PRIESTS, PHILOSOPHERS AND PROPHETS

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A DISSERTATION ON REVEALED RELIGION

BY

THOMAS WHITTAKER,

AUTHOR OF

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PREFATORY NOTE

THE present work was finished provisionally early in July 1910, but insertions have been made later in Chapters VI., VII., and VIII. These are the result of suggestions by Dr. Sutherland Black, who very kindly pointed out to me some literature which had appeared after the book was written, or to which I had not given adequate attention. For these suggestions, which I think have enabled me considerably to improve the development of my positions, I wish to offer my best thanks. For the positions themselves I am responsible.

T. W.

May 1911.

P.S.—The alterations in the second edition are very slight, and affect almost exclusively the Appendix. The Note on Hellenistic Messianism was written in 1914. In the note on the dramas of Seneca I have altered the references in accordance with the later edition of Peiper and Richter (1902). A reference to "Holy Russia" was too obsolete to retain; but, for the rest, I have not tried to efface every mark of the original date.

February 1925.

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CHAPTER I

PRELIMINARY

RELIGIONS, like political constitutions, the world has been taught for a century, are not made, but grow. Contemporary politics seem to be teaching us in England that, without "that art which you say adds to nature," even the best of the constitutions that have grown cannot continue to adapt itself to present needs. And during the period of the authorised teaching of evolution as opposed to revolution there have been before men's eyes the examples of the American and French Republics to prove that conscious human art can build up a fairly stable political structure. Behind this, of course, there were ages of only partly conscious growth. As was said by Bruno and Shakespeare, it is Nature that ultimately makes Art. Yet the natural process, as it goes on, seems to bring with it the result that deliberate art must count for more and more. Even in the past we shall probably find that it has counted for more than the theorists of the nineteenth century were willing to admit. We shall not go back to simple acceptance of the view that great legislators, in primitive times, produced out of hand the codes ascribed to them; but we may

find that a view somewhat resembling this is nearer the truth than it has for a long time been fashionable to suppose.

Of religious origins the most characteristic recent studies have been anthropological. And anthropology is here taken in its specialised sense as that branch of the science of man that deals with the modes of savage thought and their survival in civilised life. Here the most generalised and philosophically important work has been done by Dr. Tylor ; but, as this did not touch very closely the specific features of the Christian creed, it seemed to younger investigators to call for a supplement. These, looking beneath imaginative myth and speculative cosmogony, which are now held to be outgrowths of religion rather than religion itself, have concentrated themselves on the study of the cults in which they find its essence as a practical thing. The works of Dr. J. G. Frazer in England, and of M. Salomon Reinach in France, may be taken as examples. They seem to mark the culmination of a general tendency, common, as it has been noticed that such tendencies are, to opponents and defenders of religious tradition in the same age. The religious revival or reaction, whichever we like to call it, of the nineteenth century was characterised by a return to the structure of specifically Christian dogma and ritual as distinguished from the pure theism and ethics also incorporated in the historic system. In the eighteenth century Deists and Apologists alike had treated as the

essential thing in Christianity the direction of the universe by a moral providence. What was over and above this, the Deists had argued, was useless or pernicious; while the Apologists defended it as a system of ceremonies perhaps arbitrary, but necessary, like legal regulations about things indifferent in themselves, for the institution of the Church as an actual society. With the return among the more timid of the educated classes to popular religion as a means of counteracting the revolution that was thought to be the outcome of rationalism, the mental attitude changed. Not ethical theism, not even belief to be tested by historical evidence, the spokesmen of anti-rationalism now declared, was essential Christianity. Apart from atoning sacrifice and sacramental cult, all the rest was idle. The new critical attitude of the anthropologists has been in part a reflex of this modification on the religious side. The scientific question was put, If this is essential Christianity, was there nothing like it before? The Deists had proved that ethical monotheism was not peculiar to the Judæo-Christian tradition. Are the mysteries any more peculiar? It appears that they are not. Those regarded as the most distinctive are transformations of world-wide savage or barbaric rites which once had a very barbaric meaning. Christianity as a cult is in its detail a growth from elements of savage ritual.

The orthodox are, of course, not without a rejoinder. Philosophically put, their argument

is that the validity of a doctrine is not to be finally determined by an investigation of its origin. This, as a general proposition, is true. Strictly, no doubt, all our thinking, higher and lower, might be traced back to adumbrations in the minds of savages; "like the man's thought dark in the infant's brain." Suspicion, indeed, may be thrown on some doctrines by their origin; but ultimately the test must always be direct examination in the light of reason and experience. The historical investigation of origins, whatever its result, cannot discredit a doctrine for which positively valid grounds can be assigned. Yet, when no such grounds are assignable, and the direct attack of reason has failed, it may undermine the prescription that has so far repelled the assault.

This, however, as I have indicated, is not the line of thought that I now propose to follow out. In essence, the work of the anthropologists on religion seems to have reached its limits. No doubt there is endless detailed research to be done; but in the meantime there is need to recall a distinction that has been partly forgotten; and this leads to a new direction for our inquiries. After all, in spite of the detection of extremely primitive elements in all religions, some of these still have to be classed as lower and some as higher. How does this difference arise? If by evolutionary growth, at what point precisely does a lower become a higher religion? And is there all through nothing but continuous growth?

Are there not perhaps definite stages where religions are made as well as grow? Has the arrival of humanity at self-consciousness no effect whatever in changing the process by which one embodiment of its ideals gives place to another?

To decide this question, it seems to me that a synoptic as distinguished from a specialist view is necessary. In trying to gain such a view, I believe that I have arrived at a general solution of the problem. This solution, I hold, can be proved true by what is accepted as the scientific method in these inquiries. To make the exposition as easy as possible to follow, I will first state briefly the general result. And, though the essential interest of the thesis is scientific, I do not propose to hold my metaphysical view or general presuppositions in reserve, but shall set these, as occasion may suggest, candidly before the reader.

For the purpose of the inquiry, religions may be classified into natural or spontaneous religions, looser or more organised, and "revealed religions." The latter are higher because they are religions carried to a more self-conscious stage. My contention is that all the revealed religions of the West were, from the first, constructed religions. They were constructed by means of a general idea that was the result of reflection when the growth of the organised natural religions had been completed from within. The ruling conception was ethical monotheism, or a monotheism tending to be ethical. The

process of construction, in Zoroastrianism and Judaism, was combination of the speculative idea with a pre-existing national cult by a priestly aristocracy. In Christianity there was a resurgence of cult and myth from a more popular level and from more cosmopolitan sources; but still the construction was on the whole by groups imbued with hierarchical ambitions. In the case of Islam a single prophet, animated by the same monotheistic idea, selected elements from the Judæo-Christian tradition to form a relatively new system. As the internal divisions of Christianity came to a head, similar prophets appeared in Western Christendom; who, however, have created what it is customary to call new sects or churches rather than new religions. To a certain extent, the same process has taken place among the successors of Mohammed.

Under this classification the religions of the remoter East cannot be precisely brought. Brahmanism and Buddhism, so far as they incorporate a cult, are at the stage of organised natural religions; but beyond this they pass into philosophies. Philosophy, as we shall see, has played a very important part in relation to the religions of the West, but its part has been different. At an early stage it became an independent power. Since then it has now opposed and now entered into alliance with religion; at one time lost its independence and at another regained it. From India eastward, that which corresponds to European philosophy has been an outgrowth of religious

life,[1] and has at the same time reacted on popular religion from its higher point of view because it has remained itself a part of religion. Thus, even Buddhism, though professedly going back to a personal founder, is a revealed religion only in a peculiar sense. What is distinctive of it is a philosophic mode of life, not a systematisation of rites. Yet the books that contain the philosophy are sacred books, parts of a canon. Their analogue in the West is the Bible or the Koran, rather than the works of Plato or Aristotle or Kant. On the other side, the Christianity of the New Testament is also a mode of life, distinguished by certain ethical characteristics more than by its peculiar rites, and having perceptible analogies with Buddhism. Thus we must not make our divisions too sharp.

In the West (under which in its broader sense I include both Europe and Western Asia) the beginnings of philosophy are much later than the organisation of natural religion, but a little earlier than the beginnings of revealed religion. Of the true view of their relations Hume seems to have had a glimpse in his dialogue "Of a Particular Providence and of a Future State."[2] He represents himself as setting forth to a friend his admiration of "the singular good fortune of philosophy, which, as it requires entire liberty

[1] That Indian thought, to pass into philosophy distinctively so called, needed the contact with Greece that is known to have existed from the time of Alexander, is a thesis that does not yet seem to have been adequately examined. Professor Burnet is strongly inclined to it: see *Early Greek Philosophy*, 2nd ed. (1908), p. 21.

