and Aristotle, to idealism as a positive doctrine, the idealism is more like the doctrine called by the same name in modern times than is that of the earlier thinkers. Not essentially the concept against the particular that comes under it, nor yet permanence as against flux, furnishes the principle of its antitheses, but consciousness as contrasted with its object. Here, however, we have to deal with Neo-Platonism, not in its general relations, but only as one form of the Greek philosophical theology.

For Plotinus, as for Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics, the world, like its principle, is one. The reality in it is a system of permanent individual beings, mental in nature. At the summit is the transcendent unity identified with Plato's Idea of the Good. The One (τὸ ἕν) is beyond consciousness and thought, and can be directly seized only in a mystical experience, though its necessity as principle admits of rational proof. It creates (ποιεῖ) the realities in the universe, which are real in descending degrees, till at last Matter is reached, which is no reality at all, but, as in the system of Aristotle, a bare possibility of becoming, or rather of appearing to become, all things. For the external world is (in modern language) a phenomenal manifestation. In it the realities are shown reflected as in a mirror and seemingly set apart. Matter, in fact, is a name summing up the generalisation that in the world of experience the unextended realities called souls are in a peculiar association with bodies apparently

divided from one another in a spatial world. Thus at the lowest stage in the system is Matter, which is negative, the origin of division and in this sense of evil. Next come determinate Bodies, which are appearances partially manifesting the Ideas or general concepts from which they receive their names. Above Body is Soul: this, in relation to its associated organism, is "all in all and all in every part," unlike any quality of extended body, such as colour, which can never be thus described. Soul includes not only the principle of consciousness but also of animal motion and vegetative life, and so is in active relation to the world. Above it is Mind, or pure Intellect, which, as with Aristotle, thinks only itself and not the world. This, in the system of Plotinus, contains the Ideas or general Forms according to which all things are "made." Mind and Soul are individualised in particular minds and souls, but these are not to be thought of as in reality apart. All souls coexist in the Soul of the whole; and, in the "intelligible world" of universal Intellect, minds all subsist together, without spatial division and without succession of consciousness in time. Beyond the intelligible world a higher principle of unity is logically required because Mind, in thinking itself, still retains a certain duality—the duality of intelligence and the intelligible Being that it knows, though this is itself. The principle of all, beyond even this degree of duality, is the One that is none of the

things that are in the world, though all are its product.

This general doctrine, it seems to me, is not wrongly described as an idealistic pantheism. It is pantheistic in explicitly rejecting the personality of God and the production of the world by volition. The world, says Plotinus, must flow from its principle by a "natural" process, not by planning and deliberation, like the works of human art. At the same time, the Neo-Platonic pantheism may be said to incorporate ethical theism. The world is as if it had been planned for an end, and justice is ultimately realised in the system; partly in the moral order we can see, but, it is admitted, not wholly in this. The life of the soul, however, goes on, and its fate in its next manifestation depends upon what has been done here. Evil is a necessity if there is to be, among the degrees of reality, a world like ours; and our world, such as it is, is so far a manifestation of goodness and beauty that its existence is preferable to its non-existence. For we have to remember that the question is not whether men and animals should be what they are or be something higher, but whether they should be what they are or not be at all. And there is ascent or descent in the scale according to the degree of knowledge and virtue attained.

The optimism of the Neo-Platonic system, defended by Plotinus against external attack, was brought into a more finished form by Proclus, who occupied Plato's chair at Athens in the fifth

century, being the last great teacher before the schools of pagan philosophy were suppressed by Justinian. Matter, he explained, is not properly to be called evil, but only "necessary." Evils arise through conflict in the world of things apparently set apart; and this conflict, the school from Plotinus onward agreed, is a condition, as Heraclitus had said, of the "alternating harmony" of the world. Thus the first and the last expressions of Greek theodicy coincide. And in its statement by Proclus the defence of the providential order was taken over by Christian scholasticism, whence it passed to the moderns.

CHAPTER IV

THE OPPOSITION

PURE theism, as developed in the Greek philosophical schools, it has sometimes been thought, must have come into collision at first with popular opinion; and the cases of Anaxagoras and of Socrates have been supposed to illustrate this. Anaxagoras was closely associated with Pericles, who had been influenced by him as a thinker. In consequence of this relation, the political enemies of the statesman brought a prosecution against the philosopher for impiety, and he had to leave Athens, where he had settled. This has been supposed to illustrate the hostility of naturalistic polytheism to a doctrine like that of the Anaxagorean Nous, pure from all mixture with the material elements and bringing them into order. The case of Socrates, a generation later, seemed another illustration of the same hostility to a "spiritual" teaching; and he has sometimes been regarded as a martyr of monotheism.

This explanation is no longer in fashion, and, indeed, it is easily refuted. In both cases the motives at work were essentially political, and religion was only a pretext; but, so far as religious bigotry could be called in, it consisted in a

prejudice against what seemed too audaciously naturalistic explanations, such as the description of the sun by Anaxagoras as a red-hot stone. In the *Clouds* of Aristophanes, it is not the introduction of mind to put things in order, but of a mechanical vortex, that is the ground of accusation against the philosophers. And the "new gods" that Socrates was accused of substituting for those of the city meant probably the divine voice of warning which he was accustomed to describe as a psychological experience of his own. This may have been regarded by vulgar prejudice as a sort of unauthorised private oracle, but little could be made of it by itself; and we know from Plato's *Euthyphro* that only a very moderate degree of enlightenment was needed to treat this particular charge with contempt.

Whatever may be the precise explanation of events not known in anything like their full detail, I cannot agree with those who regard the Athenian democracy as peculiarly bigoted and intolerant. Socrates himself recognised that he could have lived his life of discussion nowhere but at Athens; and the occasional outbursts there of a natural conservatism of custom as against new thought perhaps only prove that Athens was the one city of Greece where thought was practically influential and not limited to a few curious inquirers. There was, it is true, misunderstanding on both sides. The democracy did not sufficiently recognise that not the maintenance of custom, religious and other, but critical

thought, was the condition of its effective survival; and the Socratic school failed to see in democracy its own natural atmosphere, and looked rather to an enlightened oligarchy, if not a monarchy, as the ideal. Athens, however, in spite of the death of Socrates, became the centre of the philosophic schools of Greece. And the later philosophers, Greek and Roman, while varying in their leanings as between aristocracy and democracy, were at any rate consistently republican to the end of the ancient world. This applies also to the philosophic emperors, who abhorred the name and memory of Cæsarism. As regards religious persecution, the plain fact remains that Greece and Athens have a far milder record than any modern nation whatever if we go back only a little way into its historic past.

It is true that the philosophers, theistic and other, had to proceed with caution. We may see this from Cicero in the time of most undisturbed tolerance. Whatever speculative attacks men educated in philosophy may permit themselves in private on the absurdities of ritual and myth, all agree that religious custom is to be maintained publicly.[1] Cicero's own philosophic creed was, as is known, a very generalised theism which included a doctrine of the immortality of the soul. And this I think Cudworth and the Deists, from their different points of view, were right in holding to have been in the main the formal doctrine of

[1] *De Div.* ii. 33, 70: "retinetur autem et ad opinionem vulgi et ad magnas utilitates reipublicæ mos, religio, disciplina, ius augurium, collegii auctoritas,"

educated men for a long way back in classical antiquity. It could easily enter into alliance with a conservative attitude to ceremonial usage, though, in fact, it was unnecessary ; for a perfectly irreligious position was quite compatible with abstinence from attack. In private discussion it was an obvious topic with members of the schools less friendly to theism to point out that the religious Stoic used misleading language when he gave the name of Zeus, the subject of the popular legends, to the God of philosophy. The discredit into which the legends had fallen may be inferred as early as Aristophanes, who certainly believed as little in the popular stories as Euripides or Socrates. It has been said with truth that what gives point to his ridicule is really the idea of the divine. The pure theism which, I have argued, was permeating the educated classes from the sixth century onward had already become so fixed as the true notion of deity—if a deity existed—that we have to bear it in mind to understand a scene of the *Frogs*. Bacchus and his slave Xanthias submit themselves to the torture to try which is the god, and the test is impassibility[1] : both show pretty plainly by their cries that they do feel pain, but with well-matched ingenuity they turn it off. Yet Aristophanes, while thus indulging his humour with a boldness that seems greater than that of Lucian during the decay of classical religion, could pose

[1] *εἴπερ θεὸς γάρ ἐστιν, οὐκ αἰσθήσεται.*
Ranæ, 634.

as the champion of conservative orthodoxy against the new enlightenment.

This enlightenment was represented, in the latter part of the fifth century B.C., by the class of teachers known as the Sophists. Of that class Socrates in popular esteem was a member. What he had in common with it was a predominantly subjective attitude as compared with the objective direction that had characterised the inquiries of the physical philosophers. The Sophists were the first professional instructors in grammar, rhetoric, and humane culture generally. They undertook, especially, to train promising young men for public life. Their occupation with the humanities had had the incidental effect of turning sceptical reflection on the divergent doctrines in which investigations of natural causes had ended. A well-known example of the results to which this led exists in the record of the treatise of Gorgias in which he maintained that the general term nature, as employed by the physical philosophers, was a name for nothing real, or for something of which there could be no knowledge, or at any rate of which no knowledge was communicable. The general drift of the new ideas is summed up in the saying of Protagoras that "man is the measure of all things." This, according to Plato's liberal interpretation of the doctrine in the *Theætetus*, meant that pure truth is unattainable, but that there is a certain useful art of persuading men to think about things as it is good for them that they should think. It is on record that

Protagoras, in a published treatise, disclaimed all knowledge of the gods, whether they exist or not, by reason of the obscurity of the subject and the shortness of human life. This led to his banishment from Athens.

That the Sophists were not, as was long held, corrupters of youth for gain, whom Socrates set himself in a moral interest to oppose, has been made clear by many writers, especially by Grote, who first established the view now generally accepted. Yet, after all that has been said on their behalf, it remains true that Socrates had a far more serious purpose. The mere external facts raise a presumption of this. The Sophists were foreigners at Athens and not strongly attached to any State. They received payment and were able to accumulate fortunes by teaching. Socrates was a native Athenian citizen who lived in poverty for the sake of devoting himself to discussion. And the record of Xenophon as well as of Plato, taken along with the statements of Aristotle, proves that he first set himself with complete self-consciousness to investigate the nature of the concept or general idea. This became the scientific point of departure for a constructive idealism, as distinguished from the merely negative criticism that ended in denial of the possibility of knowledge. That his own constructive aims were direct, and had not all to wait for the mediation of Plato, may be inferred from some positions brought out by Xenophon. For, though he did not first state it, he defended with arguments

of his own the kind of ethical theism that afterwards, as I have said, became semi-official in the educated world of antiquity.

To the mass of his Athenian contemporaries, however, the influence of Socrates appeared to be simply a dissolvent. He was by repute the master of Critias and Alcibiades, and those brilliant "super-men" were thought to be in the worst sense typical pupils of the Sophists. A fragment of a satyric drama of Critias called the *Sisyphus*, preserved by Sextus Empiricus,[1] contains a remarkable statement of a theory commonly regarded as characteristic of the eighteenth century, explaining the belief in a moral god or gods as a device of legislators. Critias, says Sextus,[2] seems to belong to the ranks of the atheists, when he says that the ancient lawgivers fabricated God (ἔπλασαν τὸν θεόν) as an overseer of the right actions and the sins of men; so that no one might secretly injure his neighbour, for fear of vengeance from the gods. Now this interests us in two ways. First it shows that a compromise had already been arrived at by which the one God of the thinkers and the many gods of the multitude could be spoken of in alternation and by an almost unconscious transition. The essential point insisted on was the ethical character of Deity, unity or

[1] Diels, who gives the passage in *Die Fragmente der Vorsokratiker*, 2nd ed., vol. ii. 1 (1907), pp. 620–622, accepts the ascription to Critias, though some authorities assigned it to a drama of Euripides with the same title.

