions, to reveal their worth and [149] worthlessness, to show in what the highest perfection of man actually consists, to show how far it still has to go to achieve this, and that there are associated advantages for human welfare.

It cannot be a matter of indifference to you to consider your subject from all sides, to compare these experiences and insights with your own and thereby arrive at sounder judgements. If this Lecture only implants in your mind the idea that the wisdom of the Sophists deserves to be abhorred and that the opposing principles deserve preference, oh! Then you have triumphed, your biggest step towards goodness has been taken, and your greatest obstacle has been overcome. Force of habit, inertia and mistrust of your powers alone hold you fast and stand in the way of the happy results you desire. But even this powerful will is a virtue and until your powers develop it will take the place of action. Examine your intentions more frequently therefore, refine them as much as you can, be satisfied with small steps until your powers are more practised and, if you ever find your courage failing, remember that *no one was ever perfect at the beginning. Virtue is the result of long practice. If I go as far as I can then I have done my duty.* [150]

But my friend, just one more thing before we part! If one day you should find nothing in this world that seems reasonable or ethical, if you find the precise opposite of those things, if your faith in virtue should then start to waver, if you start to doubt even the possibility of any right thinking then, before you allow this to happen, just remember the instruction you are currently receiving. Ask yourself whether it is not precisely these false principles that are determining your behaviour in a way that is so unfavourable to your virtue. Remember that although you previously identified these principles as false they still have a great deal of power over you and that your virtue is still weak and incomplete. [151]

THIRD CLASS. INSTRUCTION FOR THE THIRD DEGREE.

Acre more semper gaudendi.^{xxi}

Show me a man who has never known displeasure; who has never wanted to improve himself; who has never experienced injustice, insult and disdain; who has never suffered setbacks and unfulfilled desires; and who has never dreamed of situations that would improve his lot in life and make his existence free of pain!

You yourself are certainly one of this number, for everyone is. Even you will find – and will often already have found – that these unpleasant states of mind predominate so that no one is ever entirely at his ease and everyone seeks some form of relief. You would certainly have seen anyone who could have ensured for you a life of bliss or, at least, a life entirely free from pain as a divine messenger and would rightly have embraced him as your saviour and your greatest benefactor, for what higher, greater and more worthy goal could you or any son of man wish for or desire?

Call this higher goal the ‘Better’ if you recognise it, give us a demonstration of it if you possess it, and I shall be your pupil and disciple and shall abandon everything to share in it. For when I speak of a life that is

as free of [152] suffering as possible, I obviously mean one in our inner defects both of mind and heart are minimised, in which we suffer from these as little as possible, in which all ugly and repellent objects outside of us shed their deformities and seem quite beautiful, appropriate and desirable. A life in which all my wishes are fulfilled, in which I experience a minimum of regret, shame, anxiety, fear and grief, of hate and envy, and in which I am least anxious about any future uncertainties.

Would you perhaps insist upon something even higher and greater than this? What more could someone with the most uninhibited, impudent and insatiable demands and with unlimited money, power, fame, capacity for sensual enjoyment and hunger for secrets and for investigating the future possibly desire and wish for? All human knowledge and learning and all the sciences have such a goal as their aim, and are of value only in so far as they, more or less directly, promote the betterment and felicity of humanity. All the world's religions and all human political structures and activity since the earliest days of humanity, have also tried to solve this problem. All their institutions, for better or for worse, aim for [153] it and all their efforts and exertions seek to come closer to it. This is the sole wish of the rich man as well as of the poor one, the powerful as well as the powerless, the wise as well as the foolish, and – I believe – also of your kinfolk and mine, and even indeed of the suicidal and the masochist as well as the most pampered voluptuary.

Man has spoken, written and taught a great deal about this subject and has erred much also, but he has never entirely lost sight of the truth. But only very rarely, indeed in just a few cases, has this doctrine passed into the whole vein of human thought and become a genuine and pressing need. Never or only very rarely has it ever been contemplated often enough or vividly enough to provide a counterpoise to competing attractions, and very often it has been shrouded in obscurity and excessively interwoven with subtleties, have been misused and then repeated *ad nauseam* from as early as infancy. Almost always man has left this subject stranded in a desert of purely theoretical knowledge and speculation and very rarely has he made the necessary application of it to the everyday eventualities of life, struggled against himself in practical exercises of it, and overcome the obstacles. Man has always found something that was more important to him than the perfection [154] of his soul. Though he understood and valued the Better he still pursued the Worse, engaging in lifeless acknowledgement of the Good but a lively and habitual desire for Evil as well as an eternal grumbling about Providence and the shortcomings of the world while displaying inertia and faint-heartedness in his efforts to diminish these.

If I could now put all this into practice for you through this organisation to which we both belong then would you really know how to ever thank me for it? But imagine that I need your cooperation in this task and that it is upon this cooperation that its success primarily depends. No objective in the world can be achieved without the means that lead up to it, and in this case these means are certainly not impossibilities. I will teach you to understand that all these means are derived from the heart of the matter, and are necessary and essential. The efforts required in this task are shared out very reasonably and appropriately, for can any effort ever be too great that seeks to bring our nature to the highest perfection and ensure for us the greatest and clearest insight into the interrelationship of things and their links to ourselves? And even if, at the very outset, this effort might be accompanied by certain hardships or even sufferings [155] then would this not also be suited to our goal: the fact that we suffer today to be happy tomorrow and, indeed, for all eternity?

Rest assured that I shall always propose to you the mildest and simplest means. And where will the blame lie if you have understood and acknowledged them as essentially appropriate to the goal and have convinced yourself of the soundness of the foundation of the matter and yet still pursue the opposite course? What right would you then have to grumble about Providence and the world and your place in it? Instead, admit that your suffering and your displeasure in this world are both voluntary and well-merited.

And now to the heart of the matter:

If an object is to be pleasing to the mind and is to inspire appreciation and enjoyment then it must have the characteristic of not contradicting the first and most essential of all human drives, which is the drive for expansion, i.e. the drive towards and the hunger for more and clearer concepts. Therefore the mind must not therefore discover contradiction in this object, but must instead find multiplicity, diversity and order.

All our experience ultimately leads to the conclusion that objects with opposing qualities are displeasing: such objects are said to be *originally pleasant*, [156] and must necessarily please all souls and all spirits in so far as they are regarded without bias and without special circumstances or modifications. To that extent, every sentient being should welcome every truth. However, a contrary experience shows us that this is not the case and that man, even with the sacrifice of his greatest advantages, does not cling to the grossest errors, and that all those who dare to enlighten themselves about this, are victims of the most extreme abuse and persecution.

Wiser men have sought to explain this very unusual phenomenon by arguing that, if a truth is to enjoy a more favourable reception among men, it is not enough for that truth to retain its original characteristics and not stand in any contradiction to the drive for expansion in general. They have understood how necessary it is for this given truth *not to primarily contradict the drive for expansion of the individual who is representing this object to himself; that the power of this individual should not in the first place be reciprocally modified by any converse representations; and that no idea already present in this thinking subject should contradict this idea which is to be* [157] *newly assimilated*. In such a case the soul cannot connect with the object, the drive for expansion is hindered, and the soul accordingly feels displeasure and aversion.

This kind of pleasure or displeasure is not original in the sense that it does not lie within the thing itself but has its basis in the peculiar attunement and receptivity of this sentient being, in the preceding modification of his power, and in the peculiar connection of his ideas and representations. It is therefore known as *a derived or transferred pleasure or displeasure*. This is the most common form of human pleasure and displeasure. In these cases the mind does not draw directly from the source, i.e. from the object alone. Instead there is a particular way of seeing, which is not the same for every person. But what exactly is the origin of this very diverse way of seeing and of dealing with objects outside ourselves?

As soon as the mind has received the first impression, representation or idea then, precisely as a result of this action, it stops being the first original power common to all humanity and instead becomes the modified individual power of thought of that human being. No longer [158] are all possible ideas apprehensible to it, but only those that do not stand in an adverse relationship to this preceding first idea. By virtue of this immediately preceding modification an idea is displayed more to this kind of perceiver than to any other. This first idea already establishes an inclination – an attachment as it were, or a mental tendency – to recognise this object rather than any other, and to be attracted or repelled by it. Should this person now assimilate a second representation appropriate to the previous one then any subsequent third idea which must be newly assimilated, must not contradict either of the two previous ideas in such a way, that the person becomes aware of this contradiction.

In this way the power of his mind is modified afresh and made stronger. The person rejects, disapproves of and finds displeasure in everything that he cannot reconcile with his initial ideas. Every other person, in whom these ideas are lacking, or who has perhaps assimilated them in an opposing manner, will also be able to reject or be attracted to quite different objects. Through the increase of the third, fourth and all subsequent representations, the modification of the mental powers will and must consistently increase.

Since we are in a position to renew these ideas once [159] we have assimilated them and since without this renewal any use of the power of recollection and imagination, of fantasy and memory, of understanding and reason, is inconceivable, then unless these ideas, once formulated, are deleted from the mind immediately after their first use, they persist and survive individually and collectively, but are driven back by newer and later arrivals among the more mental furniture and, at that point, would join the ranks of the obscure representations and form and fill up the foundation of the mind. All without exception would constitute the sufficient reason why we, even in our latter years, assimilate or reject this or that idea, or deal with an object in a certain way and not otherwise.

Here then, in every person, throughout his entire life, is organised a series of co-existing and succeeding ideas which form the human mode of thought in which a concept is always developing from the other preceding ones as if these were its premises; in which this concept contains the reason for our aversions and

curiosity as well as our joys and sorrows; where each successive idea draws from all the preceding ones its strength or weakness, its light or shadow, [160] because these come into our awareness sooner or later, with greater or lesser frequency at this particular time, at this particular place, with this particular association, according to these preconditions.

It is partly among this tremendous quantity of renewed ideas that there are often found among various kinds of interconnections of renewed ideas, one that is the clearest and most prominent of all, which arises the most readily and most frequently, and which for that very reason casts a light or shadow upon all the others, depending upon the closeness of their relationship to it. This is *the predominant idea* which shines forth clearly from all our prejudices and inclinations, from our every Yes and No. It is in the light of this idea that we judge everyone's character and moral temperament with all their modifications and further subdivisions.

Although it is only natural for everyone to agree that they would like nothing more than a happy continuation of themselves – and, to that extent, this is the generally predominant and prevailing basic idea of all humanity – yet there is a further subdivision in their choice of the means of achieving it. The question is whether the preceding initial ideas and experiences will determine that they will seek their felicity in a certain [161] form of repose or leisure, in sensual enjoyment, in the purchase of distinctive signs of wealth and influence, in the acquisition of great power, honour and an expanded sphere of activity or, finally, in the perfection of their spiritual powers.

This is the origin of the main moral temperaments, namely the *phlegmatic, sanguine, melancholic, choleric and philosophical*, with all their possible mixtures and gradations. Since however no man is, for example, ever totally ambitious, but rather every ambitious person is ambitious in his own way, and because there are various ways and means of satisfying this desire, humanity's ideas of what honour actually consists of can indeed be varied. There must therefore appear from a large branch of this main trunk some vary varied offshoots, such as vanity, a desire for fame, boastfulness, arrogance, pride, a desire for rank and titles, a fawning nature, hypocrisy, a desire to be seen as a hero, and sometimes also greed, profligacy, a desire to stand out and even the Herostratus Syndrome.^{xxii}

In the presence of such a pre-determined momentum of the spirit all objects acquire a certain venter according to the diversity of the prevailing idea. These objects no longer appear as they really are but as a means or [162] obstacle to the prevailing idea, and to that extent also will be desired or rejected. Every one of these diverse states of mind has its own joys and sorrows, its own symbols and forms of expression, and its own language and gestural system.

But since no one has ever experienced exactly the same object at the same time at the same place and in the same interconnection and order and with the same vividness and intensity, so everyone necessarily has a sequence of ideas that differs from all the others, and in this lies his own predominant idea, his way of seeing and dealing with objects, and the source of pleasure and displeasure which is peculiar to him alone.

This sequence of ideas, unique to every individual, also means that he is not solely dependent on sensory impressions; that he can diminish or increase their impact where necessary for the sake of his felicity; that he accordingly becomes the creator of his own felicity or infelicity; that everything more or less depends on his particular mental attunement, which he is able to adjust; that even so he is something rather more than just a machine, an animal or a plaything of external [163] circumstances; and that, for him, the world must be what he can find in it and wishes to find in it.

This infinitely variable sequence of ideas also explains why the same object does not please or displease everyone.

It also explains:

why the same lecture has differing and often completely opposing effects upon different people, and often even upon the same person;

why young people are easier to influence and persuade than older people, in whom a definite way of thinking has already been firmly established;

why a sudden change of perspective causes quite different and often previously repellent things to suddenly become attractive;

why in this case we notice characteristics in things which we had previously never noticed and why we do not notice certain things until we have acquired an interest in them;

why the fascination of something must be made visible and apprehensible to a person before we insist that they see and desire certain objects and characteristics; [164]

why accordingly every change in people, whether it be a conversion or a deterioration, is simply an alteration of their perspective;

why everyone is correct in so far as and for as long as they have this perspective; but it also explains why his error consists solely in the fact that he has this perspective which he ought not to have, as well as why this is the sole source of all his faults and vices;

why, with an alteration in this perspective, all his basic principles, desires and passions that cannot be reconciled with and integrated into this new goal or perspective also change automatically at the same time;

why therefore, in teaching people to take the shortest and safest route, one should not challenge their individual propositions and desires but rather directly seize upon and undermine their perspective and goal;

why no one completely connects the same idea with the same word, why no one ever perfectly understands another person, and why everyone has his own language and philosophy;

why we speak to everyone subjectively in our own language which is unique to us, and why we must therefore investigate a person's sequence of ideas as closely [165] as possible in order to bring him round to our point of view;

why, if we want to make something comprehensible to someone, we must immediately bring this new idea into connection with those ideas that are best known and most familiar to him;

why the idea of advantage, utility and interest is so attractive.

Because facts and immediate experiences are comprehensible to everyone, and because certain facts and explanations arise in everyone's sequence of ideas, this helps explain why history, fairy-tales, metaphors, lectures that use figurative expressions and illustrative examples have such power over people;

It also helps to explain:

why direct attacks upon and flat contradiction of another person's opinion almost always cause harm and have the opposite effect of their intentions;

why temporising is so necessary when dealing with other people;

why, when making recommendations for membership and in some other cases, the Sponsor's current mood is carefully investigated before the application for membership is passed on;

why in our organisation the complainant is so happy to be found right, and why for this reason malicious slanderers are so happy to get there first; [166]

why one can never feel completely unadulterated respect towards certain people whom one knew in their youth when one now finds them in situations of servility, poverty, misfortune and weakness, even if their merits are outstanding and predominant;

why when one is among important people everything has an aura of greatness, why among friends everything seems beautiful and yet among enemies seems wicked and evil;

why hatred towards an offender can extend to innocent members of his family;

why one's annoyance is all the more intense the more vivid and outstanding the idea that is undermined thereby;

why the death or sudden removal of people whom one loves or with whom one has long had a close relationship causes a sudden and painful feeling of emptiness in one's soul;

why new opinions always cause indignation at the outset and must therefore be presented in the guise of old ideas;

why the way someone embraces an idea helps me connect with his existing sequence of ideas;

why I can determine, from the sequence of a person's ideas which is now known to me, the degree of success with which he will accept the new idea; [167]

why a person will dislike or accept certain teachings even before he has heard their basic ideas;

why prejudices are so powerful;

why people are only friends to the extent that they share the same way of thinking;

why a person who wants to unite people and keep them united must awaken within them a similar sequence of ideas and, to this end, must closely investigate over a long period the course of the ideas that are already present in their minds, must connect appropriately the newly-produced ideas to those already present and especially with those which are predominant at the very outset, must make their connection with felicity and self-interest vivid and perceptible, must present the basic ideas that lead up to them in a lively way, must repeat them often and make them into a need, and finally must substitute them for the other ideas which, up to now, have been just as effective and vivid, and in doing so devitalise those earlier ideas. [168]

We can therefore also explain:

why no one can be instantly converted to an idea, and why this is always such a hard and time-consuming task;

why rapid conversions rarely last if the ideas required for them have not previously been in secret gestation for a considerable time and therefore are, as it were, only waiting for the enlivening vital spark to cause them to suddenly arrange themselves;

why also, in certain situations, an internal struggle and a sort of trepidation always and persistently express themselves, both of which serve only to prove that the older basic principles according to which a person formerly acted have not yet been sufficiently and completely neutralised; why also, after these ideas have already almost expired, they all at once – through a sudden vivid association – regain their old power and might;

why attachment to a particular opinion and doctrine tells us nothing about their truthfulness, for otherwise every opinion, including the most groundless and contradictory, would have to be equally true;

why we so often act against our better judgement; [169]

why persuasion works more powerfully than cold conviction;

why reason must always yield to sensible cognition as long as the distinct cognition does not become the sensible cognition. The distinct cognition does however become sensible cognition through repeatedly habitual thinking, through thinking of an object in terms of pictures and examples, and through repeated experiences (either one's own or of others) of the consequences associated with that object. A person who still needs to think about the motivations behind the goodness in every action is certainly on the path to virtue, but he is still far from being a steadfast and perfected virtuous man. A person is most firmly anchored in goodness and is least open to temptation only if the representation of goodness and truth works instinctively within him. This is achieved by avoiding temptations, through permanent contact with the

good and the best, by reading good books, by setting a good example, by creating situations in which one has to very frequently remind oneself of the reason for goodness and for one's goal, and through repeated exercises and struggle.

The reason why I experience pleasure [170] or displeasure does not therefore lie solely in the objects outside of me: these are to the spirit, what clay is to the potter, for some take pleasure in the same effect in which others experience displeasure. Similarly, something that causes me to stumble today or yesterday will not always defeat me. The more obvious and more reliable explanation will be found in the sequence of ideas and in my mode of representation and receptivity. To be felicitous, a certain attunement of this spirit is demanded: this is a task of the basic principles that predominate within it, but not every basic principle leads to this attunement. Since felicity is a state of overwhelming pleasure I must thereby become more capable of seeing and experiencing the good and the beautiful than was previously the case, and be more able to deprive the ugly of its ugliness. Nor does that seem to me to be an impossibility, or else felicity would be an absurdity: for I do not know of anything that is ugly or evil under all circumstances or in all contexts. *I must accordingly attune my soul so that, within me, the perspective through which unfavourable objects become objects of desire prevails.* Now experience leads me to the conclusion that the most common forms of evil are those that are associated with the narrowest perspectives: I therefore need only to broaden my perspective and the world will immediately appear to me in a more beautiful [171] form, while only the most general perspective will reconcile me with the whole of Nature.

He who makes his own Self the goal of Creation never finds things in the order in which he needs them, for his wishes are in eternal conflict with Nature. He conceives the cohesion and order of the world according to a different and utterly perverse rule: the things that happen in the world follow the former, but he expects them to be in accordance with the latter, and so he expects things in vain. He does not conceive of people as they actually are and as they must be according to the world's purpose but rather as his basic principle requires them to be. For him the whole of Nature is one big contradiction. He would like to work but his whole activity is hindered and he therefore experiences distress and dejection. This leads to him to engage in endless complaints about Providence and the order of the world, dissatisfaction with his position, futile efforts to improve it and, ultimately, to misanthropy and hatred of the whole of Nature. Every dissatisfaction with the world and one's position within it is folly and concealed egoism: only understanding the course of nature and wishing and acting in accordance with it is wisdom, and this alone guarantees pleasure and joy. [172]

If it is the most general perspectives and goals that have the greatest influence on human felicity then the person who wishes to lead man thither must master the art of making him responsive to the sublimity and greatness of Nature, of wresting him from his restricted spheres of activity, and of causing the necessary ideas to gradually arise within him and then turning them into needs.

The idea that, in this world of ours, the wisest order and cohesion prevail, that this world has a most high and most general purpose, and that this purpose is the perfection and felicity of spirits is, along with a vivid understanding that everything acts as an infallible means to that end, an idea that lifts the heart and spirit, banishes all inhibition, strengthens you in the face of the greatest misfortunes, transforms whole worlds and triumphs over all evil. This firm belief in Providence, in the order and perfection of the world, and in the vivid notion to which this gives rise that evil is a good thing and that it is worth the trouble of accepting evil – this thought, made into a spiritual need – produced the heroes of the ancient and modern worlds, single-handedly championed the cause of truth and [173] virtue, maintained belief in them, elevated the spirit beyond all fears, burst all chains asunder, strengthened the body against all pain, conquered the fear of Death, bound its already fleeing heels, and wrested the sword of despair – already turned against itself – from its hands.

If our felicity here on Earth requires that our pleasure be steadily multiplied and increased and our displeasure proportionately diminished (for pure felicity is not for mere mortals, as there is a need to ensure that they are sufficiently motivated to activity and to the higher development of their spiritual strength

through the lack of felicity that is simultaneously expressed), and if to achieve this our spiritual imperfection must continue to diminish, the ugliness of external objects disappear, and our wishes enjoy more frequent fulfilment – if these, I say, are the necessary preconditions for felicity then we must first identify the idea that is more apt for and better suited to it.

If there are people who are supreme masters of the art of anticipating and calculating the consequences of their actions and if they, for that reason, fail [174] less frequently, take more appropriate measures, are less likely to experience the results of excessive ardour and haste, are less subject to unpleasant feelings of remorse and shame, have a more precise knowledge of their true advantages, are less covetous, do not frequently invest in wishes that lead to disappointment and, therefore, also experience less displeasure and live a more satisfying and happier existence, then how much more must this peace of mind increase with an ever-growing (but never entirely perfect) insight into the plan of the world to a degree that promises even greater growth.

A man can endure insults, injustice, contempt and the errors of others, can have enemies and love them and can endure being misunderstood if he is able to imagine this tremendous and indeed innumerable quantity of forces and how effective these forces have been from the infinite past and how they have undergone modifications suited to their nature and location, how they radiate in apparent conflict and in opposing directions in order to one day meet again at a common point, how everything – from human facial characteristics via the smallest pen-stroke to the most finely articulated sound of one's voice – is diverse and multifarious and yet forms just a single whole, with no one part [175] hindering the other; if he can see that nothing in the immense universe is separate from anything else; how everything is rooted in everything else and attunes itself reciprocally; how everything develops without evolutionary leaps; how everything develops at the necessary moment and at precisely this and at no other place, and only in the necessary measure; how everything develops differently and yet always for the better; how nothing among all the innumerable things is small, weak, insignificant or superfluous; how everything is grafted onto the greater whole; and how no atom can ever be annihilated without wresting planets from their poles and destroying the entire worldly edifice; and how, even so, the greatest human institutions and human activities are nothing more than miserable playthings compared with the efficacy of Nature and only have value in so far as they are interwoven as a means to an end into the general world-plan as peculiar systematic expressions of the forces that are bestowed upon us; and how everything is there for the sake of the other, and every means is there for a specific end, and that this end is the salvation of all beings.

A man can endure insults, injustice, contempt and the errors of others, can have enemies and love them, and can endure being misunderstood if he can also find and discover greatness in what is presently small, can find truth in error, an unfolding refinement and morality in savagery, preparation for freedom in oppression, a means for perfecting his higher nature in misfortune, and a future higher and better life [176] in death; if he furthermore believes that Providence is watching over him, and can conceive of the spirit that creates, organises and oversees it all; if he conceives of all this often and vividly, has attuned his spirit in accordance with these ideas and has made them predominant; if to him everything appears in maidenly splendour, in the rosy gowns of Nature, if for him evil has assuredly lost its sting and can look upon Nature in her most awful displays but not be frightened by them; and if he possesses this first and truest of all forms of knowledge and does not forget in this regard that ultimately he is only a man who cannot possibly complain about the imperfection of his understanding.

