

religion of the Medes, a people joined with the Persians proper under Cyrus; and the Magi or priests were one of the seven tribes of the Medes,¹ as the Levites were one of the tribes of Israel. It may then be conjectured that the Magi were the priests of a people who previously conquered or were conquered by the Medes, who had then adopted their religion, as did the Persians after their conquest by or union with the Medes. Cyrus, a semi-Persian, may well have regarded the Medes with some racial distrust, and, while using them as the national priests, would naturally not be devout in his adherence at a time when the two peoples were still mutually jealous. When, later, after the assassination of his son Smerdis (Bardes or Bardija) by the elder son, King Cambyses, and the death of the latter, the Median and Magian interest set up the "false Smerdis," Persian conspirators overthrew the pretender and crowned the Persian Dareios Hystaspis, marking their sense of hostility to the Median and Magian element by a general massacre of Magi.² Those Magi who survived would naturally cultivate the more their priestly influence, the political being thus for the time destroyed; though they seem to have stirred up a Median insurrection in the next century against Dareios II.³ However that may be, Dareios I became a zealous devotee of their creed,⁴ doubtless finding that a useful means of conciliating the Medes in general, who at the outset of his reign seem to have given him much trouble.⁵ The richest part of his dominions⁶ was East-Iran, which appears to have been the original home of the worship of Ahura-Mazda.⁷

Such is the view of the case derivable from Herodotos, who remains the main authority; but recent critics have raised some difficulties. That the Magians were originally a non-Median tribe seems clear; Dr. Tiele (*Outlines*, pp. 163, 165) even decides that they were certainly non-Aryan. Compare Ed. Meyer (*Gesch. des Alt.* i, 530, note, 531, §§ 439, 440), who holds that the Mazdean system was in its nature not national but abstract, and could therefore take in any race. Several modern writers, however (Canon Rawlinson, ed. of Herodotos, i, 426-31; *Five Great Monarchies*, 2nd ed. ii, 345-55, iii, 402-404; Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, Eng. tr. pp. 197, 218-39; Sayce, *Anc. Emp. of the East*, p. 248), represent the Magians as not only anti-Aryan (=anti-Persian), but opposed to the very worship of Ormazd, which is specially associated with their name. It seems difficult to reconcile this view with the

¹ Herod. i, 101.

² *Id.* iii, 79.

³ Cp. Grote, *History of Greece*, pt. ii, ch. 33 (ed. 1888, iii, 442), note.

⁴ Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 505 (§ 417), 542 (§ 451), 617 (§ 515); Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 164.

⁵ Herod. i, 130.

⁶ Cp. Herod. iii, 94, 98; Grote, vol. iii, p. 448.

⁷ Meyer, as cited, i, 505, 530 (§ 439); Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 163, 165.

facts; at least it involves the assumption of two opposed sets of Magi. The main basis for the theory seems to be the allusion in the Behistun inscription of Dareios to some acts of temple-destruction by the usurping Magian Gomates, brother and controller of the pretender Smerdis. (See the inscription translated in *Records of the Past*, i, 111-15.) This Meyer sets aside as an unsettled problem, without inferring that the Magians were anti-Mazdean (cp. § 449 and § 511, *note*). As to the massacre, however, Meyer decides (i, 613) that Herodotos blundered, magnifying the killing of "the Magus" into a slaughter of "the Magi." But this is one of the few points at which Herodotos is corroborated by Ktesias (cp. Grote, iii, 440, *note*). A clue to a solution may perhaps be found in the facts that, while the priestly system remained opposed to all image-worship, Dareios made emblematic images of the Supreme God (Meyer, i, 213, 617) and of Mithra; and that Artaxerxes Mnemon later put an image of Mithra in the royal temple of Susa, besides erecting many images to Anaitis. (Rawlinson, *Five Great Monarchies*, iii, 320-21, 360-61.) There may have been opposing tendencies; the conquest of Babylon being likely to have introduced new elements. The Persian art now arising shows the most marked Assyrian influences.

The religion thus imposed on the Persians seems to have been imageless by reason of the simple defect of art among its cultivators;¹ and to have been monotheistic only in the sense that its chief deity was supreme over all others, including even the great Evil Power, Ahriman (Angra Mainyu). Its God-group included Mithra, once the equal of Ahura-Mazda,² and later more prominent than he;³ as well as a Goddess, Anahita, apparently of Akkadian origin. Before the period of Cyrus, the eastern part of Persia seems to have been but little civilized;⁴ and it was probably there that its original lack of images became an essential element in the doctrine of its priests. As we find it in history, and still more in its sacred book, the Zendavesta, which as we have it represents a late liturgical compilation,⁵ Mazdeism is a priest-made religion rather than the work of one Zarathustra or any one reformer; and its rejection of images, however originated, is to be counted to the credit of its priests, like the pantheism or nominal monotheism of the Mesopotamian, Brahmanic, and Egyptian religions. The original popular faith had clearly been a normal polytheism.⁶ For the rest, the Mazdean ethic

¹ Meyer, i, 528 (§ 438).

² Darmesteter, *The Zendavesta* (S. B. E. ser.), vol. i, introd., p. lx (1st ed.).

³ Rawlinson, *Religions of the Anc. World*, p. 105; Meyer, §§ 417, 450-51.

⁴ Meyer, i, 507 (§ 418).

⁵ Cp. Meyer, i, 506-508; Renan, as cited by him, p. 508; Darmesteter, as cited, cc. iv-ix, 2nd ed.; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 165.

⁶ Meyer, i, 520 (§ 428).

has the usual priestly character as regards the virtue it assigns to sacrifice;¹ but otherwise compares favourably with Brahmanism.

As to this cult being priest-made, see Meyer, i, 523, 540, 541. Tiele (*Outlines*, pp. 167, 178) assumes a special reformation such as is traditionally associated with Zarathustra, holding that either a remarkable man or a sect must have established the monotheistic idea. Meyer (i, 537) holds with M. Darmesteter that Zarathustra is a purely mythical personage, made out of a Storm-God. Dr. Menzies (*Hist. of Relig.* p. 384) holds strongly by his historic actuality. The problem is analogous to those concerning Moses and Buddha; but though the historic case of Mohammed bars a confident decision in the negative, the balance of presumption is strongly against the traditional view. See the author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 286-88.

There is no reason to believe, however, that among the Persian peoples the higher view of things fared any better than elsewhere.² The priesthood, however enlightened it may have been in its inner culture, never slackened the practice of sacrifice and ceremonial; and the worship of subordinate spirits and the propitiation of demons figured as largely in their beliefs as in any other. In time the cult of the Saviour-God Mithra came to the front very much as did that of Jesus later; and in the one case as in the other, despite ethical elements, superstition was furthered. When, still later, the recognition of Ahriman was found to endanger the monotheistic principle, an attempt seems to have been made under the Sassanian dynasty, in our own era, to save it by positing a deity who was father of both Ahura-Mazda and Angra-mainyu;³ but this last slight effort of freethinking speculation came to nothing. Social and political obstacles determined the fate of Magian as of other ancient rationalism.

According to Rawlinson, Zoroastrianism under the Parthian (Arsacide) empire was gradually converted into a complex system of idolatry, involving a worship of ancestors and dead kings (*Sixth Orient. Mon.* p. 399; *Seventh Mon.* pp. 8-9, 56). Gutschmid, however, following Justin (xli, 3, 5-6), pronounces the Parthians zealous followers of Zoroastrianism, dutifully obeying it in the treatment of their dead (*Geschichte Irans von Alexander bis zum Untergang der Arsakiden*, 1888, pp. 57-58)—a law not fully obeyed even by Dareios and his dynasty (Heeren, *Asiatic Nations*, Eng. tr. i, 127). Rawlinson, on the contrary, says the Parthians burned their dead—an abomination

¹ Meyer, i, 524 (§ 433); Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 178; Darmesteter, *Ormazd et Ahriman*, 1877, pp. 7-18.

² Meyer, i, § 450 (p. 541).

³ Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 167. Cp. Lenormant (*Chaldean Magic*, p. 229), who attributes the heresy to immoral Median Magi; and Spiegel (*Avesta*, 1852, i, 271), who considers it a derivation from Babylon.

to Zoroastrians. Certainly the name of the Parthian King Mithradates implies acceptance of Mazdeism. At the same time Rawlinson admits that in Persia itself, under the Parthian dynasty, Zoroastrianism remained pure (*Seventh Mon.* pp. 9-10), and that, even when ultimately it became mixed up with normal polytheism, the dualistic faith and the supremacy of Ormazd were maintained (*Five Monarchies*, 2nd ed. iii, 362-63; cp. Darmesteter, *Zendavesta*, i, lxvi, 2nd ed.).

§ 5. Egypt

The relatively rich store of memorials left by the Egyptian religions yields us hardly any more direct light on the growth of religious rationalism than do those of Mesopotamia, though it supplies much fuller proof that such a growth took place. All that is clear is that the comparison and competition of henotheistic cults there as elsewhere led to a measure of relative skepticism, which took doctrinal shape in a loose monism or pantheism. The language is often monotheistic, but never, in the early period, is polytheism excluded; on the contrary, it is affirmed in the same breath.¹ The alternate ascendancy of different dynasties, with different Gods, forced on the process, which included, as in Babylon, a priestly grouping of deities in families and triads²—the latter arrangement, indeed, being only a return to a primitive African conception.³ It involved further a syncretism or a combining of various Gods into one,⁴ and also an esoteric explanation of the God-myths as symbolical of natural processes, or else of mystical ideas.⁵ There are even evidences of quasi-atheism in the shape of materialistic hymns on Lucretian lines.⁶ At the beginning of the New Kingdom (1500 B.C.) it had been fully established for all the priesthoods that the Sun-God was the one real God, and that it was he who was worshipped in all the others.⁷ He in turn was conceived as a pervading spiritual force, of anthropomorphic character and strong moral bias.⁸ This seems to have been by way of a purification of one pre-eminent compound deity, Amen-Ra, to begin with, whose model was followed in other cults.⁹ "Theocracies of this kind could not have been

¹ Le Page Renouf, *Hibbert Lectures on Relig. of Anc. Egypt*, 2nd ed. p. 92; Wiedemann, *Religion of the Ancient Egyptians*, Eng. tr. 1897, p. 109. Cp. p. 260. Renouf (pp. 93-103) supplies an interesting analysis.

² Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 83; Wiedemann, as cited, p. 103 sq.

³ Cp. Major Glyn Leonard, *The Lower Niger and its Tribes*, 1906, pp. 354, 417, 433.

⁴ Wiedemann, as cited, p. 136.

⁵ Meyer, p. 81 (§ 66); Tiele, *Hist. of the Egypt. Relig.* Eng. tr., pp. 119, 154.

⁶ Le Page Renouf, *Hibbert Lectures*, 2nd ed. p. 240.

⁷ Meyer, *Geschichte des Alten Egyptens*, in Oncken's series, 1877, B. iii, Kap. 3, p. 249; *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 109; Tiele, *Egypt. Relig.* pp. 149, 151, 157; Maspero, *Hist. anc. des peuples de l'orient*, 4^e ed., pp. 278-80; Le Page Renouf, as cited, pp. 215-30; Wiedemann, pp. 12, 13, 301; Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, Eng. tr. 1907, p. 57.

⁸ Erman, pp. 59, 60.

⁹ Tiele, *Egypt. Rel.* pp. 153, 155, 156.

formed unconsciously. Men knew perfectly well that they were taking a great step in advance of their fathers."¹ There had occurred, in short, among the educated and priestly class a considerable development, going on through many centuries, alike in philosophical and in ethical thought; the ethics of the Egyptian "Book of the Dead" being quite as altruistic as those of any portion of the much later Christian Gospels.² Such a development could arise only in long periods of peace and law-abiding life; though it is found to be accelerated after the Persian conquest, which would force upon the Egyptian priesthood new comparisons and accommodations.³ And yet all this was done "without ever sacrificing the least particle of the beliefs of the past."⁴ The popular polytheism, resting on absolute ignorance, was indestructible; and the most philosophic priests seem never to have dreamt of unsettling it, though, as we shall see, a masterful king did.

An eminent Egyptologist has written that, "whatever literary treasures may be brought to light in the future as the result of excavations in Egypt, it is most improbable that we shall ever receive from that country any ancient Egyptian work which can properly be classed among the literature of atheism or freethought; the Egyptian might be more or less religious according to his nature and temperament, but, *judging from the writings of his priests and teachers which are now in our hands*, the man who was without religion and God in some form or other was most rare, if not unknown."⁵ It is not clear what significance the writer attaches to this statement. Unquestionably the mass of the Egyptians were always naïf believers in all that was given them as religion; and among the common people even the minds which, as elsewhere, varied from the norm of credulity would be too much cowed by the universal parade of religion to impugn it; while their ignorance and general crudity of life would preclude coherent critical thought on the subject. But to conclude that among the priesthood and the upper classes there was never any "freethinking" in the sense of disbelief in the popular and official religion, even up to the point of pantheism or atheism, is to ignore the general lesson of culture history elsewhere. Necessarily there was no "literature of atheism or freethought." Such literature could have no public, and, as a

¹ Tiele, p. 157.

² Brugsch, *Religion und Mythologie der alten Aegypter*, 1884; 1 Hälfte, pp. 90-91; Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, Eng. trans. i, 395-97; Tiele, pp. 226-30; Erman, pp. 71, 103-105.

³ Cp. Wiedemann, p. 302.

⁴ Tiele, pp. 114, 118, 154. Cp. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 101-102 (§ 85). Wiedemann, p. 260.

⁵ Dr. Wallis Budge, *Egyptian Magic*, 1899, *end.*

menace to the wealth and status of the priesthood, would have brought death on the writer. But in such a multitudinous priesthood there must have been, at some stages, many who realized the mummerly of the routine religion, and some who transcended the commonplaces of theistic thought. From the former, if not from the latter, would come esoteric explanations for the benefit of the more intelligent of the laity of the official class, who could read; and it is idle to decide that deeper unbelief was privately "unknown."

It is contended, as against the notion of an esoteric and an exoteric doctrine, that the scribes "did not, as is generally supposed, keep their new ideas carefully concealed, so as to leave to the multitude nothing but coarse superstitions. The contrary is evident from a number of inscriptions which can be read by anybody, and from books which anyone can buy."¹ But the assumption that "anyone" could read or buy books in ancient Egypt is a serious misconception. Even in our own civilization, where "anyone" can presumably buy freethought journals or works on anthropology and the history of religions, the mass of the people are so placed that only by chance does such knowledge reach them; and multitudes are so little cultured that they would pass it by with uncomprehending indifference were it put before them. In ancient Egypt, however, the great mass of the people could not even read; and no man thought of teaching them.

This fact alone goes far to harmonize the ancient Greek testimonies as to the existence of an esoteric teaching in Egypt with Tiele's contention to the contrary. See the *pros* and *cons* set forth and confusedly pronounced upon by Professor Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, Eng. tr. pp. 400-401. We know from Diodorus (i, 81), what we could deduce from our other knowledge of Egyptian conditions, that, apart from the priests and the official class, no one received any literary culture save in some degree the higher grades of artificers, who needed some little knowledge of letters for their work in connection with monuments, sepulchres, mummy-cases, and so forth. Cp. Maspero, *Hist. anc. des peuples de l'orient*, p. 285. Even the images of the higher Gods were shown to the people only on festival-days (Meyer *Gesch. des Alterthums*, i, 82).

The Egyptian civilization was thus, through all its stages, obviously conditioned by its material basis, which in turn ultimately determined its polity, there being no higher contemporary civilization

¹ Tiele, p. 157. Cp. p. 217.

to lead it otherwise. An abundant, cheap, and regular food supply maintained in perpetuity a dense and easily-exploited population, whose lot through thousands of years was toil, ignorance, political subjection, and a primitive mental life.¹ For such a population general ideas had no light and no comfort; for them was the simple human worship of the local natural Gods or the presiding Gods of the kingdom, alike confusedly conceived as great powers, figured often as some animal, which for the primeval mind signified indefinite capacity and unknown possibility of power and knowledge.² Myths and not theories, magic and not ethics, were their spiritual food, albeit their peaceful animal lives conformed sufficiently to their code. And the life-conditions of the mass determined the policy of priest and king. The enormous priestly revenue came from the people, and the king's power rested on both orders.

As to this revenue see Diodorus Siculus, i, 73; and Erman, *Handbook of Egyptian Religion*, Eng. tr. 1907, p. 71. According to Diodorus, a third of the whole land of the kingdom was allotted to the priesthoods. About a sixth of the whole land seems to have been given to the Gods by Ramessu III alone, besides 113,000 slaves, 490,000 cattle, and immense wealth of other kinds (Flinders Petrie, *Hist. of Egypt*, iii (1905), 154-55). The bulk of the possessions here enumerated seems to have gone to the temple of Amen at Thebes and that of the Sun-God at Heliopolis (Erman, as cited). It is to be noted, however, that the priestly order included all the physicians, lawyers, clerks, schoolmasters, sculptors, painters, land measurers, drug sellers, conjurers, diviners, and undertakers. Wilkinson, *Ancient Egyptians*, ed. Birch, 1878, i, 157-58; Sharpe, *Egypt. Mythol.* p. 26; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, § 68. "The sacred domains included herds of cattle, birds, fishermen, serfs, and temple servants" (Flinders Petrie, as cited, iii, 42). When the revenues assigned for a temple of Seti I were found to be misappropriated, and the building stopped, his son, Ramessu II, assigned a double revenue for the completion of the work and the worship (*id.*). Like the later priesthood of Christendom, that of Egypt forged documents to establish claims to revenue (*id.* p. 69). Captured cattle in great quantities were bestowed on temples of Amen (*id.* p. 149), whose priests were especially grasping (*id.* p. 153). Thus in the one reign of Ramessu III they received fifty-six towns of Egypt and nine of Syria and 62,000 serfs (*id.* p. 155).

This was fully seen when King Akhunaton (otherwise Echnaton, or Icheniton, or Akhunaton, or Akhunaten, or Chuenaten, or Khu-en-

¹ Cp. Maspero, as cited, pp. 274-76.

² Meyer, i, 72.

aten, or Kku-n-aten, or Khouniatonou, or Khounaton!) = Amehetep or Amun-hotep (or Amenophis) IV, moved by monotheistic zeal, departed so far from the customary royal policy as to put under the ban all deities save that he had chosen for himself, repudiating the God-name Amen in his own name, and making one from that of his chosen Sun-God, Aten ("the sun's disk") or Aton or Atonou¹ or Iton² (latterly held to be = the Syrian Adon, "the Lord," symbolized by the sun's disk). There is reason to think that his was not a mere Sun-worship, but the cult of a deity, "Lord of the Disk," who looked through the sun's disk as through a window.³ In any interpretation, however, the doctrine was wholly unacceptable to a priesthood whose multitudinous shrines its success would have emptied. Of all the host of God-names, by one account only that of the old Sun-God Ra-Harmachis was spared,⁴ as being held identical with that of Aten; and by one account⁵ the disaffection of priests and people rose to the point of open rebellion. At length Akhunaton, "Glory of the Disk," as he elected to name himself, built for himself and his God a new capital city in Middle Egypt, Akhet-Aten (or Khut-Aten), the modern Tell-el-Amarna, where he assembled around him a society after his own heart, and carried on his Aten-worship, while his foreign empire was crumbling. The "Tell-el-Amarna tablets" were found in the ruins of his city, which was deserted a generation after his death. Though the king enforced his will while he lived, his movement "bore no fruit whatever," his policy being reversed after his family had died out, and his own monuments and capital city razed to the ground by orthodox successors.⁶ In the same way the earlier attempt of the alien Hyksos to suppress the native polytheism and image-worship had come to nothing.⁷

The history of Akhunaton is established by the later Egyptology. Sharpe makes no mention of it, though the point had been discussed from 1839 onwards. Cp. Lepsius, *Letters from Egypt*, etc., Bohn trans. 1853, p. 27; and Nott and Gliddon's *Types of Mankind*, 1854, p. 147, and *Indigenous Races of the Earth*, 1857, pp. 116-17, in both of which places

¹ Maspero's spelling.

² Von Bissing's spelling.

³ De Garis Davies, *The Tombs of Amarna*.

⁴ Maspero (*Hist. anc. des peuples de l'orient*, ed. 1905, p. 251) says he respected also Osiris and Horus.

⁵ Brugsch, *Egypt under the Pharaohs*, ed. 1891, p. 216. Maspero (as cited, p. 250) recognizes no such revolt.

⁶ Maspero, *Hist. anc. de l'orient*, 7e éd. pp. 248-54; Brugsch, *Hist. of Egypt under the Pharaohs*, Eng. trans. ed. 1891, ch. x; Meyer, *Geschichte des alten Aegyptens*, B. iii, Kap. 4, 5; *Gesch. des Alterthums*, i, 271-74; Tiele, pp. 161-65; Flinders Petrie, *History of Egypt*, iii (1905), 10; Wiedemann, pp. 35-39; Erman, pp. 61-70; L. W. King and H. H. Hall, *Egypt and Western Asia in the Light of Recent Discoveries*, 1907, pp. 383-87; F. W. von Bissing, *Geschichte Aegyptens in Umriss*, 1904, pp. 52-53.

⁷ Tiele, p. 144; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt. i*, 135.

will be found the king's portrait. See last reference for the idle theory that he had been emasculated, as to which the confutation by Wiedemann (*Aegyptische Geschichte*, p. 397, cited by Budge, *Hist. of Egypt*, 1902, iv, 128) is sufficient. In point of fact, he figures in the monuments as father of three or seven children (Wiedemann, *Rel. of Anc. Eg.* p. 37; Erman, p. 69; Budge, iv, 123, 127).

Dispute still reigns as to the origin of the cult to which he devoted himself. A theory of its nature and derivation, based on that of Mr. J. H. Breasted (*History of Egypt*, 1906, p. 396), is set forth in an article by Mr. A. E. P. Weigall on "Religion and Empire in Ancient Egypt" in the *Quarterly Review*, Jan. 1909. On this view Aten or Aton is simply Adon = "the Lord" — a name ultimately identified with Adonis, the Syrian Sun-God and Vegetation-God. The king's grandfather was apparently a Syrian, presumably of royal lineage; and Queen Tii or Thiy, the king's mother, who with her following had wrought a revolution against the priesthood of Amen, brought him up as a devotee of her own faith. On her death he became more and more fanatical, getting out of touch with people and priesthood, so that "his empire fell to pieces rapidly." Letters still exist (among the Tell-el-Amarna tablets) which were sent by his generals in Asia, vainly imploring help. He died at the age of twenty-eight; and if the body lately found, and supposed to be his, is really so, his malady was water on the brain.

Mr. Breasted, finding that Akhunaton's God is described by him in inscriptions as "the father and the mother of all that he made," ranks the cult very high in the scale of theism. Mr. Weigall (art. cited, p. 60; so also Budge, *Hist.* iv, 125) compares a hymn of the king's with Ps. civ., 24 sq., and praises it accordingly. The parallel is certainly close, but the document is not thereby certificated as philosophic. On the strength of the fact that Akhunaton "had dreamed that the Aton religion would bind the nations together," Mr. Weigall credits him with harbouring "an illusive ideal towards which, thirty-two centuries later, mankind is still struggling in vain" (p. 66). The ideal of subjugating the nations to one God, cherished later by Jews, and still later by Moslems, is hardly to be thus identified with the modern ideal of international peace. Brugsch, in turn, credits the king with having "willingly received the teaching about the one God of Light," while admitting that Aten simply meant the sun's disk (*Hist. of Egypt*, 1-vol. ed. p. 216).

