disbelief in Christianity; and Gibbon has reproduced the story that at the Synod of Florence in 1438 one of those scholars said in familiar conversation to another "that in a short time mankind would unanimously renounce the Gospel and the Koran for a religion similar to that of the Gentiles."[1] The actual process, however, by which European humanity found its way out of the middle period was much more complex and troubled.

Protestantism, far from being in the direct way a return to classical antiquity, was rather a return to the Gospel in the spirit of the Koran. Luther was a new example of the prophet as man of action. His aim, not unlike that of Mohammed, if we allow for the difference of time and country, may be described as revival of the Semitic basis of the Gospel so far as that could be cleared of its Hellenic superstructure. From this effort in itself Humanism had nothing to gain; though its own critical work, in dissolving a heavy accumulation of ecclesiastical fictions and forgeries, had been of immense service to the preachers of return simply to the New Testament. Indirectly, however, the gain was great; for the definitive schism of the West preserved the new science and learning from serious risk of being overwhelmed by an unbroken Catholic Church wielded by the next generation

[1] *Decline and Fall of the Roman Empire*, lxvi., ed. Bury, vol. vii., p. 130, *n*. *Cf*. Salomon Reinach, *Cultes, Mythes et Religions*, vol. i. (2nd ed., 1908), "Le Christianisme à Byzance et la Question du Philopatris," p. 391. An excellent account of the distinguished philosophical scholar referred to is given by Prof. John Wilson Taylor of the University of Manitoba in a thesis published for the University of Chicago, *Georgius Gemistus Pletho's Criticism of Plato and Aristotle*, 1921.

of fanatics. The life of national States could now go on with the clerical power on the whole subordinated in Catholic as in Protestant countries. All the religions, in the complication of other interests, became henceforth essentially sects. Theocracy, though still militant,

> if all it can will serve
> That little which is left so to defend,

has ceased in Western Europe to be more than a name.

CHAPTER X

THE NEW ERA

WHAT then, as regards religion, is the issue of the modern period, at which we have now arrived? Has any spontaneous agreement substituted itself for the compulsion exercised by the powers that claimed to represent God on earth? Or is any such agreement in sight?

One widespread doctrine certainly has appeared aiming at rational agreement based on philosophical principles, and yet not appealing solely to professional philosophers. This description, I think, applies to the position of the Deists from the seventeenth to the eighteenth century. Varying to some extent in their views on ultimate questions, they agreed in taking for an approximation to the truth the pure theism that might be abstracted from the religions claiming to be revealed, or might be more directly found in writers like Cicero. This they regarded as a universal and rational religion; and, partly from the *a priori* ethical ground furnished by it, and partly from historical arguments of a more empirical kind, they tried to discredit the details of the positive creeds. If we could suppose their general doctrine to have triumphed over historical Christi-

anity, the result would have been the substitution of a philosophy for all that has hitherto been called religion. It would undoubtedly have been a philosophy with some affinities to the higher religions; but it would have meant ultimately the disappearance of all cult that is not internal, and of all serious belief in traditional stories as an element in a religious creed. And, for the first time since the revival of the "liberty of philosophising," it would have been a philosophy not really requiring the distinction of esoteric and exoteric in any form, however the Deists themselves may have had to disguise their opinions about traditional religion in a time of still imperfect freedom.

Something colourless and attenuated in the religious philosophy of that time, which resembles its rather thin classicism in art, ought not to conceal from us the historical importance of the reappearance of Græco-Roman theism as a common standing-ground against superstition. It was, as Comte saw in spite of his distaste for the creed of the Deists, the final phase of that monotheism which had become the fundamental religion of the West with only provincial differences. In the view here taken, this was also the primordial phase: the common starting-point of theistic philosophies and of the constructed religions called revealed. There is this amount of truth in the contentions of the Deists themselves, beginning with Lord Herbert of Cherbury. If ethical theism is not, as they said, the natural

religion of all mankind, it is at least a natural mode of thought when a certain degree of intellectual culture has been attained ; and to a large extent it is the underlying and more genuine belief of those who nominally accept the traditional creeds. Apologists for those creeds on the one side, and Agnostics on the other, have had a controversial interest in representing it as a mere residue of Judæo-Christianity ; and I must admit that I have occasionally myself slipped into this view too easily. I was partly set right by Renouvier, who affirmed irrefragably that all the elements of his own theism were to be found in ancient philosophy ; but I cannot say that I grasped the bearings of this all at once. Indeed, it is only recently that I have found what seems to me the solution, by which the agreement of type is explained. I think I have given the outlines of a rational demonstration ; but in order to leave nothing obscure as regards the way in which I arrived at the idea, I will add that it first took distinct form when I was reading, without special purpose, the fragments of Xenophanes, including the elegies, as given in the collection of Diels. It then struck me that the forcible yet unsystematic expression of the monotheistic idea by a wandering learner and teacher, who was yet not in the full sense a philosopher like Parmenides, would be intelligible if we could suppose it to have been taken up by him, firmly grasped, and transmitted with something of the character that we call philosophic, but not to have been from the very

beginning an original conception of his own. What then was the primal source ? It seemed discoverable if we could allow one grain of truth, beyond what is now universally admitted regarding Greek science, in the mass of assertions so often made, and mostly with so little evidence, about the Oriental sources of Greek philosophy.

As I have remarked already, the ultimate doctrines of those who can be called in a general sense theists have been various. The Greek theism, as in the case of Xenophanes himself, is usually tinged with what we call pantheism. And, as we saw, some of those who have put forward theism ostensibly, have had their reserves as to what is now called the personality of God. This might be shown, not only from writers touched by mysticism, but from Cicero, who is not in the least a mystic.[1] It is still more conspicuous in many among the doctors of the revealed religions, who, when they reach a certain degree of profundity, almost inevitably become pantheists. Thus an adherent, like Renouvier, of a very clearly defined personal theism regards the "absolutist" and "infinitist" theologians as representatives, on that side, of the view opposed to his own.