The more clearly he sees the less he engages in excessive haste, imprudence, remorse, shame, grief, fear and dejection. A mind of this type, which knows so many interconnections between things and which, in unknown cases, draws conclusions by means of analogy, can only want what the creator of Nature wants and what is commensurate with Nature's course. He is incapable of doing what a fool would do, and thirsting after the impossible and so suffering vexation and unfulfilled desires. The man who has a [177] will of this kind, in which everything presents itself to his higher nature as a means of perfection, in which this perfection is its own most inherent desire, will certainly feel that his will is inseparable from the will of others, that thanks to them he is everything, and that without them he is nothing. He cannot act self-interestedly,

lovelessly and unjustly; he must be the personification of benevolence; in him the prevailing inclination must rise to subordinate all his drives, wishes, desires, intentions, goals and actions to the general purpose of the world, to do nothing that might conflict with it, and to express desires that are in accordance with Nature alone – and if this inclination should be called virtue, then who would have been more virtuous than he? Virtue, *this harmony of all spiritual forces and drives, this spiritual attunement that leads us to see goodness and perfection everywhere and thus connect with the perfection of the Creator, this love of the whole of Nature, this coalescence in and with all beings, this ability to make clearer and more vivid the immense world-plan, this order, this cohesion, this harmony of the whole, this ability to recognise harmony everywhere and contradiction nowhere, to recognise everything in its place, to see everything as a means [178] to its end, for our pleasure,* would such virtue not therefore have been a result of this world-encompassing idea, of this enlightenment of the spirit? Would this virtue not indeed have been this enlightenment? And would the purest and most enduring pleasure not have been essentially associated with it? Would virtue then have been an empty name? Would it have been its own reward, independent of any human acclaim? No, it would be the most elevated form of human felicity, the highest perfection of human nature! Pleasure, perfection of the spirit, felicity and virtue would be one and the same thing, merely seen from different perspectives!

Even the blessedness of that life would have been nothing other than this clearer, more vivid and ever-growing insight into the plan and cohesion of the world through which there operated a more vivid perception of God's perfection, a beholding of God in all the majesty of His world and therefore an ever less inhibited and ever more freely developing power and activity of the soul, and so finally the state of the predominating pleasure expressing itself after this death, because every pleasure is a promoted activity and power of representation of the soul, and every displeasure an inhibited activity and power of representation of the soul. Add to this [179] the awareness that the spirit that has all this is my own spirit, and that I am it. Tell me, if that is not beatitude, perfection and the highest purpose, what are they?

So we can see just how much influence a single basic idea can have upon a person's character and their whole moral conduct, as also a belief in order and harmony and in the perfection of his creator! How inseparable this conviction is from our felicity, and how necessary it is to weaken and root out the opposing prevailing and harmful basic principles of every age and every nation and, instead of them, make as far as possible this spiritual teaching predominant and more general for the greatest benefit of the inhabitants of this planet!

As soon as the individuals of this nation, of this age, acquire an insight into the falsehood of the former principles and the truthfulness of the latter, as soon as the number of those who are enlightened about such matters multiplies, grows and increases, so also will the nation improve and so also will the way of thinking of the age. Oppression will diminish, the nation will be more satisfied, pleasanter and more moral, and the sources of misery will diminish through the direction [180] that the human mind receives.

Though a slow process, this is in general the only sure and infallible way of working and of promoting the welfare of the world as a whole. Initially indeed only single drops fall onto the earth but these gradually, as they fall more often and more frequently into a brook, a river, a sea, are gathered from all sides and combined to form an entire ocean. How very much is the felicity of individuals interwoven with the universal mass of the blessedness of all living things, and how certainly can everyone in the most insignificant position, through nothing more than their own education and the expansion of basic philanthropic principles and without the cooperation of external circumstances, work for the welfare of the world even within the most restrictive sphere of activity!

But how do individuals arrive at this conviction, at this enlightenment of the spirit? What are the practical instructions for achieving it?

1.) A careful *study of Nature* should be undertaken to find confirmation of these teachings. This will make it clear that even the smallest thing has its purpose. The careful investigator will also find the rationale for that [181] purpose. He will find that every being is there for the sake of another and for the sake of all; that nothing can be separated from the other and that all is based in all; that every being possesses everything in

sufficient measure to achieve its goal and fulfil its purpose; that, seen from this perspective, everything is perfect and good; that the imperfection of things increases proportionately as we distance ourselves from the intentions of Nature, and when we conceive of her according to alien rules, goals and destinies; that accordingly disharmony, aimlessness and imperfection have their true origin and foundation not in Nature herself but in the human power of representation; and similarly that the displeasure we express about them and which accompany this power of representation arise from the same sources.

2.) A no less *careful study of human nature* should be undertaken. An investigator of this sort will readily convince himself that our will receives its direction solely from the faculties of understanding and cognition; that the entire character of a man necessarily changes in proportion as our basic principles change; that not every basic principle brings peace, [182] satisfaction and equanimity to the soul; that only certain representations, before all others, are disposed to this; that this peace and satisfaction increases in proportion as these representations become predominant; that every distancing from these representations increases the amount of displeasure; that accordingly the evil and malice of objects have their basis more in a certain vibration of our spirit than in the thing itself; and that it is ultimately not beyond our powers to provide for ourselves this very beneficial spiritual attunement.

3.) *A study of history*, this great teacher of men, this personification of ethics, should also be undertaken. An investigator of this kind will find that the examples so often encountered in history, with their good or bad consequences, contain the most vivid and apprehensible precepts for life, and that its study can compensate for a lack of (often unpleasant) personal experience. He will find how the consequences of every action extend into an immeasurable future, how relatively useless immediately good or bad consequences are for deciding the value of things, and how often the most striking evil may in its remote consequences bring forth beneficial effects for the future; [183] how everything is organised so as to stimulate needs, and through those needs activity and so the development of higher powers. He will find that everything is a development of a plan leading to betterment, and he will learn how everything arises, grows and declines and how this decline is itself the onward movement and purposeful origination of something else. Finally he should:

4.) *Closely observe and fulfil a very specific instruction*. This instruction is as follows: if a certain attunement of the soul and a certain way of knowing (and this alone) enable man to discern that everything in Nature is perfect and good as a means to attaining blessedness and perfection, and for that reason make it possible for him to create pleasure from every eventuality and every object, and if furthermore this knowledge, this way of seeing objects, is the most correct and the truest, then obviously every vexation and every displeasure which he experiences is a lack or neglect of this knowledge, a deviation and abnormality of the reason, a disharmony of Nature with the representations of one's understanding, the result of a false idea, an erroneous basic principle becoming predominant in one's soul. Therefore, as you experience displeasure [184] so you should immediately track down the source and the premises which, in your judgement, underlie this expression of your will. Then instead of thinking of that thing, think of the opposite, and you will have found the truth and will be more at peace.

This exercise is useful for another reason: it distracts you, it turns your attention away from the repellent object, from the source of your displeasure, towards another object of enquiry: in doing so it deprives the adverse impression of its effectiveness and power. It is also an infallible way of exploring the errors in your reasoning and, since it is the opposite of the truth, of finding what the truth is and so, through the diligent plotting of the erroneous premises you have found, finally investigating your whole philosophy and way of thinking. It cannot fail: you will and must in every displeasure find false and impossible expectations, foolish desires and erroneous underlying concepts. In this way every displeasure serves as a criterion of the truth and becomes the surest way of rectifying your knowledge: indeed, displeasure becomes a school of truth and pleasure.

To take an example, imagine you are a judge, that your sworn enemy has been obliged to seek justice from you and that, against all his expectations, he has received [185] justice from you right down to the last detail. Let us suppose that, in retaliation, he now imputes ignoble intentions to you, says that you only allowed

justice to proceed in this way to win him over and acquire a reputation for stringent justice. This annoys you. But why? Well, enquire more closely into yourself. Why should the main driving-force behind this otherwise very legitimate action not actually be a kind of vanity, a desire to shame your opponent through noble behaviour, to cause him to realise his own injustice? Is this the outcome you banked on? No, it is precisely the opposite.

Let the displeasure you feel in this and similar cases teach you a lesson and enable you to derive the following rule: *He who in the execution of every duty makes the goal something other than the execution of that duty and the inner perfection of himself which is necessarily bound up with it can indeed easily neglect his best intentions and so experience displeasure regarding them.*

Do good therefore, simply because it is good, because it is your duty, because it makes you into a better and more perfect person. Do it with no other intention and you will always fulfil that intention [186] and will always be happy.

Suppose you have shown great kindness towards someone and yet ingratitude and, indeed, insults are now your reward. This obviously annoys you, because ingratitude is hurtful. You counted on a reward, you sold your acts of kindness, you made retaliation the object of your actions, and you sought to buy off your supporters, whom you sought to handle with all the greater arbitrariness the greater your acts of kindness were. And now you are being punished for this error, and for this more selfish intention, and your present displeasure is its inseparable consequence.

In the future, do good to others because they need it and because doing good is an expression of a benevolent power: this power is your mind, the inner value of which is determined solely by its actions. Do good because it is your duty to apply your abundance of powers and kindnesses for the use of those who need them, because you acquired this abundance precisely so it would become in your hands and through your purposeful application, a means of achieving your perfection, which must therefore be the only goal of your actions; because nothing can be so much as you are yourself; because perfection alone follows you consistently, and cannot be separated from you unless everything is separated from you; because on the other side [187] of the grave your future state will be determined according to the degree of the lesser or greater perfections you have acquired here below, will be based on these perfections, and will be connected to these; because this is the only way you can raise yourself above your still felicitous contemporaries, ensure precedence over them, and provide yourself with the distinction before them which you have received so little of here below; and because it makes smooth and orderly the path to our future spiritual life.

So let ingratitude be ingratitude. I quite understand however that it is not the ingratitude itself but the imperfection of the spirit that is capable of the ingratitude which causes you this displeasure. But I also understand that this expression is all too often the mask behind which the more selfish and more wicked foundations of our moral conduct are so happy to hide. The ungrateful person may well be an imperfect spirit yet he goes his own way just as you go yours in order to reach a goal along with you. He is, in the hands of Providence, an instrument of the goodness that should manifest later. His imperfection is not yours: indeed, through contrast it increases your inner worth. Among all his faults he still has some goodness in himself, so that he can teach [188] you and give you a lively lesson on how repugnant it is to be ungrateful. This you should and must feel so as not to become, one day in the future, what you presently detest.

Oh you who want to be truly happy, in all things look upon that which promises to endure. Do not try too hard to impress, but rather strive to be what you want to appear to be. If you want to be peaceful and contented then do not try so hard to make the approbation and respect of your fellow-men and of the world your goal. Rather look inwards, at what is required to perfect your nature. Believe us when we say that human virtue has no more dangerous a hurdle to overcome than this delusive and ensnaring adulation or censure at the hands of others. Take heart, and dare to be good against the judgement of those who mock and sneer. Your judges are certainly no Socrates, Cato or Scipios: they do not look beyond the superficial or whatever is in front of their noses, and they are always dazzled by outward appearances. The most perfect spirit always acts in accordance with the most perfect, noblest, purest and most enduring intentions, but the good opinion

of the multitude and fear of what others think are not of that kind, for the former cannot very often be achieved except by neglecting higher duties [189] and at the expense of higher forms of goodness. The good opinion of the multitude causes frequent conflict, leads you into acts of foolishness which are the morals of the age, awakens the dangerous desire to put on appearances, gives everyone a value that serves to attract the attention of others, awakens the hunger for wealth and power, makes these seem like things of exceptional goodness, arouses the desire to emulate others and so increases the unnecessary expenditure of every family, encourages a taste for luxury, and is the source of all the woes associated with these things. It eliminates truthfulness from human affairs, breeds liars and hypocrites, undermines justice, postulates false ideals, reduces intellectual agility and equanimity, undermines all the bases of morality, and is the richest and most abundant source of all displeasure and misery.

If on the other hand you ignore the immature judgements of the short-sighted it will furnish you with singularity and unswerving strength of mind and help you see through deception and focus your attention on the point, on man's inner core. Through it the most insignificant man can become great, because it is a noble and difficult thing to endure contempt and ridicule and not succumb to them. It produced the great characters of the ancient [190] world: it produced Cato, it discovered America. Away therefore with this foolish and exaggerated desire for adulation, with this fear of the world's censure! All conviction becomes weak and all virtue falters if it shuns the mockery and the ridicule of one's contemporaries, if it cannot seriously resist censure and injustice. Avoid this hurdle therefore as much as you can, or it spells the end for your freedom and virtue: you would then be not what you should be but what people want you to be, be it bad or good, just a copy of an inferior pattern, and the monkey of your age. [191]

INSTRUCTIONS FOR THE EDUCATION, PREPARATION, TEACHING AND TRAINING OF MEMBERS OF THE THIRD CLASS.

- 1.) In this Class also we do not generally use ceremonies, subscriptions, gratuitous signs/symbols or formal gatherings. If local requirements demand alternative measures then the Provincial Superiors are fully at liberty to organise these.
- 2.) No one will be admitted to this Degree unless they can provide sufficient evidence that they have been fully indoctrinated into the system and have completely assimilated the principles of the preceding Degree.
- 3.) An interval of at least one year is not considered excessive or superfluous for the purpose referred to in 2). Indeed, it is preferable to extend this interim period rather than shorten it.
- 4.) It is not enough for the Aspirant to be familiar with the principles of the previous Degree: he must also have been prepared for those of the Degree to come and have been examined to see whether he will be able to accept the new principles which are to be propounded. [192]
- 5.) For this purpose the Superior will, some time beforehand, introduce him into the narrower circle of Members of this Degree and allow him to take some part in their discussions. Its Members will have previously been informed about his intended participation and will have been cautioned to orientate their discussions in such a way that his attention is focused on the topics mentioned in 6.) below and he is encouraged to reflect upon these.
- 6.) The main topics of these discussions (and indeed of the activities of this Degree) are: the need for good morals; the wide diversity of human behaviour reflecting the moral principles to which they adhere; the state of mind – one of greater or lesser felicity – associated with those principles; the doctrine of felicity; the ideal systems pertaining to this doctrine; and ways of testing and examining these systems.
- 7.) To ensure that the Aspirant feels a genuine need to continue with the Degree after the Lecture has been read, it is a good idea to adopt a thoroughly sceptical attitude and to touch upon the difficulties present

in all systems while maintaining a cautious silence about the determining principles and the ultimate solution to the problem.

Since, after the Degree has been read, everyone tends to feel that he 'knows it all already' [193] and has heard nothing new, he should be asked how a man might minimise the displeasure in his life: this is done partly to ensure a better preparation of the Aspirant and partly to refute as effectively as possible, the lack of logical foundations underlying any information he might have received previously.

8.) If the Aspirant is felt to be well on the way to successful integration then a day should be chosen for the actual Admission on which he is free of all concerns, on which his mind is not distracted by any more intense ideas that might obscure the impression to be made upon him, and his whole attention and interest are focused on this topic. The Lecture for his Degree should then be read with the appropriate liveliness.

The impression it makes upon him and the degree of success it has achieved should be closely observed, but before this stage is reached, he should receive preparatory instruction on the criterion to be used to assess all the Degrees and Instructions: this states that nothing good can be achieved as long as human passions predominate and come into play, humanity refuses to share the same grand perspective and there are no great human [194] souls elevated above every baser interest. These insights are confirmed by experience: everyone should therefore see the Order as a school and an institution for training more elevated (and, therefore, happier) men of this kind.

Pupils should then use this criterion to judge all our instruction, guidelines and suggestions to see whether these are consistent with it and are a means of achieving it, and whether any better versions are to be found. It is by this criterion alone that everyone should assess the value of our teachings and arrangements.

9.) If the Aspirant shows his unqualified approval then he must be adequately supported in his enthusiasm and determination so that he can give proper expression to them.

10.) The Members then usually do the exercises prescribed in the Degree (including No. 15 at the end, which is the best way of all of discovering the false principles underlying our displeasures), discussing them, defining them more precisely, setting each of them down in writing, gradually building up a collection of such false principles as they prevail among humanity, sharing information on how to identify them, and pointing out the resulting benefits that we can enjoy and experience. [195]

11.) For this Class the main recommended reading, which is in part a preparation for future Degrees, is as follows:

1. *Seneca's* letters and, especially, his *De providentia, De Vita Beata* and *De Constantia Sapientis*.
2. *Epictetus* and *Marcus Aurelius*.
3. *Abbt's Vom Verdienste*.
4. *Garve's Philosophische Anmerkungen und Abhandlungen zu Cicero's Büchern von den Pflichten*.
5. *Xenophon's Memorabilia of Socrates*.
6. *Sulzer's* philosophical writings^{xxiii}.
7. *Meiner's Geschichte des Ursprungs, Fortgangs und Verfalls der Wissenschaften in Griechenland und Rom*, especially vol. 2.
8. *Feder's Untersuchungen über den menschlichen Willen*.^{xxiv}
9. *Charron's De la sagesse*,^{xxv} one of the most suitable books of all.
10. *Montaigne's* Essays.

12.) Those who, when joining the Order, propose themselves for eventual acceptance into the Class of Manuductors and who wish to participate in the governance of the Order must complete all these exercises to the highest possible standard and must fulfil all the requirements here prescribed. With the other

Members a slightly more lenient approach can be adopted, [196] but it is always advisable to do or at least try to do as much as possible with them. The Class of Manuductors is actually the true Order: they are the spirit and soul of the Order as a whole, and it is upon their training, ethics and ability that everything depends.

13.) However, each of the Manuductors and Superiors must carefully ensure that he implements these regulations in such a way that they cause his pupils the least inconvenience and annoyance, and so that they are least likely to be rejected by them. Even more so, he must ensure that his treatment of his pupils reveals no signs of compulsion or pedantry. The best teacher is always someone who is himself thoroughly and passionately convinced of the truth of what he is teaching.

14.) *Setting a good example, maintaining contact with virtuous people, ensuring purposeful leadership and focused discussions, showing one's affection for the purpose of the Order, and finding pertinent examples from history* are the subtlest and yet the surest ways of turning people into what one wants them to be. If you can achieve this though these means alone then you do not need to consider more strenuous approaches.

15.) Do not believe anyone when they say that this system of training is too demanding. To the man whose heart and head are full of these ideas, and who looks for opportunities to unburden himself of them and to lighten the load [197] by sharing them with others, every opportunity to talk about them is welcome. Who is the loser if your own heart and head are full of these ideas, if your principles are such that they make it easier to fulfil your natural obligations, if they are the most elevated and correct of their kind, if they are the most effective for producing great thoughts and deeds, and if there is an obligation to make this way of thinking one's own?

Good organisation and a shrewd division of tasks make things even easier, while hard work and an unwillingness to be daunted complete the whole and so ensure success. Finally, it is certainly worth the effort of the more noble members of society if, when faced with so little encouragement and, indeed, with clamorous demands to do exactly the opposite, they become what the rest of humanity will only become much later on, namely a type of man that entire generations can take as their model, a man whose life will serve as an example to the most distant posterity.

16.) Since man only desires something to the extent that and in the proportion to which it fulfils his purpose, another very appropriate exercise is to accustom pupils to recalling their purpose and determining the [198] relationship to it of their every action. This can be very readily achieved by the more frequent use of the acclamation *respice finem*, i.e. *does this advance your purpose?* Even better however one can frequently raise the following questions, which should be answered or at least investigated during conversations and at social gatherings:

1. What is the goal of humanity in general or of one man in particular likely to be, if he makes a certain statement or performs a certain action?

This exercise helps you acquire the skill of seeing into the mainsprings of human actions.

2. How do certain goals stand in relation to humanity's true purpose: do they hinder or assist it?

This exercise helps you learn how to evaluate and classify human goals.

3. Is a certain action a valid way of achieving this particular true (or even false) purpose?

This helps you acquire the skills of selecting the most correct means, rejecting incorrect means, acting considerately, and engaging with appropriate desires. [199]

This exercise is one of the most important because it improves the head and the heart simultaneously without the need for deep reflection, so that – instantly as it were – the Aspirant receives instruction about the things that are so essential to his felicity.

The phrase *respice finem* can therefore be adopted as the motto of this Class. Suitable questions include, do you want to become or possess this or that and yet do just the opposite? What sense does that make?

How do you hope to achieve your goal by this means? Perhaps you need to change either your goal or your means, i.e. your behaviour to date?

17.) Goals should also be examined in a similar manner, e.g.

Q. Why do you do that?

A. It increases my income.

Q. Why do you want to increase your income?

A. So I can support myself and my family.

Q. Why do you want to support yourself and your family? and so on.

Within every goal there is a hidden goal, and in every one of these hidden goals there is a further goal. You therefore need to continue until the other person is no longer able [200] to think of a different goal. This enables you to trace all his actions back, via their entire hierarchy, to the highest goal, to show that all the other goals are simply means, and so deprive them of their attractiveness. Alternatively you will at least find out at which goal he 'gets stuck' as it were and what he sees as his highest good, and will therefore be able to point out to him the futility of it.

If I have now so attuned a person that his most serious intention and main goal in life is to become a better and more perfect person, then it strikes me as very possible that I will be able to prepare him for every good action in the shortest and most illuminating way by simply declaiming *respice finem, will you really become what you want to become by following this course of action? Is this really a way of becoming a better person?* If he is serious about attaining his goal then he should follow my instructions. I always ask: *How can you achieve this goal more easily, in a shorter time, with greater certainty, through this behaviour or through that? Which is the greater act, to follow one's instincts like animals do or to struggle against them, to do something towards which the whole world and the weakest of men feels an inclination and a desire, which everyone feels like doing, or something that not everyone can emulate? Was it better to be just a convincing [201] copy of somebody else or to be an original?*

In this way my pupils can and must investigate and determine for themselves the worthiness or lack of it of all the actions in this context. I can always say to a pupil, 'If you just want to appear to be something and to stand out from the crowd then, insofar as your behaviour is appropriate to that goal, I can understand why you are doing this rather than anything else, but why do you prefer to just *appear* to be something rather than actually being it? Which is better? Which of the two is more likely to make you into a more perfect man?' He must be a fool indeed if he cannot acquire an insight into the absurdity of his behaviour so that he changes his goal and, accordingly, also changes his means.

This enables true miracles of instruction to be performed. It is the easiest way of showing pupils the unworthiness of their baser goals. All Superiors are therefore requested to adopt this exercise to the fullest extent and to set it above all others, since they themselves will gain immeasurably thereby. It is also easy to include this exercise when seeking out false basic principles on the basis of our displeasures, for false goals are false principles, and every displeasure has an abortive goal at its [202] root. It is in fact one and the same task, and thus the only task in this Class and the most important one from every perspective, because all of man's faults without exception arise from this source, as well as their virtues and vices, their foolishness and wisdom.

18.) To develop some exercises in the art of disregarding unfair criticism, the Order has also expressed the wish that members of this Class accustom themselves to (and might possess enough strength of character to accept) restraint in all categories of luxury, e.g. dining, expensive clothes, carriages, etc., as far as circumstances permit, to reduce everything to a state of naturalness and refined simplicity, and to avoid displaying excessive grandeur and social distinctions through obnoxious extravagance. Everyone secretly wants this, and everyone has wanted to emulate it, but no one has sufficient strength of character to make a

start on it and so suffer the contempt of fools and the ridicule of spendthrifts. This exercise enables the following moral gains to be ultimately achieved:

1. Men become used to distinguishing themselves more through actual than through external advantages, and vanity is undermined; [203]
2. Frugality is encouraged;
3. Extravagance and its associated vices are prevented and all oppressive debt-burdens avoided;
4. A contribution is made to the prosperity and welfare of each country.

What a wretched kind of grandeur and social distinction it is to have the most beautiful clothes or keep the most lavish table! Shame on you for such extravagance which at once makes you small, poor and deceitful! You must sweep aside the obstacles to every great and manly virtue, drive out the childish Spirit of the Age, and in no way suffer the follies of your contemporaries or this human urge to waste your time. Do you wonder why there are so few really great and eminent men when the only people who enjoy good fortune are those who can amuse their contemporaries? Do you really call an age enlightened in which singers, dancers and buffoons receive all the honours and distinctions and win a degree of respect from the higher social classes that never falls to the lot of a genuine person? As long as a man can make his fortune in this way, the world will be full of such people. Just make sure that [204] people can gain these advantages through other kinds of merit, share out your respect, acclaim and rewards more sensibly, and then see whether people do not instead devote themselves to more serious pursuits. That is the direction in which we must work, in which morality and virtue must be promoted, to prevent the opposite of such things.