[2] *Adv. Math.* ix. 54.

plurality being a secondary consideration. This interpretation does not come from Sextus : Critias, as we shall see, makes the transition from one mode of speech to another in the same way. In the second place, we perceive the rise of a speculation, in advanced circles that had undergone the Sophistic training, to explain the origin, not of any theology whatever, but precisely of this ethical theism. So fixed it was as the norm by the fifth century B.C. To bring out these points I proceed to translate the passage in full :

" There was a time when the life of men was unordered and brutish and subjected to main force ; when there was no reward for the good and no punishment came to the bad. And then, I think, men appointed laws as chastisers, that justice should be ruler and keep wanton insolence in bondage : and if one transgressed, he was punished. Thereafter, when the laws hindered indeed wrongful works done by open violence, but men continued to do them by stealth, some shrewd and wise-thoughted man found out an object of awe for mortals, that there might be some dread to the wicked even if they do or say or think anything in secret. Whence he brought in the divinity (τὸ θεῖον), telling them that there is a Deity (ὡς ἔστι δαίμων), vigorous with imperishable life, hearing and seeing with the mind, with sure thought attending to these things, and clothed with a divine nature, who will hear all that is said among mortals and will have power to see all that is done. And if in silence

thou plan a wicked deed, this shall not escape the gods: for in them is careful thought. By this discourse he introduced the most welcome of teachings, hiding the truth with a false story (*ψευδεῖ καλύψας τὴν ἀλήθειαν λόγῳ*). And there, where he could most astound the senses of men by saying that the gods dwelt, there he placed them: in the vault of heaven above, whence, he knew, are the terrors that descend upon mortals and the benefits that help their toilsome life. There he saw that the lightnings were, and the dire strokes of the thunder, and the star-eyed body of the sky, the fair-wrought broidery of Time, the wise artist; whence rises the glowing mass of the day-star and moist showers are poured down to the earth. Such lines of fear he set around men,[1] and fairly constituted the Deity by his fiction[2] and in a fitting place, and quelled lawlessness with laws." "Thus, in my opinion, some one first persuaded mortals to think that there is a race of deities."

Against this, the fatal objection is already put by Sextus. If the belief was implanted by legislators for the sake of moral government, how did they first come upon the notion of gods, when no one had handed it down?[3] Besides, he adds, nationalities were at first separate, and how did the legislators come to coincide? "For

1 Or, according to the reading selected by Diels: "Such fears he shook around upon men."

2 Diels, in a note, suggests "*durch seine Fiktion*" as the rendering here of *τῷ λόγῳ*.

3 *Adv. Math.* ix. 31.

all men have a common preconception about God, according to which he is a blessed living being, immortal and perfect in happiness, and not admitting of any ill; and it is altogether irrational to suppose that all hit upon the same properties by chance, without being naturally moved thus to affirm them."[1] This, it must be remembered, is not an argument on behalf of theism, but is the objection of a sceptic against a particular theory of origins. From the negative side, it seems to me to confirm the view I have maintained: namely, that ethical theism arose as a rational speculation in an advanced state of culture and not without contact between nationalities.

Another explanation of the origin of the belief in gods which Sextus is able to dispose of by arguments still valid is the theory called "Euhemerism," from a member of the Cyrenaic school who wrote a treatise or romance in support of it. Euhemerus, who lived under Cassander (311–298 B.C.),[2] is thought to have arrived at his theory by suggestion from the deifications of kings which the Macedonian dynasties were adopting in his time from the traditional usages of Asia. The gods of mythology, said Euhemerus, are all deified men. As Sextus interprets it, the earliest dynasts procured to themselves divine honours in order to maintain their power, and came afterwards to be thought gods. But, as he goes on

[1] *Adv. Math.* ix. 33.
[2] See Zeller, *Philosophie der Griechen*, II. 1, p. 343, *n.* (4th ed.).

to object, how did they first think of causing themselves to be regarded as divine if they had not a pre-existent idea of divinity?[1] From the evolutionary point of view by which the Spencerian form of the "ghost-theory" differs from Euhemerism, it might indeed be replied that the early kings did not precisely cause themselves to be deified, but that honours were slowly accumulated upon them after their decease, and that thus the ghost of a powerful king, without abrupt transition, became what was afterwards called a god. Sextus has anticipated the argument from experience that tells most strongly against this also. An apotheosis, he proceeds, becomes permanent only when the person deified succeeds in annexing some pre-existent divine name.[2] The particular cases that he gives—namely, that an actual "Alcæus, the son of Amphitryon," obtained the title of a pre-existent god Heracles, and that the historical Tyndarids received the honours of the divine Dioscuri, by which were meant "the two hemispheres, that above the earth and that below the earth"—would not now be admitted by comparative mythologists. The rejection, however, only strengthens the negative argument of Sextus; for the accepted view is that the heroes never existed as such, but that the stories of them were those of ancient gods brought down to mortality.[3]

[1] *Adv. Math.* ix. 34: *αὐτοὶ γὰρ οἱ εἰς θεοὺς ἀνάγοντες αὐτοὺς πῶς ἔννοιαν ἔλαβον θεῶν εἰς ἣν αὐτοὺς ἐνέταξαν;*

[2] *Ibid.* ix. 35–38.

[3] This view is set forth at length by Ed. Meyer in his *Geschichte des*

From what he says about the symbolism in the head-dress of the Dioscuri,[1] it might be imagined that Sextus is hinting at a theory of the derivation of gods from cosmic powers; but this is not so. Whatever faint reserve, or perhaps personal sentiment, he may have in favour of some such theory,[2] he is formally a pure sceptic, rejecting in turn every theory of origins, just as he afterwards rejects as inconclusive every positive argument for theism. This impartiality makes his work an extremely valuable repertory of arguments on both sides; and I shall have to return to it. In the meantime, something must be said about the chief school, apart from the Sceptics, that stood out against the received philosophical religion.

For the history of philosophy the names of typical "atheists," like Diagoras of Melos and Theodorus the Cyrenaic, do not fill a very important place. They were "characters" whose sayings were remembered rather than great original thinkers. The anecdotes in which they figure represent them especially as deriding the popular

Alterthums. The ground of it, to take a typical case, I suppose to be this. If, as is a fact, there was a cult of Zeus Agamemnon at Sparta, it is easier to explain how from this centre the name of a hero Agamemnon, derived from the god, spread over all Greece, than it would be to explain how a human hero rose to the rank of a god in one particular State, and that remarkable for its conservatism. The case of Helen, who was a Spartan goddess, is similar. Achilles, again, was worshipped in Thessaly as a god, whereas he was merely a hero for the rest of Greece.

[1] *Adv. Math.* ix. 37: *πίλους τ'ἐπιτιθέασιν αὐτοῖς, καὶ ἐπὶ τούτοις ἀστέρας, αἰνισσόμενοι τὴν τῶν ἡμισφαιρίων κατασκευήν.*

[2] *Ibid.* ix. 40: *τινὰ μὲν γὰρ λόγου ἴσως ἔχεται, καθάπερ τὸ τὴν γῆν θεὸν νομίζειν, οὐ τὴν αὐλακτομουμένην ἢ ἀνασκαπτομ νην οὐσίαν, ἀλλὰ τὴν διήκουσαν ἐν αὐτῇ δύναμιν καὶ καρποφόρον φύσιν καὶ ὄντως δαιμονιωτάτην.*

gods; though clearly they were also deniers of any providential direction of the world. The Epicureans, on the other hand, who left to the glorified popular gods a tranquil life in the *intermundia*, were serious opponents of philosophical theism. This, as has been noticed incidentally, did not arise from the goodness of their science. Democritus, indeed, from whom Epicurus derived his Atomism, was a genuinely scientific thinker; and the atomic theory, neglected by the science of later antiquity, which was not ready for it, but was making some progress along other paths, has become the most powerful instrument of modern physics and chemistry. Thus Epicureanism, for the early modern period, was particularly suggestive, in spite of its want of scientific value as a whole. Now, however, that all suggestiveness in the speculations of the ancient atomists has been completely exhausted, the merits of Epicureanism are clearly perceived to consist in the stand it made against existing superstition, and not in its view of the whole of things. This stand it was enabled to make, not by any radical denial of the popular gods; for the theory above referred to may have been piously accepted in the school. Since, however, they were removed from all possibility of interference with the natural course of events, being themselves merely aggregates of finer atoms, a thoroughgoing affirmation of law in the physical world was necessitated. And from this basis, defective, and indeed belated, as was so much of the detailed theorising, Lucretius

could direct his attack with unsurpassable force against the archaic *religio*, the bond of supernatural terror of which the extreme expression had once been human sacrifice. This terror he doubtless saw as the inner meaning of the rituals of old priesthoods above which the civic order of Rome was precariously erected.

Intellectually, though not emotionally, the protest might have been made with just as much effect from the point of view of philosophical theism or pantheism; but undoubtedly those are right who have held that the position of the Epicureans, in view of the theological doctrines already formulated in antiquity, amounted to speculative atheism. This was abundantly set forth by Cudworth in the seventeenth century. When Lucretius composed his poem (published after his death in 55 B.C.) philosophical theism was a reigning belief; and, that he may sweep away every vestige of the supernatural, he strikes at its base. The ground of the attack is the denial that the universe can be a single system, as the ancient theists maintained that it was. Matter is infinite in quantity. Therefore, since nothing is sole of its kind, and there is nothing to limit the number of the worlds, these must be innumerable. The Epicurean worlds are not, of course, the innumerable worlds of Bruno, each consisting of a sun (which is one of the fixed stars) together with a system of revolving planets. They are worlds such as ours appears to be, with a central earth having sun, moon, and stars, and

generally "meteors" like those of our sky, surrounding it. The conception had come to Democritus from Anaximander, and had been accepted by Epicurus and his school unmodified, without regard to the new developments of mathematical astronomy; the constitution ascribed to each world being an impossible one according to what was then accurately known. None the less, the idea of the infinite universe is turned with the most powerful effect against the notion that a mind conceived on the analogy of man's is the governor of the whole.

> Quis regere immensi summam, quis habere profundi
> Indu manu validas potis est moderanter habenas,
> Quis pariter cælos omnis convertere et omnis
> Ignibus ætheriis terras suffire feraces,
> Omnibus inve locis esse omni tempore præsto?[1]

Thus Lucretius cannot, as Heraclitus is thought to have done,[2] threaten mystery-mongers with the wrath to come, since there is no cosmic law that is also divine reason to appeal to; but the protest of human reason and conscience against the "wicked and impious deeds" of religion[3] has been found all the more moving.

If the philosophy of theism failed to gain the assent of Lucretius, it was not for want of argumentative statement. How far this had been carried may be shown from the account which

[1] *De Rerum Natura*, ii. 1095–1099.
[2] See Burnet, *Early Greek Philosophy*, 2nd ed., p. 189.
[3] Illud in his rebus vereor ne forte rearis
Impia te rationis inire elementa viamque
Indugredi sceleris. Quod contra sæpius illa
Religio peperit scelerosa atque impia facta.
De Rerum Natura, i. 80–83.