The general result, however, is that theism, with a tendency to pass into pantheism, can really

1 Near the end of the *De Divinatione* the content of Cicero's theism is reduced to something that Hume's scepticism would leave untouched : "Esse præstantem aliquam æternamque naturam, et eam suspiciendam admirandamque hominum generi pulchritudo mundi ordoque rerum cælestium cogit confiteri" (ii. 72, 148).

claim a pretty wide consensus. And its earliest and latest phases prove it to be quite detachable from the revealed religions. It is not a residue of these, but, if I am right, the idea under which they were formed, disentangled at length from a factitious union. It had its origin in rational reflection; and, in its detached form, even apart from pantheistic developments, it has the characters of a philosophy. The non-theistic philosophies, I think it must be confessed, are those of minorities of dissentients, the dissentients themselves being often sceptics and not absolute deniers.

I do not argue from this that theism is true: on what most will think fundamental points I have to class myself as a dissentient. I only contend that it is an error in opponents of the popular religions to throw all their force into an attack upon what these have assumed as their foundation, for which there is really a wide consensus, and almost to allow the logical claim of the superstructure to remain unassailed if the foundation is left. Of course the questions between theism, atheism, and pantheism (to use broad rather than strictly defined terms) will long have to be discussed in the schools; but, the claims to miraculous tradition being set aside, these all seem to be questions on the rational plane. In no time that can be foreseen, if philosophical liberty is preserved, are they likely to be settled by the spontaneous and universal agreement of thinkers. And in no other way can we

desire that they should be settled. To suppress subtleties by a compromise in the interests of social discipline would be worthy only of a new Church, and not of a State ordered with a view to the free expansion of the human spirit. No such agreement about topics of the schools is needed in a social or political interest; and, as Spinoza, who proved this, has also said, the multitude would laugh at, rather than venerate, a priesthood or popedom of philosophers.[1] But, this being so, it is well not to complicate practical questions by dragging into them topics of the schools. To consent that ecclesiastical Christianity shall stand till mechanical Atheism has prevailed would be to play into the hands of reactionaries. And the error is one of logic, not merely of tactics; for in fact the two are not the sole logical alternatives.

The practical conclusion into which I have digressed for a moment is not new; and it would certainly not have been worth while to write the present book merely for the sake of drawing it. In fact, though it seemed well to bring it out explicitly by way of supporting what others have said, my present thesis, so far as I understand my own aim, is scientifically disinterested. If true, it has an important bearing on the history of religions; and I have developed it to the best of my ability. But, as I promised before, in order

[1] *Tractatus Theologico-Politicus*, vii. 79: "Nova . . . ecclesiæ auctoritas novumque sacerdotum vel pontificum genus, quod vulgus magis irrideret quam veneraretur."

to put the reader in full possession of the means of judging, I will go on briefly to discuss the merits of the rational as distinguished from the historical question, and set forth in outline my metaphysical view. Thus any bias that may exist can be allowed for.

First, then, I do not accept the theism of Renouvier, which asserts the existence of a personal creative God who at a definite time set going the series of phenomena.[1] The holding of this form of theism by a philosopher may, it seems to me, result either from an extreme preoccupation with ethics, causing a relative indifference to pure speculation, or from a passion for clearly defined imaginative forms, an intolerance of anything of the nature of mystery even at the limit. Now Renouvier was both strongly preoccupied, though perhaps not to excess, with the practical side of philosophy, and a mathematician by training. His logical rigour, with insistence on clear outline, has an impressiveness which I have felt. On the other hand, a creationist doctrine tends inevitably to an imaginative embodiment which is apt to become mythological. This was revealed in the

1 Though Renouvier's philosophical starting-point was Kantian, his creationist doctrine was not that of Kant, whose real position is in essence Neo-Platonic. "Creation" for Kant, as for Plotinus, does not mean the causal beginning of a phenomenal series, but is a name for a relation of noumena out of time. See *Kritik der praktischen Vernunft*, Part i., Bk. i., Sect. 3, pp. 123–124 (ed. Kehrbach), where the position is very distinctly put. When Plotinus says that the One "creates," he means that it is the eternal ground of particular realities. Kant, in his own technical language, says the same thing. With Kant, too, as with the Neo-Platonists, occasional ambiguity arises from application of the word "cause" to noumena.

work entitled *Le Personnalisme* (1903), dating from the last year of the philosopher's life.

Taking the creationist doctrine seriously, he set out to imagine, in a form consistent with science, a history of the universe leading to the existing social state on earth. The imagination is that, before the nebula out of which the present world emerged, there was a creation of living beings, endowed with free-will, in an order of equality and justice. Through the egoistic ambition of some, this passed into a hierarchical order governed by tyrants like the Jupiter of Shelley. Then came rebellion ; and such were the powers over Nature possessed by the beings in this first creation that there was a wreck of the world, such as would have been the end in the *Prometheus Unbound* if Jupiter in his fall could actually have confused the elements. In our world, which has emerged from the nebula resulting from the wreck, the spiritual existences of the former state, being immortal, return to a renewed life, with the possibility that in the end a better order may come to be. This, in Renouvier's view, is always only a possibility. And the possibility is not merely hypothetical, but absolute ; for knowledge in God himself is limited by a real free-will of creatures. In the meantime, the human race seems to have sprung, as in one of the myths of ancient Orphism, from the ashes of the Titans.

If this had been put forth as an imagination like that of Plato in the *Politicus*, it would have been interesting and stimulating ; but I am afraid

it was meant to be taken more literally. Coming from the rigorous logician of creative theism, it destroys all the sobriety that this might seem to have as against evolutionist cosmogonies whether ancient or modern. And a creationist doctrine must take some such form. It is in the very nature of the theory that it cannot be content with the concept.

Though it does not perhaps strictly follow from rejection of the creative beginning of phenomena, I think the recognition here implied, that the reality, beyond a certain point, must be to us unimaginable will lead to the rejection of personality as its attribute. The question then remains, Is there still any meaning for philosophy in speaking of God? Ought we to choose some other name for the ultimate reality, if it is not personal?

