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# EXPERIENCE, REASON AND FAITH:
## *A SURVEY IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION*

# Experience, Reason and Faith:

## A SURVEY IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

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EXPERIENCE, REASON AND FAITH:
A SURVEY IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION

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*To*

ALFRED E. ALTON

*Professor Emeritus of Biblical Literature*
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# *PREFACE*

A survey or general course must present a fairly extensive impression and appreciation of the field which it proposes to cover, and at the same time provide ample content and enrichment. This is a difficult assignment, and many who like the idea have despaired of its realization in practice. Nevertheless, there is increasing conviction among educators that courses of this type which provide general knowledge of a broad field of subject matter can be constructed and made effective. We share this belief out of a long experience with survey courses at Colgate in most of the major fields of study. These courses can provide breadth as well as a surprising degree of depth, and at the same time meet vital student needs at the college level.

The present volume is designed to provide the subject matter for a survey or general course in philosophy and religion. It can be used specifically for that purpose, and also in connection with courses in the history of western civilization or the humanities generally, for it provides the philosophic and religious material which is so easily overlooked or slighted in dealing with the development of western culture.

This volume is not presented as either a condensed introduction to history of philosophy or philosophy problems, or as a short course in Biblical or Christian history. It is rather a very general introduction or survey of the part which philosophy and religion have played in western civilization. The book might well have been described as the adventure of philosophic and religious ideas in western culture. We have tried to give the college student, who has no particular preparation in either philosophy or religion, an extensive course which will give him some idea of the way in which the religious and philosophic roots of our cultural heritage took hold and developed in the course of a long history. The volume should certainly do this for the college student; but even

so, contact with this survey for the first time is not likely to exhaust its content. We venture to say that more mature students will find here a perspective and a content that will satisfy a long-felt need in this field. Certain historical periods are especially illuminating in showing the interconnection between philosophy and religion, and also in revealing their total effect upon the life of an era. We have endeavored to give to the student such ample illustration of this interplay of ideas that he will be in a position to gain genuine insights into the dynamic character of philosophy and religion as cultural forces.

The emphasis and selection of materials are based on more than a decade of experience in teaching a general course in philosophy and religion. The authors have worked together for a long period as a staff handling over three hundred students yearly in such a course. The actual arrangement of materials and chapter divisions was the result of cooperative planning. There was a necessary division of labor in writing, however, which was somewhat arbitrary and was distributed as follows: the undersigned wrote Chapters I, II, III, IV, V, VI and XIX; E. T. Adams VII, VIII, IX and the part on physics in XX; H. B. Jefferson X, XI, XII, XVII, XXI; H. A. Brautigam XIII, XIV, XV, XVI, XVIII and the part on psychology in XX. The volume is in no sense a symposium, but a joint project which grew out of the day-by-day give-and-take of classroom and staff discussion. Consequently we know that students can assimilate this wide range of subject matter. There is an organic unity which unfolds its own story. The material is adaptable to any level of the college curriculum. However, its value as background for later studies, and its contribution to student literacy in a relatively closed field, make it desirable for inclusion earlier rather than later in the curriculum.

EUGENE G. BEWKES

# *ACKNOWLEDGMENTS*

The authors are especially indebted to their colleague, Dr. James Calvin Keene, Instructor in Religion at Colgate, who joined the staff after the writing was well under way. He has prepared all maps, charts, and photographs (many of which were taken by him), and in numerous other ways has aided us in conference and in editing. We wish to acknowledge, also, our indebtedness to the following colleagues formerly associated with us—Alfred E. Alton, Franklin S. Reardon, Lloyd R. Stamp and Horace J. Nickels. During the years when we strove to work out a unified and teachable combination of philosophical and religious materials, each of these men bore a large share of responsibility in both organization and teaching.

We wish also to thank the publishers of the books cited for their kind permission to quote from their books.

# EXPERIENCE, REASON AND FAITH:
## *A SURVEY IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION*

# CHAPTER I

# *INTRODUCTION: THE MIND AND RELIGION OF EARLY MAN*

## Characteristics of "Primitive" Thinking

An insatiable curiosity is always raising questions in our minds about the beginnings of things. We want to know the origin of the solar system, the beginnings of life, speech, art, religion. The little child goes further and wants to know who made God. We know that man is on this planet, but we want to know how he got here. We know that man speaks, but we seek to know how his speech developed. Everywhere we find that man is religious, "incurably religious," as one philosopher describes it. So we seek through all the multitudinous forms for the beginnings of religion. And if we push back as far as we can beyond the limits of recorded history, or if we examine some contemporary savage peoples, we find an established life of social organization, religious practices, elaborate patterns of living, divisions and skill in labor and artistic production.

A tremendous amount of research by anthropologists and ethnologists has gone into the study of early man and primitive types of culture. Study has been made of all manner of savage and semi-civilized tribes and groups in all parts of the world. In view of the fact that man has been on this planet at least a million years, we nowhere find the "original" primitive man, human nature "in the raw," so to speak. No matter how crude or uncivilized some savage people may be, the very language development which they possess reveals "the marks of an age-old evolution."[1] And this applies also to other features of early culture.

Despite the fact that we are unable to discuss the "original" human being, we have learned a great deal about the mind of early man and about his reactions to his total environment. The most

[1] Grace DeLaguna, *Speech, Its Function and Development* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), p. 5.

impressive and startling fact is that the mind of primitive man, whether we are considering prehistoric man or the contemporary savage, is not essentially different from our own. Most modern students would agree with Dr. Radin that the same distribution of temperament and ability exists among primitive peoples as among ourselves.[2] They have men among them who are natural leaders because of intelligence, skill, and strength of character. There are men who stamp their personalities and ideas on the whole group. No one can study primitive peoples without being greatly impressed with their ability to get along in their environment. They display surprising ingenuity and their practical knowledge of natural phenomena is amazing. Botanical knowledge is often quite exhaustive. Animal lore would fill volumes. They have minds and they use them for utilitarian purposes astonishingly well.

But while there was much in his environment he did understand, there was vastly more that primitive man did not understand. It was the inexplicable that he feared and worried about. Primitive man had no conception of a systematic world order. The inexplicable was, therefore, something to be feared.

> Primitive people could not even have formulated the issue (of the inexplicable), much less could they have applied enlightened methods of investigation to it. They felt it in a dull sort of way and squirmed and fumbled about to dodge the pain of it, or to secure some alleviation.[3]

Long experience with the world of nature, however, has gradually sharpened our mental tools, so that we have learned a technique of mental use, which, in two important respects, differentiates us considerably from our primitive forebears. Note that we are not saying that our minds or our capacities are of a different order. We are simply saying that given approximately the same mental capacity and potentiality, experience has brought to light ways of thinking which have been very fruitful in adjusting the human species to the environment. The two respects which have made

[2] Paul Radin, *Primitive Man as Philosopher* (New York: Appleton, 1927), p. 5; cf. Franz Boas, *The Mind of Primitive Man* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), p. 113.

[3] W. G. Sumner and A. G. Keller, *Science of Society* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1927), Vol. II, p. 747.

vast practical differences have to do with our facility in abstract thinking, and our ability to work out cause-and-effect relations. We shall now make these statements more meaningful by illustration.

*Abstract Thinking.*—If we talk about biology, we use such terms as genera, species, vertebrates, mammals. If we are discussing morals, we use such terms as goodness, justice, virtue. All these words are abstract terms. Sometimes we call them general or universal terms. We need these general or abstract words to help us classify and give order to all the millions of particular things which exist. They are mental labor-saving devices. For example, when we use the word "vertebrate," we mean that whole class of animals that are backboned. We do not have to stop and name all the kinds of creatures with backbones. So with the word, "goodness." Nobody ever saw "goodness" all by itself. But we have seen particular good acts. So we have abstracted from the particular good acts the *idea of goodness.* The idea of goodness now becomes a mental coin or counter to be used in the exchange or communication of ideas with others. When the mind abstracts a general or universal *idea* from particular instances, it has made a selection of some factor or quality which is present in all the particulars. We say it has selected the common element. The mind is uncanny in its ability to do this. This ability to think abstractly is a wonderful faculty of the human mind, without which we never could develop science or philosophy.

No one any longer doubts the capacity of primitive man to think abstractly. There is incontrovertible evidence that he does so think in limited degree. It is also shown that a modern savage can, under instruction, grasp and use the abstract ideas of civilized man. But the point is that it takes long years of societal evolution for systematic abstract thinking to develop. Primitive man was so engrossed with the concrete particulars of his environment that there was very little impetus to reflect abstractly beyond those absorbing objects of everyday pursuit. Nevertheless, there was some reflection about the world around him. He had ideas about that world. Without the capacity to think to some extent abstractly, it would have been impossible for primitive man to develop the ideas and religious forms and practices which did occupy a portion of his attention.

*Cause-and-effect Thinking.*—Probably the outstanding mental difference between ourselves and primitive man has to do with causes and effects. He had nothing like our modern notion of an ordered sequence of events. And wherever this idea is absent, there is no clear-cut distinction between causes and their invariable effects. As a matter of fact, this is only a very recent achievement of the race. The words "cause" and "effect" are themselves abstractions which belong to a highly developed mode of thought. They are categories or word forms in terms of which we mold our thinking about the external world, but they are not the terms which molded the thinking of primitive man. His experience had not yet invented such abstract words. Though his mind had not abstracted the idea of cause, yet in order to think at all, it did seek explanations for events that occurred. In other words, when some natural event happened, the primitive man wondered *what* or *who* did it. We, on the other hand, ask for the natural cause of the event. He tended to think only in terms of some kind of personal agency, while we think in terms of impersonal causes also.

It is important to see that the primitive man needed explanations for the occurrences around him just as much as we do. And certainly a seeking for explanations is a seeking for causes. His mind was seeking for particular reasons or causes, but he had not attained the general idea of cause, nor had he got the idea of impersonal agency or the idea of an order of nature that takes its course without exception. He needed explanations and we also need explanations. For both civilized and primitive men, the explanation of an event is looked for in some other event that preceded it in time. But we think in terms of some *necessary connection* between the event to be explained and some preceding event that caused it. In this manner we seek to distinguish between cause and coincidence. Our ancestor, on the other hand, was likely to accept as cause almost any event that had immediately preceded the event he wanted to explain. Especially if it was an unusual happening, he attributed it to the activity of some spirit or ghost. For example, Sumner and Keller[4] record the instance of a Bushman chief who was given an ornamented stick with buttons as a kind of mace or symbol of authority.

[4] *Ibid.*, Vol. II, 763; Vol. IV, 301.

The man died shortly thereafter, but before dying he handed on the stick to his son, who also soon died. The stick was then returned because of the supposedly fatal power residing therein. In the New Hebrides, a scourge of dysentery was assumed to be the result of accepting and using hatchets from a visiting ship. The hatchets were believed to be possessed or animated with malicious power, so they were thrown away. In both instances, such unpleasant visitations as death and dysentery had to be accounted for.

The human mind must fasten on something which will give meaning to all that occurs. The mind refuses to stand insecurely in the midst of occurrences. Civilized man has simply gone further, but in an orderly fashion, along the same track. Compare the examples we have just given with such a painstaking process as searching for and isolating the cause of yellow fever, or locating the source of typhus in a modern community. Yet, strangely enough, modern as we are, a great deal of our day by day habits of action and thought are shot through and through with superstitions. Modern superstition perfectly illustrates the kind of causal thinking that was done by primitive man. What necessary connection is there between a rabbit's foot and a man's good luck? Was seven years of bad luck really caused by that broken mirror a long while ago? Did that black cat's crossing the road have any connection with the falling flowerpot that laid low the pedestrian farther down the street? The innumerable instances which could be given should show how difficult it is even for us to get away from primitive ways of thinking.

A list of modern superstitions should strike us as no more odd and curious than the primitive counterparts. Yet it was the so-called odd and "uncivilized" customs and habits which gave rise to the idea that early man had a different mind from our own. That was a hasty and unwarranted conclusion. It should now be clear that the great difference between us is a difference not in kind or quality, but rather in content and experience. Social heritage rather than subhuman equipment will account for the whole range of cultural differences which separate primitive men from the civilized members of the species.

*Primary Religious Attitudes and Ideas of Early Man.*—All this is related to the problem of the beginnings of philosophy and religion in the most intimate way, for now we can really understand how early man thought and how he felt. Primitive man's emotional and intellectual equipment, out of which religion and philosophy proceed, are concerned with the whole realm of the inexplicable. The primitive mind reacts as ours would were we put in the same environment minus our cultural heritage.

Let us for a moment acknowledge our kinship with uncivilized man and imaginatively think of him with bare hands in the face of nature. We shall be able to recognize at once that there is a state of affairs in the relation of man to his natural environment which is creative of an experience sufficiently differentiated from other experiences as to be called religious. What is this experience? We can understand it best by examining certain aspects of our own consciousness. That kinship which we have been recognizing between ourselves and the minds of our primitive forebears is now brought into use. Most of us at some time or another become aware of how much our very existence is dependent upon the order of nature around us. The modern man, despite his inventive ability and conquering control over many of the forces of nature, is often enough reminded of his insecurity. Especially is this marked in times of war, economic depression, famine, epidemic, flood, earthquake. Regardless of our vaunted modernity, we are frequently aware of our limitations in controlling things and events, and are sometimes awed with a feeling of helplessness in the face of natural powers or forces so much greater than ourselves. We become aware of a power not our own. Thoughtful men in civilized society have always been aware of their limitations in other directions also. They have been dissatisfied with themselves, with their attainments, their conduct, individual and social, and they have been left with a sense of frustration and incompleteness. Men feel or experience all this, even though they are members of a modern cultured society. And if men did not feel like this, religions would probably die out altogether, for religion has always in some form or another attempted to meet and satisfy man's need for security, to reconcile him to his

limitations or to enable him to transcend them. Religion has contributed something which adds strength to frailty, fulfillment to frustration, and wholeness to incompleteness. When religion succeeds in doing this, it is because the religious person or group has come to some terms, alleged or actual, with "the power, not our own," which controls our destiny.

There is a common element in this reference to universal human feeling which runs through the varieties of religious experience and connects us with primitive men. Despite the fact that modern religion may be rich in content, and as different from primitive religions as the Rheims Cathedral is from the grass hut of prehistoric man, nevertheless we have touched on the basic background which gives rise to religion. That background is the deeply felt awareness of power, other than self or the group, now imminent, now cruel, now withheld, but always there. That awareness may be accompanied by a corresponding gamut of emotions—awe, fear, admiration. Such emotions give rise to actions and to thoughts, for some relation must be established toward this power. Actions will be of the "doing-something-about-it" sort. Words descriptive of such actions quickly suggest themselves: placate, propitiate, invoke, petition, offer, conciliate. Thinking will likewise take many directions and will give rise to such oddities and variations as we shall presently disclose.

The experience just described is primitive or basic religious experience. It is the core or nucleus of religion. It rises out of the vital whole of living and includes as a part of itself the unreflective assumption of a more than human presence or power which can be dealt with. It is our contention that there is no religion where this assumption, either reflective or unreflective, is not made. There are some who hold that this initial awareness of power is really the concept of sacredness or holiness. No doubt it is the basis of the concept of the sacred, but sacredness as such is probably a later distinction. Originally the feeling of power was undifferentiated, manifesting itself indiscriminately as malevolent or beneficent. However, the psychological state we have here presented does involve reference to an objective source that is other than human. This

is in line with Marett[5] who asserts that the elementary experience of religion includes the concept of the supernatural. Marett means by "supernatural" the realm which goes beyond the primitive man's immediately understood natural surroundings, or, as we have called it here, "the inexplicable." There is a word in the vocabulary of many primitive peoples which is used to designate the undifferentiated power here referred to. This word is *mana*, and it has now been adopted by most students of primitive religions. Belief in *mana* is accepted as the most original religious belief.

The emotional or feeling elements described in basic religious experience are, of course, intimately intertwined with thought. Belief in *mana* is the intellectual or thought counterpart of the primary experience. It was said, however, in the preceding paragraph that initial religious feeling gave rise to an "unreflective assumption of a more than human presence or power which can be dealt with." The *idea* of existing power, or *mana*, which is assumed, is as much a part of what we call religion as the feeling itself. Feeling and some form of thought are always closely related. But we emphasize the word "unreflective" because it conveys the suggestion we wish to make that the mind just acted the way it did without considering how it would act. Religious feeling generates "religious" thoughts about the world around us. This is the truth in the saying of Tylor[6] that religion rises in response to intellectual need. If we recognize that in the rudimentary experience of religion which we have endeavored to reconstruct in the simplest terms, the occurrence takes place as a total response without considered reflection, then we have gained a correct impression of the "religious" event as a "natural" happening.

The primitive mind continues to be an important accessory of primitive feeling and experience. Its type of thinking is not philosophic in the technical sense of later ages, but it is a kind of incipient philosophizing. Early man was very busy finding "explanations"

[5] R. R. Marett, *The Threshold of Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1914), pp. 11, 13, 15. See also R. R. Marett, *Faith, Hope and Charity in Primitive Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1932), and articles by R. R. Marett, *Encyclopedia Britannica*, 14th edition.