You can at least make a start on this by refusing to be ashamed of doing your duty. It is wretched enough that nowadays almost everyone who wants to do something good, e.g. live frugally, tries to avoid doing anything that he thinks will cause him to stand out from the crowd and so does not stand out because there are always others who will stand out more. It is a wretched thing I say that such a person must first join forces with others who behave similarly to console and protect himself against the senseless ridicule of the rest of humanity by winning the approval and emulation of others, and that nowadays one can only do good deeds in league with other people, because only a few have the appropriate courage and strength, and because there are very few among those who can decide, even in association with others, to disregard the flattering attentions of fools. Is that what we call the wisdom and enlightenment of our time? [205]

19.) Exercises 15 and 16 can also be read out to those Members of this Degree to whom instruction is being given and their implications clearly and entertainingly explained.

FOURTH CLASS.

The subject-matter for this Class was provided by the teachings published *in the Third Dialogue of my 'Apologie des Mißvergnügens und Uebels', from page 217 until the end.*

FIFTH CLASS.

This Class studies the principles contained in the Fifth Dialogue of my *Apologie des Mißvergnügens*, which are concerned with the historical development of the human race.^{xxvi}

SIXTH CLASS.

MY SYSTEM CONCERNING IDEALISM.

Since the following three Degrees are already available in print for everyone to read,^{xxvii} and since the Fifth Class will be published shortly, my readers will readily understand that there is no need to publish them

again. I need add only that they are currently being immeasurably expanded and improved and that only later will they acquire the dialogue format which they have not had up to now. [206]

SEVENTH CLASS.

INSTRUCTION FOR SPONSORS AND MANUDUCTORS.

In any well-organised body of people, and in one that wants to be effective and to achieve great things, members should be inspired by a single understanding, a single will and a single interest, and to this general interest all specific and selfish interests should be skilfully subordinated. No member should ever do or want to do anything opposed to this general goal, otherwise misunderstanding, envy, disagreement, discord and controversy arise, energies are divided, the general interest is forgotten, and the agreed goal is not achieved. It is not enough for the collaborators to be burning with desire to achieve their goal: they must also achieve mutual understanding and should have similar and congruent ideas about the constitution and structure of such a society even before they have been introduced to the reality of such an association. Everything depends on allowing ideas to spontaneously arise, on preparing candidates properly, on raising their expectations even before they join, and on testing, investigating and inconspicuously attuning [207] them. Everyone, before he even knows that he is entering the Order, must feel a lively need for such a society which should be so insistent that he himself wants to make contact and would like to try to establish such an organisation of his own. He must be thoroughly convinced of its possibility and essential utility and must be so attuned that if he was free to do so, he himself would establish it in precise accordance with this already available plan.

The present Instruction is designed to achieve that aim: everyone who wants to help expand the Order must fall into line with it, nor should it be shared with anyone without exceptional ability and suitability for this task. Not everyone however is fit for this purpose. The Sponsor must:

1. Study thoroughly the plan of the Order.
2. Have the goal and the means steadily before his eyes.
3. Know exactly what is still lacking in his Candidate, what is inharmonious in him and what therefore still needs to be strengthened, weakened, rooted out, increased, invigorated or made more responsive.
4. He must master the art of digging out pertinent facts and passages from his historical studies to then [208] reflect upon them, broaden the pupil's degree of attention to and interest in them, and expound all the remarks that can be made on them as naturally as possible very subjectively and without applying pressure. He must use a lively style of presentation and a self-expressed seriousness to kindle the candidate's passions to his advantage while closely observing the impressions made upon him so that he knows what areas to focus on in his future activities.

Al this is no easy matter: not everyone has the ability, and practice makes perfect.

If one of these skilled individuals selects, with the approval of his Superiors, a well-intentioned and cooperative person upon whose confidence and friendship he flatters himself on being able to rely after long acquaintance then he can steer him towards the Order as follows:

1. He should not breathe a word about the society he wants him to join.
2. He should arouse in him only a keen desire to study history.
3. To do this he tells him about the great advantages he will enjoy thereby. [209]
 - 1.) He tells him that history is the best guide to life and the best teacher of it, and that it is the true and indeed only source of all sound learning, astuteness and wisdom, the most necessary preparation for the highest forms of knowledge, and the key to understanding the most distant future.

2.) He presents history to him as the best subject for understanding humanity, calculating the success of our actions, comparing cause and effect, investigating the causes and mainsprings of our passions, deriving from the fates of others rules for our own future use, and becoming astute and irreproachable through understanding the failures of others.

3.) Similarly he should show him how history helps us develop an overall view of the origin, development, failure and ultimate fate of whole nations, to compare them with each other, and to draw analogies regarding the fate of other nations, including present-day ones,

4.) so that he ultimately achieves an insight into the course and development of the human spirit, how a general and universal thread seems to weave its way through world affairs and determine their character, and so that he might perhaps discover the basic [210] rule that explains everything which has happened so far and which must also occur in the future.

5.) If the candidate does not express any liking for this presentation and if he does not feel any need to learn about history and all this other material then – whoever he might be, whether great, rich or powerful – you should immediately drop him, for such a man does not share our way of thinking and is completely useless to us in all respects.

6.) If however a keen desire for these activities arises within him and if it can be sustained for a certain period then the Sponsor should immediately, for the mutual benefit of both himself and his pupil, offer to share his leisure-hours with him in walks and other activities in order to probe him, perhaps study an historian with him, test everything he can about him and explore ideas together.

7.) Although someone with a good mind will know how to exploit any historian effectively so as to steer his Candidate in the direction he wants him to go, to proceed subjectively in all aspects he must nonetheless try to find the historian: [211]

a) his Candidate finds the most absorbing;

b) whose work most naturally leads to the commentary that he needs to provide to his Candidate given the goal he is trying to reach;

c) who sheds light on what the Candidate wants to be and who awakens in him an inclination towards virtue and a lively hatred of vice.

In general, *Plutarch's Lives* are not without their usefulness, as well as perhaps *William Robertson's History of the Reign of the Emperor Charles V^{xxviii}* and, for those excessively drawn to court-life and worldly hurly-burly, *Sully's Mémoires*.^{xxix} To those who think they are above all misfortune or who consider their fellow-men superfluous you should, for example, recommend books in which the opposite perspective is frankly and intuitively illustrated.

8.) Once your talk has begun you should certainly not miss any opportunities to introduce your Candidate to great and high-minded perspectives and the need to display unselfishness, magnanimity and self-control, as well as a love for the goal of the Society, for good order and the social virtues. You should cast these qualities in the most favourable light and in the pleasantest colours, as well as inspiring in him an abhorrence of their opposite and an understanding of the need to [212] always put himself in the shoes of the person he is dealing with.

9.) But besides everything that can kindle a love for virtue and an abhorrence of vice and foolishness, history should also teach us how strength comes through unity, how divided interests foster universal weakness and decline, and how easily discord can insinuate itself and unity be disrupted.

It should also teach us how and by what means great and mighty institutions arise from humble beginnings, what risks should be run in the process, and what virtues and forms of conduct were required; how a whole world arose from a melting-pot of Romans and barbarians; what a great contribution persistence made to this success; what a great achievement it is to remain standing amid the storm, why

one should never doubt the progress of Goodness, and how often obstacles merely serve to encourage; how necessary it is that not everybody should want to give orders or dominate in every situation of order and unity, and that everyone should work at the task most appropriate to him and should not concern himself with anything else.

It should teach us how very often reaching a goal requires us to be humble even in great things, that we should ask instead of tell, and obey instead of command; [213] how dangerous it is to rush to accomplish something, and how much ardour and impetuosity simply go to waste; it teaches us what causes the most beautiful and world-encompassing designs to fail and what we need to avoid if we are not to share the same fate.

10.) In a nutshell, the whole lecture should focus on a single task, i.e. instilling in your Candidate's mind the idea that humanity would be capable of great things and tremendous results if only the passions and the more selfish goals were not so active, if people had a proper appreciation of their best interests, if the majority shared the same principles and were all of the same mind and if they established closer relations with one another, that it would be well worth the trouble to limit their passions to bring such an institution into existence, and that this would not be impossible if they would only resist the weakness to which their predecessors had succumbed. No source of human misery should be uncovered without immediately finding a remedy in morality and in the real knowledge of our true advantage.

11.) You should always subtly awaken in your Candidate doubts as to whether humanity is not the author of its own misfortune. You should show him what humanity could [214] be, and how easily; you should make it clear to him that humanity still has so much more to do to ensure its lasting well-being; you should show him, for example, that some villain would never have caused some particular misfortune and disrupted this work of unity if he had not been assisted by the weakness and faint-heartedness of good people, if only they had been strong enough to withstand the proffered advantages or the threatened dangers, how all this would change if only confidence, persistence, morality, unselfishness, mercy and patience were more common among humans, and how very possible all this would be if only the better sort of people joined forces, empowered themselves through education, and so disseminated better principles among the developing human race.

12.) You should always present everything to your pupils without an obvious motive: instead, interweave it with their own ideas, with the historical narrative that the pupil himself most closely personifies, at the moment when he is starting to take an interest in this or that hero or great historical figure or institution, and always present your material with a fire and passion born of inner conviction.

If that does not do the trick then your Candidate is simply not [215] worth the effort you are wasting on him and does not deserve further familiarity with a Society whose activities you have so far wisely concealed from him. Let him go. Both you and we ourselves are adequately safeguarded against abuse, and as long as this unique and reliable system of preparation is scrupulously maintained it is impossible for our organisation to be defiled by the unworthy.

Certainly time gets wasted on these efforts – years sometimes. But if just one person succeeds through this process then this will be ample reward for all your efforts.

Friends, brothers, be humble in pursuit of the goal, remain anonymous and you will become great: a single family can, one day, turn into a great nation, just as we are all descended from the two Original Parents.

13.) The idea of such an organisation, and of its utility and necessity, should now gradually but automatically arise in the pupil's mind. If he feels this urge with sufficient intensity then he will seek it out of his own free will or make plans to establish a society of his own. You yourself should continue to insinuate this idea into his heart, supporting him in his reflections upon it and, in particular, ensuring that the following question remains clearly and vividly in his mind: [216]

What could a society of noble, harmonised and closely-bonded people achieve and accomplish?

Ask him this. The more answers he can work out the more he will become attracted to an organisation of this kind. The secret here is to work out a few quite major results but the pupil must be allowed to work them out for himself, with you acting only as the 'midwife'.

The pupil benefits from this exercise in the following ways:

1. The thoughts and results are his own, are the fruits of his own imagination, and are therefore all the more stimulating and attractive for him. You can always make up for any deficiencies, but you should not try to suddenly produce a new effect in him every day: instead, repeat an image frequently so that it is more deeply committed to memory.
2. Because they are his own thoughts and discoveries he will easily be in a position to teach them to others.
3. You will discover how deeply his mind penetrates the subject-matter, and how profoundly he sees things.
4. The results he produces will show you his fears and greatest wishes: this enables you to discover his prevailing idea. [217] If the latter is noxious then you can undermine it with other appropriate lectures.

If he is very dilatory or short-sighted in his answers then he will not be very rewarding to work with.

14.) If his answers are good ones then continue with the following questions:

We can conclude that people who are of one mind can achieve great things. But for this to be the case there are two major requirements: they must share the same ideas and they must be closely united. So:

1. How do we get people with different interests and ways of thinking to share the same ideas?
2. How can we bind them closely together?

In answering these questions your Candidate should display intelligence in his choice of means and will also reveal whether or not he has an organised mind. Give him time to answer: there is no hurry, but if he cannot sort himself out immediately then drop the following hint:

Both these things have already happened: history provides us with a host of examples with varying outcomes for better or for [218] worse, and so it must be possible. Tell me, what have other religious and secular associations not achieved in such cases, and what have they done to produce these effects?

If his solution includes a means to achieve a goal that runs counter to our plans then he must be gradually persuaded of its irrationality.

15.) With every Candidate, but especially with those who doubt the viability of such a project, even more recondite questions can be asked. *Why should it not be possible for just one person to influence the way of thinking both of his contemporaries and his most remote descendants, and attune them all accordingly? How would this individual set about creating a very closely-knit and very widespread society in which everyone shared the same philosophy?*

If he reflects on this for some considerable time (for he should be made to think about everything) and finds the solution, then he is certainly a splendid fellow and someone who will be of some use to us. If, however, the exercise proves too difficult for him then you may prompt him as follows: [219]

If someone thoroughly galvanised two of his closest friends whose thinking was closest to his own, if he attuned his whole life to this task and made this way of thinking into a necessity for them and then allowed these two people, after securing their cooperation, to breathe this same spirit into four of their own friends in the same way, and made it into a necessity for them also, and even accepted them into the group, and if in the same way each of these four very closely attuned people acquired further permission to similarly accept their own friends into this group, and if this group consequently grew and grew, would this not be a sure and almost infallible

(albeit slow) way of achieving this aim? Or would it be simply impossible to create such a structure? How, if we began this, would we have laid the foundation for it?

If the Candidate raises objections to this method, especially about its slowness, then these must be countered by pointing out that:

1. by this means all obstacles and opponents are almost entirely removed; [220]
2. a very small number of people are able through their position to influence the whole, so that it is, as it were, within the power of every good person to spread virtuous beliefs, and this alone falls within the power of most people;
3. this is the most discreet and most secure way;
4. this method is actually Nature's way, for she does not do everything all at once, she does not work in leaps, and she starts out from the smallest things;
5. that this task involves 're-tuning' people and laying the foundations of certain abilities, and this is certainly not the work of a single day or even year;
6. that in this method unselfishness reaches its apex, if only we can decide to renounce all the fruits of our labours and work for the welfare of our most remote descendants;
7. that when building for eternity the foundations must be laid deep;
8. that this is the least burdensome and expensive method for those actively involved; [221]
9. that one day, if membership increased to a certain number, it should become well established, as membership would grow in the following progression:
1. 2. 4. 8. 16. 32. 64. 128. 256. 512. 1024.

We should however note that this arrangement is unsuitable for a working Order because of members dying in the interim and so interrupting the recruitment chain and also because of the huge piles of correspondence and other problems. You should therefore propose this to the candidate with no other motive than to suggest to him the *possibility* of bringing together a group of people with a shared inclination.

16.) If however the Candidate decides to take the initiative by proposing such an arrangement to you then this means his intentions are suitably refined and that he has been attuned and prepared in the noblest manner. Now the arrangement must be explained to him in such a way as to remove any apprehensions he might have about our chosen structures. Do this by asking the following questions:

1. What qualities do we need to begin this work and to win other people's trust? Do we really have these qualities? [222]
2. Are we, once we have begun, the masters of our own conduct? Instead of being the lords and masters of others, are we not actually the most dependent of people, since our pupils' eyes are constantly focused on us to see whether there is any discrepancy between what we teach and how we act? Would such an inconsistency not diminish our people's trust?
3. If we spotted such an inconsistency then would not the goal of the Order require us to draw it to their attention and insist on a change in their conduct? Would they be right to feel annoyed about this?
4. Can such an organisation, if it is to grow, exist without cohesion, the strictest order and the most stringent subordination?
5. In such an organisation, can everyone be allowed to give orders? Can everyone in it be asked about their opinion without wasting huge amounts of time and money?

6. Do we not need someone to give the machine some overall direction; do we not need a centre at which everything unites, a centre from which everything flows forth, to ensure that we work [223] quickly, discreetly and uniformly?

7. Should this 'centre' be single or multiple? How do we foster unanimity, speed, power and vigour in working?

8. Might someone in a position of leadership not abuse his power in this situation, especially if he is unknown to everyone except those through whom he directly works? Or might not this concealment from all others lead to an exceptional limitation of his power and therefore to the happiest mixture of aristocracy and monarchy?

9. Should our superiors be known to us or hidden? Would not the hidden character of the superiors offer us protection against their despotism, in the light of what we have just said in paragraph 8?

10. Why must there be cohesion in such an organisation? Can such cohesion ever be close enough?

11. Finally, how should our members be taught ideas, how can these ideas be made entertaining, and how can they be made into a necessity?

17). When the Candidate has answered all these questions (preferably in writing or, if need be, orally – [224] although in any case the answers must be sent to the Superiors) and has answered them satisfactorily (for everyone must do so without leniency or exception, and if a member refuses or is dilatory then he must be let go) then we can be sure his way of thinking is completely homogeneous with ours; that we run no risk by accepting him; that he has not been attracted to the Order by wrong or foolish expectations of physical advantage, money, power or 'secrets'; and that his only objective is love for the whole and a desire to be useful and to act well and beneficently. Finally every such tried and tested person can be asked the following:

How should people be recruited to an Order of this kind, especially if what I have been doing with them for so long is actually preparation for an existing organisation of which I am a member? And would that organisation really be what we have outlined so far?

Then continue by leaving him to his thoughts. [225]

EIGHTH CLASS.

FURTHER INSTRUCTION FOR THE MANUDUCTORS ON THE TRAINING AND GUIDANCE OF MEMBERS.

THIRD CLASS.

I feel I should be leading others. I should be imparting a new direction to their hearts and minds. I should be allowing new ideas and motivations to imperceptibly arise within them. I should be eradicating the old weak ideas, reinforcing the new ones and making them into needs. I should be bringing other people to the point where they ought to be without them even being aware of it. I should be making them of one mind, with the many of which they are a part. How do I achieve this? I want to pursue a path which I think will bring me to my goal with certainty. This requires experience both of oneself and of others.

I have also been led by others. What did *my* Superiors do to gain power over me? Whatever they did is also what I want to do. What did I demand from my Superiors to willingly abandon myself to their power? That is something that others will also demand from me. It is trust that made me obedient to my Superiors. But what did they have to do to inspire this trust in me? [226]

1. *They had to convince me that their insights were superior*, for superiority gives mastery. The Order provides the insights and now it is all up to me. Am I really familiar with these insights? Can I properly formulate them and communicate them to others?

2. They had to convince me that they would use these insights solely for my own benefit and well-being. The greatest ‘magic potion’ of all, if you want to persuade people and win their trust, is to awaken in them a lively and steadfast conviction that you will not take advantage of them – and this is exactly what they did.

3. They chose me in preference to many others. Not to everyone do they show this willingness; it is *preferable* to earn their attention.

4. I had to find that their teachings corresponded precisely with their actions.

5. I had to be convinced that there were no contradictions, weaknesses or self-interested intentions in their behaviour. Unfeigned love for me, concern for my welfare and a desire to satisfy my wishes had to shine forth from everything they did. [227]

My leaders met me and won my entire confidence. As the above qualities increased or diminished so my trust in them rose or fell. To win the trust of my pupils I myself must therefore do the same, for ‘similar causes produce similar effects’.

But how can I tell that my pupils have confidence in me? I think I can tell this from signs of confidence:

1. The impact my Lectures have on them.
2. The extent to which they follow my rules.
3. Their desire to please me, and their abhorrence of displeasing me.
4. Whether I am their first choice of companion and their closest one.
5. The displeasure caused by my indifference towards them.
6. Their unease about my disapproval, and the attempts they make to reduce this.
7. The respect they show me in preference to everyone else.
8. The extent to which they bring their doubts and problems to me. [228]
9. The weight my decisions carry with them.
10. The favourable opinions about me they express to others.
11. Their open-heartedness towards me.
12. A reduction in the degree of familiarity they display towards me.

As these diminish so does their level of trust in me. Then, as I have noted, it is time for me to turn my gaze inwards, to find out what is lacking within me and to remedy any deficiencies. If the pupils’ mistrust is aroused by certain expectations or by more selfish purposes or if the pupils are not well attuned to the Order’s goal then the level of trust can be even further diminished by the following:

1. Disappearance of the intentions that are conducive to the specific goal.
2. If the leader suffers misfortune or becomes the target of contempt or persecution, which is evidence that in such cases a person’s trust in him was due simply to the fact that other people trusted him, which means that any respect was not heartfelt, etc. etc. [229]

Now that I have won their trust, I need to exploit it so as to have an effect upon them, i.e. I need to influence their sequence of ideas in accordance with my goal. I therefore need to know what these people already are, what is lacking in them, what I need to add to them, and what I should remove from them. But how do I do that? No one has direct experience of what goes on in other people’s minds: I am not *you*. Analogy therefore remains my only guide. No one is as close to me as I am myself: the state of my mind, the

mainsprings and the ideas of which I am composed, and the impressions that external circumstances and the behaviour of others have on me, all can and should be known to me. Knowing myself is therefore the first and basic requirement for knowing others: then I can assess other people's functioning and actions and apply these cases to myself, investigating the motivations that must have been present within me to bring forth this particular effect, draw conclusions about similar effects having similar causes, comparing my conclusions with other experiences I have already had, and so accurately determining the actual sources of other people's behaviour. This self-knowledge is the key to investigating the [230] minds of others. But how do I acquire it?

From searching within me I learn that all my desires, passions, inclinations and impulses are determined by the faculties of cognition and representation; that the faculty of desire should be entirely dependent on the will; that obscure representations [sensations] produce the instinct, while clear representations [concepts] produce the drives, and distinct representations [ideas] the motives; that I have never desired something without a preceding obscure sensible or distinct representation of a certain benefit; that because this anticipated benefit is the goal and the interest I do everything because of a certain interest; that none of my actions is without a goal; that these goals can be manifold; that not all goals are equally good, but that a goal always seems to me to be the best whenever I act in accordance with it; that the general goal is felicity; that something only seems desirable to me when it seems to me to be a means to felicity; that every goal should have its own means, its own expressions and symptoms; that I can therefore draw conclusions from the last of these about the nature of the goal itself; and that the same action and effect can have many different causes.

This (and even more) I have experienced within myself. Since I have observed [231] similar effects in others and have myself sometimes even caused those effects I must assume that the mechanism of their nature is quite similar to mine, and since I was able to repeat these observations not just in one person but in everybody I know it is safe to conclude that these experiences are rooted in the nature of humanity, i.e. that they are general. And if I become aware of individual differences in people then I do not draw conclusions about these differences from the general mechanism of their nature but from their individual way of thinking, because my way of acting is the result of my way of thinking and is peculiar to me alone.

Since I now understand the general mechanism of my nature I now turn to the individual, to that something which means that I am *myself*. This something I find in my sequence of ideas. Only in such a sequence and coalescence of ideas can one *think* thus, and so consequently *will* thus. Only ideas that agree with my existing ideas are suited to them: such ideas give me pleasure, while all others I reject or am indifferent towards. This is how I investigate my sequence of ideas: I observe carefully what I [232] reject and what I abhor. This tells me what ideas I already have. From the strength of my abhorrence or aversion I come to experience how familiar these ideas are to me, how very intertwined they are with my sequence of thoughts, and how very much they have become a necessity for me. Now I know what those things are that cause me the greatest upset, those things which attack my favourite idea, my dominant idea. If I want something then I investigate the intention that I have in respect of it, but I do not stop there. This intention must have a further intention, and this in its turn a yet further one. Eventually I come to a question that I cannot answer any further, beyond which I cannot go. It may be that in various actions I always encounter the old intention: this (very often underlying) intention is the source of my prevailing longing to know the basis of my faculty of desire, which is my character. I then compare my actions and find that I engage in them because they are a means to my goal. Frequent and precise reflection upon myself, without the aim of appearing more wonderful than I really am, provides me with this insight.

Now I apply this technique to other people and I find that, just like me, everyone seeks and longs for pleasure, but that not everyone is like me in making a particular [233] category of pleasure into his goal. Wealth, honour, popularity, sensuous desires and a preference for peace and quiet are the most common and virtually the ultimate goals of their actions. These goals are intermingled to varying degrees, so much so indeed that they often produce conflicting effects. He who desires these things as ultimate and principal goals and who orientates his entire behaviour in accordance with them and makes them the aim of all his

actions acts wrongly, makes a means into an end, and deserves to be reprimanded, for all these things should only be sought, in so far as they are a means to promote or elevate the perfection of one's spirit. They can also lead him astray and become sources of displeasure.

This therefore is the direction in which my leadership must go, this is what I must seek to investigate, and it is here that I must infer the causes from the effects, for it is through actions that the character expresses itself. Every investigator of human behaviour therefore needs:

1. Accurate self-knowledge.
2. An equally accurate *knowledge of the general mechanism of the human will*. [234]
3. Knowledge of all human drives and purposes, and an understanding of just how many intentions can result in each action and in each act of virtue or vice.
4. Knowledge of all the means leading to each of these goals.
5. Knowledge of all the indications and symptoms through which each goal expresses itself, for everything is an impression of the prevailing passion and is an indication of it. A person with a specific goal can only walk, laugh, be angry, and speak in a certain way.
6. Knowledge of the purposes of the goals, in an ascending line, as far as he can go.
7. Because the goals can so easily be disguised as principles or, rather, since every goal is itself a principle, just as every pleasure is a principle, so he must also try to acquire a knowledge of the prevailing principles. These are very easy to discover by the following method.