This, it seems to me, depends finally on the view we take concerning the system of the universe as a perfect or imperfect manifestation of reality. For some forms of doctrine that can be called in general terms pantheistic there is a meaning in saying that the reality is God. For other forms this is doubtful. It is doubtful, many have thought, in the case of Spinoza's pantheism. There is indeed a mystical consummation; knowledge of the necessary order of the universe is accompanied by an emotion which Spinoza calls the "intellectual love of God"; but there is no moral order of the world beyond that which is introduced into it by human society. This last, I am inclined to think, is the decisive point.

Even in a purely idealistic system, for which the ultimate reality is mind, or something beyond mind, if justice does not rule, there is no God worthy of the name. Or perhaps, as Euripides puts it, an ultimate order of things that is unjust would be mindless.[1] Euripides was not so great a poet as the author of the Book of Job; but he was a Greek, and could say this explicitly.

Now the consensus for a moral order of the world is, when we come to consider it, wider than for the personality of God. For it extends not only over Europe and Western Asia, but also over the remoter East. And it runs through not only the popular modes of thought but the philosophies, including those that are called technically "atheistic," in the sense that they reduce the world to a collection of individuals and deny any unitary reality of the whole even in the form of an impersonal Absolute. That the moral order is supposed to be realised, not in a rigorously circumscribed "future state," as in the dominant Western religions, but in a series of lives, does not alter the character of the general conception. Of course there are always dissentients. And, as I said before, I do not take the consensus to prove the case. Still, so general a view, held both by thinkers and by whole races without coercion from political power, gives the

[1] ἀρετῇ σε νικῶ θνητὸς ὢν θεόν μέγαν·

ἀμαθής τις εἶ θεός, εἰ δίκαιος οὐκ ἔφυς.

Her. Fur. 342, 347. Cf. *Phœn.* 86–87.

doctrine a claim to careful examination on its philosophical merits.

If in any form the belief in a moral order of the universe is to be defended, one concession must be made from the first. The actual world taken as it appears, with lives in it supposed really beginning and ending when they seem to begin and end, is not a manifestation of absolute justice. The moral sense of man brought into relation with the facts has been found sufficient to decide this when the pious prepossessions encouraged by unspeculative religion are dismissed. This means that if there is finally, or in the long run, a complete moral order of the world, the existence which, on the principles of idealism, is the ultimate reality must be only partially manifested in the visible universe. It must be not only "immanent" but also "transcendent"; not in the sense that it is an interfering power such as is assumed in the popular religions or in some kinds of mechanical Deism, but in the sense that there are manifestations beyond those known to us. The kind of law asserted by the Indian religious philosophies, according to which a sum of guilt or merit is carried over from one life to another, would fulfil the condition; but I only give this as an illustration. I desire to remain in the region of concepts, and to avoid tying down the idea to any particular mode in which it might be realised. Now it may be said in favour of this assumption of a transcendent reality having other manifestations, first,

that a pure phenomenism which tries to get rid of all metaphysics is in the end incoherent; next, that the world is not intelligible metaphysically without the aid of hypotheses; and, finally, that there seems to be in us a demand that, while the ultimate reality is more than a moral order, it shall include that. Against this reasoning Hume's well-known objection is not conclusive. He argues that we have no right to infer in the cause—that is, in God—more of moral perfection than is discoverable in the effect—that is, in the world. But to speak of God and the world as cause and effect belongs only to the hypothesis of creation, which has been set aside. If we call the metaphysical reality God, then the world of phenomena is a perpetual manifestation, not an effect produced at a certain point of time by a First Cause. And the manifestation is known to be incomplete from the incoherence it presents to logical intellect, without the use of any ethical or æsthetic tests whatever. The concepts by which physical science in part remedies this incoherence, themselves fail to arrive at harmony in a total system. Thus on metaphysical grounds we are entitled to recur, if this will help us, to the concept of a supreme ideal. But why, it may be said, think that the moral order, if fully known, would be better than that which we know? An order of justice can be seen to exist up to a certain point, but it is imperfect. Why suppose the imperfection corrected in some unknown way? Is there more in this than simply, as Hume puts

it, the desire which always exists for something a little more or better than has been experienced, whatever that may be? Now here again I have to concede a point to Renouvier, of which I did not always adequately see the necessity. We cannot finally, I think, escape the admission that there is in the human mind a demand, in the case of certain ethical norms, that they should be realised absolutely, neither more nor less. First of all, the demand applies to ourselves; but, as we are demonstrably, from the resemblance of our different phenomenal worlds (out of which we make one for science by abstraction), microcosms, representing each in its manner the whole, we are led to infer, in the directing principle of this, something corresponding to the norms imperfectly realised by us. If in the system of things as a whole they are absolutely realised, this answers the inexpugnable demand made by them; and to say that they are thus realised is mere words unless the manifestation is prolonged beyond what is visible. This means that the visible universe, though never at any moment a complete manifestation of Mind or Reality, points to series of experiences in which the manifestation, if grasped as a whole, would answer our ideal demands. If this is so, then the name of God, as conceived by the theistic philosophies and by the higher religions when cleared of their superstitions, is nearer to the ultimate meaning of things than objective and indifferent Nature as conceived by science.

In the process by which thought tends to this result I do not see any actual fallacy; provided we do not pass from the formation of an ideal to the suppression of facts in the interests of our postulates. As against any other kind of faith, intellectual good faith must be preserved. If any one had already achieved a completely harmonious system in which the reality of the whole presented itself as uniting logical non-contradiction with perfect beauty and goodness, there would be no more to say. We should have a scientific system of metaphysics. A process ending in this, and not in mere aspiration, would translate itself into intuitive conviction. Such conviction some thinkers in the past have thought must necessarily be produced in all minds willing to give to their demonstrations the requisite effort of attention. At present we are again rather in the position of Xenophanes, who said that even if a man should chance to say the complete truth, he himself does not know it:

εἰ γὰρ καὶ τὰ μάλιστα τύχοι τετελεσμένον εἰπών,
αὐτὸς ὅμως οὐκ οἶδε· δόκος δ' ἐπὶ πᾶσι τέτυκται.