[2] *Inquiry concerning Human Understanding*, sect. xi.

above all other privileges, and chiefly flourishes from the free opposition of sentiments and argumentation, received its first birth in an age and country of freedom and toleration, and was never cramped, even in its most extravagant principles, by any creeds, confessions, or penal statutes." "You admire," says my friend, "as the singular good fortune of philosophy, what seems to result from the natural course of things, and to be unavoidable in every age and nation. This pertinacious bigotry, of which you complain, as so fatal to philosophy, is really her offspring, who, after allying with superstition, separates himself entirely from the interest of his parent, and becomes her most inveterate enemy and persecutor. Speculative dogmas of religion, the present occasions of such furious dispute, could not possibly be conceived or admitted in the early ages of the world; when mankind, being wholly illiterate, formed an idea of religion more suitable to their weak apprehension, and composed their sacred tenets of such tales chiefly as were objects of traditional belief, more than of argument or disputation." The implication here is that philosophical theism, in which the revealed religions have found aid, was not only prior to them, but was in part their original source. The exclusiveness and intolerance of monotheism, finally organised in a creed, was itself derived from the philosophy against which it turned when it had grown to maturity. This suggestion Hume does not develop anywhere else; and, indeed, his

generalisation could not have been sustained consistently with the chronological data admitted in his age. What he was thinking of was probably the use which the Christian Fathers made of the principles of philosophical theism as stated by Greek and Roman writers, to defend the position of their own theology that the one God was the God of the Jews. But whence came the religion of the Jews itself? And how came it to be monotheistic? These questions Hume does not consider. And in the end it would not be strictly correct, though it approaches the truth, to say that Judæo-Christian monotheism arose directly out of the theism of the philosophers. A more accurate statement is that the theism of the philosophers and Judæo-Christian monotheism had a common source, and that the philosophic doctrine was slightly prior.

This general view, even in its modified form, I have to admit further, cannot be defended consistently with the positions still maintained in Biblical criticism by the majority of the "higher critics." I shall have to appeal, for its empirical support, to what is at present a small minority of scholars. This small minority, indeed, includes competent specialists; and I shall set forth the grounds for using my own judgment and adopting their view rather than simply relying on the consensus of experts. After all, it might be said, many trained Hebraists still follow the old tradition, refusing to accept the views of the "higher critics" at all. Does not their standing out show

at any rate this: that hitherto no compulsory scientific proof has been furnished such as that which has overborne all serious opposition to the Copernican astronomy, and even to the Darwinian biology? Thus, though I do not expect that the proofs I offer will be found compulsory, I think myself justified in treating the origin of Judaism as still a subject for hypothesis and argument.

The empirical results of the critical revision in Holland and in France, to which the appeal can be made as against the majority of German "higher critics" and their English followers, have been arrived at quite apart from the deductive synthesis by which the way now seems to me open for their completion. In fact, I had accepted them myself when only a partial deduction seemed possible. Thus the fuller deduction I have now to put forward will be a genuine verification in accordance with the "historical method" discovered by Comte and worked into his system of scientific proof by Mill. For the principle of the method is that in history empirical generalisation comes first; but since, in the extreme complexity of actual historical circumstances, merely empirical proof of a law must always be insufficient, this has to be supplemented by deduction from some general tendency in the human mind to follow the path that experience suggests has in the particular case been actually followed.

CHAPTER II

THE RISE OF MONOTHEISM

It is now known from contemporary documents, and not merely from late writers trained in Greek philosophy and desirous of finding the essentials of this in the Eastern religions, that before 1500 B.C. a generalised monotheism was already the possession of the Babylonian and Egyptian priesthoods. This, indeed, as Maspero tells us, was entirely an esoteric doctrine.[1] The vulgar simply accepted the polytheistic myths and did not go behind them. The Deity recognised in the esoteric theology as the one God was for the multitude of worshippers simply a celestial king ruling over the other gods. What particular divine name reached this supreme rank depended on political causes. At one time it might be the god of Memphis, at another time the god of Thebes, according as the seat of political sovereignty was tranferred to one city or the other. This division, however, between the few and the many marked the approaching end of

[1] See *Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient*, p. 334 (8th ed., 1909): "Ces idées élevées demeurèrent l'apanage d'un petit nombre de docteurs et de particuliers instruits: elles ne pénétrèrent pas la masse de la population." The reference here is to the celebrated Hymn to Ammon; but Maspero finds the same type of esoteric monotheism also in Chaldæa.

the old order; as is illustrated by the curious history, now becoming popularly known, of the heretical Pharaoh Khuenaten or Akhnaton (Amenophis IV.), who tried to supersede the worship of Ammon by the devotion to a deity represented by no visible image but the solar disc, and regarded as the one God. This was early in the fourteenth century B.C. Thus he was not the inventor of monotheism. The Ammon of the priests was already in their hymns celebrated by them as the supreme or sole God. What he desired was to overthrow the priestly monopoly by giving to the higher religion of the few a more popular and, as we should say, "laic" form. The king is here, as against the priestly caste, what Comte held that he normally is, the first leader of revolution. In this case, however, the priests won in the end. The old ceremonial was restored, with the offerings by which it was maintained; and not only did it continue after the destruction of the simpler worship initiated by the "heretic king," but it encroached more and more on civic life, so that henceforth the fate of Egypt was slow decay under its hierarchic petrifaction.

The decay, in so highly elaborate a structure, of course took a long time. A thousand years later the stability of the Egyptian order and the venerable character of its priesthood could still impress the greatest minds among the Greeks. And Chaldæa, conquered successively by the same foreign powers and similarly decaying, retained the same impressiveness. What then

at last became of the theological ideas evolved by the speculative minds among the priesthoods that had had so long the direction of civilisations upwards of five thousand years old ?

The later history of their science, which empirically they had carried to a considerable degree of complexity, we know. Data in geometry and astronomy, long accumulated by the priesthoods as masters of knowledge, began to be taken up by the Greeks from the seventh to the sixth century B.C., and afterwards formed the basis of a science more theoretically developed. Now my conjecture is that their generalised theology, in a detached form, similarly spread abroad among educated minds at the borders of the civilisations ; and that thus it became the original source at once of the philosophical theism of Greece and of the proselytising new religions of Zoroastrianism and Judaism. These two lines of development, so different in many ways, afterwards met, along with others, in Christianity.

For this conjecture the argument can only be deductive. On the one side, Orientalists have made the existence of a generalised Chaldæan and Egyptian monotheism certain. On the other side, the later religions and the philosophies are from given points of time historically known. The kind of proof that can be furnished of connexion as distinguished from mere succession is this : that we have a cause psychologically adequate to the effect ; and that the empirical facts, from their chronological relations, admit of

explanation in this way. Now if Judaism is as late as is maintained by the new critical school, not only does the chronology present no difficulty, but the facts seem inexplicable except by such causal connexion.

The detailed argument will come later; but in the meantime it is evident that, on this view, we need not look for an independent origin of monotheism itself in Judæa, nor even in Greece. Its first origin, evidently, must have been an affair of slow growth, though its working out could only belong to self-conscious reflection. By what kind of process, then, did it arise, and what were its antecedents?

The answer, I hold, is partly furnished by Comte and partly by the anthropologists. Given an elaborately ordered polytheism, Comte's explanation of monotheism appears sufficient; namely, that the human mind, in its effort to understand, would naturally go forward to it by abstraction and generalisation. And the doctrine; I think it can be shown, would necessarily assume an ethical character. For the priests who speculated on the hierarchy of the gods were also the accumulators of scientific knowledge and the directors in chief of human life. Thus they had in their minds an anticipatory conception of the system of things as an ordered whole. Their science had shown them something of the regularity of laws in the cosmos; and, as the gods were always supposed to resemble man in possessing mind and will, they were conceived as acting

for ends. The God of the universe would therefore, on all analogies, be thought of as bringing into the world a moral order. We know, in fact, that he was conceived as a creative God, introducing form in the beginning; though his relation to the unformed material was at first left indeterminate. The Judæo-Christian doctrine of creation *ex nihilo* was not defined till much later. Not only was the distinction between artificer and absolute creator still unformulated; there was also a certain indetermination in the conception itself of God. Through the imperfect discrimination between personal and impersonal agency, it floated between what we now call theism and pantheism. A tendency to personal theism was no doubt impressed originally by the centralisation of the State in a king. In imagination as distinguished from pure conception, the supreme God would therefore be figured as surrounded by a hierarchy of spirits corresponding to the popular gods.

But how was the basis of this high theology formed? For, of course, an elaborate polytheism like that of Egypt and Chaldæa is itself far from primitive. Here the general explanation is furnished by the animistic theory of Tylor and Herbert Spencer. The material of religion, though not religion itself, is to be found in the belief in ghosts; and this arose out of a primitive speculation of man to explain his inner life, with its alternations of consciousness and unconsciousness. The ghost-soul was the permanent

being within, regarded as separable and as existing in picturable form. And all the features of the theory resulted from observed facts, mixed with imagination, as, indeed, all observed facts are. The soul was supposed to be picturable because men had dreams in which they saw other persons, who were sometimes living and sometimes dead. It was conceived as separable to explain sleep, trances; and death; for how can one understand why the body is now active and now quiescent unless there is some difference in the two cases? If it was capable of going away and returning, there was a possibility of explanation. The soul came to be thought of as permanent, perhaps because if it could exist at all in a separable form there seemed no reason why it should cease to exist. Of course there were many variants in the belief. In some races, as among the Egyptians, it became extremely intensified. In others, as the Homeric Greeks and the Jews of the pre-apocalyptic age, it faded almost to nothing. And to the formation of the theory of course many more elements contributed than those that I have mentioned.

Not until animism has appeared is the way prepared for a definite religion. Whatever vague awe there may be apart from or prior to belief in souls, this seems to me necessary to give the determinateness required for the conception of a god. According to Spencer, the basis of religion is ultimately ancestor-worship. Great gods arise from the time when a ghost supposed more power-

ful than the rest, especially the ghost of a long-remembered king, stands out from the other ancestors. Cosmic powers, as, for example, the heavenly bodies, only become deified through misunderstanding of names. Particular persons, who may have had the names attached as epithets, after their deification are imagined to have been identical with the heavenly bodies themselves. Dr. Tylor has never found this view satisfactory; but, working on the same data of savage belief, has suggested rather that, when the idea of a soul has once been formed, cosmic powers can be directly regarded as living beings, through the application of the animistic hypothesis to all organic and even inorganic nature as a universal principle of explanation. This form of the doctrine I accept rather than the Spencerian, because students of mythology seem to find no actual cases of deified men becoming great gods. Ancestor-worship, they find, remains always a subordinate cult. Nor is a deified king raised as an individual person to the rank of a high divinity. If he is more than the object of a minor cult, he is worshipped as the incarnation of some pre-existing divine power.