Maspero, again, declares Tii to have been an Egyptian of old stock, and the God "Atonou" to have been the deity of her tribe (*Hist. anc.*, as cited, p. 249); and he pronounces the cult probably the most ancient variant of the religions of Ra (p. 250). Messrs. King and Hall, who also do not accept the theory of a Syrian derivation, coincide with Messrs. Breasted and Weigall

in extolling Akhunaton's creed. In a somewhat summary fashion they pronounce (work cited, p. 383) that, "given an ignorance of the true astronomical character of the sun, we see how eminently rational a religion" was this. The conception of a moving window in the heavens, which appears to be the core of it, seems rather a darkening than a development of the "philosophical speculations of the priests of the Sun at Heliopolis," from which it is held by Messrs. King and Hall to have been derived. Similarly ill-warranted is the decision (*id.* p. 384) that in Akhunaton's heresy "we see.....the highest attitude [? altitude] to which religious ideas had attained before the days of the Hebrew prophets." Alike in India and in Egypt, pantheistic ideas of a larger scope than his or those of the Hebrew prophets had been attained before Akhunaton's time.

Dr. E. A. Wallis Budge, on the other hand, points out that the cult of the Aten is really an ancient one in Egypt, and was carried on by Thothmes III, father of Amen-hetep II, a century before Akhunaton (Amen-hetep IV), its "original home" being Heliopolis (*History of Egypt*, 1902, iv, 48, 119). So also von Bissing, *Gesch. Aeg. in Umriss*, p. 52 (reading "Iton"). Rejecting the view that "Aten" is only a form of "Adon," Dr. Budge pronounces that "as far as can be seen now the worship of Aten was something like a glorified materialism"—whatever that may be—"which had to be expounded by priests who performed ceremonies similar to those which belonged to the old Heliopolitan sun-worship, without any connection whatsoever with the worship of Yahweh; and a being of the character of the Semitic God Adôn had no place in it anywhere." Further, he considers that it "contained no doctrines on the unity or oneness of Aten similar to those which are found in the hymns to Rā, and none of the beautiful ideas on the future life with which we are familiar from the hymns and other compositions in the *Book of the Dead*" (*Ib.* pp. 120-21).

By Prof. Flinders Petrie Queen Tii or Thiy is surmised to have been of Armenian origin (see Budge, iv, 96-98, as to her being "Mesopotamian"); and Prof. Petrie, like Mr. Breasted, has inferred that she brought with her the cult of which her son became the devotee. (So also Brugsch, p. 214.) Messrs. King and Hall recognize that the cult had made some headway before Akhunaton took it up; but deny that there is any reason for supposing Queen Tii to have been of foreign origin; adding: "It seems undoubted that the Aten cult was a development of pure Egyptian religious thought." Certainty on such an issue seems hardly possible; but it may be said, as against the theory of a foreign importation, that there is no evidence whatever of any high theistic cult of Adonis in Syria at the period in question. Adonis was primarily a Vegetation-God; and the older view that Aten simply means "the sun's disk"

is hardly disposed of. It is noteworthy that under Akhunaton's patronage Egyptian sculpture enjoyed a term of freedom from the paralyzing convention which reigned before and after (King and Hall, as cited, pp. 383-84). This seems to have been the result of the innovating taste of the king (Budge, *Hist.* iv, 124-26).

As the centuries lapsed the course of popular religion was rather downward than upward, if it can be measured by the multiplication of superstitions.¹ When under the Ramesside dynasty the high-priests of Amen became by marriage with the royal family the virtual rulers, sacerdotalism went from bad to worse.² The priests, who held the allegorical key to mythology, seem to have been the main multipliers of magic and fable, mummary, ceremonial, and symbol; and they jealously guarded their specialty against lay competition.³ Esoteric and exoteric doctrine flourished in their degrees side by side,⁴ the instructed few apparently often accepting or acting upon both; and primitive rites all the while flourished on the level of the lowest savagery,⁵ though the higher ethical teaching even improves, as in India.

Conflicts, conquests, and changes of dynasties seem to have made little difference in the life of the common people.⁶ Religion was the thread by which any ruler could lead them; and after the brief destructive outbreak of Cambyses,⁷ himself at first tolerant, the Persian conquerors allowed the old faiths to subsist, caring only, like their predecessors, to prevent strife between the cults which would not tolerate each other.⁸ The Ptolemies are found adopting and using the native cults as the native kings had done ages before them;⁹ and in the learned Greek-speaking society created by their dynasty at Alexandria there can have been at least as little concrete belief as prevailed in the priesthood of the older civilization. It developed a pantheistic philosophy which ultimately, in the hands of Plotinus, compares very well with that of the Upanishads and of later European systems. But this was a hot-

¹ "We do not find magic predominant [in the tales] until the Ptolemaic age. At that time the physical magic of the early times reappears in full force" (Petrie, *Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt*, 1898, p. 29. Cp. Maspero, p. 286; Budge, *Egyptian Magic*, pp. 64, 233).

² Petrie, *Hist.* iii, 174-75, 180.

³ Tiele, pp. 180-82; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 140-43.

⁴ Tiele, pp. 184-85, 196, 217.

⁵ Herodotos, ii, 48, 60-64, etc. Cp. Maspero, p. 286.

⁶ "The Osiride and Cosmic Gods rose in importance as time went on, while the Abstract Gods continually sank on the whole. This agrees with the general idea that the imported Gods have to yield their position gradually to the older and more deeply-rooted faiths" (Petrie, as last cited, p. 95).

⁷ The familiar narrative of Herodotos is put in doubt by the monuments. Sayce, *Ancient Empires*, p. 246. But cp. Meyer, i, 611 (§ 508).

⁸ Tiele, p. 158.

⁹ See figures 209, 212, 221, 235, 242, 249, 250, in Sharpe's *Hist. of Egypt*, 7th ed.

house flower; and in the open world outside, where Roman rule had broken the power of the ancient priesthood and Greek immigration had overlaid the native element, Christianity found an easy entrance, and in a declining society flourished at its lowest level.¹ The ancient ferment, indeed, produced many stirrings of relative freethought in the form of Christian heresies to be noted hereafter; one of the most notable being that of Arius, who, like his antagonists Athanasius, was an Alexandrian. But the cast of mind which elaborated the dogma of the Trinity is as directly an outcome of Egyptian culture-history as that which sought to rationalize the dogma by making the popular deity a created person;² and the long and manifold internecine struggles of the sects were the due duplication of the older strifes between the worshippers of the various sacred animals in the several cities.³ In the end the entire population was but so much clay to take the impress of the Arab conquerors, with their new fanatic monotheism standing for the minimum of rational thought.

For the rest, the higher forms of the ancient religion had been able to hold their own till they were absolutely suppressed, with the philosophic schools, by the Byzantine government, which at the same time marked the end of the ancient civilization by destroying or scattering the vast collection of books in the Serapeion, annihilating at once the last pagan cult and the stored treasure of pagan culture. With that culture too, however, there had been associated to the last the boundless credulity which had so long kept it company. In the second century of our era, under the Antonines, we have Apuleius telling of Isis worshipped as "Nature, parent of things, mistress of all elements, the primordial birth of the ages, highest of divinities, queen of departed spirits, first of the heavenly ones, the single manifestation of all Gods and Goddesses," who rules all things in earth and heaven, and who stands for the sole deity worshipped throughout the world under many names;⁴ the while her worshipper cherishes all manner of the wildest superstitions, which even the subtle philosophy of the Alexandrian Neo-Platonic school did not discard. All alike, with the machinery of exorcism, were passed on to the worship of the Christian Queen of Heaven, leaving out only the pantheism; and when that worship in turn was overthrown, the One God of Islam enrolled in his train the

¹ Cp. Sharpe, ii, 287-95; Budge, *Egyptian Magic*, p. 64.

² Compare the orthodox view of Bishop Westcott, *Essays in the History of Religious Thought in the West*, 1891, pp. 197-200.

³ These fights had not ceased even in the time of Julian (Sharpe, ii, 280). Cp. Juvenal, *Sat.* xv, 33 sq.

⁴ *Metamorphoses*, B. xi.

same host of ancient hallucinations.¹ The fatality of circumstance was supreme.

§ 6. *Phoenicia*

Of the inner workings of thought in the Phoenician religion we know even less, directly, than can be gathered as to any other ancient system of similar notoriety,² so completely did the Roman conquest of Carthage, and the Macedonian conquest of Tyre and Sidon, blot out the literary remains of their peoples. Yet there are some indirect clues of a remarkable sort.

It is hardly to be doubted, in the first place, that Punic speculation took the same main lines as the early thought of Egypt and Mesopotamia, whose cultures, mixing in Syria as early as the fifteenth century B.C., had laid the basis of the later Phoenician civilization.³ The simple fact that among the Syro-Phoenicians was elaborated the alphabet adopted by all the later civilizations of the West almost implies a special measure of intellectual progress. We can indeed trace the normal movement of syncretism in the cults, and the normal tendency to improve their ethics. The theory of an original pure monotheism⁴ is no more tenable here than anywhere else; we can see that the general designation of the chief God of any city, usually recognizable as a Sun-God, by a title rather than a name,⁵ though it pointed to a general worship of a pre-eminent power, in no sense excluded a belief in minor powers, ranking even as deities. It did not do so in the admittedly polytheistic period; and it cannot therefore be supposed to have done so previously.

The chief Phoenician Gods, it is admitted, were everywhere called by one or several of the titles Baal (Lord), Ram or Rimmon (High), Melech or Molech (King), Melkarth (King of the City), Eliun (Supreme), Adonai (Lord), Bel-Samin (Lord of Heaven), etc. (Cp. Rawlinson, *History of Phoenicia*, p. 231; Tiele, *Hist. comp. des anc. relig.*, etc., Fr. tr. 1882, ch. iii, pp. 281-87; *Outlines*, p. 82; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 246, and art. "PHOENICIA" in *Encyc. Biblica*, iii, 3742-5; Sayce, *Ancient Empires*, p. 200.) The just inference is that the Sun-God was generally worshipped, the sun being for the Semitic peoples the pre-eminent Nature-power. "He alone of all the Gods is by Philo explained not as a deified man, but as the sun, who had been invoked from the earliest times" (Meyer, last cit.). (All Gods were not Baals: the division between

¹ Cp. Lane, *Manners and Customs of the Modern Egyptians*, passim.

² Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 232-33.

⁴ Put by Canon Rawlinson, *History of Phoenicia*, 1889, p. 321.

⁵ As to the universality of this tendency, see Meyer, ii, 97.

³ Meyer, i, 237.

them and lesser powers corresponded somewhat, as Tiele notes, to that between Theoi and Daimones with the Greeks, and Ases and Vanes with the old Scandinavians. So in Babylonia and India the Bels and Asuras were marked off from lesser deities.) The fact that the Western Semites thus carried with them the worship of their chief deities in all their colonies would seem to make an end of the assumption (Gomme, *Ethnology of Folklore*, p. 68; Menzies, *History of Religion*, pp. 284, 250) that there is something specially "Aryan" in the "conception of Gods who could and did accompany the tribes wheresoever they travelled." Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* iii, 169.

The worship of the Baal, however, being that of a special Nature-power, cannot in early any more than in later times have been monotheistic. What happened was a preponderance of the double cult of the God and Goddess, Baal and Ashtoreth, as in the unquestionably polytheistic period (Rawlinson, p. 323; Tiele, *Hist. Comp.*, as cited, p. 319).

Apart from this normal tendency to identify Gods called by the same title (a state of things which, however, in ancient as in modern Catholic countries, tended at the same time to set up special adoration of a given image), there is seen in the later religion of Phoenicia a spirit of syncretism which operated in a manner the reverse of that seen in later Jewry. In the latter case the national God was ultimately conceived, however fanatically, as universal, all others being negated: in commercial Phoenicia, many foreign Gods were adopted,¹ the tendency being finally to conceive them as all manifestations of one Power.² And there is reason to suppose that in the cosmopolitan world of the Phoenician cities the higher intelligence reached a yet more subversive, though still fallacious, theory of religion. The pretended ancient Phoenician cosmogony of Sanchoniathon, preserved by Eusebius,³ while worthless as a record of the most ancient beliefs,⁴ may be taken as representing views current not only in the time and society of Philo of Byblos (100 C.E.), who had pretended to translate it, but in a period considerably earlier. This cosmogony is, as Eusebius complains, deliberately atheistic; and it further systematically explains away all God stories as being originally true of remarkable men.

Where this primitive form of atheistic rationalism originated we cannot now tell. But it was in some form current before the time of the Greek Evêmeros, who systematically developed it about

¹ Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, i, 251, § 209; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 84; *Histoire comparée des anciennes religions*, Fr. tr. pp. 320-21.

² Rawlinson, *Phoenicia*, p. 340; Sayce, *Anc. Emp.* p. 204; Menzies, *Hist. of Relig.* p. 168.

³ *Præparatio Evangelica*, B. i, c. 9-10.

⁴ Meyer, i, 249.

300 B.C.; for in a monotheistic application it more or less clearly underlies the redaction of much of the Hebrew Bible, where both patriarchal and regal names of the early period are found to be old God-names; and where the Sun-God Samson is made a "judge"¹—having originally been the Judge-God. In the Byblian writer, however, the purpose is not monotheistic, but atheistic; and the problem is whether this or that was the earlier development of the method. The natural presumption seems to be that the Hebrew adaptors of the old mythology used an already applied method, as the Christian Fathers later used the work of Evêmeros; and the citation from Thallos by Lactantius² suggests that the method had been applied in Chaldea, as it was spontaneously applied by the Greek epic poets who made memorable mortals out of the ancient deities Odysseus and Aeneas,³ Helen, Castor and Pollux, Achilles, and many more.⁴ It is in any case credible enough that among the much-travelling Phoenicians, with their open pantheon, an atheistic Evêmerism was thought out by the skeptical types before Evêmeros; and that the latter really drew his principles from Phoenicia.⁵ At any rate, they were there received, doubtless by a select few, as a means of answering the customary demand for "something in place of" the rejected Gods. Concerning the tradition that an ancient Phoenician, Moschus, had sketched an atomic theory, we may again say that, though there is no valid evidence for the statement, it counts for something as proof that the Phoenicians had an old repute for rationalism.

The Byblian cosmogony may be conceived as an atheistic refinement on those of Babylon, adopted by the Jews. It connects with the theogony ascribed to Hesiod (which has Asiatic aspects), in that both begin with Chaos, and the Gods of Hesiod are born later. But whereas in Hesiod Chaos brings forth Erebus and Night (Eros being causal force), and Night bears Æther and Day to Erebus, while Earth virginally brings forth Heaven (Uranos) and the Sea, and then bears the first Gods in union with Heaven, the Phoenician fragment proceeds from black chaos and wind, after long ages, through Eros or Desire, to a kind of primeval slime, from which arise first

¹ Cp. Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, p. 159, as to Persian methods of the same kind.

² *Div. Inst.* i, 23.

³ E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 104, 105.

⁴ As to Greek instances, cp. Bury, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. 1906, pp. 53, 55, 65, 92, 104; and as to Roman, see Ettore Pais, *Ancient Legends of Roman History*, Eng. trans. 1906, ch. x, where it is shown that Virginia and Lucretia are primarily ancient Latin divinities; and (ch. vii) that both Numa and Servius Tullius are probably in the same case, Servius Rex being in all likelihood the *servus rex Nemorensis* of the Arician grove, round whom turns the research of Dr. J. G. Frazer's *Golden Bough*; while *tullius* is an old Latin word for a spring. See also ch. iv as to Acca Larentia, another Goddess reduced by the historians to the status of a *hetaira*, as was Flora. Horatius Cocles (*id.* p. 157) is also a God reduced to a hero.

⁵ So Sayce, *Ancient Empires*, p. 204.

animals without intelligence, who in turn produce some with intelligence. The effort to expel Deity must have been considerable, for sun and moon and stars seem to arise uncreated, and the sun's action spontaneously produces further developments. The first man and his wife are created by male and female principles of wind, and their offspring proceed to worship the Sun, calling him Beel Samin. The other Gods are explained as eminent mortals deified after their death. See the details in Cory's *Ancient Fragments*, Hodges' ed. pp. 1-22. As to Moschus, cp. Renouvier, *Manuel de philos. ancienne*, 1844, i, 238; and Mosheim's ed. of Cudworth's *Intellectual System*, Harrison's tr. i, 20; also Cudworth's *Eternal and Immutable Morality*, same ed. iii, 548. On the general question of Phoenician rationalism, compare Pausanias's account (vii, 23) of his discussion with a Sidonian, who explained that Apollo was simply the sun, and his son Æsculapius simply the healing art.

At the same time there are signs even in Phoenician worship of an effort after an ethical as well as an intellectual purification of the common religion. To call "the" Phoenician religion "impure and cruel"¹ is to obscure the fact that in all civilizations certain types and cults vary from the norm. In Phoenicia as in Israel there were humane anti-sensualists who either avoided or impugned the sensual and the cruel cults around them; as well as ascetics who stood by human sacrifice while resisting sexual licence. That the better types remained the minority is to be understood in terms of the balance of the social and cultural forces of their civilization, not of any racial bias or defect, intellectual or moral.

The remark of E. Meyer (*Gesch. des Alt.* i, 211, § 175), that an ethical or mystical conception of the God was "entirely alien" to "the Semite," reproduces the old fallacy of definite race-characters; and Mr. Sayce, in remarking that "the immorality performed in the name of religion was the invention of the Semitic race itself" (*Anc. Emp.* p. 203; contrast Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 83), after crediting the Semitic race with an ethical faculty alien to the Akkadian (above, p. 66), suggests another phase of the same error. There is nothing special to the Semites in the case save degree of development, similar phenomena being found in many savage religions, in Mexico, and in India. (Meyer in later passages and in his article on Ba'al in Roscher's *Lexikon* modifies his position as to Semitic *versus* other religions.) On the other hand, there was a chaste as well as an unchaste worship of the Phoenician Ashtoreth. Ashtoreth Karnaim, or Tanit, the Virgin, as opposed to Atergates and

¹ Sayce, *Ancient Empires*, p. 202.

Annit, the Mother-Goddesses, had the characteristics of Artemis. Cp. Tiele, *Religion comparée*, as cited, pp. 318-19; Menzies, *History of Religion*, pp. 159, 168-71; Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, i, 91; Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, pp. 292, 458. [In Rome, Venus Cloacina, sometimes ignorantly described as a Goddess of Vice, was anciently "the Goddess of chaste and holy matrimony" (Ettore Pais, *Ancient Legends of Roman History*, Eng. tr. 1906, p. 199)]. For the rest, the cruelty of the Phoenician cults, in the matter of human sacrifice, was fully paralleled among the early Teutons. See Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 199; and the author's *Pagan Christs*, Pt. ii, ch. i, § 4.

§ 7. Ancient China

Of all the ancient Asiatic systems that of China yields us the first clear biographical trace of a practical rationalist, albeit a rationalist stamped somewhat by Chinese conservatism. Confucius (*Kung-fu-tse* = Kung the Master) is a tangible person, despite some mythic accretions, whereas Zarathustra and Buddha are at best but doubtful possibilities, and even Lao-Tsze (said to have been born 604 B.C.) is somewhat elusive.

Before Confucius (551-478 B.C.), it is evident, there had been a slackening in religious belief among the governing classes. It is claimed for the Chinese, as for so many other races, that they had anciently a "pure" monotheism;¹ but the ascription, as usual, is misleading. They saw in the expanse of heaven the "Supreme" Power, not as a result of reflection on the claims of other deities among other races, but simply as expressing their primordial tribal recognition of that special God, before contact with the God-ideas of other peoples. Monotheistic in the modern sense they could not be. Concerning them as concerning the Semites we may say that the claim of a primary monotheism for them "is also true of all primitive totemistic or clannish communities. A man is born into a community with such a divine head, and the worship of that God is the only one possible to him."² Beside the belief in the Heaven-God, there stood beliefs in heavenly and earthly spirits, and in ancestors, who were worshipped with altars.³

The remark of Professor Legge (*Religions of China*, p. 11), that the relation of the names Shang-Ti = Supreme Ruler, and T'ien = the sky, "has kept the monotheistic element prominent in the religion proper of China down to the present time,"

¹ Legge, *Religions of China*, 1880, pp. 11, 16; Douglas, *Confucianism and Taouism*, 1879, pp. 12, 82.

² Menzies, *History of Religion*, p. 158.

³ Legge, pp. 12, 19, 23, 25, 26; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 27; Douglas, p. 79.

may serve to avert disputation. It may be agreed that the Chinese were anciently "monotheists" in the way in which they are at present, when they worship spirits innumerable. When, however, Professor Legge further says (p. 16) that the ancient monotheism five thousand years ago was "in danger of being corrupted" by nature worship and divination, he puts in doubt the meaning of the other expression above cited. He states several times (pp. 46, 51, 52) that the old monotheism remains; but speaks (p. 84) of the mass of the people as "cut off from the worship of God for themselves." And see p. 91 as to ancestor-worship by the Emperor. Tiele (*Outlines*, p. 27) in comparison somewhat overstates the polytheistic aspect of the Chinese religion in his opening definition; but he adds the essential facts. Dr. Legge's remark that "the idea of revelation did not shock" the ancient Chinese (p. 13) is obscure. He is dealing with the ordinary Akkado-Babylonian astrology. Pauthier, on the contrary (*Chine Moderne*, 1853, p. 250), asserts that in China "no doctrine has ever been put forth as revealed."

As regards ancestral worship, we have record of a display of disregard for it by the lords of Lû in Confucius's time;¹ and the general attitude of Confucius himself, religious only in his adherence to old ceremonies, is incompatible with a devout environment. It has been disputed whether he makes a "skeptical denial of any relation between man and a living God";² but an authority who disputes this complains that his "avoiding the personal name of Ti, or God, and only using the more indefinite term Heaven," suggests "a coldness of temperament and intellect in the matter of religion."³ He was, indeed, above all things a moralist; and concerning the spirits in general he taught that "To give one's self to the duties due to men, and, while respecting spiritual beings, to keep aloof from them, may be called wisdom."⁴ He would never express an opinion concerning the fate of souls,⁵ or encourage prayer;⁶ and in his redaction of the old records he seems deliberately to have eliminated mythological expressions.⁷ "I would say," writes Dr. Legge (who never forgets to be a missionary), "that he was unreligious rather than irreligious; yet, by the coldness of his temperament and intellect in this matter, his influence is unfavourable to the development of true religious feeling among the Chinese people generally, and he prepared the way for the speculations of

¹ Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 142.

² See the citations made by Legge, p. 5.

³ *Id.* p. 139; cp. Menzies, p. 109.

⁴ Legge, p. 140; cp. p. 117; Douglas, p. 81.

⁵ Legge, *Religions*, p. 117; *Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 4th ed. p. 101; Douglas, p. 68; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 29.