[6] Edward B. Tylor, *Primitive Culture* (New York: Henry Holt, 1874), Vol. I, chap. 11.

for experiences and events, and this was an embryonic promise of philosophic as well as scientific effort. Out of the basic background experience of religion involving the emotions and the mind, there did emerge a vast variety of religious ideas and practices. We understand why this must necessarily have been the case. The business of living brought with it a variety of experiences out of the realm of the inexplicable. The mind would suggest now this, now that, course of procedure. It would exercise itself on the happenings that stalked unbidden into the life of primitive men. Obviously, there would come into being a vast array of intermingled ideas and practices.

## Early Forms of Religion

The almost infinite variation in the details of religious expression may be appreciated from the fact that its rites and ceremonies are intertwined with every phase of life and activity, such as birth, death, marriage, hunting, warfare. But though there is this endless diversification in details, it is of great significance to note that certain broad general classifications are possible. There are similarities common to all early types of religion. There are certain words or concepts which represent these recurring manifestations of religion. Terms which constantly appear in all descriptions of early religions are animism, tabu, ghosts, demons, totemism, magic, fetichism, myth, sacrifice, polytheism. These words are the coinage of the realm of thought here concerned. Some of them need to be explained and defined before we can use them descriptively in presenting the religious life and ideas of a particular people. A condensed account of the religion of an actual present-day primitive society will be given in this chapter. This is the most realistic way to appreciate the manner in which early religion operated. All the words which we have just enumerated are necessary for this task.

A preliminary word of caution must be offered by way of introduction to the terminology we are to discuss. The order in which the concepts are taken up does not necessarily represent any evolutionary order of development. There is no absolutely certain course of evolution known to us, although, to be sure, a process of evolution has taken place from lower to higher forms of religion.

*Development of Animism.*—One of the most deep-rooted features of early religion is the universal conviction that each person has a ghost or soul. It has an existence which is only relatively dependent upon the body, for at death it continues in its own right. The firm assurance of this is so great that the beyond is spoken of with the same matter-of-factness as the here and now. One of Stanley's aides in Africa has described the death of an African chief. His body was burned, as were also those of his wives and servants who were to accompany him. The new chief was observed to go up to the head servant, about to die, and whisper something in his ear. The next day the white observer asked the new chief what he had said to the servant. He replied that he had asked the servant to tell his uncle, the old chief, that the war canoe he had left for him was rotten.

It is not difficult to discover the roots of this fundamental belief. There are two impressive experiences which come to all men, primitive and modern—the experience of dreams, and the sight of a strong comrade gasping his last breath, then becoming completely quiescent in death. With the last breath, the life of the man seems to have passed out of him. But it is more than just another breath. It is the thing that made this man what he was. That which tenanted his body left it, and is not far away. The certainty that the soul or ghost of the man is near at hand is attributable to the testimony of dreams.

Dreams have a way of conducting us "out of ourselves" to distant places. It is an experience whose reality is accepted by many. Even in modern times this has been affirmed by Mrs. Eddy:

> In dreams we fly to Europe and meet a far-off friend. The looker-on sees the body in bed, but the supposed inhabitant of that body carries it through the air and over the ocean. This shows the possibilities of thought.[7]

Primitive men accepted the realism of such an experience at its face value and beyond all possible doubt. When dreams include, as they do, the appearance and presence of dead comrades as well as living ones, the certainty of continued existence is unquestioned

[7] Mary Baker Eddy, *Science and Health* (Boston: Stewart, 1910), p. 256.

fact. A dream about one who is gone may be a delightful experience or it may be a veritable nightmare, quickening the victim into a terrified wakefulness. The departed friend or enemy is not visible in the wakeful state, but his ability to be near at hand for weal or woe becomes one of the firm certainties of the mind. It is not difficult to populate a spirit world which, although it may be as invisible as the wind, is nevertheless just as near, just as friendly or as menacing. One does not ignore the inhabitants of that world any more than those of this one. In fact, special demands arise, for one can keep his eye on terrestrial neighbors, but one's spiritual neighbors are elusive wraiths that seem neither to slumber nor to sleep.

What was primitive man to make of this cessation of the breath called death, and the flight of himself or the appearance of others in dreams? What else could he make of it than to suppose that there is an invisible something or power that makes our bodies act and feel? That introduces us to the term "animism." The word for breath is "anima," which acquired the further meaning of "soul." Thus "animism," the belief in the ability of power or soul or spiritual beings to inhabit objects, and to govern their motion and action. It was the thesis of Tylor that animism was the most original form of religion.[8] As a matter of fact many primitive manifestations of religion are animistic, that is, they reveal this belief in the animation of objects by souls or ghosts. But our present understanding of primitive religion enables us to see that the most original basis of religion is the belief in *mana*, and that animism is a next stage. Animism is a step on the way from undifferentiated power to specific manifestations of power. Animism has become a general term to cover all forms of ghost-soul beliefs.

The acceptance of a spirit environment brings about a close fusion with the actual environment. There may be spiritual counterparts for most anything in nature. There may be animating spirits which have to do with beasts, birds, fish, trees and rivers, and many other objects. It is obvious that ritual of some kind must spring up to deal properly with the spirits. It may be desirable to gain favor with the spirit of a dead parent or grandparent or someone else in

[8] E. B. Tylor, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, chaps. 14-17.

the ancestral line. It is easy to conceive the beginnings of ancestor worship. Again, fear that some offense has angered the spirits probably generated the act of propitiation—some sacrifice or gift is offered that will appease the wrath, turn it if possible into good will. At all events, the good will must be maintained and offerings of all kinds presented. These offerings will be of things valued by those involved: food, pottery, raiment, and even human life itself.

*Fetichism.*—A belief in spiritual beings will readily include within its scope the idea that they may enter in and possess not only "natural objects," but artificial objects as well. A made object may by some appropriate rite be made the dwelling place of a spirit, or be endowed with an indefinite power. Professor Lowie, in his treatment of religion and art, has put this point splendidly:

> . . . a fetich is not the execution of the craftsman's conception of some divine being; but among the legion of human effigies in this region (the Congo) of carvers, some specimens are collected for sanctification: the representation of a human figure "is not an effective fetich until it has been through the hands of the medicine man and received its power from him." What confers upon the object its supernatural potency is solely the mysterious spell sung over it or the substance, wonder-working in its own right like the ngula paint, thrust into a vernal cavity. Hence, only a moderate percentage of the human or animal figurines are in reality fetiches. On the other hand, the sanctifying technique can manifestly be applied to quite different objects—to artifacts not suggesting human form or to inanimate phenomena of the surrounding world, a stone, a tree, a crossroad. Any object can become a "fetich" if only it has been ritualistically consecrated.[9]

The value of a fetich lies in the fact that the owner has ready to hand spiritual agency for any emergency. The fetich may be utilized to ward off disease, plague, famine, or bring success in some endeavor. It may also be an idol to the mind of its possessor. The possible number of fetiches and their uses are innumerable. Amulets and "lucky stones" are a species of fetich, and their use persists unto this day.

[9] Robert H. Lowie, *Primitive Religion* (New York: Boni and Liveright, 1924), p. 269.

*Totemism.*—In brief, we may say that totemism is a form of social organization involving as a central element reverence for and sometimes worship of an animal, bird or plant that has become the guardian spirit of a particular group. Furthermore, there is believed to be a blood kinship between this totem animal and all the members of its totem group. The reverence for living things of the animal kingdom which still characterizes much of Indian religion, enables us to appreciate that for them the line between animal and man is not very marked. The actual belief, still widely held, that a man's soul may be reincarnated in an animal is further evidence of a time when distinctions between men and animals were dim. The fairy stories for children carry the idea to their minds with ready acceptability. The Golden Calf of the Israelites suggests itself in this connection. We still hold to the owl as a symbol of wisdom. Heraldry has singled out many beasts and birds to adorn the arms of nobility. Some admired quality of animal or bird was looked upon as a thing of meaningful significance, and a possible source of power. Certain animals became the totems of particular groups, and social organization as well as religious rites was considerably affected.

The Iroquois Indians had their whole clan and tribal life arranged in totem groups. Elaborate rules of conduct, concerning marriage, assistance in war, and other obligations, resulted. Morgan has shown this organization in detail.[10] In each of the five groups or nations into which the Iroquois were divided there were eight totems: Wolf, Bear, Beaver, Turtle, Deer, Snipe, Heron, and Hawk. Each totem group was required to marry outside its own group and the selection was usually limited to certain other totems. Furthermore, Bears from one nation felt themselves so realistically kin to the Bears of any one of the other nations, that the bond was closer than that toward the Beavers of their own nation.

> In the eyes of an Iroquois, every member of his own tribe (totem), in whatever nation, was as much his brother or his sister as if children of the same mother.[11]

A modern variant which suggests itself as having a few similar

[10] Lewis H. Morgan, *League of the Ho-dé-no-sau-nee or Iroquois* (New York: Dodd, Mead, 1922), Vol. 1, p. 74.

[11] *Ibid.*, p. 77; see also Appendix B, Vol. II, p. 233.

psychological elements is a national college fraternity with many chapters. Often the national rivalries or some historical quarrel between nationals will be a ground of antipathy between two local chapters of these same fraternities, existing side by side on the same campus. The expected natural campus loyalties of members of the same college are often riven by the "obligations" of a name and a badge that bind together men who do not so much as know each other.

*Tabu.*—The reference to the Iroquois totems provides a basis for the explanation of Tabu or Taboo. Societal organization and the rules of conduct pertaining thereto are not separate from religion. Religion and patterns of conduct (mores), show us a two-way road with traffic both ways. Or, to change the figure, the social and the religious are so interwoven as to be the warp and woof of a single fabric. There is variation in design, however, for every separate group that is studied. The rules for behavior become deeply grooved in the mind of the group, not only through ordinary social conservatism, with the unreflective moral approval that this is the right way, *but because religion sanctions this way*. This way lies the blessing of the gods. These ways of conduct are enjoined by the guardian powers.

Now Tabu is a term applied to any conduct which runs counter to or is in any way opposed to the accepted, *sanctioned ways*. Anything is tabu which is regarded as something that *must absolutely not be done*. Obviously, all that may be tabu in any one group may be so extensive and numerous as to attend life activity from birth to death and thereafter. In the case of the Iroquois, the marriage rules between totem groups were so firmly fixed that they simply could not be broken. In other words, exception to the rules is Tabu.

> Thus Hawk could intermarry with Bear or Beaver, Heron with Turtle; but not Beaver and Turtle, nor Deer and Deer. Whoever violated these laws of marriage incurred the deepest detestation and disgrace.[12]

Among all peoples there are always a large number of tabus; the belongings of a king may not be touched by an undesignated

[12] *Ibid.*, Vol. I, p. 79.

person; the flesh of certain animals may be tabu; to hunt on certain days is tabu; to speak to one's mother-in-law is tabu in one place; the fruit of certain trees is tabu; and so on, endlessly. The tabus are the restrictions which hem in the group, keeping individuals in line with the social life and well-being of the community. There is always a religious connection, even with the most secular tabus, because a spiritual agency or power will wreak vengeance on the violators. Breaking any tabu savors of desecration, but when a more vital regulation is broken, then the desecration is fraught with peril and the fear engendered may produce death. A striking example of tabu is recorded in the Old Testament.[13] It was tabu for anyone but a priest to touch or handle the Ark of the Covenant. An unordained Israelite, standing by as the Ark was being transported, put forth his hand to steady the Ark as it was about to fall, and immediately dropped dead, presumably struck dead by Jahweh.

The breaking of a tabu sets in motion an inexorable fate which runs its course toward dire consequences. No exceptions are made in deference to mistakes or unintentional breaking of tabus. In this respect the breaking of a tabu is as irrevocable in its effects as is the operation of some natural law with us. The accidental touch of a live wire brooks no exceptions in the result. Likewise, there is no abrogation of tabu in favor of innocence. Certainly we may say that, on the whole, tabus were of great value, for they were a tremendous factor in developing discipline and self-control.

If at this point we will picture an island in the Pacific, San Cristoval, one of the Solomon Islands to the northeast of Australia, occupied by aboriginal peoples, we shall be able to observe an actually existing present-day life situation. It will require the vocabulary of terms with the significant meanings which we have now acquired. The detail and combination of elements are different from those of any other peoples, but the major primitive types are all present. We shall be able to note also that the forms of religion are as much a part of the whole of life as eating and sleeping. The close relation between religion and magic will be brought out and commented upon. Furthermore, the account of the natives at San Cristoval will reveal something of the process or evolution in reli-

[13] I Chronicles 13.

gion and thought which carries us some little way beyond the early forms already considered.

## A Case Study in Primitive Religion[14]

Our mind's eye sees a cluster of grass-roofed huts. In the foreground are some children enjoying a game, four or five on each side. One side has a portion of a shell, which represents a pig, and the others have a white stone, which is to play the part of the dog. The team with the "pig" has dug four holes and secretly they will put the "pig" into one of these and cover all the holes. The opposition will now try to guess which hole contains the "pig," and will throw the "dog" on the chosen one. If, in scooping away the sand, the "dog" has really got the "pig," then the "pig" goes to the side which guessed correctly, otherwise they must try again. This is one of numerous games.

These children do have a good deal of fun. There are little ones on the fringe of the group with dolls and other homemade toys. Near by others are swinging and calling out to each other as they enjoy this universal pastime. It is an exciting world in which they live, for they are saturated with stories about *adaro* (ghosts), and *figona* (spirits). They are on the lookout for evidences of these beings. They have heard stories of magical rocks that jump off hills and fly through space, lighting the sky at night. They watch the ceremonies and ritual dancing of their elders through moonlight nights. Each of these children has a guardian ghost, whose name is the child's real name, and it is also usually the name of a deceased member of the male line. As the children gather at their own huts for their meals, they will be careful not to eat certain things which the older ones present enjoy. Fish and pork are tabu for the little fellows: turkeys' eggs, lizards, and bats are tabu for those somewhat older; and bananas for others, and so on, up to sixteen, when food restrictions or tabus are off and it is anything on the card.

At this family "board," first-born children are not present. They were put to death at birth by custom, which regards them as stupid

[14] The account here given is a selection of materials drawn from the findings of C. E. Fox, as published in his volume, *The Threshold of the Pacific* (New York: Knopf, 1925).

and probably not the husband's offspring anyway. Conversation is often about ghosts and other spirits. These children have been entertained with myths telling about certain specific spirits. They hear often about the creator Agunua. This is the spirit that created men and women. Originally he intended that mankind would be able to renew its youth, but he had to change his mind. For, having created woman, she became old, and to renew her youth went to a stream to change her skin, as a serpent does. She came back young and lovely, but her daughter cried, declaring that she did not know this woman. Then the mother searched the stream and finally found her old skin and, putting it on, came home. The daughter recognized her mother and was happy. So Agunua had to let people become old and finally die, otherwise children would not know their parents.

If we single out one of the children in the play group whose parents happen to be people of distinction, either because of birth, as in the case of a chief's son, or by reason of material prosperity, for money talks here too, then the progressive stages of the lad's development are marked by feasts. There is a kind of graded curriculum of religious and social education. An important child, destined to be an *araha*, or chief, has a feast at the age of eight years which would make any child feel his destiny. A three-cornered platform ten feet high is painted in large red, white, and black spots. Many figures or images of birds and fish, and always, too, a serpent, are carved, for totemism is present here. Neighboring villagers come for this day, and each chief chews betel nut with the young guest of honor and bows down and indicates acceptance of him as an *araha*, and as an ally.

Such a boy, shortly after this feast, proceeds through a series of tattooings. He is adorned with trees, fish, birds, stars and sun. These are all significant, having meanings which connect him with spiritual powers. An important part of this period of instruction is the lesson in killing. It is bald realism, for a man is actually killed and placed before the boy, who sends his spear into the corpse. He next cuts a piece of flesh from the right arm and eats it raw.

At the completion of these and many other phases of educational procedure, the lad at ten or twelve goes into the canoe house for a

rigid two-year training period. He has other boys with him but they never go near the village for they must not so much as see a woman during this time. Even their own mothers are tabu to them. The walled enclosure of the canoe house is in like manner always tabu for women. Nothing must be allowed to interfere with this intensive training. The boy learns how to handle the canoe and how to fish. The lore of the sea and weather must be learned. The meals are frugal and the work is hard. This is a rugged preparatory school ending with a "graduation" ceremony, indicating the union of the boy with the sacred deity, which in this case is a bonito fish. The boy prior to this will have eaten the raw liver of the first bonito fish which he caught. This gives him *mena* or *mana* (supernatural power). The "exercises" or festival again requires a platform with carvings and paint, but it is so shaped as to represent the bonito. The *araha* and the other boys who were in his "class" at the canoe house go up the stairway, which is the mouth of the fish, onto the platform, thus signifying their entrance into the body of the fish.

By the time the young *araha* has reached this stage, he has become well acquainted with the life and customs of the group. He has seen a medicine man diagnose and prescribe for some severe sickness. The lad knows, of course, that to be ill at all with fever and delirium is an indication that one of the victim's two souls, the *aunga*, is off somewhere and must be brought back. The other soul, the *adaro* or ghost, does not leave the body until the fourth day after death. Specific illnesses have specific remedies, and it is perfectly clear that causal reasoning is in full operation. Let us suppose the medicine man diagnosed the disease as *mata'i* (malaria). The cause or agency is believed to be known. There is present another *adaro* (ghost), which has taken possession of the man and must be driven out. The technique requires that a dracaena leaf be taken. It is then charmed with the proper spell in order that it may possess *mana*. The leaf must then be shaken over the patient. Then with extreme caution the leaf is carried outside with the *adaro* hanging onto it (which, of course, is invisible), and thrown away.