Or, in the theological language chosen by John Scotus Erigena in speaking of the ultimate reality itself: *Sicut tenebræ ejus, ita et lumen ejus.*

This final confession that a constructive metaphysic can at present be only a possibility or an aspiration, and not an achieved result, must not of course be taken as involving the scientific part of the present work in corresponding uncertainty.

That does not depend on the metaphysical theorising, into which I have only entered to avoid the implication that I suppose myself all along to be dealing with nothing but illusions and errors. What I regard as such I have made sufficiently clear. Combined with these sometimes, and sometimes detached from them, there have nevertheless been genuinely rational speculations of religious thinkers. Whether we accept these or reject them, or regard them with doubt or reserve, or treat them as provisional solutions to be considered in the light of fuller knowledge, we are bound to give them a place apart from the elements of religion that can be adequately dealt with by anthropological or even by historical criticism. And, if we take the ultimate speculations of the highest minds for a period of between two and three thousand years, there is probably not one that does not still offer some point of actual suggestion for present thought.

APPENDIX

NOTE TO CHAPTER VI

SINCE finishing this book (except for the insertions mentioned in the Preface) I met incidentally with a reference to the *De Legibus Hebræorum* of the Rev. John Spencer, D.D., Master of Corpus Christi College, Cambridge, which led me to think that I might find in it some anticipation of the view whereby I have made an attempt to synthesise the most radical criticism of the Old Testament. The work—a huge Latin folio—first appeared in 1685. Though written by a doctor of the Restoration, with the purpose of buttressing the Anglican position, it was immediately found dangerous by the orthodox, and became the object of many "refutations." The importance of its researches has since been recognised by the higher critics. In particular Robertson Smith, in the preface to his *Religion of the Semites* (1st ed., 1889), which itself will probably come to be regarded as the true starting-point of a revolution in the anthropological theory of sacrifice, has generously expressed his obligations to it. Spencer, he says, "was so much before his time that his work was not followed up; it is often ignored by professed students of the Old Testa-

ment, and has hardly exercised any influence on the current ideas which are the common property of educated men interested in the Bible." And, as far as I am able to judge from looking into portions to catch the general drift, its value is inadequately estimated when it is treated as merely preparatory to the work of critics dominated by later ideas of historical evolution. It might yet serve to counteract the exclusive and dogmatic faith in "gradual growth" which disciples of the more famous Spencer of the nineteenth century—quite in contradiction to his own mental habits—are apt to think sufficiently supported by the authority of his name.

The ecclesiastical position of the seventeenth-century theologian, in which he follows Hooker, is that particular historic branches of the Christian Church are entitled, within certain limits, to construct forms of discipline and ceremonial for themselves. The Presbyterian model set up by the Puritans is therefore not of divine authority. The Church of England may lawfully appoint, as forms to be observed, rites in themselves indifferent. For this position he seeks support in the ancient Hebrew legislation. The divine lawgiver, he holds, while giving his "chosen people" commands definitely intended to rid them of polytheism and idolatry, at the same time sanctioned the religious use of symbolic imagery and practices originally "heathen." This (like the "popery" which some objected to in the Church of England) was an indulgence to the weaknesses

through which the mass of mankind cannot without aids and concessions be brought to acceptance of a pure and imageless monotheism as the final expression of religious truth. The religion of the Jews itself did not conform to the standard set up by the Puritans, but was in its disciplinary and ceremonial part a kind of selection with expurgation of heathen rites, of which the origins are to be sought especially in Babylonia and Egypt.

On the whole this seems to me, when the dates and some of the modes of formulation are changed, a truer account than that which makes the religion primarily an evolution within a small tribe, arising in the ethical spirit of its own prophets, and going back for ultimate source either to the "mono-theistic instinct of the Semitic race" or to the "genius of Israel for righteousness." Substitute the priestly corporation of the Persian period for the "divine legislator" of the date traditionally assigned to the Mosaic Code, and we are at the historical origin. And this origin is in a manner catastrophic, and not the culmination of gradual growth within a particular tribe or group of tribes. We are at one of the great moments of revolutionary change. The "pre-history" of this moment for higher theology, whatever may be the case with rites, is in Egypt and Babylonia, not in Israel. What made Israel—or, rather, Jerusalem—fit to receive the innovating idea was, as M. Dujardin has shown, no peculiar ethical genius, but intense desire for the preservation (and

extension) of a nationality. In its priestly leaders were found men of sufficient insight to adopt the speculative monotheism that was the final result attained by their predecessors of the older polytheistic civilisations, and to organise a national cult by means of the identification of the tribal "god of Israel" with the God of the universe. The hierarchs of Jerusalem were the systematising minds of the religion, which based its intolerant fanaticism ultimately on this identification. The prophets were its later poetic voices. As regards development, ethical and other, the first literary impression from reading the Bible is nearest the truth. Isaiah does not come before Moses, nor even before the stories of *Samuel* and *Kings*. The Prophets and Psalmists refine on a basis given them in the tangible form of legal code and sacred history. This last (apart from its late ecclesiastical ossification, represented especially in the Books of Chronicles) was not derivative, but relatively primary.

In all this (which I have put at greater length in the course of the book) there is no inconsistency with rational evolutionism. It could be admitted by a writer who lays all possible stress on the doctrine of continuity.[1] With this it is quite consistent that the evolution of the human race should have its moments of crisis. From a period that can be definitely fixed, it may be said that

[1] I find it perfectly compatible with what is established in the excellent work of Dr. Alfred Vierkandt, *Die Stetigkeit im Kulturwandel* (1908), which has influenced some turns of expression above.