Everything is characteristic of man, and betrays the state of his soul. The data that lead to its discovery include: [235]

1.) Every *yes* and *no*; the former indicates harmony and the latter disharmony with the available arguments; therefore

1. If you take note of all a person's yes's and no's then you will have a complete record of their sequence of thought.
2. If you know how to ask pertinent questions you can extract a person's whole way of thinking.
3. A major way of investigating human behaviour lies in the art of questioning and of rebutting or conceding arguments.
4. Pretence is of no use here. The following rule applies in this case: pretence always involves compulsion, whereas Nature herself is truthfulness. Suppose, for example, you see your pupil praising someone. To find out whether his praise is sincere, pay close attention to all the outward signs, even the smallest, to all his gestures, to his tone of voice. Now closely observe him when he praises someone for whom you know his praise is genuine. Note whether the same signs occur: in the latter case it was serious admiration, in the opposite case pretence. The difference in his expressions shows you his distinctive way of praising someone, whether it is out of genuine feeling [236] or pretence. And there is no pretence in this world which is capable of succeeding right down to the smallest details, for everything has its undeniably distinctive character.

2.) Every expression of *pleasure* or *displeasure*. The former is a more pronounced sequence of ideas; the latter a more inhibited one. The magnitude and intensity of the two give you another basis for judging people.

1. A person who takes pleasure in someone's downfall was certainly not their friend. If he hates this person then he must have had a reason for doing so. Try to find out what this reason is: it is a product of this person's character and provides a new datum for the investigator of human nature.

2. A person who is dissatisfied with the world is certainly – regardless of what he may have to say – a secret egoist. He is not playing the part he wanted to play and hates the world accordingly.
3. A person who cannot bear pain will go to any lengths to avoid it.
4. A person who cannot resist pleasure will go to any lengths to receive it. [237]
5. Whatever gives a person pleasure is, for him, either a goal in itself or a means to his goal.
6. He who is dissatisfied with the world finds in it something that he wants to change. Ask him what that something is and he will reveal his character to you.
7. He who is not interested in the Order's activities and the fate of his fellow members, who remains indifferent to them and who does not think of ways of helping them is certainly an apathetic member of the Order upon whom little reliance can be placed; for him any other form of activity is more welcome.

3.) *From what people like to talk about, e.g.:*

1. Someone who rarely talks about the Order and even then only with great indifference does not truly deserve to be called a member.
2. Someone who likes to talk most of all about wine, food, loose women, gambling, novels, love affairs and hobbies reveals the spirit of which he is the child: he is the sensuous type.
3. Someone who likes to talk about all his honours and distinctions, the importance of respect and the deferential encounters he has had with VIPs, letters they have written to him and the intimate dealings he has had with them shows [238] how very important these things are to him: in essence he is a vain fool.
4. Someone who likes to talk about intrigues in which he or others are involved is certainly himself an intriguer who is lacking only the chance to be one.
5. Someone who likes to find fault and who is amused and entertained by the shortcomings of others has a heart full of malice and pride.
6. Someone who praises or admires everything is either stupid or a flatterer.
7. Someone who talks loosely to everyone about matters that readily cause annoyance is either unintelligent or someone who will loosen his tongue in your presence.
8. Someone who likes to ask a lot of questions is usually a prattler.
9. Someone who talks about himself persistently makes it clear that he is vain and selfish.
10. Someone who likes to talk about decoration and ornaments and other trivia betrays a small and childlike mind.
11. Someone who raises objections against everything and finds problems in the most straightforward matters [239] is either an indolent and easy-going slob or a melancholy hypercritical type.
12. Someone who talks a lot about his trade and business shows that he will take good care of them.
13. Someone who likes to joke is anxious to please and entertain.
14. Someone who gives praise and then adds lots of *but's* will be a backbiter.
15. Someone who speaks only a little wants either to be regarded as wise and reasonable or likes to listen in order to learn or to explore other people's opinions.
16. Someone who talks a lot about everything to everyone but actually says nothing is a prattler who should not be trusted.
17. Someone who acts and speaks mysteriously in everything likes to cheat.
18. Someone who speaks briefly and seriously speaks well.

19. Someone who speaks aggressively is expressing passion.
 20. Someone who talks a lot and quickly, reflects little.
 21. Someone who speaks in a confused and incoherent manner is unclear in his thinking. [240]
 22. Someone who jumbles everything up when speaking is disorganised in his thinking.
 23. Someone who speaks ill of his friends does not deserve to have any.
 24. Someone who talks about his mistakes is seeking to excuse himself.
 25. Someone who apologises without being asked to do so is incriminating himself.
 26. Someone who speaks ill of his enemies follows his instincts.
 27. Someone who likes to talk about being persecuted and about conspiracies against him wants to be seen as important.
 28. Someone who speaks well of his enemies wants to be appear to be just, fair and impartial.
 29. Someone who promises much and readily, has no intention of keeping his promise.
 30. Someone who speaks ill of everyone will also not speak well of you.
 31. Someone who threatens people, wants only to frighten.
 32. Someone who reveals his plans before their implementation does not want to implement them. [241]
 33. Someone who likes to criticise wants to be seen as having better and more refined taste.
 34. Someone who likes to contradict cannot himself bear contradiction.
 35. No buffoon has ever won anyone's respect.
 36. Someone who likes to talk much about virtue and yet does not display it in his own actions is a hypocrite and is more trouble than he is worth, etc.
- 4.) From the company he keeps, e.g.
1. Someone who has other members of the Order as his most frequent and closest companions will also truly cherish the Order.
 2. Someone who spends most of his time with gamblers, debauchees, loose women etc. betrays thereby what he is really seeking and really loves.
 3. Someone who pushes himself, who seeks contact with more important people before all others and who is driven to such things by vanity wants to win respect among his peers, wants to be better than they are and wants to acquire influence over them; he is ambitious and power-seeking.
 4. Someone who actually despises his peers and pretends not to recognise his friends [242] when in the company of his Superiors is a haughty, puffed-up individual ashamed of his social status who would like to appear to be more important than he really is.
 5. Someone who, to attain a higher social status, has close contact with the servants of important people and entertains people beneath his dignity is a despicable person who grovels to these people in order to lord it over all others.
 6. Someone who spends a lot of time in the anterooms of the wealthy otherwise has little to do and consequently has a great deal of time to waste, or else there is a great deal that he feel he needs to seek out.
 7. Someone who deliberately avoids contact with his social betters and seeks out only people weaker than himself to whom he can offer instruction considers himself to be already perfect. He wants to stand out from the crowd but he is standing still on the path to perfection.

8. Someone who seeks the company of better and more perfect people wants to perfect himself or at least have the appearance of it.

9. Someone who is a friend to everyone is a friend to no one.

10. Someone to whom all organisations are the same makes a hobby of joining things. [243]

11. Someone who only spends time with certain people when he really needs them is pursuing his self-interest.

12. Someone who shuns society and seeks isolation either wants to avoid distraction and apply himself to more serious activities; or is aware of his deficiencies, which he wants to conceal; or has been too often badly treated or betrayed by others; or sees himself in too flattering a light and others in too negative a one; alternatively, the reason lies in his temperament.

13. Someone who is otherwise very active but still seeks solitude has other activities but wants to conceal what he is up to so he can engage in it with all the more hindrance the less he is noticed, etc.

5.) From loss of temper.

1. Someone who rarely loses his temper is either quite wise or simply phlegmatic.

2. Someone who loses his temper frequently is very demanding.

3. Someone who has a lively temper makes heavy demands on others.

4. Someone whose anger expresses itself immediately and then dies away quickly has a harmless temper. [244]

5. Someone who can conceal his anger is self-controlled, but lies in wait for an opportunity to do harm.

6. An anger that flares up suddenly soon passes.

7. Vain and ambitious people are the most prone to anger.

8. Someone who works himself up into a rage shows his opponent where his weakness lies; the latter can exploit this on a future occasion if he only wishes to. A person who works himself up into towering rages is therefore a weak person.

9. We can tell the wise from the foolish by what the person is getting angry about, etc.

6.) From opportunities to reveal his personality, e.g.

1. Someone who is only attracted to the Order as long as things are going well is a useless member.

2. Someone who cannot cope with the Order's tribulations is only weakly imbued with its purpose.

3. Someone who allows himself to be intimidated by the profanes' slander and criticism of the Order and is ashamed of the Order and its Members has been attracted to it by vanity rather than by its inner worth. [245]

4. Someone who refuses to be defended when he needs it and declines help when it is required proves how weakly he is attached to the Order and betrays his selfish intentions, his weak and unreliable character, the extent to which he cares about himself and how little he cares about others, and how unimportant the whole thing is to him, etc.

7.) In just the same way I can derive similar rules to draw conclusions about someone's character from his favourite activities; from the things he praises and criticises; from his reason for joining the Order; the demands he makes on it; the length of his membership; the minor activities of life (where there is the least pretence, because one is more rarely observed); the interest he takes in his status; his personal circumstances; and his gait, age, social standing, temperament and physiognomy. But I must be on my guard against falling into making one-sided judgements: when applying these rules I must compare everything with everything

else, explain one thing by means of the other and so discover the real reason for something, since in the human character everything works together to bring about these mixtures of ideas, inclinations and drives. [246] Religion and politics have no less crucial an influence, and if you know a man's principal goal then you can reliably determine what means he should use to achieve it, just as you can with confidence determine the goal from the means chosen because every goal has its own means and every means its own goal.

I would also like to think that I would not allow myself to be deceived by external and superficially impressive human actions, for not everything that has the appearance of virtue is such. Only the motives underlying actions and the make-up and attunement of the spirit whose expressions they are determine the worthiness or unworthiness of every action. The following guiding principles should ensure that I am not deceived in this way:

1. Every action can have many different underlying causes, and I must know what these are to determine the value of this action.

2. Not all underlying causes are equally pure and noble. The virtuous person acts according to the purest and noblest ones, and the spirit that acts according to the noblest [247] and purest intentions is the most perfect spirit and at the same time the most reliable friend and partner.

3. The virtue of a person who makes pleasure or the avoidance of displeasure the principal purpose of his actions and who claims that all pleasures are fundamentally sensual or ultimately resolve themselves into sensuality is entirely epicurean, and his guiding-thread is uncertain. He has the potential to become a more honourable man but not a great one.

4. If on the other hand we take someone who performs every action with no other intention than that it makes him a better and more perfect man, because this is his destiny, because this is the will of the creator of Nature, because with this alone the purest and most enduring pleasure and the least displeasure for the entire future is inseparably connected, who seeks only the pleasure that arises from spiritual perfection and who makes this alone the goal of his actions then his virtue is as pure as it can be, and is *Socratic, Stoic and Christian*. Such a man is capable of all great deeds, is [248] thoroughly at ease with himself, is unshakeable in danger, reliable in friendship and great in thought and deed.

5. Someone who does not make pleasure in general but rather a *specific category* of pleasure into his principal purpose, e.g. honour, power, wealth or public acclaim, can certainly do some good but only because it is a means for achieving his goal. He will also do the opposite, because it is the means to his goal. He is the farthest removed from becoming a more perfect man and a more reliable member of the organisation, even though this form of behaviour is the one most commonly encountered among humanity.

To convince myself of the correctness of these principles from experience and to discover with greater precision the motivations behind human actions in good people as well as in bad ones, I want to gradually explore the underlying causes of all human virtues. Here are some examples:

1.) *Justice*.

1. Many humans act justly simply in order to be praised for it, to win people's trust and influence over them, and [249] to rise through the reputation thus acquired to those public offices where impartiality is required. This is a wretched reason for being just, because in this case justice is cherished simply as a means for achieving a base purpose.

2. Because lack of respect for justice brings adverse consequences: this is just as bad a reason.

3. Because justice safeguards my property and protects my rights.

4. Because justice supports the order and tranquillity of society.

5. Because the characteristics that go to make up a perfect man – assuming he has an orderly mind and a no less orderly will – include the practice of justice, self-mastery, foregoing of immediate advantage, and a knowledge of one's rights and the rights of others (and an understanding of the relationship between

the two); because a person who allows himself to interfere in the enforceable duties of others will be all the less observant in the duties of life; and because without the practice of these duties people will be hampered in the development of their higher powers. Which underlying cause is therefore the purest? Which will [250] most reliably ensure that justice is practised at all times and under all circumstances? The investigator of human nature will also find that, given the diversity of motives, every form in which justice is practised will have its own signs and characteristics which betray and characterise the underlying motive.

2.) *Moderation*. People behave with moderation:

1. From temperament.
2. From love of life.
3. From a fear of disease.
4. To bring more refinement to the enjoyment of things.
5. Out of miserliness.
6. To be freer and more independent.
7. To achieve self-mastery.
8. To be admired and praised for it.
9. Because we enjoy in order to live, because we live in order to be active, to develop our powers. Because a sick body hinders the development of the spiritual forces.

3.) He who has little regard for *praise* often wants to be doubly praised or simply hates the way in which praise is given rather than praise itself. [251]

4.) *Courage* has its roots in:

1. Temperament.
2. Love of fame.
3. Fear of dishonour.
4. A desire to make one's own way in the world.
5. The search for a pleasant and leisurely life.
6. A desire to surpass others.
7. A desire for a reduced sense of danger.
8. Acquaintance with scenes of horror.
9. Striving to fulfil a higher duty, and subordination of goals.

5.) *Contempt for wealth is often only:*

1. An affectation, to protect oneself against the shame of poverty.
2. Secret revenge against the unfairness of luck.
3. Hatred of the rich, and a desire to reduce their status in order to improve one's own.
4. A byway through which the honour that cannot be achieved by wealth can be obtained. [252]
5. The wise man despises wealth as an obstacle on the path to goodness and something that leads him astray into secondary intentions (which are means not goals).

6.) *Humility* in most people is:

1. A secret hidden pride.
2. A way of achieving an imperceptible mastery even over those to whom one subjects oneself.
3. An artifice used by proud social-climbers.
4. However, people can also act with humility because they are aware of their own weakness and know only too well how much they are lacking in completeness, and because they are comparing themselves with others, with more important and better people; it is through this that the determination arises to become more like them.

False humility is recognised:

1. When people who express strong self-deprecation take very careful note of the way one greets them and then avenge any slight.
2. When people act humbly towards those they rely upon but proudly towards others who seem to them to be dispensable. [253]

7.) *Sincerity*. People are sincere:

1. To receive sincerity in return.
2. To win the trust of others.
3. To avoid being deceived.
4. To avoid being suspected of duplicity and deceit.
5. To make oneself favourably disposed to others.
6. Because one can never really hide anything and because one abhors the constraint associated with pretence.
7. Generally to win people's confidence in what one has to say.
8. Often to increase the likelihood of being able to deceive others.
9. Because then one does not think or do anything of which one would have to be ashamed.
10. Because sincerity is the characteristic of an innocent and perfect soul.

Once I have investigated my pupil's prevailing idea and passion I then need to learn more about the nature of this passion. I need to know:

1. *The origin of this passion, drive and power over human souls and through what they are expressed.* What is it that he finds most [254] attractive about it? I have to investigate this to find out what attracts him so as to then be able to satisfy this same expectation more surely and lastingly from another perspective.
2. *What is good about the passion?* I do not need to change or undermine this but rather build on it, use it as a starting-point and connect with it.
3. *What is bad about this passion?* This must be uncovered, teased out, intuited and vividly presented to him so that he can acquire whatever is the main reason for him indulging in this passion without him running the underlying risks and dangers of going astray associated with it.

To take an example, as soon as I show an ambitious person how he can satisfy his expectations from another perspective and, indeed, be much more certain to achieve them in this new way, he is sure to immediately come around to my way of thinking. All I have to do then is get him used to doing certain basic exercises to accustom him to this proposal and to occasionally [255] entertain him. As an example of this in practice let us look at overbearing ambition.

Overbearing ambition is an exaggerated demand for outward signs of honour, respect and distinction.

The reasons why it is attractive or why people suffer from it and find outward signs of honour so desirable are:

1. Because such signs awaken in us feelings of inner perfection.
2. Because honour presupposes superiority, and gives influence and power over everyone who respects us.
3. Because this influence is a further means to provide us with other kinds of pleasures, and to make people more inclined to contribute to those pleasures.
4. Because honour extends our sphere of activity and eliminates some resistance through the respect it inspires in others.
5. Because everyone likes to persuade himself that he has inner honour and perfection and even if he does not have it would still like to be respected for it for the sake of the associated [256] advantages.

Ambition is good in itself in that:

1. It is an expression of the drive for pleasure and felicity.
2. It is, fundamentally, nothing other than the drive for perfection.
3. Given rational leadership it maximises people's ability to perform great deeds.

Ambition is harmful because:

1. Most of its devotees have incorrect notions of honour.
2. It makes people very inclined to desire results before they have established the preconditions. It demands the benefits of the outward signs that result from inner honour and perfection in accordance with the rule, *'Act honourably and honour will follow'*. Then only is it genuine external honour.
3. Precisely for that reason inner perfection and honour are generally neglected, and external perfection is instead made into the goal, and everything that is a means to attaining it is then desired indiscriminately. [257]
4. Ambition therefore goes hand in hand with vanity, love for power, praise and acclaim, and a desire for fame, or certainly turns into these if accompanied by major causative circumstances.
5. An ambitious person frequently abuses the respect they are accorded and therefore wants to seek out and do things they should not; as a result they end up losing the respect they have acquired.

If my pupil is to stop being excessively ambitious then I must convince him:

- 1.) That outer honour presupposes inner honour, otherwise it is pure hypocrisy or flattery which no reasonable person can like; that for reasonable people outer honour is the inevitable consequence as soon as they become aware of a person's inner honour; but criticism by unreasonable people is just as ineffective at diminishing honour as it is at increasing acclaim when there is no reason for it. [258]
- 2.) That this inner perfection is therefore the only thing that can inevitably guarantee the pleasure associated with ambition mentioned above without bringing with it ambition's negative consequences, as anyone can see from its application if he is willing to go through both the above lists once more.
- 3.) That one accordingly acquires true honour and the true and unfeigned characteristics of the conviction that other people have of our inner worth, and that one seeks:
 1. To become ever more perfect in spirit, heart and mind.
 2. Assuming a certain magnanimity, to undertake actions that not everyone who is not as magnanimous can undertake due to the often severe underlying struggles.
 3. To use these very elevated powers for the benefit and advantage of others.

4.) In this way you can familiarise your pupil with the art of paying close attention to the behaviour of other ambitious people, and especially to the impression they make on him. You can inspire him to investigate their inner respectability, the unreasonable nature of their demands, the [259] constraint and the hypocrisy of those who appear to honour them, and the ridicule of those same people when they are free to laugh at them. You suggest visualising different circumstances, putting himself into that person's shoes, and putting that person into his own shoes so that he becomes an observer of himself.

5.) To impart all this to him in the gentlest way so as to encounter the least reluctance you should not try this out on him immediately and directly but should instead seek to steer the conversation around to this subject in his presence and that of others. In that situation you should investigate the nature of ambition from a psychological perspective, should quote examples from everyday life confirming these principles, show him examples of other people's conduct which are very similar to his own for him to make his own decision, and ensure that he develops these principles for himself.

6.) To ensure these investigations are put to good use and to avoid having to give him more specific hints you should accustom your friend right from the very outset to make it, as it were, a law and condition of his close dealings with people that he should immediately go into himself (as was the case with human failings), [260] to apply what we have just said to himself and then make the effort to avoid making excuses and instead identify these failings within himself. If necessary you should make a certain sign, e.g. tap the table, as a signal for him to undertake this investigation.

7.) A person who enjoys these gatherings and this kind of conversation, attends them regularly, discovers interesting examples in them and sees good results is certainly already far on the way to attaining his perfection. Anything can be achieved with this person in the future if his leader remains the same and if that leader continues to enjoy his trust.

Meetings and conversations of this kind are the best way of guiding and attuning people but they must be free of compulsion and obligation. The more relaxed such discussions appear to be the less self-conscious people are about resorting to them, the more ardently they are sought out and the more effective are the anticipated results. Discussions like this of subjects which are of such great interest because they are the key to understanding the hearts of others – something one would very like to understand in depth so as to make use of their intentions in one's [261] own intentions – which anyone who sharpens his powers of observation and becomes adept at dealing with the world can confirm from self-observation, and where people learn effortlessly because they see or hear everything in the form of consequences and examples, are too attractive and obviously useful, even for a listless audience, for them not to be eagerly sought out and sustained. At these meetings, which can be held anywhere, you can talk, argue and write about anyone using the pattern of the investigations above through discussions which, though basic, nonetheless fill in the gaps in people's knowledge about the mainsprings of human actions and virtues, the attractiveness of every passion, the best way of dealing with certain temperaments, the characteristics of the passions, and such practical matters as lead to a knowledge of human nature – and all from one's own experience. You can even set exercises and share out appropriate roles among the members. What a wonderful opportunity to train oneself! And what a fertile field for observation, where you can teach while you learn, and learn while you teach! [262]

Recommended reading here includes:

1. All historians, but especially Tacitus.
2. Marin Cureau de La Chambre:^{xxx} *Caractères des passions*.
3. Jean-Baptiste Morvan de Bellegarde:^{xxxi} *L'art de connoitre les hommes*.
4. Jacques Esprit:^{xxxii} *La Fausseté des vertus humaines*.
5. François de La Rochefoucauld:^{xxxiii} *Maximes*.
6. Baltasar Gracián:^{xxxiv} *Oráculo manual y arte de prudencia*.

7. Theophrastus: *Characters*.

8. Seneca: *De ira* and *De beneficiis*.

9. La Lanque.^{xxxv}

10. Cochius, Garve and Meiners:^{xxxvi} *Preisschriften über die Neigungen*.

11. Johann Kämpf:^{xxxvii} *Kurze Abhandlung von den Temperamenten*.

and many others.

These texts should only be used as suggestions and invitations for the pupil to do his own thinking, testing and correction based on his own experiences and observations.

Someone who wants to have an effect on people, who wants to change their inclinations and who wants to ensure that things that they formerly saw as desirable stop being so tries to ensure that things that were formerly abhorred are now found desirable. He must accordingly: [263]

1. Work on the conceptions, the sequence of ideas and intellect of those whom he is seeking to change.
2. Everyone has his own ideas because he believes they are true and correct. Someone who genuinely attacks these will therefore always encounter resistance and so work in vain. To avoid this he must:
 3. know what sort of person he has before him, what stands in that person's way, where the weakness lies that he must master (this is always to be found where his and his opponent's principles coincide).
 4. He must infiltrate his mind, connect with him, draw conclusions imperceptibly whenever the pupil concedes something, and in this way steadily approach and eliminate whatever is standing in his way.
 5. He must seek to undermine the cause: the effects will then fall of their own accord.
 6. He must previously awaken a need corresponding to that which he wants to propose.
 7. He must introduce him to the subject-matter rather than simply confront him with it: the necessary idea should suddenly arise in his soul as if he himself had discovered it. He must therefore: [264]
 8. suggest preparations that require him to subsequently fall back on these results. Our preparation for the admission of members is an example of this.
 9. Put him into a position where these ideas are frequently renewed;
 10. and then skilfully and vividly link them to very familiar everyday ideas.
 11. Introduce his Candidate to people with similar ideas.
 12. Make sure such people are worthwhile for him and create an excellent group of people.
 13. And show the link between every new thing that is to be taught and his felicity.
 14. Teach by example, and personify his teachings,
 15. but never do anything at the wrong time.
 16. Always act without self-interest and noticeable intention regarding the change he is to make.
 17. Present things vividly and with proper emphasis and eloquence.