In the event that the sick individual is about to die, then at the impending death, especially if he is one of the important men,

others gather around waiting for him "to-let-go-the-breath," which is the word for death. Elaborate procedures now occur. If the deceased is to be buried at sea, his coffin will be a canoe. The most important thing is to take precautions with the ghost. A method has been devised to keep the *adaro* occupied. Two cocoanuts are split in two. The halves from the different nuts are put together and, of course, being unmatched they will not fit well. So the ill-fitted nut is placed under the right armpit of the deceased. The ghost will be so busy trying to put together what he thinks are two halves of the same nut that he will not have time to bother anybody before the funeral is over.

If the dead man had a son or a nephew, it is possible he may have left the boy some object—perhaps a conch trumpet or a crown of cowry shells. These will be prized not only for themselves as intrinsically valuable, but because they are regarded as sacred. Thus they will be handled as sacred objects and will thereby function as fetiches.

If we could participate in the daily life of the young *araha*, we should observe his presence at many ritual sacrifices. In time of preparation for war there would be a sacrifice of a pig to the spirit Harumae. In the shrine a voice would exclaim: "Harumae! chief in war! we sacrifice to you with this pig, that you may help us to smite that place; and whatsoever we shall carry away shall be your property, and we also shall be yours." Or it might be that with a group of fighting men the young chief would go to the sacred stone Wabina (named after a hawk). Around the sacred stone are many carved figures or totems of birds and fish, for the clan divisions are totemic. The priest who attends this sacred place would take a branch of a certain tree and strike it against Wabina, afterward giving leaves to each man. They would tie these around their necks as amulets and by the power residing therein would be protected in battle.

At harvest time there are other sacrifices and in different places. For all sorts of occasions there are appropriate rites and sacrifices. Sometimes the performance takes place in a grove, or at the seashore, or at one of the many sacred rocks.

## Magic and Religion

As one reads the many references to customs and rites of the natives of San Cristoval, it is very difficult to distinguish which practices are religious and which are magical. As a matter of fact there is very little difference at this level. This holds in all primitive religions. The modern student differentiates between magic and religion by regarding religion as a spiritual relation through worship or prayer with a deity; while magic is a strictly prescribed performance which endeavors to coerce some power or spirit to take some specific action. Religion we think of as generating humility, supplication, reverence. On its higher levels, religion finds its deepest satisfaction, not in seeking material things, but in the very relation of communion itself, attended by joy and peace. Religion does not command or compel or demand. Magic, on the other hand, is less personal, concerned primarily with the gaining of an object or bringing something to pass, without regard to the spiritual attitude of the participant. Magic serves an ulterior interest, and is not a relation held to be good in and for itself. Magic is not a spiritual transaction in the sense that worship is, but a method or formula which is supposed to have an efficacy by reason of correct performance. It is simply a way of coercing or constraining external agency by some method presumed to be automatically effective for the end desired.

As moderns, we recognize the differences between religion and magic but on the primitive levels no sharp dividing line exists. Magic and religion shade into each other. They both endeavor to draw upon that reservoir of power called *mana*. And *mana*, as we have seen, is in its earliest conception ambivalent, i.e., neither good nor bad. It is morally neutral. Magical practices then are readily associated with and also derived from religious ideas. This is evident in the beliefs in magic and superstitions that have persisted until today. So long as demons and ghosts remain in the thought of people, so long does magic maintain a fast hold. It is only as men's minds approach monotheism, i.e., worship of one supreme God, that the half-gods begin to go and carry magic and superstition with them.

The state of affairs among the natives of San Cristoval, however, is the soil in which magic flourishes. Mr. Fox, who has so carefully studied this people, considers magic to be an inevitable accompaniment and outgrowth of the religious ideas. In the language of San Cristoval, the word *mana* stands for an invisible nonmaterial substance. Of this an unlimited "amount" may be present in the smallest object. This *mana* is literally a kind of tenuous stuff or ether which may cling to or enter into an object without any visible evidence. It may pour itself like water from one object to another, or it may gradually "evaporate" from a person or object. *Mana* is power to do, just as electricity is power to do. To impart *mana* to an object requires a form of words without any necessary religious attitude. The object may then be used to work good or ill, depending on the formula or spell used. There are magical forms of words which will prevent as well as augment the passage of *mana* to an object or person. Its effects can be neutralized with the proper formulae if done at the right time.

To get rain, recite an *haiaru* (a formula) and blow toward the quarter from which you want rain.

To get a good nut crop, break some of the first fruit nuts and recite an *haiaru*.

To make a woman love you, take the end shoots of 'arhasi and 'ado'a; throw them down reciting an *haiaru*.

The use and technique of such procedure, which, of course, pervades all of life, is magic at work. It is part of the practice of medicine, just as the practice of medicine is also part of the repertoire of religious techniques. It is only by reason of deeper insight into the nature of religion that mankind has been able to disassociate itself from magic, which is essentially incompatible therewith. Religious development runs in an opposite direction. The higher forms of religion can be achieved only with increasing self-consciousness and more detached reflective thinking.

## Polytheism

There is a deeper vein of religious thought discoverable in the religion of San Cristoval than has as yet been brought out. If we look for this we recognize that the *figona* are a more spiritualized

form of being than the *adaro*. The *adaro* are almost innumerable, but the *figona*, while just as real, may or may not incarnate themselves. If they take a form at all, it is always as a serpent. Their dwelling is usually in those places where natural beauty or ruggedness inspires a feeling of awe. Certain *figona* have become singled out with names, such as Agunua, and Hatuibwari. It is not certain which of these is the more powerful, but both are thought of as having some attributes in relation to the world and mankind. Thus, religious thought here has passed over the threshold of polytheism (many gods).

On the island there are some who hold that Agunua is a supreme being to whom prayers are addressed and who is the source of all the spiritual power that pervades things. But their ideas concerning Hatuibwari are also very significant for an insight into the development of spiritual conceptions and the growth of the god idea. This latter *figona* has become a god, for although his body is mostly that of a serpent, yet there is a human torso and head. There are four eyes which suggest the incipient notion of an all-seeing god. He has wings, which makes clear that he can go everywhere. The breasts are female, indicating the thought that from this god created things are nourished.

This concrete illustration of the ascendancy of spiritual powers with specific names and attributes is an excellent example of a process that occurs in the evolution of religion. In this way, from the multitude of spiritual powers, the idea of gods arises. This next stage is polytheism. It is not sharply separated from the earlier forms, but it represents an advance in spiritual thinking and feeling. One of the characteristics of this stage is the great number of myths or fanciful stories of the gods. These are usually wonder tales of prowess against other gods, or against forces of nature, or miraculous accounts of creative power.[15]

The Babylonian and Egyptian religions show us polytheism at a more advanced stage, accompanied also by a rich tradition of myths about the gods. The Hebrew history affords us the deepest insight into as well as the clearest example of the way in which

[15] D. A. Mackenzie. See *Myths and Traditions of the South Sea Islands*; also, *Myths from Melanesia and Indonesia* (London: Gresham, 1931).

religion becomes increasingly spiritualized and monotheistic. Yet in its earliest stages it too has many elements of animism and polytheism.

## Summary

A consideration of the mind and religion of early man has prepared us to appreciate the long course of development, religious and philosophical, in western culture which follows from such simple beginnings. We now recognize that the primitive mind is in native capacity and endowment not unlike our own. Primitive man is kin to us in his needs and feeling, as well as in his mind. We can understand each other. We understand the limitations of his outlook upon the inexplicable, and we can understand his "explanations" and attempts to adjust himself to the unknown. We are aware that the religious reaction to the environment is universal, and that religious expression finds outlet in a variety of forms. These forms in turn are evidence of a great deal of intellectual activity, albeit not self-conscious reflection. In short, we have some appreciation of the stuff of which man is made, which is as near as we can come to the raw material of our cultural foundations.

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# PART ONE

## *THE HEBREW DEVELOPMENT OF RELIGION*




THE ANCIENT WORLD

## CHAPTER II

# *RELIGION OF THE HEBREWS TO THE EIGHTH CENTURY B.C.*

In passing from primitive thinking and early forms of religion to a consideration of the Hebrew development, we have entered the most interesting and fascinating laboratory of religion available for investigation. At the very outset, as the Hebrews cross the threshold of recorded history to achieve their place as the most significant contributors to the spiritual life of mankind, they possess in their religious equipment many of the primitive elements carried along from a remote past. We shall need such terms as fetichism, tabu, demonism, to describe features which persisted alongside more advanced insights. Their development, from such beginnings to the eminence of spirit which they attained, is the most epic story of all the pilgrimages of the human soul. But this is a long journey and not at all a smooth one. If we were to plot its course the line would be very jagged, revealing many high points, but also many deep valleys. This history is realistic and contains a full share of the tragedy of life. Whatever was learned about God, eternal justice, and righteousness, was knowledge bought at a great price in human experience and suffering. The religious side of man's life has had to struggle for its experience no less than the biological or the intellectual. In religious experience there are factors that make for survival and some that do not. Ideas have their battles to fight as armies do. This clash of spiritual ideas is nowhere better illustrated than in the life of the Hebrews. Many varieties of religion both from within and from without, through other peoples, expose themselves to view. So that, from the standpoint of the evolution of religion in general, this particular development of Hebrew religion is preferable for study beyond any other that might be chosen. There are many other ancient religions —for example, the Egyptian, the Babylonian, the Persian—which

## Chronology of the Hebrew People

| | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| | 2000 B.C. (?) | Abraham wanders through Palestine into Egypt. | |
| | 1447 B.C. (?) | Moses leads the Hebrews out of Egypt. | |
| | 1400 B.C. (?) | Joshua leads Hebrews into Canaan via Jericho. | |
| | 1400-1037 B.C. | (?) Period of the Judges. No national unity. | |
| Independent United Kingdom | 1037 B.C. (?) | Saul made the first king of the Hebrews. *United Kingdom* begins. | |
| | 1020 B.C. (?) | David made second king. | |
| | 980 B.C. (?) | Solomon made king. | |
| Break-up of United Kingdom | 937 B.C. (?) | Rehoboam made king. Kingdom divides into North and South. | |
| Dominant Power Controlling Palestine ↓ | 900-800 B.C. | *Judah (South)*—Rehoboam | *Israel (North)*—Jeroboam<br>Israel becomes vassal of Assyria in 842 B.C.<br>ELIJAH and ELISHA prophesy. |
| Assyria | 800-700 B.C. | Judah becomes vassal of Assyria in 722 B.C.<br>ISAIAH and MICAH prophesy. | *Israel carried captive into Assyria* in 722 B.C.<br>AMOS and HOSEA prophesy. |
| | 700-600 B.C. | The Great Reformation under Josiah in 621 B.C. Book of Instruction found. Babylonia conquers Assyria and takes control of Judah in 604 B.C.<br>JEREMIAH prophesies. | |
| Babylonia | 600-500 B.C. | Leading citizens of Judah taken captive to Babylon in 597 B.C.<br>*Judah taken captive into Babylon in 586* B.C.<br>EZEKIEL and DEUTERO-ISAIAH prophesy in Babylon. | |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| Persia | 600-500 B.C. | Cyrus conquers Babylon in 537 B.C. and allows Jews to return to Palestine. |
| | 500-400 B.C. | Walls of Jerusalem rebuilt under Nehemiah in 444 B.C. |
| Greece | 400-300 B.C. | Alexander the Great conquers Persia and controls the Jews, in 332 B.C. Ptolemy takes Palestine upon death of Alexander in 323 B.C. |
| | 300-200 B.C. | Wars between the Seleucids, who hold Syria, and the Ptolemies who hold Egypt. Palestine ravaged. |
| Syria | 200-100 B.C. | Palestine finally taken by Seleucids and made a part of Syria in 198 B.C. Temple desecrated by Antiochus Epiphanes in 168 B.C. *Maccabean Revolt* begins. Judea obtains political independence in 143 B.C. Maccabean family rules. |
| A Period of Relative Independence | 100 B.C.-A.D. | Civil war in Judea 67-63. Rome annexes Palestine in 63 B.C. Pompey rules Palestine 63-48 B.C. Palestine under Julius Caesar, Cassius, and Antony successively 48-40 B.C. Herod the Great made king of the Jews. Rules 40-4 B.C. Jesus born in 6 B.C. (?) On death of Herod, Herod Antipas is made tetrarch of Galilee and Perea; Archelaus is made ethnarch of Judea; and Philip is made tetrarch of Iturea, Batanea, etc. |
| Rome | A.D.-100 A.D. | Archelaus banished in 6 A.D. and Judea goes under Roman procurators. Pontius Pilate is one of these and rules Judea 26-36 A.D. Jesus crucified in 29 A.D. (?) Paul's missionary journeys 40-64 A.D. Jerusalem destroyed by Romans in 70 A.D. |

might be selected, but none of these is so well recorded, nor has any moved with so continuous an ascent up so long a ladder of spiritual evolution. The religion of the Greeks, however, will receive some attention because it was part of the Greek heritage that mingled with Hebrew thought in shaping the culture of the Western world. A great deal from these two sources has become imbedded in the religious and intellectual habits of modern civilization.

Turning now to the Hebrews, we observe on the map a small stretch of land at the eastern end of the Mediterranean. This became their homeland. In size it is slightly smaller than the state of Vermont. Despite insignificance of size, and despite the fact that it never became a great political power, the historian never fails to comment on the tremendous influence of this land and people on the world's history.

It is easy to see that the land is a corridor between Africa to the south and semi-Asian and European lands to the north. Any dominant power would find it necessary to control this corridor, and each empire that rose and fell did so dominate it, often after severe battles. Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, Rome, each had its day there, and that fact has much to do with the tragedies that befell its inhabitants. The migrating Hebrews, who fastened upon this area as their chosen land, had selected the most strategically important spot in the ancient world. On this diminutive plot of ground the Hebrews, who never numbered, up to the Greek period, more than 750,000 people, lived their kaleidoscopic life.

## Beginnings of Hebrew Life and Religion

The racial origins of the Hebrews are to be sought to the eastward of Palestine, from which direction they came on to the stage of history. In regard to the exact details of their migration there are many unsettled problems. They belonged to a drifting westward movement toward Palestine of Semitic stock. One strain of this Semitic people was the Aramean, which was the nucleus out of which the Hebrew nation eventually grew. But for many centuries prior to any kind of national consciousness there was no definite location, but simply a nomadic and pastoral type of living, which

we designate as the patriarchal period. The patriarchs were important chieftains, like Arabian sheiks, wealthy with cattle and movable possessions, at the head of a large following related to the patriarch by ties of kinship. The long patriarchal past is, in Hebrew tradition, tied together by the names of the outstanding characters, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. This whole period is known to us only in terms of such traditions as were handed down orally over many centuries before they were put into writing. Only a very small part of this tradition is available to us in the Bible, the composition of which, as we know it, took place relatively late in Hebrew history. In the biblical account, the patriarchal period terminates with a migration into Egypt. Here the Hebrews might have been lost to view had it not been for the unique leadership of a great personality by the name of Moses, whose importance we shall presently consider.

On the religious side, these Aramean people carried with them into Egypt, from their nomadic past, some very valuable ideas along with very crude religious practices. It appears that they possessed a high degree of moral sensibility. They had a strictly regulated sexual morality, which was in turn, no doubt, derived from their respect for individual personality. They had a group consciousness which looked upon merit as the basis of leadership. Without straining this point overmuch, it is a fact that the human social relationships of the nomad period had a moral quality which was not superficial, but deeply characteristic. It was an important element in the religious development of the nation. The moral genius of the Hebrews asserted itself again and again under the most untoward circumstances.

But there were also present in the nomadic period religious remnants of a far distant past. The biblical record contains many references which clearly illustrate the animistic background of this people. There were all sorts of sacred objects and places inhabited and animated by some god or demon or genie. The name for such demons or spirits among all Semitic peoples was Ba'al (masculine), Ba'alat (feminine), Ba'alim (plural). In the Book of Genesis, 12:6, we read that, Abraham "passed on through the land as far as the oracular oak at the shrine of Shechem." The "oracular oak" was a

sacred tree, at which spot Abraham worshiped. In Chapter 13:18, we note that "Abraham moved his tent and went to live beside Mamre's oaks at Hebron, where he built an altar to the Eternal." These oaks also were sacred. No matter how enlightened Abraham may have been, still in these instances we have evidence of practices persisting from a far past. Tradition has preserved the remains of an age-old animism which had been universal throughout the Semitic world.

Similarly, there are numerous references to sacred stones or pillars which are also animistic objects inhabited or "possessed" by Ba'alim. There is no mistaking this in the account of Jacob in Genesis 28:11 ff., where, after his famous dream of the ladder with angels ascending and descending, he awakened and was afraid and said, "What an awesome place! This is a very dwelling of God, a very opening into heaven! So Jacob rose in the morning and, taking the stone he had put under his head, he erected it as a pillar, pouring oil upon it." And then he declared, "This stone which I have erected as a pillar shall be God's dwelling." The form which his act of worship took shows remains of an animism whose origin was extremely remote. Likewise, in I Samuel 4:1 and elsewhere occurs the name "Ebenezer"; "Israel marched out to fight the Philistines and camped at Ebenezer." The word "Ebenezer" itself means "Stone of Help," which is very suggestive of the original character of the place. As a matter of fact, sacred pillars persisted until quite late, for even in the porch of the temple there were two such pillars (I Kings 7:15, 21), although no longer consciously associated with animism. It has been suggested that out of the ideas of stones or pillars developed the idea of an altar.