Humanity reached a higher degree of self-consciousness. The sixth century B.C. is the period at once of the great teachers of Chinese and Indian tradition and of the earliest Greek philosophers. From that time onward, systems deliberately thought out by individual minds, or groups of minds, in part supersede those processes of social growth in which consciousness is only of detailed modifications and not of a systematic plan. The whole period of the European "revolutionary transition," indeed, goes further back. When we have traced it to its first beginnings—seen to be such in the light of after-knowledge—it becomes the "three thousand years" of Shelley and Comte. The early part of this period, however, had not yet reached for itself the consciousness of something new; and when self-consciousness comes in, it affects not only the distinctively progressive—the Hellenic and Humanist—movement, but the more or less reactionary returns to the past. The systems of "revealed religion," all later than the origins of philosophy, were partly adaptations of rationalised theism, and partly reinforcements of old authority by fusions of this high theology with mysterious ritual and myth. And as much as philosophy they were expressions of what the Hegelians call "self-conscious spirit." Undoubtedly there is sub-conscious growth behind them—a long "pre-history"; but Judaism. Christianity, and Mohammedanism are all doctrines worked out from the first by minds with a certain view of the whole. This character they share

not only with philosophy, but with the political types of the Greek and the Roman world later than the heroic monarchies. The description applies equally to aristocracy and democracy as historically worked out, and to the "new monarchy" of which Julius Cæsar remains the supreme representative. The "Roman Revolution," through which it came that "the Orontes flowed into the Tiber," had at least as much in it of self-conscious direction as the French Revolution, which meant that the forward wave of the world had regained its force. And to know that such phenomena still exist, we have only to look around us—for example, at events in Japan, or in Turkey, or (more recent and nearer to ourselves) in Portugal (1910). An evolutionism that denies the reality or permanent effect of all changes in human affairs except those that take place gradually and through unconscious or subconscious processes is merely a new form of arbitrary dogma. That much movement, progressive or not, still goes on in this way we know; but the method of leaving it to itself is neither the ideal method nor the method that has been found solely practicable.

NOTE TO CHAPTER VII (A)

In reading lately some of the dramas of Seneca, I could not help noticing indications of the feelings with which the governing classes in the first century of the Roman Empire regarded the

imperial monarchy. And Seneca, of course, knew the monarchy at particularly close quarters. The dramas, his latest editors conclude, were not made public as a whole during his lifetime, but only after his death from collected manuscripts. That they were literary exercises, not written either for acting or with any serious attempt at characterisation, makes them all the more interesting for their unmistakable revelation of the intense underlying hate and fear inspired by the Cæsarean autocracy. How the inarticulate masses felt we can scarcely know ; but we perceive the temper (not entirely undemocratic) of the class of officials who, having formerly ruled by arrangements with their fellow nobles and an occasional "new man" of ability, under the popular sanction of elections, now held their lives and all that they possessed at the discretion of a master. Through the personages of the drama as mouthpieces, the feelings associated with the new imperial despotism are transferred to the kingships of the heroic age.

For princes there is no need of evil counsellors : a kingdom will of itself teach fraud and crime.

> Atr. Ut nemo doceat fraudis et sceleris vias :
> Regnum docebit. *Thy.* 312.

If a nature shows signs of cruelty before attaining the sceptre, what will it become after ?

> Ioc. Tam ferus durum geris
> Sævumque in iras pectus et nondum imperas :
> Quid sceptra facient ?
>
> *Phœn.* 582–584.

To a king there is no sense of dominance in ruling over willing subjects : the God who formed the world established hate and kingship at the same moment.

ETE. Regnare non vult esse qui invisus timet.
Simul ista mundi conditor posuit deus
Odium atque regnum.

* * * * *

Qui vult amari languida regnat manu.

Phœn. 654-659.

Even so small a liberty as silence cannot be permitted by a king.

CR. Tacere liceat. Ulla libertas minor
A rege petitur ?
ŒD. Sæpe vel lingua magis
Regi atque regno muta libertas obest.

Œd. 523–525.

Kings are accustomed to treat suspicions as certainties. Fear is the guardian of kingdoms.

CR. Quid si innocens sum ?
ŒD. Dubia pro certis solent
Timere reges.

* * * * *

CR. Sic odia fiunt.
ŒD. Odia qui nimium timet
Regnare nescit. Regna custodit metus.

Œd. 699–704.

The consummate tyrant does not make death his worst penalty. That must rather be an object of desire to his victims.—The *Thyestes* is in great part a development of this ; and compare *Hercules Furens*, 511–513 :

LYC. Qui morte cunctos luere supplicium iubet
Nescit tyrannus esse. . . .
Miserum veta perire, felicem iube.

Yet the crimes of rulers are punished—and heavily—by the mere possession of the kingly power.

POL. Sceleris et fraudis suæ
Pœnas nefandus frater ut nullas ferat ?
IOC. Ne metue : pœnas, et quidem solvet graves :
Regnabit. Est hæc pœna.

Phœn. 643–646.

For all that, the aspirant to monarchy holds everything—country, kindred, wife—as nothing in comparison with it.

ETE. Pro regno velim—
IOC. Patriam penates coniugem flammis dare ?
ETE. Imperia pretio quolibet constant bene.

Phœn. 662–664.

Then, by reaction, we get the " supra-morality," as Renouvier called it, of the ascetic, opposed to the " anti-morality " of the despot. This is what Dr. F. W. Bussell, in his recent work, *Marcus Aurelius and the Later Stoics* (1910), has called the " Buddhistic " element in Stoicism. A typical expression of it is put into the mouth of Antigone, dissuading Œdipus from suicide, on the ground that the end has been attained already by absolute renunciation.

Qui fata proculcavit ac vitæ bona
Proiecit atque abscidit et casus suos
Oneravit ipse, *cui deo nullo est opus*,
Quare ille mortem cupiat, aut quare petat ?

Phœn. 193-196.

By the words italicised, the morality becomes almost explicitly atheistic. They would have pleased Schopenhauer, though I do not think he

has quoted them.[1] And yet Seneca is formally an optimistic theist; for the tragedian is certainly identical with the philosopher.