Sextus gives of the Stoic modes of proof. The Stoics had substantially put forward every one of the famous arguments that Kant set himself to demolish theoretically in the "Transcendental Dialectic." To Cleanthes a form of the "ontological argument" is ascribed. Since one nature is better than another, there must be some best nature, and this can only be God.[1] With Zeno the same form of argument had taken a more pantheistic turn. The world, being most perfect, must have mind and soul; for that which has them is better than that which has them not.[2] To the Stoics also is attributed the "cosmological argument" from the world to an intelligent cause of motion.[3] But this, again, is conceived pantheistically, as the active element that runs through the world, and is its directive principle.[4] From Xenophon is cited the teleological argument to an artificer of the human body; who, since this is accompanied by mind, must possess mind in surpassing degree.[5] This mode of proof, likewise taken up and elaborated by the Stoics, is that which is called by Kant the "physico-theological."

The objections to these proofs go back for the most part to Carneades (213–129 B.C.), the greatest sceptical mind of antiquity. To understand his position, we must remember that, as Professor

1 *Adv. Math.* ix. 88–91.
2 *Ibid.* ix. 104: *οὐδὲν δέ γε κόσμου κρεῖττον· νοερὸς ἄρα καὶ ἔμψυχός ἐστιν ὁ κόσμος.*
3 *Ibid.* ix. 111 ff.
4 *Ibid.* ix. 119–120.
5 *Ibid.* ix. 92 ff.

Carveth Read puts it,[1] he had glissaded from Platonism. This means that no offered proofs seemed to him to satisfy the Platonic ideal of knowledge. On theism, the sceptical argumentation of Carneades, as developed by Sextus, is in sum this: God, being perfect, must have virtue[2]; must indeed, it is maintained, have each and all of the human virtues and the senses they imply; for there is greater perfection in having any power whatsoever than in having it not. But to have any sense or virtue implies capability of modification, of human weakness, of affection by pain as well as by pleasure. Beings thus constituted are subject to dissolution, and this is contrary to the notion of divinity. An argument of Carneades in the form of a sorites was thought especially conclusive; doubtless because, notwithstanding its captious appearance, it went to the heart of the Stoic compromise. If Zeus is a god, then Poseidon, being his brother, must be a god; if Poseidon, then Achelous; if Achelous, then the Nile and every river; if every river, then the mountain-streams also and torrents must be gods. But since these are not gods, no more is Zeus. Yet, if there were any gods, Zeus would be a god. Therefore there are no gods.[3] And so the argument proceeds, starting with any of the greater gods or goddesses. If

1 *The Metaphysics of Nature*, 2nd ed. (1908), p. 86.

2 *Adv. Math.* ix. 172: *μὴ ἔχων δὲ θεὸς ἀρετὴν ἀνύπαρκτός ἐστιν. Cf.* 175.

3 *Ibid.* ix. 183: *εἰ δέ γε ἦσαν θεοί, καὶ ὁ Ζεὺς ἦν ἂν θεός. οὐκ ἄρα θεοί εἰσίν.*

Aphrodite, then every passion of the soul.[1] If Demeter, who is interpreted as Mother Earth, then the mountains and promontories and every stone must be gods.[2] Thus the Sceptic, without concluding positively, for these arguments were put forth only as cancelling others allowed to be of equal weight, in effect went further than the Epicurean, in so far as he directed his attack against philosophical and popular religion together. Since the Stoic called the supreme divinity, the Reason of the World, Zeus, and allegorised the greater gods into natural powers, he must be compelled to carry out his system into a longer chain of deductions, and must consent that it should be tested by its weakest link.

Sextus Empiricus, who has preserved the arguments of the older and newer Sceptics, along with developments of his own, wrote late in the second century of the Christian era. Neither in his work nor anywhere in the compilation called by the name of Diogenes Laertius, which in its present form dates from the beginning of the third century, do we perceive the faintest sign of a new movement on the horizon. For anything that might appear, all was about to end in sterility. Yet, as we have seen, the Greek intellect rallied for a last effort; and this took the direction of an idealistic return to Plato and Aristotle. Now Scepticism, Academical or Pyrrhonic, had never been seriously turned against the doctrines of the great idealists. Theoretical materialism of one

[1] *Adv. Math.* ix. 186–188. [2] *Ibid.* ix. 189.

kind or another having been predominant, the Sceptics attacked the prevailing dogmatism. Thus the Neo-Platonic system, when it appeared, did not need to meet sceptical attack, but, so far as it was polemical, continued to oppose the weakened Stoicism, though with a constructive instead of a destructive aim. If, however, a systematic reply had been called for, such a reply could now have been offered both to the Sceptics and to the Epicureans. The One, the supreme principle of Plotinus, it could have been said, does not need to possess any virtue, because it is above even thought. It does not wield or direct the world in human fashion; the world is its product by a kind of natural necessity. Nor is there any pretence, though it is sometimes called *θεός*, of identifying it in name with any of the popular gods. The system, indeed, of allegorising the myths still went on; and myths were even more liberally accepted from all quarters: but this did not affect Neo-Platonism as pure philosophy. How is it then that ancient thought ends here, and that another philosophical renewal only came after a break in culture?

The answer is that the religious problem had now become the essential one. The fact that Neo-Platonism, however it might try to maintain an alliance with popular religion, was in reality more removed from it than Stoicism, was fatal. In the actual world—the world, as the philosophers would have said, of mixture—the question, what

was to be the religious belief of the mass of mankind, was all-important. Philosophy was not in a position effectively to inspire those who had the practical government of affairs; and this meant, at that stage of history, that a popular religion which was taken seriously by directing minds, even of inferior order, and could adapt itself at once to despots and the crowd, must conquer. To understand the process, we shall have to return to the point from which we started, and follow the development of the religions that grew up with a life of their own stronger than that of any rival power, whether philosophy or the State.

CHAPTER V

THE PERSIANS AND THE JEWS

THE religion of the ancient Persians, by general consent one of the higher religions of the world, has counted for comparatively little in universal history. Though propagated with zeal, both in its official form of Zoroastrianism and in its later offshoot Mithraism, it was driven from the field by the Judæo-Christian and afterwards the Islamic development of the West, and it made no way in remoter Asia. Still, it has variously influenced the Western group of religions; and it is represented in India by the Parsis, who are descendants of refugees from the Mohammedan persecution in the native home of the faith. Above all, it is interesting as the earliest form of a "revealed religion," claiming to go back to a personal teacher. And its kinship is with the religions of the West in so far as it is at once monotheistic and ethical.

While its origins in detail are extremely obscure, there is fortunately no need to enter into controverted questions. For my present purpose, the undisputed facts will suffice. The native source for the tradition is the sacred book, the Avesta, which dates from the new Persian

kingdom of the Sassanidæ, founded near the beginning of the third century of the Christian era. Portions of this are by most scholars held to be considerably older, some reaching back to the time of the Achæmenidæ. But the empire and dynasty of the Achæmenidæ came to an end in 330 B.C.; and in the long interval between Alexander's conquests and the rise of the new theocratic State the religion had passed into obscurity, so that great caution is clearly necessary in determining what are the older portions of the stratification. For the earlier stages, however, there are the monuments left by the Achæmenid emperors, and there are the extant records of the Greeks. These begin with the account given by Herodotus in the latter part of the fifth century. Herodotus knows the religion as that which was held by a priesthood, the Magians, but does not mention the name of the teacher, Zoroaster. He knows and sympathises with its rejection of all images. Its monotheistic character is evident from the inscriptions of Darius I. (521–485 B.C.), who declares himself a worshipper of the good divinity, Ahura-Mazda (Ormuzd). References to the distinctive feature of the Zoroastrian religion, its dualism, not metaphysical but ethical, by which a chief of the evil powers of the universe was set against the good divinity, do not appear in Greek literature till the fourth century. And then also the name of Zoroaster appears. On the date of Zoroaster the native tradition is extremely modest, not

requiring that his activity should be earlier than the sixth century B.C. The name of the king who supported him in his reforms has been identified with Hystaspes, the father of Darius, but the details regarding the legendary and the historical characters do not agree. Whether Zoroaster ever existed is a matter of disagreement among competent scholars; but this is unimportant, since it is generally allowed that the whole elaboration of the law ascribed in the sacred book to a communication from the divinity to Zoroaster was the work of the priesthood.

To see how the explanation I have already stated is applicable in view of these facts, it must be recalled who the Persians were. Usually they are associated with the Medes, who were also Aryans, and who come on the historical scene a little earlier. Now the Median monarchy can only be traced historically to about the middle of the seventh century. About a century later, Cyrus, King of the mountain-land of Persis, made himself master of both the kindred nations, and, at their head, subjugated all Western Asia. Egypt was conquered in 525 B.C. by his son Cambyses; and the empire was organised and somewhat extended by Darius, the son of Hystaspes. Thus the Medes and Persians appear as conquering tribes superimposing themselves on extremely old civilisations. Equal in natural intelligence to their subjects and more vigorous, they were at a stage of relative simplicity of life and thought, but flexible and ready to learn from their predecessors. They

brought with them a belief in gods whose names are etymologically related to the Vedic gods of the Aryan conquerors of India. At the early stage, we may suppose that, like the oldest Romans, they had no statues of the gods ; and we may attribute this merely to want of any sufficient growth of the arts. Given these historical conditions, I think the general features of the Magian or Zoroastrian religion can be deduced.

For these are precisely the conditions under which the esoteric monotheism arrived at already within the ancient hierarchies could start on a career of its own. And this career, among the Medes and Persians, would necessarily be distinctively religious. They had not the arts, the politics, and the humanistic literature of Greece, which kept religious interests within bounds ; nor had they the scientific and philosophical schools. The higher theology of the old priesthoods, therefore, could be turned by the Magians without serious hindrance to the purpose of reforming religion. The reform, traditionally ascribed to Zoroaster, I take to have consisted in the ordering of morally selected ritual and myth under the monotheistic idea. This idea was taken up by an intelligent and relatively unpreoccupied priestly class, supported no doubt by royal authority, which at this stage had an interest in a relatively simple and rational religion, disentangling it from the network of old custom and the etiquette of caste. We must also take into account, as in the case of the Greek theology,

that there has now been much contact between empires and peoples. Thus the esoteric speculations of Egypt and Chaldæa, when they met, naturally took this form, that the one God who was lord of all was the God of all races, did not speak a particular language, and must not be envisaged in a particular figure. The idea of a local god, in fact, was beginning to appear absurd. It is this absurdity that is brought out when Aristophanes introduces the Thracian god Triballus speaking broken Greek and wearing his cloak the wrong way. Yet only philosophical monotheism (if even this) could be quite pure. For a religion that was to be popular there must be some embodiment. The Magians fulfilled this condition by imaginatively representing the supreme lord of the universe as a celestial monarch surrounded by subordinate deities. These are not yet as reduced in rank as are the "angels" of the religions that started from Judaism, but the system is essentially of the same kind. The names both of the supreme God and of his surrounding spirits were, of course, those of old Aryan divinities. Ormuzd, however, was thought of as unquestionably the God of all, and images of the divinity were now definitely rejected. Here the state of culture of an intelligent race not artistically developed was precisely adapted to realise in practice the spiritualised theology reached by the few in the ancient civilisations. The structure of the religions of Babylonia and Egypt, with their sculptured and pictured

imagery, was too complex to be transformed, and could only decay as belief ceased to be possible; but the insight reached by their speculative minds could pass over to their successors.