⁶ Tiele, p. 31; Legge, *Religions*, p. 143.

⁷ Tiele, pp. 31-32; Douglas, pp. 68, 84. But cp. Legge, *Religions*, pp. 123, 127.

the literati of medieval and modern times, which have exposed them to the charge of atheism."¹

The view that there was a very early "arrest of growth" in the Chinese religion (Menziès, *History of Religion*, p. 108), "before the ordinary developments of *mythology* and doctrine, priesthood," etc., had "time to take place," is untenable as to the mythology. The same writer had previously spoken (p. 107) of the Chinese system before Confucius as having "already parted with all savage and irrational elements." That Confucius would seek to eliminate these seems likely enough, though the documentary fact is disputed.

In the elder contemporary of Confucius, Lao-Tsze ("Old Philosopher"), the founder of Taouism, may be recognized another and more remarkable early freethinker of a different stamp, in some essential respects much less conservative, and in intellectual cast markedly more original. Where Confucius was an admirer and student of antiquity, Lao-Tsze expressly put such concern aside,² seeking a law of life within himself, in a manner suggestive of much Indian and other Oriental thought. So far as our records go, he is the first known philosopher who denied that men could form an idea of deity, that being the infinite; and he avowedly evolved, by way of makeshift, the idea of a primordial and governing Reason (*Tau*), closely analogous to the *Logos* of later Platonism. Since the same idea is traceable in more primitive forms alike in the Babylonian and Brahmanic systems,³ it is arguable that he may have derived it from one of these sources; but the problem is very obscure. In any case, his system is one of rationalistic pantheism.⁴

His personal relation to Confucius was that of a self-poised sage, impatient of the other's formalism and regard to prescription and precedent. Where they compare is in their avoidance of supernaturalism, and in the sometimes singular rationality of their views of social science; in which latter respect, however, they were the recipients and transmitters of an already classic tradition.⁵ Thus both had a strong bias to conservatism; and in Lao-Tsze it went the length of prescribing that the people should not be instructed.⁶ Despite this, it is not going too far to say that no ancient people appears to have produced sane thinkers and scientific

¹ Legge, *Life and Teachings*, pp. 100-101.

² Douglas, pp. 179, 184.

³ See the author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 214-22.

⁴ Pauthier, *Chine Moderne*, p. 351. There is a tradition that Lao-Tsze took his doctrine from an ancient sage who flourished before 1120 B.C.; and he himself (*Tau Teh King*, trans. by Chalmers, *The Speculations of Lao-Tsze*, 1868, ch. 41) cites doctrine as to *Tau* from "those who have spoken (before me)." Cp. cc. 22, 41, 62, 65, 70.

⁵ Cp. E. J. Simcox, *Primitive Civilizations*, 1894, ii, 18.

⁶ Pauthier, p. 358; Chalmers, pp. 14, 37.

moralists earlier than the Chinese. The Golden Rule, repeatedly formulated by Confucius, seems to be but a condensation on his part of doctrine he found in the older classics;¹ and as against Lao-Tsze he is seen maintaining the practical form of the principle of reciprocity. The older man, like some later teachers, preached the rule of returning kindness for evil,² without leaving any biographical trace of such practice on his own part. Confucius, dealing with human nature as it actually is, argued that evil should be met by justice, and kindness with kindness, else the evil were as much fostered as the good.³

It is to be regretted that Christian writers should keep up the form of condemning Confucius (so Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 144; *Life and Teachings of Confucius*, 4th ed. p. 111 sq.; Douglas, p. 144) for a teaching the practice of which is normally possible, and is never transcended in their own Church, where the profession of returning good for evil merely constitutes one of the great hypocrisies of civilization. Dr. Legge does not scruple to resort to a bad sophism in this connection. "If," he says, "we only do good to them that do good to us, what reward have we?" He thus insinuates that Confucius vetoed any *spontaneous* act of benevolence. The question is not of such acts, but of kind acts to those who seek to injure us. On the other hand, Mr. Chalmers, who dedicates his translation of Lao-Tsze to Dr. Legge, actually taunts Lao-Tsze (p. 38) with absurdity in respect of *his* doctrine. Such is the sincerity of orthodox polemic. How little effect the self-abnegating teaching of Lao-Tsze, in turn, has had on *his* followers may be gathered from their very legends concerning him (Douglas, p. 182). There is a fallacy, further, in the Christian claim that Confucius (*Analects*, v, 11; xv, 23) put the Golden Rule in a lower form than that of the Gospels, in that he gave it the negative form, "Do *not* that which ye would *not* have done unto you." This is really the rational and valid form of the Rule. The positive form, unless construed in the restrictive sense, would merely prescribe a non-moral doing of favours in the hope of receiving favours in return. It appears, further, from the passage in the *Analects*, v, 11, that the doctrine in this form was familiar before Confucius.

Lao-Tsze, on his part, had reduced religion to a minimum. "There is not a word in the Tào Têh King [by Lao-Tsze] of the sixth century B.C. that savours either of superstition or religion."⁴

¹ Legge, *Religions*, p. 137.

² *Tau Têh King*, as cited, pp. 38, 49, ch. 49, 63; Pauthier, p. 358; Legge, p. 223.

³ *Analects*, xxv, 36; Legge, *Religions*, p. 143; *Life and Teachings*, p. 113; Douglas, p. 144.

⁴ Legge, *Religions*, p. 164. We do find, however, an occasional allusion to deity, as in the phrase "the Great Architect" (Chalmers' trans. 1868, ch. lxxiv, p. 57), and "Heaven" is spoken of in a somewhat personalized sense. Still, Mr. Chalmers complains (p. xv) that Lao-Tsze did not recognize a personal God, but put "an indefinite, impersonal, and unconscious Tau" above all things (ch. iv).

But the quietist and mystical philosophy of Lao-Tsze and the practicality of Confucius alike failed to check the growth of superstition among the ever-increasing ignorant Chinese population. Says our Christian authority: "In the works of Lieh-Tsze and Chwang-Tsze, followers of Lao-Tsze, two or three centuries later, we find abundance of grotesque superstition, though we are never sure how far those writers really believed the things they relate." In point of fact, Lieh-Tsze is now commonly held by scholars to be an imaginary personage, whose name is given to a miscellaneous collection of teachings and moral tales, much interpolated and added to long after the date assigned to him—*circa* 400 B.C.¹ It contains a purely pantheistic statement of the cosmic problem,² and among the apologues is one in which a boy of twelve years is made tersely and cogently to rebut the teleological view of things.³ The writers of such sections are not likely to have held the superstitions set forth in others. But that superstition should supervene upon light where the means of light were dwindling was a matter of course. It was but the old fatality, seen in Brahmanism, in Buddhism, in Egypt, in Islam, and in Christianity.

Confucius himself was soon worshipped.⁴ A reaction against him set in after a century or two, doctrines of pessimism on the one hand, and of universal love on the other, finding a hearing;⁵ but the influence of the great Confucian teacher Mencius (Meng-Tse) carried his school through the struggle. "In his teaching, the religious element retires still further into the background"⁶ than in that of Confucius; and he is memorable for his insistence on the remarkable principle of Confucius, that "the people are born good"; that they are the main part of the State; and that it is the ruler's fault if they go astray.⁷ Some rulers seem to have fully risen to this view of things, for we have an account of a rationalistic duke, who lived earlier than 250 B.C., refusing to permit the sacrifice of a man as a scapegoat on his behalf; and in the year 166 B.C. such sacrifices were permanently abolished by the Han Emperor Wen.⁸ But Mencius, who, as a sociologist, excels not only Lao-Tsze but Confucius, put his finger on the central force in Chinese history when he taught that "it is only men of education who, without a certain livelihood, are able to maintain a fixed heart. As to the people, if they have not a certain livelihood, it follows that they

¹ F. H. Balfour, Art. "A Philosopher who Never Lived," in *Leaves from my Chinese Scrap-book*, 1887, p. 83 sq.

² *Id.* pp. 86-90.

³ *Id.* p. 134.

⁴ Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 147; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 33.

⁵ Legge, *Life and Works of Mencius*, 1875, pp. 29, 50, 77, etc.

⁶ Tiele, p. 33.

⁷ Legge, *Life and Works of Mencius*, pp. 44, 47, 56, 57, etc.

⁸ Miss Simcox, *Primitive Civilizations*, ii, 36-37, following Chavannes.

will not have a fixed heart.”¹ So clearly was the truth seen in China over two thousand years ago. But whether under feudalism or under imperialism, under anarchy or under peace—and the teachings of Lao-Tsze and Mencius combined to discredit militarism²—the Chinese mass always pullulated on cheap food, at a low standard of comfort, and in a state of utter ignorance. Hence the cult of Confucius was maintained among them only by recognizing their normal superstition; but on that basis it has remained secure, despite competition, and even a term of early persecution. One iconoclastic emperor, the founder of the Ch’in or Ts’in dynasty (221 or 212 B.C.), sought to extirpate Confucianism as a means to a revolution in the government; but the effort came to nothing.³

In the same way Lao-Tsze came to be worshipped as a God⁴ under the religion called Taouism, a title sometimes mistranslated as rationalism, “a name admirably calculated to lead the mind astray as to what the religion is.”⁵ It would seem as if the older notion of the *Tau*, philosophically purified by Lao-Tsze, remained a popular basis for his school, and so wrought its degradation. The Taoists or Tao-sse “do their utmost to be as unreasonable as possible.”⁶ They soon reverted from the philosophic mysticism of Lao-Tsze, after a stage of indifferentism,⁷ to a popular supernaturalism,⁸ which “the cultivated Chinese now regard with unmixed contempt”;⁹ the crystallized common-sense of Confucius, on the other hand, allied as it is with official ceremonialism, retaining its hold as an esoteric code for the learned. The evolution has thus closely resembled that which took place in India.

Nowhere, perhaps, is our sociological lesson more clearly to be read than in China. Centuries before our era it had a rationalistic literature, an ethic no less earnest and far more sane than that of the Hebrews, and a line of known teachers as remarkable in their way as those of ancient Greece who flourished about the same period. But where even Greece, wrought upon by all the other cultures of antiquity, ultimately retrograded, till under Christianity it stayed at a Chinese level of unprogressiveness for a thousand years, isolated China, helped by no neighbouring culture adequate to the need, has stagnated as regards the main mass of its life, despite some political

¹ Legge's *Mencius*, p. 49; cp. p. 48.

² Cp. Legge's *Mencius*, pp. 47, 131; Chalmers' *Lao-Tsze*, pp. 23, 28, 53, 58 (chs. xxx, xxxi, xxxvi, lxvii, lxxiv); Douglas, *Taouism*, chs. ii, iii.

³ Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 147. The ruler in question seems to have been of non-Chinese descent. E. H. Parker, *China*, 1901, p. 18. ⁴ Legge, *Religions of China*, p. 159.

⁵ *Id.* p. 60.

⁶ Tiele, p. 37.

⁷ Douglas, p. 222.

⁸ *Id.* p. 239.

⁹ Tiele, p. 35; Douglas, p. 287. Taouism, however, has a rather noteworthy ethical code. See Douglas, ch. vi. It has to be noted that the translations of the T'ao T'eh King have varied to a disquieting degree. Cp. Drews, *Gesch. des Monismus*, p. 121.

and other fluctuations, till our own day. Its social problem, like that of India, is now more or less dependent, unfortunately, on the solutions that may be reached in Europe, where the problem is only relatively more mature, not fundamentally different.

§ 8. *Mexico and Peru*

In the religions of pre-Christian Mexico and Peru we have peculiarly interesting examples of "early" religious systems, flourishing at some such culture-level as the ancient Akkadian, in full play at the time of the European Renaissance. In Mexico a partly "high" ethical code, as the phrase goes, went concurrently with the most frightful indulgence in human sacrifice, sustained by the continuous practice of indecisive war for the securing of captives, and by the interest of a vast priesthood. In this system had been developed all the leading features of those of the Old World—the identification of all the Gods with the Sun; the worship of fire, and the annual renewal of it by special means; the conception of God-sacrifice and of communion with the God by the act of eating his slain representative; the belief in a Virgin-Mother-Goddess; the connection of humanitarian ethic with the divine command; the opinion that celibacy, as a state of superior virtue, is incumbent on most priests and on all would-be saints; the substitution of a sacramental bread for the "body and blood" of the God-Man; the idea of an interceding Mother-Goddess; the hope of a coming Saviour; the regular practice of prayer; exorcism, special indulgences, confession, absolution, fasting, and so on.¹ In Peru, also, many of those conceptions were in force; but the limitation of the power and numbers of the priesthood by the imperial system of the Incas, and the state of peace normal in their dominions, prevented the Mexican development of human sacrifice.

It seems probable that the Toltecs, who either fled before or were for the most part subdued or destroyed by the barbarian Chichimecs (in turn subdued by the Aztecs) a few centuries before Cortes, were on the whole a less warlike and more civilized people, with a less bloody worship.² Their God, Quetzalcoatl, retained through fear by the Aztecs,³ was a comparatively benign deity opposed to human

¹ Details are given in the author's *Pagan Christs*, pt. iv.

² Nadaillac (*L'Amérique préhistorique*, 1883, pp. 273-84) gives them little of this credit, pronouncing them at once cruel and degenerate. He credits them, however, with being the first makers of roads and aqueducts in Central America, and cites the record of their free public hospitals, maintained by the sacerdotal kings. Prescott, on the other hand, overstated the bloodlessness of their religion (*Conquest of Mexico*, Kirk's ed. 1890, p. 41 and ed. note).

³ Réville, Hibbert Lectures, *On the Native Religions of Mexico and Peru*, 1884, pp. 62-67.

sacrifice, apparently rather a late purification or partial rationalization of an earlier God-type than a primitively harmless conception.¹ Insofar as they were sundered by quarrels between the sectaries of the God Quetzalcoatl and the God Votan, though their religious wars seem to have been as cruel as those of the early Christians of North Africa, there appears to have been at work among them a movement towards unbloody religion. In any case their overthrow seems to stand for the military inferiority of the higher and more rational civilization² to the lower and more religious, which in turn, however, was latterly being destroyed by its enormously burdensome military and priestly system, and may even be held to have been ruined by its own superstitious fears.³

Among the recognizable signs of normal progress in the ordinary Aztec religion were (1) the general recognition of the Sun as the God really worshipped in all the temples of the deities with special names;⁴ (2) the substitution in some cults of baked bread-images for a crucified human victim. The question arises whether the Aztecs, but for their overwhelming priesthood, might conceivably have risen above their system of human sacrifices, as the Aryan Hindus had done in an earlier age. Their material civilization, which carried on that of the kindred Toltecs, was at several points superior to that which the Spaniards put in its place; and their priesthood, being a leisured and wealthy class, might have developed intellectually as did the Brahmans,⁵ if its economic basis had been changed. But only a conquest or other great political convulsion could conceivably have overturned the vast cultus of human sacrifice, which overran all life, and cherished war as a means of procuring victims.

In the kindred State of Tezcucó, civilization seems to have gone further than in Aztec Anahuac; and about the middle of the fifteenth century one Tezcucan king, the conqueror Netzahualcoyotl, who has left writings in both prose and verse, is seen attaining to

¹ J. G. Müller, *Geschichte der Amerikanischen Urreligionen*, ed. 1867, pp. 577-90; H. H. Bancroft, *Native Races of the Pacific States*, iii, 279. (Passage cited in author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 402-403; where is also noted Dr. Tylor's early view, discarded later, that Quetzalcoatl was a real personage.)

² Cp. Prescott, as cited.

³ Réville, p. 66.

⁴ J. G. Müller, as cited, pp. 473-74; Réville, p. 46. Dr. Réville speaks of the worship of the unifying deity as pretty much "effaced" by that of the lower Gods. It seems rather to have been a priestly effort to syncretize these. Still, such an effacement did take place, as we have seen, in Central Asia in ancient times, after a syncretic idea had been reached (above, p. 45). As to the alleged monotheism of King Netzahualcoyotl, of Tezcucó, mentioned above, p. 39, see Lang, *Making of Religion*, p. 270, note, and p. 282; Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, as cited, p. 92; and J. G. Müller, as cited, pp. 473-74, 480.

⁵ As to the capabilities of the Aztec language, see Bancroft, *Native Races*, ii, 727-28 (quoted in *Pagan Christs*, p. 416, note).

something like a philosophic creed, of a monotheistic stamp.¹ He is said to have rejected all idol-worship, and erected, as aforesaid, an altar "to the Unknown God,"² forbidding all sacrifices of blood in that worship. But among the Tezcucans these never ceased; three hundred slaves were sacrificed at the obsequies of the conqueror's son, Netzahualpilli; and the Aztec influence over the superior civilization was finally complete.

In Peru, again, we find civilization advancing in respect of the innovation of substituting statuettes for wives and slaves in the tombs of the rich; and we have already noted³ the remarkable records of the avowed unbelief of several Incas in the divinity of the nationally worshipped Sun. For the rest, there was the dubious quasi-monotheistic cult of the Creator-God, Pachacamac, concerning whom every fresh discussion raises fresh doubt.⁴

Mr. Lang, as usual, leans to the view that Pachacamac stands for a primordial and "elevated" monotheism (*Making of Religion*, pp. 263-70), while admitting the slightness of the evidence. Garcilasso, the most eminent authority, who, however, is contradicted by others, represents that the conception of Pachacamac as Creator, needing no temple or sacrifice, was "philosophically" reached by the Incas and their wise men (Lang, p. 262). The historical fact seems to be that a race subdued by the Incas, the Yuncas, had one temple to this deity; and that the Incas adopted the cult. Garcilasso says the Yuncas had human sacrifices and idols, which the Incas abolished, setting up their monotheistic cult in that one temple. This is sufficiently unlikely; and it may very well have been the fact that the Yuncas had offered no sacrifices. But if they did not, it was because their material conditions, like those of the Australians and Fuegians, had not facilitated the practice; and in that case their "monotheism" likewise would merely represent the ignorant simplicity of a clan-cult. (Compare Tylor, *Primitive Culture*, ii, 335 sq.; Brinton, *Myths of the New World*, p. 52.) On the other hand, if the Incas had set up a cult without sacrifices to a so-called One God, their idea would be philosophical, as taking into account the multitude of clan-cults as well as their own national worships, and transcending these.

But the outstanding sociological fact in Incarial Peru was the

¹ Refs. above, p. 41. Cp. Lang, *Making of Religion*, p. 270, note, and p. 282; J. G. Müller, as cited, pp. 473-74; and Nadaillac, as cited, p. 289.

² The Christianized descendant of the Tezcucan kings, Ixtilxochitl, who wrote their history, adds the words, "Cause of Causes"—a very unlikely formula in the place and circumstances.

³ Above, p. 41. Cp. Lang, as last cited, pp. 263, 282.

⁴ Cp. Kirk's ed. of Prescott's *Conquest of Peru*, 1889, p. 44; Réville, pp. 189-90; Lang, as cited below.

absolute subjection of the mass of the people; and though its material development and political organization were comparable to those of ancient Persia under the Akhamenidæ, so that the Spanish Conquest stood here for mere destruction, there is no reason to think that at the best its intellectual life could have risen higher than that of pre-Alexandrian Egypt, to which it offers so many resemblances. The Incas' schools were for the nobility only.¹ Rationalistic Incas and high priests might have ruled over a docile, unlettered multitude, gradually softening their moral code, in connection with their rather highly-developed doctrine (resembling the Egyptian) of a future state. But these seem the natural limits, in the absence of contact with another civilization not too disparate for a fruitful union.

In Mexico, on the other hand, an interaction of native cultures had already occurred to some purpose; and the strange humanitarianism of the man-slaying priests, who made free public hospitals of part of their blood-stained temples,² suggests a possibility of esoteric mental culture among them. They had certainly gone relatively far in their moral code, as apart from their atrocious creed of sacrifice, even if we discount the testimony of the benevolent priest Sahagun;³ and they had the beginnings of a system of education for the middle classes.⁴ But unless one of the States which habitually warred for captives should have conquered the others—in which case a strong ruler might have put an end to the wholesale religious slaughter of his own subjects, as appears to have been done anciently in Mesopotamia—the priests in all likelihood would never have transcended their hideous hallucination of sacrifice. Their murdered civilization is thus the “great perhaps” of sociology; organized religion being the most sinister factor in the problem.

§ 9. *The Common Forces of Degeneration*

It is implied more or less in all the foregoing summaries that there is an inherent tendency in all systematized and instituted religion to degenerate intellectually and morally, save for the constant corrective activity of freethought. It may be well, however, to note specifically the forms or phases of the tendency.

1. Dogmatic and ritual religion being, to begin with, a more or less general veto on fresh thinking, it lies in its nature that the

¹ Réville, p. 152, citing Garcilasso. See same page for a story of resistance to the invention of an alphabet.

² Réville, p. 50, citing Torquemada, l. viii, c. 20, *end.*

³ *History of the Affairs of New Spain*, French trans. 1880, l. vi, ch. 7, pp. 342-43. Cp. Prescott, *Conquest of Mexico*, Kirk's ed. pp. 31, 33.

⁴ Prescott, p. 34.

religious person is as such less intelligently alive to all problems of thought and conduct than he otherwise might be—a fact which at least outweighs, in a whole society, the gain from imposing a terrorized conformity on the less well-biassed types. Wherever conduct is a matter of sheer obedience to a superhuman code, it is *ipso facto* uncritical and unprogressive. Thus the history of most religions is a record of declines and reformations, each new affirmation of moral freethought *ad hoc* being in turn erected into a set of sheer commands. To set up the necessary ferment of corrective thought even for a time, there seems to be needed (a) a provocation to the intelligence, as in the spectacle of conflict of cults; and (b) a provocation to the moral sense and to self-interest through a burdensome pressure of rites or priestly exactions. An exceptional personality, of course, may count for much in the making of a movement; though the accident of the possession of kingly power by a reformer seems to count for much more than does genius.

2. The fortunes of such reactions are determined by socio-economic or political conditions. They are seen to be at a minimum, as to energy and social effect, in the conditions of greatest social invariability, as in ancient Egypt, where progress in thought, slow at best, was confined to the priestly and official class, and never affected popular culture.

3. In the absence of social conditions fitted to raise popular levels of life and thought, every religious system tends to worsen intellectually in the sense of adding to its range of superstition—that is, of ignorant and unreasoning belief. Credulity has its own momentum. Even the possession of liminary sacred books cannot check this tendency—*e.g.*, Hinduism, Judaism, Mohammedanism, Mazdeism, Christianity up till the age of doubt and science, and the systems of ancient Egypt, Babylon, and post-Confucian China. This worsening can take place alongside of a theoretic purification of belief within the sphere of the educated theological class.

Christian writers have undertaken to show that such deterioration went on continuously in India from the beginning of the Vedic period, popular religion sinking from Varuna to Indra, from Indra to the deities of the Atharva Veda, and from these to the Puranas (cp. Dr. J. Murray Mitchell, *Hinduism Past and Present*, 1885, pp. 22, 25, 26, 54). The argument, being hostile in bias from the beginning, ignores or denies the element of intellectual advance in the Upanishads and other later literature; but it holds good of the general phenomena. It holds good equally, however, of the history of Christianity in the period of the supremacy of ignorant faith and absence of

doubt and science; and is relatively applicable to the religion of the uneducated mass at any time and place.

