

ὁ σ. ἐξετάζει ἀπὸ ἰδικῆς του σκοπιᾶς τὴν συνειδησιν καὶ τὰς ρίζας τῆς διὰ τῆς ἐνδοσκοπήσεως, ἀφήνων πολλὰ ἐρωτηματικά διὰ τὸν χῶρον τοῦ ὑποσυνειδήτου, ἡμισυνειδήτου καὶ τῆς ἐν γένει δομῆς τῆς συνειδήσεως.

Ἐξετάζεται ἡ λειτουργικὴ διαδικασία τῆς «ἀπόθησης» καὶ τίθεται ὡς δεδομένον ὅτι ἡ ἰδία συνειδήσις θὰ πρέπει νὰ συναντᾶται καὶ εἰς τὴν πρωτόγονον ὄρδην καὶ εἰς τὴν σύγχρονον κοινωνίαν, ἀφοῦ ἡ διαδικασία τῆς ὄντογενέσεως εἶναι ἀπελπιστικὰ ὁμοία. Διατυπώνονται σκέψεις διὰ τὴν δομὴν τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης γνώσεως καὶ ἐπιχειρεῖται ἀνίχνευσις τῆς παρουσίας τοῦ κοινωνικοῦ στοιχείου ἐντὸς τῶν μυθίων τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης ὑπάρξεως.

Τὰ ὀργανικὰ στοιχεῖα, ἡ οὐσία καὶ ἡ λειτουργικὴ τῆς συνειδήσεως τοῦ ἀτόμου ἐξετάζονται ἐν ἀναφορᾷ πρὸς τὴν ὄντογένεσιν τῆς κοινωνικῆς συνειδήσεως, ὡς καὶ ἡ φύσις, ἡ οὐσία καὶ σχέσις, τοῦ Ἐγὼ καὶ τῆς Κοινωνίας-Ἐγὼ (ἰποκειμένον-ἀντικείμενον, Ἐγὼ-κοινωνία) εἰς μεταλλακτικὰς φάσεις.

Ἡ ἀνάλυσις τῆς οὐσίας καὶ τοῦ περιεχομένου τῆς συνειδήσεως ὡς, καὶ ὁ ἰδιαίτερος τρόπος λειτουργίας τῆς —ἀντιδράσεώς τῆς εἰς τὰ ἐρεθίσματα— ἀπασχολοῦν τὸν σ., ὁ ὅποιος ἐρμηνεύει κατ' αὐτὸν τὸν τρόπον διάφορα γνωστικά, πολιτιστικὰ καὶ κοινωνικὰ φαινόμενα τῆς συγχρόνου ἀγχομένης κοινωνίας.

Ὁ σ. ἐστόχευσε νὰ συλλάβῃ καὶ ἐρμηνεύσῃ «τὴν κοινωνία τῆς συνειδήσεως», δηλ. τὴν κοινωνίαν-συνειδήσιν. «τὴν ἰδία τὴν ἀνθρώπινη συνειδήση» εἰς τὰς μεταλλακτικὰς τῆς μορφᾶς καὶ καταλήγει εἰς τὸ ὅτι, ἂν γνωρίσωμεν τὴν σχέσιν κοινωνίας-Ἐγὼ θὰ διευκολυνθῶμεν εἰς τὴν ἔρευναν καὶ ἀνάλυσιν τοῦ κοινωνικοῦ φαινομένου διὰ νὰ προωθήσωμεν μίαν Κοινωνιολογίαν ἀνωτέρου ἐπιπέδου.

Ἡ ἀνωτέρω ἐργασία διαφωτίζει ἐπαρκῶς τὸν ἀναγνώστην διὰ νὰ κατανοήσῃ τὴν θέσιν τοῦ ἀτόμου ἐναντι τοῦ κοινωνικοῦ φαινομένου.

ΑΝΤΩΝΙΟΣ Ν. ΛΟΞΑΣ

**Porphyry's Letter to his wife Marcella: Concerning the life of Philosophy and the ascent to the Gods**, trans. by A. Zimmern with an introduction by D. R. Filader Grand Rapids, MI: Phanes Press, 1986, 59 pages, paper \$ 4.95.

Phanes Press (PO Box 6114, Grand Rapids, MI 49506) is to be highly commended for undertaking the publication of such important courses as the present one which ironically was out of print for nearly a hundred years.

In this *Letter to his wife Marcella* Porphyry (c. 233-305 A.D.) the fascinating disciple of Plotinus and hearer of Origen, explains in a personal and moving way, why in his 70s he chose to marry Marcella, a widow of a close friend who had seven children, consoles her and reminds her not to neglect the life of philosophy, conceived of here as the care of the soul in her re-ascent to the One. Porphyry writes of how God is best honoured and of the divine principles which must be upheld by the philosopher in daily life. He notes that «no two things can be more entirely opposed to one another than a life of pleasure and ease, and the ascent to the gods». In this *Letter* Porphyry describes the preparatory stages of that ascent, and how the ascent is accomplished.

Porphyry's interesting and unusual *Life of Plotinus, The Philosophy*

from *Oracles*, his massive (of 15 books) polemic *Against the Christians* (a unique contribution to the science of textual criticism nevertheless, of which only questionable fragments remain) and the *Letter* under consideration, are perhaps the most significant (from the point of view of history of Christian thought) among his numerous writings including his commentaries on the works of the great philosophers, historians, biographers, metaphysics, psychology, ethics, the philosophical interpretation of myths, rhetoric and grammar, mathematics, astronomy and musical harmonics (the known titles of the Porphyrian corpus exceeds 75 in number). Porphyry is considered, even by his arch-critic St. Augustine, as «the most learned of the philosophers» and «as one of the great figures of the Western intellectual tradition» (since he spent most of his life in Rome and Sicily).

Interestingly, Porphyry speaks of Jesus always with high respect, but toward the Christians Porphyry was only critical because they identify Jesus with God or the *supreme principle*. To Porphyry this was blasphemous, impious and lawless for, by turning men and women away from the worship of the *supreme principle* (the One high God), it undercut the traditional piety that was such an important foundation stone of classical civilization. However, Porphyry never suggested any persecution of the Christians. On the contrary, Porphyry admired and believed in the intimate relationship of the two ethical systems, the Christian and the Pagan or Greek philosophical ethics. This is clearly shown in the second part of the *Letter* in which is set out Porphyry's mildly ascetic moral philosophy. Actually, the *Letter* is an introduction to the purificatory or cathartic virtues, the acquisition of which is prerequisite in the soul's assimilation to the higher intelligible realities.

In addition, I should mention that Fideler's carefully written introduction, his copious notes and bibliographical listings are a significant plus to the value of this little book.

The crucially important and most meaningful message of this *Letter* of Porphyry to our contemporary society and civilization is certainly his emphasis on Marriage as a gift and sacrament of Heaven, as a communion and community of God's move, a complimentary male-female perfection in the spiritual life and the divinization of human being despite the difficulties, obstacles, and hardship of marital life in such a thoroughly corrupted society as ours.

This *Letter* greatly helps any reader, specialist and non-specialist alike, to rediscover the vision of the sacredness and the dignity of human person and the right path to healthy interpersonal, family and social relations and to genuine personal happiness in this life. And even just for this *Phanes Publisher* deserves the gratitude of all the readers of this *Letter*.

Kingston, New York

CONSTANTINE N. TSIRPANLIS