We have seen already how the process can be understood as going on in Greece. Here pure monotheism produced its effect entirely through philosophy; with the result that a kind of ethical theism consistent with belief in one God, but not laying great stress on the divine unity as a dogma, became semi-official. The art of statuary, based essentially on polytheism and now highly developed, of course no man of culture could desire to interfere with; and compromises in thought, as has been found in later religions, were very easy. Even if the philosophers had wished ever so much to revolutionise popular religion in its external expression, they could nowhere have procured to themselves the authority to do this. In Persia, the different conditions explain the difference. Placed among the older peoples of Asia, itself under an absolute monarchy, and looking to religion for the direction of life, the Persian nation had still the docility to receive the teachings offered by an authoritative corporation as those of a divinely inspired prophet and revealer. Greece, indeed, had only transcended this stage for a time[1]; and the Western

[1] How easily some could imagine that it was transcended once for all may be seen from the saying of one philosopher about another as recorded in Diogenes Laertius. Menedemus said of Bion that in "running down" the prophets or diviners he was slaying the dead: *Βίωνος τε ἐπιμελῶς κατατρέχοντος τῶν μάντεων, νεκροὺς αὐτὸν ἐπισφάττειν ἔλεγε* (ii. 135).

world was to return for centuries to a type having in it more of Asia than of Athens.

The dualism of the Persian religion has been thought to have its source in some mythological conflict among the Aryan divinities; but, as this is much disputed, and does not bear on the general thesis, I leave the question aside. In any case, its dualism is a very distinctive feature of the Zoroastrian faith. The good divinity is opposed by Ahriman, the chief of the evil spirits, who form around him an infernal court opposed to the celestial court of Ormuzd. The arch-fiend is himself a creator, and uses his power to contaminate the creation of Ormuzd. Noxious animals, for example, are produced by him; hence it is a religious duty to destroy them. Marauding barbarian nomads also were looked upon as servants of the evil one. Thus the religion has a strongly practical character, making duty centre in productive activity and opposition to the destructive agencies in the world. It is not only a religion of activity but of optimism. At the end of the ages there is to be a conflict in which Ahriman will be finally overthrown; for the powers of good and evil in the universe are not coequal. To present them as ultimate and inexpugnable (though separable) metaphysical elements seems to have been characteristic of the Manichæan "heresy"; and this arose under the influence of Christian Gnosticism.

The religion in its older form was well adapted

to be that of a conquering and, in its degree, civilising empire. Officially it was tolerant in so far as the kings recognised and supported by gifts the religions of willing subjects. Yet I think we must not wholly set aside the testimony of ancient literature to occasional acts of intolerance. The Greeks had no prepossessions as to what was to be expected from a religion regarding itself as revealed and claiming universality; and they have put on record acts which they and the Romans came to interpret in the end as due to religious disapproval of temples containing images and of cults like the animal-worship of Egypt. The testimony to the facts begins with Æschylus, a contemporary, and proceeds through Herodotus and Isocrates, till at length we find the cause given by Cicero, who explains it, not as wanton iconoclasm, but as iconoclasm with the motive of religion. Of course, if the kings of Persia were to hold together an empire at all on their principle of favouring local autonomy, they had to recognise in some measure the religions of their subjects or vassals; and they seem to have been able to do this consistently with their belief in Ormuzd as the supreme God. Yet they held that they themselves were possessors of religious truth in a higher degree of purity. Thus, if opposed, they had no longer a motive for refraining from acts of contemptuous destruction. That these cannot have been very numerous or extensive has been shown by Professor Eduard Meyer from the evidence of the monuments, which directly

prove that the general policy was one of toleration. Yet he himself recognises the other side in admitting that Cambyses "plundered temples, derided the gods, wounded Apis," though officially he came forward as legitimate successor of the native dynasties.[1]

With the Greeks and Romans tolerance was differently based, and was more successful with polytheists, but broke down at another point. They did not regard their own religions as containing any higher truth, but as on an equality with the rest. They merely preferred them for their own countries, and did not desire the entrance of others. Anything dangerous to the order of the State was of course to be repelled. If they believed in any higher truth, it was in that of philosophy. Quite consistently, outward deference could be paid to all religions,[2] unless there was some ethical or political ground of disapproval. Thus the Hellenised Macedonians, and afterwards the Romans, could govern any nation except the Jews. For a Jew held precisely the belief they could not understand, namely, that his own religion was true and all the others false. Now this throws interesting light on the precisely opposite failure and success of the Persians. Under them polytheistic Egypt again and again revolted, with Greek aid regaining its indepen-

[1] *Geschichte des Alterthums*, iii. § 101: "Zwar hat Kambyses die Tempel geplündert, die Götter verhöhnt, den Apis verwundet, aber officiell ist er in Ægypten als legitimer Nachfolger der Pharaonen aufgetreten, wie in Babylon als der Nebuchadnezars."

[2] This applies to public men. A private man—say, a Cynic or Cyrenaic philosopher—did not need to pay deference to any.

dence for a considerable time. Babylon also rebelled, apparently from some religious grievance. On the other hand, the Jews claim to have been specially favoured by the Persian rulers, and the attitude in the Bible is one practically of uniform friendliness to Persia.[1] From this I argue that there was some understood kinship of aim between the Magian and the Jewish priesthoods. It seems very probable that the establishment of a local religion on monotheistic lines was actually favoured and supported, not merely tolerated, by the Persian government, as the Jewish Scriptures relate that it was.

The time, we must remember, had not yet come of mutually hostile revealed religions with detailed dogmas set in array. These religions, if I am right in my general contention, were in the inchoate stage. The priestly class among the Jews, especially those who were living in exile in Babylonia when the Persian conquest liberated them, were just coming, like the Magians, under the influence of the generalised monotheism that had now spread abroad in Western Asia. They, too, were relatively unpreoccupied. They had never had any but rude images of their tribal god, and their local cults had been in great part put an end to in the Assyrian and Babylonian plundering expeditions. Being Semites, of high natural intelligence and assimilative power, they too were able, under the given conditions, to

[1] If the Jews revolted, as they are said to have done, under Artaxerxes Ochus, near the end of the Achæmenid dynasty, the cause was in the tyranny felt by all his subjects alike.

form the idea of a more spiritual religion, monotheistic and with no representation of the divinity, but only with a cult and a legal code. For object of religious worship, to be identified with the one God of the universe, they naturally selected their tribal deity, Jahveh, as the Magians had selected the old Aryan divinity Ahura-Mazda; but the two priesthoods were still near enough the source to feel a sense of community rather than hostility, especially as they were in a world of polytheists and their spheres of influence lay wide apart. Hence an understanding could be arranged, through the royal power, such as would have been, of course, quite impossible between later Jewry with its canonical Scriptures and the new Persian theocratic State of the Sassanidæ with its own sacred Avesta.

Hitherto, I think, the deductive synthesis has amounted simply to a retrospective explanation of the facts as generalised by historians without serious disagreement. I now come to a point where, if accepted, it will enable us to decide in favour of one system of generalisations as against the others. That system, as I have admitted, is at present adopted only by a minority of scholars. In the rest of the present chapter, therefore, I shall try to clear away some prepossessions against it resting on fancied knowledge. The next chapter will contain the positive theory. But first, it is worth while to point out one or two relatively conservative results of the position attained.

Among the best-known works of the radical criticism of the Bible by Dutch theologians is the study of W. H. Kosters entitled *The Restoration of Israel in the Persian Period*.[1] Here the attempt is made to show that the supposition of an important return of exiles under Cyrus is unnecessary. In fact, the "post-exilic" Church-State of the Jews was built up with little assistance by the men of Jerusalem and the surrounding territory. The small groups from the Babylonian colony who actually returned came only later with Ezra and Nehemiah, and the importance of their activity has been exaggerated. This criticism was carried a step further by C. C. Torrey, who contends that "Ezra, the priest, the scribe," is a fictitious personage created by the author of the Books of Chronicles, who is generally allowed to have compiled the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah as they stand.[2] "The story of Ezra," he says, "is the Chronicler's masterpiece"[3]; though he accepts portions of the Biblical record as containing authentic memoirs of Nehemiah.[4] Now of course it was easy to prove that the record as it stands cannot be precisely historical. Kosters did not even need the law of causation, but only the law of contradiction, to show how "the pragmatism of the sacred historian" has affected

[1] *Het Herstel van Israël in het Perzische Tijdvak.* Eene Studie van Dr. W. H. Kosters, 1894.

[2] *The Composition and Historical Value of Ezra-Nehemiah*, by Dr. Charles C. Torrey, Instructor in the Semitic Languages at Andover Theological Seminary. Published in *Beihefte zur Zeitschrift für die alttestamentliche Wissenschaft*, ii. 1896.

[3] P. 57. [4] P. 2.

the details. Reconstruction, however, is a different matter; and here, I think, to account for the result, something nearer the tradition is necessary. Torrey may be right in denying the historical existence of Ezra; and, doubtless, there is no reason to suppose long processions of exiles by which Judæa was repeopled in the time of Cyrus. As Édouard Dujardin observes in a work to which I shall have to return,[1] the descendants of those who had been deported fifty years before Cyrus captured Babylon (538 B.C.) would by then have formed a permanent colony. Yet, as he also recognises,[2] intercommunications between Babylon and Jerusalem furnished the Babylonian basis of Jewish culture. On the theory which I am now setting forth, they were also needed to initiate the Church-State. And, in general, the spirit of the transactions as recorded in the Books of Ezra and Nehemiah corresponds to what we should expect on the theory. That is to say, we need not suppose that the permission to return given by the Persian emperors or their support of the new order was more grudging or difficult or delayed than is implied in the documents. The position given to Cyrus as a sort of Messiah may very well have had its basis in the recollections of the people.

The other point where an approximation to tradition seems to me needed relates to the Covenant or Pact between the Jewish people and

[1] *La Source du Fleuve Chrétien*: Histoire Critique du Judaïsme ancien et du Christianisme primitif. i. Le Judaïsme, 1906.

[2] Pp. 372–373.

its God. On the view that the religion of the Jews was a revolutionary construction, it seems necessary to suppose that assemblies, much like those reported in Ezra and Nehemiah, accepted the new order by their voices. Members of the Jewish priestly class at Babylon had assimilated the idea of the universal God without visible form; and, with the sympathetic support of the kings of Persia and the reforming Magi under whose inspiration these were acting, they returned to realise the idea in their native community. The old "pre-exilic" cult having been reduced to disorganised vestiges, they might hope to build up a new order corresponding to their aspirations; but for success popular assent was necessary. For there was no king descended from the ancient line, and no nobility but the priesthood. The hypothesis, in that part of the world and at that stage of history, of course would be that they were restoring an old law. Thus was realised, in a peculiar manner, the theory of the "social compact," which does in reality find some kind of outward expression on such revolutionary occasions. Hence Hobbes was able to manipulate the Biblical documents in favour of his own form of contract-theory, without fundamentally doing violence to the record on the political side: for the Pact is in truth there. And I see no difficulty in supposing that what originally brought it there was some real transaction of swearing allegiance to the god, represented by the high priest or the priestly class. That the real transaction, what-

ever it may have been, was afterwards thrown back into a far past and duplicated and disguised out of recognition is admitted by all the critics who are not absolutely traditionalists.[1]

But here arises the question, why set aside the views of traditionalists as such, especially when a return at some points to tradition is forced upon us? Why recur for explanatory theory, as distinguished from bare facts, only to "independent" critics, whether called "higher" or not? The answer can be given, and in such a way as to destroy all presumption, not only in favour of simply accepting the traditional account, but against re-examining the positions of the "higher criticism" itself.