Another illustration of the survival of primitive forms is discernible in references to sacred wells. Certain wells were originally presumed to be the possession or dwelling place of some god. The habit of reverence for these places persisted long after newer ideas of religion prevailed. An interesting example occurs in connection with the examination of place names. In Genesis 14:7 is the following passage: "Then they turned back to En-Mishpat (that is, Kadesh), ravaging all the country of the Amelekites . . ." Note that the place which is at the time of the writing of this passage

called Kadesh used to be called En-Mishpat. Kadesh itself means sanctuary. So then, Kadesh, which now is a sanctuary, has a history going far back to a time when the same place was called En-Mishpat or "the spring of decision." In other words, it was formerly an oracle spring or natural well, a sacred place of abode inhabited by some god. By proper ceremony of incantation, the will of the god was elicited. Several times the place name, En-Eglain, appears, meaning, "the spring of the two calves." This is especially interesting as testimony concerning an age-old worship of calves, which we know about from other sources, and this form of worship persisted also until comparatively late. (See Exodus 32, where a golden calf is worshiped; also I Kings 12:29, where Jereboam I set up two calves for worship.)

In connection with sacred places, there is every reason to suppose that Mt. Sinai, which was so important in the work of Moses, was centuries previously associated with animism. It is referred to as "the mount of Jahweh" in the Old Testament (Numbers 10:33). It is undoubtedly a volcanic mountain. Such a phenomenon among primitives is always animistically regarded. The mountain never lost its sacredness despite the higher form of religion with which it later became associated.

There are also indications that primitive totemism existed some time in the Hebrew past. Totemism, as we have seen, is a form of primitive social-religious organization which is very common in the evolution of society in various parts of the world. The names of Hebrew clans and tribes are in some instances animal names, which is a universal characteristic of totemism. Simeon means "hyena," Levi means "wild cow." So, also, place names representing clans illustrate the same point. Aijalon from Aijal means "stag," Thalbim, "foxes," and Ephron from Epher, "young antelope." Furthermore, the frequent mention in the Old Testament of animal worship such as goats, calves, bulls, serpents, is an indication of social habits and religious customs that were probably totemic in origin.

Gradually, during a long-unfolding history, the earliest forms gave way to polytheism. The first steps of this process were observable in the San Cristoval illustration in the preceding chapter.

This development in religion comes about partially by reason of increased definiteness in the names given to supernatural beings. Names reveal a process of identification and recognition of specific functions. This stage of necessity follows animism, and it also exists alongside animistic habits. Furthermore, it precedes henotheism (worship of one god but belief in many), and also precedes monotheism (belief in and worship of one god only). The long period of struggle between polytheism and henotheism, and then later between henotheism and monotheism, is really the story of Hebrew religious development. The successive steps on the way will now occupy our attention.

## The Exodus from Egypt and the Religion of Moses

The patriarchal period, about which we know very little, terminated, it was said, with a migration into Egypt. Here, for some generations, the Hebrews carried on their pastoral life unmolested by the Egyptian Pharaohs. But the position of relative independence which was theirs was lost during one of the great building eras in Egypt. This unassimilated alien group was fit prey for some greedy monarch who needed man power for building his pyramids and storehouses. In this way, the Hebrews were reduced to virtual slavery. It is at this point that the figure of Moses enters to play one of the most important roles in history. That portion of the biblical material about Moses which appears in the book of Exodus is regarded by historians as substantially correct. Yet the account in its present form was written probably in the eighth century B.C., at least five hundred years after the events took place. By the strange course of circumstances Moses was brought up in the royal household and given an Egyptian name. It is very much like that of other royal names of the eighteenth Egyptian dynasty, such as Ahmose and Tutmose. He received all the advantages of education and culture which such circumstances made possible. That training included mathematics and military tactics and was the best in the ancient world.

Moses is presented to us as a man who, on the battlegrounds of moral decision, underwent a personal struggle which has repeated itself many times in other men's lives. It was a conflict between

personal advantage, success, and pleasure and his people's disadvantages, hardships, and miseries. Should he identify himself with the untutored rabble which were his people, or should he leave well enough alone and enjoy the position which good fortune had given him? The greatness of men is often revealed by what lies heavily on their minds, and by the choices arising therefrom. Moses was haunted by the burdens of his people, and when we read that he murdered an Egyptian taskmaster who scourged with whips a Hebrew slave, we recognize the final step whereby he had made himself at one with his own kin. His flight from Egypt, and his return with his brother Aaron many years later to maneuver and plan for the freedom of his people, is an interesting story. We emphasize only those parts which are momentous from a religious point of view.

Moses, as we learn from the Scriptures, adopted when he was in exile the religion of Jahweh, the God of his father-in-law Jethro. Moses would, of course, accept for himself the god of the place where he dwelt, for in those days it was customary to honor whatever god was understood to control the area. Gods were many. There were gods of the Egyptians, gods of the Babylonians, gods of the desert, gods of the mountains. And Moses, in accordance with the custom of the age, worshiped the El (god) of the people who gave him refuge during his exile. That these people were of the Semite race like himself we cannot doubt. Their manner of worship was not what he had known in Egypt; nevertheless it is possible that he learned in exile that the religion of Jahweh antedated the Egyptian period, and may have been the original nomadic religion of the Hebrews.[1] If this is so, then it accounts for Moses' tremendous effort to fasten Jahweh religion onto the Egyptian Hebrews who worshiped other gods. It also accounts for his belief that Jahweh "called" him to rescue his kinsmen from Egypt. He certainly had the conviction that Jahweh was the God of his people, and had been the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob.

Under Moses' leadership, and after a series of disappointing efforts at escape, the Hebrews undertook a mass movement east-

[1] W. O. E. Oesterley and T. H. Robinson, *Hebrew Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), chap. X.

ward toward the Arabian wilderness on the other side of the Red Sea. At the shore of the northeastern arm of the Red Sea, which is narrow and shallow, they were almost overtaken by the pursuing Egyptian soldiers. The biblical account tells us that suddenly the sea separated because of a strong wind, enabling the Hebrews to pass safely. When they were on the other side, the wind abated and the returning waters overwhelmed the pursuing soldiers. Now something of the very greatest moment happened here in connection with the Exodus, because it marks the actual birth of the Hebrew nation, and the official adoption of Jahweh as the God of the Hebrews. Let us then consider this event in order to understand if we may what it was that plowed a furrow of remembrance so ineradicably deep across the national consciousness.

There can be no question that the escape of the Hebrews was attended by some extraordinary natural occurrence which had the full force of a miracle. The account of the crossing of the Red Sea as given in Exodus 14 may be taken just as it is. We do know that an unusually strong wind on the shallow flats where they planned to ford these waters could produce the described effect. The same thing has been observed in this area in modern times. There are some scholars, however, who think that the crossing was attended also by volcanic action of some mountain close by. Volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, and receding waters from near-by shores very commonly occur together. It is claimed by other authorities that Mt. Sinai was not volcanic, and therefore some other mountain was involved. The Scripture tradition, however, singled out Mt. Sinai. It is a fact that Mt. Sinai was understood to be the abode of Jahweh. We do know that its alleged activity was associated with Moses.

> And Mount Sinai was altogether enveloped in smoke because Jahweh descended on it in fire; and the smoke thereof ascended as the smoke of a furnace and the whole mountain quaked greatly. (Exodus 19:18)
>
> And he came near and stood under the mountain, and the mountain burned with fire unto the heart of heaven, with darkness, cloud, and thick darkness. And the voice of Jahweh spoke unto you out of the midst of the fire. (Deuteronomy 4:11-12)

Whatever the combination or sequence of happenings, the total effect was overwhelming and unforgettable.

After the safe crossing, and in the security of the wilderness within sight of the sacred mountain, Moses assembled the people and conducted a most significant religious meeting. Moses saw before him merely a large crowd of people, unorganized, undisciplined, and ill prepared for the semi-desert conditions awaiting them. There is reason to think there were some Semitic tribes in this assemblage who had not been in Egypt, but who dwelt in the vicinity of Mount Sinai. The only thing in common among these people was a sense of kinship, but there was no genuine feeling of unity. Their religion or religions did not as yet create unity, for it was conglomerate, made up of diverse elements from their own traditions, from the Egyptian environment, and with all manner of local variations. They worshiped idols, relying on material images of gods. Moses desired to substitute for these material idols a more spiritual concept of a Being that dwelt on the mountain top, close to the clouds, the thunder and lightning of which were his voice and flaming messengers.

Moses wanted them to understand that it was Jahweh who had miraculously delivered them out of Egypt, that Jahweh had chosen them as his people, and now they were to make a *Covenant* with Jahweh to be binding for all time to come. This they were ready to do, and under stress of the moment they intended to be faithful and put away all gods except Jahweh. Jahweh had revealed his power as a God of nature's forces, as the God who could overwhelm the Egyptians. What impressed the Hebrews as more wonderful still was that this power was manifested to save *them*. In so doing, Jahweh had revealed his care, possibly even his love for them. This is the great revelation which appears to have been dominant in the mind of Moses.

*The Covenant.*—We may visualize an altar dedicated to Jahweh. Near the altar, facing it, is Moses. Some distance behind him are Aaron and certain other leaders. Then the people. Various animals are sacrificed and the blood is gathered into vessels. Half is sprinkled upon the altar and half on the multitude, thus irrevocably binding in a blood covenant the union of Jahweh and his chosen

people—they to do his will and he to prosper them, protect them and lead them. Jahweh is now their God and they are his people. This form of religion is called henotheism, the worship of one god only, while believing that other gods exist.

The Covenant relation carried with it the idea of a great destiny for the Hebrew people. The Covenant established between Jahweh and the Hebrew people is the most significant fact in the whole history of Judaism. It is the foundation of all the future of the Hebrews. It is the theme song of its national life. We emphasize it because it must of necessity be referred to again and again. It is the basis of the Hebrew philosophy of history. It is the keynote of the messages of the prophets. The idea of the Covenant itself undergoes a profound enrichment in the centuries to come, an enrichment which moves it far beyond the simplicities of the ceremony so briefly described. In other words, the idea of deity and a chosen people, conceived at the outset in so elementary a way, nevertheless contains within itself implications of universal import which come to fruition under the great prophets. No one person, not even Moses, could know all that this Covenant or contract would mean. In many minds it was on the level of a commercial arrangement guaranteeing prosperity. To Moses, however, it meant much more.

*Moses' Ideas of God and Worship.*—What is the idea of God, what were the forms of worship, and what effect did these have on the lives of the people?

In regard to the name, Jahweh, the tradition is plainly stated in Exodus 3 that Jahweh was the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, but he was not known to them by that name. The name is revealed to Moses for the first time. Jahweh is called, "I am that I am." "Say unto the children of Israel that I am hath sent me unto you." This passage is rather puzzling. What did it mean to Moses? The statement suggests a revelation to Moses that Jahweh is a unique God. He is not to be called by some name like other gods. He is not just another El. Jahweh is in a class by himself. Jahweh just is what he is. His being or existence is not dependent upon any other power. Jahweh can take care of himself among the powers. Jahweh can handle earthquakes, storms, lightning, volcanoes. Jahweh needs no help to look after his people. The name,

"I am that I am," is very suggestive. It gives rise to such ponderings and reflections as will in time expand its implications to include all power, all wisdom, and the idea of only one God, whose being involves all life and all nature.

In analyzing further the conception of Jahweh, we discern certain elements held in common by all the sources which make up the early books of the Bible.[2] Jahweh took the initiative in manifesting himself as a savior or deliverer of his people. So they may look to him for help. He is powerful, but not yet in their thought almighty. There are other gods. In respect to his power, Jahweh is far above human beings. He is superhuman. He is not completely a spirit. He is manlike, for it is possible that he may be seen. Yet this is dangerous and Jahweh is not to be sought visibly. Moses was allowed to catch a passing glimpse of Jahweh, for no man could look on Jahweh's face and live. Moses craved some direct acquaintance with his God, which desire is easy enough to understand. What was more natural in that day than to look for a sensuous appearance of the deity? This experience of Moses shows that Jahweh may be counted upon to reveal himself. He may reveal himself to persons, but usually it is through such events as the Exodus itself. Jahweh, although mighty and powerful, has a personal interest in the group, for Jahweh will hover close over his people.

Jahweh was regarded also as the source of law and morality, which were the same thing. We are not certain of the original form of the Ten Commandments. There are two different accounts, Exodus 20 and Exodus 34. Some commandments were certainly required in order that all would know what conduct would satisfy the Covenant relation. Jahweh represented justice and goodness as the leaders understood justice and goodness. Stating it another

[2] The Bible in its present form is composed of a great variety of materials accumulated over hundreds of years, and edited by men who drew together this material from different sources. These sources can be fairly well identified. Sometimes several source materials cover the same important event and obviously they differ somewhat, just as two correspondents differ in describing an event for two different papers. Likewise, what an editor is most interested in influences his selection of material. Consequently, we have various strands of information woven together.

way, Jahweh was the vindicator, the ultimate appeal. Jahweh could be relied on to keep his part of the Covenant. Rules and regulations of behavior were to be observed as duties toward Jahweh. The breaking of the rules or any moral or religious breach was a personal offense against Jahweh. Jahweh was endowed with the human quality of anger. But when Jahweh became angry he had superhuman power at his command. He could punish with a vengeance if he willed. Jahweh was also a jealous god, who would brook no apostasy toward any other god or gods. This last was a very demanding requirement, and complete obedience to it was hardly to be expected. It was accepted, but not fully obeyed. However, the total insight of Moses goes a great way beyond the then current ideas of religion. We are required to think that Moses was a great spiritual leader. Drawing upon all the knowledge of his time and his own religious experience, his genius and personality produced a new pattern of ideals and provided a new dynamic for their realization. We may think of Moses as a vigorous personality in the same way as we think of Mohammed, who in the same part of the world, about two thousand years later, took scattered tribes and infused them with a common religion and a common aim.

The examination of the ideas about Jahweh impresses us with the thought that, despite their simplicity, there are present here characteristics of Jahweh, together with his exclusive place in nature, which present a unique view of divinity. And it marks a new stage in the development of religion. Professor Peake has stated this well:

> Jahweh was so different from other gods in his character, as well as in his relation to his people, that time alone was needed for the further discovery that other gods could be no gods at all. It is but a step from "thou shalt have no other gods before me," to "beside me there is no god."[3]

In the light of our understanding of the meaning of Jahweh in conceptual terms, we next ask about the forms or modes of worship that prevailed at the time of Moses, *prior to the Hebrews' entrance into the land of Canaan.* This is an extremely difficult

[3] A. S. Peake, *The People and the Book* (Oxford: The Clarendon Press, 1925), p. 230.

question to answer. If the Bible were not a highly complex document made up of many sources, we could read the books of Leviticus, Numbers, and Deuteronomy, with all their details of worship and practice, and regard it all as belonging to the time of Moses. Many of the provisions contained in those books belong, however, to the life of well-established communities and refer to conditions which were not in existence when Moses led his people. Lacking historical perspective, those who finally put into written form accounts of Hebrew religious practices assumed them to be of more ancient lineage than they actually were.

However, there are some aspects of Jahweh religion in Moses' day about which we can be quite certain. We know from the account given of the Covenant ceremony that at least some simple form of worship or ritual was practiced. The description of the sacrifice of animals and the use of blood sprinkled on the people and on the altar shows a procedure which was very meaningful in that area of the world, although Amos and Isaiah appear to deny that sacrifice was practiced in the wilderness. The blood represented the essence of life and was universally used as a bond of kinship.

There can be little doubt that the Ark of the Covenant[4] covered by a tent was the central object in connection with religious observances. The exact nature is, however, somewhat obscure. Naturally, the scriptural writers described these observances in terms of practices which they knew about, but which originally were somewhat more simple. At any rate, sacrifices occurred, and Moses probably was the leading figure. The simple life and conditions did not require elaborate ritual, nor did they require a separate order of priests. All that would come in time, but at this stage it is probable that there were only a few men, such, for example, as Moses' brother Aaron, and possibly Joshua, who were assigned specific religious tasks concerning the worship of Jahweh and the preparation of the sacrificial animals.

One of the religious observances of the wilderness was the

[4] This was a boxlike structure which symbolized for the Hebrews the constant presence of Jahweh. The box contained some stones from the sacred mountain. Tradition asserted that these stones were tablets or slabs on which were written the Ten Commandments given by Jahweh. The Ark is also said to have been adorned with two angels facing each other.

Passover. Tradition regarded it as definitely associated with the escape from Egypt. In the Passover feast after sundown an animal was sacrificed. No bone could be broken; the blood was taken for sprinkling on doorposts. The whole animal was then roasted over the fire and eaten by all present as a sacrificial feast.