On the other hand, it is not at all true that religious history is from the beginning, in any case, a process of mere degeneration from a pure ideal. Simple statements as to primitive ideas are found to be misleading because of their simplicity. They *can* connote only the ethic of the life conditions of the worshipper. Now, we have seen (p. 28) that small primitive peoples living at peace and in communism, or in some respects well placed, may be on that account in certain moral respects superior to the average or mass of more civilized and more intelligent peoples. [As to the kindness and unselfishness of some savages, living an almost communal life, and as to the scrupulous honesty of others, there is plenty of evidence—*e.g.*, as to Andaman islanders, Max Müller, *Anthrop. Relig.*, citing Colonel Cadell, p. 177; as to Malays and Papuans, Dr. Russel Wallace, *Malay Archipelago*, p. 595 (but cp. pp. 585, 587, 589); as to Esquimaux, Keane, *Man*, p. 374; Reclus, *Primitive Folk*, pp. 15, 37, 115 (but cp. pp. 41–42). In these and other cases unselfishness within the tribe is the concomitant of the communal life, and represents no conscious ethical volition, being concurrent with phases of the grossest tribal egoism, in some cases with cannibalism, and with the perpetual oppression of women. In the case of the preaching of unselfishness to the young by the old among the Australians, where Lubbock and his authorities see “the tyranny of the old” (*Origin of Civilization*, 5th ed. pp. 451–52) Mr. Lang sees a pure primeval ethic. Obviously the other is the true explanation. The closest and best qualified observers testify, as regards a number of tribes: “So far as anything like moral precepts are concerned in these tribes.....it appears to us to be most probable that they have originated in the first instance in association with the purely selfish ideas of the older men to keep all the best things for themselves, and in no case whatever are they supposed to have the sanction of a superior being” (Spencer and Gillen, *North. Tribes of Cent. Australia*, 1904, p. 504).]

The transition from that state to one of war and individualism would be in a sense degeneration; but on the other hand the entirely communistic societies are unprogressive. Broadly speaking, it is by the path of social individuation that progress in civilization has been made, the early city States and the later large military States ultimately securing within themselves some of the conditions for special development of thought, arts, and knowledge. The residual truth is that the simple religion of the harmless tribe is *pro tanto* superior to the instituted religion of the more civilized nation with greater heights and lower depths of life, the popular religion in the latter case standing for the worse conditions. But the simple religion

did not spring from any higher stage of knowledge. The old theorem revived by Mr. Lang (*Making of Religion*), as to religion having originally been a pure and highly ethical monotheism, from which it degenerated into animism and non-moral polytheism, is at best a misreading of the facts just stated. Mr. Lang never asks what "Supreme Being" and "monotheism" mean for savages who know nothing of other men's religions: he virtually takes all the connotations for granted. And as regards the most closely studied of contemporary savages our authorities come to an emphatic conclusion that they have no notion whatever of anything like a Supreme Being (Spencer and Gillen, *North. Tribes of Cent. Austr.* pp. 491-92. Cp. A. H. Keane, *Man*, p. 395, as to the "Great Spirit" of the Redskins). For the rest, Mr. Lang's theory is demonstrably wrong in its ethical interpretation of many anthropological facts, and as it stands is quite irreconcilable with the law of evolution, since it assumes an abstract monotheism as primordial. In general it approximates scientifically to the eighteenth-century doctrine of the superiority of savagery to civilization. (See it criticized in the author's *Studies in Religious Fallacy*, and *Christianity and Mythology*, 2nd ed. pp. 37-43, 46 sq.)

4. Even primary conditions of material well-being, if not reacted upon by social science or a movement of freethought, may in a comparatively advanced civilization promote religious degeneration. Thus abundance of food is favourable to multiplication of sacrifice, and so to priestly predominance.¹ The possession of domesticated animals, so important to civilization, lends itself to sacrifice in a specially demoralizing degree. But abundant cereal food-supply, making abundant population, may greatly promote human sacrifice—*e.g.*, Mexico.

The error of Mr. Lang's method is seen in the use he makes (work cited, pp. 286-289, 292) of the fact that certain "low" races—as the Australians, Andamanese, Bushmen, and Fuegians—offer no animal sacrifice. He misses the obvious significance of the facts that these unwarlike races have as a rule no domesticated animals and no agriculture, and that their food supply is thus in general precarious. The Andamanese, sometimes described (Malthus, *Essay on Population*, ch. iii, and refs.; G. W. Earl, *Papuans*, 1853, pp. 150-51) as very ill-fed, are sometimes said to be well supplied with fish and game (Peschel, *Races of Man*, Eng. tr. 1876, p. 147; Max Müller, *Anthrop. Rel.* citing Cadell, p. 177); but in any case they have had no agriculture, and seem to have only occasional animal food in the shape of a wild hog (Colebrooke in *Asiatic Researches*, iv, 390).

¹ "The priest says, 'the spirit is hungry,' the fact being that he himself is hungry. He advises the killing of an animal" (Max Müller, *Anthropological Religion*, p. 307).

The Australians and Fuegians, again, have often great difficulty in feeding themselves (Peschel, pp. 148, 159, 334; Darwin, *Voyage*, ch. 10). It is argued concerning the Australian aborigines that "as a rule they have an abundance" (A. F. Calvert, *The Aborigines of Western Australia*, 1894, p. 24); but this abundance is made out by cataloguing the whole edible fauna and flora of the coasts and the interior, and ignores the fact that for all hunting peoples food supply is precarious. For the Australian, "the difficulty of capturing game with his primitive methods compels him to give his whole time to the quest of food" (Keane, *Man*, p. 148). In the contrary case of the primitive Vedic Aryans, well supplied with animals, sacrifices were abundant, and tended to become more so (Müller, *Nat. Relig.* pp. 136, 185; *Physical Relig.* p. 105; but cp. pp. 98, 101; Mitchell, *Hinduism*, p. 43; Lefmann, *Geschichte des alten Indiens*, in Oncken's series, 1890, pp. 49, 430-31). Of these sacrifices that of the horse seems to have been in Aryan use in a most remote period (cp. M. Müller, *Nat. Rel.* pp. 524-25; H. Böttger, *Sonnencult der Indogermanen*, Breslau, 1891, pp. 41-44; Preller, *Römische Mythologie*, ed. Köhler, pp. 102, 299, 323; *Griechische Mythologie*, 2te Aufg. i, 462; Frazer, *Golden Bough*, ii, 315). Max Müller's remark (*Physical Religion*, p. 106), that "the idea of sacrifice did not exist at a very early period," because there is no common Aryan term for it, counts for nothing, as he admits (p. 107) that the Sanskrit word cannot be traced back to any more general root; and he concedes the antiquity of the *practice*. On this cp. Mitchell, *Hinduism*, pp. 37-38; and the author's *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed. p. 122. The reform in Hindu sacrifice, consummated by Buddhism, has been noted above.

5. Even scientific knowledge, while enabling the thoughtful to correct their religious conceptions, in some forms lends itself easily to the promotion of popular superstition. Thus the astronomy of the Babylonians, while developing some skepticism, served in general to encourage divination and fortune-telling; and seems to have had the same effect when communicated to the Chinese, the Hindus, and the Hebrews, all of whom, however, practised divination previously on other bases.

6. Finally, the development of the arts of sculpture and painting, unaccompanied by due intellectual culture, tends to keep religion at a low anthropomorphic level, and worsens its psychology by inviting image-worship.¹ It is not that the earlier and non-artistic religions are not anthropomorphic, but that they give more play for intel-

¹ On the general tendency cp. Chantepie de la Saussaye, *Manual of the Science of Religion*, pp. 77-84.

lectual imagination than does a cult of images. But where the arts have been developed, idolatry has always arisen save when resisted by a special activity or revival of freethought to that end; and even in Protestant Christendom, where image-worship is tabooed, religious pictures now promote popular credulity and ritualism as they did in the Italian Renaissance.¹ So manifold are the forces of intellectual degeneration—degeneration, that is, from an attained ideal or stage of development, not from any primordial knowledge.

¹ In the windows of the shop of the S. P. C. K., in London, may be often seen large displays of reproduced Madonna-pictures, by Catholic artists, at popular prices.

CHAPTER IV

RELATIVE FREETHOUGHT IN ISRAEL

THE modern critical analysis of the Hebrew Sacred Books has made it sufficiently clear that in Jewish as in all other ancient history progress in religion was by way of evolving an ethical and sole deity out of normal primitive polytheism.¹ What was special to the Hebrews was the set of social conditions under which the evolution took place. Through these conditions it was that the relative free-thought which rejected normal polytheism was so far favoured as to lead to a pronounced monotheistic cultus, though not to a philosophic monotheism.

§ 1

As seen in their earliest historical documents (especially portions of the Book of Judges), the Hebrews are a group of agricultural and pastoral but warlike tribes of Semitic speech, with household Gods and local deities,² living among communities at the same or a higher culture stage. Their ancestral legends show similar religious practice.³ Of the Hebrew tribes some may have sojourned for a time in Egypt; but this is uncertain, the written record being a late and in large part deliberately fictitious construction.⁴ At one time twelve such tribes may have confederated, in conformity with a common ancient superstition, seen in Arab and Greek history as well as in the Jewish, as to the number twelve. As they advanced in civilization, on a basis of city life existing among a population settled in Canaan before them, parts of which they conquered, one of their public cults, that of Yahu or Yahweh, finally fixed at Jerusalem, became politically important. The special worshippers of this God (supposed to have been at first a Thunder-God or Nature-God)⁵ were in that sense monotheists; but not otherwise than kindred neighbouring communities such as the Ammonites and Moabites and Edomites, each of which had its special God, like the cities of Babylonia and Egypt. But that the earlier conceptions of

¹ Compare the author's *Pagan Christs*, pp. 66-95.

² Jud. xvii, xviii.

³ Gen. xxxi, 19, 34, 35.

⁴ Compare Hugo Winckler, *Geschichte Israels*, i, 56-58.

⁵ Compare Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 87; *Hist. comp. des anc. relig.* p. 342 sq.; Kuenen, *Relig. of Israel*, iii, 35, 44, 398. Winckler (*Gesch. Israels*, i, 34-38) pronounces the original Semitic Yahu, and the Yahweh evolved from him, to have been each a "Wetter-Gott."

the people had assumed a multiplicity of Gods is clear from the fact that even in the later literary efforts to impose the sole cult of Yahweh on the people, the plural name *Elohim*, "Powers" or "Gods" (in general, things to be feared),¹ is retained, either alone or with that of Yahweh prefixed, though cosmology had previously been written in Yahweh's name. The Yahwists did not scruple to combine an Elohist narrative, varying from theirs in cosmology and otherwise, with their own.²

As to the original similarity of Hebraic and other Canaanite religions cp. E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* §§ 309-11 (i, 372-76); Kuenen, i, 223; Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 440; Winckler, *Gesch. Israels, passim*; Réville, *Proleg. de l'hist. des relig.* 1881, p. 85. "Before being monotheistic, Israel was simply *monolatrous*, and even that only in its religious *élite*" (Réville). "Their [the Canaanites'] worship was the same in principle as that of Israel, but it had a higher organization" (Menzies, *Hist. of Rel.* p. 179; cp. Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 85-89). On the side of the traditional view, Mr. Lang, while sharply challenging most of the propositions of the higher critics, affirms that "we know that Israel had, in an early age, the conception of the moral Eternal; we know that, at an early age, the conception was contaminated and anthropomorphized; and we know that it was rescued, in a great degree, from this corruption, while always retaining its original ethical aspect and sanction" (*Making of Religion*, p. 295). If "we know" this, the discussion is at an end. But Mr. Lang's sole documentary basis for the assertion is just the fabricated record, reluctantly abandoned by theological scholars as such. When this is challenged, Mr. Lang falls back on the position that such low races as the Australians and Fuegians have a "moral Supreme Being," and that therefore Israel "must" have had one (p. 309). It will be found, however, that the ethic of these races is perfectly primitive, on Mr. Lang's own showing, and that his estimate is a misinterpretation. As to their Supreme Beings, it might suffice to compare Mr. Lang's *Making of Religion*, chs. ix, xii, with his earlier *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, i, 168, 335; ii, 6, etc.; but, as we have seen (above, p. 93), the Supreme Being of the Australians eludes the closest search in a number of tribes; and the "moral" factor is equally intangible. Mr. Lang in his

¹ The word is applied to the apparition of Samuel in the story of the Witch of Endor (1 Sam. xxviii, 13).

² The unlearned reader may here be reminded that in Gen. i the Hebrew word translated "God" is "Elohim" and that the phrase in Gen. ii rendered "the Lord God" in our versions is in the original "Yah-weh-Elohim." The first chapter, with its plural deity, is, however, probably the later as well as the more dignified narrative, and represents the influence of Babylonian quasi-science. See, for a good general account of the case, *The Witness of Assyria*, by C. Edwards, 1893, ch. ii. Cp. Wellhausen, *Proleg. to Hist. of Israel*, Eng. tr. pp. 196-308; E. J. Fripp, *Composition of the Book of Genesis*, 1892, *passim*; Driver, *Introd. to the Lit. of the Old Test.* 1891, pp. 18-19.

later reasoning has merely added the ambiguous and misleading epithet "Supreme," stressing it indefinitely, to the ordinary God-idea of the lower races. (Cp. Cox, *Mythol. of Aryan Races*, ed. 1882, p. 155; and K. O. Müller, *Introd. to Sci. Mythol.* Eng. tr. p. 184.)

There being thus no highly imagined "moral Eternal" in the religion of primitive man, the Hebrews were originally in the ordinary position. Their early practice of human sacrifice is implied in the legend of Abraham and Isaac, and in the story of Jephthah. (Cp. Micah vi, 7, and Kuenen on the passage, i, 237.) In their reputed earliest prophetic books we find them addicted to divination (Hosea iv, 12; Micah v, 12. Cp. the prohibition in Lev. xx, 6; also 2 Kings xxiii, 24, and Isa. iii, 2; as to the use of the ephod, teraphim, and urim and thummim, see Kuenen, *Relig. of Israel*, Eng. tr. i, 97-100) and to polytheism. (Amos v, 26, viii, 14; Hosea i, 13, 17, etc. Cp. Jud. viii, 27; 1 Sam. vii, 3.) These things Mr. Lang seems to admit (p. 309, *note*), despite his previous claim; but he builds (p. 332) on the fact that the Hebrews showed little concern about a future state—that "early Israel, having, so far as we know, a singular lack of interest in the future of the soul, was born to give himself up to developing, undisturbed, the theistic conception, the belief in a righteous Eternal"—whereas later Greeks and Romans, like Egyptians, were much concerned about life after death. Mr. Lang's own general theory would really require that *all* peoples at a certain stage should act like the Israelites; but he suspends it in the interest of the orthodox view as to the early Hebrews. At the same time he omits to explain why the Hebrews failed to adopt the future-state creed when they were "contaminated"—a proposition hardly reconcilable, on any view, with the sentence just quoted. The solution, however, is simple. Israel was not at all "singular" in the matter. The *early* (Homeric) Greeks and Romans (cp. as to Hades the *Iliad*, *passim*; *Odyssey*, bk. xi, *passim*; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 209, as to the myth of Persephone; and Preller, *Römische Mythologie*, ed. Köhler, 1865, pp. 452-55, as to the early Romans), like the early Vedic Aryans (Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 117; Müller, *Anthropol. Relig.* p. 269), and the early Babylonians and Assyrians (Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 181-82; Sayce, *Hib. Lect.* p. 364) took little thought of a future state.

"Homer knows *no* influence of the Psyche on the realm of the visible, and also no cult implying it.....A later poet, who made the last addition to the *Odyssey*, first introduced Hermes the 'leader of souls' [perhaps taken from a popular belief in some part of Hellas].....Underneath, in the gloomy shades, the souls waver, unconscious or at the best in a glimmering half-consciousness, endowed with faint voices, feeble, indifferent..... To speak, as do many old and recent scholars, of the 'immortal

life' of such souls, is erroneous. They live rather as the spectre of the living in a mirror.....If the Psyche outlives her visible mate (the body), she is powerless without him.....Thus is the Homeric world free from ghosts (for after the burning of the body the Psyche appears no more even in dream).....The living has peace from the dead.....No dæmonic power is at work apart from or against the Gods; and the night gives to the disembodied spirits no freedom" (Rohde, *Psyche*, 4te Aufl. 1907, pp. 9-11).

This minimization of the normal primitive belief in spirits is one of the reasons for seeing in the Homeric poems the outcome of a period of loosened belief. It is not to be supposed that the pre-Homeric Greeks, like the easterns with whom the Greeks met in Ionia, had not the usual ghost-lore of savages and barbarians; and it may be that for all the early civilizations under notice the explanation is that primitive ghost-cults were abandoned by migrating and conquering races, who rejected the ghost-cults of the races whom they conquered, though they ostensibly accepted their Gods. In any case they made little religious account of a future state for themselves.

This attitude has again been erroneously regarded (*e.g.*, Dickinson, *The Greek View of Life*, p. 35) as peculiar to the Greeks. Mr. Lang's assumption may, in fact, be overthrown by the single case of the Phoenicians, who showed no more concern about a future life than did the Hebrews (see Canon Rawlinson's *History of Phoenicia*, 1889, pp. 351-52), but who are not pretended to have given themselves up much to "developing, undisturbed, the belief in a righteous Eternal." The truth seems to be that in all the early progressive and combative civilizations the main concern was as to the continuance of *this* life. On that head the Hebrews were as solicitous as any (*cp.* Kuenen, i, 65); and they habitually practised divination on that score. Further, they attached the very highest importance to the continuance of the individual in his offspring. The idea of a future state is first found highly developed in the long-lived cults of the long-civilized but unprogressive Egyptians; and the Babylonians were developing in the same direction. Yet the Hebrews took it up (see the evidence in Schürer, *Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, Eng. tr. Div. II, vol. ii, p. 179) just when, according to Mr. Lang, their cult was "rescued, in a great degree, from corruption"; and, generally speaking, it was in the stage of maximum monotheism that they reached the maximum of irrationality. For the rest, belief in "immortality" is found highly developed in a sociologically "degenerate" and unprogressive people such as the Tasmanians (Müller, *Anthrop. Rel.* p. 433), who are yet primitively pure on Mr. Lang's hypothesis; and is normal among negroes and Australian blackfellows.

This primary polytheism is seen to the full in that constant resort of Israelites to neighbouring cults, against which so much of the Hebrew doctrine is directed. To understand their practice the modern reader has to get rid of the hallucination imposed on Christendom by its idea of revelation. The cult of Yahweh was no primordial Hebrew creed, deserted by backsliding idolaters, but a finally successful tyranny of one local cult over others. It is probable that it was originally not Palestinian, but Sinaitic, and that Yahweh became the God of Caleb-Judah only under David.¹ Therefore, without begging the question as to the moral sincerity of the prophets and others who identified Yahwism with morality, we must always remember that they were on their own showing devotees of a special local worship, and so far fighting for their own influence. Similar prophesying may conceivably have been carried on in connection with the same or other God-names in other localities, and the extant prophets freely testify that they had Yahwistic opponents; but the circumstance that Yahweh was worshipped at Jerusalem without any image might be an important cause of differentiation in the case of that cult. In any case it must have been through simple "exclusivism" that they reached any form of "monotheism."²

The inveterate usage, in the Bible-making period, of forging and interpolating ancient or pretended writings, makes it impossible to construct any detailed history of the rise of Yahwism. We can but proceed upon data which do not appear to lend themselves to the purposes of the later adaptors. In that way we see cause to believe that at one early centre the so-called ark of Yahweh contained various objects held to have supernatural virtue.³ In the older historic documents it has, however, no such sacredness as accrues to it later,⁴ and no great traditional prestige. This ark, previously moved from place to place as a fetish,⁵ is said to have been transferred to Jerusalem by the early king David,⁶ whose story, like that of his predecessors Saul and his son Solomon, is in part blended with myth.

As to David, compare 1 Sam. xvi, 18, with xvii, 33, 42. Daoud (= Dodo = Dumzi = Tammuz = Adonis) was a Semitic deity (Sayce, Hib. Lec. pp. 52-57, and art. "The Names of the First Three Kings of Israel," in *Modern Review*, Jan. 1884),

¹ Winckler, *Gesch. Isr.* i, 29-30.

² Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 398.

³ See the myth of the offerings put in it by the Philistines (1 Sam. vi).

⁴ 1 Sam. iii, 3. Cp. ch. ii, 12-22. Contrast Lev. xvi, 2, ff.

⁵ 1 Sam. iv, 3-11. Cp. v, vii, 2.

⁶ 2 Sam. vi.

whom David resembles as an inventor of the lyre (Amos, vi, 5 ; cp. Hitzig, *Die Psalmen*, 2 Theil, 1836, p. 3). But Saul and Solomon also were God-names (Sayce, as cited), as was Samuel (*id.* pp. 54, 181 ; cp. Lenormant, *Chaldean Magic*, Eng. tr. p. 120) ; and when we note these data, and further the plain fact that Samson is a solar myth, being a personage Evemerized from Samas, the Sun-God, we are prepared to find further traces of Evemeristic redaction in the Hebrew books. To say nothing of other figures in the Book of Judges, we find that Jacob and Joseph were old Canaanitish deities (Sayce, *Lectures*, p. 51 ; *Records of the Past*, New Series, v, 48 ; Hugo Winckler, *Geschichte Israels*, ii, 57-77) ; and that Moses, as might be expected, was a name for more than one Semitic God (Sayce, pp. 46-47), and in particular stood for a Sun-God. Abraham and Isaac in turn appear to be ancient deities (Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* i, 374, § 309 ; Winckler, *Gesch. Israels*, ii, 20-49). Miriam was probably in similar case (cp. *Pagan Christs*, 2nd ed. pp. 165-66). On an analysis of the Joshua myth as redacted, further, we may surmise another reduction of an ancient cult to the form of history, perhaps obscuring the true original of the worship of Mary and Jesus.

It seems probable, finally, that such figures as Elijah, who ascends to heaven in a fiery chariot, and Elisha, the "bald head" and miracle-worker, are similar constructions of personages out of Sun-God lore. In such material lies part of the refutation of the thesis of Renan (*Hist. des langues sémit.* 2e édit. pp. 7, 485) that the Semites were natural monotheists, devoid of mythology. [Renan is followed in whole or in part by Nöldeke, *Sketches from Eastern Hist.* Eng. tr. p. 6 ; Soury, *Relig. of Israel*, Eng. tr. pp. 2, 10 ; Spiegel, *Eránische Alterthumskunde*, i, 389 ; also Roscher, Draper, Peschel, and Bluntschli, as cited by Goldziher, *Mythology Among the Hebrews*, Eng. tr. p. 4, *note*. On the other side compare Goldziher, ch. i ; Steintal's *Prometheus and Samson*, Eng. tr. (with Goldziher), pp. 391, 428, etc., and his *Geschichte der Sprachwissenschaft bei den Griechen und den Römern*, 1863, pp. 15-17 ; Kuenen, *Rel. of Israel*, i, 225 ; Smith, *Rel. of the Semites*, p. 49 ; Ewald, *Hist. of Israel*, Eng. tr. 4th ed. i, 38-40 ; Müller, *Chips*, i, 345 sq. ; *Selected Essays*, 1881, ii, 402 sq. ; *Nat. Rel.* p. 314.] Renan's view seems to be generally connected with the assumption that life in a "desert" makes a race for ever unimaginative or unitary in its thought. The *Arabian Nights* might be supposed a sufficient proof to the contrary. The historic truth seems to be that, stage for stage, the ancient Semites were as mythological as any other race ; but that (to say nothing of the Babylonians and Assyrians) the mythologies of the Hebrews and of the Arabs were alike suppressed as far as possible in their monotheistic stage.