The anthropological theory of animism, which has been worked out as a hypothesis to explain the beliefs of savages as these have been generalised after inquiry into their details, is confirmed by what are called survivals in the historic civilisations. With the animistic faith of early man there goes a belief in "magical" action by

sympathy passing from one animated thing to another. Various methods of communicating this sympathy for practical ends are devised, and become a complicated tradition. And the whole structure of belief and practice that thus comes into being goes on through the distinctively religious stage. Men as a rule do not cease to believe in souls when they have begun to believe in gods. And even after a considerable growth of science, which means the uniformity of impersonal law, magical practices still prevail. Thus in ancient civilisations like those of Egypt and Babylonia there is formed an enormously complex structure not only of life, but of belief. Animism, magic, polytheism, science, with a monotheistic theology finally emerging, all co-exist at different social and intellectual levels, or it may be even in the same mind. And the polytheism itself, which gives its historic label to the system, is extremely varied. There are gods of different ranks. Some are conceived as beneficent and some as maleficent. Some gods are cosmic, as the stellar and planetary divinities, the worship of whom is associated with astrology and thence with the beginnings of astronomical science. Others have human, and others animal forms, or at least are associated with species of animals as their sacred "totems." Some live in everlasting joy and dominion, while some have to become servants on earth, and may die and come to life again. Sacrifices are offered, at an early stage probably as gifts to please the gods, after-

wards as propitiations for guilt incurred by neglect of them. At a more primitive level than the sacrificial gift is the sacramental meal, in which the flesh of the incarnate god (animal or human) is partaken of by his worshippers so that his divinity may be appropriated. As the monarchical government of the invisible world, following the progress of government on earth, becomes stronger, the beneficent gods tend to pass into a host of "angels," or messengers and heavenly servants and warriors of the supreme God; while the maleficent gods become what we call "demons," who afterwards form a host under a chief and in a dwelling-place of their own. And of course there is an increasing complication of rites and ceremonies, and especially of "taboos" or prohibitions of action, at first imposed for no reason except some vaguely felt danger. So important are these last that M. Salomon Reinach places in taboo the essence of practical religion. In any case, its possibilities for the formation of a priestly code of ethics are obvious. And where morality grows up under the dominance of an organised religion it tends to become itself a part of the religion. According to the stage of its evolution, it may have any degree of externality or of "inwardness." In the civilisations of which I am now speaking, along with advanced legal codes, there was inward morality that had reached a very high level.

This general description may easily be confirmed by consulting the recognised authorities. It was

necessary to indicate the pyramidal character of the structure to avoid too great abstractness in conceiving the monotheism finally reached. This, as has been said, was only the possession of a few. In practice it had displaced nothing else. Clearly, if it ever got loose, it would not remain simple long, but would be sure to undergo complications in the surrounding world. And, while the elaborate structures within which it first appeared had felt no shock, it would hardly make way at all outside the system of which it was still part.

CHAPTER III

GREECE AND PHILOSOPHICAL THEISM

For the emergence of pure monotheism as a force in the world the way was prepared by the fall of the ancient empires. The Egyptian and Babylonian civilisations had arisen in what were at first national States, not empires in the distinctive sense. Conquest and organisation produced a high degree of complexity, fixing the results of past internal growth, but incompatible henceforth with anything but increasing conservatism bound to end in decay. Assyria, the most aggressive and the most ruthless of all conquering States, was a kind of robber-organisation with its seat at Nineveh, making war in the name of its tribal god Asshur. For the civilisation it had, it depended on what had been achieved in Babylonia, for a time subjected to its kings. It was destroyed near the end of the seventh century by a combination of the neighbouring peoples. The great empires that remained were those of revived Babylonia and of Egypt; but in the latter part of the sixth century these succumbed in turn to the Achæmenid monarchy of Persia, which superimposed itself on both of them. From this period a new empire and new peoples

come on the scene. The Aryan as distinguished from the Semitic-speaking branches of the white race assume the predominance. In Europe and on the coast of Asia Minor the Greeks, who in so far as they were Aryans were a kindred people, had long been a power ; and at this time they had definitely reached the form of polity by which they are distinguished historically—that of the republican city-State. In Asia the Persian kings began to build up an empire of a new type ; which did not, like those of Assyria and Babylonia, try to efface the nationalities of its alien subjects, but granted them practical autonomy within its own military and tribute-collecting organisation. Its attempt to bring the Greeks under its suzerainty failed, as it is scarcely necessary to recall, at Salamis and Platæa (480 and 479 B.C.). The republican polity was to have sufficient time to develop and hand down its ideals before it was brought under the form of a later empire-State. And this return to the imperial type of organisation, under the Macedonians first and afterwards the Romans, did not come about before the conquerors were in culture Hellenic. This, however, is not our topic at the present stage. We have now to consider what was going on intellectually between the fall of Nineveh (608 B.C.) and the defeat of Persia, the ambitions of which had henceforth to be limited to Asia and Egypt, till it was in its turn overthrown.

The religion of the Persians will be best considered at a later stage, when we come to deal

with that of the Jews, which grew up under their empire. It is doubtful whether their distinctive religion, with its dualism and its claim to go back to a personal founder, is as old as the Greek theistic philosophy; and Judaism, as all independent critics admit so far as its developed form is concerned, is decidedly younger. The thing that happened I hold to be this: that the esoteric monotheism of Egyptian and Chaldæan priests, during the contacts and collisions of peoples in this transition-time of more than a century, was seized upon by detached and prepared minds at the borders of the civilisations; and that in particular it had both a rapid and a permanent effect on the Greek educated class. But we must first try to make clear to ourselves at what precise point of spiritual development the Greeks were. This involves going back some distance in order to gain a conspectus of circumstances that seem at first out of relation to the development of theology. The discussion of them, however, is necessary if the chronological relations of the new factor are to be made quite definite, as I think they can be.

All the great civilisations have behind them a considerable period not recorded in historical documents. Thus Egyptologists and Assyriologists assign to about 8000 B.C. the beginnings of the civilisations which they can trace by documentary evidence for five thousand years of this time.[1]

[1] These figures are only given as approximations. I know that final results have not been reached; but high authorities can be cited for them.

The historical Greek civilisation is traceable by definite dates only from the seventh century downward; but archæological evidence has in recent years brought to light the "Mycenæan" civilisation which preceded it; and this, it is now known, was at its height from about 2000 to 1500 B.C. After this it fell before Northern invaders, to give place to the transition period called "the Greek Middle Age," out of which sprang the historic Greece known to us from literature. The Mycenæan civilisation as revealed by its art had a certain relative æsthetic freedom; but on the whole it was probably not very strongly distinguished from the less determinate of the Oriental civilisations contemporary with it. That is to say, it was monarchical, imperialist, and based on a polytheistic religion, but without the elaborately organised hierarchy of Babylonia and Egypt. Features of its life are preserved in the Homeric poems, either by deliberate archaism or because some of them, such as the use of war-chariots and bronze weapons, were still existent in that portion of the "Middle Age" from which the poems date.

The controversy regarding the authorship of the poems, which began over a century ago, is not yet decided. It seems reasonable to suppose that long epics like the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* could not be projected till after a preparatory period in which many poets had composed short epic lays. From the poems themselves we know that the final author or redactor worked with

formulæ and similes that had become common property, and could be made to do duty in various contexts. We know also, however, that at a much later stage of self-conscious art Virgil could simply transfer to his own epic whole lines translated from Homer. Much later, again, Milton, at the same level of self-conscious art, could deal similarly with lines and phrases of his predecessors, from Homer to Virgil and the moderns. Thus Homer—if we assume his personality—was only working, in a somewhat "rougher" way, as it has been put, according to the method of the historically known epic poets. The "stratification" of customs belonging to different ages, if it really exists, does not, on this view, seem to prove much against the unity of authorship. The poet, of course, did not invent the whole matter of the epics out of his own head. He took it from stories preserved in the pre-existing lays. Thus the stratification may well be due to preservation of archaic features in the various narratives handed down with the conservatism natural to popular tradition. The expurgation which Professor Gilbert Murray finds to have gone on, as in the reduction of the human sacrifice offered by Achilles at the funeral of Patroclus to the barest possible statement of a traditional detail that could not be wholly omitted, seems best explicable on the view that the poems represent the mind of an individual poet; for I think no one maintains that there was a priestly corporation to do this

work.[1] Out of the various views presented I am therefore most inclined to accept in general terms that which is stated by another high classical authority, Professor J. B. Bury, who holds that the "great editor" of the *Iliad*, from whom it received approximately its present form in the ninth century B.C., was at the same time the great poet. With decided stress on the last clause, this amounts to acceptance of personal authorship. The *Odyssey*, though bearing on the whole the mark of the same period, that is, of the "Middle Age," post-Mycenæan but prehistorical, differs somewhat in vocabulary and in manners. But is not this easily explicable, on the hypothesis that both poems proceed from the same poet, by his necessary use of a different cycle of lays for the second poem? I have not the philological and archæological knowledge to justify an independent contribution to the discussion like that of Mr. Andrew Lang; but I must confess that I can see no greater difference in tone and colour between the *Iliad* and the *Odyssey* than between *Paradise Lost* and *Paradise Regained*. Ancient tradition—which, it is necessary to bear in mind, had no pious ends to serve, but was quite disinterested if insufficiently informed—assigned the two poems to the same author; and in this view I could be content to acquiesce with M. Havet, who defended the personal

1 Shakespeare in *King John* deals similarly with the raiding of the monasteries, dramatised in detail, with an appeal to the passions of the time, by his predecessor who wrote *The Troublesome Reign of King John*.

authorship and the unity of Homer in a Latin thesis[1] before he became a pioneer in the radical criticism of the Hebrew Scriptures to which we shall come later.