As long as you do not rush things and show enough patience and diligence then this procedure will never be ineffective or be without a satisfactory outcome. [265]

The greatest obstacle to every serious, lasting and rapid human conversion is that hereditary sin, of the human race known as *inertia*, but not the type that has its roots in the temperament and the physical structure of humans, but the kind which has its seat in the soul itself. If you can change this then you will

immediately remove a host of other obstacles. In everyone this inertia manifests as a very common abhorrence of any kind of effort. It takes various forms and is the source of a host of errors. From it arise:

1. Our abhorrence of anything new.
2. All forms of human credulity and superstition, together with all forms of prejudice.
3. Every tendency to waste time.
4. The power of distracting pleasant or unpleasant impressions.
5. A longing to appear to be what one is not but nevertheless could be.
6. Any mistrust of one's own strength.
7. Faint-heartedness and despair towards the execution of major plans, and the doubts and scruples that so frequently arise concerning them. [266]
8. An abhorrence of risks and anything else requiring more than the usual effort.
9. A preference for enjoyment, leisure and all kinds of direct pleasures, including all the associated deficiencies and vices.

Inertia arises:

1. From a lack of keen interest in something.
2. From the inability of the spirit to show interest in a given subject and impart sufficient vigour to this view of a subject.
3. From being more interested in other subjects and goals.
4. From exaggerated ideas of perfection.
5. From principles that presuppose the corruption of our powers and of ourselves as primordial.
6. From believing that something exceeds our powers. [267]

This inertia decreases:

1. If you can display a high level of interest in the subject and can visualise it as essential to your felicity,
2. as well as demonstrating to yourself the possibility and
3. ease of achieving such.
4. You therefore should not make excessive demands on the pupil at the outset.
5. You should orientate his view of the subject and his degree of attentiveness gradually.
6. Show them that everything is (and has to be) small to begin with since even the greatest things and the greatest people start from the smallest and are only able to become so big as a result of having once been so; that they do no more than their circumstances permit but always do this assiduously; that many small steps finally comprise a bigger one; and that many people incomparably weaker than themselves have succeeded in their task.
7. Specify rules that enable the pupil to acquire a global view of a large number of individual cases.
8. Through an intensive development of the pupil's understanding of the benefit of more remote consequences. [268]
9. By the leader making himself at the outset a 'first among equals', avoiding expressing his superiority too much, and not making too much of the ideal. In general it is a wretched and useless trick in leading and training an Order to try to win the respect of one's pupils by telling them how far you have already risen in it. If the leader is not a 'finished' individual then the pupil will obviously wonder why people of this kind are

promoted so far so quickly, which means that his respect for the whole organisation will be diminished. This error is all the more dangerous because everyone thinks of himself as perfect and does not think that this observation applies to him. Vanity always lies at the root of a pretence of this kind.

In a nutshell: *An anticipated major advantage, very feasible with moderate effort, motivates people.*

1. A person who should be active on behalf of the Order must be taught love for the goal; this goal must be presented as highly feasible; and it must be shown that his powers are sufficient to achieve the goal without excessive effort. [269]

2. The greater this love for the goal the more feasible the goal itself becomes, and the simpler the means leading to it the greater is the encouragement, and all the greater is the activity.

3. If love for the goal increases to the extent that all other goals appear smaller and less important then the soul's entire activity and strength will focus on this goal alone, and the greatest sacrifice is capable of overcoming the greatest difficulties with the greatest ease (hence religion's dependence on the monastic orders for their ideal organisational form).

4. The higher, greater and nobler the goal is for which the soul burns then the brighter, livelier, more pronounced and more vivid it will appear to the soul. The greater, more worthy and more just this enthusiasm becomes, the richer it is as a source of great actions and virtues. The soul 'forgets itself' in the magnitude of the subject, and sees everything else as beneath itself and inferior.

5. High principles, grand perspectives, a keen interest and inspiring examples are therefore the best ways of creating enthusiasm. If there is a lack of actual examples then the great [270] deeds of the ancients can take their place: a careful reading of the ancient writers, in which major acts of evil are placed in their true light, is the best way of elevating the soul and inspiring enthusiasm. The impression that the telling or reading of such deeds makes on people makes it possible for you to investigate their liking for the great and heroic. A person who is capable of understanding great ideas, of feeling great sentiments or valuing and admiring great deeds and people is capable of becoming something similar if presented with the right opportunity and degree of challenge.

6. In a great soul everything must be great: the goal, the means, thinking, feeling, acting. These find ultimate expression as gestures and bearing but with meagre spirits everything is meagre and a person is always meagre in spirit for as long as the highest perspective and goal are not the dominant ones. Everyone should investigate himself to see what progress he has made in this regard. [271]

GENERAL INSTRUCTION REGARDING THE CONSTITUTION OF THE ORDER.

§. 1. Every organisation has 1) its *specific goal*, 2) its *specific means* for achieving that goal, 3) and *certain laws to ensure its continued existence*. This goal, these means and these laws together form its *constitution*.

§. 2. The quality of its goal determines how substantial is its contribution to society, the quality of its means determines the extent of its wisdom, and its internal policies determine the scope of its power and its degree of strength.

§. 3. Its primary focal point must however be the goal that it pursues: everything else must be subservient to it and be most perfectly attuned to it.

§. 4. An organisation will not easily be destroyed or disrupted unless there are already faults in the Constitution or unless it subsequently allows derogations from it.

§. 5. Caution is all the more necessary in secret societies because the absence of coercive measures reduces the degree of external protection. [272] However, the external dangers in the event of discovery are many: disorder can easily arise and can soon lead to disintegration.

§. 6. At the outset a great deal of intellectual resourcefulness is required to establish a society that sets itself the highest goal; which can deal with the all-powerful and very conflicting passions of its members and of humanity in general; and which aims at nothing less than reform of the entire human race and, indeed, a reform that will enable humanity to rise from the lowest level of immorality to the highest level of morality and from misery to felicity! Not only are all kinds of intellectual skills required for this task but there is also a need for the ability to stick meticulously to the structure once decided upon for as long as is appropriate, in order to ensure that it remains what it set out to be.

§. 7. Only felicity can be the most sublime and ultimate goal, for Nature herself has never revealed anything higher to humanity; consequently no secret society can have a higher ultimate goal than felicity. But by felicity Nature understands every conceivable form of well-being which humanity is capable of achieving through its own means and its own activity, [273] one that can never fade, one that completely permeates humanity, and which in general can consist of nothing more than its spiritual purification.

§. 8. If felicity is the ultimate goal of every secret society just as it is of every individual then to that extent the latter is in agreement with the former, but there is a difference in that not every individual has the same idea of what felicity is, and that individuals strive for only one part of it and not the whole (if, indeed, they do not seek to attain the complete opposite out of error and passion). Consequently individuals also diverge very widely from one another in terms of the means to be used.

§. 9. Felicity is also the ultimate goal of every state. To that extent secret societies and states have the same ultimate goal, but they diverge in that the latter comprise only individual peoples whereas secret societies comprise the whole of humanity; also, the state strives more for the felicity of its citizens while secret societies aim more for human felicity in general; the state sees physical well-being as effectively being the defining part of felicity, while a secret society sees it only as a means to a higher form of well-being, namely spiritual purification; the state seeks almost entirely [274] *to compel actions* and, indeed, only within *a specific and limited sphere of beneficence*, while in secret societies the *will is manifested* in respect of *all* good actions; the state also has to use human corruption to achieve its goal, while every secret society tends to oppose corruption; finally, only one true and perfect means of achieving this goal is at the disposal of a secret society, whereas a state can find thousands of them.

That single true and perfect means are *enlightenment*, for insight guides the will, and the will brings forth the deed. The higher morality is a direct consequence of moral enlightenment and an indirect consequence of scientific and transcendent enlightenment, but it is morality from which felicity springs, and both forms of enlightenment are therefore comprehended under the highest goal as one and the same thing.

Moral enlightenment should therefore be the principal goal of such a secret society while scientific enlightenment – insofar as it relates to that goal – is but a secondary means. The attraction to goodness then arises automatically through its true and vivid representation: the will then passes over into action, the higher [275] morality is disseminated, the example that is set provides a new stimulus, success becomes ever more visible, and felicity becomes more and more general.

1. Goal and Means.

§. 1. This organisation, with this goal and these means, is our Order. We strive only *for a general and lasting human felicity* and we strive for it only through *enlightenment*, mostly of the *moral* kind but also of the *scientific* variety. We extend far beyond the borders of the state yet we are willing to come to its aid. We do not compel, but focus solely on developing human insight to establish, by that means alone, the constant and vigorous will to do good, obey the law and produce and appreciate beauty. In this way we enhance the moral sentiment and so create, as it were, new people by changing them from being involuntarily bad to being voluntarily good. Thus we join with you in creating a new world and acting as the faithful instruments of Mother Nature that is constantly working towards improvement.

§. 2. Purification or enlightenment of the spirit also depend on physical fitness, and if we wish to achieve the former we should also encourage the latter. This is the only aspect regarding which the State has already

taken [276] any measures, but we also understand that the more active we are the more effective we are as citizens, and as members of our society. We also understand that physical fitness depends more on enlightenment than enlightenment does on physical fitness.

§. 3. We repeat: enlightenment is our principal activity, but it must be directed inwards rather than outwards. The more enlightenment which is spread within the Order itself and the more its membership gradually increases in favourable circumstances then the more enlightened people the world over will generally be. Only in this way can the roots take hold, flourish and become general and in no way harmful, because this process does not occur partially, without preparation or without the resolution of all doubts, but without sudden leaps, slowly, surely and according to its inner nature.

§. 4. Some written lessons on the goal (felicity) and the means of attaining (moral enlightenment) should be prepared and filed for the use of members so that they can all start equally and from the same standpoint [277] and so that they are encouraged to reflect even further on the teachings, to make observations in the real world, to apply them to everyday life and to collate their experiences. The outcome of this process will determine their whole way of life. These teachings must however follow a progressive plan and increase gradually in scope. No member should be given even a part of any lesson for which he is unprepared. This preparation takes place via oral instruction administered by the leaders of the Order. The so-called *Degrees* fulfil the early stages of this function and the *instructions for Manuductors*, the rest.

§. 5. In the fulfilment of the goal everything depends on the degree of diligence and attentiveness with which business is done. If the goal is to be achieved swiftly and surely then the highest and most detailed organisation must prevail. This organisation forms the internal policy of the Order, and upon it depend its power and durability. It is the third essential point of the Constitution and involves a new task – that of ensuring cohesion among the members. [278]

2. Internal policy.

§. 1. If order is to prevail then tasks must be shared out among several people, and to each of them a specific portion must be meted out.

§. 2. An ascending ladder of subordination must be established so that someone in a superior position always has a simplified and global overview of what is below him.

§. 3. General laws require deliberation and consultation: they must therefore always be established by a gathering of the wise,

§. 4. but their implementation requires agility and vigour: this task should therefore be entrusted to just one person and be subject only to revision.

§. 5. The attraction of secrecy and the concealed must nowhere be left out of consideration, but nor should it be exaggerated.

§. 6. Each level of the hierarchy must have its own monitoring mechanism to identify and prevent possible abuses of power, negligence or people being led astray.

A. Distribution of tasks.

§. 1. Our fields of activity are giving our society the best constitutional form so we can change and improve it to suit our needs; training, leading, admitting and encouraging members in accordance with its overall purpose; [279] attaining and intensifying harmony and cohesion; caring for everyone in a brotherly and fatherly manner; bringing humanity as a whole to maturity by perfecting the ever-increasing number of members and accordingly restoring virtue and wisdom to their rightful place; destroying vice and its roots and, as far as possible, rectifying all social defects; consequently investigating these and studying generally the course of human culture, identifying the obstacles in its path and determining what can promote it; and using the past as a guide to the necessary future outcomes and thus seeking to have an influence on the generality.

§. 2. Proposals for improvements must be outlined and then commented on. These proposals must be fit for purpose, and must also be duly agreed, organised and implemented.

§. 3. Distribution and assignment of tasks at local level is therefore necessary. Each lower degree must have its own sphere of activity. [280] Each higher degree must embrace all the lower ones and the highest degree must be able to take in the whole at a glance.

§. 4. For this local distribution of tasks, the following headings are necessary and sufficient: individual locales, small districts, whole provinces, nations.

§. 5. Each of these areas has its own Superintendent, and each Superintendent has his own instructions regarding what rules he must observe, what he can decide for himself, and what he must refer to the higher Superintendents. The ladder of subordination must also be arranged to match this distribution of areas.

B. Ladder of Subordination.

§. 1. The main rule of subordination is that you only keep an eye on those between whom you are standing, i.e. the man who gives you direct orders and the man to whom you are to give them.

§. 2. The ladder of subordination has the following steps which follow the subdivisions outlined above:

a) Individual *members*.

b) Superintendents of several members at a specific place: the *Manuductors*. [281]

c) Superintendents of individual districts, the centre of unity for the Manuductors: the *Prefects*.

d) Members seconded to assist the Prefect to make his tasks easier and make sure they are performed correctly, known collectively as the *Prefectural Chapter*.

e) The supervisor of individual districts, the point of unity for the Prefectures: the *Provincial*.

It is up to this point that executive power extends.

f) Oversight of all the Provinces, the government of the whole Order, general legislation and making decisions about things that concern everybody equally lie solely within the responsibility of the elect, who are the most experienced members and the teachers of all the others: these are the *Chapter and the Provincial*.

g) Matters which have an influence beyond the boundaries of the Province, which are of interest to all the other Provinces equally, or which do not allow for any joint consultation because of geographical remoteness – these require someone who represents the whole, who is known as the *National*.

In the light of this classification, tasks can be assigned as follows. [282]

A. Individual members.

Each member has the right and, indeed, the obligation to *observe* and draw attention to anything that, generally or specifically, seems to be favourable or unfavourable to the good of humanity and to encourage the former, as well as to note what he likes or dislikes about the Order itself, to *inform* his superiors frankly of such things, and draft to the best of his ability feasible *proposals* for dealing with them.

However, observations, notifications and proposals are not *decisions*. The Manuductors must be inept if they cannot persuade their subordinates that there is a need for obedience, that not everything can be made to happen at any given time, and that only those who have an overall view can make decisions about the whole, for there will be even more genuine freedom where there is obedience. Individual members can propose non-members for admission but they cannot promise membership to anyone, much less grant them membership.

B. Superintendent.

The Superintendent must absorb the spirit of the Order; express it in all his actions and inactions; study his subordinates at his location; [283] investigate their inclinations, their good and bad sides, their basic principles, their progress towards perfection, their capabilities, their relationships, the scope of their interests; train them in accordance with the spirit of the Order; give stature, dignity and perfection to their hearts and spirit through lectures, everyday contact, explanations of the degrees, and written and oral exercises; persuade them of the need for activity and attentiveness on behalf of all forms of goodness; act as their role-model by displaying his own perfection; win their entire trust; and become, all in all, a brother and father to them.

Questions he should always be asking of himself and his circle include, What is impeding or promoting the progress of our noble association? What good principles are especially lacking? What are the prevailing opinions? What progress is morality making there, and what form does it take?

So much for the circle below him. What about those above? His immediate superior is the Prefect to whom he sends from time to time:

- a) The *Conduct Tables* relating to his subordinates describing their progress in spiritual and moral development, increase in their knowledge of human nature, their [284] loyalty, obedience, absorption of the spirit of the Order, discretion, etc. He also encloses with these tables his subordinates' written work and exercises.
- b) *Reports* on the Order's status at its location, anything that has happened for or against the Order's general goal, anything favourable or unfavourable to it, anything that he and his circle have done to promote it, etc.
- c) *Enquiries* about major influences (which might also extend outside his circle) regarding which he feels he may lack sufficient general or Order-specific knowledge and astuteness.
- d) Finally, his own and his colleagues' frank proposals, notifications and observations on his circle as well as about the Order as a whole.

He may also propose non-members for admission and members for promotion, but he cannot make any promises regarding membership or grant it to anybody.

C. Prefects.

The Prefect stands in the same relationship to the Superintendents as the latter do to individual members.

The Prefect must provide further guidance to the Superintendents who are subordinate to him and must accordingly get to know their character in its essentials; [285] maintain and reinforce their enthusiasm; prevent all backsliding and deviation; prepare them for higher knowledge; and seek and win their entire confidence.

Within his District he carries out whatever he considers good and useful in the light of the Superintendents' reports and inquiries; approves their actions or sets their feet on the right path; issues them with new instructions; and directs their attention and activity where it seems to him to be necessary. Everything advantageous or harmful within his District lies within the scope of his attention, direction and activity. He is the true 'soul' of the lower part of the Order.

He has authority to raise the lower-ranking members as far as the Second Degree inclusive.

On the other hand he must send to the latter from time to time:

- a) The Conduct List of the Superintendents themselves.
- b) The *Conduct List* of the members drawn up by the Superintendents accompanied by his comments.
- c) An epitome of the reports of the Superintendents, their procedures, queries, regulations and the outcome thereof, and the [286] observations, proposals, announcements etc. made by individual members

and Superintendents, with a note of the person by whom they were made; together with a *history of the Order* in his District, its progress, activities, challenges, actions and hopes for the future.

Finally, no one must be better placed than the Prefect to comment on general improvements, on proposals regarding the effectiveness of the Order, and plans for individual parts of or for the whole of the Province. These also he sends to the Provincial, who submits them for consideration by the whole Chapter.

But the Prefect cannot decide anything by himself alone: his power rests on the will of the Chapter of which he is a part and of whose will he is the instrument. He also reports to his Superior but only in the name of the Chapter.

Prefect and Chapter.

The Prefectural Chapter consists of an indefinite number of members, which should not however be so large that their gatherings excite public attention on meeting-days. [287]

The Chapter elects the Superintendents, its Capitulars and the Prefect, but every elected member must be elected unanimously by the Chapter and then confirmed in office by the Provincial Chapter.

The Chapter meets quarterly (and otherwise as often as circumstances demand) on a day to be decided by the Prefects.

Provincial.

This person is the confluence and point of unity of the entire Order. His office collates all the descriptions of the Members, their activity-reports, the summaries of all their strengths, individual remarks and proposals, and the members' hopes, wishes and concerns. From these the Provincial must draft a *General Conspectus* of the society's whole personnel and material status.

Incidentally, the Provincial may neither order nor grant a promotion or admission except where time demands, and even then his decision is only provisional.

Chapter and Provincial.

The Provincial Chapter should consist of a fixed number of twelve members, which must not be exceeded until [288] a new regulation concerning this point is felt to be necessary.

No one except the Prefects, who in any case belong to it automatically, may be included among the Capitulars, except by the unanimous vote of all the Capitulars. The Provincial himself is elected by the Chapter, but his appointment is subject to confirmation by the National.

Every one has an equal vote in Chapter. In general, as in the Prefectural Chapter, decisions are by simple majority of the votes cast unless another arrangement has been decided for special purposes.

If a member feels obliged to vote differently to all his fellow Capitulars then the matter must be sent to the National who, if it strikes him as important enough, will refer the relevant decision to another Provincial Chapter.

The same procedure also applies to the Prefectural Chapter except that this body turns to the Provincial Chapter, and it is from there that the final decision comes. [289]

The Provincial must get the Lectures into proper order by sending missives to the Capitulars, each of whom can then add their opinions in writing.

Each Capitular can also send his own Lectures as and when he wishes either to the Provincial or, if he thinks it necessary, direct to his fellow Capitulars.

A requirement that cannot be observed at the beginning but which must be scrupulously observed as time goes by is that none of the identities of the Prefectural Capitulars or Provincial Capitulars should be made known to the subordinate members because each of the latter should only know his immediate Superior.

Since it would be almost impossible for all the Capitulars to meet, but since it would also not be feasible to obtain the opinions of all of them by letter, the Provincial should attend to current business personally or, where time-constraints demand, with the assistance of a committee of two or three Capitulars located most closely to him or especially well informed about the matter, but always in such a way that the whole Chapter is subsequently informed about it. [290]

Everything that relates to the honour, progress and expansion of the Order within a Province, proposals for the improvement of the general morality, and whatever might have a positive or negative influence on it, fall exclusively within the decision-making authority of the Provincial Chapter. These issues include:

- a) Election of the Provincial and the Capitulars.
- b) Confirmation of appointments of Prefects, Capitulars and Superintendents.
- c) Admission of new members.
- d) Promotion from the Third Degree onwards.
- e) Expulsion of a member.
- f) Determination of the internal government mechanism and its subsequent amendment, regarding which however, nothing may happen without the knowledge of the National.
- g) Advising on principles and structures within a Province that might be contrary to the best interests of the Order or humanity in general as well as those that might be favourable to it.
- h) In general, all regulations which might be introduced for the whole Province.
- i) The provision of a general insurance and welfare scheme for all. [291]

Regarding the admission of a member: a) all votes of both the Prefectural and the Provincial Chapter must be in his favour. He must not have received the *exclusiva*^{xxxviii} from anyone in the former if he wishes to be admitted to the latter. It is however understood that votes are to be cast on the basis of reasoned arguments and not at random. b) The reasons for acceptance or rejection rest on the Manuductors' description of the candidate which, if possible, must be confirmed by two others or by comments in the Chapter itself. c) The description must be prepared with all due care and diligence so that it arrives complete. This task becomes all the easier if one can find enough time to test one's pupil before he becomes aware of the existence of the Order. d) Even if the pupil should be outstandingly worthy of membership this is not enough by itself: his admission must not otherwise place the Order in any danger and must not conflict with any political or other relationship.

Exclusion from the Order is determined by simple majority of votes. Each Provincial must lodge with his Provincial Archive the list of those excluded from the Order as well as [292] those whose applications for admission have been rejected.

To cope with all these major concerns the Capitulars must be intimately familiar with the goal of the Order and its expansion and the means to achieve that end. They must have thoroughly imbibed its thought-system, must embody all its strengths, and must study the characters of the subordinate Brethren intently and with the greatest care in order to know reliably what they can accomplish. They must observe with keen attention and an unwavering gaze the progress of the world, opinions, morals, legislation, the reciprocal efforts of good and evil, and the machinations of collective, public or secret associations, and in every case know how to acquire the appropriate means for achieving their goal – but only their specific goal.

The Provincial must from time to time inform them of the head-count and material circumstances of the entire Province, as well as any announcements, plans, proposals and reports he has received. In reciprocation, each of them must send theirs, both to him and to each other. [293]

He is the 'eye' through which the lower part of the Order is supervised and the 'voice' through which it receives instructions.

B. Relationship of the Provinces to each other.

Each Province can and must be seen from a twofold perspective: *part of a larger whole* and a *whole that exists for itself*.

As a separate whole it is *independent* and must act according to its own individual needs. These needs were discussed from this standpoint in the previous section.

Any matter with a likely impact beyond its borders or which concerns several Provinces and even entire nations must be handled communally, with the proviso that the Province is subject to higher authority and can therefore only make proposals and submit reports but not make decisions. The representative of this community is the *National* since a direct common consultation among the Provinces is impossible.

For matters that do not concern the Provinces' own decision-making or non-decision-making authority there must be a *bond of union* [294] between them which binds them together as an eternally inseparable and jointly-functioning body. To meet both these goals the following regulations will be necessary:

- a) The Chapter is, via the Provincial, in continuous correspondence with the National, thus forming a continuous bond of dependency and union.
- b) From time to time the Provincial sends the National, a simplified overview of the overall state of the Order as was previously sent to the Chapter.
- c) He sends a continuously updated list of all members, with brief descriptions.
- d) The Provinces exchange lists of their excluded members.
- e) The Provincial sends all proposals regarding the general character of the Order to the National along with his and the Capitulars' remarks.
- f) The latter supervises, publishes details of and confirms the election of the Provincial.
- g) The external form and internal governmental mechanism of the Chapter to be agreed upon must also be communicated to him, [295]
- h) as well as any important changes to these.
- i) On the other hand, if circumstances allow and the National thinks it feasible, from time to time, information about the state of the Order in the other Provinces will be communicated to the individual Provincial Chapters, as might be favourable for encouragement, raising people's spirits, emulation or to issue an important warning.

So much for the Subordination of all the parts.

C. Secrecy.

§. 1. The Order must observe a twofold secrecy: one *external* through which not only the Order's goal, operations and personnel but also its very existence should remain unknown to the profane (since once this is known, so also will all the rest become known) and the other an *inner* secrecy through which every member receives access to just as much of the Order's business and personnel as his degree of reliability, the extent of his sphere of action and the need to maintain his trust and enthusiasm demands.

§. 2. All efforts to maintain secrecy will however be fruitless if the Superiors do not make the effort a) to *convince* the members of [296] the need for this secrecy and b) *give them practice* in maintaining secrets of a lesser kind and *testing* them carefully on it.