Compare Renan's own admissions, pp. 27, 110, 475, and *Hist. du peuple d'Israël*, i, 49-50.

At other places, however, Yahweh was symbolized and worshipped in the image of a young bull,¹ a usage associated with the neighbouring Semitic cult of Molech, but probably indigenous, or at least early, in the case of Yahweh also. A God, for such worshippers, needed to be represented by something, if he were to be individualized as against others; and where there was not an ark or a sacred stone or special temple or idol there could be no cult at all. "The practices of ancient religion require a fixed meeting-place between the worshippers and their God."² The pre-Exilic history of Yahweh-worship seems to be in large part that of a struggle between the devotees of the imageless worship fixed to the temple at Jerusalem, and other worships, with or without images, at other and less influential shrines.

So far as can be gathered from the documents, it was long before monotheistic pretensions were made in connection with Yahwism. They must in the first instance have seemed not only tyrannical but blasphemous to the devotees of the old local shrines, who in the earlier Hebrew writings figure as perfectly good Yahwists; and they clearly had no durable success before the period of the Exile. Some three hundred years after the supposed period of David,³ and again eighty years later, we meet with ostensible traces⁴ of a movement for the special aggrandizement of the Yahweh cult and the suppression of the others which competed with it, as well as of certain licentious and vicious practices carried on in connection with Yahweh worship. Concerning these, it could be claimed by those who had adhered to the simpler tradition of one of the early worships that they were foreign importations. They were, in fact, specialties of a rich ancient society, and were either native to Canaanite cities which the Hebrews had captured, or copied by them from such cities. But the fact that they were thus, on the showing of the later Yahwistic records, long associated with Yahwist practice, proves that there was no special elevation about Yahwism originally.

Even the epithet translated "Holy" (*Kadosh*) had originally no high moral significance. It simply meant "set apart," "not common" (cp. Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, i, 43; Wellhausen, *Israel*, in *Prolegomena* vol. p. 499); and the special substantive (*Kadesh* and *Kedeshah*) was actually the name for the most

¹ 1 Kings xii, 28; Hosea viii, 4-6. Cp. Jud. viii, 27; Hosea viii, 5.

² Smith, *Religion of the Semites*, p. 196. But see above, p. 79.

³ 11th cent. B.C.

⁴ 2 Kings xviii, 4, 22; xxiii, 48.

degraded ministrants of both sexes in the licentious worship (see Deut. xxiii, 17, 18, and *marg. Rev. Vers.* Cp. 1 Kings xiv, 25; xv, 12; 2 Kings xxiii, 7). On the question of early Hebrew ethics it is somewhat misleading to cite Wellhausen (so Lang, *Making of Religion*, p. 304) as saying (*Israel*, p. 437) that religion inspired law and morals in Israel with exceptional purity. In the context Wellhausen has said that the starting-point of Israel was normal; and he writes in the *Prolegomena* (p. 302) that "good and evil in Hebrew mean primarily nothing more than salutary and hurtful: the application of the words to virtue and sin is a secondary one, these being regarded as serviceable or hurtful in their effects."

§ 2

Given the co-existence of a multitude of local cults, and of various local Yahweh-worships, it is conceivable that the Yahwists of Jerusalem, backed by a priest-ridden king, should seek to limit all worship to their own temple, whose revenues would thereby be much increased. But insoluble perplexities are set up as to the alleged movement by the incongruities in the documents. Passing over for the moment the prophets Amos and Hosea and others who ostensibly belong to the eighth century B.C., we find the second priestly reform,¹ consequent on a finding or framing of "the law," represented as occurring early in the reign of Josiah (641-610 B.C.). But later in the same reign are placed the writings of Jeremiah, who constantly contemns the scribes, prophets, and priests in mass, and makes light of the ark,² besides declaring that in Judah³ there are as many Gods as towns, and in Jerusalem as many Baal-altars as streets. The difficulty is reduced by recognizing the quasi-historical narrative as a later fabrication; but other difficulties remain as to the prophetic writings; and for our present purpose it is necessary briefly to consider these.

1. The "higher criticism," seeking solid standing-ground at the beginning of the tangible historic period, the eighth century, singles out⁴ the books of Amos and Hosea, setting aside, as dubious in date, Nahum and Joel; and recognizing in Isaiah a composite of different periods. If Amos, the "herdsman of Tekoa," could be thus regarded as an indubitable historical person, he would be a remarkable figure in the history of freethought, as would his nominal contemporary Hosea. Amos is a monotheist, worshipping not a God of Israel but a Yahweh or Elohim of Hosts, called also by the

¹ 2 Kings xxiii.

² Jer. i, 18; iii, 16; vi, 13; vii, 4-22; viii, 8; xviii, 18; xx, 1, 2; xxiii, 11.

³ Jer. ii, 28; xi, 13.

⁴ So Kuenen, vol. i, App. i to Ch. 1.

name Adon or Adonai, "the Lord," who rules all the nations and created the universe. Further, the prophet makes Yahweh "hate and despise" the feasts and burnt-offerings and solemn assemblies of his worshippers;¹ and he meddles impartially with the affairs of the kingdoms of Judah and Israel. In the same spirit Hosea menaces the solemn assemblies, and makes Yahweh desire "mercy and not sacrifice."² Similar doctrine occurs in the reputedly genuine or ancient parts of Isaiah,³ and in Micah.⁴ Isaiah, too, disparages the Sabbath and solemn meetings, staking all upon righteousness.

2. These utterances, so subversive of the priestly system, are yet held to have been preserved through the ages—through the Assyrian conquest, through the Babylonian Captivity, through the later period of priestly reconstruction—by the priestly system itself. In the state of things pictured under Ezra and Nehemiah, only the zealous adherents of the priestly law can at the outset have had any letters, any literature; it must have been they, then, who treasured the anti-priestly and anti-ritual writings of the prophets—unless, indeed, the latter were preserved by the Jews remaining at Babylon.

3. The perplexity thus set up is greatly deepened when we remember that the period assigned to the earlier prophets is near the beginning of the known age of alphabetic writing,⁵ and before the known age of writing on scrolls. A herdsman of Judea, with a classic and flowing style, is held to have written out his hortatory addresses at a time when such writing is not certainly known to have been practised anywhere else;⁶ and the pre-eminent style of Isaiah is held to belong to the same period.

"His [Amos's] language, with three or four insignificant exceptions, is pure, his style classical and refined. His literary power is shown in the regularity of structure which often characterizes his periods.....as well as in the ease with which he evidently writes.....Anything of the nature of roughness or rusticity is wholly absent from his writings" (Driver, *Introd. to Lit. of Old Test.* ch. vi, § 3, p. 297, ed. 1891). Isaiah, again, is in his own narrow field one of the most gifted and skilful writers of all antiquity. The difficulty is thus nearly as great

¹ Amos v, 21, 22.

² Hosea ii, 11; vi, 6.

³ Isa. i, 11-14.

⁴ Mic. vi, 6-8.

⁵ Cp. M. Müller, *Nat. Rel.* pp. 560-61; *Psychol. Rel.* pp. 30-32; Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 465. If the Moabite Stone be genuine—and it is accepted by Stade (*Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, in Oncken's Series, 1881, i, 86) and by most contemporary scholars—the Hebrew alphabetic writing is carried back to the ninth century B.C. An account of the Stone is given in *The Witness of Assyria*, by C. Edwards, ch. xi. See again Mommsen, *Hist. of Rome*, bk. i, ch. 14, Eng. tr. 1894, i, 280, for a theory of the extreme antiquity of the alphabet.

⁶ Dr. Cheyne (Art. Amos in *Encyc. Biblica*) gives some good reasons for attaching little weight to such objections, but finally joins in calling Amos "a surprising phenomenon."

as that of the proposition that the Hebrew of the Pentateuch is a thousand years older than that of the latest prophetic books, whose language is substantially the same. (Cp. Andrews Norton, *The Pentateuch*, ed. 1863, pp. 47-48; Renan, *Hist. des langues sémit.* 2e édit. p. 118.)

4. The specialist critics, all trained as clergymen, and mostly loth to yield more than is absolutely necessary to skepticism, have surrendered the antiquity claimed for Joel, recognizing that the arguments for that are "equally consistent with a date *after* the Captivity."¹ One of the conclusions here involved is that "Egypt is probably mentioned only as the *typical instance* of a Power hostile to Judah." Thus, when we remember the later Jewish practice of speaking of Rome as "Babylon," or "Edom," allusions by Amos and Hosea to "Assyria" have no evidential force. The same reasoning applies to the supposed ancient portions of Isaiah.

5. Even on the clerical side, among the less conservative critics, it is already conceded that there are late "insertions" in Amos. Some of these insertions are among, or analogous to, the very passages relied on by Kuenen to prove the lofty monotheism of Amos. If these passages, however, suggest a late date, no less do the others disparaging sacrifices. The same critics find interpolations and additions in Hosea. But they offer no proof of the antiquity of what they retain.

The principal passages in Amos given up as insertions by Dr. Cheyne, the most perspicacious of the English Hebraists, are: iv, 13; v, 8-9; ix, 5-6; and ix, 8-15. See his introduction to 1895 ed. of Prof. Robertson Smith's *Prophets of Israel*, p. xv; and his art. on Amos in the *Encyclopædia Biblica*. Compare Kuenen, i, 46, 48. Dr. Cheyne regards as insertions in Hosea the following: i, 10-ii, 1; "and David their King" in iii, 5; viii, 14; and xiv, 1-9 (as cited, pp. xviii-xix). Obviously these admissions entail others.

6. The same school of criticism, while adhering to the traditional dating of Amos and Hosea, has surrendered the claim for the Psalms, placing most of these in the same age with the books of Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, and Ecclesiasticus.² Now, the sentiment of opposition to burnt-offerings is found in some of the Psalms in language identical with that of the supposed early prophets.³ Instead of taking the

¹ Driver, *Introd. to Lit. of Old Test.* ch. vi, § 2 (p. 290, ed. 1891). Cp. Kuenen, *Relig. of Israel*, i, 86; and Robertson Smith, art. JOEL, in *Encyc. Brit.*

² Cp. Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 501; Driver, ch. vii (1st ed. pp. 352 sq., esp. pp. 355, 361, 362, 365); Stade, *Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, i, 85.

³ E.g. Ps. 1, 8-15; li, 16-17, where v. 19 is obviously a priestly addition, meant to countervail vv. 16, 17.

former for late echoes of the latter, we may reasonably suspect that they belong to the same culture-stage.

The principle is in effect recognized by Dr. Cheyne when he writes: "Just as we infer from the reference to Cyrus in xlv, 28; xlv, 1, that the prophecy containing it proceeds from the age of the conqueror, so we may infer from the fraternal feeling towards Egypt and Assyria (Syria) in xix, 23-25, that the epilogue was written when hopes of the union and fusion of Israelitish and non-Israelitish elements first became natural for the Jews—*i.e.*, in the early Jewish period" (*Introd. to the Book of Isaiah*, 1895, pp. 109-10).

7. From the scientific point of view, finally, the element of historical prediction in the prophets is one of the strongest grounds for presuming that they are in reality late documents. In regard to similar predictions in the gospels (Mt. xxiv, 15; Mk. xiii, 2; Lk. xxi, 20), rational criticism decides that they were written after the event. No other course can consistently be taken as to early Hebrew predictions of captivity and restoration; and the adherence of many Biblical scholars at this point to the traditional view is psychologically on a par with their former refusal to accept a rational estimate of the Pentateuchal narrative.

On some points, such as the flagrant pseudo-prediction in Isaiah xix, 18, all reasonable critics surrender. Thus "König sees rightly that xix, 18, can refer only to Jewish colonies in Egypt, and refrains from the arbitrary supposition that Isaiah was supernaturally informed of the future establishment of such colonies" (Cheyne, *Introd. to Smith's Prophets of Israel*, p. xxxiii). But in other cases Dr. Cheyne's own earlier positions appear to involve such an "arbitrary supposition," as do Kuenen's; and Smith explicitly posited it as to the prophets in general. And even as to Isaiah xix, 18, whereas Hitzig, as Havet later, rightly brings the date down to the actual historic time of the establishment of the temple at Heliopolis by Onias (Josephus, *Ant.* xiii, 3, 1; *Wars*, vii, 10, 2), about 160 B.C., Dr. Cheyne (*Introd. to Isaiah*, p. 108) compromises by dating it about 275 B.C.

The lateness of the bulk of the prophetic writings has been ably argued by Ernest Havet (*Le Christianisme et ses Origines*, vol. iv, 1878, ch. vi; and in the posthumous vol., *La Modernité des Prophètes*, 1891), who supports his case by many cogent reasonings. For instance, besides the argument as to Isaiah xix, 18, above noted: (1) The frequent prediction of the ruin of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar (Isa. ch. xxiii; Jer. xxv, 22; Ezek. xxvi, 7; ch. xxvii), false as to him (a fact which might be construed as a proof of the fallibility of the prophets and the

candour of their transcribers), is to be understood in the light of other post-predictions as referring to the actual capture of the city by Alexander. (2) Hosea's prediction of the fall of Judah as well as of Israel, and of their being united, places the passage after the Exile, and may even be held to bring it down to the period of the Asmoneans. So with many other details: the whole argument deserves careful study. M. Havet's views were, of course, scouted by the conservative specialists, as their predecessors scouted the entire hypothesis of Graf, now taken in its essentials as the basis of sound Biblical criticism. M. Scherer somewhat unintelligently objected to him (*Études sur la litt. contemp.* vii, 268) that he was not a Hebraist. There is no question of philology involved. It was non-Hebraists who first pointed out the practical incredibility of the central Pentateuchal narrative, on the truth of which Kuenen himself long stood with other Hebraists. (Cp. Wellhausen, *Proleg.* pp. 39, 347; also his (4th) ed. of Bleek's *Einleit. in das alte Test.* 1878, p. 154; and Kuenen, *Hexateuch*, Eng. tr. pp. xv, 43.) Colenso's argument, in the gist of which he was long preceded by lay freethinkers, was one of simple common sense. The weak side of M. Havet's case is his undertaking to bring the prophets bodily down to the Maccabean period. This is claiming too much. But his negative argument is not affected by the reply (Darmesteter, *Les Prophètes d'Israël*, 1895, pp. 128-31) to his constructive theory.

[Since the above was written, two French critics, MM. Dujardin and Maurice Vernes, have sought vigorously to reconstruct the history of the prophetic books upon new lines. I have been unable to acquiesce in their views at essential points, but would refer the reader to the lucid and interesting survey of the problem in Mr. T. Whittaker's *Priests, Philosophers, and Prophets* (Black, 1911), ch. vi.]

It is true that where hardly any documentary datum is intrinsically sure, it is difficult to prove a negative for one more than for another. The historical narratives being systematically tampered with by one writer after another, and even presumptively late writings being interpolated by still later scribes, we can never have demonstrative proof as to the original date of any one prophet. Thus it is arguable that fragments of utterance from eighth-century prophets may have survived orally and been made the nucleus of later documents. This view would be reconcilable with the fact that the prophets Isaiah, Hosea, Amos, and Micah are all introduced with some modification of the formula that they prophesied "in the days of Uzziah, Jotham, Ahaz, and Hezekiah, kings of Judah," Jeroboam's name being added in the cases of Hosea and

Amos. But that detail is also reconcilable with absolute fabrication. To say nothing of sheer bad faith in a community whose moral code said nothing against fraud save in the form of judicial perjury, the Hebrew literature is profoundly compromised by the simple fact that the religious development of the people made the prestige of antiquity more essential there for the purposes of propaganda than in almost any other society known to us. Hence an all-pervading principle of literary dissimulation; and what freethinking there was had in general to wear the guise of the very force of unreasoning traditionalism to which it was inwardly most opposed. Only thus could new thought find a hearing and secure its preservation at the hands of the tribe of formalists. Even the pessimist Koheleth, wearied with groping science, yet believing nothing of the doctrine of immortality, must needs follow precedent and pose as the fabulous King Solomon, son of the half-mythic David.

§ 3

We are forced, then, to regard with distrust all passages in the "early" prophets which express either a disregard of sacrifice and ritual, or a universalism incongruous with all that we know of the native culture of their period. The strongest ground for surmising a really "high" development of monotheism in Judah before the Captivity is the stability of the life there as compared with northern Israel.¹ In this respect the conditions might indeed be considered favourable to priestly or other culture; but, on the other hand, the records themselves exhibit a predominant polytheism. The presumption, then, is strong that the "advanced" passages in the prophets concerning sacrifice belong to an age when such ideas had been reached in more civilized nations, with whose thought travelled Jews could come in contact.

It is true that some such ideas were current in Egypt many centuries before the period under notice—a fact which alone discounts the ethical originality claimed for the Hebrew prophets. *E.g.*, the following passage from the papyrus of Ani, belonging to the Nineteenth Dynasty, not later than 1288 B.C.: "That which is detestable in the sanctuary of God is noisy feasts; if thou implore him with a loving heart of which all the words are mysterious, he will do thy matters, he hears thy words, he accepts thine offerings" (*Religion and Conscience in Ancient Egypt*, by Flinders Petrie, 1898, p. 160). The word rendered "mysterious" here may mean "magical"

¹ Cp. Kuenen, i, 156; Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, p. 139; *Israel*, p. 478.

or "liturgical," or may merely prescribe privacy or silence; and this last is the construction put upon it by Renouf (Hibbert Lectures, 2nd ed. p. 102) and Erman (*Handbook of Eg. Relig.* Eng. tr. p. 84). The same doctrine is put in a hymn to Thoth (*id.*). But in any case we must look for later culture-contacts as the source of the later Hebrew radicalism under notice, though Egyptian sources are not to be wholly set aside. See Kuenen, i, 395; and Brugsch, as there cited; but cp. Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 440.

It is clear that not only did they accept a cosmogony from the Babylonians, but they were influenced by the lore of the Zoroastrian Persians, with whom, as with the monotheists or pantheists of Babylon, they would have grounds of sympathy. It is an open question whether their special hostility to images does not date from the time of Persian contact.¹ Concerning the restoration, it has been argued that only a few Jewish exiles returned to Jerusalem "both under Cyrus and under Dareios"; and that, though the temple was rebuilt under Dareios Hystaspis, the builders were not the *Gola* or returned exiles, but that part of the Judahite population which had not been deported to Babylon.² The problem is obscure;³ but, at least, the separatist spirit of the redacted narratives of Ezra and Nehemiah (which in any case tell of an opposite spirit) is not to be taken as a decisive clue to the character of the new religion. For the rest, the many Jews who remained in Babylon or spread elsewhere in the Persian Empire, and who developed their creed on a non-local basis, were bound to be in some way affected by the surrounding theology. And it is tolerably certain that not only was the notion of angels derived by the Jews from either the Babylonians or the Persians, but their rigid Sabbath and their weekly synagogue meetings came from one or both of these sources.

That the Sabbath was an Akkado-Babylonian and Assyrian institution is now well established (G. Smith, *Assyrian Eponym Canon*, 1875, p. 20; Jastrow, *Relig. of Bab. and Assyria*, p. 377; Sayce, Hib. Lect. p. 76, and in *Variorum Teacher's Bible*, ed. 1885, *Aids*, p. 71). It was before the fact was ascertained that Kuenen wrote of the Sabbath (i, 245) as peculiar to Israel. The Hebrews may have had it before the Exile; but it was

¹ As to a possible prehistoric connection of Hebrews and Perso-Aryans, see Kuenen, i, 254, discussing Tiele and Spiegel, and iii, 35, 44, treating of Tiele's view, set forth in his *Godsdienst van Zarathustra*, that fire-worship was the original basis of Yahwism. Cp. Land's views, discussed by Kuenen, p. 398; and Renan, *Hist. des langues sémit.* p. 473.

² Cheyne, *Introd. to Isaiah*, Prol. pp. xxx, xxxviii, following Kusters.

³ There is a cognate dispute as to the condition of the Samaritans at the time of the Return. Stade (*Gesch. des Volkes Israel*, i, 602) holds that they were numerous and well-placed. Winckler (*Alttestamentliche Untersuchungen*, 1892, p. 107) argues that, on the contrary, they were poor and unorganized, and looked to the Jews for help. So also E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* iii (1901), 214.

clearly not then a great institution; and the mention of Sabbaths in Amos (viii, 5) and Isaiah (i, 13) is one of the reasons for doubting the antiquity of those books. The custom of synagogue meetings on the Sabbath is post-exilic, and may have arisen either in Babylon itself (so Wellhausen, *Israel*, p. 492) or in imitation of Parsee practice (so Tiele, cited by Kuenen, iii, 35). Compare E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* iii (1901), § 131. The same alternative arises with regard to the belief in angels, usually regarded as certainly Persian in origin (cp. Kuenen, iii, 37; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 90; and Sack, *Die altjüdische Religion*, 1889, p. 133). This also could have been Babylonian (Sayce, in *Var. Bible*, as cited, p. 71); even the demon Asmodeus in the Book of Tobit, usually taken as Persian, being of Babylonian derivation (*id.*). Cp. Darmesteter's introd. to *Zendavesta*, 2nd ed. ch. v. On the other hand, the conception of Satan, the Adversary, as seen in 1 Chr. xxi, 1; Zech. iii, 1, 2, seems to come from the Persian Ahriman, though the Satan of Job has not Ahriman's status. Such a modification would come of the wish to insist on the supremacy of the good God. And this quasi-monotheistic view, again, we are led to regard, in the case of the prophets, as a possible Babylonian derivation, or at least as a result of the contact of Yahwists with Babylonian culture. To a foreign influence, finally, must be definitely attributed the later Priestly Code, over-ruling Deuteronomy, lowering the Levites, setting up a high priest, calling the dues into the sanctuary, resting on the Torah the cultus which before was rested on the patriarchs, and providing cities and land for the Aaronidae and the Levites (Wellhausen, *Prolegomena*, pp. 123, 127, 147, 149, 347; *Israel*, pp. 495, 497)—the latter an arrangement impossible in mountainous Palestine, as regards the land-measurements (*id. Proleg.* p. 159, following Gramberg and Graf), and clearly deriving from some such country as Babylonia or Persia. As to the high-priest principle in Babylon and Assyria, see Sayce, *Hibbert Lectures*, pp. 59–61; Jastrow, as cited, p. 658.

Of the general effect of such contacts we have clear traces in two of the most remarkable of the later books of the Old Testament, Job and Ecclesiastes, both of which clearly belong to a late period in religious development. The majority of the critics still confidently describe Job as an original Hebrew work, mainly on the ground, apparently, that it shows no clear marks of translation, though its names and its local colour are all non-Jewish. In any case it represents, for its time, a cosmopolitan culture, and contains the work of more than one hand, the prologue and epilogue being probably older than the rest; while much of the dialogue is obviously late interpolation.