It is believed by many scholars that the use of sacrifice in connection with Jahweh worship was not prominent in the days of Moses. The elaborate use of sacrifice no doubt developed after the entrance into Canaan and especially during the reigns of the Hebrew kings. There is not only the probability that under the kings royal dignity would require more elaborate ceremonies, but there is the more important fact that the prophets of the seventh and eighth centuries were so opposed to sacrifices. It is more probably the case that the prophets were opposed to the elaboration of sacrifices which had crept in, and which were often associated with religious practices borrowed from other religions. It seems reasonable to believe that simple forms of sacrifice existed from the earliest times.

It is worth while, before passing to the next section, which tells us what happened to Jahwehism or Mosaism in Palestine, to note what effect their religion had upon the people. What did it do to them? To be sure, these men and women were not disturbed by philosophical problems or religious doubts, but religion, then as now, sought to provide a belief and feeling that the world we live in is in good hands. At one stroke Jahweh religion sought to eliminate other gods. In so far as this was wholeheartedly accepted, its psychological effect must have been extremely important in unifying personality in one direction of devotion and loyalty. Recall also that power and goodness were joined together in Jahweh. This in itself is a great idea and much was to come from it. Its full significance was not appreciated. But its practical importance was understood and operated as a controlling element in the moral life of the people. We can hardly overstress this point. Moses did not originate all the required moral standards, but he did give them a more binding status by making their fulfillment a condition of approach to Jahweh. We have already referred to the fact that there are two accounts of the Commandments of Moses (Exo-

dus 20, 34). Whether the earlier and simpler of these forms is exactly as Moses laid it down is immaterial, but the fact is undeniable that to him we must attribute a new moral religious relationship. What is so distinctive about this is not merely that proper religious ceremony is satisfactory to Jahweh, but that moral relationships and conduct toward others is a condition of the good will of Jahweh. The moral demands were simple and few, but they were strict. No man could be right with Jahweh who was wrong in his moral conduct. Whatever was understood to be good was the will of Jahweh. But we may not idealize the situation overmuch, for the general level of morals in many areas of human relations was very crude. However, the effect on behavior of such a situation as we have indicated was of necessity great. We must not suppose that the entire group appreciated the nature of these religious ideas. There was still retained in the popular mind a great deal of superstition and confidence in polydemonic and polytheistic practices.

We now have before us the essential ideas of the Hebrew religion which we may call Jahwehism or Mosaism. It was the personality of Moses that made it what it was. It is characterized by a few fundamental ideas which were like seeds with astonishing germinal possibilities. Equipped with these ideas and ideals, the Hebrews entered the land of Canaan or Palestine, comprehending not at all the strange fate that was to confuse them often, and produce many changes in religious thinking.

## Hebrew Life and Religion in Palestine

In preparation for an attack or a forced entrance into the land of Palestine, Moses kept his people in the semi-wilderness long enough to develop a new generation, training up competent leaders who could carry on. When the venture into Palestine was at last undertaken, and a foothold gained on the west bank of the Jordan, it was a younger man, Joshua, who led them; Moses had been buried with most of the older generation. The date of this occasion is uncertain and much research has been put upon it. One archaeological discovery in particular has been emphasized as carrying much weight in regard to the date. In 1887 about three hun-

dred clay tablets inscribed with cuneiform characters were unearthed in the ruins of ancient Ekhaton on the Nile, 190 miles up the river from Cairo. These tablets are official communications or letters from kings of Babylon and Assyria, and also from Egyptian governors and army officers in the Palestinian area, complaining about two large groups of invaders, the Habiru (Hebrews?) and the Sagaz. A plea for military assistance is made to the Egyptian ruler, Amenhotep IV, which dates the letters about 1350 B.C. The Habiru were approaching Palestine from the east and south, which immediately suggests to our minds the biblical narratives of Joshua's campaign. Although some authorities on other grounds prefer an earlier date, and some a slightly later date, 1350 B.C. is suitable, for it allows sufficient time for all the events to take place which occurred prior to the beginnings of a kingdom under Saul about 1050 B.C.

*Historical Events to the End of Solomon's Reign, About 933* B.C.—Having entered the land of Canaan or Palestine, the Hebrews found that their fortunes hung again and again in the balance. During the first generation or so they had to fight for every inch of the way against the Canaanites who dwelt there and who resisted the intrusion of the Hebrews. The constant strain of incessant and guerilla warfare put the standards of living on a very low plane. The moral and spiritual level was correspondingly low. As time went on, there was less and less open antagonism, and the Hebrews filtered through the area, living more or less side by side with the Canaanites, intermarrying and adopting their modes of life. The Canaanites were agricultural rather than pastoral, and we shall bring out later the tremendous effect this had on Hebrew religion.

Many generations came and went before Palestine was dominated by the Hebrews. Tribal rather than national organization characterized their political and social structure. It was a loosely knit organization held together by a common religion and common interests. There was a succession of men called judges, who exercised an intertribal leadership by reason of their natural ability. This condition finally gave way to greater consolidation under the demand for a king. This demand indicated a growing national con-

sciousness and pride which desired to emulate the many other small neighboring kingdoms. The process of amalgamating the tribes into closer political unity was begun under Saul, about 1050 B.C., and achieved under David. David supplemented political unification with aggressive geographical extension.

It is an interesting fact that just about the time when, under David particularly, the Hebrews were in a position to extend themselves, not one of the ancient empires was in a position to stop them by dominating the Palestinian area. Egypt had fallen upon evil days, and was in a temporary condition of exhaustion, having recently repulsed Philistine invaders. Babylonia had not yet recovered from its temporary decline. And Assyria, which was in the ascendant, was still too busy nearer home to turn its attention as far south as Palestine. The Hebrews had come to terms with the Canaanites and had established themselves, so that the Philistines were the only enemy which remained to test the Hebrew mettle. They were comparatively recent comers also into this part of the world.

Recent research has shown that the Philistines were probably the last remnant of an Aegean civilization about which practically all knowledge is lost. They had occupied parts of the Greek mainland, Asia Minor, and Crete. Being pressed from behind by barbarian invaders from the north, they moved southward, beginning about the thirteenth century, and in the twelfth century launched a terrific onslaught upon Egypt by land and sea. They were repulsed by Rameses II, but were merely backed up along the Syrian coast and occupied much of the hill country and the land of southern and western Palestine. They intended to fasten themselves upon this land and to extend their dominance over Palestine, and consequently garrisoned themselves at a number of points. There was a good deal of fraternizing among the Hebrews and Philistines, as the Samson stories show, and they were encroaching upon the territory which the Hebrews regarded as their own. This continuous pressure found increasing resistance as it moved eastward and encountered an unexpected Hebrew national solidarity brought about by the leadership of Saul. The issues of battle were drawn and the struggle for Palestinian mastery was on. The

result was a complete defeat for Saul, including the loss of his own life and the ignominious nailing of his body upon the wall of the Philistine city of Bethshean. This defeat appeared to close the door to any further Hebrew ambitions. It looked like the end.

But there was a man called David, who was in a most unique situation. The tide of battle which engulfed Saul did not touch him. Because of jealousy, Saul had tried years before to murder his fellow countryman, David. The latter had been able to establish himself in Hebron on friendly relations with the Philistines. They, however, were sufficiently cautious not to want him with them in the war against Saul. The Philistines now might have made themselves a great power, but, like the Greeks of later times, they made each city an independent unit. This weakness proved to be David's strength.

*The United Kingdom.*—David had considerable prestige with his countrymen, and it was easy to look to him as the man of the hour. He was asked to be king and willingly accepted, although, to be sure, there was nothing to accept but the name of king, accompanied by a backbreaking burden. There was no court, palace, temple, treasury, or capital city. It is a remarkable thing that David did not set himself up to be king, but was *invited* to be king by representatives of the tribes, with whom he made a "Covenant" (II Samuel 5:1-5). The idea of kingship is here on a different basis from that of other oriental kingdoms. David got his sovereignty from the people, who delegated it to him. Sovereignty thus had two sources—from Jahweh and from the people. There were interesting consequences of this relation, as we shall see later when we illustrate the action of prophets who could face kings with scathing moral and religious rebuke.

David took up his job, facing difficulties about as great as those which confronted Moses several hundred years before. His range of operations was extremely limited, but at Hebron in the western hills, his capital for the time being, he had a rather impregnable natural position, and from here he kept the Philistines quite uncomfortable. The very fact that the Philistines settled down in more or less independent communities meant that David did not have to face their united action.

There is ample justification for the preeminent place David came to hold in the history of the Hebrew people, for he executed one bold stroke after another, which electrified all of the tribes out of dismay into a new pride of national self-consciousness. A flood of confidence and determination was released. The most significant act of audacious bravery on David's part was the capture of the Jebusite stronghold, Jerusalem. The amazing thing is that he managed it at all. This ancient city was located in a position of great defensive advantage. On all but the north side the land dropped away steeply, so that defense could be concentrated on the north side, where a very strong wall had been erected. In the whole future course of its long history, Jerusalem withstood many armies, succumbing only to the Babylonians, and later to the Romans. David accomplished its capture by drawing the full attention of the enemy to the walls in defense against the attack which was directed there, meanwhile having dispatched a hand-picked group to enter the city through a water tunnel and up a steep shaft. They succeeded in their surprise attack and David established himself there, absolutely secure against any Philistine attempt to dislodge him. With Jerusalem as a base of operations, he could extend his power considerably. Furthermore, Jerusalem now became the capital city. It lay outside the territories of any of the tribes and seemed, therefore, to belong to all of them. Jerusalem became a symbol of national unity and the central point of loyalty. David also, as a loyal follower of Jahweh, had the Ark of the Covenant brought to Jerusalem, thus associating the national city and the national god. However, Jerusalem did not for a long time become the central point for worship. That was something for the future. In the following section we shall discuss the religious conditions which parallel this period in national development. It will be well to keep our expectations from rising too high.

David was indeed a leader from every point of view. By military prowess he successfully overcame the Philistines and exercised sovereignty over an extensive area. As a statesman, he definitely established a Hebrew government, founded a dynasty, and in time created friendly relations with neighboring states. As an executive, he ran the country efficiently and built up national resources. David,

and not his son Solomon, is the great man on the list of Hebrew kings. Of all these kings, David is distinguished by his loyalty to and faith in those simple Aramean ideas which were never shaken off, then or later, but persisted as a national conscience.

This was not the case, however, with Solomon, one of David's younger sons. As successor to his father, Solomon received the fruits of a great man's work—an organized government, with civil and military offices, and with growing resources. Another strong leader was needed to consolidate and make permanent those achievements, but Solomon was what the country got. Despite popular tradition to the contrary, he did not fill his father's shoes. Solomon's general conduct shows clearly that he did not have the same idea of the relationship between king and people which his father had. The new king was an exceedingly expensive luxury. His blooded horses were a big item, as was his table, his silver and gold inlaid furniture, his public buildings. His harem was large and involved a great expense entirely out of proportion to the national income. That income was derived from direct taxation and by a well-organized conscription of labor (I Kings 5:13). This was offensive to the independently minded Hebrews who kept alive in song and story the goodness of Jahweh in leading them away from the taskmasters of Egypt. Solomon carried on commerce and developed a sea trade in order to increase his revenue, which never seemed to be enough for his insatiable demands. Such a policy was fundamentally unsound, and disintegration set in; various outlying subject peoples revolted, and by the time of Solomon's death the kingdom was smaller than at the beginning. Also, a seething unrest augured evil days. The only thing from the Hebrew point of view which entitles Solomon to grateful remembrance is the building of the Temple. Even so, the chapels for foreign types of worship within the Temple court, which he provided for his harem favorites, detract somewhat from that gratitude. But, in defense, it should be said that the ethical monotheism of the prophets, still to be born, was not part of religious thought then, and it still seemed reasonable to allow foreign wives to follow the foreign faiths they brought with them.

No other term but stupidity, unless we add moral blindness, is

adequate to label the action of Rehoboam, the son of Solomon, who succeeded his father. Revolt was in the air already and only a wise man could smooth the troubled waters. The people had had enough of tax burdens and conscript labor. It was not entirely forgotten that the king held no absolute rights over his people; that the political relation rested upon a covenant between king and people, no less important than the religious relation, which was also a covenant, between Jahweh and the people. Rehoboam was addressed in open assembly by the spokesman of the people, who delivered this petition:

"Your father's rule was heavy; lighten the heavy rule he imposed upon us and his crushing service, *and we will serve you.*" (I Kings 12:4)

After three days an answer was given, arrived at by accepting the counsel of young advisers who ignored the views of older and wiser men.

"My father's rule pressed hard on you, but I will press harder still; my father lashed you with scourges, but I will lash you with scorpions." (I Kings 12:14)

This reply was of course unacceptable and revolt followed.

> When all Israel saw that the king refused to heed them, the people retorted to the king, "What part have we in David? We're done with Jesse's son! Look to your own house, David, now! Home, Israel, to your homes!" When king Rehoboam sent them Adoniram, who was in charge of the labor-gangs, all Israel stoned him to death; whereupon king Rehoboam mounted his chariot in a hurry to escape to Jerusalem.
>
> So Israel rebelled against the dynasty of David, as it still does. When all Israel heard that Jeroboam had returned to the country, they summoned him to a popular assembly and elected him king over Israel, only the clan of Judah being left loyal to the dynasty of David. (I Kings 12:16-20)

It is clear from this passage that the United Kingdom was thus rent in twain: a Southern Kingdom called Judah, and a Northern Kingdom called Israel. Judah was ruled by Rehoboam, and Israel by Jeroboam. The United Kingdom, begun under Saul, achieved by David, and continued during Solomon's reign, came to an end with the passing of Solomon. Even though we did telescope many

centuries into a few pages, we have nevertheless been sympathetic spectators through some of history's most dramatic scenes and we feel a bit let down when human weakness and stupidity appear to interrupt unfolding possibilities of a great future. But this is no fairy tale or fiction with a happy ending. It is life, and we shall see how events like this affected religious thought, causing men to reflect deeply about the meaning of God and human destiny.

The term Israel in popular usage is a very general descriptive word to designate the whole Jewish people. There is no need to alter this, but it is necessary to recognize the distinction between what are now actually two countries instead of one. Israel, the Northern Kingdom, contained ten tribes, while Judah, the Southern Kingdom, contained but two. For two generations Israel and Judah were bitter enemies but later they cooperated against common foes. Neither this impact from without nor time working slowly from within ever healed the breach between them.

## Religion in Palestine to the Ninth-century Prophets

The religion of the Canaanites in the land of Palestine was animistic. It was a mixture of polydemonism and polytheism, somewhat like the later phases of the primitive religion of San Cristoval portrayed in the first chapter. Gods or Ba'als of springs, wells, sacred trees, and other objects received proper names and were personalized. Among the Canaanites various gods or Ba'alim with specific names were associated with particular places and functions. For example, Ba'al Pe'or was the god of a widely known glen. In similar fashion, throughout the entire land of the Canaanites, places were identified with the names of the Ba'alim. The process of personification is further illustrated by the fact that there were believed to be male and female Ba'alim. The word for Ba'al also meant "husband." This in turn gave rise to the idea that the relation between the gods was analogous to that which existed among men and women. This was especially true when the worship of Ashtart (Ashteroth, plural) was joined with the Ba'al cult. Ba'al worship also included religious practices associated with sun, moon, and stars as nature divinities, together with many forms of magic and superstition. Many of these activities were of the

nature of agricultural festivals. Throughout the ancient world agricultural pursuits were associated with fertility, not only as to plants and animals, but as to man also. Consequently, the agricultural deities were worshiped in terms of sexual practices, which obviously resulted in a debased standard of sexual morality. We can now appreciate the type of polytheism and polydemonism that existed in the land of Palestine among the Canaanites prior to, and at the time of entrance of, the Hebrews into the land.

The Hebrews were brought into contact with all these Canaanite forms of worship as soon as they began to live peaceably alongside their Canaanite neighbors. The effect on them was disastrous. It must be borne in mind that, in accordance with the understanding of the age, there was doubt in many minds that the power of Jahweh extended into the land of the Canaanites. How far beyond Mount Sinai did Jahweh's jurisdiction extend? To be sure, the best Hebrew thought, remembering that the gods of Egypt had not been able to frustrate Jahweh's plans, believed his sway held wherever his people might be, especially so long as they possessed the Ark of the Covenant.

The popular drift among the Hebrews was in the direction of a rather complete adoption of Canaanitish ways. After all, these Canaanites had a settled community life, better housing, and more sophisticated ways. Not only did the Hebrews pay respect to the local Ba'als wherever they happened to be, but more and more Jahwehism itself was modified in the direction of Ba'al worship. In fact, so far as Jahweh continued to be worshiped, he was worshiped by many as just another Ba'al. From the standpoint of religious evolution this is definitely a retrogression toward primitive forms. Of course, the situation is very easy to explain and to understand. The simple fact is that the Hebrews, like all their neighbors, believed that a given territory had its particular gods. One of the best illustrations of this wide conviction occurs in the account of Naaman, the Syrian who carried a quantity of soil from Palestine to Syria in order that Jahweh might be properly worshiped in a far country. (II Kings 5:1-19.)

Without intending to forget Jahweh, the Hebrews did want to play safe in the new land. It seemed merely good sense to pay

respect to the gods that one's neighbors worshiped and of whose power old inhabitants could well testify. At the same time, there was another line of thought. There were groups of Hebrews to the east and south who retained the pastoral rather than the agricultural form of life, and who remembered Jahweh and what he had done for them. He had led them out of Egypt and made a covenant with them. Was it not under his guidance that they were preserved in the wilderness? Was it not his command that they should inhabit this land? Jahweh had taken care of them thus far. Surely he would not have led them where he could not protect them. He must have known that his power was ample. And certainly the Covenant with Jahweh was irrevocable.

