

Chap Xxi.--Some Portions of the Virtue Have Good In

by Alexander of Lycopolis

The sermon explores the nature of virtue, emphasizing the differences in goodness among various entities and the impact of matter on virtue's purity.

Scripture: Genesis 1:16, Proverbs 2:6, Romans 12:2, 1 Corinthians 15:41, James 1:17

Topics: "Divine Virtue", "Spiritual Purity"

Description

Alexander of Lycopolis discusses the concept of virtue and its varying degrees of goodness, using the analogy of the sun and moon remaining uncorrupted despite their interaction with matter, unlike other things that have become depraved. He delves into the idea that within the divine virtue, there are portions with differing levels of goodness, similar to the centaurs with the human part being superior. Alexander explores the notion that the sun and moon, through wise choices, selected less evil parts of matter for their interaction, maintaining their perfection. However, as time passed, the excess evil in matter affected different objects to varying degrees, leading to some parts remaining pure while others became corrupted.

Transcript

CHAP XXI.--SOME PORTIONS OF THE VIRTUE HAVE GOOD IN THEM, OTHERS MORE GOOD; IN THE SUN AND THE MOON IT IS INCORRUPT, IN OTHER THINGS DEPRAVED; AN IMPROBABLE OPINION.

But if any one were to apply his mind to what follows, the road would not appear to be plain and straightforward, but more arduous even than that which has been passed. For they say that the sun and moon have contracted no stain from their admixture with matter. And now they cannot say how other things have become deteriorated contrary to their own proper nature.

For if, when it was absolute and by itself, the divine virtue was so constituted that one portion of it was good, and another had a greater amount of goodness in it, according to the old tale of the centaurs, who as far as the breast were men, and in the lower part horses, which are both good animals, but the man is the better of the two; so also, in the divine virtue, it is to be understood that the one portion of it is the better and the more excellent, and the other will occupy the second and inferior place. And in the same way, with respect to matter, the one portion possesses, as it were, an excess of evil; while others again are different, and about that other the language will be different.

For it is possible to conceive that from the beginning the sun and moon, by a more skilful and prudent judgment, chose for themselves the parts of matter that were less evil for the purposes of add mixture, that they might remain in their own perfection and virtue; but in the lapse of thee, when the evils lost their force and became old, they brought out so much of the excess in the good, while the rest of its parts fell away, not, indeed, without foresight, and yet not with the same foresight, did each object share according to its quantity in the evil that was in matter.

But since, with respect to this virtue, nothing of a different kind is asserted by them, but it is to be understood throughout to be alike and of the same nature, their argument is improbable; because in the admixture part remains pure and incorrupt, while the other has contracted some share of evil.

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