Compare Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, 1887, p. 72; Bradley, *Lectures on Job*, p. 171; Bleek-Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, § 268 (291), ed. 1878, p. 542; Driver, *Introd.* pp. 405-8; Cornill, *Einleit. in das alte Test.* 2te. Aufl. 1892, §§ 38, 42; Sharpe, *Hist. of the Hebrew Nation*, 4th ed. p. 282 sq.; Dillon, *Skeptics of the Old Test.* 1895, pp. 36-39. Renan's dating of the book six or seven centuries before Ecclesiastes (*L'Ecclésiaste*, p. 26; *Job*, pp. xv-xliii) is oddly uncritical. It must clearly be dated after Jeremiah and Ezekiel (Dillon, as cited); and Cornill even ascribes it to the fourth or third century B.C. Dr. Cheyne notes that in the skeptical passages the name Yahweh is very seldom used (only once or twice, as in xii, 9; xxviii, 28); and Dr. Driver admits that the whole book not only abounds in Aramaic words, but has a good many "explicable only from the Arabic." Other details in the book suggest the possible culture-influence of the Himyarite Arabs, who had reached a high civilization before 500 B.C. Dr. Driver's remark that "the thoughts are thoroughly Hebraic" burkes the entire problem as to the manifest innovation the book makes in Hebrew thought and literary method alike. Sharpe (p. 287) is equally arbitrary. Cp. Renan, *Job*, 1859, pp. xxv, where the newness of the whole treatment is admitted.

Dr. Dillon (pp. 43-59), following Bickell, has pointed out more or less convincingly the many interpolations made in the book after, and even before, the making of the Septuagint translation, which originally lacked 400 lines of the matter in the present Hebrew version. The discovery of the Saidic version of the LXX text of Job decides the main fact. (See Professor Bickell's *Das Buch Job*, 1894.) "It is quite possible even now to point out, by the help of a few disjointed fragments still preserved, the position, and to divine the sense, of certain spiteful and defiant passages, which, in the interest of 'religion and morals,' were remorselessly suppressed; to indicate others which were split up and transposed; and to distinguish many prolix discourses, feeble or powerful word-pictures, and trite commonplaces, which were deliberately inserted later on, for the sole purpose of toning down the most audacious piece of rationalistic philosophy which has ever yet been clothed in the music of sublime verse" (Dillon, pp. 45-46).

"Besides the four hundred verses which must be excluded on the ground that they are wanting in the Septuagint version, and were therefore added to the text at a comparatively recent period, the long-winded discourse of Elihu must be struck out, most [? much] of which was composed before the book was first translated into Greek.....In the prologue in prose..... Elihu is not once alluded to; and in the epilogue, where all the [other] debaters are named and censured, he.....is absolutely ignored.....Elihu's style is *toto cælo* different from that of the

other parts of the poem;.....while his doctrinal peculiarities, particularly his mention of interceding angels, while they coincide with those of the New Testament, are absolutely unknown to Job and his friends.....The confusion introduced into the text by this insertion is bewildering in the extreme; and yet the result is but a typical specimen of the.....tangle which was produced by the systematic endeavour of later and pious editors to reduce the poem to the proper level of orthodoxy" (*id.* pp. 55-57). Again: "Ch. xxiv, 5-8, 10-24, and ch. xxx, 3-7, take the place of Job's blasphemous complaint about the unjust government of the world."

It need hardly be added here that not only the Authorized but the Revised Version is false in the text "I know that my redeemer liveth," etc. (xix, 25-27), that being a perversion dating from Jerome. The probable meaning is given in Dr. Dillon's version:—

But I know that my avenger liveth;
Though it be at the end upon my dust,
My witness will avenge these things,
And a curse alight upon mine enemies.

The original expressed a complete disbelief in a future life (ch. xiv). Compare Dr. Dillon's rhythmic version of the restored text.

What marks off the book of Job from all other Hebrew literature is its dramatic and reflective handling of the ethical problem of theism, which the prophets either evade or dismiss by declamation against Jewish sins. Not that it is solved in Job, where the rôle of Satan is an inconclusive resort to the Persian dualistic solution, and where the deity is finally made to answer Job's freethinking by sheer literary thunder, much less ratiocinative though far more artistic than the theistic speeches of the friends. But at least the writer or writers of Job's speeches consciously grasped the issue; and the writer of the epilogue evidently felt that the least Yahweh could do was to compensate a man whom he had allowed to be wantonly persecuted. The various efforts of ancient thought to solve the same problem will be found to constitute the motive power in many later heterodox systems, theistic and atheistic.

Broadly speaking, it is solved in practice in terms of the fortunes of priests and worshippers. At all stages of religious evolution extreme ill-fortune tends to detach men from the cults that have failed to bring them succour. Be it in the case of African indigenes slaying their unsuccessful rain-doctor, Anglo-Saxon priests welcoming Christianity as a surer source of income than their old worship, pagans turning Christian at the fall of Julian, or Christians going

over to Islam at the sight of its triumph—the simple primary motive of self-interest is always potent on this as on other sides ; and at all stages of Jewish history, it is evident, there were many who held by Yahweh because they thought he prospered them, or renounced him because he did not. And the very vicissitude of things would breed a general skepticism.¹ In Zephaniah (i, 12) there is a specific allusion to those “that say in their heart, The Lord will not do good, neither will he do evil.”

Judaism is thus historically a series of socio-political selections rather than a sequence of hereditary transmission. The first definite and exclusive Yahwistic cult was an outcome of special political conditions ; and its priests would adhere to it in adversity insofar as they had no other economic resort. Every return of sunshine, on the other hand, would minister to faith ; and while many Jews in the time of Assyro-Babylonian ascendancy decided that Yahweh could not save, those Yahwists who in the actual Captivity prospered commercially in the new life would see in such prosperity a fresh proof of Yahweh's support,² and would magnify his name and endow his priests accordingly. For similar reasons, the most intense development of Judaism occurs after the Maccabean revolt, when the military triumph of the racial remnant over its oppressors inspired a new and enduring enthusiasm.

On the other hand, foreign influences would chronically tend to promote doubt, especially where the foreigner was not a mere successful votary exalting his own God, but a sympathetic thinker questioning all the Godisms alike. This consideration is a reason the more for surmising a partly foreign source for the book of Job, where, as in the passage cited from Zephaniah, there is no thought of one deity being less potent than another, but rather an impeachment of divine rule in terms of a conceptual monotheism. In any case, the book stands for more than Jewish reverie ; and where it is finally turned to an irrelevant and commonplace reaffirmation of the goodness of deity, a certain number of sincerer thinkers in all likelihood fell back on an “agnostic” solution of the eternal problem.

In certain aspects the book of Job speaks for a further reach of early freethinking than is seen in Ecclesiastes (Koheleth), which, however, at its lower level of conviction, tells of an unbelief that could not be overborne by any rhetoric. It unquestionably derives from late foreign influences. It is true that even in the book of

¹ Cp. Rowland Williams, *The Hebrew Prophets*, ii (1871), 38. This translator's rendering of the phrase cited by Zephaniah runs: “Neither good does the eternal nor evil.”

² Cp. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, iii, 216.

Malachi, which is commonly dated about 400 B.C., there is angry mention of some who ask, "Where is the God of judgment?" and say, "It is vain to serve God";¹ even as others had said it in the days of Assyrian oppression;² but in Malachi these sentiments are actually associated with foreign influences, and in Koheleth such influences are implicit. By an increasing number of students, though not yet by common critical consent, the book is dated about 200 B.C., when Greek influence was stronger in Jewry than at any previous time.

Grätz even puts it as late as the time of Herod the Great. But compare Dillon, p. 129; Tyler, *Ecclesiastes*, 1874, p. 31; Plumptre's *Ecclesiastes*, 1881, introd. p. 34; Renan, *L'Ecclésiaste*, 1882, pp. 54-59; Kuenen, *Religion of Israel*, iii, 82; Driver, *Introduction*, pp. 446-47; Bleek-Wellhausen, *Einleitung*, p. 527. Dr. Cheyne and some others still put the date before 332 B.C. Here again we are dealing with a confused and corrupted text. The German Prof. Bickell has framed an ingenious and highly plausible theory to the effect that the present incoherence of the text is mainly due to a misplacing of the leaves of the copy from which the current transcript was made. See it set forth by Dillon, pp. 92-97; cp. Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 273 sq. There has, further, been some tampering. The epilogue, in particular, is clearly the addition of a later hand—"one of the most timid and shuffling apologies ever penned" (Dillon, p. 118, note).

But the thought of the book is, as Renan says, profoundly fatigued; and the sombre avowals of the absence of divine moral government are ill-balanced by sayings, probably interpolated by other hands, averring an ultimate rectification even on earth. What remains unqualified is the deliberate rejection of the belief in a future life, couched in terms that imply the currency of the doctrine;³ and the deliberate caution against enthusiasm in religion. Belief in a powerful but remote deity, with a minimum of worship and vows, is the outstanding lesson.⁴

"To me, Koheleth is not a theist in any vital sense in his philosophic meditations" (Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 250). "Koheleth's pessimistic theory, which has its roots in secularism, is utterly incompatible with the spirit of Judaism. It is grounded upon the rejection of the Messianic expectations, and absolute disbelief in the solemn promises of Jahveh himself. It would be idle to deny that he had far more in

¹ Mal. ii, 17; iii, 13. Cp. ii, 8, 11.
³ Eccles. iii, 19-21.

² Cp. Jer. xxxiii, 24; xxxviii, 19.

⁴ Ch. v. Renan's translation lends lucidity.

common with the 'impious' than with the orthodox" (Dillon, pp. 119-20).

That there was a good deal of this species of tired or stoical semi-rationalism among the Jews of the Hellenistic period may be inferred from various traces. The opening verses of the thirtieth chapter of the book of Proverbs, attributed to AGUR, son of Jakeh, are admittedly the expression of a skeptic's conviction that God cannot be known,¹ the countervailing passages being plainly the additions of a believer. Agur's utterances probably belong to the close of the third century B.C. Here, as in Job, there are signs of Arab influence;² but at a later period the main source of skepticism for Israel was probably the Hellenistic civilization. It is told in the Talmud that in the Maccabean period there came into use the formula, "Cursed be the man that cherisheth swine; and cursed be the man that teacheth his son the wisdom of the Greeks"; and there is preserved the saying of Rabbi Simeon, son of Gamaliel, that in his father's school five hundred learnt the law, and five hundred the wisdom of the Greeks.³ Before Gamaliel, the Greek influence had affected Jewish philosophic thought; and it is very probable that among the Sadducees who resisted the doctrine of resurrection there were some thinkers of the Epicurean school. To that school may have belonged the unbelievers who are struck at in several Rabbinical passages which account for the sin of Adam as beginning in a denial of the omnipresence of God, and describe Cain as having said: "There is no judgment; there is no world to come, and there is no reward for the just, and no punishment for the wicked."⁴ But of Greek or other atheism there is no direct trace in the Hebrew literature;⁵ and the rationalism of the Sadducees, who were substantially the priestly party,⁶ was like the rationalism of the Brahmans and the Egyptian priests—something esoteric and withheld from the multitude. In the apocryphal Wisdom of Solomon, which belongs to the first century A.C., the

¹ Driver, *Introduction*, p. 378. Prof. Dillon (*Skeptics of the Old Testament*, p. 155) goes so far as to pronounce Agur a "Hebrew Voltaire," which is somewhat of a straining of the few words he has left. Cp. Dr. Moncure Conway, *Solomon and Solomonic Literature*, 1899, p. 55. In any case, Agur belongs to an age of "advanced religious reflection" (Cheyne, *Job and Solomon*, p. 152).

² Driver, *Introduction*, p. 378.

³ Biscoe, *Hist. of the Acts of the Apostles*, ed. 1829, p. 80, following Selden and Lightfoot.

⁴ S. Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 1896, p. 189, citing *Sanhedrin*, 386, and Pseudo-Jonathan to Gen. iv, 8. Cp. pp. 191-92, citing a mention of Epicurus in the Mishna.

⁵ The familiar phrase in the Psalms (xiv, i; liii, 1), "The fool hath said in his heart, there is no God," supposing it to be evidence for anything, clearly does not refer to any reasoned unbelief. Atheism could not well be quite so general as the phrase, taken literally, would imply.

⁶ Cp. W. R. Sorley, *Jewish Christians and Judaism*, 1881, p. 9; Robertson Smith, *Old Test. in the Jewish Ch.* ed. 1892, pp. 48-49. These writers somewhat exaggerate the novelty of the view they accept. Cp. Biscoe, *History of the Acts*, ed. 1829, p. 101.

denial of immortality, so explicit in Ecclesiastes, is treated as a proof of utter immorality, though the deniers are not represented as atheists.¹ They thus seem to have been still numerous, and the imputation of wholesale immorality to them is of course not to be credited;² but there is no trace of any constructive teaching on their part.

So far as the literature shows, save for the confused Judaic-Platonism of Philo of Alexandria, there is practically no rational progress in Jewish thought after Koheleth till the time of contact with revived Greek thought in Saracen Spain. The mass of the people, in the usual way, are found gravitating to the fanatical and the superstitious levels of the current creed. The book of Ruth, written to resist the separatism of the post-Exilic theocracy,³ never altered the Jewish practice, though allowed into the canon. The remarkable Levitical legislation providing for the periodical restoration of the land to the poor never came into operation,⁴ any more than the very different provision giving land and cities to the children of Aaron and the Levites. None of the more rationalistic writings in the canon seems ever to have counted for much in the national life. To conceive of "Israel," in the fashion still prevalent, as being typified in the monotheistic prophets, whatever their date, is as complete a misconception as it would be to see in Mr. Ruskin the expression of the everyday ethic of commercial England. The anti-sacrificial and universalist teachings in the prophets and in the Psalms never affected, for the people at large, the sacrificial and localized worship at Jerusalem; though they may have been esoterically received by some of the priestly or learned class there, and though they may have promoted a continual exodus of the less fanatical types, who turned to other civilizations. Despite the resistance of the Sadducees and the teaching of Job and Ecclesiastes, the belief in a resurrection rapidly gained ground⁵ in the two or three centuries before the rise of Jesuism, and furnished a basis for the new creed; as did the Messianic hope and the belief in a speedy ending of the world, with both of which Jewish fanaticism sustained itself under the long frustration of nationalistic faith before the Maccabean interlude and after the Roman conquest. It was in vain that the great teacher Hillel declared, "There is no Messiah for

¹ *Wisdom*, c. 2.

² Cp. the implications in *Ecclesiasticus*, vi, 4-6; xvi, 11-12, as to the ethics of many believers.

³ Kuenen, ii, 242-43.

⁴ Kalisch, *Comm. on Leviticus*, xxv, 8, pt. ii, p. 548.

⁵ In the *Wisdom of Solomon*, iii, 13; iv, 1, the old desire for offspring is seen to be in part superseded by the newer belief in personal immortality.

Israel"; the rest of the race persisted in cherishing the dream.¹ With the major hallucination thus in full possession, the subordinate species of superstition flourished as in Egypt and India; so that at the beginning of our era the Jews were among the most superstitious peoples in the world.² When their monotheism was fully established, and placed on an abstract footing by the destruction of the temple, it seems to have had no bettering influence on the practical ethics of the Gentiles, though it may have furthered the theistic tendency of the Stoic philosophy. Juvenal exhibits to us the Jew proselyte at Rome as refusing to show an unbeliever the way, or guide him to a spring.³ Sectarian monotheism was thus in part on a rather lower ethical and intellectual⁴ plane than the polytheism, to say nothing of the Epicureanism or the Stoicism, of the society of the Roman Empire.

It cannot even be said that the learned Rabbinical class carried on a philosophic tradition, while the indigent multitude thus discredited their creed. In the period after the fall of Jerusalem, the narrow nationalism which had always ruled there seems to have been even intensified. In the Talmud "the most general representation of the Divine Being is as the chief Rabbi of Heaven; the angelic host being his assessors. The heavenly Sanhedrim takes the opinion of living sages in cases of dispute. Of the twelve hours of the day three are spent by God in study, three in the government of the world (or rather in the exercise of mercy), three in providing food for the world, and three in playing with Leviathan. But since the destruction of Jerusalem all amusements were banished from the courts of heaven, and three hours were employed in the instruction of those who had died in infancy."⁵ So little can a nominal monotheism avail, on the basis of a completed Sacred Book, to keep thought sane when freethought is lacking.

Finally, Judaism played in the world's thought the great reactionary and obscurantist part by erecting into a dogma the irrational conception that its deity made the universe "out of nothing." At the time of the redaction of the book of Genesis this

¹ Schechter, *Studies in Judaism*, 1896, p. 216. Compare pp. 193-94.

² See *Supernatural Religion*, 6th ed. i, 97-100, 103-21; Mosheim, *Comm. on Christ. Affairs before Constantine*, Vidal's tr. i, 70; Schürer, *Jewish People in the Time of Jesus*, Eng. tr. Div. II, vol. iii, p. 152.

³ *Sat.* xiv, 96-106.

⁴ Cp. Horace, 1 *Sat.* v, 100.

⁵ Rev. A. Edersheim, *History of the Jewish Nation after the Destruction of Jerusalem*, 1856, p. 462, citing the *Avoda Sara*, a treatise directed against idolatry! Other Rabbinical views cited by Dr. Edersheim as being in comparison "sublime" are no great improvement on the above—*e.g.*, the conception of deity as "the prototype of the high priest, and the king of kings,"—"who created everything for his own glory." With all this in view, Dr. Edersheim thought it showed "spiritual decadence" in Philo Judæus to speak of Persian magi and Indian gymnosophists in the same laudatory tone as he used of the Essenes, and to attend "heathenish theatrical representations" (p. 372).

dogma had not been glimpsed: the Hebrew conception was the Babylonian—that of a pre-existent Chaos put into shape. But gradually, in the interests of monotheism, the anti-scientific doctrine was evolved¹ by way of negative to that of the Gentiles; and where the great line of Ionian thinkers passed on to the modern world the developed conception of an eternal universe,² Judaism passed on through Christianity, as well as in its own “philosophy,” the contrary dogma, to bar the way of later science.

¹ See Ps. xc, 2; Prov. viii, 22, 26.

² This is seen persisting in the lore of the Neo-Platonist writer Sallustius Philosophus (4th c.), *De Diis et Mundo*, c. 7, though quite unscientifically held.

CHAPTER V

FREETHOUGHT IN GREECE

THE highest of all the ancient civilizations, that of Greece, was naturally the product of the greatest possible complex of culture-forces;¹ and its rise to pre-eminence begins after the contact of the Greek settlers in Æolia and Ionia with the higher civilizations of Asia Minor.² The great Homeric epos itself stands for the special conditions of Æolic and Ionic life in those colonies;³ even Greek religion, spontaneous as were its earlier growths, was soon influenced by those of the East;⁴ and Greek philosophy and art alike draw their first inspirations from Eastern contact.⁵ Whatever reactions we may make against the tradition of Oriental origins,⁶ it is clear that the higher civilization of antiquity had Oriental (including in that term Egyptian) roots.⁷ At no point do we find a "pure" Greek civilization. Alike the "Mycenæan" and the "Minoan" civilizations, as recovered for us by modern excavators, show a composite basis, in which the East is implicated.⁸ And in the historic period the connection remains obvious. It matters not whether we hold the Phrygians and Karians of history to have been originally an Aryan stock, related to the Hellenes, and thus to have acted as intermediaries between Aryans and Semites, or to have been originally Semites, with whom Greeks intermingled.⁹ On either view, the intermediaries represented Semitic influences, which they passed on to the Greek-speaking races, though they in turn developed

¹ Cp. Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 205, 207, 212.

² Cp. E. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, ii, 533.

³ Cp. K. O. Müller, *Literature of Ancient Greece*, ed. 1847, p. 77.

⁴ Duncker, *Gesch. des Alterth.* 2 Aufl. iii, 209-10, 252-54, 319 sq.; E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterth.* ii, 181, 365, 369, 377, 380, 535 (see also ii, 100, 102, 105, 106, 115 note, etc.); W. Christ, *Gesch. der griech. Lit.* 3te Aufl. p. 12; Gruppe, *Die griech. Culte und Mythen*, 1887, p. 165 sq.

⁵ E. Curtius, *Griech. Gesch.* i, 28, 29, 35, 40, 41, 101, 203, etc.; Meyer, ii, 369.

⁶ See the able and learned essay of S. Reinach, *Le Mirage Orientale*, reprinted from *L'Anthropologie*, 1893. I do not find that its arguments affect any of the positions here taken up. See pp. 40-41.

⁷ Meyer, ii, 369; Benn, *The Philosophy of Greece*, 1898, p. 42.

⁸ Cp. Bury, *History of Greece*, ed. 1906, pp. vi, 10, 27, 32-34, 40, etc.; Burrows, *The Discoveries in Crete*, 1907, ch. ix; Maisch, *Manual of Greek Antiquities*, Eng. tr. §§ 8, 9, 10, 60; H. R. Hall, *The Oldest Civilization of Greece*, 1901, pp. 31, 32.

⁹ Cp. K. O. Müller, *Hist. of the Doric Race*, Eng. tr. 1830, i, 8-10; Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* 1885, i, 33; Grote, *Hist. of Greece*, 10-vol. ed. 1888, iii, 3-5, 35-44; Duncker, iii, 136, n.; E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, i, 299-310 (§§ 250-58); E. Curtius, i, 29; Schömann, *Griech. Alterthümer*, as cited, i, 2-3, 89; Burrows, ch. ix.

their deities in large part on psychological lines common to them and the Semites.¹

As to the obvious Asiatic influences on historic Greek civilization, compare Winwood Reade, *The Martyrdom of Man*, 1872, p. 64; Von Ihering, *Vorgeschichte der Indo-Europäer*, Eng. tr. ("The Evolution of the Aryan"), p. 73; Schömann, *Griech. Alterthümer*, 2te Aufl. 1861, i, 10; E. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterth.* ii, 155; A. Bertrand, *Études de mythol. et d'archéol. grecques*, 1858, pp. 40-41; Bury, introd. p. 3. It seems clear that the Egyptian influence is greatly overstated by Herodotos (ii. 49-52, etc.), who indeed avows that he is but repeating what the Egyptians affirm. The Egyptian priests made their claim in the spirit in which the Jews later made theirs. Herodotos, besides, would prefer an Egyptian to an Asiatic derivation, and so would his audience. But it must not be overlooked that there was an Egyptian influence in the "Minoan" period.