No doubt such passages were written under the impression of the last years of the reign of Nero. The later books of the poem of Seneca's nephew Lucan show marks of the same period. The apotheosis of the Emperor, celebrated with conventional flattery in the first book, is now declared in a tone of furious scorn to be the revenge, such as mortals can exact from deities, for allowing liberty to be destroyed. Rome has invested dead men with the emblems of divinity, and swears in the temples of the gods by shades.

mortalia nulli
Sunt curata deo. Cladis tamen huius habemus
Vindictam, quantam terris dare numina fas est:

[1] In *Parerga und Paralipomena*, ii. § 116, he cites, to convey the meaning, Sophocles, *Ajax*, 767–769; but in these lines the hero's expression of the intention to do without the gods is not doctrinal, but dramatic, and is treated as the first beginning of his ills; so that the passage from Seneca would have been more appropriate.

Nevertheless, it would be true to say that the *Ajax* of Sophocles is as much an indictment of the gods as *Atalanta in Calydon*. It is an error to regard Æschylus and Sophocles as distinctively "pious" poets in contrast with the freethinking Euripides. Æschylus undoubtedly had a theodicy of his own; but there is some evidence that among contemporaries his reputation was that of a blasphemer. From the traditional biography, it is clear that the legend about his death was invented as the fulfilment of an oracle: "A bolt from heaven shall slay thee" (*οὐράνιόν σε βέλος κατακτενεῖ*). Such a fate may well have suggested itself to a pietist as vengeance for the threatenings of Prometheus against the celestial despot. We may even perceive a verbal echo of the lines—

πρὸς ταῦτά νυν
θαρσῶν καθήσθω τοῖς πεδαρσίοις κτύποις
πιστός, τινάσσων τ' ἐν χεροῖν πύρπνουν βέλος.

And the bolt, according to the story, was let fall by the eagle, the "winged hound of Zeus." It is remarkable that, in the *Frogs*, Aristophanes does not make Æschylus say one word against the notorious attacks of Euripides on the popular gods. By Plato in the *Republic* he is treated as an offender because his characters, in the lost *Niobe* and elsewhere, reproach divine powers for their injustice.

Bella pares superis facient civilia divos;
Fulminibus manes radiisque ornabit et astris
Inque deum templis iurabit Roma per umbras.[1]

NOTE TO CHAPTER VII (B)

THE investigations of W. B. Smith (*Der vorchristliche Jesus*, 1906) result in the conclusion that "Christ" and "Jesus" were both divine names before the Christian era. To bring them together as names for a single being who had lived on earth was first achieved by the movement that passed into historical Christianity. In the origin of this, the essential process was substitution of the assertion "One has come" for "One is to come." Precisely how this substitution was effected the author does not undertake to show; but he seems to take it for granted that the explanation must in the end be in terms of a slow and gradual evolution. (See the closing pages of his chapter entitled "Anastasis.") So far as the detailed transition is concerned, we may agree that no certainty is yet attainable. Perhaps, indeed, certainty can never be attained where the factors are so complex and elusive. I think, however, we can carry understanding a step further by taking into account a catastrophic element, not merely hypothetical, but

[1] *Pharsalia*, vii. 454–9. Compare Gaston Boissier, *L'Opposition sous les Césars*, a work which I had not read when I first brought together for illustration a few anti-monarchical passages from Seneca's tragedies. Boissier has gone over the whole ground and has made a more extensive selection; but I think he tends to minimise the republican convictions underlying the opposition to the early Empire. Everyone indeed knew that the monarchy was not to be thrown off; but, among the classes that had articulate theories, there was no question of taking up into their inner minds as ethical principles duties of obedience to a person as substitutes for the duty to do such service to the commonwealth as was still possible.

historically known. My own suggestion (made in *The Origins of Christianity*, 1st ed., 1904) was that the occasion of the transition is to be found in the destruction of Jerusalem in the year 70. Before that crisis of Judaism the only "Christians" were Messianists; after it, there came to be Christians in the sense which the name has borne ever since. The assertion that the true Christ had already come and been rejected was made under the stress of that shock; and on this hint the story grew from pre-existent elements of myth and legend. Doubtless many Messianic pretenders had been executed by Pontius Pilate; therefore the event was placed in the time of that severe governor a generation earlier. In any case, Professor Smith seems to me to give exactly the true account when he treats the apocalyptic passages in the Gospels, predicting the end of the world (more or less confused in the redactions with the destruction of Jerusalem), as vestiges left over by the earlier Messianic movement and incorporated by the new Christianity that was continuous with it. Misunderstanding of these passages (readily perceived in the centos of our canonical Gospels and Epistles) he thinks was the source of ideas about a "second coming." The essential message of the transformed Messianism or new Christianity was that the Christ or Messiah had already appeared in the form of Jesus. The "second coming" was a means of comprehending in the new scheme what had at first been the future (and only)

coming of a divine being—Son of God and Son of Man—now said to have come. Since the revelation of this divinity was supposed to have been made in the earthly life, sufferings and death, resurrection and glorification of Jesus, the old apocalyptic hope (irreconcilable with the type given in the Gospel to the manifestation of the Saviour-god) had to be postponed to a more remote and indefinite future.

In the reign of Nero (to restate my own hypothesis) the proclaimers of the end of the world by fire as a preliminary to the reign of the Messiah or supernatural Χριστός were actually the only "Christians." No one yet said that the Christ had come. In the reign of Trajan the Christians known to Tacitus believed in a Christ who had already come down to earth, and had brought into the world a new revelation that was to inherit and supersede the claims of Judaism. Jerusalem had been destroyed (so the Christian Fathers afterwards said) for rejecting him. The continuity between the earlier and the later groups is no doubt illustrated by the incorporation of the diary known as the "we-narrative" in the Acts of the Apostles. The "Paul" of that document was a member (or perhaps, as Professor Smith thinks, only an associate) of a little group of Messianic propagandists. Afterwards he became the hero and the ideal Apostle of certain groups by whom, among the newer Christians, the doctrine concerning the supernatural Redeemer at last revealed in the flesh

was most elaborately wrought out and "spiritually" sublimated.