Be this as it may, the *Iliad* is broadly assignable to the ninth century B.C., to which Herodotus, writing in the fifth century, had already assigned the poet of both *Iliad* and *Odyssey*. And I suppose no one will now contest the statement, quoted from Wolf's "Prolegomena" in the new Oxford edition of the *Iliad*, that the text of Homer is established on far surer philological foundations than the Massoretic text of the Hebrew Bible. In age Homer is exceeded by no living sacred books. The oldest parts of the Vedas are not authentically assignable to a higher date. Thus it may be said that nothing older will ever be read again as literature. The antiquity of the extant beginning of Greek letters is exceeded only by the dead scripts of Egypt and Western Asia, brought to light by archæological research within the last century. European civilisation, therefore, is as old as any extant civilisation, with the possible exception of the Chinese.[2] India seems older because its life has had greater continuity, presenting no such break as the Christian Middle Age of Europe; and because it has preserved an older social type, though with modifi-

[1] *De Homericorum Poematum Origine et Unitate*, 1843.

[2] The great antiquity of the Mediterranean civilisation in which that of Greece and consequently of Europe had its beginning has been still more decisively established by the results of recent excavations in Crete.

cations. But to the historic civilisation of India, as to us, Egypt and Babylonia are a true elder world.

In Homer the Greek genius is already fully articulate, and has reached the stage of moral reflectiveness. Heroes are discriminated for honour as "looking before and after." The poems, although they contain religious elements, are fundamentally not religious poems, but objective representations of life. In the life they represent we can vaguely discern the political elements out of which emerged the free States of Greece and of modern Europe. There is a kind of "constitutional monarchy," an aristocracy of nobles or minor kings, and the dim outline of something that will afterwards be democracy. The diviner or prophet is a known figure, but the priestly class is as inconspicuous as in the life of historic Greece. The germ of the future can be seen especially in the free play of impersonal criticism round men and gods alike. The religion is an "anthropomorphic polytheism," which Hegel and Comte agree in regarding as a more advanced stage of religious evolution than the "astrolatry" of the Chaldæans. It cannot be said, however, that the tendency is distinctively to the evolution of a higher theology. Zeus holds a position of celestial kingship, limited by the wills and persuasive powers of the gods and goddesses, and by some impersonally conceived fate behind; but the direction taken by the advance in reflectiveness is essentially humanistic criticism. As a

single hero can stand out against the imperial sovereignty of Agamemnon, so the other gods can complain of and sometimes thwart the action of Zeus; and the case of all is presented in an impartial light under which ethical judgment is easily applied. The gods, it has often been noted, are less moral in action than the human personages; and, while this is in itself merely an instance of the archaism or conservatism of religion, there is not with the Greek poet the awe that has elsewhere stood in the way of any exercise of human judgment regarding a divine power. There are, indeed, passages in which the relations of the gods among one another are treated with light ridicule.

Of course this is only one side. A distinct tendency not to flout but quietly to get rid of the "survivals" of archaic savagery can also be traced. And in Hesiod and the gnomic and lyric poets who followed before and during the definitely historical period similar drifts of thought continue. Hesiod, though later, preserves more archaic material than Homer, especially in the form of cosmogonic myths, but he too displays a sceptical reflectiveness. All along there is free play of criticism, destructive or reconstructive; and there is no organised social authority to check the poets. It is rather they that have the censorship over public opinion. There is no overshadowing caste, as in mediæval Christendom, that can tolerate extreme licence provided it is only that, but cannot tolerate serious criticism by those who claim in virtue of individual insight

to correct the common doctrine, as the Greek poets did.

On the borders of the historic period, when prose begins to be written, appear new classes of critics. First we meet with the "wise men," who framed such maxims as those that have been preserved at the beginning of the compilations called Lives of the Philosophers, and so forth. After these appear the philosophers properly so called, who not only reflect in general terms on human life, but proceed to investigate the nature of the world. This kind of investigation, carried on in complete independence, was definitely a new thing. The Egyptians and Babylonians had created the beginnings of science, and had arrived at a high theology. Philosophy was the distinctive creation of the Greeks. No doubt there are conceptions in the Babylonian and Egyptian cosmogonies which, disentangled from myth and viewed in the light of later ideas, can be called philosophic; but there was not individual reflection with a clear view of the problem to be attacked. The quasi-philosophical ideas arrived at do not seem to be beyond the scope of Hesiod's *Theogony*. Even the high theology of the priests, though it had reached the stage of pure monotheism, was not yet philosophical theism. Its attitude was always that of "common sense," which might become very refined, but still did not amount to philosophy. The nature of a god was thought to be sufficiently known. He was conceived as a powerful invisible being acting

on the world of men, animals, and things. There was a kind of "dualistic" opposition between gross matter and "spirit," or finer matter with the power of intelligent will and of swifter motion. When a supreme, and finally a sole, God was conceived, he was, in our phrase, "spiritualised." That is to say, he was thought of as without visible form, as potentially at least omnipresent, as knowing all things, and as having the power to carry into effect instantly every volition; but the ultimate nature either of God or gods or of the world was not examined. It was not even asked at first whether these natures were the same in essence or different. This examination was begun by the Ionian Greeks on the coast of Asia Minor, and they examined first the nature of the world. The earliest Greek philosophers may be called, if the phrase is understood without its aggressive sense, atheological. In using the name of "god," as they did sometimes, they transferred it to the world or its parts.

The first school of Greek philosophy was that which had the centre of its activity at Miletus. The names of its successive chiefs are Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes. That this was really a school, and not merely a succession of isolated thinkers, Professor Burnet has shown in his *Early Greek Philosophy*. As philosophy was very closely connected with the science then known, and, indeed, differed from science only by its breadth of view, the school of Miletus was at the same time a school for scientific investiga-

tion. Various particular inventions and discoveries are ascribed to its chiefs. What, then, was the influence in Greece of this science under philosophic direction? According to Professor Burnet, its influence was really immense; and it is especially important to note this because his tendency is the very opposite of exaggeration. Indeed, it is safe to say, in view of his method, that the thinkers must have had more in their minds than he finds it possible definitely to ascribe to them. In his account their doctrines seem to be reduced to the barest meaning that the carefully sifted fragments or statements of their opinions, cleared of the comments of the ancient "doxographers," will admit of. In one case (though not till we get beyond the earliest "physicists") I shall try to show that less is allowed than is required to explain the expressions.

The philosophers of Miletus flourished during the sixth century B.C., Thales and Anaximander having been born in the seventh century. While science was thus for the first time cultivated with a philosophic aim, the religious movement known as Orphism was passing over Greece. This was not specially connected with the monotheistic doctrine to which I ascribe an important influence on the Greek philosophical theism. If monotheism came in as an element, Orphism was in essence rather a doctrine of expiatory ritual, going back to archaic and popular ideas. It was an attempt at a "revealed religion," whose

revealer, Orpheus, as Aristotle declared in the fourth century, had never existed. It was popular in its preoccupation with the fate of the soul in the underworld; the soul's way of release having been shown by a god who descended into Hades. Here it differed from the Olympian religion, represented in a purified form in Homer, as Christianity differed from prophetic Judaism. Thus it seems to have been precisely the religion which, if adopted, might have consolidated the existing priesthood and given it the social direction. For the social type of Greece was still sufficiently indeterminate, and the priesthood of the temples had no dogma already formed that could give a bias against it. To explain its failure several causes have been assigned; but Professor Burnet seems to have stated the decisive one.

When comparisons are drawn between Greece and the Oriental civilisations, all monarchical and theocratic in form, it is noticed that in Greece a military aristocracy, having obtained the social leadership, prevented the rise to power of a priestly caste. And of course the armed democracies of the cities were an extension of the aristocracies. Political privileges were by degrees wrested from the ruling class, while the directing power of the State remained laic as before. But India similarly had a military aristocracy which was so far successful in its struggle for power that the kings arose out of it. Professor Rhys Davids has shown that in the period of the rise of Buddhism (precisely in the sixth century B.C.)

the type of government was not even fixedly monarchical, but that along with incipient monarchies there were also republics. And, to take a remote parallel, in the Italy of the Middle Ages the city-republics, whether of aristocratic or democratic constitution, could not seriously conceive the idea of emancipating themselves from the spiritual supremacy of the Church. Of course this was a case of an established system long fixed; and Greece was still plastic. But why did not Greece take this path in the sixth century B.C., instead of some centuries later when overwhelmed along with the rest of the ancient world? The cause is clearly stated in the passage I have just referred to:[1] "It looked as if Greek religion were about to enter upon the same stage as that already reached by the religions of the East; and, but for the rise of science, it is hard to see what could have checked this tendency. It is usual to say that the Greeks were saved from a religion of the Oriental type by their having no priesthood; but this is to mistake the effect for the cause. Priesthoods do not make dogmas, though they preserve them once they are made; and in the earlier stages of their development, the Oriental peoples had no priesthoods either in the sense intended. It was not so much the

[1] *Early Greek Philosophy*, 2nd ed., p. 87.—In the third edition (1920), Professor Burnet has withdrawn this passage. He now seems to make the military aristocracies descended from the northern invaders of "Mycenæan" Greece the determining cause. "It was probably due to the Achaians that the Greeks never had a priestly class, and that may well have had something to do with the rise of free science among them" (3rd ed., p. 4).

absence of a priesthood as the existence of the scientific schools that saved Greece."