A Hellenistic enthusiasm has led a series of eminent scholars to carry so far their resistance to the tradition of Oriental beginnings² as to take up the position that Greek thought is "autochthonous."³ If it were, it could not conceivably have progressed as it did. Only the tenacious psychological prejudice as to race-characters and racial "genius" could thus long detain so many students at a point of view so much more nearly related to supernaturalism than to science. It is safe to say that if any people is ever seen to progress in thought, art, and life, with measurable rapidity, its progress is due to the reactions of foreign intercourse. The primary civilizations, or what pass for such, as those of Akkad and Egypt, are immeasurably slow in accumulating culture-material; the relatively rapid developments always involve the stimulus of old cultures upon a new and vigorous civilization, well-placed for social evolution for the time being. There is no point in early Greek evolution, so far as we have documentary trace of it, at which foreign impact or stimulus is not either patent or inferrible.⁴ In the very dawn of history the Greeks are found to be a composite stock,⁵ growing still more composite; and the very beginnings of its higher culture are traced to the non-Grecian people of Thrace,⁶ who worshipped the

¹ Cp. Meyer, ii, 97; and his art. "BAAL" in Roscher's *Ausführl. Lex. Mythol.* i, 2867.

² The fallacy of this tradition, as commonly put, was well shown by Renouvier long ago—*Manuel de philosophie ancienne*, 1844, i, 3-13. Cp. Ritter, as cited below.

³ Cp. on one side, Ritter, *Hist. of Anc. Philos.* Eng. tr. i, 151; Renan, *Études d'hist. religieuse*, pp. 47-48; Zeller, *Hist. of Greek Philos.* Eng. tr. 1881, i, 43-49; and on the other Ueberweg, *Hist. of Philos.* Eng. tr. i, 31, and the weighty criticism of Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, i, 126-27 (Eng. tr. i, 9, note 5).

⁴ Cp. Curtius, i, 125; Bury, introd. and ch. i.

⁵ Cp. Bury, as cited.

⁶ As to the primary mixture of "Pelasgians" and Hellenes, cp. Busolt, i, 27-32; Curtius, i, 27; Schömann, i, 3-4; Thirlwall, *Hist. of Greece*, ed. 1839, i, 51-52, 116. K. O. Müller (*Doric Race*, Eng. tr. i, 10) and Thirlwall, who follows him (i, 45-47), decide that the

Muses. As seen by Herodotos and Thucydides, "the original Hellenes were a particular conquering tribe of great prestige, which attracted the surrounding tribes to follow it, imitate it, and call themselves by its name. The Spartans were, to Herodotos, Hellenic; the Athenians, on the other hand, were not. They were Pelasgian, but by a certain time 'changed into Hellenes and learnt their language.' In historical times we cannot really find any tribe of pure Hellenes in existence."¹ The later supremacy of the Greek culture is thus to be explained in terms not of an abnormal "Greek genius,"² but of the special evolution of intelligence in the *Greek-speaking* stock, firstly through constant crossing with others, and secondarily through its furtherance by the special social conditions of the more progressive Greek city-states, of which conditions the most important were their geographical dividedness and their own consequent competition and interaction.³

The whole problem of Oriental "influence" has been obscured, and the solution retarded, by the old academic habit of discussing questions of mental evolution *in vacuo*. Even the reaction against idolatrous Hellenism proceeded without due regard to historical sequence; and the return reaction against that is still somewhat lacking in breadth of inference. There has been too much on one side of assumption as to early Oriental achievement; and too much tendency on the other to assume that the positing of an "influence" on the Greeks is a disparagement of the "Greek mind." The superiority of that in its later evolution seems too obvious to need affirming. But that hardly justifies so able a writer as Professor Burnet in concluding (*Early Greek Philosophy*, 2nd ed. introd. pp. 22-23) that "the" Egyptians knew no more arithmetic than was learned by their children in the schools; or in saying (*id.* p. 26) that "the" Babylonians "studied and recorded celestial phenomena for what we call astrological purposes, *not* from any scientific interest." How can we have the right to say that no Babylonians had a scientific interest in the data? Such interest would in the nature of the case miss the popular reproduction given to astrological lore. But it might very well subsist.

Professor Burnet, albeit a really original investigator, has not here had due regard to the early usage of collegiate or corporate culture, in which arcane knowledge was reserved for the few. Thus he writes (p. 26) concerning the Greeks that "it was not

Thracians cannot have been very different from the Hellenes in dialect, else they could not have influenced the latter as they did. This position is clearly untenable, whatever may have been the ethnological facts. It would entirely negate the possibility of reaction between Greeks, Kelts, Egyptians, Semites, Romans, Persians, and Hindus.

¹ Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, 1912, p. 59.

² Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alt.* ii, 583.

³ The question is discussed at some length in the author's *Evolution of States*, 1912.

till the time of Plato that even the names of the planets were *known*." Surely they must have been "known" to some adepts long before: how else came they to be accepted? As Professor Burnet himself notes (p. 34), "in almost every department of life we find that the corporation at first is everything and the individual nothing. The peoples of the East hardly got beyond this stage at all: their science, such as it is, is anonymous, the inherited property of a caste or guild, and we still see clearly in some cases that it was once the same among the Hellenes." Is it not then probable that astronomical knowledge was so ordered by Easterns, and passed on to Hellenes?

There still attaches to the investigation of early Greek philosophy the drawback that the philosophical scholars do not properly posit the question: What was the early Ionic Greek society like? How did the Hellenes relate to the older polities and cultures which they found there? Professor Burnet makes justifiable fun (p. 21, *note*) of Dr. Gomperz's theory of the influence of "native brides"; but he himself seems to argue that the Greeks could learn nothing from the men they conquered, though he admits (p. 20) their derivation of "their art and many of their religious ideas from the East." If religion, why not religious speculation, leading to philosophy and science? This would be a more fruitful line of inquiry than one based on the assumption that "the" Babylonians went one way and "the" Greeks another. After all, only a few in each race carried on the work of thought and discovery. We do not say that "the English" wrote Shakespeare. Why affirm always that "the" Greeks did whatever great Greeks achieved?

On the immediate issue Professor Burnet incidentally concedes what is required. After arguing that the East perhaps borrowed more from the West than did the West from the East, he admits (p. 21): "It would, however, be quite another thing to say that Greek philosophy originated quite independently of Oriental influence."

§ 1

By the tacit admission of one of the ablest opponents of the theory of foreign influence, Hellenic religion as fixed by Homer for the Hellenic world was partly determined by Asiatic influences. Otfried Müller decided not only that Homer the man (in whose personality he believed) was probably a Smyranean, whether of Æolic or Ionic stock,¹ but that Homer's religion must have repre-

¹ *Lit of Anc. Greece*, pp. 41-47. The discussion of the Homeric problem is, of course, alien to the present inquiry.

sented a special selection from the manifold Greek mythology, necessarily representing his local bias.¹ Now, the Greek cults at Smyrna, as in the other Æolic and Ionic cities of Asia Minor, would be very likely to reflect in some degree the influence of the Karian or other Asiatic cults around them.² The early Attic conquerors of Miletos allowed the worship of the Karian Sun-God there to be carried on by the old priests; and the Attic settlers of Ephesos in the same way adopted the neighbouring worship of the Lydian Goddess (who became the Artemis or "Great Diana" of the Ephesians), and retained the ministry of the attendant priests and eunuchs.³ Smyrna was apparently not like these a mixed community, but one founded by Achaians from the Peloponnesos; but the general Ionic and Æolic religious atmosphere, set up by common sacrifices,⁴ must have been represented in an epic brought forth in that region. The Karian civilization had at one time spread over a great part of the Ægean, including Delos and Cyprus.⁵ Such a civilization must have affected that of the Greek conquerors, who only on that basis became civilized traders.⁶

It is not necessary to ask how far exactly the influence may have gone in the Iliad: the main point is that even at that stage of comparatively simple Hellenism the Asiatic environment, Karian or Phoenician, counted for something, whether in cosmogony or in furthering the process of God-grouping, or in conveying the cult of Cyprian Aphrodite,⁷ or haply in lending some characteristics to Zeus and Apollo and Athênê,⁸ an influence none the less real because the genius of the poet or poets of the Iliad has given to the whole Olympian group the artistic stamp of individuality which thenceforth distinguishes the Gods of Greece from all others. Indeed, the very creation of a graded hierarchy out of the independent local deities of Greece, the marrying of the once isolated Pelasgic Hêrê to Zeus, the subordination to him of the once isolated Athênê and Apollo—all this tells of the influence of a Semitic world in which each Baal had

¹ *Introd. to Scientif. Mythol.* Eng. tr. pp. 180, 181, 291. Cp. Curtius, i, 126.

² Cp. Curtius, i, 107, as to the absence in Homer of any distinction between Greeks and barbarians; and Grote, 10-vol. ed. 1888, iii, 37-38, as to the same feature in Archilochos.

³ Duncker, *Gesch. des Alt.*, as cited, iii, 209-10; pp. 257, 319 sq. Cp. K. O. Müller, as last cited, pp. 181, 193; Curtius, i, 43-49, 53, 54, 107, 365, 373, 377, etc.; Grote, iii, 39-41; and Meyer, ii, 104.

⁴ Duncker, iii, 214; Curtius, i, 155, 121; Grote, iii, 279-80.

⁵ Busolt, *Griech. Gesch.* 1885, i, 171-72. Cp. pp. 32-34; and Curtius, i, 42.

⁶ On the general question cp. Gruppe, *Die griechischen Culte und Mythen*, pp. 151 ff., 157, 158 ff., 656 ff., 672 ff.

⁷ Preller, *Griech. Mythol.* 2 Aufl. i, 260; Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 211; R. Brown, Jr., *Semit. Influ. in Hellenic Mythol.* 1898, p. 130; Murray, *Hist. of Anc. Greek Lit.* p. 35; H. R. Hall, *Oldest Civilization of Greece*, 1901, p. 290.

⁸ See Tiele, *Outlines*, pp. 210, 212. Cp., again, Curtius, *Griech. Gesch.* i, 95, as to the probability that the "twelve Gods" were adjusted to the confederations of twelve cities; and again p. 126.

his wife, and in which the monarchic system developed on earth had been set up in heaven.¹ But soon the Asiatic influence becomes still more clearly recognizable. There is reason to hold with Schrader that the belief in a mildly blissful future state, as seen even in the *Odyssey*² and in the *Theogony* ascribed to Hesiod,³ is "a new belief which is only to be understood in view of oriental tales and teaching."⁴ In the *Theogony*, again, the Semitic element increases,⁵ Kronos being a Semitic figure;⁶ while Semelê, if not Dionysos, appears to be no less so.⁷ But we may further surmise that in Homer, to begin with, the conception of Okeanos, the earth-surrounding Ocean-stream, as the origin of all things,⁸ comes from some Semitic source; and that Hesiod's more complicated scheme of origins from Chaos is a further borrowing of oriental thought—both notions being found in ancient Babylonian lore, whence the Hebrews derived their combination of Chaos and Ocean in the first verses of Genesis.⁹ It thus appears that the earlier oriental¹⁰ influence upon Greek thought was in the direction of developing religion,¹¹ with only the germ of rationalism conveyed in the idea of an existence of matter before the Gods,¹² which we shall later find scientifically developed. But the case is obscure. Insofar as the *Theogony*, for instance, partly moralizes the more primitively savage myths,¹³ it may be that it represents the spontaneous need of the more highly evolved race to give an acceptable meaning to divine tales which, coming from another race, have not a quite sacrosanct prescription, though the tendency is to

¹ "Even the title 'king' (*Βασιλεύς*) seems to have been borrowed by the Greek from Phrygian.....It is expressly recorded that *τύραννος* is a Lydian word. *Βασιλεύς* ('king' resists all attempts to explain it as a purely Greek formation, and the termination assimilates it to certain Phrygian words." (Prof. Ramsay, in *Encyc. Brit.* art. PHRYGIA). In this connection note the number of names containing *Anax* (Anaximenes, Anaximandros, Anaxagoras, etc.) among the Ionian Greeks.

² iv, 561 sq.

³ It is now agreed that this is merely a guess. The document, further, has been redacted and interpolated.

⁴ *Prehist. Antiq. of the Aryan Peoples*, Eng. tr. p. 423. Wilamowitz holds that the verses *Od.* xi, 566-631, are interpolations made later than 600 B.C.

⁵ Tiele, *Outlines*, p. 209; Preller, p. 263.

⁶ Meyer says on the contrary (*Gesch. des Alt.* ii, 103, Anm.) that "Kronos is certainly a Greek figure"; but he cannot be supposed to dispute that the Greek Kronos cult is grafted on a Semitic one.

⁷ Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, pp. 54, 181. Cp. Cox, *Mythol. of the Aryan Nations*, p. 260, note. It has not, however, been noted in the discussions on Semelê that *Semlje* is the Slavic name for the Earth as Goddess. Ranke, *History of Servia*, Eng. tr. p. 43.

⁸ *Iliad*, xiv, 201, 302.

⁹ Sayce, Hibbert Lectures, p. 367 sq.; *Ancient Empires*, p. 158. Note p. 387 in the Lectures as to the Assyrian influence, and p. 391 as to the Homeric notion in particular. Cp. W. Christ, *Gesch. der griech. Literatur*, § 68.

¹⁰ It is unnecessary to examine here the view of Herodotos that many of the Greek cults were borrowed from Egypt. Herodotos reasoned from analogies, with no exact historical knowledge. But cp. Renouvier, *Manuel*, i, 67, as to probable Egyptian influence.

¹¹ Cp. Meyer, ii, §§ 453-60, as to the eastern initiative of Orphic theology.

¹² It is noteworthy that the traditional doctrine associated with the name of Orpheus included a similar materialistic theory of the beginning of things. Athenagoras, *Apol.* c. 19. Cp. Renouvier, *Manuel de philos. anc.* i, 69-72; and Meyer, ii, 743.

¹³ Cp. Meyer, ii, 726. As to the oriental elements in Hesiod see further Gruppe, *Die griechischen Culte und Mythen*, 1887, pp. 577, 587, 589, 593.

accept them. On the other hand, it may have been a further foreign influence that gave the critical impulse.

Note. "It is plain enough that Homer and Hesiod represent, both theologically and socially, the *close* of a long epoch, and not the youth of the Greek world, as some have supposed. The real signification of many myths is lost to them, and so is the import of most of the names and titles of the elder Gods, which are archaic and strange, while the subordinate personages generally have purely Greek names" (Professor Mahaffy, *History of Classical Greek Literature*, 1880, i, 17).

§ 2

Whatever be the determining conditions, it is clear that the Homeric epos stands for a new growth of secular song, distinct from the earlier poetry, which by tradition was "either lyrical or oracular." The poems ascribed to the pre-Homeric bards "were all short, and they were all strictly religious. In these features they contrasted broadly with the epic school of Homer. Even the hexameter metre seems not to have been used in these old hymns, and was called a new invention of the Delphic priests.¹ Still further, the majority of these hymns are connected with mysteries apparently ignored by Homer, or with the worship of Dionysos, which he hardly knew."² Intermediate between the earlier religious poetry and the Homeric epic, then, was a hexametric verse, used by the Delphic priesthood; and to this order of poetry belongs the *Theogony* which goes under the name of Hesiod, and which is a sample of other and older works,³ probably composed by priests. And the distinctive mark of the Homeric epos is that, framed as it was to entertain feudal chiefs and their courts, it turned completely away from the sacerdotal norm and purpose. "Thus epic poetry, from having been purely religious, became purely secular. After having treated men and heroes in subordination to the Gods, it came to treat the Gods in relation to men. Indeed, it may be said of Homer that in the image of man created he God."⁴

As to the non-religiousness of the Homeric epics, there is a division of critical opinion. Meyer insists (*Gesch. des Alt.* ii, 395) that, as contrasted with the earlier religious poetry, "the epic poetry is throughout secular (*profan*); it aims at charming its hearers, not at propitiating the Gods"; and he further sees

¹ Cp. however, Bury (*Hist. of Greece*, pp. 6, 65), who assumes that the Greeks brought the hexameter with them to Hellas. Contrast Murray, *Four Stages*, p. 61.

² Mahaffy, *History of Classical Greek Literature*, 1880, i, 15.

³ *Id.* p. 16. Cp. W. Christ, as cited, p. 79.

⁴ Mahaffy, pp. 16-17.

in the whole Ionian mood a certain cynical disillusionment (*id.* ii, 723). Cp. Benn, *Philos. of Greece*, p. 40, citing Hegel. E. Curtius (*G. G.* i, 126) goes so far as to ascribe a certain irony to the portraiture of the Gods (Ionian Apollo excepted) in Homer, and to trace this to Ionian levity. To the same cause he assigns the lack of any expression of a sense of stigma attaching to murder. This sense he holds the Greek people had, though Homer does not hint it. (Cp. Grote, i, 24, whose inference Curtius implicitly impugns.) Girard (*Le Sentiment religieux en Grèce*, 1869), on the contrary, appears to have no suspicion of any problem to solve, treating Homer as unaffectedly religious. The same view is taken by Prof. Paul Decharme. "On chercherait vainement dans *l'Iliade* et dans *l'Odyssée* les premières traces du scepticisme grec à l'égard des fables des dieux. C'est avec une foi entière en la réalité des événements mythiques que les poètes chantent les légendes.....; c'est en toute simplicité d'âme aussi que les auditeurs de l'épopée écoutent....." (*La critique des traditions religieuses chez les grecs*, 1904, p. 1.) Thus we have a kind of balance of contrary opinions, German against French. Any verdict on the problem must recognize on the one hand the possibilities of naïve credulity in an unlettered age, and on the other the probability of critical perception on the part of a great poet. I have seen both among Boers in South Africa. On the general question of the mood of the Homeric poems compare Gilbert Murray, *Four Stages of Greek Religion*, 1912, p. 77, and *Hist. of Anc. Greek Lit.* pp. 34, 35; and A. Benn, *The Philosophy of Greece in Relation to the Character of its People*, 1898, pp. 29-30.

Still, it cannot be said that in the *Iliad* there is any clear hint of religious skepticism, though the Gods are so wholly in the likeness of men that the lower deities fight with heroes and are worsted, while Zeus and Hêrê quarrel like any earthly couple. In the *Odyssey* there is a bare hint of possible speculation in the use of the word *atheos*; but it is applied only in the phrase οὐκ ἄθεεϊ, "not without a God,"¹ in the sense of similar expressions in other passages and in the *Iliad*.² The idea was that sometimes the Gods directly meddled. When Odysseus accuses the suitors of not dreading the Gods,³ he has no thought of accusing them of unbelief.⁴

¹ *Od.* xviii, 352.

² *Od.* vi, 240; *Il.* v, 185.

³ *Od.* xxi, 39.

⁴ In *Od.* xiv, 18, ἀντίθεοι means not "opposed to the Gods," but "God-like," in the ordinary Homeric sense of noble-looking or richly attired, as men in the presence of the Gods. Cp. vi, 241. Yet a Scholiast on a former passage took it in the sense of God-opposing. Clarke's ed. *in loc.* Liddell and Scott give no use of ἄθεος, in the sense of denying the Gods, before Plato (*Apol.* 26 C, etc.), or in the sense of ungodly before Pindar (*P.* iv, 288) and Æschylus (*Eumen.* 151). For Sophocles it has the force of "God-forsaken" — *Oedip. Tyr.* 254 (245), 661 (640), 1360 (1326). Cp. *Electra*, 1181 (1162). But already before Plato we find the terms ἀπιστος and ἄθεος, "faithless" or "infidel" and "atheist," used as terms of moral aspersion, quite in the Christian manner (Euripides, *Helena*, 1147), where there is no question of incredulity.

Homer has indeed been supposed to have exercised a measure of relative freethought in excluding from his song the more offensive myths about the Gods,¹ but such exclusion may be sufficiently explained on the score that the epopees were chanted in aristocratic dwellings, in the presence of womenkind, without surmising any process of doubt on the poet's part.

On the other hand, it was inevitable that such a free treatment of things hitherto sacred should not only affect the attitude of the lay listener towards the current religion, but should react on the religious consciousness. God-legends so fully thrust on secular attention were bound to be discussed; and in the adaptations of myth for liturgical purposes by STESICHOROS (fl. circa 600 B.C.) we appear to have the first open trace of a critical revolt in the Greek world against immoral or undignified myths.² In his work, it is fair to say, we see "the beginning of rationalism": "the decisive step is taken: once the understanding criticizes the sanctified tradition, it raises itself to be the judge thereof; no longer the common tradition but the individual conviction is the ground of religious belief."³ Religious, indeed, the process still substantially is. It is to preserve the credit of Helena as a Goddess that Stesichoros repudiates the Homeric account of her,⁴ somewhat in the spirit in which the framers of the Hesiodic theogony manipulated the myths without rejecting them, or the Hebrew redactors tampered with their text. But in Stesichoros there is a new tendency to reject the myth altogether;⁵ so that at this stage freethought is still part of a process in which religious feeling, pressed by an advancing ethical consciousness, instinctively clears its standing ground.

It is in Pindar, however (518-442 B.C.), that we first find such a mental process plainly avowed by a believer. In his first Olympic Ode he expressly declares the need for bringing afterthought to bear on poetic lore, that so men may speak nought unfitting of the Gods; and he protests that he will never tell the tale of the blessed ones banqueting on human flesh.⁶ In the ninth Ode he again protests that his lips must not speak blasphemously of such a thing as strife among the immortals.⁷ Here the critical

¹ Cp. Lang, *Myth, Ritual, and Religion*, 2nd ed. i, 14-15, and cit. there from Professor Jebb.

² Cp. Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterthums*, ii, 724-27; Grote, as cited, i, 279-81.

³ Meyer, ii, 724, 727.

⁴ The tradition is confused. Stesichoros is said first to have aspersed Helen, whereupon she, as Goddess, struck him with blindness: thereafter he published a retractation, in which he declared that she had never been at Troy, an *eidolon* or phantasm taking her name; and on this his sight was restored. We can but divine through the legend the probable reality, the documents being lost. See Grote, as cited, for the details. For the eulogies of Stesichoros by ancient writers, see Girard, *Sentiment religieux en Grèce*, 1869, pp. 175-79.

⁵ Cp. Meyer (1901), iii, § 244.

⁶ *Ol.* i, 42-57, 80-85.

⁷ *Ol.* ix, 54-61.

motive is ethical, though, while repudiating one kind of scandal about the Gods, Pindar placidly accepts others no less startling to the modern sense. His critical revolt, in fact, is far from thoroughgoing, and suggests rather a religious man's partial response to pressure from others than any independent process of reflection.¹

"He [Pindar] was honestly attached to the national religion and to its varieties in old local cults. He lived a somewhat sacerdotal life, labouring in honour of the Gods, and seeking to spread a reverence for old traditional beliefs. He, moreover, shows an acquaintance with Orphic rites and Pythagorean mysteries, which led him to preach the doctrine of immortality, and of rewards and punishments in the life hereafter. [Note.—The most explicit fragment (*θρηνοί*, 3), is, however, not considered genuine by recent critics.] He is indeed more affected by the advance of freethinking than he imagines; he borrows from the neologians the habit of rationalizing myths, and explaining away immoral acts and motives in the Gods; but these things are isolated attempts with him, and have no deep effect upon his general thinking" (Mahaffy, *Hist. of Greek Lit.* i, 213-14).