The two attitudes, a leaning toward Ba'alism versus wholehearted loyalty to Jahweh, indicate a genuine religious conflict. The rough and ready temperaments tried to straddle the situation. However, Jahwehism as such lost ground. As Jahweh took on more of the character of a Canaanite Ba'al, the corresponding behavior took on more of the religious and ethical character of the surrounding people. Instead of simple and rugged rules of ritual and conduct, Canaanite rites prevailed and the older morality was compromised by acceptance of other standards. Private property in the form of farm land and houses was sought, comforts and luxuries were desired; life became somewhat easier, temptations greater, and morality freer. The most regrettable aspect of this transformation lies in the fact that, among the Canaanites, religion and morality were separable, whereas the achievement of Jahwehism was the close association of religion and morality. That is to say, Ba'al religion permitted certain practices in the name of religion which even the ordinary morality of the time would not have defended. This condition is illustrated, for example, by acceptance and even justification of ritual murder or human sacrifice, although the common morality was opposed to murder. And likewise, ordinary sexual standards, which have a hard time improving their status anyway, had no real support from a religion which in its reverence for fertility, upon occasion permitted ritual prostitution. Thus, the trend was away from the few Mosaic fundamentals and simplicities of Jahweh worship, especially on the part of

those Hebrews who attached themselves most closely to the agricultural and social life of Palestine. In time there was very little practical difference between the worship of Jahweh and the worship of various Ba'als.

This was certainly the general state of affairs that existed even during the monarchy under Saul, David, and Solomon, and well into the period after the break-up of the monarchy into two kingdoms. We must make a qualification of this remark only to the extent of saying that Saul personally and more especially David were very loyal to Jahweh. David established Jahweh worship at the newly acquired city of Jerusalem. Here David brought the Ark and made it a central object of worship, which kept alive the name of Jahweh and the memory of his goodness to his people. And even in spite of the fact that Solomon built the Temple, the religious condition in the country at large was just what has been described. During the reign of Solomon there was not an exclusive Jahweh worship at all. Foreign cults were allowed and openly practiced on the part of Solomon's wives and their retainers. It was only after the break-up of the United Kingdom that there began the prophetic movement to restore Jahwehism to a supreme place among the Hebrews.

## The Ninth-century Prophets

As we recall from the account of historical events, the division of the United Kingdom was followed by the parallel existence of two kingdoms, the Northern (Israel) and the Southern (Judah).

The Northern Kingdom had only a short existence, for it was annihilated by the Assyrians in 722 B.C. It, therefore, had a life span of just about 200 years. We shall not consider in detail its outward political history. It is like following the story of an organization rapidly heading into bankruptcy. From Jeroboam I (933 B.C.) to the end, one king followed another in rapid succession.

What is of great interest to us is the rise of an order of men, called prophets. There had been a few prophets in time past but they first came into prominence in the Northern Kingdom. These men displayed an originality and an authority which many times overrode and superseded the office of priests. The prophets were

a peculiarly important feature of Hebrew religious life and their contribution was a determinative factor in Hebrew history. The first appearance of the prophets in the Northern Kingdom was concerned with the great problem of saving Jahweh religion.

Recall that there were many Hebrews all around the eastern and southern fringes of the country. These had not adopted the agricultural and town modes of life to anywhere near the same degree as had those who had crossed the Jordan and who were now permanently rooted in the land. The outlying Hebrews had retained more of the ancient ways of life and habits than their brethren in Canaan. Despite such social differences, however, there continued to be a strong bond of kinship and a recognition of common heritage and common relation to Jahweh on the part of all the Hebrews. If there was to be any revival of Jahwehism it might be expected to gain its stimulus from those who had kept the faith rather than from those who had lost it. And indeed, this did happen. The first outstanding man in the striking line of persons who are called prophets was Elijah. He came from the country east of the Jordan and took up residence in the Northern Kingdom at the time when Ahab was king (ninth century). Elijah was rudely shocked by what he saw. In the first place he found a rather sophisticated city life and a decidedly oriental flavor emanating from the king's court. He learned soon enough about the notorious Queen Jezebel, a Sidonian princess, who brought with her the worship of Melkart, the Sidonian Ba'al. Jezebel intended to have her husband reign absolutely like other oriental potentates. Politically and religiously this ran against the grain of the two deepest things in the heritage of Israel, namely, the covenant relation between king and people, and the covenant between Jahweh and his people. Note that here is one of those instances which occasionally occur in history, where a complacent people drifting away from the old landmarks, losing sight of something valuable in their past, rendering only lip service to it, are suddenly confronted with the prospect of cutting loose altogether. Then they are in a mood to be aroused by a leader. So it was in Israel, and Elijah was that leader on one side, with Jezebel and her priests on the other. These two are the *dramatis personae* of a very exciting play.

Ahab may be called the king, but his part is that of a pawn, moved about by the cunning of the queen.

The account which follows is Act I in this drama:

Now Naboth of Jezreêl had a vineyard close to the palace of Ahab the Samaritan king. Ahab said to Naboth, "Give me your vineyard that I may make it a vegetable garden, for it is near my palace. I will give you a better vineyard in place of it, or, if you prefer it, I will give you its value in money." "The Eternal forbid," said Naboth, "that I should ever give away my fathers' property to you!" Ahab went home chafing and sullen; he lay down on his bed, covering his face and refusing to take any food.

His wife Jezebel came and asked him, "Why are you so depressed that you cannot eat?" He said to her, "I asked Naboth of Jezreêl to let me buy his vineyard, or, if he preferred it, to let me give him another vineyard in place of it, and he said he would not give me his vineyard." Jezebel his wife said to him, "And are you not in command of Israel's kingdom? Get up and take some food; cheer up, I will get you the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreêlite." So she wrote a letter in Ahab's name, sealing it with his seal, and sending it to the sheikhs and the freemen who managed the town of Jezreêl along with Naboth. In the letter she wrote, "Proclaim a fast, put Naboth to the front among the townsfolk, and get two rascals to confront him and charge him with having cursed God and the king; then away with him outside the town and stone him to death." The citizens, that is, the sheikhs and freemen who managed Naboth's town, did as Jezebel sent them instructions. They proclaimed a fast, they put Naboth to the front among the townsfolk, and the two rascals charged him, charged Naboth, before the people, with having cursed God and the king. Then he was taken outside the town and stoned to death. They sent word to Jezebel that Naboth had been stoned to death; and when Jezebel heard it, she said to Ahab, "Go and take possession of Naboth's vineyard at Jezreêl, which he refused to let you buy, for Naboth is not alive but dead." As soon as Ahab heard that Naboth was dead, Ahab started off to take possession of the vineyard of Naboth the Jezreêlite.

Now this word from the Eternal came to Elijah the Tishbite: "Away, down to meet Ahab king of Israel, who resides at Samaria; he is in the vineyard of Naboth, he has gone down to take possession of it. Tell him this from the Eternal: You have killed and you have taken possession, have you? Tell him this from the Eternal: Where dogs licked up the blood of Naboth, there shall dogs lick up your own blood." Ahab said to Elijah, "So you have found me out, O my

enemy!" He answered, "I have found you out. Because you have sold yourself to no purpose in doing what is evil in the sight of the Eternal, I bring evil on you, I will sweep you off, stripping Ahab of every male child, and of free and fettered alike in Israel; I will make your house fare like the house of Jeroboam the son of Nebat and like the house of Baasha the son of Abijah, for the provocations that have angered me by making Israel sin. Anyone belonging to Ahab who dies in the city, the dogs shall devour him; anyone who dies out in the country, wild birds shall eat him up." The Eternal also predicted of Jezebel that dogs would eat Jezebel in the territory of Jezreêl. (I Kings, 21:1-24)

Several things should at once be noted concerning the above passage. Naboth felt no obligation to sell his land to the king. In Israel there still remained the idea that the king was in a sense the servant of the people, that he had covenanted with them to rule, but to rule for the common good. It is to be remembered that the Northern Kingdom, Israel, seceded from the United Kingdom on this very issue. Solomon had played too much the part of absolute monarch in contrast to David, and when Rehoboam succeeded Solomon, the overture was made by elders of the people to get him to alter the policy of his father. But he had been too deeply infected with the principle that the will of the ruler and not the will of the people is sovereign. The result, as we saw, was rebellion, and the establishment of the independent Northern Kingdom, under Jeroboam. Ahab was in that succession and on that throne. He had not forgotten. Observe that Naboth's refusal made the king feel badly because now he could not carry out his desire, but it did not occur to him that he could do anything about it. He simply accepted it. But not so Jezebel. For her the royal will was subject to no review. No writ could run against the king. There was no tribunal to pass judgment on kings. Yet this is where the prophets, the spokesmen of Jahweh, come in. After Ahab had accepted the *fait accompli* so foully conceived by Jezebel, Elijah did what Nathan did to David years before. Elijah met Ahab face to face and there, in the name of Jahweh, flayed him with all the anger of a righteous indignation.

Jezebel took up the gauntlet thrown down by Elijah; the ensuing struggle was very bitter. It became a sharply drawn contest

between the religion of Jahweh and the religion of Melkart. Elijah set the stage for a scene in which the power of Jahweh was to be tested against the power of Melkart. Elijah intended to show that the power of Jahweh was everything, that of Melkart nothing. The account in I Kings 18 may or may not be literally correct, but in any case Jahweh was judged to have shown his superiority to Melkart. There followed a massacre of all the prophets of Ba'al Melkart. While this latter act may seem cruel to us, it was on the part of Elijah just another gesture of contempt toward Melkart, who was powerless to protect even his own priests. Despite these dramatic events, the tide did not turn against Ba'al worship until Elisha, the successor of Elijah, influenced Jehu, the army general, to revolt against the royal house. Ahab and Jezebel were both put to death, and Jehu became king. Jehu endeavored to wipe out all trace of Ba'al worship, which attempt was not completely successful. Nevertheless, Jahweh was now the recognized God of the land. For the time being, Jahweh and all the moral potentialities and religious possibilities resident in the few great ideas about him were preserved for further growth and development. It is not, therefore, surprising that in the history of Hebrew religion the name of Elijah stands out with special prominence. His name is a symbol of prophecy. Even though greater men came after him, the tradition that persists through all the centuries to the time of Jesus is that Elijah is preeminently the picturesque representative of the prophetic line.

The steps from the unquestioned acknowledgment of Jahweh as the God of Palestine, more powerful than the previously worshiped Ba'als, to the idea of one God only, could not now be many. We can perhaps rethink for ourselves that far-off adventure of the mind. To the thoughtful worshiper, Jahweh was an adequate God. Jahweh could do anything necessary for the care and protection of his chosen people. The Exodus out of Egypt was proof of that; so was the miraculous care through the wilderness. The Promised Land had now been a reality as a homeland for many years. In the fight against the Philistines, every battle was as much a contest between Jahweh and the god or gods of the opposing army as it was a conflict between two groups of men in mortal combat.

Victories were Jahweh's victories. Observe, then the implications! Jahweh could withstand the gods of the Egyptians, the Philistines, the Sidonians. But what now about many of the neighboring kingdoms with their different religions? We shall presently see Amos answer this very question; but even before him it must have occurred to more than one man contemplating the future of the nation, that its continuance would have to depend on the ability and power of Jahweh to control events. The only security against envelopment by some other nation was the power of Jahweh. How could Jahweh protect them unless he transcended in some way the gods of their foes? If he were really great enough for that, then the others might as well be no gods at all. Some such process of thought must have taken place in the centuries following Elijah, for when we turn to the work of the great prophets of the eighth century and after, the supremacy of Jahweh is a major assumption of their theology.

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## CHAPTER III

# *POPULAR AND PROPHETIC RELIGION BEFORE THE EXILE*

### Social and Religious Conditions in the Eighth Century B.C.

The greatest period of prophetic genius occurred in the three centuries, eighth, seventh, and sixth, B.C. After Elijah and Elisha, the supremacy of Jahweh was established, but the character of Jahwehism was not far advanced beyond other contemporary religions. The fact of supremacy brought about a considerable development in the ritual of worship, and consequently also in the promotion of a professional priesthood. It is characteristic of religion, that whenever ritual and priesthood develop, there is danger that rites and ceremonies may become ends in themselves rather than means to ends. The proprieties of worship appear to possess inflated values, and the priesthood arrogates to itself a place of primary importance. This tendency, displayed by formally established religion, is amply illustrated by the religious life in Israel and Judah for more than a century, from the days of Elisha, in the reign of Jehu, to that of Jeroboam II. At the same time, however, among the religious leaders there were many thinking men who pondered a great deal about Jahweh, and who influenced religious thinking in the direction of a monotheistic conception of their God.

Note with care the further fact that during this same period of time there were in the Northern Kingdom much prosperity and many changes in the economic and social order. In place of many little farms, great estates were developing, often by reason of foreclosure of mortgages occasioned by high rates of interest on borrowed money. The well-to-do, through the channel of judges from their own social set, bent the process of justice to their own interest. Moreover, undisguised bribery was a commonplace, and

with it there was a callous disregard of human rights. Consequently the hard lot of circumstance was, in case after case, made increasingly bitter by bold and brazen injustice. Because of it, free men were becoming slaves and serfs to their own countrymen. Now how do we know this? We certainly would never know it from anything which the priests of this era left behind. They thought of religion in terms of ritual, ceremony, sacrifices, and festivals. They saw no relation between religion and ethics, except within a very narrow area of conduct. We learn of the existing conditions from what the prophets had to say. They had an amazingly clear insight into the relation between religion and ethics. Their idea of Jahweh as the one great God, was coupled with the corresponding idea that human virtues of justice, fair play, mercy, sympathy, and kindness should manifest themselves throughout the whole of life, and that this practical morality itself was the most acceptable form of worship. It was in the course of their assertions as to what the will of Jahweh was that they enumerated so many indictments against current practices.

In order to get a clear conception of the work of these men, we shall consider them against the background of contemporary events, because from now on, national affairs are important only in relation to their religious significance. We shall, in this chapter, consider the four greatest prophets, whose contribution to religious thought occurred during the eighth and seventh centuries before the great Exile early in the sixth. This same period of time should be remembered also as that span of Hebrew history during which the Hebrews were ruled by their own kings. There were no kings after the Exile, except for one very short period. The four prophets to be considered here are Amos, Hosea, Isaiah, and Jeremiah. The work of Amos and Hosea occurred in the Northern Kingdom before its fall to Assyria in 722 B.C. Isaiah and Jeremiah prophesied in the Southern Kingdom, which was overthrown by the Babylonians in 586 B.C.

## Amos and Hosea

*Amos.*—Amos is the prophet who gave us the picture of social-economic conditions in the Northern Kingdom to which we have

just referred. But Amos should be read directly, which takes but a few minutes of time. There is no substitute for his language, which falls upon the reader like the march of doom. Here we see him, a native of the Southern Kingdom, but now in the capital city of the Northern Kingdom, speaking to a large festive gathering of leaders who believe that things are going rather well. One by one, he names the neighboring kingdoms, arraigns them before the judgment of Jahweh, specifies the charge and proclaims the punishment. As he goes down the list he comes to Judah, about which he has something to say before letting out his climactic broadside against Israel.

The Eternal declares: "After crime upon crime of Judah I will not relent; for they have rejected the Eternal's ruling, his directions they have disobeyed, led astray by their false gods, by idols that their ancestors had followed; so I fling fires of war on Judah, to burn up the palaces of Jerusalem."

The Eternal declares: "After crime upon crime of Israel I will not relent, for they sell honest folk for money, the needy for a pair of shoes, they trample down the poor like dust, and humble souls they harry; son and father go in to the same girl (a profanation of my sacred shrine!), they loll on garments seized in pledge, by every altar, they drink the money taken in fines within the temple of their God." (Amos 2:4-8)

Jahweh reminds them of the help he has given them in time past, for which they owe him obedience:

"Yet it was I who brought you up from Egypt's land; for forty years I led you through the desert, to occupy the Amorite land, felling the Amorite before you—though he towered like a cedar, strong as an oak, I felled him, fruit above and root below; I raised up sons of yours as prophets, and young men to be Nazirites. Is it not so, O Israel?—the Eternal asks you." (Amos 2:9-11)

Yet despite his aid, they have continued to disobey him, so now punishment is about to be dealt out to them:

"So now I make your steps collapse . . . , and flight shall fail the swift, the sturdy shall not hold their own, the warrior shall not escape alive, the archer shall not stand his ground, quick-footed men shall not get clear, horsemen shall not escape, and even the stalwarts in

the ranks shall strip and run upon that day—this by order of the Eternal." (Amos 2:13-16)

"The Foe shall overrun the land, laying your forts level, plundering your palaces. . . . I strike down winter-house and summer-house together, and ivoried houses perish—ay, many a house is swept away: by order of the Eternal." (Amos 3:11-15)

For this, for crushing the weak, and forcing them to give you grain, houses of ashlar you may build, but you shall never dwell in them; vineyards you may plant, but you shall drink no wine from them. I know your countless crimes, your manifold misdeeds—brow-beating honest men, accepting bribes, defrauding the poor of justice. (Amos 5:11-12)

The reader of such stirring passages is made profoundly aware that Amos as a prophet of Jahweh is passing ethical judgment and condemnation upon the whole national scene. In other words, Jahweh is a God of righteousness, demanding justice in human affairs. Upon injustice he will bring down disaster. The disaster may be captivity, or a scourge, or a famine, but punishment in some form is destined to come, for Jahweh is angry and outraged. Amos, as spokesman for Jahweh, recalls to their minds the Exodus out of Egypt, and enumerates the care of Jahweh which many times has saved them "as a brand plucked out of the burning." Those in authority may have thought they were serving Jahweh but they were not. They did not conceive him properly. They thought Jahweh was served by sacrifices, rites, and ceremonies, but of what value were these when greed, avarice, intemperance, and sensuality created new miseries and debased the creators thereof!