Concurring circumstances, of course, were necessary. Historians have conjectured that if the Persian invasion had never come, or if it had succeeded, the schools of Ionia would have been powerless to check the movement. In the first case there would have been peaceful permeation by mystagogues from the East in alliance with Orphic adepts; in the second case, the Persian hegemony, working in alliance with the local religions, would have provided the new cult with the conditions for organising itself. What secured the liberty of science and philosophy was the direction given to national enthusiasm by patriotic resistance to the Asiatic kings. The Greeks were really fighting, not for their own gods against the destroyers of their shrines, as, by a natural illusion, they thought, but against the gods and religion raised to an independent power dominating the State.[1] Yet, when everything has been allowed for political accident, I think we must also recognise in the end what amounts to an innate disposition of the Greek mind. That Greece had something positive tending to freedom seems to be shown first by the humanism of its literature and then by the naturalism of its scientific philosophy.

Whether we explain the result by intrinsic or by extrinsic causes, the victories of Athens at Marathon and Salamis were decisive in the history

[1] *Cf.* Ed. Meyer, *Geschichte des Alterthums*, iii. § 256.

of the human race.[1] Students of the disinterred Oriental civilisations are quite right in pointing out, as Maspero does, that the contest was not precisely between civilisation and barbarism, but between two types of civilised life; yet it remains true that the victorious cause in this case was the higher. And when we consider what kind of organisation was imposed on Europe later, and with what extreme difficulty it was shaken off, even with all the spirit of the Northern nations for resistent power, and with the recovery of Greek literature and thought and the new growth of science for encouragement to civic and intellectual freedom, it seems clear that, without the example of Greece, the theocratical and monarchical order would never have been transcended on earth. The fanciful speculation might be started that if a smaller and older planet is indeed inhabited by intelligent beings, it has probably reached its term in political unification under some perfected benevolent despotism of Chaldæan type, without entering at all on what Comte calls "the revolutionary transition of three thousand years," beginning with Homer and not yet ended.

This is not to say that the first movement of Greek thought after it became conscious of its freedom attained by immediate intuition to absolute truth, and that it had now nothing further to learn from what had preceded it. On

[1] *νῦν ὑπὲρ πάντων ἀγών.*
Æsch. *Pers.* 405.

the contrary, a movement of return very soon became necessary. What had been gained was that ideas which elsewhere, if they were to count at all, could only become elements in other religions, in Greece were taken up into the higher form of a philosophy.

When Greek systematic reflection, starting free from the practical organising aims to which intellect had been bound down in Western Asia, set out on its quest of pure truth, it first sought the explanation of all things in a reality given as objective. The substance which the early thinkers regarded as primary was something known by vaguer or clearer perception. It was constant in quantity. Other apparent substances were transformations of it, and returned into it. Particular things were differentiations of it, and the life and sense and intelligence of men and animals were temporary determinations of qualities latent in the whole. Clearly this is a philosophical view. It aims at a unity of principle not contained in the common-sense view of the world; which at first supposes particular things to come into and go out of existence, and recognises irreducible differences. And, indeed, in the schools it came to be expressly set in antagonism to the opinion of "the Greeks" in general—that is, of the popular mind.

Its fundamental axiom or postulate, *ex nihilo nihil*, remains that of modern science; but as a philosophy the early movement reached no permanently acceptable solution. Divergent paths were

taken, and led to conclusions differing in detail and equally unverifiable. And the next movement of thought, partly by developing the early thinkers to extremes, and partly by an investigation of the conditions of knowing, showed that the apparently real existences presented in perception are only phenomena for the knower, and enable us to arrive at no system of permanent realities. For this we must fall back on something else.

This was, for the men of constructive genius who now appeared, "God and the soul"; or, more exactly, in terms of philosophic thought, something symbolised by those names. As the first movement had tried to unify the nature of things from acceptance of the perceived object as real, and had so far failed, the new movement, when it became positive, turned to the other side of that "dualism" which had been in human thought since it was human. The problem that early man had tried to solve by conceiving a world of ghosts and gods behind presented phenomena was found to be still existent; and, in the meantime, the conception had been considerably purified and rationalised, though, as has been said, without becoming strictly philosophical. Now, if the view that I have put forth is right, the idea that God is one was thrown into Greek thought from outside, and not wholly developed from within; though a portion of the philosophers immediately made it their own. As presented to them, it was more like what we call distinctively theism. As

they developed it, especially at the first stage, it became more like pantheism. And again, at the last stage of Greek thought, it tended anew to a pantheistic form.

That the idea of divine unity was not developed from within Greek religion seems to be shown by the literature which we possess; for no real process is traceable from the monarchy of Zeus to the conception of a sole God. Humanistic criticism plays round the Olympian hierarchy without even trying to reduce it to anything but a poetic order for the imagination. When Zeus is identified with the one God, this is abrupt, and, as I shall try to show, is best explained by an external contact. The contact I take to be no more than this: that an internationalised monotheism, packed into formulæ which, I think it must be admitted, could be made more portable than those of the mathematics and astronomy which the Greeks admittedly borrowed, had spread abroad, as a doctrine of "wise men," among the educated and reflective classes both of the Greek and other races. Even before it came to the Greeks it was the doctrine of a God no longer national. The one God was neither Ammon nor Merodach, though he might be called locally by those names. And this, as we shall see, was also the position of the greatest minds among the Greeks when they applied the name of Zeus to the highest or sole God.

These, in the early part of the fifth century B.C., were Heraclitus and Æschylus; but Xenophanes

is earlier, and philosophic theism is often ascribed to him as its beginner. Against this Professor Burnet has proved, in the first place, that Aristotle, in what he says in the *Metaphysics*, does not ascribe to him originality in his doctrine of "the One";[1] and in the second place that the doctrine is really pantheism. These proofs I accept; but I maintain that it was a pantheism incorporating theism, and not simply a reproduction of the doctrine as to the one nature of things held by the early Ionians. Further, it seems to me that the theism is explicable as a doctrine with which Xenophanes had become acquainted in his wanderings in search of knowledge; and we know of these by his own statements. This agrees in substance with Professor Burnet's view as to his kind of activity; and it helps to explain the well-known depreciating judgment of Heraclitus: "The learning of many things teacheth not understanding, else would it have taught Hesiod and Pythagoras, and again Xenophanes and Hekataios."[2] Like Pythagoras, Xenophanes had important ideas, to which he was able to give a personal impress; and these, as in the case of Pythagoras, were both theological and scientific. The suggestions attributed to him in geology are comparable with those of Leibniz's *Protogæa* written in 1691.[3] Yet Heraclitus—a per-

[1] By πρῶτος τούτων ἑνίσας, as he shows (*Early Greek Philosophy*, 2nd ed., p. 139 *n.*), Aristotle could only mean "the first partisan of the One," and not "the first to unify."

[2] I cite the fragments as translated by Burnet.

[3] See Leibniz's Collected Works, ed. L. Dutens (1768), vol. ii.

fectly self-conscious man of genius—was right in placing the others below himself in thought; for he had attained an original and unified philosophical doctrine concerning the nature of things, and they had not. Simply as a theologian, Heraclitus agreed with Xenophanes, but there is no sign of borrowing from the elder thinker. All is explicable if we suppose that pure monotheism was then a common doctrine, not yet of the philosophic schools, but of minds whose reflections had put them in opposition to the popular stories, without making them simply "atheists."

For the proof of my case as regards the theism of Xenophanes, I am willing to abide by the impression made by a single fragment: "But without toil he swayeth all things by the thought of his mind."[1] This, it seems to me, can only mean direction of the whole by intellect. And that is definitely the introduction of a new idea as compared with the notion of a diffused sentiency and latent intelligence capable of differentiation into individuals. That Xenophanes had not, like Heraclitus, formed an organic system out of his theology together with his cosmic physics has been admitted; but I think we cannot deny to him the theistic view of the world. There would certainly be less point in his attack on the immoral representations of the gods in the mythologies of Homer and Hesiod if there

[1] ἀλλ' ἀπάνευθε πόνοιο νόου φρενὶ πάντα κραδαίνει.
Fragm. 25, Diels.

were no tacit contrast of these with an ethical monotheism of his own. And by Empedocles the universality of moral law is upheld in close association with a generalised theism which is a paraphrase of the better-known expressions of Xenophanes.[1] "It is not possible for us to set God before our eyes, or to lay hold of him with our hands, which is the broadest way of persuasion that leads into the heart of man." "For he is not furnished with a human head on his body, two branches do not sprout from his shoulders, he has no feet, no swift knees, nor hairy parts; but he is only a sacred and unutterable mind flashing through the whole world with rapid thoughts." "This is not lawful for some and unlawful for others; but the law for all extends everywhere, through the wide-ruling air and the infinite light of heaven."[2]

Turning now to the corresponding passages of Heraclitus and of Æschylus, we find a remarkable coincidence of thought. First, I will quote the generalised statement of his theology by Heraclitus. "The wise is one only. It is unwilling and willing to be called by the name of Zeus."[3] Now compare his contemporary Æschylus, who makes the Chorus in the *Agamemnon*, referring to the power that gives its sanction to the moral law, hesitate to speak of this as Zeus, but, after

1 Fragm. 23–26, of which the third was quoted above.
2 Fragm. 133–135, Burnet's translation.
3 *ἓν τὸ σοφὸν μοῦνον λέγεσθαι οὐκ ἐθέλει καὶ ἐθέλει Ζηνὸς ὄνομα* (Fragm. 32, Diels.).

a kind of deprecation, finally choose the name as permissible.