For such a development we are not, of course, forced to assume a foreign influence: mere progress in refinement and in mental activity could bring it about; yet none the less it is probable that foreign influence did quicken the process. It is true that from the beginnings of the literary period Greek thought played with a certain freedom on myth, partly perhaps because the traditions visibly came from various races, and there was no strong priesthood to ossify them. After Homer and Hesiod, men looked back to those poets as shaping theology to their own minds.² But all custom is conservative, and Pindar's mind had that general cast. On the other hand, external influence was forthcoming. The period of Pindar and Æschylus [525-455 B.C.] follows on one in which Greek thought, stimulated on all sides, had taken the first great stride in its advance beyond all antiquity. Egypt had been fully thrown open to the Greeks in the reign of Psammetichos³ (650 B.C.); and a great historian, who contends that the "sheer inherent and expansive force" of "the" Greek intellect, "aided but by no means either impressed or provoked from without," was the true cause, yet concedes that intercourse with Egypt "enlarged the range of

¹ He dedicated statues to Zeus, Apollo, and Hermes. Pausanias, ix, 16, 17.

² Herodot. ii, 53.

³ A ruler of Libyan stock, and so led by old Libyan connections to make friends with Greeks. He reigned over fifty years, and the Greek connection grew very close. Curtius, i, 344-45. Cp. Grote, i, 144-55.

their thoughts and observations, while it also imparted to them that vein of mysticism which overgrew the primitive simplicity of the Homeric religion," and that from Asia Minor in turn they had derived "musical instruments and new laws of rhythm and melody," as well as "violent and maddening religious rites."¹ And others making similar *à priori* claims for the Greek intelligence are forced likewise to admit that the mental transition between Homer and Herodotos cannot be explained save in terms of "the influence of other creeds, and the necessary operation of altered circumstances and relations."² In the *Persae* of Æschylus we even catch a glimpse of direct contact with foreign skepticism;³ and again in the *Agamemnon* there is a reference to some impious one who denied that the Gods deigned to have care of mortals.⁴ It seems unwarrantable to read as "ridicule of popular polytheism" the passage in the same tragedy:⁵ "Zeus, whosoever he be; if this name be well-pleasing to himself in invocation, by this do I name him." It may more fitly be read⁶ as an echo of the saying of Herakleitos that "the Wise [= the Logos?] is unwilling and willing to be called by the name of Zeus."⁷ But in the poet's thought, as revealed in the *Prometheus*, and in the *Agamemnon* on the theme of the sacrifice of Iphigeneia, there has occurred an ethical judgment of the older creeds, an approach to pantheism, a rejection of anthropomorphism, and a growth of pessimism that tells of their final insufficiency.

The leaning to pantheism is established by the discovery that the disputed lines, "Zeus is sky, earth, and heaven: Zeus is all things, yea, greater than all things" (Frag. 443), belonged to the lost tragedy of the *Heliades* (Haigh, *Tragic Drama of the Greeks*, 1896, p. 88). For the pessimism see the *Prometheus*, 247-51. The anti-anthropomorphism is further to be made out from the lines ascribed to Æschylus by Justin Martyr (*De Monarchia*, c. 2) and Clemens Alexandrinus (*Stromata*, v, 14). They are expressly pantheistic; but their genuineness is doubtful. The story that Æschylus was nearly killed by a theatre audience on the score that he had divulged part of the mysteries in a tragedy (Haigh, *The Attic Theatre*, 1889, p. 316; *Tragic Drama*, pp. 49-50) does not seem to have suggested to

¹ Grote, 10-vol. ed. 1888, i, 307, 326, 329, 413. Cp. i, 27-30; ii, 52; iii, 39-41, etc.

² K. O. Müller, *Introd. to Mythology*, p. 192.

³ "Then one [of the Persians] who before had in nowise believed in [or, recognized the existence of] the Gods, offered prayer and supplication, doing obeisance to Earth and Heaven" (*Persae*, 497-99).

⁴ *Agamemnon*, 370-72. This is commonly supposed to be a reference to Diagoras the Melian (below, p. 159).

⁵ *Agam.* 170-72 (160-62).

⁶ So Whittaker, *Priests, Philosophers, and Prophets*, 1911, pp. 42-43.

⁷ So Buckley, in Bohn trans. of Æschylus, p. 100. He characterizes as a "skeptical formula" the phrase "Zeus, whoever he may be"; but goes on to show that such formulas were grounded on the Semitic notion that the true name of God was concealed from man.

Aristotle, who tells it (*Nicomachean Ethics*, iii, 2), any heterodox intention on the tragedian's part; but it is hard to see an orthodox believer in the author either of the *Prometheus*, wherein Zeus is posed as brutal might crucifying innocence and beneficence, or of the *Agamemnon*, where the father, perplexed in the extreme, can but fall back helplessly on formulas about the all-sufficiency of Zeus when called upon to sacrifice his daughter. Cp. Haigh, *Tragic Drama*, p. 86 sq. "Some critics," says Mr. Haigh (p. 88), "have been led to imagine that there is in Æschylus a double Zeus—the ordinary God of the polytheistic religion and the one omnipotent deity in whom he really believed. They suppose that he had no genuine faith in the credibility of the popular legends, but merely used them as a setting for his tragedies; and that his own convictions were of a more philosophical type," as seen in the pantheistic lines concerning Zeus. To this Mr. Haigh replies that it is "most improbable that there was any clear distinction in the mind of Æschylus" between the two conceptions of Zeus; going on, however, to admit that "much, no doubt, he regarded as uncertain, much as false. Even the name 'Zeus' was to him a mere convention." Mr. Haigh in this discussion does not attempt to deal with the problem of the *Prometheus*.

The hesitations of the critics on this head are noteworthy. Karl Ottfried Müller, who is least himself in dealing with fundamental issues of creed, evades the problem (*Lit. of Anc. Greece*, 1847, p. 329) with the bald suggestion that "Æschylus, in his own mind, must have felt how this severity [of Zeus], a necessary accompaniment of the transition from the Titanic period to the government of the Gods of Olympus, was to be reconciled with the mild wisdom which he makes an attribute of Zeus in the subsequent ages of the world. Consequently, the deviation from right.....would all lie on the side of Prometheus." This nugatory plea—which is rightly rejected by Burckhardt (*Griech. Culturgesch.* ii, 25)—is ineffectually backed by the argument that the friendly Oceanides recur to the thought, "Those only are wise who humbly reverence Adrasteia (*Fate*)"—as if the positing of a supreme Fate were not a further belittlement of Zeus.

Other critics are similarly evasive. Patin (*Eschyle*, éd. 1877, p. 250 sq.), noting the vagaries of past criticism, hostile and other, avowedly leaves the play an unsolved enigma, affirming only the commonly asserted "piety" of Æschylus. Girard (*Le sentiment religieux en Grèce*, pp. 425–29) does no better, while dogmatically asserting that the poet is "the Greek faithful to the faith of his fathers, which he interprets with an intelligent and emotional (*émue*) veneration." Meyer (iii, §§ 257–58) draws an elaborate parallel between Æschylus and Pindar, affirming in turn the "tiefe Frömmigkeit" of the

former—and in turn leaves the enigma of the *Prometheus* unsolved. Professor Decharme, rightly rejecting the fanciful interpretations of Quinet and others who allegorize Prometheus into humanity revolting against superstition, offers a very unsatisfying explanation of his own (p. 107), which practically denies that there is any problem to solve.

Prof. Mahaffy, with his more vivacious habit of thought, comes to the evaded issue. "How," he asks, "did the Athenian audience, who vehemently attacked the poet for divulging the mysteries, tolerate such a drama? And still more, how did Æschylus, a pious and serious thinker, venture to bring such a subject on the stage with a moral purpose?" The answers suggested are: (1) that in all old religions there are tolerated anomalous survivals; (2) that "a very extreme distortion of their Gods will not offend many who would feel outraged at any open denial of them"; (3) that all Greeks longed for despotic power for themselves, and that "no Athenian, however he sympathized with Prometheus, would think of blaming Zeus for.....crushing all resistance to his will." But even if these answers—of which the last is the most questionable—be accepted, "the question of the poet's intention is far more difficult, and will probably never be satisfactorily answered." Finally, we have this summing-up: "Æschylus was, indeed, essentially a theologian.....but, what is more honourable and exceptional, he was so candid and honest a theologian that he did not approach men's difficulties for the purpose of refuting them or showing them weak and groundless. On the contrary, though an orthodox and pious man, though clearly convinced of the goodness of Providence, and of the profound truth of the religion of his fathers, he was ever stating boldly the contradictions and anomalies in morals and in myths, and thus naturally incurring the odium and suspicion of the professional advocates of religion and their followers. He felt, perhaps instinctively, that a vivid dramatic statement of these problems in his tragedies was better moral education than vapid platitudes about our ignorance, and about our difficulties being only caused by the shortness of our sight" (*Hist. of Greek Lit.* i, 260-61, 273-74).

Here, despite the intelligent handling, the enigma is merely transferred from the great tragedian's work to his character: it is not solved. No solution is offered of the problem of the pantheism of the fragment above cited, which is quite irreconcilable with any orthodox belief in Greek religion, though such sayings are at times repeated by unthinking believers, without recognition of their bearing. That the pantheism is a philosophical element imported into the Greek world from the Babylonian through the early Ionian thinkers seems to be the historical fact (cp. Whittaker, as last cited): that the

importation meant the dissolution of the national faith for many thinking men seems to be no less true. It seems finally permissible, then, to suggest that the "piety" of Æschylus was either discontinuous or a matter of artistic rhetoric and public spirit, and that the *Prometheus* is a work of profound and terrible irony, unburdening his mind of reveries that religion could not conjure away. The discussion on the play has unduly ignored the question of its date. It is, in all probability, one of the latest of the works of Æschylus (K. O. Müller, *Lit. of Anc. Greece*, p. 327; Haigh, *Tragic Drama*, p. 109). Müller points to the employment of the third actor—a late development—and Haigh to the overshadowing of the choruses by the dialogue; also to the mention (ll. 366-72) of the eruption of Etna, which occurred in 475 B.C. This one circumstance goes far to solve the dispute. Written near the end of the poet's life the play belongs to the latest stages of his thinking; and if it departs widely in its tone from the earlier plays, the reasonable inference is that his ideas had undergone a change. The *Agamemnon*, with its desolating problem, seems to be also one of his later works. Rationalism, indeed, does not usually emerge in old age, though Voltaire was deeply shaken in his theism by the earthquake of Lisbon; but Æschylus is unique even among men of genius; and the highest flight of Greek drama may well stand for an abnormal intellectual experience.

In this primary entrance of critical doubt into drama we have one of the sociological clues to the whole evolution of Greek thought. It has been truly said that the constant action of the tragic stage, the dramatic putting of arguments and rejoinders, *pros* and *cons*—which in turn was a fruit of the actual daily pleadings in the Athenian dikastery—was a manifold stimulus alike to ethical feeling and to intellectual effort, such as no other ancient civilization ever knew. "The appropriate subject-matter of tragedy is pregnant not only with ethical sympathy, but also with ethical debate and speculation," to an extent unapproached in the earlier lyric and gnomic poetry and the literature of aphorism and precept. "In place of unexpanded results, or the mere communication of single-minded sentiment, we have even in Æschylus, the earliest of the great tragedians, a large latitude of dissent and debate—a shifting point of view—a case better or worse—and a divination of the future advent of sovereign and instructed reason. It was through the intermediate stage of tragedy that Grecian literature passed into the Rhetoric, Dialectics, and Ethical speculation which marked the fifth century B.C."¹

¹ Grote, ed. 1888, vii, 8-21. See the whole exposition of the exceptionally interesting 67th chapter.

This development was indeed autochthonous, save insofar as the germ of the tragic drama may have come from the East in the cult of Dionysos, with its vinous dithyramb: the "Greek intellect" assuredly did wonderful things at Athens, being placed, for a time, in civic conditions peculiarly fitted for the economic evocation of certain forms of genius. But the above-noted developments in Pindar and in Æschylus had been preceded by the great florescence of early Ionian philosophy in the sixth century, a growth which constrains us to look once more to Asia Minor for a vital fructification of the Greek inner life, of a kind that Athenian institutions could not in themselves evoke. For while drama flourished supremely at Athens, science and philosophy grew up elsewhere, centuries before Athens had a philosopher of note; and all the notable beginnings of Hellenic freethought occurred outside of Hellas proper.

§ 3

The Greeks varied from the general type of culture-evolution seen in India, Persia, Egypt, and Babylon, and approximated somewhat to that of ancient China, in that their higher thinking was done not by an order of priests pledged to cults, but by independent laymen. In Greece, as in China, this line of development is to be understood as a result of early political conditions—in China, those of a multiplicity of independent feudal States; in Greece, those of a multiplicity of City States, set up first by the geographical structure of Hellas, and reproduced in the colonies of Asia Minor and Magna Graecia by reason of the acquired ideal and the normal state of commercial competition. To the last, many Greek cults exhibited their original character as the *sacra* of private families. Such conditions prevented the growth of a priestly caste or organization.¹ Neither China nor Pagan Greece was imperialized till there had arisen enough of rationalism to prevent the rise of a powerful priesthood; and the later growth of a priestly system in Greece in the Christian period is to be explained in terms first of a positive social degeneration, accompanying a complete transmutation of political life, and secondly of the imposition of a new cult, on the popular plane, specially

¹ Cp. Meyer, ii, 431; K. O. Müller, *Introd. to Mythol.* pp. 189-92; Duncker, p. 340; Curtius, i, 384; Thirlwall, i, 200-203; Burckhardt, *Griech. Culturgesch.* 1898, ii, 19. As to the ancient beginnings of a priestly organization, see Curtius, i, 92-94, 97. As to the effects of its absence, see Heeren, *Polit. Hist. of Anc. Greece*, Eng. tr. 1829, pp. 59-63; Burckhardt, as cited, ii, 31-32; Meyer, as last cited; Zeller, *Philos. der Griechen*, 3te Aufl. i, 44 sq. Lange's criticism of Zeller's statement (*Gesch. des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl. i, 124-26, note 2) practically concedes the proposition. The influence of a few powerful priestly families is not denied. The point is that they remained isolated.

organized on the model of the political system that adopted it. Under imperialism, however, the two civilizations ultimately presented a singular parallel of unprogressiveness.

In the great progressive period, the possible gains from the absence of a priesthood are seen in course of realization. For the Greek-speaking world in general there was no dogmatic body of teaching, no written code of theology and moral law, no Sacred Book.¹ Each local cult had its own ancient ritual, often ministered by priestesses, with myths, often of late invention, to explain it;² only Homer and Hesiod, with perhaps some of the now lost epics, serving as a general treasury of myth-lore. The two great epopees ascribed to Homer, indeed, had a certain Biblical status; and the Homerids or other bards who recited them did what in them lay to make the old poetry the standard of theological opinion; but they too lacked organized influence, and could not hinder higher thinking.³ The special priesthood of Delphi, wielding the oracle, could maintain their political influence only by holding their function above all apparent self-seeking or effort at domination.⁴ It only needed, then, such civic conditions as should evolve a leisured class, with a bent towards study, to make possible a growth of lay philosophy.

Those conditions first arose in the Ionian cities; because there first did Greek citizens attain commercial wealth,⁵ as a result of adopting the older commercial civilization whose independent cities they conquered, and of the greater rapidity of development which belongs to colonies in general.⁶ There it was that, in matters of religion and philosophy, the comparison of their own cults with those of their foreign neighbours first provoked their critical reflection, as the age of primitive warfare passed away. And there it was, accordingly, that on a basis of primitive Babylonian science there originated with THALES of Miletos (fl. 586 B.C.), a Phoenician by descent,⁷ the higher science and philosophy of the Greek-speaking race.⁸

¹ Cp. K. O. Müller, *Introd. to Mythol.* p. 195; Curtius, i, 387, 389, 392; Duncker, iii, 519-21, 563; Thirlwall, i, 204; Barthélemy St. Hilaire, préf. to tr. of *Metaphys.* of Aristotle, p. 14. Professor Gilbert Murray, noting that Homer and Hesiod treated the Gods as elements of romance, or as facts to be catalogued, asks: "Where is the literature of religion: the literature which treated the Gods as Gods? It must," he adds, "have existed"; and he holds that we "can see that the religious writings were both early and multitudinous" (*Hist. of Anc. Greek Lit.* p. 62; cp. Meyer and Mahaffy as cited above, pp. 125-26. "Writings" is not here to be taken literally; the early hymns were unwritten). The priestly hymns and oracles and mystery-rituals in question were never collected; but perhaps we may form some idea of their nature from the "Homeridian" and Orphic hymns to the Gods, and those of the Alexandrian antiquary Callimachus. It is further to be inferred that they enter into the Hesiodic Theogony. (Decharme, p. 3, citing Bergk.)

² Meyer, ii, 426; Curtius, i, 390-91, 417; Thirlwall, i, 204; Grote, i, 48-49.

³ Meyer, ii, 410-14.

⁴ Cp. Curtius, i, 392-400, 416; Duncker, iii, 529.

⁵ Curtius, i, 112; Meyer, ii, 366.

⁶ Curtius, i, 201, 204, 205, 381; Grote, iii, 5; Lange, *Gesch. des Materialismus*, 3te Aufl. i, 23 (Eng. tr. i, 23).

⁷ Herodotos, i, 170; Diogenes Laërtius, *Thales*, ch. i.

⁸ On the essentially anti-religious rationalism of the whole Ionian movement, cp. Meyer, ii, 753-57.

It is historically certain that Lydia had an ancient and close historical connection with Babylonian and Assyrian civilization, whether through the "Hittites" or otherwise (Sayce, *Anc. Emp. of the East*, 1884, pp. 217-19; Curtius, *Griech. Gesch.* i, 63, 207; Meyer, *Gesch. des Alterth.* i, 166, 277, 299, 305-10; Soury, *Bréviaire de l'hist. du matérialisme*, 1881, pp. 30, 37 sq. Cp. as to Armenia, Edwards, *The Witness of Assyria*, 1893, p. 144); and in the seventh century the commercial connection between Lydia and Ionia, long close, was presumably friendly up to the time of the first attacks of the Lydian Kings, and even afterwards (Herodotos i, 20-23), Alyattes having made a treaty of peace with Miletos, which thereafter had peace during his long reign. This brings us to the time of Thales (640-548 B.C.). At the same time, the Ionian settlers of Miletos had from the first a close connection with the Karians (Herod. i, 146, and above pp. 120-21), whose near affinity with the Semites, at least in religion, is seen in their practice of cutting their foreheads at festivals (*id.* ii, 61; cp. Grote, ed. 1888, i, 27, note; E. Curtius, i, 36, 42; Busolt, i, 33; and Spiegel, *Eranische Alterthumskunde*, i, 228). Thales was thus in the direct sphere of Babylonian culture before the conquest of Cyrus; and his Milesian pupils or successors, Anaximandros and Anaximenes, stand for the same influences. Herakleitos in turn was of Ephesus, an Ionian city in the same culture-sphere; Anaxagoras was of Klazomenai, another Ionian city, as had been Hermotimos, of the same philosophic school; the Eleatic school, founded by Xenophanes and carried on by Parmenides and the elder Zeno, come from the same matrix, Elea having been founded by exiles from Ionian Phokaia on its conquest by the Persians; and Pythagoras, in turn, was of the Ionian city of Samos, in the same sixth century. Finally, Protagoras and Demokritos were of Abdera, an Ionian colony in Thrace; Leukippos, the teacher of Demokritos, was either an Abderite, a Milesian, or an Elean; and Archelaos, the pupil of Anaxagoras and a teacher of Sokrates, is said to have been a Milesian. Wellhausen (*Israel*, p. 473 of vol. of *Prolegomena*, Eng. tr.) has spoken of the rise of philosophy on the "threatened and actual political annihilation of Ionia" as corresponding to the rise of Hebrew prophecy on the menace and the consummation of the Assyrian conquest. As regards Ionia, this may hold in the sense that the stoppage of political freedom threw men back on philosophy, as happened later at Athens. But Thales philosophized before the Persian conquest.

§ 4

Thales, like Homer, starts from the Babylonian conception of a beginning of all things in water; but in Thales the immediate

motive and the sequel are strictly cosmological and neither theological nor poetical, though we cannot tell whether the worship of a God of the Waters may not have been the origin of a water-theory of the cosmos. The phrase attributed to him, "that all things are full of Gods,"¹ clearly meant that in his opinion the forces of things inhered in the cosmos, and not in personal powers who spasmodically interfered with it.² It is probable that, as was surmised by Plutarch, a pantheistic conception of Zeus existed for the Ionian Greeks before Thales.³ To the later doxographers he "seems to have lost belief in the Gods."⁴ From the mere second-hand and often unintelligent statements which are all we have in his case, it is hard to make sure of his system; but that it was pantheistic⁵ and physicist seems clear. He conceived that matter not only came from but was resolvable into water; that all phenomena were ruled by law or "necessity"; and that the sun and planets (commonly regarded as deities) were bodies analogous to the earth, which he held to be spherical but "resting on water."⁶ For the rest, he speculated in meteorology and in astronomy, and is credited with having predicted a solar eclipse⁷—a fairly good proof of his knowledge of Chaldean science⁸—and with having introduced geometry into Greece from Egypt.⁹ To him, too, is ascribed a wise counsel to the Ionians in the matter of political federation,¹⁰ which, had it been followed, might have saved them from the Persian conquest; and he is one of the many early moralists who laid down the Golden Rule as the essence of the moral law.¹¹ With his maxim, "Know thyself," he seems to mark a broadly new departure in ancient thought: the balance of energy is shifted from myth and theosophy, prophecy and poesy, to analysis of consciousness and the cosmic process.

From this point Greek rationalism is continuous, despite reactions, till the Roman conquest, Miletos figuring long as a

¹ *The First Philosophers of Greece*, by A. Fairbanks, 1898, pp. 2, 3, 6. This compilation usefully supplies a revised text of the ancient philosophic fragments, with a translation of these and of the passages on the early thinkers by the later, and by the epitomists. A good conspectus of the remains of the early Greek thinkers is supplied also in Grote's *Plato and the other Companions of Sokrates*, ch. i; and a valuable critical analysis of the sources in Prof. J. Burnet's *Early Greek Philosophy*.

² Cp. Lange, *Gesch. des Mat.* i, 126 (Eng. tr. i, 8, n.). Mr. Benn (*The Greek Philosophers*, i, 8) and Prof. Decharme (p. 39) seem to read this as a profession of belief in deities in the ordinary sense. But cp. R. W. Mackay, *The Progress of the Intellect*, 1850, i, 338. Burnet (ch. i, § 11) doubts the authenticity of this saying, but thinks it "extremely probable that Thales did say that the magnet and amber had souls."

³ Mackay, as cited, p. 331.

⁴ Fairbanks, p. 4.

⁵ Diogenes Laërtius, *Thales*, ch. 9.

⁶ Herodotos, i, 74.

⁷ Cp. Burnet, *Early Greek Philos.* 2nd. ed. introd. § 3. To Thales is ascribed by the Greeks the "discovery" of the constellation Ursus Major. Diog. ch. 2. As it was called "Phoenike" by the Greeks, his knowledge would be of Phoenician derivation. Cp. Humboldt, *Kosmos*, Bohn tr. iii, 160. ⁸ Diog. Laërt. ch. 3. On this cp. Burnet, introd. § 6.

⁹ Herod. i, 170. Cp. Diog. Laërt. ch. 3.

¹¹ Diog. Laërt. ch. 9.