§. 3. Any correspondence on Order-business should be conducted with very special care and in original ciphers and allusive phrases and sometimes indeed, and where possible, as if the subject-matter was something quite other than the Order, and written entirely in the style of the profane. It would also be a good idea for each Class to have its own cipher; on the other hand, in letters of lesser importance, everything which might betray even a trace of the Order should be omitted yet written in such a way that the

correspondent still knows what he wants to know. Each Province will want to take their own special measures in this regard.

§. 4. Given this need for discretion and the great danger of being easily discovered it goes without saying that unnecessary Order correspondence is to be avoided.

D. Supervision.

§. 1. Despite all possible care in the appointment of middle-ranking superiors, abuse of their power, negligence in office, or misleading people towards one-sided and perhaps even contradictory [297] goals within a Degree is still possible. This can eventually cause considerable mischief without the higher Superiors being immediately or reliably aware of it.

§. 2. Some sort of supervision must therefore be established through which every act of commission or omission by every Superior is made known to the higher Superior without the former being able to prevent this. This supervision can be either *ordinary* or *extraordinary*.

§. 3. Ordinary supervision is effected by the *quibus licet*, *Soli*^{xxxix} and *Primo*^{xl} which each member hands over to his Superior every quarter under seal (see Special Instructions) and which the latter must then deliver with its seal unbroken.

§. 4. These *quibus licet* have a further secondary object which can be put to very good use: they are the only way by which subordinates can communicate with their unknown Superior and open up their whole heart to him. Information very often emerges from this which could never have been acquired by known Superiors.

§. 5. This precaution of our institution is very important as it provides a bastion of inner security. Everything therefore comes down to [298] a) encouraging frankness and open-heartedness in the *quibus licet* and b) making the best possible use of its contents.

§. 6. The first goal can be achieved if the *quibus licet* are drafted quarterly by immutable law. Subordinates must therefore be persuaded of their utility, and any neglect punished by a private admonition on the first occasion and, on repetition, by a public reprimand. A Member who does not take naturally to this procedure also shows that he places less emphasis on the well-being of the society and is therefore unsuitable for membership. In order however to strengthen the attachment to this obligation and to increase the degree of trust, every *quibus licet* should always receive an answer if it is deserving of one and, indeed, promptly; alternatively, they can be answered on a regular basis by the higher Superiors.

§. 7. Making good use of the *quibus licet* involves a) opening them b) answering them c) making excerpts from them to be sent to those to whom the contents relate d) finally, making any secret orders that one sees fit to give.

§. 8. The opening of *quibus licet* demands the most sacred discretion. The person who hands over the *quibus licet* must never have even the slightest suspicion that by [299] opening it he would be able to make even the slightest misuse of it. The most scrupulous care must be taken in the selection of those persons who will open the *quibus licet*; in particular, the person doing the opening must be as remote as possible from any civil relationships that might tempt him to abuse their contents. If a certain standard is established regarding the persons who are to open them, then the Chapter must always be free to alter this norm according to need and to transfer the task of opening to someone else.

§. 9. If matters arise in the *quibus licet* which concern the sphere of activity of a certain Superior or which require explanation etc. then they are to be sent to the Superior concerned without mentioning their source.

§. 10. The *quibus licet* enable the higher invisible superiors to give someone especially secret orders, as a way of showing their confidence in him.

§. 11. As a rule, only the Prefect opens all the *quibus licet* for the individual members of his District. He then extracts anything that has to be made known to the Superintendents, records their answers and sends

these to the Provincial along with the Conduct Tables for his further examination, use and [300] forwarding. The Provincial opens the *Soli* of the individual members and the *quibus licet* of the Superintendents and deals with them as the Prefect does with his. The *quibus licet* of the Prefects and their Capitulars, the *Soli* of the Superintendents and all the *Primo* are sent to the Nationals who arrange for them to be answered anonymously. The Provincial Capitulars correspond with the National in similar fashion by *Primo*.

One Superior is therefore under the supervision of another. The answers to any *quibus licet* must however come back with the next *quibus licet*.

This Instruction should remain in the hands of the Provincial. Special instructions for the Prefects and Superintendents can be extracted from it. Special Instructions for Superintendents and individual members will in any case be found under the various Degrees. [301]

INSTRUCTION FOR ALL MEMBERS INCLINED TO AN INFATUATION WITH THEOSOPHICAL IDEAS.

Anyone who wants to promote human felicity, pleasure and peace and to reduce displeasure must investigate and then refute all those principles that are disadvantageous to them: these include any systems that reject the goal of ennobling and perfecting human nature; which needlessly increase the amount of evil in the world or which depict the world as worse than it really is; which diminish the worth and value of man; which reduce man's reliance on his natural powers and thereby make him sluggish, fearful, dejected, grovelling and superstitious; and those which lead to infatuation and to the disparagement of human reason, and so make him vulnerable to deception.

All theosophical and mystical systems and everything more or less related to them, and all principles that are theosophical in origin (though often these are deeply concealed) ultimately lead to these negative qualities and therefore fall into this category.

And how many are *not* involved with these systems? What limits are there to the [302] spread of such systems in our own times? How many people have been infected by them? In vain do we seek to banish the monkish spirit, for it re-surfaces in other multifarious forms, and works all the more swiftly the more secretive its activities are.

At all periods of history everyone (apart from the very minor sect of Physical Egoists) has agreed that apart from ourselves there is an enormous amount of essence which has been comprehended under the term 'universe'. But a different line of enquiry, namely the further and very obvious question of where this universe comes from, has led to a division in human opinion. There were only two plausible options: either *the world had imparted its reality to itself* or, alternatively, *a being outside of it had created it* (whether right from eternity or at some specific point in time is neither here nor there in an investigation of this kind).

The first option is the *system of atheism* but the order, cohesion and harmony of the world, the purposefulness of all beings, the subordination of their purposes to a supreme and most general purpose – to a common purpose – and the sense that all creatures and especially sentient ones have an ultimate destiny have inspired in most people such a palpable aversion [303] towards atheism that a disproportionately larger number of people have, at all times, held to the opposing and disproportionately comforting and soul-exalting doctrine of *deism*.

But even in the deist system an inquiring thinker who is not entirely clear in his own mind encounters a new difficulty: where did this being, who was outside the world, this creator of the world, obtain the matter to create this world? Here once again we have only two possible escape-routes: he got it *from nothing* or he got it *from something*. We must therefore adhere to one or other of these opinions.

The whole of antiquity without exception could not grasp the idea of creation from nothing. The prevailing doctrine of the ancient world, even among the Jews and even in the Mosaic creation-story, was

therefore that the world arose from *something*. Only in *2 Maccabees 7-28th* do we find the first unequivocal reference to creation from nothing.² This principle that *nothing* [304] *comes from nothing* is the basic idea from which all the old systems start and from which its more distant successors are derived. [305]

According to the doctrine adhered to by the whole of antiquity therefore, the world arose from *something*. But what could there possibly have been before *a world* came into existence from which *the world* could then be brought forth? According to these presuppositions we must conclude *either that something flowed out from God* (the so-called *emanation system*) or that, *in addition to God, there must have been a substance* which the divinity fashioned and upon which He imposed order. This substance was, depending on the system in question, either *night, chaos, or unformed and formless matter*.

These two systems form the foundations of all others: all of them can ultimately be reduced to one of these two (that is if, we exclude the atheist one). It was from one or the other that the later systems arose with all their various modifications: from the former came the philosophy of *Zoroaster, the Oriental philosophy* and *the Cabala of the* [306] *Jews*, along with the *Gnostic* heresies, and partly also the *Pythagorean-Platonic system*. Of those that followed the second path the most conspicuous were these same Pythagorean-Platonic schools with their later descendants, the *Alexandrines* and the *Eclectics*, along with the present-day theosophists and mystics.

With this in mind we now want to investigate these two main systems: we want to see what older ways of thinking necessarily followed from these two preconditions, namely 1. *That the world is an efflux from God;* 2. *That a formless matter has co-existed with God from eternity.*

I. Emanation system.

If nothing can come from nothing and if this world is an efflux from the divinity then:

1) this divinity must be a composite being and only be incorporeal insofar as the composition is finer when contrasted with coarse matter. The ancients therefore visualised the divinity as a sea of the purest light and æther, the symbol and Shekinah^{xliii} of which are the Sun and fire. [307]

2) Just as rays stream unceasingly from this Sun and fire and from this sea of light so all powers, beings and objects come from the divinity.

3) All parts of this world are therefore fundamentally parts of the divinity.

4) Consequently all spirits and our souls are of divine origin and are immortal.

[1.] We can see from the above that the immortality of souls is an age-old doctrine which, however, was based on quite different – and, as we shall show, incorrect – grounds.

2. This is also the origin of the doctrine of the pre-existence of souls and, as we shall show below, of the migration of souls into different bodies and the reproduction of souls by the souls of one's parents.

²The old Jewish or Mosaic cosmogony seems to be of Ancient Egyptian origin (it was of course among the Egyptians that the Jews lived for four long centuries before the Exodus). It also bears an astonishing resemblance, as we shall show below, to the Pythagorean-Platonic philosophy and cosmogony. The unformed matter that is first brought into some form of order, the spirit that floats and broods above the waters, the breath of life that God breathes into the first man – these are obviously ideas that Pythagoras and Plato would have acquired from the Orient or Egypt. It is also more likely that a dominant nation would impart its opinions and customs to a subjugated and despised fragment of a people rather than *vice versa*. That the Jews in Egypt were actually infected with the doctrines of this nation is however sufficiently proved by their attachment to and regression into the idolatry against which Moses fought so fruitlessly, especially the worship of the Golden Calf (which is none other than the Egyptian Apis) besides other customs, e.g. circumcision, the festival of the new moon, the class of priests and Levites (a wholly Egyptian institution) and dietary restrictions, as well as, to some extent, the way that the whole Jewish social structure was based on agriculture. Everything shows that the Jews took their models from the Egyptians and that their law-giver only departed from Egyptian sources when it furthered the purpose and uniqueness of his newly-established state. According to the Acts of the Apostles, VII.22, 'Moses was learned in all the wisdom of the Egyptians'. In the time of Solomon, Egyptian and Oriental wisdom were still very much respected and well-known among the Jews, as we can see from 1 Kings, V.29-30, where the wisdom of Solomon is extolled *even above* the wisdom of these peoples ['And God gave Solomon wisdom and understanding exceeding much, and largeness of heart, even as the sand that is on the sea shore/And Solomon's wisdom excelled the wisdom of all the children of the east country, and all the wisdom of Egypt.']

3. These effluxes are the so-called *probolai*.^{xliii}

5) In this efflux some of the parts flowing out from the divinity or first source (which itself is hidden and thoroughly inaccessible) must be closer or further away from the divinity.

6) Alternatively, only the first direct effluxes are actual emanations from the divinity, [308] while all the others have just streamed out further from these first direct emanations in various outflows which are accordingly subordinated.

1. In many emanation-systems (and indeed, in most) the highest God is therefore not the immediate creator of this world but is himself created by the demiurge or by other intermediary spirits.

2. The subordinated emanations were therefore invented to avoid making God the creator of the evil which people think is encountered so frequently in this world.

7) The nearer an outflowing being is to the original source of the highest divinity in its emanation the more perfect this being is; conversely, and the more distant it is then the more imperfect it is.

1. This principle is the key to the whole emanation-system and to the extremely varied theogonies^{xliiv} of the ancients: only this makes their theogonies comprehensible and at all meaningful.

2. According to the teachings of the ancients, some of these emanations could therefore be of the male gender if they themselves reproduced the effects of the emanation or female [309] if they were only capable of undergoing these effects.

3. From this there also arose the doctrine, so common in the Orient, *that angels have sexual intercourse*.

8) From this doctrine also arose the idea of a series of subordinated spirits, some good and some evil, of different classes and designations depending on the emanation-system in question.

From it there also arose:

1. The Yazatas, Amesha Spentas, Fenurs^{xlv} and Daevas of the Parsis; the lesser gods, the born and unborn gods and the world-soul of Plato; the demiurge, Adam Kadmon and Sephirot of the Jewish Cabalists; and the angelic and satanic hierarchies with all their classes and subdivisions.

2. The fantasies of the Gnostics with their æons and the intermingling of their notions with Christianity, namely their doctrine that Christ (or even one of their fellow-Gnostics, like Simon Magus) was one of the first æons and immediate effluxes from the highest divinity. Similarly it explains all the passages of the Four Evangelists [310] mentioning the divinity of Christ: the origin of this doctrine is to be found in this source. From this also stem the concept of æons having male and female genders as well as the idea of their generation and reproduction.

3. The story of the Cabalists' Four Worlds which emerged from each other, namely Atziluth, Beri'ah, Yetzirah and finally Assiah, our own material world.

4. The idea of the obscurity and inaccessibility of the highest God, whom one can only reach via these intermediate natures, these lesser gods and intercessors.

5. The idea of worshipping these lesser gods as well as the origin of all theurgy, i.e. the belief in invisible beings and the desire to achieve closer contact and fellowship with them.

6. Chaldeism, the doctrine of the influence and power of evil spirits, and the various rituals and formulas to appease them and to persuade them to look benignly upon our intentions.

9) Matter is the lowest manifestation of this efflux of divinity, and therefore also the most [311] imperfect efflux of all and the source of evil.

1. It is from this idea that there originally arose all the aversions of the ancient philosophers and their later adherents towards matter, the body and the flesh, and from this also the attempts by the pious to escape

from and achieve independence of the body, as well as the urge for reunion with God and a longing for a return to the home of the souls. Here lie the first seeds of mysticism.

2. In this doctrine is also rooted the idea that the body is the prison or dungeon of the soul, that the soul is pulled downwards by it, is attached to the Earth by it, and is hampered by it in the development of its powers and in contemplation of and unification with the divinity.

3. In this are rooted also the earliest justifications for the mortification of the flesh, abstinence, all kinds of expiation and purification by propitiatory offering, the desire for a contemplative life and for solitude and, more distantly, monasticism and at the same time theological asceticism, together with its entire phraseology, as well as an abhorrence of matrimony [312] and sexual reproduction or a tendency to celibacy, and a contempt for or at least an indifference towards the world. All of these were later intensified by classical and later forms of Platonism.

These results of belief in the emanation-system certainly did not arise immediately right at the outset and in their entirety as presented here, but it is certainly true that the emanation-system must lead to such results sooner or later. Among these results are some which are only designated here as erroneous insofar as they resulted from a false premise or an incorrect and arbitrarily assumed basic principle of emanation. History teaches us that in their initial stages the best doctrines are not always defended for the right reasons. If therefore the groundlessness of the emanation-system can be proved, then everything based upon it falls with it. This emanation-system is however wrong because:

1) it rests on arbitrary premises, in essence explains nothing, only increases the difficulties, and is more of a figurative and allegorical explanation, and a solution to a problem that no one can [313] answer. It is a pointless exercise of the Oriental imagination; a poem about the origins of the world; and a prideful striving by the human mind towards things that are beyond its comprehension and outside its experience, something which is to be explained by fantasies rather than not explained at all;

2) it makes God corporeal and turns Him into a composite. How otherwise would it be possible for something to flow forth from a single thing? But God cannot be corporeal for the following reasons (which, incidentally, can also be used, with a few amendments, as arguments against the materiality of our soul):

1. If all the parts without exception constitute the divinity, then where is God? Is he not in any of the parts taken individually? And are these individual parts imperfect, for each one of them is not everything and is not what the others are? In what object does the common whole now exist if it is in none of the parts?

2. If all the parts taken together do not constitute the divinity then is every part the whole of God? But what would be the point of such endless repetition? From where does the plurality come from if there is no [314] diversity? Why have several parts if each single part is already the whole of God? If every part has the capacity to be that which is, then what would and should several parts be?

3. If only some parts of this material God are God then what is the point of the parts in Him which are not God?

3) Were the emanating parts, before their emanation, actually parts of the divinity or not? If the latter, how can there be something in God which is not God? If the former, were these parts actually parts of the divinity? The question then becomes even more confused and the answer even more questionable. The further question arises: do these parts still remain parts of the divinity after the emanation or do they cease to be such as a result of it? If the *latter*, then how can a part of the divinity (whose nature is one of immutability) cease to be God? If the former then we are confronted with Spinozism^{xlvi} or pantheism, for they differ only in the way that a genus differs from a species.

4) If moreover the emanation-system is also (as many kinds of emanation-system actually are and, to be [315] logically consistent, must be) at the same time a *re-emanation system*, i.e. the parts that have flowed out

are re-united with the divinity after an unspecified time, then the individuality and personality of the beings – and consequently their actual immortality also – are lost.

5) According to the emanation-system, matter should be the worst and therefore the most imperfect thing that has flowed out from the divinity. But it is the *first* efflux of the divinity, and yet for that very reason it is the *lowest* of all these outflows, and all the others have followed it. The reason for matter's corruption therefore lies in the distancing according to the law we have stated above, i.e. because it is the farthest removed from the emanating principle. But what effect can this distancing alone have on the characteristics of the immutable divinity? Or were these lowest parts already imperfect when they were still parts of the divinity? But how in that case could they be parts of the divinity? If matter is the source of all evil, and if this matter, as the emanation-system requires, has flowed out from God, then there still remains the [316] difficulty that the emanation-system seeks to remove, namely God as the source of evil. In a being composed the way God was before the emanation there would certainly be some parts that were above and other parts that were below. I do not see that anything new has been introduced here: the parts have simply acquired a new location, and God – whose parts were close to one another – has expanded. According to this system therefore the whole world is nothing more than a more expanded and increasingly thin mass of the divinity, and to that extent the divinity had worked in the nothingness because, if I may be so bold, the divinity is now located where, before His expansion, there was nothing.

6) If therefore the distance from the original source cannot be the cause of an imperfection arising from that source then how, in a world where all the parts of that world are parts of the divinity, can we explain the origin of evil? Or is evil a component of the divinity? There is no escape from this except the doctrine of *Dualism*, i.e. of two independent principles, one good and the other evil. But what use is a fiction if more realistic explanations are possible? [317]

7) The emanation-system arbitrarily accepts all classes of the emanating intermediate natures, but these classes could just as well be 100,000 in number as three or four, so why the latter rather than the former?

On closer reflection many other objections arise. The ones cited above are merely some of the most powerful and most striking. The emanation-system has one strong point: it implies the unity of God. It is one of the oldest and most common systems in the Orient, and one upon which the Oriental mind, with its preference for sensory experience, would most easily and most naturally alight when the first traces of human reason began to appear. Among peoples who devote much attention to the astronomical sciences, such as the Egyptians, Chaldeans and Indians, its acceptance is even easier to understand. Their mythology is worthy of a reasonable and more equitable explanation: only over the course of the ages could the signifier come to be confused with the signified. From this we can readily understand that the doctrine of the unity of God is age-old and that the polytheism of the heathens is not nearly as wicked as has been portrayed. Even so it is still a shallow and groundless [318] system in which human imagination and creativity have too much room for manoeuvre. Pure understanding finds it all the less satisfying. All systems based on the emanation-system or which presuppose such are therefore equally shallow and groundless.

Now we come to the second form of explanation: the assumption *that the divinity, when He created the world, worked upon a pre-existing substance*. Among systems of this kind the most prominent and the one which has attracted the most support, especially in later times, is:

The earlier Pythagorean-Platonic system.

We find the classic statement of this in the *Timaëus*.^{xlvii} This is also fundamentally an emanation-system and therefore stems from an Oriental or ancient Egyptian source, with which either *Pythagoras* or *Plato* became familiar on their alleged travels. Insofar as it is based on an emanation-system it can be challenged by most of the objections we have raised above, but it has other flaws of its own which should be immediately [319] pointed out here: its basic principles are even more arbitrary, it is less internally consistent, and it is presented by *Plato* himself in such an obscure manner and with such ostensible contradictions that it is very

difficult to summarise it as a coherent whole. This made it all the easier for the Neoplatonists to replace it with their own ideas and opinions. According to *Plato's Timaeus*, its essence is as follows:

1) God (the most perfect being of all) and matter are both eternal: they were separated and are independent of one other.

1. The existence of matter is arbitrarily accepted in order to then designate it as the source of evil and so explain the origin of evil.

2. *Plato* here takes it for granted that there really is such a thing as matter. If however the idealistic systems are true (as is also possible) then the whole of *Plato's* system fails and the entire basis of his intellectual edifice is shaken.

2) Matter, before it was acted upon, was formless and without independent properties. It [320] had only the ability to accept all kinds of imprints of divine ideas.

But 'formless matter' is an absurdity. As soon as we mention matter we know we are talking about something composite. Composites have parts outside of parts, and therefore shape and form.^{xlviii} This is the second of *Plato's* arbitrary and completely groundless presuppositions.

3) This matter was in never-ending but disorderly motion. What imparted this disorderly motion to the chaos, i.e. to matter, was the chaotic unreasoning soul. In the case of matter a distinction is therefore made between:

1. the dead mass, and

2. the soul-enlivening principle.

From this soul came sensibility and the drives, which are material and unbridled. The soul struggles against reason and order: it is the source of all evil. Traces of it are still to be found to this very day, including everything that is wretched, weak, defective and deficient in human beings.

These are completely unproven assumptions, nor are they susceptible to proof. This soul is, at its root, the [321] Ahriman of the Persians under another name, and matter is then superfluous. The system itself is actually dualistic.

4) Matter, amid all this disorder, would have remained eternal if the highest being had not decided to approach it, work upon it, and so establish order and purposeful movement. But just as every master-builder, before he constructs any building, creates for himself in his mind's eye a notion, a pattern and an ideal of what he wishes to build, so in the same way God, before he approached matter, brought forth from His most perfect understanding the ideas, patterns, original images and imprints of all things. He created these first, and they are the first emanation from His divine nature. This was the Logos, so now there existed God, His ideas (or the Logos) and matter.

What is an idea outside the understanding?

Nothing but a Platonic reverie.

5) God is incapable of envy: He therefore wanted to impart to matter all possible perfections, and would not suffer anything evil which could be separated from it. The world [322] created from matter must therefore, as the effect of the best cause, become the best and most perfect. It had to become as much like God as possible.

6) God approached matter, grasped the bare primal substance, and transformed it first into a visible and solid material in the form of fire and earth. However, to give it even greater solidity and to unite the two elements even more closely He created two intermediate natures, namely air and water. From these four natures the whole was so arranged in harmonic proportions that it could only be destroyed by God. For these four elements, God used all the available substance, whereupon He gave to the whole the configuration which was most appropriate for its purpose, and set it in spherical rotation. Matter, for this configuration

and unification of all the available primal substance, needed neither eyes nor ears, neither hands nor feet, and just as few tools of preservation and propagation.

7) But the world was still not what it should be, for anything with a soul is better than anything without one, and everything endowed with reason is better than [323] anything without it. God therefore decided to give this body a soul to act as its guide. But since it was impossible, to unite reason directly with the body, He forcibly united one of His perfections, namely His understanding, with the chaotic soul and, through this, with the corporeal world. He created from this mixture a reasonable soul which He placed in the centre of the world and then extended throughout the whole.

In this way the *world-soul* came into being, while the world itself became an enormous animal composed of spirit, soul and body. Here similarly is the very famous Platonic trinity of *God*, the *Logos* (from the above), and the *world-soul* or *spirit*, the latter two being emanations from the first. We should also compare this with the Mosaic cosmogony's idea of the spirit of God hovering over the chaos and the waters.

8) This world-soul is not simple but composite. It is an efflux from the divinity insofar as it is reasonable, and chaotic insofar as it is sensible.

9) After God created the world-soul He made the heavens and the heavenly bodies. He ensouled them and made [324] them into visible Gods. He then brought forth invisible natures, the origination and character of which *Plato* does not dare to describe.

10) These demons are, in terms of powers, far below the gods. They can sin, but they are not malicious or gloating. They have ethereal bodies, and are spread across the heavens and Earth. The ones on Earth carry humanity's prayers aloft to the Gods, and the commands of the Gods down to mankind. Everyone is under their protection.