"Your sacred festivals? I hate them, scorn them; your sacrifices? I will not smell their smoke; you offer me your gifts? I will not take them; you offer fatted cattle? I will not look at them. No, let justice well up like fresh water, let honesty roll in full tide." (Amos 5:21, 22, 24)

The idea of Jahweh in the mind of Amos shows a very great advancement beyond his generation. While he does not in so many words say there is only one God, as the second Isaiah does almost two hundred years later, it is our view that there are decided implications of monotheism in what he has to say. In order that there



MOSES

(From Lubke's *Outlines of the History of Art*, Dodd, Mead & Company.)



*Photo by J. Calvin Keene*

THE DOME OF THE ROCK IN JERUSALEM

The Moslem mosque shown above is built over a spot sacred alike to Jews, Christians and Moslems. Near here David erected his altar to Jahweh. Here was the site of the great temple built by Solomon as well as that built by Herod. Later a Roman temple to Jupiter was erected at this place. The Arabs built the present structure, sometimes erroneously called the Mosque of Omar, about the year 684 A.D. Before Mohammed broke off relations with the Jews his followers were commanded to face this spot when they prayed. The mosque surrounds the sacred rock.

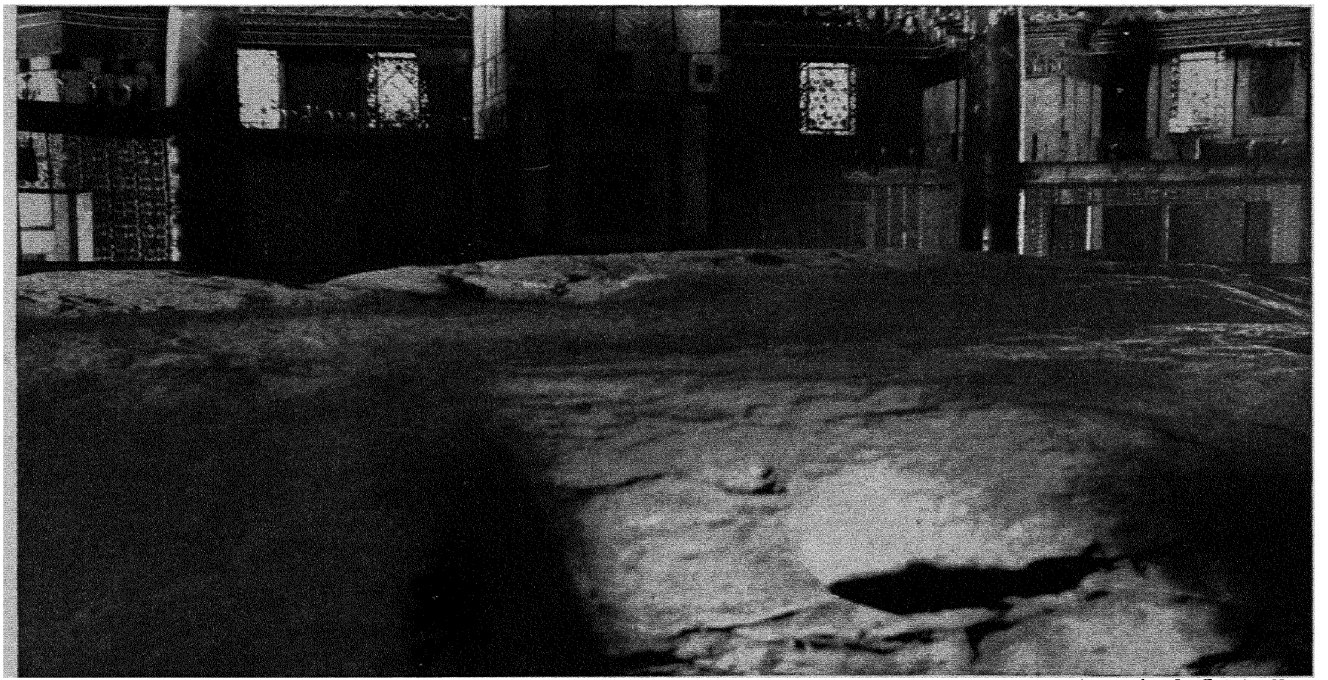


*Photo by J. Calvin Keene*

INTERIOR OF THE DOME OF THE ROCK

The holy rock rises in the center. According to tradition it was on this spot that Abraham was on the point of slaying Isaac. The Ark of the Covenant is said to have stood here. Here probably was erected the altar of sacrifice for both the Solomon and the Herod temples. From this rock Mohammed is said to have ascended to heaven on his miraculous steed. It is one of the few unquestionably genuine sacred places in Palestine.

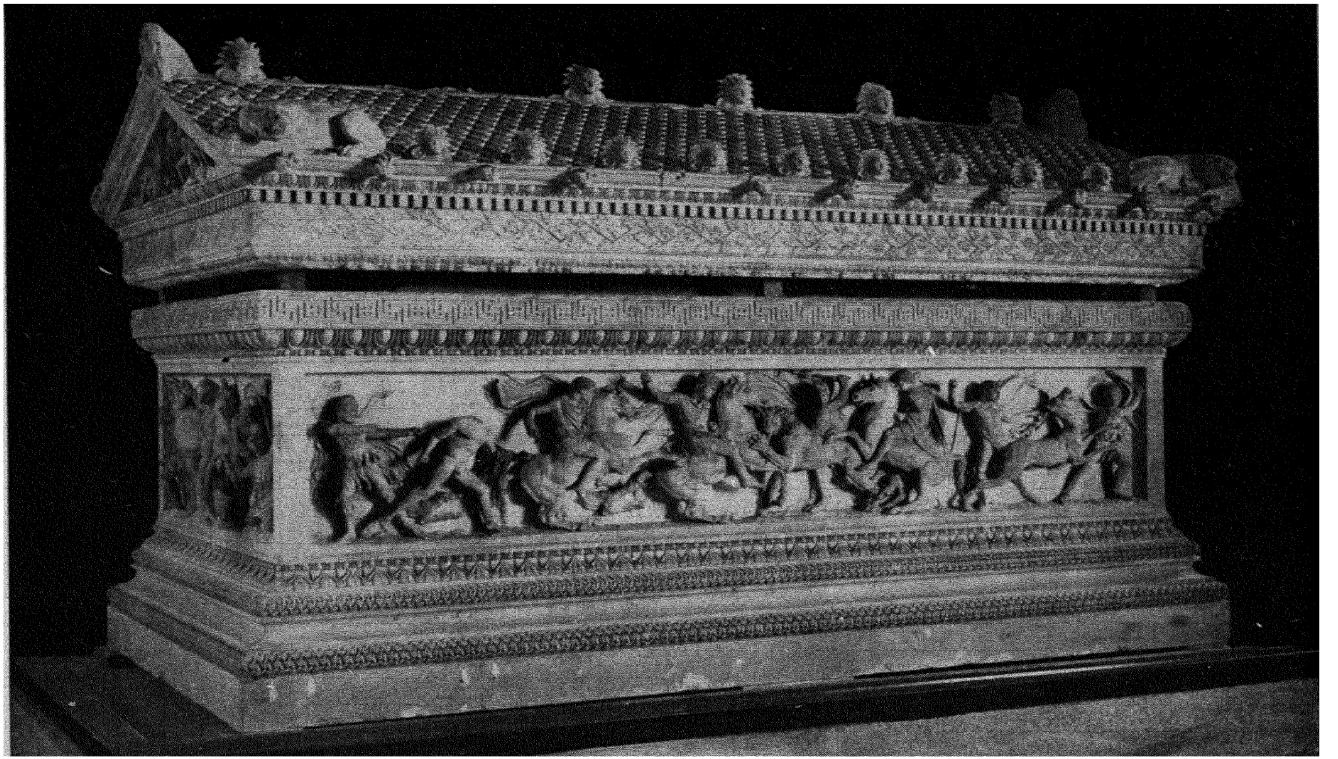


*Photo: Sebah Juaye*

ALEXANDER THE GREAT SHOWN IN A HUNTING SCENE ON THE "ALEXANDRIAN" SARCOPHAGUS

shall be no doubt on the part of his hearers that Jahweh can do all that his justice requires, Amos explicitly declares of Jahweh the following:

> Prepare to meet your God; for it is he who forms the mountains and creates the wind and reveals his inner mind to man, he who makes the dawn and darkness, who marches over the heights of earth —his name is the Eternal, God of hosts; he it is who made the Pleiades and Orion, who turns black darkness into dawn and darkens day again into the night, who summons floods and pours them on the earth; his name is the Eternal. (Amos 4:13; 5:8)

*Hosea.*—In contrast to Amos, whose idea of God is characterized by the concepts of justice and power, expressed by him in terms of righteous indignation, is the prophet Hosea. With Hosea the quality of mercy was not strained. Without detracting from the idea of power and justice, Hosea enriched the meaning of God by adding the attribute of love toward Israel.

We may well ask, how does it come to pass that prophets enrich the idea of God, and thus refine the meaning and worth of religion? The answer to this question is of great importance for any real appreciation of the development of religion. These prophets in every instance were men aware of the past religious history of the nation. And they were also profoundly religious, that is, they had a deep consciousness of the reality of Jahweh, and a profound faith that he had a purpose or plan for his people. The Covenant relation was real to them. They were also intellectually active, and pondered about conduct and national affairs in terms of their understanding of God. They were sensitive in the manner of poets, artists, and musicians. In the course of their religious devotion they had, on occasion, such a feeling or awareness of the divine presence that their whole being was stimulated to a high degree of insight into the problems, personal or national, which stirred them so deeply. So, for example, it was with Amos, and it was so with all.

In the case of Hosea, we have an illustration of the way in which new insights on the nature of God grew out of profound personal experiences. The account of Hosea suggests that his wife was unfaithful, so much so that he named one of his children, "Not of my kin." She appears to have parted from him for a time, and

to have become utterly committed to immoral ways. Later on, the woman became destitute. In the face of this unhappy situation, and admitting that justice would have permitted him to wipe her memory from his mind, the fact remained that he could not forget. He had been deeply hurt but he still loved her, and what he really wanted was to see her restored. He could only think that this was something Jahweh must be doing, and he declared that God commanded him to bring her back, which he did. Then came the great revelation, what he believed to be the meaning of this tragic event. The experience became a clue for an understanding of Jahweh's attitude toward Israel. They too had sinned, they had turned away from God, and he called them an adulterous people. Justice permitted suffering, even annihilation, but love can transcend justice and, what is more, love can redeem. Hosea then used his personal experience as an analogy for the history of the relations between Israel and Jahweh. In the following passage, The Wayward Woman represents Israel and the first person Jahweh:

I reclaim my wool and my flax, that went to cover her nakedness; and I leave her all bare to the eyes of her lovers. I will lay waste her vine and figtrees, that she calls, "My own, what my lovers paid for me"; into brushwood will I turn them, and the wild beasts shall devour them. I will bring all her gaiety to an end, her festivals, new-moons, and sabbaths, to punish her for all the days when to the Baals she offered incense, decking herself with rings and jewels, running after her lovers, and forgetting me, says the Eternal.

Now then I will block up her path with a thorn-hedge, and bar the road against her, till she cannot find her way; she will pursue her lovers and miss them, seek them and never find them. Then at last she will say, "Let me go back to my first husband, I fared better with him than today."

So I will allure her, put her alone and apart, and speak to her heart; then I will restore her the vineyards, and make the dale of Trouble a door of hope; then shall she answer me as in her youthful days, when she came up from Egypt's land; for I will take the name of Baals out of her lips, and then they shall never be mentioned again.

On that day, the Eternal declares, she shall call me, "My husband," no more "My Baal"; I will betroth her to me for ever, betroth her in a bond of goodness and of justice, in kindness and in love;

yes, loyally will I betroth her, to let her understand the Eternal. (Hosea 2:6, 7, 9-17, 19-20)

Like Amos, Hosea expressed himself similarly in regard to the matter of ethical conduct or righteousness as the primary factor in doing Jahweh's will. This alone was a right keeping of the Covenant.

Love I desire, not sacrifice, knowledge of God, not any offerings. (Hosea 6:6)

A striking characteristic in Hosea is the fact that in one mood he describes Jahweh as bringing down judgment and punishment, but he follows it immediately with some passage indicating an ineradicable love for the nation, because of which love Jahweh cannot let them go. In the following passage the situation is illustrated, and the language of tenderness in this case is drawn from the relation between a father and a young son.

I loved Israel when he was young, ever since Egypt I called him my son . . . I taught Ephraim to walk, holding them in my arms; with human cords I led them, I drove with a harness of love, but, heeding not my care for them, they broke away from me; so I smote them on the face, I turned against them, overbore them. . . . The sword shall ply within their towns and lay them low within their fortresses. . . . Ephraim, how can I give you up? Israel, how can I let you go? . . . My heart recoils, all my compassion kindles; I will not execute my anger fierce, . . . for I am God, not man, I am among you, the Majestic One, no mortal man to slay. (Hosea 11: 1-9)

The disaster which the prophets Amos and Hosea feared did come, for the Assyrians put an end to the history of the Northern Kingdom, Israel, in 722 B.C. It was well that writings like those of Amos and Hosea were preserved, for catastrophe, when it came, was not altogether a surprise, and the same writings which prophesied calamity also contained elements of hope. This proved to be of no value to the survivors of the Northern Kingdom, for they were lost among other peoples; but the writings of Hosea and Amos became part of the heritage of the Southern Kingdom now, and were part of its prophetic literature. These, along with the writings of Isaiah, Jeremiah, and others, formed the religious in-

spiration of the Exile when the Southern Kingdom fell in its turn. It was these elements of hope that kept religious faith in Jahweh alive. Jahweh, the people believed, had not forgotten them, and the future, therefore, was not dark, but full of promise.

Let us note in summary, that with Amos and Hosea we have taken a great step forward in religious evolution. With the Covenant relation as the background of their thought, that relationship was raised to a new level, both as to the idea of God and as to the nature of human conduct which would satisfy the Covenant relation. Amos' conception of God appears to be monotheistic. He certainly emphasized the justice of Jahweh, now conceived universally. Amos insisted that animal sacrifice was not a fundamental religious requirement. In fact, Amos (5:25, cf. Hosea 4:13) intimates that sacrifices were not an original part of Jahweh worship. Furthermore, there is a vital infusion of ethics into religion by insistence on ethical virtues in human relations as the primary condition of keeping the Covenant properly. In this respect Hosea was exactly of the same mind. Hosea had the same theology as Amos, plus a new note of kindliness and tenderness as to the attributes of God. And this new element of love and care is so important in its implications that its development by later prophets is the very thing which saved Judaism from complete pessimism.

## Isaiah and Jeremiah

We turn our attention now to the Southern Kingdom where the prophetic insight is carried to new depths of penetration by Isaiah. In him the prophetic personality reveals a greatness of character remarkable for its assurance of and loyalty to the divine commands. He was a man with a broad national outlook. He seems to have had a wide acquaintance with the customs and habits of the peoples in the world around him. It was Isaiah's fate to be a profound observer, and a devastating commentator on the current state of affairs in religion, morals, and politics. He had the unhappy destiny of being for most of his life in the opposition, spiritually alone, and of having his patriotism misunderstood. But his personal fate is the world's good fortune, for it is through the instrument of men like him that the world makes what headway it does.

Let us take a brief glance at the setting in which Isaiah appeared. The international scenery had changed since the time of Amos. The Assyrian menace, to which the earlier prophets referred, had become a reality and Isaiah himself lived through those years when the Northern Kingdom, Israel, finally succumbed to the invaders and was so ignominiously annihilated, leaving Judah alone to carry on the Hebrew faith and traditions. Isaiah, then, had observed this calamity, had had much to say about it, and was well aware that Judah's continuance was purchased by payment of tribute to Assyria. The young king, Hezekiah, who had come to the throne after or about the time of the fall of the Northern Kingdom, was in a difficult position. The people were divided into an Egyptian party and an Assyrian party, and some wanted revolt. In the Southern Kingdom a period of diplomatic deception followed by armed revolt led to the laying waste of many towns by the Assyrians. In consequence Hezekiah was let off only by paying heavy additional tribute, and his kingdom was reduced in size. It was necessary to strip the gold and silver from the Temple in order to pay the levy.

