

APPENDIX II

The Platonic Philosopher's Creed

- 1 | I BELIEVE that there is one first cause of all things, whose nature is so immensely transcendent, that it is even superessential; and that in consequence of this it cannot properly either be named or spoken of, or conceived by opinion, or be known, or perceived by any being.

- 2 | I believe, however, that if it be lawful to give a name to that which is truly ineffable, the appellations of The One and The Good are of all others the most adapted to it; the former of these names indicating that it is the principle of all things, and the latter that it is the ultimate object of desire to all things.

- 3 | I believe that this immense principle produced such things as are first and proximate to itself, most similar to itself;

This statement of beliefs, or creed, was written by Thomas Taylor, Platonist and translator of Plato's works and those of the Neoplatonists. Emerson was devoted to Taylor's work and used his translations for what he called the "lustres" of his study of Idealism.

just as the heat immediately proceeding from fire is most similar to the heat in the fire; and the light immediately emanating from the sun, to that which the sun essentially contains. Hence, this principle produces many principles proximately from itself.

- 4 | I likewise believe that since all things differ from each other, and are multiplied with their proper differences, each of these multitudes is suspended from its one proper principle. That, in consequence of this, all beautiful things, whether in souls or in bodies, are suspended from one fountain of beauty. That whatever possesses symmetry, and whatever is true, and all principles are in a certain respect connate with the first principle, so far as they are principles, with an appropriate subjection and analogy. That all other principles are comprehended in this first principle, not with interval and multitude, but as parts in the whole, and number in the monad. That it is not a certain principle like each of the rest; for of these, one is the principle of beauty, another of truth, and another of something else, but it is simply principle. Nor is it simply the principle of beings but it is the principle of principles: it being necessary that the characteristic property of principle after the same manner as other things, should not begin from multitude, but should be collected into one monad as a summit, and which is the principle of principles.
- 5 | I believe, therefore, that such things as are produced by the first good in consequence of being connascent with it, do not recede from essential goodness, since they are immovable and unchanged, and are eternally established in the same blessedness. All other natures, however, being

produced by the one good, and many goodnesses, since they fall off from essential goodness, and are not immovably established in the nature of divine goodness, possess on this account the good according to participation.

- 6 | I believe that as all things considered as subsisting causally in this immense principle, are transcendently more excellent than they are when considered as effects proceeding from him; this principle is very properly said to be all things, prior to all; priority denoting exempt transcendency. Just as number may be considered as subsisting occultly in the monad, and the circle in the centre; this occult being the same in each with causal subsistence.
- 7 | I believe that the most proper mode of venerating this great principle of principles is to extend in silence the ineffable parturitions of the soul to its ineffable co-sensation; and that if it be at all lawful to celebrate it, it is to be celebrated as a thrice unknown darkness, as the God of all Gods, and the unity of all unities, as more ineffable than all silence, and more occult than all essence, as holy among the holies, and concealed in its first progeny, the intelligible Gods.
- 8 | I believe that self-subsistent natures are the immediate offspring of this principle, if it be lawful thus to denominate things which ought rather to be called ineffable unfoldings into light from the ineffable.
- 9 | I believe that incorporeal forms or ideas resident in a divine intellect, are the paradigms or models of every thing which has a perpetual subsistence according to nature. That these ideas subsist primarily in the highest intellects, secondarily