In speaking of the Avesta, it was assumed that the sacred book of an Oriental priesthood cannot be taken on trust without examination as being what it purports to be. That is to say, it cannot be taken simply as the revelation of a god or gods, at such and such dates, to inspired teachers. To test its claims to antiquity, philology and comparison with known history are indispensable. But, it may be asked by one pushing scepticism to extremes, what after all is "known history"? Is not every history that is known more or less mixed with falsehood and fable, written from more or less partisan points of view, and so

1 In support of my general view, I might have pressed into service what is put on record by Diogenes Laertius (Proœmium, 9, cited by Th. Reinach, *Textes d'auteurs grecs et romains relatifs au Judaïsme*, pp. 178–179), that some authorities make the Jews descend from the Magi; but to lay much stress on this, I am afraid, would be arbitrary. So many conjectures were hazarded,

forth? This must be conceded; but, in the end, the essential substance of it, the thread that carries humanity from age to age as the thread of memory carries the individual from one period of life to another,[1] remains verifiable. For it is continuous with that which now exists. We have around us the kinds of information of which "profane history"—that is to say, history that has been left open to doubt and criticism—is made up. According as we are more or less impartial, we can allow for the perturbing influences that we know to exist in the present. Such are: suppressions or exaggerations of facts in a national or party interest; personal bias, producing credulity or incredulity as the case may be; and generally the weaknesses of human memory and imagination. None of these, however, is destructive of the very nature of evidence. And, if we go back to early modern times, to the Middle Ages, to classical antiquity, to Oriental antiquity several millennia before the Christian era, the thread becomes thin sometimes, but it is never broken. The information that is for dates the most authentic of all—that of official documents—goes back furthest. This may be called the real thread of events. A fictitious narrative, in contrast, runs on what we may call an imaginary thread. Now a "sacred history" is an account of events which it is desired, and even required, by the teachers of certain

[1] The description of history as the memory of Humanity occurs in Schopenhauer; and this is the more interesting because he attached so little philosophical significance to history.

dogmas that the believers in their teaching should accept. If it cannot at any point be brought into relation with events joined by the real thread, it may be merely an imaginative story, not indeed for entertainment, but for edification. To learn its evidential value, we must try to find points of contact between the history in which faith has been required, sometimes under penalties, and the history that has been open to tests.[1] When we find slight points of contact for a certain distance, and then absolute silence on all sides except in the sacred book, are we not justified in considering it merely an affair of conjecture to determine whether anything happened at all, or all is fable with a didactic purpose ?

It may be granted that this test has sometimes been applied too roughly to sacred books, with the result that the chance of finding the attainable grains of truth has been lost. When open doubt or disbelief was not permitted, the obvious method of those who wished to invalidate the authority of the books was to insinuate that they were the work of interested deceivers. The "higher critics" of the nineteenth century have proceeded more delicately. Trained as theologians, they began by accepting the tradition ; but, finding it on close scrutiny more and more incoherent, they were driven back to the non-supernaturalism

1 Paley attempted this method quite fairly at the beginning of his *Evidences of Christianity*. With his scientific cast of mind, he perceived what were the conditions of proof. I suppose that, as Sir Leslie Stephen once put it, there is general agreement that on the terms accepted by the old "evidential" apologists, as by their opponents, the case of tradition would now be hopeless.

of precursors who had been more influenced by *a priori* philosophical points of view. Inferior for the most part to these in width of mind, they had the advantage over them in specialist knowledge, and they lived at a time when the idea of historical evolution was, as we say, "in the air." Thus the result of their collective activity has been a considerable gain in insight. In the case of the Hebrew Scriptures the great generalised result of the higher criticism is that the method of the sacred writers was to throw their ideal into the past, and that each new "redactor" of a document rewrote it from his own point of view till the canon was fixed. Still, the assumption has usually remained, except in the case of obvious myths, that the original narrative must have been history and not romance. This may or may not be so in particular cases; but does it not seem likely that the critics from within, starting with theological prepossessions and never ceasing to read the Bible in a devotional spirit, have never gained a view so detached as that of critics occupied chiefly with other studies? These, in spite of their less intimate knowledge, may, if they return to the subject with a serious desire to discover the truth, succeed in hitting upon points missed by the experts.

Let us then, in order to clear the ground, try for a moment the method of approach from without, and ask what we really know of the antecedents of the Jews and of the Old Testament from other sources than themselves. The answer

is, very little. Probably, as in the case of the earliest Christianity, very few know how little it amounts to. Before the ninth century B.C. there is no incontestable reference to either of the "Israelitish" kingdoms whose annals are related in the canonical Books of Kings. On the Assyrian monuments for the ninth century, the northern kingdom is mentioned as the "Kingdom of Omri" (the father of Ahab); and this title remains after the dynasty, according to the Biblical narrative, has been changed. Nothing in any reference that has been discovered indicates anything in the old Palestinian kingdoms distinctive of Judaism as known from its sacred book. The name of the tribal god, on the Moabite stone (attributed to the same century), is no exception; for other tribes also had their own god. On turning to the references in Greek writers, as given in the collection of Théodore Reinach,[1] we find that, instructive as they are in many ways for the later period, they furnish us with no contemporary evidence before the time of Alexander. Herodotus, it is true, speaks of the "Syrians of Palestine" and their rite of circumcision, and says that, according to their own acknowledgment, they borrowed it from the Egyptians. From this M. Reinach argues that the reference of Herodotus is to the Philistines, who by that time may have adopted it, and not to the Jews, whose sacred legend gives a different

[1] *Textes d'auteurs grecs et romains relatifs au Judaïsme*, réunis, traduits et annotés par Théodore Reinach, 1895.

account of the origin of the rite. If, however, the legend was not then formed, and the cult was only in its tentative stage, the passage may, after all, refer to the Jews; but clearly it tells us nothing about Judaism, to which the rite was not peculiar. To the distinctive religion of the Jews there is no reference for more than a century after Herodotus.

From about the opening of the third century B.C., there are references in Greek writers that show knowledge of the Jewish law; but the early ones at least, from their inaccuracy, are thought to be indirect. As knowledge becomes fuller, the Greek and after them the Roman writers adopt the method, which is still to a considerable extent that of modern Orientalists, of inserting in their historical summaries renderings of the Biblical legends more or less rationalised by omission of miracles. If their bias is hostile, they take up stories obviously invented by Egyptians[1] as a reply to the Hebrew story of the exodus. According to an admittedly forged document, known as the letter of Pseudo-Aristeas, current in Palestine in the time of Josephus,[2] the Pentateuch was translated from Hebrew into Greek during the reign of Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–247 B.C.); but most authorities think this too early. The Septuagint, as the whole Greek Bible came to be called from the fable about the seventy or seventy-two translators of the Penta-

[1] That is, of course, late Egyptians who wrote in Greek.
[2] By some admitted, however, to date from about 200 B.C.

teuch, was not completed till much later. As Dr. H. B. Swete, the orthodox authority from whom I take this, decisively points out,[1] the letter of Aristeas refers only to the Law : " His silence as to the Prophets and the Hagiographa is entirely consistent with the conditions of the period in which he fixes his story. The canon of the Prophets seems scarcely to have reached completion before the High-Priesthood of Simon II. (219-199 B.C.). If this was so in Palestine, at Alexandria certainly there would be no recognised body of prophetic writings in the reign of the second Ptolemy. The Torah alone was ready for translation, for it was complete, and its position as a collection of sacred books was absolutely secure."

We, of course, still possess the Septuagint, which was almost exclusively used by the early Christians. Of the Hebrew text, the existing form was fixed by Jewish doctors late in the Christian era ; so that the Septuagint represents an older text.[2] By the conjectured date of the first part of this (perhaps late in the third century), or better by the references in Greek writers to the Jewish State and religion, we are enabled to fix the date at which the written Law, in some form, must have existed ; and this is early in the third century B.C. So far as external testimony goes, the rest of the books may be supposed to be later. No one, indeed, brings

1 *An Introduction to the Old Testament in Greek* (1902), p. 23.
2 More accurately, its different forms represent different texts.

down the whole composition to the very lowest dates rigorously permissible by the external evidence; but it is well to remember the general rule suggested for ecclesiastical documents even by rather conservative critics—that their composition is usually not very much earlier than the date when they are first put forth as authoritative. This need not be applied to all the literary material in them; some of which may be older, as again some may be interpolated.

CHAPTER VI

THE JEWISH LAW AND THE PROPHETS

In setting forth what I should like to call the revised theory regarding the dates and origin of the Law and the Prophets, I shall not, of course, attempt to prove the case over again from the empirical side. What I propose is to show how the positions already attained both empirically and deductively form a coherent system in relation to the general thesis which I uphold.

It may be well at this point to turn back and run rapidly through the historical phases by which criticism of the Bible has reached its present stage. This will show that the "higher criticism" does not stand by itself as a unique effort to penetrate beneath the tradition. We may begin with the second century of the Christian era, when the propaganda of a religion claiming the succession to Judaism first seriously threatened the imposition of a sacred book on the European intellect. Celsus, the Platonic philosopher who under Marcus Aurelius stated the case with high ability against both the Jewish and the Christian claims, has been compared to Voltaire and the

Encyclopædists.[1] He was not obliged to mask his attack; but his aims, like theirs, were primarily destructive in view of a practical problem. We have in one case the opening, in the other not the close, but the intensest crisis, of the struggle between an essentially laic ideal and militant or triumphant theocracy. At this stage we get, as might be expected, a damaging attack from the point of view of critical common sense, but not a serious effort to find out by painstaking examination what could be known of the Jewish people and the development of its religion. The first real precursor of the "higher criticism," if this is what we are to understand by it, was the Neo-Platonist Porphyry. Of his fifteen books against the Christians very small fragments have been preserved, but one of his results was in the long run of great importance. He it was who first determined the true date and nature of the Book of Daniel, assigning it to the time of Antiochus Epiphanes (second century B.C.). This position of his, being known and much discussed in the eighteenth century, passed on to the higher critics, and has been found unshakable ever since. In the much briefer treatise of the Emperor Julian, of which more is known through the survival of a portion of the reply by Cyril of Alexandria, the point of view is in curious formal coincidence with that of Hobbes and Spinoza

[1] See Th. Reinach, *op. cit.*, p. 166, *n.*: "Nous ne donnons ici que quelques échantillons de l'exégèse railleuse de Celse, qui, sur beaucoup de points, se montre le digne précurseur de Voltaire et des encyclopédistes."

thirteen centuries later. There is no question, as before or after, of making an end of the theocracy,[1] but only of limiting it. Judaism ought to be regarded as simply the religion, which is also the law, of a particular nation. Its documents furnish no basis for the universal dominion of ecclesiastics, whose activities ought to be severely restricted to their own communities and kept out of the life of the State and its education. In the seventeenth century the prescriptive claims of the clerical corporations to direct the civil State required, besides a new exegesis, incidentally some attempt at a rationalising account of Jewish origins; yet even Spinoza, with his skill in Hebrew learning, was unable to proceed far towards positive explanation. The English Deists in the eighteenth century continue Hobbes and Spinoza; but on the whole do not go much beyond conjectures as to how something like what is recorded in the Bible may have happened, with exclusion of miracles. What is most distinctively called the "higher criticism" consists of the work of those who, beginning with the French physician Astruc in the middle of the eighteenth century, first proved the composite origin of the "Mosaic" books, and then set themselves on this basis to reconstruct Hebrew history. The criticism is called higher because, while it is cultivated by experts in the ordinary or "textual" criticism, it goes

[1] *Écrasez l'Infâme* might have been the motto of Celsus as of Voltaire.

beyond it, aiming not merely at accurate reconstitution of the texts, but at showing their true literary and historical relationships. As a matter of fact, much of the kind of work could be done, and has been done, without knowledge of Hebrew. And, if the critical revision is right, the aims of the experts who first called themselves higher critics have been too ambitious. As regards reconstruction, we shall have to be more modest.[1] We cannot hope ever to know anything circumstantial about Hebrew history before the Persian period. Yet we must not forget the one clear gain already referred to. The higher criticism was worked out during the dominance of evolutionary ideas and bears their impress; and whether the stratification of the Hebrew Bible is of seven or eight or only of three centuries, we know that we must look for changes in the outlook of the writers from age to age and for causes of those changes.