11) God assigned to these visible and invisible Gods made immortal by His special grace, the task of forming the bodies and the mortal part of the inhabitants of the water, air and earth. In the cup in which He had created the world-soul, He himself mixed the remaining parts which were no longer pure and noble in nature. From these remainders He created the souls of men or rather of [325] demons, sprinkled them across the heavenly bodies, and familiarised them with the nature of the whole and with Fate. To these demons, He revealed that from them, in the future, humans (and, first of all, men, as being the better part) would arise. Occupying the bodies would make them very sensitive and prone to violent convulsions. Taming and eradicating them would bring them back to their original home. If they needed to be subdued they would be once again enclosed in a human body, but this time in a female one. Should this chastisement also prove fruitless they would be directed towards such animal-bodies as would be appropriate to their cast of mind for as long as was necessary for them to be completely freed from all the foulness of matter.

12) The Gods formed these bodies, but in doing so they did not achieve such a blend as would enable the spirit to retain the upper hand: sensuality prevailed, humanity fell and became carnal.

13) Humanity was consequently driven out from its first dwelling-place and banished [326] to this terrestrial world. Here it received its coarse material body. Man deviates more and more from the path of perfection, and has to pass through various bodies until he is moved to the Underworld for complete purification. Philosophy, theurgy and the practice of virtue can accelerate this purification.

The intrinsic characteristics of this Platonic system are as follows:

- 1) It is more like a novel than a philosophical system.
- 2) It is full of irreconcilable contradictions and incoherent theories.
- 3) It is supposed to explain the origin of evil but it does not do so because the existence of a chaotic soul from which all evil is presumed to come is accepted without proof.
- 4) It is supposed to explain the origin of the spirit world and, insofar as it does, it is an incoherent emanation-system.

5) According to this system, humanity is not the direct creation of God but of the lesser [327] gods, which are partly divine and partly sensual like the world-soul itself.

6) According to this system humanity consisted, before its Fall, of three parts:

1. The emanated part of the divinity,
2. mixed with a part of the chaotic soul.
3. A finer body.

7) After the Fall the coarse body and the disorderly soul were added to the foregoing. Humanity therefore has two bodies – a finer one and a coarser one – and three souls, namely:

1. The spirit or the emanating part of the divinity is in the head.
2. The finer or furious soul is in the heart.
3. The animal soul is in the lower parts.

8) *Plato's* system differentiates between spirit and soul, as almost all Oriental systems do. The spirit is the immortal emanating particle of the divinity, while the soul is the enlivening material principle, the particle from the chaotic soul, which is coarser or finer depending on how coarse or fine the body [328] is. Every coarse body has more of the chaotic soul.

9) *Plato's* system intensifies the aversion to and contempt for the body and matter to an incomparably greater extent than the basic emanation-system, for it regards the present life as a state of punishment and the body as the dungeon or prison of the soul. What aversion must there consequently be towards sexual reproduction? How great a preference for celibacy? Plato argues that the steadfast effort to break these ties, to free oneself from the senses and to withdraw into oneself is the true wisdom, the true purification, the only way to become more like the divinity and so be transferred back to the class of demons.

10) From this system there arises in part the decrying of human reason and cognition and the disparagement of human nature which are so characteristic of all theosophical systems. In his *Theaetetus* Plato depicts a wise man who is inept at and disinterested in all worldly affairs: he loves [329] only those sciences that teach him how to escape as swiftly as possible from this impure and ephemeral sojourn into a better world. In these incorrect assumptions and Plato's fabrication of the chaotic soul of matter as the source of all evil we see the first outlines of monastic asceticism.

11) This idea of the corruption of matter and of effluxes of the better parts from the divinity are the source and foundation of all theosophical and mystical systems. Both these principles have their roots in Oriental philosophy and in the teachings of *Pythagoras* and *Plato*. Both however are also devoid of even the slightest philosophical basis and proof, all the more so as the corruption of humanity can be explained on a far more natural and demonstrable basis. In these two sources sharp minds will discover the origin of immeasurably more errors, but we leave this to their own reflections.

But how exactly do we prove the lineage and the descent down to our own times of the later systems [330] from these two sources? The answer lies in history: in the interim the following may provide some hints for the reader who wishes to investigate the matter more closely for himself.

Both individuals and entire peoples have spread these ideas throughout the world. Everything that drives humanity forth from his homeland, is at the same time a means that Providence uses to propagate its doctrines and opinions. Trade, war and conquest have done more in this regard than any instruction by the learned. This comment is made in passing to those readers who think that there is nothing more to war than spoliation and destruction.

The Orient was the cradle of the emanation-system. From Egypt the Jews brought their cosmogony to Palestine: during the Assyrian and Babylonian captivity they (including many who remained) became familiar with the doctrines of those two peoples, just as the Assyrians and Babylonians did with those of the

Jews. *Josephus* admits this himself in Book 3 Chapter 7 of his *Antiquities of the Jews*, though not without some reticence. Here the Jews learnt about, among other things, the Chaldean Satan and various types of angels, resulting from the emanation-system. When *Cyrus* conquered [331] Babylon and Chaldea became a Persian province, Chaldeism became mingled with Magianism and Judaism: the books of the Parsis contain undeniable traces of this mixture, e.g. the creation-story spread over six days and the Fall of Man. When Egypt was conquered by *Cambyses* there was another not imperceptible union of the old Egyptian teachings with those of the Persians. Earlier, under *Psamtik I*, Greeks from Ionia and Caria had been invited to Egypt, and from this time onwards it became increasingly common for Greeks, and especially their intellectuals, to visit Egypt, but by now the ancient Egyptian wisdom had been corrupted. Due to incursions into Greece by the Persians the Greeks became familiar, as *Xenophon* makes clear, with the basic Persian doctrines. This was perhaps the moment when *Pythagoras* and *Plato* took the opportunity to familiarise themselves with the emanation-system.

But a more important contribution than this was made by the conquests of Alexander which helped transplant Platonism and indeed the whole of Greek philosophy to Asia, India and, especially, to Egypt where the last Pythagoreans from Italy had also sought refuge. Even the Jews visited Alexandria more frequently under *Alexander* and the *Ptolemaic* [332] government; there they were known as *Hellenists*, though even before that time some had fled there after the murder of *Gedaliah*^{xlix} and the destruction of the Temple. Alexandria became the world's foremost commercial centre: there people gathered from all over the known world of the time, bringing with them their opinions and teachings, including *Oriental philosophy, ancient Egyptian teachings, Judaism, Pythagoreanism* and *Platonism*. From this melting-pot of all these doctrines there arose primarily:

1) The *famous Cabala of the Jews*, the *Sefer Yetzirah* and the *Zohar*, and probably the sects of the *Essenes* and *Therapeutae*.

2) The even more famous *Syncretism* of opinions which later became known as the *Alexandrian, Neoplatonic* or also *Eclectic* schools, which were first systematised in the second and third centuries A.D. primarily by *Plotinus, Iamblichus, Porphyry* and other Neoplatonists. Some members of this Alexandrian school became enthusiastic followers of Christianity, and even became eager proponents of it such as *Clement of Alexandria, Origen*, [333] *Tatian the Assyrian, Athenagoras* and *Justin Martyr*, and combined with it some of the teachings of Neoplatonism.

3) The *Gnosis*: an oriental philosophy mixed with Platonism which spread very widely in the East, especially in the first and second centuries A.D., after the philosophers had been driven out of Alexandria by the tyranny of *Ptolemy VIII Physcon* and had sought refuge in Asia some time before the Christian era. Branches of these Gnostics included the *Saturnilians, Elcesaites, Carpocratians, Cerdonians, Marcionites, Bardesianists, Cerinthians, Ophites, Basilideans, Valentinians* and other so-called heretics of church history of the first few centuries of the Christian era, as well as, in part, the *Manicheans*.

In all three of the above systems the emanation-system predominates, especially in the Cabala and Gnosis, although in those cases some adaptation to Judaism and Christianity respectively is found. In the Alexandrian school itself it was less prominent, as here the Pythagorean-Platonic system predominated, although with very noticeable modifications [334] that occasionally increased in importance. These Pythagorean-Platonic teachings found an even warmer welcome in Egypt and Alexandria as there they were regarded as the original doctrine of Egypt into which *Pythagoras* and *Plato*, during their stay in Egypt, had been initiated by the Egyptian priests. Already both before and after the time of Christ not just heathens but Jews and Christians as well had very often been devoted to it. *Philo of Alexandria* was wholly Platonist, and the *Essenes* and the *Therapeutae* are obviously derived from this school. Even the writings of the Apostles, especially *St. Paul* and *St. John*, contain visible evidence of familiarity with these ideas. The so-called *Revelation to John*, and the Chiliast sect who based themselves upon it, fall into this category. Indeed, the earliest heretics found traces of this doctrine in all the Gospel verses relating to the divinity of Christ. This is all the more true of the anti-Nicene Church Fathers. Thanks to them, mysticism had already entered the

Christian religion in the earliest days of the Church and was enabled by it to sustain and propagate itself. The swarms of anchorites and monks in Egypt and, later on, other parts of the Church came about thanks to the Alexandrian school. However, the Pythagorean-Platonic school's [335] main contribution to this very powerful advance was the famous adventurer and alleged miracle-worker *Apollonius of Tyana*, who in everything he did showed himself to be an emulator of *Pythagoras*, and who travelled the world and attracted a huge following.

Also important in the second century A.D. was the no less notorious *Alexander*. There also emerged a trend towards and a belief in astrology and all the other types of divination common among the Greeks and Romans. At the end of the 2nd and the beginning of the 3rd century A.D. the decline of the sciences and a firm belief in the reality of magic, the art of conjuring gods and spirits, using them to help realise one's goals, invoking the souls of the dead and investigating the future with the help of spirits finally, along with other concomitant causes, engendered that nonsense and philosophical monstrosity, the scattered fragments of which *Ammonius Saccas*, *Plotinus*, *Porphyry*, *Iamblichus*, *Psellus*, *Proclus* and others gathered together into an orderly system under the name of *Eclecticism*.

That these infatuations [336] and stupidities were based on the emanation-system along with the Platonic-Pythagorean philosophy, and that the doctrines of present-day theosophists and mystics, with some additions and changes, are fundamentally the same as these can clearly be shown from an examination of the doctrines of these enthusiasts. These were as follows, as anyone can prove for himself from their writings if he only has sufficient ability and patience to penetrate the sense of their barbarous and incomprehensible literary style:

1) In the terminology of the Eclectics, God is the 'really real', the super-essential, the super-comprehensible, the source of the divine, the unity of all unities, the inaccessible hidden one among the comprehensible gods. He is everywhere and yet He is nowhere; He penetrates, encloses and illuminates everything, and yet He is not present anywhere.

2) This God produced from Himself through various emanations everything possible and everything real, everything visible and everything invisible.

3) From this divinity there went forth the spiritual and the conceivable gods, and from these the comprehensible [337] gods, and from these in their turn the souls, and finally from the souls the bodies.

In this the Eclectics therefore deviated from Plato by rejecting formless matter and in this respect adhered to the pure emanation-system.

4) The most obscure and mutually contradictory aspects of their teachings are their thoughts on the creator of the visible world and the first trinity to proceed from the divinity.

Iamblichus assumes, apart from one *comprehensible* trinity, three other *conceivable* trinities which, in their turn, are contained in a *comprehensible heptad*.¹

5) From this trinity they took the creator of the visible world, the *Demiurge*.

6) Like *Plato* they asserted that the world was an ensouled, sentient and reasoning being in the midst of which was a divine soul which guides and permeates it and which holds it together. However, they also invented a further *transcendent soul*. [338]

7) *Plato* derived the origin of evil from the chaotic soul. In this regard the Eclectics departed from their teacher by rejecting *Plato's* matter and explaining physical evils as being due to:

1. the effects of evil spirits,
2. transgressions in a previous life.

8) Since however even these explanations struck them as inadequate they joined *Plato* in shifting all the blame onto matter. However, in their view the corruption of matter consisted of a complete privation and absence of anything good.

9) On the other hand they did elevate matter: they spoke of a pure, imperishable, heavenly matter in which the gods clad themselves and which forms the point of union between the divine and the human nature.

10) They showed inexhaustible imagination in thinking up classes and natures for the Gods, but they did not agree among themselves. *Plato* himself did not accept the existence of any gods other than the highest God, the world-soul and the heavenly bodies. [339]

11) According to *Porphyry*, *Iamblichus* and *Plotinus*, some Gods are quite immaterial, while others are joined to bodies over which they have control.

This does not mean however that these gods, according to the understanding of the whole ancient world, were simple, for incorporeal in this context means anything without a coarse material body and which is consequently ethereal in nature. The peculiar spirituality of both God and souls was unknown to them. Their belief in this refined materialism of the soul also enabled them to develop the doctrine of the propagation of souls through one's parents (*propagatio per traducem* or traducianism), a belief to which, among Christian scholars, Origen and Tertullian still adhered. This theory of the reproduction of souls sought to explain the extent to which all humanity sinned through the Fall of its progenitors and thus shared in this Fall.

12) All transcendent gods, which have no connection with matter, are immutable and are not susceptible to the effects of theurgy, but all gods which are associated with matter can be appeased by magic. [340]

13) The highest god can only be worshipped in the spirit, in silence, and without any words or external signs. Imitating him is the form of worship that is most pleasing to him.

14) The transcendent gods can be worshipped through songs and fervent prayer.

15) Offerings can be made to the gods who have bodies which they govern, but no animals should be slaughtered.

16) The Gods also manifest themselves to humanity. These theophanies can be distinguished from the manifestations of angels, archangels and demons as follows:

1. The former appear to be homogeneous, and their movements are faster than thought.

2. From the magnificence and splendour that fills the whole of heaven and which cannot be endured by physical vision.

3. Their presence elevates the soul to the comprehensible world, and makes the invisible as visible as the physical.

4. By the glory of their retinue of angels and archangels. [341]

17) According to *Plato*, the demons are intermediate beings between Gods and humanity. He says that humans are fallen demons and that all demons are good. According to the Eclectics some are good and some evil: both are surrounded by a body which they can vary according to their whim.

18) The good demons are the protectors of humans, animals and plants, are Rulers of the seasons, and can foretell the future.

19) The evil demons however are the cause of all accidents to humans and of all physical evils. From them stem all temptations and evil thoughts, and all dissipations and harmful passions. All cities, houses and temples are filled with them: they even sneak into the human body, but can be driven out by purifications. Relevant here are talismans and amulets against evil spirits. Every man has his own demon. *Psellus* achieved especial distinction in his teachings about demons. [342]

20) All this explains the power of theurgy or magic: these make their adepts into masters of Nature and of the gods. This power constitutes the secrets and mysteries of this sect as far as the practical part of their doctrine is concerned.

21) Magic is therefore a real science and not a fantasy, because the world is a whole in which everything is united: consequently the terrestrial is linked to the heavenly and the latter to the supercelestial. All beings are attracted to each other or repelled by each other. Someone who understands these sympathies and antipathies can play with the whole of Nature, make gods and demons appear according to his whim, and can prophesy: he is the lord of both the past and the future.

22) The attractive or repellent powers required for magic are found in animals, precious-stones and herbs and in certain signs, words and formulas.

23) If these formulas are to have the desired effect then all meaningfulness and all thoughts must be removed from them because they are addressed to incorporeal beings. They should therefore be incomprehensible. [343] *Wisely*, God has manifested them in the language of the old barbarian peoples: they should not therefore be translated into any comprehensible languages.

24) The most important part of theurgy is the art of prophesy, for just as in Nature everything works upon everything else so also everything is a sign from another thing and an omen. Astrology and dream-interpretation also have their place here.

25) According to *Plotinus* and his successors (who in this aspect of their teachings depart completely from *Plato*) all souls initially rested in the lap of the transcendent soul. According to the laws of order and harmony they all at the designated moment detached themselves from this spiritual nature, entered the system of our own world, and acquired bodies. They first entered heaven in the abode of the visible gods and there acquired a garment made of ethereal substance. They did not remain there for ever but lowered themselves deeper and deeper in accordance with those same laws until they reached our Earth. At each of these stages they acquired a new body and finally, here on Earth, a terrestrial one. [344]

26) The forces of the soul are *rational* and *irrational, cognitive, and appetitive*.

27) According to their doctrine the *rationally cognitive* forces are three in number: opinion-forming ability, rational understanding and pure understanding.

The first is the ability to understand general empirical statements.

The second is the ability to devise or understand general principles along with their proofs.

Pure understanding is the ability to immediately recognise certain truths without any obscurity and without proof. In most people only obscure traces of the latter are to be found, due to their sensuality: these are the truths of common human understanding.

28) The rationally appetitive powers are two in number: the *will*, or the constant inclination to do good, and the *capacity* to select from among several good actions the greatest good, and conversely from among several evils the most minor.

29) In humans we find four irrational powers: two cognitive [345] (*sentience* and *imagination*) and two appetitive.

30) Apart from these forces humans also have three *plant-like* ones: the *nourishing*, the *mutiplicative* and the *procreative* force.

31) Their moral philosophy was the epitome of monastic ethics, fully disposed to a complete stifling of the noblest powers of the soul and to the transformation of people into useless members of society, something for which their teacher *Plato* had already set the tone in his *Theaetetus*.

32) All the Eclectics say that the true felicity of man lies in an ascent to the divinity. He can only achieve this *reunification* with God if all the ties that bind the soul to matter are loosened. To achieve this requires

not a simple exploration of the truth and constant contemplation but primarily the practice of theurgy and saintly abstinence. Fasting and all the mortifications of the body, disdain for all honours and outward signs of wealth, and contempt for marriage were essential principles of their ethical teaching. Ecstasies, raptures and [346] heavenly transports are in no way unusual here.

33) All the virtues only have value to the extent that they distance us from matter and bring us closer to the divinity. The Eclectics divided these virtues into *civil* or *ethical* and *purifying* ones, virtues of the *already purified* soul and contemplative virtues, and into *theurgic* and *godly* ones.

34) Along with all the other Greek philosophers they assumed four civil or moral virtues: intelligence, moderation, courage and fairness. For the Eclectics however these were only a preparation for achieving higher stages of perfection as forerunners to the purifying virtues, which actually free the soul from all dependence on matter: these virtues therefore also included a *purifying intelligence* or a capacity to be free of all temptation to commit reckless actions, and a *purifying moderation* or a sublimity of the soul that freed it from all sensual temptation.

35) Only when the soul has been cleansed of all the dross of matter does it acquire the virtues of the purified soul. [347]

36) Thanks to the contemplative virtues, humanity no longer sees the eternal truth in terms of mutually dependent principles but intuitively, with a single vision.

37) The godly virtues are only to be found in the divine understanding: they are the original sources from which all the other virtues flow forth.

If any reader mistrusts this summary or regards it as exaggerated he should seek out confirmatory sources either in the Eclectics themselves or, for more detailed instruction, those texts of which the foregoing is an abbreviated excerpt, namely *Brucker's 'Historia Critica Philosophiae', vol IIⁱ* and *Meiner's 'Beytrag zur Geschichte der Denkart der ersten Jahrhunderte nach Christi Geburt, in einigen Betrachtungen u'ber die Neu-Platonische Philosophie'*.

Would anyone nowadays say that just another stupid folk-tale and superstition, just another vulgar monkish fraud, an old fishwives' story and a fairy-tale from our present era should be openly and expressly included in this category of philosophy, not as a conclusion derived from something else but as a genuine doctrine? Never has the human understanding erred so far as it did in these systems. Only [348] a Gnostic, Eclectic or Cabalist could rave like this: quite apart from what they had to say, the end-result is the most extravagant of human follies and chimeras. More recent theosophists and mystics have certainly lacked nothing in amazing intellectual extravagance, but try as they might they could at the most only equal the ideas of earlier generations: to outdo them was simply impossible, for even stupidity has its limitations. Yet to add to the horror this sect, in addition to their two siblings – the Gnosis and the Jewish Cabala – added the delightful habit of either falsifying a huge number of writings or else attributing them to some of the greatest names and figures of antiquity – to *Moses, Abraham, Hermes, Orpheus, Zoroaster, Pythagoras* and so on – in order to win for their fantasies a more favourable acceptance and a greater respect. Who would have believed that this category of philosophy would gain the admiration of later centuries, and that even in our own times it would be warmed up afresh and disseminated as perfected wisdom? Who would have believed that all the later [349] theosophical systems would stem from these sources, and would differ only in that they defiled Christianity and employed Christo-theosophical fanatics to work on these dogmas rather than heathen fools.

However, the fact that present-day theosophists and mystics certainly have sprung from this source shows partly that their history and lineage have continued and partly that their teachings and basic principles display a remarkable and very visible concordance with the theories of the Platonic-Alexandrian school, with which they became familiar not necessarily directly but via different routes, explanations and nuances.

This Neoplatonic philosophy continued from its founder *Ammonius Saccas*, from *Plotinus* and others in unbroken sequence, via *Damascius* and *Isidorus*, until the mid-7th century. Most of the Church Fathers were devoted to it, especially *Origen* and *Synesius*. Even *St. Augustine* extols the work of *Plotinus* in his 'Against the Academics' (*Contra Academicos*), and this doctrine was, as it were, the teaching of the [350] Christian church until it was displaced by *Aristotle* and the *Scholastics*. Into this category also fall the works attributed to *Hermias* and *Dionysius the Areopagite*, to which the Christians attached such value that it can safely be said that the Platonic and Eclectic schools were primarily propagated, in the subsequent murky period, by the Church itself, because the teachings of the first Church Fathers, almost all of whom were Platonists, were used to form the basis of Christian doctrine. No less a contribution to them was made by apocalyptic ideas, together with the Chiliasm^{lii} revived in the 11th century and at various intervals subsequently.

Around this time the sciences in Europe had so extensively disappeared thanks to the Barbarian incursions that only some feeble survivals had been preserved among the Saracens and in the capital of the Eastern Roman Empire at Constantinople. That exponents of the Platonic philosophy also fled there and managed to put down reasonably firm roots is proved by the writings of two authors called *Psellus*^{liiii} [351] and by the degree of superstition and stupidity prevailing in the Imperial capital around that time.

This development is even more clearly illuminated however by the revival of the sciences in the West by Greek refugees before and, more particularly, immediately after the conquest of Constantinople. At the time of the Council of Florence^{liv} in the mid-15th century there came to that city as part of the retinue of the Byzantine Emperor a Greek from Constantinople called Georgius Gemistus *Pletho* or *Plethon*.^{lv} This man subsequently won the friendship of *Cosimo de' Medici*.^{lvi} Cosimo acquired such a taste for the kind of philosophy that was most familiar to Gemistus Pletho that he resolved to establish his own academy in Florence to disseminate these teachings. To this end he bought the library of *Janus Lascaris*.^{lvii} and commissioned *Marsilio Ficino*.^{lviii} to translate into Latin the works of *Plato* and other Platonists. Thanks to the efforts of *Ficino* and, even more so, of *Pico della Mirandola*.^{lix} and *Bartolemeo di Filippo* [352] *Valori*.^{lx} this Platonic school became so famous throughout the whole of Europe that Florence became full of inquisitive young men from every country. Among them was a German, *Johannes Reuchlin*, otherwise known as *Capnion*, one of the strongest supporters and advocates of the Pythagorean-Platonic-Cabalistic philosophy in later times, with whom *Pietro Colonna Galatino*,^{lxi} *Paolo Riccio*.^{lxii} and *Francesco Giorgi Veneto*.^{lxiii} joined forces. Since however Aristotle enjoyed prior possession thanks to the Saracens and the Scholastics, the supporters of the Alexandrian school never entirely succeeded in restoring Plato to his former glory. Here and there however there were isolated adherents who studied the writings of these forerunners: these included in the 16th century the famous *Heinrich Cornelius Agrippa*, who in his books *De occulta philosophia* revived the Neoplatonic nonsense along with magic, although with many deviations from the original. [353] *Franciscus Patricius*, *Jan Marek Marci* and later, *Theophilus Gale*, *Ralph Cudworth*, and *Henry More* subsequently followed the original Platonist teachings.

The various stupidities and errors of human understanding also included the ridiculous desire to transmute base metals into nobler ones. In the 16th century this very harmful craze was spread primarily by the writings and theories of *Theophrastus Paracelsus* after being previously stirred up by the writings of *Arnaldus de Villa Nova*, *Jean de Roquetaillade* (*Johannes de Rupescissa*), *Basil Valentine* and the texts ascribed to *Ramon Llull*. In physics and medicine *Paracelsus* enunciated the principle that true philosophy and medicine can and must be learnt not from humans or animals but solely from and through God by means of a special grace and illumination. These teachings were not only endorsed but further developed by *Aegidius Guthmann* and *Julius Sperber* (*Julianus de Campis*).