> Ζεύς, ὅστις ποτ' ἐστίν, εἰ τόδ' αὐ-
> τῷ φίλον κεκλημένῳ,
> τοῦτό νιν προσεννέπω.[1]

Among men, we may perhaps interpret, the name of the chief god of the State may be adopted, but the pure conception is to be kept clear of the mythological attributes. When the Zeus of myth is himself one of the conflicting personages in a drama among the gods, as in the *Prometheus*, the sanction is wielded by the more impersonally conceived powers of the Fates and the Erinyes.[2] Ultimately the conception of the poet, as of the philosophers in the same age, is pantheistic; but the pantheism, it is worthy of note, includes, in modern phrase, both immanence and transcendence.

> Ζεύς ἐστιν αἰθήρ, Ζεὺς δὲ γῆ, Ζεὺς δ' οὐρανός,
> Ζεύς τοι τὰ πάντα χὤτι τῶνδ' ὑπέρτερον.[3]

Thus we find ideas characteristic of the second or idealistic period of Greek thought already expressed in the first or naturalistic. In the second period, that of Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle, the external origin of the generalised theism is still inferrible. When they appeal, as they do, to the opinions of "wise men," it is not to Greek predecessors, to whom their attitude is far more critical than deferential. It is, I take it, to the

[1] Æsch. *Ag.* 160–162.
[2] *Prom. Vinct.* 516.
[3] Fragm. 70 (*Heliades*).

imported idea of a creative God, now more definitely conceived as creative and as acting teleologically. For the idea of the soul, which was one of their points of contact with more primitive thought for the renewal of philosophy, they were indebted to the survival in the popular mind of a stronger animism than that of the Homeric age or of the physical philosophers. It was long before this could be cleared of its mythical associations and brought to an abstract expression of the unity of consciousness in distinction from that of an individual thing in nature; for here the whole process of abstraction had to be performed by the idealistic thinkers. The Orphics and Pythagoreans, who were to some extent their precursors, had clothed the idea in more, and not less, elaborately imaginative form than it had for the Greeks generally. With theism it was different. This they had not to develop for the first time directly out of the polytheism of the Greeks. They could take up a known doctrine partly elaborated to their hand, though not yet brought to the strictly philosophical form that could satisfy them. And to them the essence of the doctrine seemed to be teleology. The world and its parts are directed as if by a deliberating intelligence for the good of animated beings.

Closer students of ancient thought have noted that for the Greek philosophical theism the dogma of divine unity had not the importance that moderns, under the influence of Judæo-

Christian prepossessions, are inclined to ascribe to it. Yet, as I shall try to show, the dogma was really part of what became the orthodox classical philosophy. The truth seems to be that, as the question of personality was relatively unimportant, the form of expression was indifferent. Writers pass from plural to singular (*οἱ θεοί, ὁ θεός*), and from personal to impersonal (*τὸ θεῖον*), and back again, without attaching any significance to the change. But of course moderns also often talk about "the gods" when they mean "God," and often substitute an impersonal form. Among the Greeks, no need was felt for a sustained attack upon polytheism, provided the gods were conceived ethically. This became the practically important point. And in modern times Kant held that this was the right attitude. An ethical polytheism is a higher religion than a monotheism that makes of its one God simply a celestial despot determining things according to his good pleasure.

Stress on the ethical attitude is, as we should expect, found especially in the Xenophontic Socrates. The passages in the *Memorabilia* (I. 4 and IV. 3) setting forth the "design-argument" for the belief in God or gods are rejected by some editors as interpolations; but, as I think Zeller has shown,[1] without sufficient ground. The objection seems to be that they are too like the detailed argumentations of the Stoics to belong to Socrates, or even Xenophon; but, entirely

[1] See *Philosophie der Griechen*, II. 1, pp. 172–181 (4th ed.).

apart from them, we know by the evidence of Plato also that teleology was a doctrine of the Socratic school; and insistence on small adaptations of the human organism and on the utility of the rest of the world and of animals for man does not seem incongruous with the practical character of the Socratic teaching as it was presented to and understood by Xenophon. A notable point in the exposition is the invisibility of God[1] or the gods. God is in the universe what the mind or soul of man is in the body.[2] Any one following Socrates, Xenophon adds as a comment of his own, would refrain from evil even when unseen of men, since he would hold that nothing that is done escapes the gods.[3]

The more metaphysical minds of the school, however, were not content merely with this. Even when they used the same kind of language about a providential order, they were quite aware that it was popular language. The effort to go deeper resulted in Plato's elaboration of the doctrine of Ideas. The teleological nature of this elaboration is indicated by his making the idea

1 iv. 3, 13 : *ὁ τὸν ὅλον κόσμον συντάττων τε καὶ συνέχων.*

2 i. 4, 17.

3 i. 4, 19. An indirect confirmation of the genuineness of the whole passage is to be found in the sceptical explanation put forth in a drama by Xenophon's elder contemporary Critias, the member of the Thirty, to which I shall refer later. The ethical conception of the gods is treated as the authorised doctrine; which, it is maintained, was introduced by wise legislators to hold men in awe when human laws could not reach them. Xenophon may even have been alluding to what was probably notorious as having been spoken on the stage, and thus indirectly rebutting the accusation that the teaching of Socrates, which at one time Critias had followed with interest, had helped to form unprincipled oligarchs.

of good supreme; but what is clear about the doctrine is that it aims at being science, and not merely belief. The belief in one supreme creative God and in providence Plato held to be "right opinion," and he would, no doubt, have had it taught in the rightly constituted State; but this opinion only pointed to a truth, and was not the truth itself. In the *Phædo* he makes Socrates say that in the search for truth he had turned with hope from the earlier physical thinkers to Anaxagoras, who introduced Mind as a cause of order in the world; but he was disappointed, finding in detail only mechanical agencies employed, and no systematic use made of the new principle.[1] Anaxagoras had, in fact, as later critics in antiquity came to see, and as the moderns generally allow, failed to express what we may suppose that he was driving at; namely, the distinction of a purely immaterial principle from the interacting things in the universe. Through inability to find adequate language for a distinction common sense had had no need of, he was compelled to make mind, which in reality is the condition of all knowledge, only one agent among others; so that it became no more than another cause brought into his physical explanations when the rest fell short. Thus, as far as language was concerned, he had failed to transcend the notion

[1] According to the authority followed by Diogenes Laertius (ii. 45), what Plato attributed to Socrates respecting the "physicists" really applied to himself. The remark refers directly to the *Apology*; but this statement incorporated in Diogenes seems to be the source of the traditional opinion, which some of the newer critics, who are inclined to take Plato very literally, set aside.

of "spirit" as a kind of finer matter. Plato, in his theory of Ideas (whatever may have been the remoter origin of this), took a new line in supposing the reality on which ultimate explanation depends to be an order of existences corresponding to the mental concepts which his master had been the first to make the object of systematic search culminating in strict definition. The essence of the theory is that a rational order is embodied in the visible world so far as this contains reality and is not illusory appearance. To explain the illusory appearance, however, a recipient opposed to the Ideas—that is, a sort of bare negation of being—had afterwards to be introduced; and the positive doctrine itself contained difficulties which Plato was constantly seeking to resolve. In spite of what has been called, improperly as many think, his "later theory of Ideas," he never succeeded in resolving them. Though he had gone further than Anaxagoras, language could not yet be carried to the point of expressing with precision something that is not an object of perception and yet is the condition of the knowledge of all perceptible things, and, ultimately, of their being objects of perception at all. The Ideas were themselves conceived as a kind of objective Forms; and even to say that the supreme Idea—that of the Good—was "beyond Being" did not succeed in fixing for thought the notion of pure subjectivity in its opposition to the object. The process that was to end in making clear language possible about

mental existences had, however, been carried a long way from the animism and theology which had contained the first recognition of those existences as facts.

Plato's later interpreters made a great advance in conceivability when they treated the Ideas as a kind of forms within universal Mind. This conception was arrived at through the medium of Aristotle, who, beginning as Plato's disciple, became his continuator as well as critic. Aristotle was really the first to define soul and mind (that is, the intellectual part of soul, or that which deals with objects of knowledge by means of concepts) so as to distinguish them wholly from objects perceptible as something external. Thus, when Neo-Platonic writers, ancient or modern, have attributed their own doctrine to Plato, they have always been met by the strict philologists with the refusal to admit that Plato's Ideas themselves can be anything but objective Forms, existing in independence of all minds or souls. They are not to be conceived as a system in any universal Mind, but are absolutely "transcendent." When Plato speaks of God as a mind forming the universe after the system of Ideas as a pattern, this is to be taken literally—that is to say, the ultimate objects of universal Intellect exist outside it as a *prius*.

It may be that Plato, in his theory of Ideas as eternally existent Forms that are conditions of the coming into being of all things, was trying to get further beyond imaginative representation

than human thought ever can. In any case, his own school, from first to last, always recognised a mythological element in his account of creation, where he speaks as a theologian. It is not, indeed, all mythological. Plato and Aristotle, after Xenophanes and Parmenides, were "partisans of the One." The position that there is only one world or universe is not part of the mythology, but is scientifically opposed to the notion of "infinite worlds" first put forward by Anaximander. Plato means quite literally that the world is formed, as far as the nature of a material world admits, in accordance with a rational order; and this requires that it should be a total system, and therefore a unity. The notion that was only for "right opinion," and not for strict science, was that the world had been created by a first act that set it going from a certain point of time. Thus the Demiurge of the *Timæus* partly represents Plato's real thought, as being one cause or principle; but is for him mythological in so far as he is a personal creator planning the world for the best by deliberative thought and taking measures to carry out his resolve. But whence, and why, did Plato adopt this particular representation?