Now the school of Wellhausen, which is on the whole the culmination of the higher criticism, after which its complexities become baffling, was able to give what seemed a plausible explanation of the development of Hebrew religion. It recognised that the Books of Moses, as they stand, are a late compilation. The earliest portions of them, however, were assigned to the ninth century, when the national literature was supposed to have begun. It began with the collection of

[1] Textual criticism, too, as Spinoza showed from the nature of the literary tradition, if it keeps within the limits of sobriety, cannot go far. There can be no question of rewriting the text.

legends, speculations about origins, and so forth. Nothing before the Book of Judges contains any vestige of genuine national history. At least this is so according to Eduard Meyer, who is not an ultra-radical critic, but has, on some points, taken the conservative side very strongly against Wellhausen. The Hebrews are conjectured to have been an Arab tribe who conquered a portion of Palestine about the twelfth century B.C. The patriarchal anarchy represented in the Book of Judges is a vague reminiscence of the state of things in the eleventh century. The founder of the national monarchy was Saul, who may have been preceded by the Abimelech of Judges. He did not, however, establish a permanent dynasty. This was achieved by David, who left the kingdom to his son Solomon. The kingdom of Solomon broke up, as described in the Bible, into a northern and a southern portion. These kingdoms, known as Ephraim (or "Israel") and Judah, came to an end in the manner described in the Books of Kings, the northern monarchy being destroyed by the Assyrians in 722, and the southern by the Babylonians in 588 B.C. As was the custom in the Assyrian and Babylonian empires, the chiefs of the people were deported in order to break up the rebellious nationalities. During the period of formed national life before the exile, however, an important religious movement had begun. The Hebrews had all along worshipped a tribal god, Jahveh; but they had images of him, they

recognised the existence of other gods, and their cult was decidedly of a barbaric type. Human sacrifices and religious prostitution were authorised parts of it. The beginnings of what afterwards became distinctively Judaism date from the eighth century, when certain prophets arose who denounced these practices and preached a religion in which Jahveh became a purely ethical divinity, not to be worshipped under the form of images, and asking for no sacrifice except the will to obey a moral law. This, according to their preaching, had always been his character. Israel (a collective name including both kingdoms) was his people, and, having sinned, would be punished by captivity to other nations. Some critics hold that the ancient prophets also predicted the restoration, which afterwards came about through the Persian conquest of Babylonia; but this is not the general view. The usual critical position is that only fragments were preserved of the prophecies actually written or spoken by Amos and Hosea in the northern and by Isaiah in the southern kingdom. The prophetic books as we have them are, like the lawbook of which the distinctive origins were later, a stratification, finally redacted by scribes. The composition of the Book of Isaiah as it stands may have extended over six centuries, from the eighth to the second. In any case, the result of the prophetic movement was a reform in which the priests of Jerusalem, influenced by the prophets, were allowed a directing part. Through

a series of stages, still to be detected in the Pentateuch and the other narrative books, the religion was brought into the form of historic Judaism. The Book of Deuteronomy represents a comparatively early phase, in which the ethical monotheism of the prophets is uppermost. It was actually found in the Temple as described in the Bible,[1] having been placed there by the priests with a view to its being passed off on the king as the book of the great lawgiver Moses.[2] Although King Josiah adopted the reforms,[3] the kingdom nevertheless came to an end a little after his time; but the religious ideal was now fixed and was cherished all through the Babylonian captivity. At the restoration the priests were able to take the government of Judæa into their own hands, and from that time they set themselves to elaborate the "Law of Moses" in greater detail. The final product of this elaboration was the Levitical Code, in which the pure religion of the prophets tends to be lost sight of under a sacrificial cult. From each new point of view as it emerged the older portions of the books were worked over for religious edification. In one particular case we

1 2 Kings xxii., xxiii.

2 The newer critics, to be spoken of presently, regard the whole account as a legend, not as the story of a deception in which the idea of the broken pact had its origin; though all agree that the book intended in the narrative was Deuteronomy.

3 If a great reform really dated from Josiah, it is strange that there should proceed from Jeremiah, a prophet who is said to have flourished in his reign (Jer. i. 2), the sentence, most vividly rendered by the Vulgate: "*A prophetis enim Jerusalem egressa est pollutio super omnem terram*" (xxiii. 15).

can see before our eyes the sacerdotal decadence in which this at length ended. The Books of Kings, manipulated as even they are, are still full of humanly interesting, if only partly historical, elements. The Chronicler, who took them for his material, has left nothing but what interested him from the point of view of the Temple-cult and the priestly organisation.

Plausible as this general view has long seemed, much of it was clearly very hazardous. How is the correctness of the ecclesiastical ascriptions guaranteed in the case of the Prophets any more than of Moses? Large portions of them, besides, have to be abandoned as interpolations, and often these are the finest poetical passages. Where did the prophetic reforms find a point of contact if nothing lay behind them but a primitive barbarian cult? Granted even Renan's "monotheistic instinct of the Semitic race" or Matthew Arnold's "genius of Israel for righteousness," what external causes evoked the innate dispositions? Something of the kind there must have been. How is it that the prophetic books convey spontaneously the impression of spiritual advance and wider outlook as compared with the Law? Many, I think, who have taken the higher criticism for a new revelation, partly through confidence in experts, must have been half-conscious of such lurking objections. The want of tangible facts outside the documents, as we have seen, reduces all theories in great part to conjecture. We need not, therefore, stand in excessive awe

of the majority of critics. Only a little courage seems required in order to consent to re-examine questions which, after all, no one ever thought were finally closed.

Some portions of the conjectural account the later critics retain. And it is worth mentioning that Spinoza, in 1670, had placed Deuteronomy before the other Books of Moses, and Chronicles last of all in order of composition and apart from the preceding historical books. The composition of Deuteronomy and the compilation of the rest with the exception of Chronicles, he conjectured, were due to Ezra after the return from the captivity. No one, however, now assigns so important a part to Ezra. Where the recent school of French critics has made a new departure is (to neglect minor details) in placing the beginnings of prophecy after, instead of before, the Law. This, as they note, is a return to tradition ; but on the other side, the date they assign to the completion of the Law itself is as late as that assigned by their German predecessors. On their view, no "pre-exilic" literature whatever has come down to us. Deuteronomy, though the earliest part of the definitive Law, dates, not from the seventh, but from the fourth century B.C. For nothing was written till the cult had received its first organisation, and this probably took nearly the whole of the fifth century. Those who wrote the sacred history after the constitution of the Jewish Church-State under the Persians possessed, indeed, some meagre archives of the old kingdoms of Ephraim and

Judah; but that was all.[1] For the rest, by drawing on the myths and legends diffused through Palestine, they by degrees composed an epic of a national past that had never existed. The Church-State was a new thing, and had properly no past; but the doctoral and the artistic spirit of its writers together produced a literature essentially harmonious for all its discrepancies of detail. The prophetic writings, like the Books of Moses, are wholly pseudepigraphic, and they are of later origin. After the Law had been in considerable part written came an influx of Hellenism. This began from the time of Alexander or a little before (say from 350 B.C.), and grew stronger in the reigns of his successors. The prophetic movement was a reaction against it. On the model of the popular "man of God" or village thaumaturge, known in Palestine as throughout the East, the poetic writers who actually composed the books of prophecy imagined great figures in the past who had denounced judgment against the people and its kings for

[1] How inexact as well as meagre these outlines must have been we may see from a confession of Maspero, *Histoire Ancienne des Peuples de l'Orient*, 8th ed., 1909, p. 465. Usually he tries to bring in the Biblical data as part of the authentic chronicle; yet, in speaking of the reign of the Assyrian king, Tiglath-Pileser III., which comes precisely at one of those turning-points where we should expect real information from the annals of the little kingdoms whose fate now became involved in the general movement of Oriental history, he has to give up all attempt to reconcile the Hebrew narratives with the data of the monuments. And in a note he adds: "Je sacrifierai les données chronologiques du récit biblique au témoignage des monuments contemporains." In the same note he cites from a letter of St. Jerome a strangely candid admission as to the irreconcilable discrepancies between the numerical data in the annals of Israel and of Judah. What then must we think where there is no possibility of verification or comparison?

apostasy from the pact of Israel with Jahveh, and promised a return of favour on amendment. They were, in a certain degree, anti-sacerdotalists, declaiming in a puritan spirit against the cere-monial cult as well as against the luxury, oppres-sion, and Hellenising tendencies, which they called "idolatry," of the ruling hierarchs. The idols which they accused Israel of following were nominally those of the dead cults of semi-barbar-ous Palestinian tribes, but really the statues of invading Hellenic art. In like manner Babylon and Assyria and Egypt were symbolic names for the kingdoms of the Seleucids and the Ptolemies. The symbolism, however, was general and poetic, not prosaically literal ; the poets threw themselves into the imaginary past of the half-legendary history, and only glanced by allusions at the present. The prophetic movement conquered in so far as Jewish nationality was preserved by the preservation of its religion ; but its puritan side was met by a new growth of sacerdota-lism. When Jerusalem had expelled the move-ment that would have overwhelmed its distinctive genius, the system established was not precisely that of Deuteronomy, with its relatively simple code, which was the ideal of the great prophets, but the full Levitical legislation as it appears in what the newer agree with the older critics in regarding as the latest portions of the Pentateuch.

This account of the new or revised criticism follows M. Dujardin, its latest representative. He was preceded by M. Maurice Vernes, and the

pioneer of the movement was Ernest Havet in his extensive treatise, *Le Christianisme et ses Origines*. Of this work the first two volumes deal with the Hellenic preparation for Christianity; in the third (1878) Judaism is dealt with; in the fourth (1884) the New Testament. Havet was not, like his successors, a Hebraist, but he had gained high distinction as a classical scholar. Thus, when he came to deal with Judaism, he approached it from a more detached point of view than is usual with Biblical critics. What struck him most in the Bible was its "modern" character, by which I think we may understand such a degree of community with the West that it could take its place among the competing forces. The Pentateuch, as he put it, was "a book of propaganda from the first."[1] More especially he was impressed by the modernity of the prophetic writings.[2] Unfortunately he spoiled his case by trying to bring them down too late; and he gave up the sound critical positions already attained as regards the date of the Book of Daniel and the priority of Deuteronomy to the Levitical Code. M. Maurice Vernes, however, who reviewed his work from the point of view of a recognised expert in Biblical criticism, was open-minded enough to reconsider the positions he then held in common with the German and Dutch authorities on the Old Testament, and the result was a reversal of the order assigned

[1] *Le Christianisme et ses Origines*, vol. iii. p. 51: "Il n'aurait pas eu, je crois, le même succès, s'il eût été plus antique."