Plato and the later Platonists had already established the [354] principle that all human knowledge was vain, and that human reason leads us astray. This principle was introduced into the Christian religion by the Platonising Church Fathers and by those whose institutions and self-interest forbade all rational sciences, and spread among their followers. Now the Paracelsian school also began to decry the use of reason in investigating the secrets of Nature. This trend became so very prevalent that, towards the end of the 16th

century, several founders of sects, including in particular *Robert Fludd*, *Valentin Weigel*, *Jakob Böhme* and his disciple *Quirinus Kuhlmann*, as well as *Jan Baptist van Helmont* all founded their own theosophical systems. The superstition of these times, which afflicted even kings, including the great Henri IV of France, is well-known from the historical record. Everything suddenly became bound up with horoscopes and the casting of birth-charts. Astrologers and all those others who were involved in such stupidities were often summoned to the royal and princely courts. The prophecies of [355] *Nostradamus* are too well-known to be repeated here. Even the great *Kepler* applied himself to astrology, cast birth-charts, and served three Emperors more as a Court Astrologer than as a Court Astronomer. Indeed he took on the task of publicly defending astrology and prophesied, by seven different methods, the death of Emperor *Matthias*. Why should anyone wonder about the progress that such stupidities made among the common herd when even minds of the first magnitude had become their adherents and defenders?

At the start of the 17th century, around the time when the trend towards alchemy and the supernatural communication of Nature's secrets unleashed by these schools had become so prevalent, there appeared a text entitled *Fama Fraternitatis R.C.*, soon followed by another called *Confessio Fraternitatis*. These reported the existence of a society that a certain *Christian Rosenkreuz* had founded in the 14th century after his return from the Promised Land, where he had gathered many secrets and much exceptional knowledge. [356] The *Fama* announced the following:

1. This society had been blessed with a quite unique revelation, but had it acquired through this a knowledge of the greatest and most recondite secrets? As true theosophists they would certainly know how to explain them.
2. The society was working on a general improvement of everything, but especially of medical and philosophical knowledge.
3. The society possessed the Philosopher's Stone and the Universal Medicine, and knew the arts of transmuting all metals and of prolonging life.
4. The society was aware of and was declaring a forthcoming Golden Age of universal felicity.

This strange announcement caused universal intellectual turmoil. The trend towards the sciences which it announced became more general, and all the theosophists and alchemists of the age devoted themselves to them. From their ranks *Sperber* and *Robert Fludd* appeared as their public [357] defenders. Tracts were written for and against it, and all kinds of theories expressed depending on each writer's personal interest in the matter. Nobody however could say where this society was actually located. Even *Descartes* on his travels could find no trace of it despite his best efforts. When people's minds had been sufficiently stimulated by this announcement all further communications from it ceased. Later it became apparent that there had possibly never been such a society, that it was only an invention and a joke by some wits, especially *Johannes Valentinus Andreae*, aimed at ridiculing the theosophists and alchemists of his time and flushing them out into the open; to find out who would side with this idea and who would contest it; and, what is more, to subtly and safely point out the deficiencies and defects of contemporary scholarship and then gradually [358] remedy them, as is explained in the well-reasoned article *Rosenkreuzer* in *Arnold's Ketzergeschichte*.^{lxiv}

But this well-intentioned project had the opposite effect to that intended: the alchemists and theosophists exploited the idea, threw themselves into it and hid themselves and their fantasies beneath its guise and thus now practised in secret their formerly public handiwork, claiming in all seriousness the existence of a society that had formerly been real only in people's imaginations and had only become real thanks to them. From this time onwards there also appeared from among the ranks of the theosophists various sects combining chemistry and alchemy with a belief in prophesy and with theosophy. Even Cartesianism and the teachings of *Malebranche*^{lxv} were highly susceptible to a linkage with theosophical ideas.

In our own times theosophical superstition is being promoted to an extraordinary extent and strained more than was ever expected by putative supermen such as *Swedenborg*, *Schröpfer*, *Saint Germain* and *Cagliostro*; by doubts, conjectures and queries about the origin, lineage and secrets of Freemasonry; [359] by

other concomitant causes; and by the gullibility of the common people and unphilosophical minds as well as the ardent or melancholy way of thinking of some silent enthusiasts. Merely ambitious or even self-convinced visionaries and alchemists have recently begun to decry human reason and have appropriated this intellectual ferment which at the present time is exploiting the widely apparent weaknesses of Freemasonry, while all the gullible and superstitious Freemasons become increasingly tepid in the face of new prospects and promises, have associated themselves with similar promoters of superstition, and for the second time have concealed themselves under the veil of Rosicrucianism to give their follies a venter of antiquity and so impress the easily convinced.

Some have even had the idea of searching for true wisdom among people who live in the deepest barbarism. Palestine, Syria, Egypt [360] and the Orient as a whole are supposed to still preserve the true seeds of it. Idle chivalric orders like the Templars are supposed to have brought this Oriental wisdom – the Gnostic and Alexandrian stupidities – back to Europe with them through the Crusades. Every cheat pretends to have acquired, through diligent research in Cyprus or in some corner or other of Asia Minor, information and knowledge to fool those gullible people who hold that everything is goodness, that everything is wisdom, and consider it all the wiser the further away the place is in which it is supposed to have originated.

Finally, thanks to the notorious *Des erreurs et de la verité*^{ixvi} and the other frequently published theosophico-mystical works, the brains of our contemporaries are so severely and so completely destroyed that this evil escalates daily more and more, so that, to all appearances, the age of our scientific glory is long past, and we must now fall back into an epoch not dissimilar to that of the Scholastics, or [361] perhaps into an even more dangerous and soul-destroying barbarism.

So that is the short but very truthful history of our currently so highly prized and so eagerly-sought 'secret wisdom': that is its origin. [362]

ⁱ Ovid, *Metamorphoses*, Book II lines 327-8: 'Here lies Phaethon, the driver of his father's chariot. Though he was unable to control it, at least he died displaying great courage.'

ⁱⁱ Die Einleitung zu meiner Apologie, published in 1787, to be translated later in this series.

ⁱⁱⁱ A reference to the Elector of Bavaria's banning of the Illuminati Order in 1784 for sedition and the sacking of Weishaupt from his Professorship at the University of Ingolstadt.

^{iv} An Enlightenment concept referring to the degree of toleration of religious or political dissidence by the State.

^v See Endnote [..](#) of On Materialism and Idealism in this series.

^{vi} Mob rule.

^{vii} See for example John Gideon Millingen's *The History of Duelling* (1841) in two volumes, available as a Google Book (accessed 28th September 2016).

^{viii} i.e. in the sense of hereditary rulers who are below the age of legal responsibility.

^{ix} See Gottfried Tam (1652-1719), *Prima Principia orthodoxæ Fidei* (Šwidnica/Schweidnitz, 1697), p. 271: 'Die sechste Stund anfienge sich mit Abraham / und wehrete bis auf Moysen durch vierhundert neunzig Jahr / war gleichsam der Mittag / oder das mannliche Alter der Welt / in welchem Gott neben dem Gesetz der Natur das männliche Geschlecht auch durch das Gesetz der Beschneidung zum wahren Gottes-Dienst beruffte', i.e. 'In the sixth hour it began with Abraham and continued until Moses over a period of 490 years. This was as it were the noontide or the manly age of the world, in which God, in addition to the Law of Nature, also called the male gender to God's service through the Law of Circumcision.' Tam was a Jesuit and Weishaupt may have encountered his book during his Jesuit schooling. A possible alternative source is Georg-Philipp Harsdörffer's poem *Geburt-Register unsers Herrn Jesu Christi, IV* in his *Nathan und Jotham* (Endter, 1659).

^x Guiding star, or the North star used for maritime navigation.

^{xi} James 5:12. But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea be yea; and your nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

^{xii} See the Gospel according to St. Matthew, 22.14.

^{xiii} French. A report of the members conduct for a given period.

^{xiv} Proof of Membership in the Order.

^{xv} Quibus licet. Latin. To whom it is permitted.

^{xvi} Lat. The chief Novice in an Order.

^{xvii} Thomas Abbt (1738-66) was a mathematician and Enlightenment philosopher, an admirer of Gotthold Lessing, and a friend of Friedrich Nicolai and Moses Mendelssohn. He also met Voltaire. In *Vom Verdienste* ('On Merit', first published in 1765) and other works he tried 'to conceptualise and to create a sense of citizenship and the common good which cut across the various divisions of German society, uniting all orders into a greater and harmonious whole' (cf. Benjamin W. Redekop, *Thomas Abbt and the Formation of an Enlightened German 'Public'*, Journal of the History of Ideas, Volume 58, Number 1, January 1997, pp. 81-103.). The 1772 Berlin edition of his work was edited by Nicolai. The passage on page 192 of that work to which Weishaupt is presumably referring reads as follows: 'The gratitude a man owes his benefactor, in other words to the man who has earned merit by doing something for him, need not correspond exactly to the yardsticks for merit that we have suggested here, for only the gratitude of the general public should be determined according to such measures. If you have enjoyed your upbringing as a private citizen then it is to that, next to God, that you owe everything that you have become. It may well be the case that the entire state, which has never used or been able to use the services of the honourable citizen in public affairs, never mentions this merit relating to your upbringing and expresses no special gratitude for it. But what about you? Does that fact make you any less obliged towards your benefactor? Are you really justified in driving a hard bargain by slightly reducing your most enthusiastic gratitude towards him just because he is not having any monuments built in his honour? All right, go ahead then, drive a hard bargain: the greater the amount of gratitude that you refuse to show for the merit that has been earned by doing something for you then the greater the stain on your own merit in the future – should, that is, you ever be capable of acquiring any'.

^{xviii} In the sense of the willingness and ability to suppress lower goals in favour of higher and more spiritual ones.

^{xix} i.e. an entitlement to the provision of some good or service as opposed to a negative right, which is an entitlement to non-interference.

^{xx} Childeric III (c. 717 – c. 754) was King of the Franks from 743 until deposed by Pope Zachary in March 751 at the behest of Pepin the Short. Childeric's parentage is uncertain but he is generally regarded as the last Merovingian king. After he was deposed, Pepin the Short, father of Charlemagne, was crowned the first Carolingian king.

^{xxi} Lat. 'With a sagacious way of always being happy.' In some editions of this work this quotation is rendered as *Ars semper gaudendi*, 'the art of always being happy', which is the title of a famous neo-Stoic work by the Jesuit theologian and mathematician (and possible discoverer of common logarithms) Alphonse Antonio de Sarasa (1618-1667), a Fleming of Spanish descent. The Jesuit-educated Weishaupt may have been familiar with it.

^{xxii} A desire to achieve fame at all costs by, if necessary, committing a criminal act. Named after Herostratus, a 4th century arsonist who, on the 21st July 356 BC, burned down one of the Seven Wonders of the Ancient World, the Temple of Artemis at Ephesus, for no other reason than to become famous.

^{xxiii} Johann Georg Sulzer (1720 – 1779) was a Swiss-born mathematician, physicist (and apparent discoverer of the 'battery tongue test') and philosopher. He was director of the philosophical section of the Berlin Academy of Sciences and translator into German of David Hume's *An Enquiry Concerning the Principles of Morals*. His philosophical writings are mostly on aesthetics and include *Unterredungen über die Schönheit der Natur* (1750), *Gedanken über den Ursprung der Wissenschaften und schönen Künste* (1762) and *Allgemeine Theorie der schönen Künste* (1771–74).

^{xxiv} Johann Georg Heinrich Feder (1740 – 1821) was an anti-Kantian and Professor of Philosophy at the University of Göttingen from 1768 to 1782.

^{xxv} Pierre Charron (1541 – 1603), born in Paris, one of 25 children of a bookseller. Originally a lawyer, he joined the church and was appointed priest-in-ordinary to Marguerite de Valois, wife of Henry IV of Navarre. He wanted to become a monk but was rejected by both the Carthusians and the Celestines. He later became a great friend of the essayist Michel de Montaigne. His writing was influenced by Montaigne, Raymond of Sabunde and Lipsius. Accused of atheism in his lifetime, he is considered a founder of modern secularism. See Dr. George Stanhope's early 18th century translation into English of *De la sagesse* (*Of Wisdom*).

^{xxvi} There would seem to be some confusion here. Weishaupt published three Dialogues in the first edition of his *Apologie des Mißvergnügens* in 1787 and then a further six in two volumes in 1790, although for the 1790 volumes he reworked some of the material from 1787. However, the Fifth Dialogue, which is contained in the second 1790 volume, does not deal with man's historical development. The likeliest candidate is the Third Dialogue from the first 1790 volume. This will be translated, along with the other Dialogues, later in this series.

^{xxvii} We need a reference to this: SSW?

^{xxviii} Born 1721, died 1793. Principal of the University of Edinburgh.

^{xxix} Maximilien de Béthune, 1st Duke of Sully, Marquis of Rosny and Nogent, Count of Muret and Villebon, Viscount of Meaux (1560 – 1641) was right-hand man to Henri IV of France and, philosophically, a neo-Stoic. Among his most famous ideas was a Europe made up of 15 roughly equal states under the direction of a 'Very Christian Council of Europe', charged with resolving differences and with a common army. This is often cited as a forerunner to the European Union. Translations into English of his memoirs, by Charlotte Lennox and others, will be found at Google Books (accessed 27th September 2016).

^{xxx} Marin Cureau de la Chambre (1594 – 1669) was a French physician and philosopher and an early member of the Académie française. He was a personal physician to Louis XIV, who was impressed with his ability to discern character from physical appearance. His five-volume study *Caractères des passions* was published between 1640 and 1662. He also wrote about palmistry, the digestion, animal intelligence, the occult and optics, and translated Aristotle's *Physica*.

^{xxxi} Jean-Baptiste Morvan de Bellegarde (1648 – 1734) was a Jesuit before joining the order of St. Francis de Sales. A prolific author on ethics and, to a lesser extent, history. He also translated the Church Fathers.

^{xxxii} Jacques Esprit (1611 – 77) was a moralist whose 'Fausseté des vertus humaines' went through many editions. An English translation by William Beauvoir appeared in 1706 as 'Discourses on the Deceitfulness of Humane [sic] Virtues'.

^{xxxiii} François VI, Duc de La Rochefoucauld, Prince de Marcillac (1613 – 1680). His 504 'maxims', short and pithy reflections on human conduct and motives written from the viewpoint of a man of the world, were admired by, among others, Nietzsche, whose style was also somewhat influenced by them. They were translated into English in 1903 by George Powell as 'The Moral Maxims and Reflections of the Duke De La Rochefoucauld'.

^{xxxiv} Born 1601, died 1658. Another Jesuit writer. Admired by Schopenhauer and Nietzsche. In 1992 Christopher Maurer's translation of this book (as *The Art of Worldly Wisdom*) remained for 18 weeks (with 2 weeks in first place) in the Washington Post's list of Nonfiction General Best Sellers.

^{xxxv} We have not been able to identify this author.

^{xxxvi} In 1744 the Royal Prussian Academy of Sciences started holding annual essay contests with a prize of 50 ducats in the form of a commemorative medal. Submissions were received from many noted intellectuals of the time, including Lessing, Condillac, Kant, Mendelssohn, Herder, Abbt, Michaelis, Garve and Kaestner. One of the two prizes awarded in 1768 (when the subject was human inclinations) went to a Herr Cochius, 'Court Pastor of Potsdam', for his essay entitled 'Whether it is possible to destroy natural inclinations, and how one strengthens the good and weakens the bad.' Garve and Meiners also submitted essays in the same

year. These are the three essays referred to here. Christian Garve lived in Breslau. He had a correspondence with Kant and translated, among other things, Cicero's *De officiis*. Christoph Meiners was a postmaster's son who became a Full Professor of Philosophy at Göttingen University in 1775. With his colleague Feder (see Endnote [..](#)) he published the anti-Kantian *Philosophische Bibliothek* (1788-91).

^{xxxvii} Born Zweibrücken 1726. Studied medicine in Basel. A prolific writer on medical subjects, his book on the temperaments was his first publication (1760). He held a number of distinguished posts as a physician-in-ordinary. Died 1787.

^{xxxviii} **We need an end note explaining this term.**

^{xxxix} If a Member wanted only his Provincial to read a *quibus licet* then he could write the word *Soli* ('to a single person') upon it.

^{xl} If a Member wanted only the head of the Order to read a *quibus licet*, then he could write the word *Primo* ('to the leader') upon it.

^{xli} The Second Book of Maccabees was written in Hellenistic Greek, probably in Alexandria, about 124 BC. It describes the revolt of the Jews against Antiochus IV Epiphanes and the subsequent defeat of the Syrian general Nicanor in 161 BC by Judas Maccabeus. Catholics and Eastern Orthodox Christians consider the work to be canonical and a part of the Bible, whereas Protestants and Jews reject most of its doctrinal content, though some of the former accept it as part of the Apocrypha.

^{xlii} 'Shekinah – a Chaldea word meaning resting-place, not found in Scripture, but used by the later Jews to designate the visible symbol of God's presence in the Tabernacle, and afterwards in Solomon's temple. When the Lord led Israel out of Egypt, he went before them 'in a pillar of a cloud.' This was the symbol of his presence with his people. God also spoke to Moses through the 'Shekinah' out of a burning bush. For references made to it during the wilderness wanderings, see Exodus 14:20; 40:34-38; Leviticus 9:23, 24; Numbers 14:10; 16:19, 42.' – from Easton's *Bible Dictionary*.

^{xliii} Lit. projections, or things thrown forward. See Tertullian, *Against Praxeas*, 7858.

^{xliv} From Classical Greek *Θεογονία*, the genealogy or birth of the gods.

^{xlv} We have not been able to trace this word. Perhaps Weishaupt means *Farohar*, about which Dr. Haug has this to say: 'These Farohars or protectors, who are numberless, are believed to be angels, stationed everywhere by Ahura Mazda for keeping the good creation in order, preserving it, and guarding it against the constant attacks of fiendish powers' (Haug's *Essays on the Parsees*, 2nd edition, p, 206).

^{xlvi} In Propositions 1 through 15 of Part One of his *Ethics* the Dutch philosopher Baruch Spinoza (1632-1677) sought to show that God is the infinite and necessarily existing (i.e. uncaused) unique substance of the universe: there is only one substance in the universe and it is God, and everything else is in God.

^{xlvii} One of the last of Plato's dialogues, in which the Pythagorean philosopher Timaeus of Locri seeks to explain the undeniable order and beauty of the universe.

^{xlviii} See in this series Weishaupt, 'On Materialism and Idealism', page [..](#)

^{xlix} See *Jeremiah*, Ch. 41, vv. 1-3.

^l A group of seven things.

^{li} Brucker's critical history of philosophy was published in Leipzig in 1742-44 in 5 volumes but was so successful that a 6-volume edition appeared in 1766-1767. An English translation by the Unitarian minister William Enfield was published in 1791 under the title 'The History of Philosophy: From the Earliest Times to the Beginning of the Present Century; Drawn Up from Brucker's *Historia Critica Philosophiæ*'.

^{lii} The belief that Christ will reign on Earth for a thousand years in a Golden Age before the Last Judgement.

^{liii} It used to be thought that there was another Michael Psellos (called the Elder) who lived on Andros in the 9th century and who was a pupil of Photius, but his existence is now disputed.

^{liv} The Council of Florence, which was concluded in 1445, negotiated (short-lived) unions between the Catholic West and various Eastern Christian churches.

^{lv} Born some time after 1355, probably in Constantinople, and educated in Adrianopolis, at that time the Ottoman capital. As a secular scholar in the entourage of Byzantine emperor John VIII Palaeologus, Gemistus' services were not much required by the Council of Florence so he accepted an invitation by some local humanists to pass the time by giving lectures (which Cosimo de' Medici attended) on the differences between Aristotelianism (then the prevailing philosophy in Europe) and Platonism. He is widely regarded as one of the most influential figures behind the Italian Renaissance.

^{lvi} Born in Florence into a banking family in 1389, died 1464. Though he rarely held public office, his vast wealth enabled him to found the Medici political dynasty which dominated Florence for most of the Italian Renaissance.

^{lvii} This is not possible, as Lascaris was born around 1445, less than 20 years before the death of Cosimo de' Medici. Perhaps Weishaupt is thinking of Cosimo's grandson Lorenzo. Lascaris was one of the leading Greek scholars of the Italian Renaissance. After the death of his patron Bessarion, Patriarch of Constantinople, he was taken up by Lorenzo de' Medici and lectured in Florence on Thucydides, Demosthenes, Sophocles and the Greek Anthology. Twice Lorenzo sent him to Greece to search for manuscripts, and on the second occasion he brought back about 200 from Mount Athos. He also collaborated with the Venetian printer Aldus Manutius and helped Louis XII of France to compile his famous library in Blois.

^{lviii} A former student of John Argyropoulos, who lectured on Greek language and literature in Florence. Ficino, who became a priest in mid-life, tried to synthesise Christianity and Platonism.

^{lix} Giovanni Pico della Mirandola (1463-1494) was an eclecticist and syncretist who was a scholar of Hebrew, Aramaic and Syriac as well as Latin and Greek. For many years he studied the Cabala while never rejecting the better features of Scholasticism. He died young, having to a certain extent turned his back on his earlier enthusiasms.

^{lx} Valori funded Ficino's translation work after the so-called Pazzi Conspiracy of 1478, in which a rival family tried to seize control of Florence by murdering Lorenzo de' Medici, who however escaped with minor injuries.

^{lxi} Galatino (1460-1540) was a Friar Minor, an oriental linguist and the author of *De Arcanis Catholicae Veritatis*, in which he tried to defend Reuchlin against charges of being unjustifiably favourable to the Jews and the Hebrew scriptures by arguing that the Jews' own religious books yielded proof of the truth of the Christian religion.

^{lxii} Riccio (1480-1541) was a German convert from Judaism who became Professor of Philosophy at the University of Pavia and, later, personal physician to the Emperor Maximilian I. He is best known for his *De Porta Lucis R. Josephi Gecatilia* (Augsburg, 1516), a free translation of part of the Cabalistic *Sha'are Orah* of Joseph Gikatilla, which Reuchlin made use of in his *De Arte Cabbalistica*. He also translated parts of the Talmud into Latin at the request of the Emperor Maximilian.

^{lxiii} The Franciscan friar Giorgi (1466-1540) features in the work of Frances Yates, who says: 'That Giorgi was a Christian Cabalist is a statement that means, not merely that he was influenced in a vague way by the Cabalist literature, but that he believed that Cabala could prove, or already had proved, the truth of Christianity' (Yates, *The Occult Philosophy in the Elizabethan Age*.)

^{lxiv} Gottfried Arnold (1666-1714), also known as Christophorus Irenæus, was a Lutheran pastor whose 'Unparteyische Kirchen- und Ketzer-historie' showed more sympathy towards various schools of heretics than some in authority liked. It was admired by Goethe and Tolstoy among others.

^{lxv} Nicolas Malebranche (1638-1715) was a French Oratorian priest and rationalist philosopher who sought to reconcile the ideas of St. Augustine and Descartes.

^{lxvi} The first book by Louis-Claude de Saint-Martin (1743-1803), who was known as *Le Philosophe Inconnu*, the Unknown Philosopher. Although Saint-Martin was raised a strict Catholic and always remained one, this book was placed on the *Index Librorum Prohibitorum*. While serving in the army in Bordeaux, Saint-Martin met the mystic Martinez de Pasqually who was influenced by the Cabala and was trying to establish a secret society with magical or theurgic rites. In 1768 Saint-Martin was introduced to the Elus Cohëns. From 1768 until 1771 he worked in Bordeaux as Martinez de Pasqually's secretary. In 1771 he left the army and became an itinerant preacher. In the same year he was living with Jean-Baptiste Willermoz, an Elus Cohën and friend of Pasqually, in Lyon, while he wrote *Des erreurs et de la vérité*. In July 1790, he resigned from the Rectified Scottish Rite and asked Jean-Baptiste Willermoz for his name to be removed from all Masonic registers. He was the first person to translate the works of Jakob Böhme into French.