He adopted it not, of course, from the popular theology of the Greeks, which he treats with supreme irony, nor yet by a direct reduction of his pure philosophy to a more imaginable form; but, I contend, from the high theology that had come into Greece through contact with Asia. And

his reason for recurring to this was precisely to oppose the naturalistic cosmogonies of the poets and the physical philosophers. He meant, in philosophic truth, that the visible universe is a manifestation of something that is of mental nature. That Ideas have this nature is always clear to him, however difficult it may be to reconcile with their objectivity. Mind, therefore, must not be thought of as a product of the visible universe. A "probable account" might be given in which Reason was represented as proceeding to manifest itself in time; but the starting-point for this must be the notion of a supreme creative God, not of a "generated god" like Zeus. Such a notion, we have seen grounds for thinking, was already current. This he would have had publicly taught; the penetration to the deeper truth being reserved for those capable of a training in dialectic.

Two passages, I think, are sufficient to establish this general view. In the *Sophist* the youthful Theætetus is asked by the Eleatic stranger, setting forth the distinction between "divine" and "human" productive art (ποιητική), whether he supposes things organic and inorganic, not made by man, to come into being by the shaping action of a god, or, accepting "the opinion and speech of the many," that nature produces them from some cause that generates spontaneously and without understanding. On his expressing doubt whether in the end he will decide for this, or, as he is now inclined in deference to one older and wiser, for the cause accompanied

by reason and divine knowledge, he is told with a certain solemnity that his own reflections are sure to confirm his present inclination to the doctrine that the things of nature are made by divine art.[1] Now the views of "the many" were such as might be derived from the *Theogony* of Hesiod. Elsewhere also Plato treats with hostility the doctrine he found in the older poets, according to which gods and men were products of a chaos or gulf without mind or thought. That which he proposes to substitute for it is stated in more detail in the *Timæus*. I cite the opening of the passage as translated by Caird in *The Evolution of Theology in the Greek Philosophers* (1904)[2]: "Let me tell you why nature and this universe of things was framed by him who framed it. God is good; and in a perfectly good being no envy or jealousy could ever exist in any case or at any time. Being thus far removed from any such feeling, he desired that all things should be as like himself as it was possible for them to be. This is the sovereign cause of the existence of the world of change, which we shall do well to believe on the testimony of wise men of old."

The last two words of the translation, I must observe, are not in the original, which speaks only of what ought to be received "from wise

1 *Soph.* 265 CD. I have not departed from the traditional rendering of λόγος by "reason" here, though exact philologists object to this rendering of it before the Stoics. But is it not likely that the sense of "reckoning" or "measurement" was thus generalised occasionally by earlier writers before the Stoics could make λόγος in their determinate sense the name for the rational law of things?

2 Vol. i. p. 243.

men" (*παρ' ἀνδρῶν φρονίμων*). Yet there seems to be a shade of expression that justifies the rendering. In any case, it was not made in support of a "tendency"; for Caird had no thesis to maintain as to the Eastern origin of the mythical clothing given by Plato to his account of the world and its origin. On the contrary, he regards the higher Greek theology as self-developed within the philosophy. Plato's ideal reconstitution of the State even he treats as a reform in a purely Hellenic spirit; though more than one ancient writer has noticed its affinity with Egypt and the East. The "wise men," then, I take it, are those who hold the doctrine that there is one God, who is a creator and providential ruler. And this generalised theology is that which, as I have maintained, had already spread abroad among reflective minds on the borders of the civilisations. In the plastic state of the Greek intellect, it was readily received as embodying ancient wisdom. By contrast, to the temper of a theologian, the polytheism of the cosmogonic poets would seem, in Hume's phrase, a doctrine of "superstitious atheists."

This explains how the myth of the *Timæus* has come to seem more than a myth. On a first reading, it is difficult not to think that Plato is setting forth as philosophic truth the creation of the universe by a personal God. Against this, however, the non-acceptance of that view by his school in all periods seems conclusive. And close reading of the passage shows

that he does not profess to offer a demonstration, but only to set forth what we ought to think, what it is right to receive, "according to the probable account" (*κατὰ λόγον τὸν εἰκότα*). Now we know that Plato held the objects of opinion, even the most probable, as distinguished from the objects of demonstrative knowledge, to be themselves partly unreal. This position, quite familiar to the school, was left to be applied in the particular case. The impression of great seriousness that is nevertheless given is explicable if we consider that the theory of the divine Artificer was already a doctrine of theologians, and was not merely an improvisation of Plato's own poetic fancy, as some of his myths no doubt are. And he was really serious in so far as he would have had this taught as an orthodox theology. Joseph de Maistre said with true insight that Plato was half a Chaldæan.

That the world, "this only-begotten universe," is one and not many or infinite, I do not, as I have said already, take to be part of the myth. Plato argues to it, not from the unity of the Creator, but of the system of Ideas, the pattern (*τὸ παράδειγμα*) in accordance with which it is to be formed.[1] The whole visible world must be one if it is to resemble the unity and ordered system that is truly real. For of course the Ideas, ordered under the Idea of the Good, are to Plato the absolute reality.

This doctrine that the universe, as well as God,

[1] *Timæus*, 31 A.

is one, became an essential part of ancient philosophical theism. To theism a form was given by Aristotle much more readily comprehensible than Plato's. For when we clear away from this the mythical representation, we seem to be left with an underlying view that in no way admits of personality at the summit. The Idea of the Good beyond Being can scarcely be a person. And Plato's successors in the end made it expressly not a person, though they called it God, and in strictness the only God. The God of Aristotle, on the other hand, "thinks himself." In man philosophic contemplation most resembles the divine life of thinking on thought. Man's thought is derived from God's; but God does not, as in some doctrines called pantheistic, come to consciousness only in particular beings in the universe. The unity of the whole is like that of an army in so far as it is even more expressed by the unity of the general than by the systematic order that exists through him as its cause. At the same time, the comparison to a general, or to the "one ruler" in the Homeric monarchy, only offers an analogy to the unity as realised for itself, and must not be pressed beyond this. Aristotle's God, though he may be called in modern language personal, is no more a "prince or legislator" than Spinoza's. He is the "unmoved mover," whose transcendent life draws to it all beings in the universe through the love by which they strive to ascend. This love, or desire for the perfection completely realised only in the supreme

unity, is the cause of the progressive changes through which particular beings pass in their effort to reach their own good. Of creation there is no question. The existence of the world extends through infinite past and future time, and the movements of its everlasting life are cyclical.

Thus, at the end of the second movement of Greek thought, philosophical theology reached its highest degree of clearness. It is therefore of special interest to know what account, if any, Aristotle himself has to give of its origin. Now in the *Metaphysics* he gives his view in a generalised form ; and it seems to me that on the whole this is in conformity with the thesis I have maintained. Next to the supreme God, as is known, both Plato and Aristotle placed the divine life of the heavenly bodies, with their regular motions, which were thought to be, of all motions, least removed from the character of divinity. So far as this part of the doctrine is concerned, Aristotle differs from Plato only in ceasing to employ in relation to God what he regarded as the misleading imagination of a creative Demiurge working from a model. Setting forth his doctrine of absolute monotheism in combination with this notion of mediation through the diviner parts of the universe (made of purer substance) down to sublunary things, he sums up the whole thus : " The first unmoved mover then is one, both by its definition as being of one kind, and numerically. Therefore also that which is moved ever and continuously is

one only. There is therefore only one heaven or universe. Now certain relics have been handed down from those of remotest antiquity (*παρὰ τῶν ἀρχαίων καὶ παμπαλαίων*) to later men, in the shape of a mythus, that these are gods, and that the divine encompasses the whole of nature. But the rest has come to be added mythically for the persuasion of the many and for employment in relation to the laws and utility."[1] Mythological additions, he proceeds, are the notions of anthropomorphic and zoomorphic gods, and the things related of them in accordance with their supposed nature. What was divinely said in all this was only the first part of it, namely, that the primal essences are gods. And the probability is that every art and philosophy has been discovered many times up to the limit of possible knowledge and again destroyed; and that these opinions about divine things are as it were remains of such discoveries that have been preserved until now.

The part of this relating to the intelligences that rule the stars I take to be connected with the origins of Greek astronomical science in Babylonia. Along with the generalised results of observation that gave the starting-point for rational astronomy, there came to the Greeks the system of the Babylonian planetary gods. Hence the names of corresponding Hellenic divinities were attached to the planets. The nomenclature of course passed over to the Romans, and thence into

[1] *Met.* xii. 8, 1074 *a* 36.

modern European languages. Zeller, indeed, finds in the passage a remnant of the Greek Nature-religion ;[1] but this seems to be connected with his tendency, justified on the whole, but too exclusive, to refuse recognition of the Oriental influences so often asserted on the beginnings of Greek thought. What had come to be distinctive of Hellenic religion was anthropomorphic polytheism. This, as may be seen in the passage itself, Aristotle simply sets aside whenever he has occasion to refer to it. And in the *Metaphysics*, as elsewhere, he takes up Plato's quarrel with the Greek θεολόγοι and the physical philosophers because they placed what is best last in the order of causation. Thus there seems to be no specially Greek point of contact here ; and we may take the reference to " ancestral opinion " at the end of the passage[2] to mean merely that the generalised idea of θεός, common to Hellenic religion and that which had preceded it, contains a recognition that the order and direction impressed on things come from beings having the highest degree of reality, which is mental. The important point for our present purpose is that Aristotle regards the elevated theology which he disentangles from its association with popular religion as an inheritance from a past era of civilisation, and as attained in that era by the insight of the few. That he connects his theory of origins with a universalised doctrine of cycles which no one

1 *Philosophie der Griechen*, II. 2, p. 467 (3rd ed.).