NOTE TO CHAPTER VIII

Hellenistic Messianism

In the constructive theory of the Judæo-Christian tradition, two propositions are dominant: Without the Persian Empire, no Judaism; without the destruction of Jerusalem, no Catholic Church. The essence of the Catholic Church was the claim to inherit the rights of the Jewish theocracy centring in the High-Priesthood; and plainly this claim would have been idle so long as there was a legitimate hierarchy with its High Priest at Jerusalem. The means by which the claim was made was the declaration that the Messiah, the predestined universal Priest-King expected by popular Judaism, had come, and that, rejected by the rulers and representatives of the Jewish race, he had sent forth authorised successors to establish his kingdom among the nations. In the new kingdom the Jews, for their rejection of the Messiah or Christos, lost the primacy they had arrogated to themselves. The Christ had come to save that which was lost—the nations that had wandered away from the true God. The Gentile who believed in the Christ would now be accepted though he had worshipped idols; the Jew who disbelieved would be cast out, whatever the rigour of his monotheism. Clearly the older propaganda of Judaism,

in competition with this new form, was foredoomed to defeat. The priestly organisation once destroyed, who would concede the claim of the Pharisee to priority because he knew the Law? The condition for the heathen proselyte was now far simpler; not to follow a law interpreted by foreign doctors, but to believe in a Person whose history was in all mouths.

If the history of the new Saviour was to be made concrete, he could not remain simply a supernatural figure like the Messiah of an Apocalypse; he must have human adventures. For this realisation there were many points of contact. Above all, there was the undoubted fact that pretenders to the Messiahship from time to time arose, and, if they gained a following and began to seem dangerous, were executed by the Roman Governors of Judæa. For the basis of the imagination that the Christ had apparently failed, instead of coming visibly as a glorious prince, there was the famous passage of Isaiah (liii.) about a suffering servant of God. This passage was already understood to be Messianic. A verse in the Greek translation of a Psalm (xxii. 17) even described the Messiah as crucified. Suffering had thus been made to precede triumph. Hence the Anointed, the Christos, who was to establish his kingdom on earth, could be identified with the typical figure of the God whose death and resurrection were celebrated in the mystery-religions of the Mediterranean world. Among the groups that were seeking to direct the inner

life of that world, newly reduced under universal monarchy, into the channel of a common religion, all the elements were ready for a new synthesis. Given minds with the insight or instinct to follow the past Jewish propaganda, but with conceptions more fully adapted to become cosmopolitan, religious chiefs might hope to dominate not obscure groups of sectaries but the whole world as they knew it. This dominance the Catholic hierarchy, of which the nascent claims can be seen in the New Testament, at length achieved.

One reason why it attained no mere passing success, like the Jewish propaganda before it, but retained its hold on Europe for ages, was that, while it was Jewish in its directing theocratic idea, the Christian doctrine in virtue of which it ruled was in substance Hellenistic. Islam, the later rival of Christianity, was on the contrary profoundly Semitic, more distinctively so indeed than Judaism, which perhaps from the earliest time when it possessed a body of literature looked forward to the conversion of the Western world—to the dwelling of Japhet [1] in the tents of Shem. The idea of Islam in relation to the

[1] The name of the patriarch, M. Dujardin conjectures, was actually taken from that of the Titan Iapetus, the father of Prometheus. This is not one of the fanciful etymologies that some have imagined; though it recalls Joseph de Maistre's humorous and ingenious rendering of *audax Iapeti genus* as "the audacious race of Japhet." According to M. Dujardin, it indicates not community of Semitic and Aryan roots but direct borrowing after contact of the Hebrews with the Greeks, and its purpose was propaganda of the new monotheism of the sons of Shem (probably an ancient divine name). Japhet, we must remember, is the father of Javan (Gen. x. 2), that is, of Ion, the eponymous ancestor of the *Ἰάονες* or "Ionians,"—the generic name of the Greeks in the East, as "Franks" was afterwards of the Western Christians.

West was mastery rather than conversion. In its own way it incorporated some Hellenic elements, and even brought them back with considerable effect to Europe, long benumbed by mediæval faith. Those, however, coming to it from outside, were expelled by its own reviving fanaticism; while Christianity, under its Oriental clothing organically Græco-Roman, could accommodate itself to a culture which, however insidiously hostile, was one of its sources.

So far I have spoken of the Messianic idea as if it had been, in contrast with the elements it brought into combination, distinctively Jewish; and no doubt the Christian Church took it over from the East in its Jewish form. We know, however, that it is Persian as well as Jewish. Probably both Persia and Jewry derived it ultimately from Babylonia. From one or other of these Oriental beginnings it had come into Europe before Christianity. The Fourth Eclogue of Virgil, celebrating a child newly-born or to be born, who is to become a Prince of Peace and to restore the Golden Age, has long been interpreted as Messianic. Of such Messianism I have met with some illustrations in earlier classical literature when not looking for them but reading the literature for its own sake.

Two idyls of Theocritus are devoted to the praise of the contemporary kings Hiero and Ptolemy. Hiero is made a half-divine saviour, who will restore peace and bring back exiled populations to their devastated homes. Ptolemy

becomes little less than an incarnation of deity. Another idyl, on the Infant Heracles, contains a curious parallel to a well-known prediction of Isaiah. When Heracles has killed the snakes sent against him, Tiresias utters a prophecy describing what will happen when the child grows up, and, after many labours, at last ascends to heaven. "The day shall be," he says, "when the sharp-toothed wolf, beholding the fawn in his lair, shall not wish to harm him" (xxiv. 86, 87).

ἔσται δὴ τοῦτ' ἄμαρ, ὁπηνίκα νεβρὸν ἐν εὐνᾷ
καρχαρόδων σίνεσθαι ἰδὼν λύκος οὐκ ἐθελήσει.

Accepting the traditional dates for the Hebrew Prophets, some might be inclined to explain this by percolation from Judæa. But, though the customary dating would admit influence not only in the third but in the fifth century B.C., probably no one will venture to attribute to Judæa the basis for the types of oracle ridiculed by Aristophanes. Now we find this same idea as a topic of parody in the *Peace* (1075–1076). The prophet Hierocles forbids the Athenians to make a treaty with the Spartans precisely on the ground that the gods will not let men cease from battle till the wolf shall wed the sheep.