[2] Compare his posthumous work, *La Modernité des Prophètes*, 1891.

by them to the Law and the Prophets. The Prophets he now assigned, on empirical grounds of exegesis, to the period between 350 and 200 B.C. The whole inductive proof is set forth in the two volumes entitled *Du prétendu Polythéisme des Hébreux* (1891).[1] M. Dujardin, coming later, has determined deductively the cause that explains this empirical order. The cause, we have seen, lies in the interactions between nationalist Judaism, already fixed in type by the priestly Law established under the Persian suzerainty, and the invading cosmopolitan Hellenism of the kingdoms ruled by the successors of Alexander. The great age of the prophets, therefore, is the third century B.C.

This deduction I have already accepted.[2] After the preceding chapter there is no further need to show that the newer views are perfectly compatible with all facts actually known about the documents. In reality they are simpler and depart less from the traditional order than those of the Germans. And, from the positive side, M. Dujardin's exposition certainly bears one mark of truth in the firm and ineffaceable impression it leaves. On returning to the subject from the point of view of general synthesis, however, it now seems to me that he has to some extent left out of sight one advance made through the cautiously inductive procedure of M. Vernes. There is a partial reversion to the search for a

[1] Published in the *Bibliothèque de l'École des Hautes Études.*
[2] *The Origins of Christianity*, Preface to the second edition, 1909.

growth of the Jewish monotheism within the Bible itself. According to M. Dujardin, the priestly legislators of the fifth and fourth centuries seized on the idea that the tribal god was to be exclusively worshipped because this presented itself to them as the only available means of preserving the nationality of the people. By degrees, as ambition expanded, the tribal god became first the supreme God, to whom the gods of other nations are inferior, and then the sole God.[1] Now undoubtedly, whatever ideas borrowed from without we may find in Judaism, it must be allowed that these all became strongly nationalised. The imagination, for example, of the Messiah may have come, as Professor Gunkel maintains, from Babylonia; but as it appeared in the apocalypses nothing could be more Jewish. In the prophets, profoundly ethical as I cannot help thinking that their tone is in some ways, I am bound to concede to M. Dujardin that there is no genuine ethical universalism. For the ancient Hebrews, the neighbour, as Spinoza also said, is always only the Jew.[2] The "stranger" to whom regard is to be paid is only the Judaising stranger. In no Hebrew prophet is there any such declaration as that of Cicero, expressing the consciousness of humanity attained by the Græco-Roman world of his time, that those who limit the practice of the moral law to fellow citizens not only take away the basis of all human virtues, but are also

[1] *La Source du Fleuve Chrétien*, pp. 253–254.

[2] *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, xvii. 86: "Caritas erga proximum, hoc est, erga concivem."

to be judged impious towards the immortal gods.[1] The monotheism of the Jews, nevertheless, I agree with M. Vernes in finding, was universalist from the first. No doubt, as M. Dujardin has shown, the ambition of the propaganda grew as the contacts of the segregated nation with the outer world became more frequent; but there was no gradual growth of the tribal god into the sole God of the universe. The God of the post-exilic Jews—that is, as M. Vernes and M. Dujardin agree, of the only Jews known to history—was from the first the Creator of heaven and earth, who had chosen Israel for his peculiar people and the land of Canaan for his dwelling-place.[2] How this doctrine had come to be so rigorously affirmed M. Vernes does not undertake to decide, thinking the question premature at the time when he wrote. All that he insisted on was the impossibility of restoring from the Bible a pre-monotheistic stage of Hebrew religion. Hence the title of his work, which is meant to convey that the attempt to learn from the documents

[1] *De Off.* iii. 6, 28: "Qui autem civium rationem dicunt habendam, externorum negant, ii dirimunt communem humani generis societatem; qua sublata beneficentia, liberalitas, bonitas, iustitia funditus tollitur; quæ qui tollunt, etiam adversus deos immortales impii iudicandi sunt."

[2] *Du prétendu Polythéisme des Hébreux*, vol. ii., chap. viii., pp. 9–10: "Pour quiconque lit avec soin les livres de *Juges-Samuel-Rois*, il est clair que le Dieu dont leurs auteurs enseignent l'existence d'un bout à l'autre, est le Dieu créateur des cieux et de la terre qui, entre tous les peuples, a choisi le peuple d'Israël comme il a désigné le pays de Chanaan pour le séjour qu'il préfère à tous les autres. C'est une religion d'un caractère franchement universaliste, malgré une attache particulariste indéniable. C'est la doctrine du Judaïsme post-exilien, si admirablement exposée dans le *Deutéronome* et dans les écrits prophétiques et destinée à devenir, avec un léger changement, la doctrine chrétienne."

anything about an actual polytheism or "idolatry" of the ancient Hebrews is illusory. The whole Bible bears the mark of a doctrinal unity. Apparently polytheistic and anthropomorphic phrases are local colour or deliberate expression of an abstract idea by means of concrete language and imagery. Passages thought archaic, in which God appears under a human figure talking familiarly to some patriarch, are perhaps really the most modern, being consciously invented stories of the nature of the later Jewish "parables."[1] That these were already a trouble in antiquity to Hellenistic Jews as well as to Christians who had grown up under the influence of the Græco-Roman speculative theism is from this point of view easily explained. Those for whom the form of expression was chosen belonged to a different type of culture; they were the people of Palestine and not the students of Alexandria; but those who were writing for them may for all that have been doctors at the stage of the Talmudic Rabbis, or of the inventors of sacred stories under Islam, with its undeniable abstract monotheism.

It follows that the nationalist reactions traced out by M. Dujardin, while they were really the conditions under which the literary genius of the Hebrews manifested itself, do not suffice to explain the beginnings of the theology. That theology, fully possessed, as M. Vernes insists, by the doctors of Jerusalem from the traceable

[1] *Loc. cit.*, p. 113: "On aura beau faire; on n'arrivera à comprendre quelque chose à la Bible, qu'en remettant en lumière les données théologiques que ses auteurs se sont proposé d'exprimer."

origins of the Church-State, was, I contend, the speculative monotheism that had emerged at the end of the long development of Western Asiatic and Egyptian civilisation. Seized on in the philosophic schools of Greece, it was formulated and reasoned out into pure theism or pantheism.[1] In Persia it furnished the starting-point for the first form of a "revealed religion"; but as this was to be the religion of a ruling race in an empire, it could not be very strongly nationalised. With the priests of the Jewish theocratic State, revealed or consciously constructed religion, under the contrasting conditions, took the intensely nationalised form we know. The modification needed in M. Dujardin's proposition is therefore, in my view, only this. Instead of saying that the God of the Jews became the God of the universe, we must say that the God of the universe, already conceived by the ancient priesthoods, was identified by a local priesthood with the god of a tribal cult. The process in Judæa was not that the national God was universalised, but that the God of the universe was nationalised. Then, placed on the borders of the East and the West, Jerusalem became the most powerful centre of propaganda ever known. After the national epic of the sacred history had been composed, the prophetic lyrists, rising from one height to another, at last predicted that the whole world

[1] It is curious to notice how Greek and Roman writers, coming in contact with Judaism and finding in it resemblances to a philosophic creed, tend to confound the transcendent God of the Jews with the "whole heaven" or universe.

would become Jewish; while the psalmists contributed a form of worship, consisting only of prayer and praise, which, though not elaborated to that end, could in the long run make the religion independent of priests and sacrifices. The attempt of a foreign overlord failed, as recorded in history,[1] to sweep away the aggressive and exclusive order in the interests of cosmopolitan Hellenic culture; though supported, and indeed first set in motion, by a section of the Jews themselves in revolt against the sombre religious nationalism of the "pious." After this came the successive apocalypses, Sibylline oracles, and so forth, predicting the end of all secular States and the dominance of God's people; till at length new races took up the succession, and the religion of the Jews, after all its hopes, was again left isolated in an alien world.

Thus in general terms the deductive synthesis by which I propose to supplement the detailed demonstrations of M. Vernes and M. Dujardin is simply this: that the monotheistic idea was not self-evolved, but was taken over by the Church-State from the wisdom of older priesthoods after this had become current. Ethical monotheism

[1] Here first, with the civil war and the Maccabean period, the Jewish nation is in the full light of day, as distinguished from the twilight of the early Greek period under the Diadochi. From the family of the successful leaders of the revolt against Syria were appointed new high-priests. These, from a little before the end of the second century B.C., began to call themselves also Kings of the Jews. The history of the fully independent Jewish polity, under its "Hasmonæan" high-priests and kings, extends from 141 to 63 B.C., when Jerusalem was taken by Pompey. The native monarchy, indeed, went on longer, but henceforth under control by the Romans.

did not arise among rude herdsmen in an isolated country and without effective influence from civilised neighbours, but was seized upon ready-formed at the centres of Western Asiatic civilisation, and then adapted by a new priestly class to a particular cult and nationality. The nationality itself had something of an artificial character, being conceived as pre-eminently a religious community to be extended by proselytism. The doctrinal unity having thus been posited, and then set forth in the concrete by an appropriate framing of myth and legend describing the miracle-guided destiny of a chosen race, poetic writers, under the excitement of the generalised ideal, could burst forth into threatenings and promises taking their colour from the supposed national past. Whether these were put in the mouth of an imaginary herdsman like Amos, "neither a prophet nor the son of a prophet," or of an imaginary politician and courtier like Isaiah, merely affects the framework. The essential thing is the lyric appeal to Israel to be faithful to its destiny as the people of God. And, to mark the later stage of development, there is the turning against the sacerdotal religion which the established priesthood now works as a ceremonial while caring only, in the prophet's view, to adorn its life with luxuries, neglecting to do justice to the oppressed, and forming alliances in a secular interest with the profane heathen peoples and their rulers. This is what we find in the great prophets. Merely as an illustration,

I transcribe from Amos the first example that occurs. The God of Israel is supposed to speak :

"I hate, I despise your feast days, and I will not smell in your solemn assemblies.

"Though ye offer me burnt offerings and your meat offerings, I will not accept them : neither will I regard the peace offerings of your fat beasts.

"Take thou away from me the noise of thy songs ; for I will not hear the melody of thy viols.

"But let judgment run down as waters, and righteousness as a mighty stream.

"Have ye offered unto me sacrifices and offerings in the wilderness forty years, O house of Israel ?

"But ye have borne the tabernacle of your Moloch and Chiun your images, the star of your god, which ye made to yourselves.

"Therefore will I cause you to go into captivity beyond Damascus, saith the Lord, whose name is The God of hosts." [1]

And then at the end the restoration is promised :

"I will bring again the captivity of my people of Israel, and they shall build the waste cities, and inhabit them ; and they shall plant vineyards, and drink the wine thereof ; they shall also make gardens, and eat the fruit of them.

"And I will plant them upon their land, and they shall no more be pulled up out of their land which I have given them, saith the Lord thy God." [2]

[1] Amos v. 21–27 (Authorised Version.)
[2] *Ibid.* ix. 14–15.