2 *Met.* xii. 8, 1074 b 13 : ἡ μὲν οὖν πάτριος δόξα καὶ ἡ παρὰ τῶν πρώτων ἐπὶ τοσοῦτον ἡμῖν φανερὰ μόνον.

will now accept does not seem to me to destroy its value as evidence of the actual historical process.

Here I come to the end of the fragmentary indications that seem to me to confirm the deductive argument for the origin of Greek philosophical theology in the generalised monotheism, not yet philosophical, which we know to have emerged in Eastern antiquity. Research would probably reveal more indications of the kind. Those that I have given are merely things held in memory without special attention before I had arrived at the theory. From the post-Aristotelian period of course there can be no evidence worth anything. Assertions long after the date, that the early philosophers had studied under Egyptian priests, Magians, and so forth, form, indeed, a large mass of apparent testimony, but these Zeller has effectively swept away. After Aristotle, Greek philosophy proceeded entirely from its own resources. Everything in the later schools can be explained as a development from their predecessors. The newer East had taken paths of its own; and from these the philosophic path, even when there seemed to be an approximation, was wholly apart. What came to the later Greeks, and afterwards to the Romans, from the East was a new influx of ritual, myth, and mystery. The philosophers were sometimes interested in this; but nowhere can it be shown that it had any power to modify their philosophy. It is not, unfortunately, that they were untouched by

superstition. The famous saying, to be met with in Cicero, that there is nothing so absurd that it has not been said by some philosopher, refers to the profusion of ingenious defences, not only of the official augury, but of all sorts of magical practices and observances of omens that were not even part of the State-religion. And in the *Philopseudes* of Lucian the philosophers are treated as especially responsible for the encouragement of superstitions new and old. The immense multiplication of all this, authorised and unauthorised, in ancient life, did not, however, interfere essentially with philosophic liberty. The defences of it were gratuitous, and any one who liked could attack it. There has never been a more drastic attack than that of Carneades which furnished Cicero with the materials for the second of his two books *On Divination*.

Of the philosophic schools that flourished in the Greek and afterwards the Græco-Roman world from the third century before to the second after the Christian era, some accepted, and some, either positively or with more or less of sceptical reserve, rejected the theism that now claimed to stand, not on the authority of past teachers, but on demonstration. A portion of the demonstrations offered might be the general consent of mankind; but this shows how far we have travelled from the origins. A doctrine at first put forward as the result of special insight, as difficult to prove, and as opposed to the prejudices of the vulgar, was now declared to be merely

an innate idea made explicit. Generalised theism became a kind of semi-official philosophy. With inclusion of the immortality of the soul, it was expressly attached to the Socratico-Platonic tradition. Cicero in the *Tusculans* calls the philosophies outside of this the "plebeian philosophies." Plato had set the tone in his treatment of the "earth-born," the γηγενεῖς, who grasp rocks and trees and think they have got hold of realities. This, of course, refers to the materialistic Atomists, though Plato nowhere mentions Democritus by name. And Cicero has in view especially the Epicureans, always treated academically as only half-trained; with some justification on account of the badness of their science, relative as well as absolute. Yet we find in the Stoics, who were on the whole the most influential school during the period, a peculiar combination of theism with materialism.

While the Stoic theology is in strict definition a naturalistic pantheism, its teachers use the language of personal theism, and in particular carry their doctrine of providential government into the most trivial details, regarding the universe consistently as ordered for the sake of man. Their period, it has often been said, was dominated by practical interests. The task now laid on philosophy was to become a rule of life for the individual. Under the Macedonian and afterwards the Roman supremacy, the city-State had been depressed to the rank of a municipality. Thus the old systems of customary morality of which it had been the

centre were no longer adequate; nor could they be replaced by a legislation reasoned out in the manner of Plato and Aristotle; for this, however it might point beyond it, still presupposed the type of civic life that belonged to the past. Philosophy, therefore, in order to become effectively a theory of practice, had to withdraw itself from the refinements of the Platonic and Aristotelian metaphysics and fall back on distinctions more accessible to common sense. On the one side, it is as if the world found itself for the time unequal to the strain of further subjective thinking, and had to take refuge in the earlier point of view for which objective things were directly apprehensible in their reality. On the other side, if a religious need was felt, a doctrine was required less remote from common modes of feeling than idealistic philosophy. God must be conceived as permeating the world and everywhere active. Aristotle's eternal and unmoved essence, separated from perceptible things, having no extension, but without parts and indivisible,[1] seemed too far away from mankind. Thus, while in detail the Stoics took much from Aristotle, they went back for a physical theology to Heraclitus. Their naturalism was, moreover, like that of the Epicureans, explicitly materialistic, as the naturalism of the early schools had not

1 *Met.* xii. 7, 1073 a 3: *ὅτι μὲν οὖν ἔστιν οὐσία τις ἀΐδιος καὶ ἀκίνητος καὶ κεχωρισμένη τῶν αἰσθητῶν, φανερὸν ἐκ τῶν εἰρημένων. δέδεικται δὲ καὶ ὅτι μέγεθος οὐδὲν ἔχειν ἐνδέχεται ταύτην τὴν οὐσίαν, ἀλλ' ἀμερὴς καὶ ἀδιαίρετός ἐστιν.*

been.[1] Everything to which a name can be given is accordingly, by Zeno as by Epicurus, declared to be either body or some property or determination of it, or a "phantasm" raised by the interaction of bodies. The particular kind of body selected by the Stoics as ultimately real was, however, not the hard atom of Democritus and Epicurus, but the elemental fire of Heraclitus, which is transformed into all the other elements and reappears as the final result of their transformations. This is continuous, not discrete like the atoms; so that there is no empty space or vacuum within the world. The universe is a plenum. The fiery breath (πνεῦμα) that pervades all things is at the same time the divine reason (λόγος) that rules them. Souls are separated parts of it, and return to it. The world passes through a series of absolutely identical cycles. At the end of each, all particular things are resolved into the primeval fire, out of which again everything emerges in repeated succession from the beginning of a new world-period. This, according to the most accurate view now attainable,[2] was not part of the theory of Heraclitus, who held the transformations to be continuously going on in all parts of the whole, but supposed this to remain

[1] Explicit materialism—the assertion that body is known as something real and that all reality is body—came in by reaction after the subjective criticism of the Sophists had attacked the dogmatism of the early thinkers. It is on record that Democritus, as well as Plato, replied to Protagoras on behalf of the attainability of objective truth. See Sextus Empiricus, *Adv. Math.* vii. 389. The passage is noted by Ritter und Preller, and cited by Diels, *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 2nd ed., vol. i. (1906), p. 371.

[2] Anticipated by Toland, the Deist.

always an ordered system of the same kind. Whether the Word (λόγος) of Heraclitus ever means precisely Reason is a disputed question; but his essential thought seems to have been reproduced by the Stoics. There is a cosmic order knowable by human intelligence; and this is ultimately identical with what is "common" or universal in man.

During the predominance of Stoicism and Epicureanism, the Platonic and Aristotelian schools had, of course, gone on at Athens under an uninterrupted series of scholarchs. The Lyceum devoted itself especially to learned and scientific studies. The Academy underwent many variations, the most interesting of these being the turning of the Platonic dialectic to sceptical account against the dogmatism of the Stoics and, to a less extent, of the Epicureans. A little before the Christian era it returned to the teaching, now, however, rather eclectic, of Plato's positive doctrine; but simultaneously a new school arose that attached itself to the name of Pyrrho, whose reputation as a sceptic had been preserved from the time of Alexander, with whom he was contemporary. Renouncing the positive search for truth, subjective criticism, whether of the New Academy or of the Pyrrhonists, turned all its resources to showing that the materialistic schools had failed to prove the existence of those objective realities which they required in order to establish the foundations of their systems. By the test of perception to which they appealed,

it was impossible for them to point to anything that was more than phenomenal or other than relative. Nothing "absolute"[1] can be demonstrated anywhere. Meanwhile all the schools took part in the search for a moral rule or plan of life. This development had resulted, by the end of the second century of the Christian era, in what we call broadly "modern" ethics. The arguments of Sextus Empiricus on the variations of ethical systems are sufficient in themselves to prove, by implication, that this had become the norm. We shall see the importance of the whole development later.

The ethical problem was now the conduct of the individual in relation to humanity, not a mode of life practicable only in a favoured city-State. Similarly in metaphysics, through the detailed advances of psychology and the effort after general intelligibility, distinctions that bore the stamp of the individual genius of Plato and Aristotle had been practically effaced to make room for those that still remain current for modern Europe. Hence the greater accessibility for us of systems belonging to the later period.[2] Something of this modernness belongs also to the last philosophic school of antiquity, that of Neo-Platonism, founded by Plotinus at Rome in the third century, when Stoicism could no longer give satisfaction. While it is essentially a return, aided by the more exact study of Plato

[1] In Sextus Empiricus the term *ἀπόλυτον* is frequent in this philosophical sense.

[2] This is a point well brought out in Caird's *Evolution of Theology*.