οὐ γάρ πω τοῦτ' ἐστὶ φίλον μακάρεσσι θεοῖσιν,
φυλόπιδος λῆξαι, πρίν κεν λύκος οἶν ὑμεναιοῖ.

Other verses follow (1083, 1086) reminding us of familiar sayings in the Gospels.

οὔποτε ποιήσεις τὸν καρκίνον ὀρθὰ βαδίζειν.

. . . . .

οὐδέποτ' ἂν θείης λεῖον τὸν τραχὺν ἐχῖνον.

The crab that you will never make to walk straight, and the rough hedgehog that you could never make smooth, recall at once the question about the skin of the Ethiopian and the spots of the leopard.

Nor were prophecies wanting that the high should be brought low and that the low should be exalted. These are parodied in the *Lysistrata* (772–773).

> παῦλα κακῶν ἔσται, τὰ δ' ὑπέρτερα νέρτερα θήσει
> Ζεὺς ὑψιβρεμέτης.

With this may be compared the saying quoted from Æsop in Diogenes Laertius (i. 69). Chilon asked him what Zeus was doing. He replied: "Humbling the things that are lofty and exalting the things that are humble."

The formula of the oracle-monger in the *Birds*, λαβὲ τὸ βιβλίον (974, etc.), is evidence incidentally that the notion of a "book-religion," though in its successful form it came from Judæa, had sprung up elsewhere.

All this, it is clear, was finding response in the popular substrata of Greek life. The time of popular government, however, was not that in which it could best flourish. The Messianic dream was unrealisable except under a monarchy. An able demagogue like Cleon, as we see in the *Knights*, might represent himself, by fabricated oracles, as a sort of Messiah of the Athenian Demos—a Messiah not of peace but of war; but the ridicule of educated Athens was a sufficient check on this. Much later, at Rome, the lampoons

of Catullus were not quite negligible by the almost deified Cæsar. On the other hand, when monarchy had really come, the only voices that had power were those of poets celebrating the "divine Augustus," under whose reign of peace the nativity of the divine child was afterwards to be placed. And oracles were never effectively worked except from a real or supposed basis in lands long dominated by religion. The successful oracles were the Sibylline oracles neither of Athens nor of Rome but of Judæa, continued in the West by Christians who, as the author of the Apocalypse said, pretended to be Jews but were not (Rev. ii. 9).[1]

The pretension was undoubtedly effective; but, as I have said above, its effectiveness was largely due to its bringing back, apparently from the East, a structure of ideas Hellenistic in all but its theocratic summit. I say "Hellenistic" and not "Hellenic," because it had the semi-alien character that always belonged to systems of the same general type, from the Orphic religion onward. Its writers, however, were not really Easterns painfully expressing themselves in a foreign language, but, whatever their nationality may have been, were men who had always spoken

[1] I am inclined to revise the opinion expressed in Chapter VII (p. 179 above) so far as to admit that the Apocalypse may be not only Jewish in basis but the work of a Jewish author. Dr. R. H. Charles (*Studies in the Apocalypse*, 1913) has furnished decisive proof of its unique Hebraic style (see chap. iii.); and, though not expressly discussing the nationality of the author, classes him incidentally as a Jewish (Christian) mystic (pp. 173–4). I assent entirely to what Dr. Charles says about the intense individuality of the prophet who speaks in this book.

and thought in Greek. The language they wrote was a conventional dialect based on vernacular Greek as distinguished from the literary Greek of the schools. Its resemblances to Hebrew idiom are due to its being a continuation of the sacred literature formed on the model of the Septuagint, which was a translation of the Hebrew Bible mainly into vernacular Greek. The intention of the whole of this literature, beginning with the Jewish Apocrypha and continued through the canonical books of the New Testament into the Christian apocryphal books, was to pass for sacred literature. As happens with all that tries to come to life, some of it was taken and the other left. The part that was left outside the canon, whether Jewish or Christian, everybody describes as consisting of "pseudepigrapha." It is only a portion of the books in the canon that critical experts ascribe to its ostensible authors. Whether any of this, even the smallest fragments, is anything but pseudepigraphic, must, it seems to me, always remain a doubtful question. Even the little that a critic like Van Manen still regarded as actual record by a contemporary, is contested. The position at which I have myself arrived is that, whatever may be the case with particular fragments, no one ever put his own name to a book in the Greek of the New Testament.[1] Both Jewish and Christian authors who came forward

[1] Those who happened to know may in one case or another have attached the name. It seems not unlikely that it was matter of private knowledge to some persons that the Apocalypse was written by a certain "John the Theologian."

in their own names wrote the Greek of the rhetorical schools to the best of their ability. To suppose that the authors of the New Testament were uneducated men writing bad Greek because they could do no better is an error. They undoubtedly meant to appeal to uneducated readers in a way that academical writers like Philo did not; but to do this they used skilfully a language that was none the less a conventional language because it was founded directly on the Greek used in the intercourse of daily life. It was not only conventional but sacred. The books written in it were put forward under the names of holy men—prophets or apostles, or companions of prophets or apostles, of whom no record remains outside the sacred books. The language, in spite of its vernacular basis and its derivative Hebraic colouring, has, besides an occasional classical quotation, such as "Evil communications corrupt good manners," many turns of expression reminiscent of classical literature. It is especially worth noting that the fundamental term, to "evangelise," is not an attempt to translate a foreign conception, but is perfectly good classical as well as popular Greek. In the *Knights* of Aristophanes, the Sausage-seller supersedes Cleon by "evangelising" the Athenian Council. The nature of the "glad tidings" for which he was crowned (εἶτ' ἐστεφάνουν μ' εὐαγγέλια, *Eq.*, 647) is, it need hardly be added, of the material kind that so scandalised the spiritually-minded in some of the Messianic utopias. This was neces-

sarily the mode of treatment in comedy; but we must not therefore suppose that there was nothing serious in the resort to prophecies and oracles outside the civic cult till Judaism and Christianity came on the scene. Christianity was merely the successful embodiment, under favourable political conditions, of forces long at work.

INDEX OF NAMES