Now Amos is placed first in order of time with practical unanimity. The "higher critics" suppose the herdsman of the eighth century who is represented as speaking the prophecy to have been actually the historical prophet. To evade some of the difficulties, they have to suppose that he only threatened and did not promise, and that the promise of restoration was appended by a later hand. Yet to suppose even a prediction of captivity precisely in the terms of the sacred history as written is sufficiently difficult at a period so long before, namely, 787 B.C.[1] or some twenty years later, as fixed by the names of the kings mentioned at the beginning of the book. And the assumption that portions of it date from so early a period is after all only a means of saving the ecclesiastical ascription, which might as easily be set aside as in any other case, so far as external evidence goes. On the other hand, if the prophecy is a late poetical composition, written after the legal and historical books, all is clear. The Mosaic sacrificial system is presupposed throughout. The legend of the forty years in the wilderness is already formed. The tabernacle of the exodus can be glanced at in a comparison that seems to allude to some modern perversion.[2] The way in which "Moloch" is spoken of does not in the least suggest a practical reformer at war with actual human sacrifices;

[1] Authorised Version, margin.

[2] I am unable to discuss the philology of the passage; but this seems as clear a sense as can be desired for imagery perhaps left purposely vague.

but rather conveys the idea that "the grisly king" was to Amos as to Milton only a name in the past. "The star of your god," which puzzles interpreters who are seeking literal facts,[1] presents no difficulty as poetic denunciation of rulers in a time of relatively advanced culture. In fact, the whole gains in interest and intelligibility if placed, as it is by the revised criticism, in the period when the half-Hellenised clerical aristocracy of Jerusalem was forming alliances now with the Seleucids and now with the Ptolemies. The prophet, by means of the legendary past, was recalling the nation to its religious ideal.

This mode of argument has been elaborated by M. Vernes in a manner that does not admit of summary. The proof is cumulative. By adding one detail to another he has shown how the prophetic books, in a whole system of references and allusions, presuppose the elaborated cult and legend of the post-exilic theocracy. These details, as must necessarily be the case in poetic books, are often small. We should not expect them to be otherwise, unless indeed it had been the prophets who put into shape the epic legend. And to suppose them inserted afterwards by redactors makes it impossible to understand the unity and literary flow, I will not say of whole books, but of long passages. The finished style of Amos, it is recognised by Hebraists themselves, does not come from the translators, but belongs to the

[1] I note that Dr. Cheyne (*The Two Religions of Israel*, pp. 191–194) rejects the elaborate Assyriological explanations that have been offered.

original. And we have to account not only for literary quality, but for the largeness with which the God of Israel is conceived as also the God of the universe.

A point brought out especially by M. Dujardin is the more advanced civilisation presupposed in the Prophets as compared with the Law. While the legal code assumes that, apart from the sacrificing priests and Levites, the population consists only of herdsmen and agriculturists, the prophetic writers describe new invasions of luxury brought by foreign commerce. Another point is the relative nearness of much in the Prophets to the Psalms, which the majority of critics now place from the third to the second century.[1] All this presents itself as confirmation of the general deduction ; but, of course, what I have been able to do is only to indicate a few heads. For the rest, I must refer the reader to the books themselves that contain the detailed argument. The illustration, and the few points of detail I have given, will suffice to show that the proof is not merely *a priori*. From one critic to another it has in fact proceeded spontaneously by the process called inverse deduction, in which the more empirical arguments come first and the more generalised theory afterwards. No one said at

[1] Dr. Cheyne (*The Two Religions of Israel*, pp. 42, 398) and M. Dujardin (*Les Prédécesseurs de Daniel*, "Habacuc," pp. 37–46) alike detect compositions of the nature of psalms in Habakkuk, who is placed by tradition about 626 B.C. The alternative theories here come out very distinctly. According to Dr. Cheyne, we may treat the passages in question as post-exilic interpolations ; according to M. Dujardin, the inference is that the whole is a purely imaginative composition of late date.

the beginning, this must have been the order; but at the end the necessity can be shown.

That some such result is inevitable may, I think, be strongly argued from the course taken by the investigations of Dr. Cheyne, culminating in his *Two Religions of Israel*.[1] This work, it seems to me, is rightly described by him as an effort at reconstruction[2]; and the reconstruction is along lines which, if far from being "traditionalist" in the ordinary sense, are at least within the tradition that tries to explain the Hebrew sacred books wholly from Hebrew, or at any rate from Semitic, sources. It is in a sense, as he says, an attempt to preserve the old. For, though nearly all round the most open-minded of critics, he rejected the theories of M. Vernes, when they were first put forward, as "ill-sustained scepticism"; and he does not seem to have been interested in newer attempts at causal explanation by contacts with the Greek world. Yet there may be seen in his contributions to Old Testament criticism a successive abandonment of every proposed reference of the prophecies accepted as "pre-exilic" to actual events of known contemporary history. I take the reason to be this: that, as an accurate student, keeping himself in relation with what is now ascertained in detail of the ancient Oriental world, he has come to perceive with increasing certainty that the apparently historical allusions in the prophetic

[1] *The Two Religions of Israel, with a Re-examination of the Prophetic Narratives and Utterances* (1911).

[2] Preface, pp. xi.–xii.

books cannot be to events recorded in the Egyptian or Assyrian or Babylonian annals; in any case, that they cannot have proceeded from writers with a direct knowledge of those events. Hence for reconstruction he finds it necessary to seek out other peoples with whom Israel may have been in relation. These, as is known to all students of the subject, he finds in North Arabia.

But is not the result regarding the prophecies, so far as it is negative, precisely what we should expect if the theories of the French critics are right? Just because of the greater elevation of early prophecy, we must not expect the exactitude with which real events are indicated in the Book of Daniel. The author of that apocalypse has been quite fairly called "Pseudo-Daniel," because there is an evident intention to produce effect by apparently circumstantial prediction, the events thus treated as objects of prevision being of course really in the past, but in the recent and comparatively well-known past of the new Greek monarchies. The early prophets, on the other hand, aim at effect partly by a vague imaginative realisation of typical events from what they took, along with their audiences, to be the history of their nation, and partly by a really daring forecast of what was for them still the future. That is, they predicted triumph for their ideas; a triumph afterwards achieved, though not in the manner of their forecast. Here the Book of Daniel is imitative. Still, there are transitions

from one type to the other,[1] and the political circumstances in view do not seem to be fundamentally unlike. Could not a first contact with the Greek monarchies call forth a reaction expressing itself in vaguely imaginative symbolism under the ancient names of Egypt and Babylon and Assyria, as those empires appeared in a national chronicle already much transformed by successive fictions; while a later apocalyptic writer, face to face with a more immediately practical crisis, turned to fresher and better-known history as material for the predictions of the seer whom he impersonated?

I hazard one attempt at relatively simple explanation, which I will put forth for what it is worth. Ezekiel, in a well-known prophecy, predicts the siege and destruction of Tyre by Nebuchadnezzar (xxvi. 7). Now Nebuchadnezzar did not destroy Tyre; but Alexander the Great did. Let us then suppose that (as the French critics hold) the writer of the prophecy lived under the successors of Alexander. How are we to explain his attitude? If on the whole I have taken the right view, there is no difficulty. "Nebuchadnezzar" was merely a symbol for a foreign "king of kings," and was not meant at the time to be taken for anything else. We cannot suppose the writer and his contemporaries at Jerusalem, now the centre of a country that was the battle-ground of rival monarchies, so

[1] These are found by M. Dujardin in the "minor prophets" Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, and Malachi. See *Les Prédécesseurs de Daniel* (1908).

ignorant as not to know who it was that had actually taken Tyre after a prolonged siege. If the author of the Book of Daniel had treated the same subject, we should have had, instead of the great poetry and the merely conventional adoption of the usual literary fiction, an apocalyptic vision with cryptic references (easily interpreted) to the Macedonian conqueror and the monarchies of his successors, definitely framed to produce the illusion of an actual revelation to a seer in the distant past. In Ezekiel we have a writer who stands as much higher ethically as he does æsthetically. Modern—as would have been the case also with ancient—Europeans have, of course, to allow for the social medium of Hebrew literature, which made it impossible for even the most individualistic of the prophets to come forward as a writer in his own name.[1]

I do not think Dr. Cheyne would regard this view as derogatory[2]; but he has selected a different hypothesis. Starting from the North Arabian investigations of Winckler, he contends that Mizraim and Asshur, the Biblical names for

[1] There is some evidence, however, of a purely æsthetic interest in the prophecies when they were first composed. The writer of Ezekiel xxxiii. 32 is evidently transferring his own feelings—those of a greater Carlyle or Ruskin—to the imaginary prophet of the past. "And, lo, thou art unto them as a very lovely song of one that hath a pleasant voice, and can play well on an instrument: for they hear thy words, but they do them not." But does not this point to the age of the Diadochi, with a comparatively settled life and a rising culture, in which there were "elegant pagans" who could even appreciate denunciations of themselves, rather than to an age like that of the Babylonian captivity?

[2] Indeed, he practically accepts it for passages classed by the higher criticism as interpolations; and these are often, both for poetry and thought, the finest.

Egypt and Assyria, may, in the texts, be corruptions, through misunderstanding, of similar names that really meant certain North Arabian tribes. Again, under many texts, he finds concealed the ethnic name of Jerahmeel, which is at the same time a divine name. This, he holds, was by some Israelites combined with the name of Jahveh as an object of devotion; but by the great prophets was set against it. Thus Jahvists and Jerahmeelites—the latter of whom had the stronger affinities to the North Arabian tribes in rivalry with Israel—became two parties within the nation.

Now on the traditional view about the dates of the documents, even as modified by the higher criticism, this hypothesis can by no means be dismissed as gratuitous. If the prophecies, or even the earlier portions of them, proceed from writers who lived in the period from the eighth to the sixth century, and refer to contemporary events, it ought to be possible to make out in a general way what those events were; for Orientalists now possess abundant records of the great empires of that period. The key, however, will not fit. Then clearly, if we are bent on excluding the hypothesis that the Hebrew prophetic writers are all post-exilic and the ethnic allusions predominantly symbolical, we must find some other contemporary reference. In North Arabian Mizrim, in a North Arabian district of which the name approximates to Asshur, and in "a second Babel in the North Arabian

land of Asshur,"[1] possible references have been found.

That this makes the problems very complex Dr. Cheyne admits; but often, as he says, "truth is complex." Still, science shows also returns to simplicity. I have myself put forward as an analogy the passage from the Ptolemaic to the Copernican astronomy. In the end, however, neither simplicity nor complexity is the test, but causal explanation. Now if we adopt the theories of M. Vernes and M. Dujardin, we have the advantage of working with known historical States and events, and with peoples of known characters. On the theory of Dr. Cheyne we have to construct hypothetically the whole psychology of the nationalities and tribal religions regarded by the prophets as their typical antagonists. But suppose the reconstruction corresponds exactly to what we can affirm, with certainty, would be the kind of impression made on ardent adherents of the Jewish theocracy by invading Hellenism, as we know it to have been at the time to which the prophets are referred by the new school. In this case why recur to the unknown, and in support of that reference infer an indefinitely interpolated and misunderstood text, when the textual problem to a great extent disappears on the simpler theory ?[2]

1 *Op. cit.*, p. 372.

2 And, it may be pointed out, Dr. Cheyne, to understand the prophecies in their present state, has to superimpose on his own hypothesis a form of the hypothesis which for the French critics is sufficient by itself. "Possibly," he says (p. 42), "writers may have continued to refer to the N. Arabian oppression even after it had ceased simply