The moral and social conditions during the reign of Hezekiah were bad. Drunkenness and other forms of gluttony were rampant among many people, including priests, and the prophet Isaiah declared that ruin would fall upon the nation. They, however, expected to evade divine judgment by subtle diplomacy, and they endeavored to make secret alliances with Egypt. These endeavors met with the vehement disapproval of Isaiah, but his objections had no avail until prospective disaster induced the authorities to bring the prophet into their consultations. Under his urging, reform measures in the field of religion were put into effect. Hezekiah carried through these reforms—abolishing high places, breaking in pieces the sacred pillars, cutting down the copper serpent, laying the axe to the sacred pole. These symbols of worship include the representation of deity in animal form, features of totemism, magic, and fertility gods. Each item speaks volumes about the deplorable everyday state of affairs. They stand in sharp contrast to the spiritual ideals of the prophets.

*Isaiah.*—With this general picture in mind, we may now consider various phases of Isaiah's contributions to religion. Obviously, we

shall have to deal only with the major features. These are: his exalted conception of God, the union of religion and morals, punishment for sin, the idea of a Remnant, the idea of Messiah, and his philosophy of history. All of these have much in common with and develop from the ideas of Amos and Hosea.

Now we cannot afford to overlook the fact that when we enumerate a list of ideas attributed to a Hebrew prophet, such ideas are not developed like an essay. They come more like molten lava, flowing out, as it were, from the inner heat and pressure within a burdened soul. Isaiah dramatizes what he has to say by various literary devices which are designed to impress the imagination and memory. For example, we learn a great deal about Isaiah's understanding of God and what religion is in an interesting passage in which we must imagine a great trial, with the people arraigned in judgment before Jahweh. Isaiah represents Jahweh as presenting his case against his people.

"I have reared, have brought up sons, and they have rebelled against me; a bullock knows its owner, an ass its master's manger, but Israel does not care, my people never heeds me." Ah sinful nation, folk whose guilt is heavy, ah race of wrongdoers, sons degenerate—they have abandoned the Eternal, and spurned the Majesty of Israel! . . .

"What care I for all your lavish sacrifices?" the Eternal asks; "I am sick of slaughtered rams, of fat from fatted beasts; the blood of bullocks and of goats is no delight to me. Who asked that from you, when you gather in my presence? Crowd my courts no more, bring offerings no more; the smoke of sacrifice is vain, I loathe it; your gatherings at the new moon and on sabbath, I cannot abide them; your fasts and festivals, my soul abhors them, they are a weariness to me, I am tired of them. You may stretch out your hands, but I will never look at you, and though you offer many a prayer, I will not listen. Your hands are full of bloodshed; wash yourselves clean, banish your evil doings from my sight, cease to do wrong, learn to do right, make justice all your aim, and put a check on violence, let orphans have their rights, uphold the widow's cause. Come, let me put it thus, the Eternal argues: scarlet your sins may be, but they can become white as snow, they may be red as crimson and yet turn white as wool. If only you are willing to obey, you shall feed on the best of the land; but if you decline and defy me, then husks shall be your food—so the Eternal himself decrees." (Isaiah 1:2-20)

Despite the fact that Jahweh worship had been rather firmly established by reason of the reforms of Hezekiah, and most of the pagan and foreign elements had been officially discarded, Isaiah was very positive that the type of religion that remained was of little value. That is how he regarded sacrifices and blood offerings, solemn feasts and incense burnings, which in themselves reveal no moral or spiritual sensibilities at all. He appealed to their minds, and when he said, "Come, . . . the Eternal argues," it is as though he called upon them to think things through with him, and if this were done, surely it would need only half a moral eye to discern that sacrifices and all that sort of thing are not in themselves righteousness. The will of Jahweh is that there shall be righteousness in all human relations; the elimination of greed, avarice, cruelty, selfish luxury, and extravagant tastes. Isaiah strove to make the people see that Jahweh is not an oriental monarch who delights to smell incense or the flavor of roasted flesh. Jahweh is the Mighty One, the Holy One, who personalizes goodness, righteousness, and justice. This idea is the core of his teaching, from which everything else flows, and in terms of which he passed judgment on a wide range of national and international behavior.

Isaiah's idea of God is universal enough to be applied to the whole world of events, local and international. He looked upon his own people, and found little in their way of life to elevate them appreciably above the neighboring nations. But he held them responsible for unfulfilled moral opportunities. They had been partners in a covenant relation which they, not Jahweh, had broken. This failure of unkept obligation was sin. And they must pay a price of punishment. They must be scourged in the international arena where they chose to play the current game of intrigue and armed alliance. Only thus could they learn to rely on something besides force. Assyria was to be the instrument of Jahweh. God held the fate of Assyria, as well as Judah, in his hand.

In a day when all men everywhere assumed the existence of many gods, and a nation like Assyria proudly assumed the preeminence of its gods, a prophetic mind like that of Isaiah and his immediate predecessors had the spiritual audacity to declare the all-powerful moral eminence of Jahweh. These other nations might

stride with power and crush with cruelty little peoples, but they would have their day and cease to be when Jahweh assigned them to oblivion.

> Woe betide this Assyria! He is my club in anger, the rod I wield in wrath; I speed him against an impious nation, a people with whom I am wroth, bidding him plunder and spoil them, trample them down like mud in the street. But other plans has he, and other aims! His thought is to exterminate the nations far and wide. "Are not my captains as good as kings?" says he. . . . "Can I not treat Jerusalem and its images even as Samaria and its idols?"
>
> So when the Eternal has completed what he has to do on Sion hill and in Jerusalem, he will punish the audacious vaunting of the king of Assyria and the arrogance of his pride . . . the Lord of hosts will send a wasting disease on his flourishing frame, and under his glitter a burning heat that glows like a flame, consuming him soul and body, till he pines away like a man diseased. (Isaiah 10: 5-13, 16, 18)

Herein is the insight of Isaiah revealed. It was his sublime faith that righteousness and justice belonged to God, that no power of man, however ruthless or wicked, could withstand the purpose of Jahweh to enthrone goodness in the life of the nation. Isaiah stood forth in a day when the whole conduct of his countrymen fluctuated between *reliance* on some combination of physical power, and *fear* of some other combination of the same sort. Isaiah wrestled with the problem of finding a dependable force for righteousness. He believed that Jahweh was such a power and he trusted that power. In one form or another this is a problem that is always with us. In what shall we put our trust? In the right that is made by might, or in a goodness that is not national, that has no boundaries, but which is universal and eternal? Isaiah chose the latter, and the universal supremacy of moral goodness was affirmed to be one with the universality of God.

The exalted conception of God as the moral ruler of the universe enabled Isaiah to interpret events in terms of the righteous purposes of God. It provided him with his philosophy of history. In other words, here was a chosen people, chosen not by a minor god or gods, but by the Mighty and Holy One. And they were chosen to do his righteous will. This was what the Covenant meant.

It was so far above the contemporary religious grasp that it ought not to surprise us that its import was only vaguely meaningful. It was so hard to see that the ways, customs, habits, current in the world of that time were not God's ways. But if the people could not be taught except by punishment and scourging, then only through bitter experience should they learn that it was righteousness alone that exalted the nation. Bitter national experiences were interpreted by the prophets as the consequences of unrighteousness.

Whatever Jahweh might have in store for them, however destructive the punishment might be, however devastatingly Assyria might ravish the land, it should not be allowed to destroy God's people utterly. And this brings us to cross-currents in Isaiah's thought out of which he evolved the ideas of the Remnant and of the Messiah. These ideas came to have a very prominent place in the thought of later generations.

The idea of a Remnant was first advanced by Isaiah when the Assyrians were laying waste the Northern Kingdom. As much as he believed punishment was due, he nevertheless thought that Jahweh could not leave himself without some remnant, out of whom could be created a new nation. The notion of a Remnant was the only form that hope could take, and the day was yet to come in the far-off future when this idea of the Remnant would be seized upon again as an anchor of hope.

> On that day any Israelites who are left, any survivors of the house of Jacob, no longer shall rely on him who proved their ruin, but rely steadily on the Eternal, Israel's Majesty. A remnant, a mere remnant of Jacob, shall come back to the Mighty God; for though your folk, O Israel, are like sea-sands in number, only a remnant of them shall return. (Isaiah 10:20-22)

The dreaded attack by Assyria did not materialize and the Southern Kingdom escaped the fate which had befallen the Northern Kingdom. As immediate danger passed, the Remnant idea fell to one side and in its place came the idea of a Messiah which was also to have a long history of great significance. Somehow, it had come to pass in Isaiah's time that there was a more or less popular hope of a great king who would some day reign; someone after the manner of David whom, with much warrant, the centuries had

exalted. Consequently, now when the nation rebounded from its period of anxiety, Isaiah optimistically previsioned a regenerated nation under the leadership of a glorious king.

> For a child has been born to us, a son has been given to us; the royal dignity he wears, and this the title that he bears—"A wonder of a counsellor, a divine hero, a father for all time, a peaceful prince!" Great is his authority, endless is his peace, over David's throne and his dominion, to base it firm and stable on justice and good order, from henceforth and forever—thanks to the jealous care of the Eternal. (Isaiah 9:6-7)
>
> From the stump of Jesse a shoot shall rise, and a scion from his roots shall flourish; on him shall rest the spirit of the Eternal, the spirit of wisdom and insight, the spirit of counsel and strength, the spirit that knows and reverences the Eternal.
>
> He will not judge by appearances, nor decide by hearsay, but act with justice to the helpless and decide fairly for the humble; he will strike down the ruthless with his verdicts, and slay the unjust with his sentences. Justice shall gird him up for action, he shall be belted with trustworthiness. (Isaiah 11:1-5)

No such glorious king appeared in Isaiah's time, although Hezekiah came nearer to it than any of the four kings through whose reigns Isaiah lived. Nor did any such Messiah appear in the remaining years of the kingdom up to the time of the Exile. As a matter of fact, the level of Hebrew politics and life in general was not permanently raised during the life of Isaiah, and one wonders at the moral steadfastness of the prophet in the face of so many discouragements. However, the Messianic idea persisted along with the idea of the Remnant, and various later forms of the idea will engage our attention, for without the concepts of the Messiah and the Remnant, the continuance of the Hebrew nation after the fall of Jerusalem would have been very doubtful.

*Jeremiah.*—In Jeremiah we come to the last of our pre-Exilic prophets. By many writers he is considered the greatest of the prophets before or since. However this may be, the fact remains that he did contribute an extremely important insight into the meaning of religion, and he is also specially significant as a religious personality. Like all the other prophets before him, Jeremiah had a "call" to prophetic service. Such "calls" appear to be experiences

which come to certain sensitive people who are undergoing a period of mental tension caused by the difference between existing conditions in society and more ennobling conceptions of what ought to be. Jeremiah, born about 650 B.C., came from an old established family long connected with the religious life of the nation, and in this way the spiritual well-being of the nation was his concern. In addition, he was acquainted with ideas from the prophetic past. Then, too, bear in mind that he saw before his very eyes the results of Manasseh's work. Manasseh, as a vassal of Assyria, undid all the religious reforms of his father Hezekiah in the days of Isaiah, and fostered Assyrian religious practices even within the area of the Temple itself. This is a perfect pattern for tension in the soul of a sensitive, conscientious worshiper of Jahweh. *Something* ought to be done about it, is the ready idea suggested to the mind. *Somebody* ought to do something about it. Somebody ought to, but surely not I. Thus Jeremiah reasoned. There was a struggle going on in his soul. Then, one day, he heard unmistakably the call to himself. He seemed to be a spectator, an instrument, a sounding board. But for Jeremiah it was so real that he believed he heard an actual voice, the voice of Jahweh, telling him that Jahweh had predestined him for such a time as this. It was useless to protest that he was too young or too shy; Jahweh would strengthen him and give him words to speak; even nations would be subservient to his word.

Jeremiah started out as a preacher on the familiar theme of the Covenant relation.

> This message came to Jeremiah from the Eternal, "Speak to the men of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem, tell them that this is the word of the Eternal, the God of Israel: Listen to the terms of this compact—a curse on the man who will not listen!—this compact which I enjoined upon your fathers when I brought them out of that iron furnace, the land of Egypt; I told you, if you obeyed my orders and carried out all my commands, then you would be my people, and I would be a God to you, confirming the oath I swore to your fathers, when I promised them a land abounding in milk and honey—as you have to-day." I answered the Eternal that I would certainly proclaim this. Then the Eternal bade me proclaim all this in the towns of Judah and in the streets of Jerusalem saying,

"Listen to the terms of this compact, and obey them." But they did not obey them. (Jeremiah 11:1-8)

Jahweh then brings against them the charge of infidelity, because of their serving other gods and thus of being guilty of having broken the compact which their ancestors had solemnly made under Moses. Because of this sin, he would punish them:

"Therefore . . . I am bringing on them disaster that they cannot escape; nor will I listen to them, when they cry to me. The townsmen of Judah and the citizens of Jerusalem may go and cry to the gods to whom they sacrifice; but they will be no help to them at all on the day of their disaster." (Jeremiah 11:11, 12)

This passage is significant, for it shows Jeremiah to us at the beginning of his career as an itinerant preacher giving voice to the central prophetic note. It affords a point from which to measure the distance which his thought traveled as he gained experience. Without repeating what has gone before, we may say that Jeremiah's teaching, like that of Isaiah, included the idea of the lofty moral character of Jahweh and the certainty of punishment for sin. He denounced the popular religion more vehemently than Isaiah had because, under Manasseh, so much ground had been lost. Therefore, the apostasy of the nation seemed so much worse than formerly. Also, Jeremiah was just as much opposed to the sins of his time as were his predecessors. He was more expressively monotheistic. Yet, if this were all that could be said about Jeremiah, we could conclude here. But in the course of an extremely active career, his own deep personal experiences brought about a fundamental change in his religious outlook in the direction of a more intimate and personal religion. We can appreciate this best if we first take into account a few important events.

About five years after Jeremiah began his ministry, there occurred the famous reformation under King Josiah, 621 B.C. We have mentioned that the earlier reforms under Hezekiah were undone by his dissolute son Manasseh (692-639 B.C.). He so thoroughly destroyed his father's reforms that there was a relapse into earlier and neighboring forms of paganism. Altars to Ba'al appeared again. He reinstituted augury, magic, and offered his son

in fire sacrifice. This latter was a reversion fraught with the most dire possibilities for the ethical religion which the prophets were developing. The reactionary movement on the part of this king can be accounted for by the fact that Manasseh was young, and influenced unduly by the women of his harem. In the nature of the case they would be inclined toward the popular superstitions and magic. The worship of demons, fairies, stars, sun, et cetera, was difficult to eliminate because it had been carried along for so many years.

Imagination can readily conjecture how the prophetic "school" would chafe under this condition of things. From rejoicing over the reforms which the prophetic insistence of Isaiah had accomplished through Hezekiah, they were now in dismay over the demolition promulgated by the son, Manasseh. It is, therefore, easily understandable that they laid plans to influence the young prince, Josiah, who came to the throne at eight years of age (637 B.C.). A long period of religious and social decadence had preceded his accession. The men who were trying to preserve a prophetic rather than a priestly approach to religion, although a few priests were favorable to their outlook, had prepared a far-reaching plan to influence events. If scholarly research is correct in regard to the proposed plan and the events that followed therefrom, we have a most unique kind of religious coup d'état. When Josiah was eighteen years of age, there was an occurrence which was revolutionary in its impact upon the nation, and which brought about the most thorough reform thus far in religious outlook and practice.

The bare facts are brought out in II Kings 22 and 23. From this account we observe that extensive repairs were being contemplated on the Temple. In connection with the financing of these repairs, Josiah's secretary, Shaphan, visited the Temple. While there, the priest Hilkiah informed Shaphan that he had discovered in the Temple a book, called the Book of Instruction. It was presumably brought to light while repairs were in progress. Shaphan read the book and was greatly disturbed by it, and he felt that it should be brought immediately to the king's attention. Then the king read it and was alarmed by its contents. It is evident there were many commands which the book contained, disobedience of which would call forth the divine wrath. The king called together

officials and leading citizens, asking them if they would stand with him on these instructions, and they all solemnly declared they would. In consequence, there was a widespread reform. The first stage of it was the removal from the Temple of every vestige and mark of idolatry and paganism. The purging process extended outward from the Temple through the country as a whole. A partial list of these reforms shows us the extent of the practices which were extant. It included the removal of rooms dedicated to pagan deities with immoral rites; it called for the elimination of numerous altars and high places which were now to be sacrificed in the interests of centralization of worship in one place—the Temple; child sacrifice to Moloch was done away with; no longer were horses sacred to the sun to be maintained, nor the altars dedicated by Solomon to the gods of his subjects.

The obvious questions which this recital evoke are: What was this Book of Instruction; where did it come from; why was it not known before; and, do we know what it contained? Historical scholars have tried to find the answers. We can say briefly that in the effort to locate this material, which does not appear side by side with the description in II Kings, we must remember that it would have to be sufficiently small in length to be read several times in one day, which the account shows was done on the day it was found. Further, to locate it, we bear in mind that it was a book of instructions with penalties for disobedience of certain commands. We have every reason to expect that this material would have been preserved as a sacred writing, and we therefore look for it somewhere in the Old Testament. There is only one book which seems to satisfy the conditions, and that is the Book of Deuteronomy. But Deuteronomy purports to be written by Moses. If Moses had left such a document it is difficult to see how it could have been so completely forgotten. Such a book would have been preserved along with other sacred writings and there would have been no need for a new Book of Instruction. Since we have no other book similar to Deuteronomy, and since Deuteronomy meets all the requirements of the situation recorded in Kings, it is reasonable to assume that Deuteronomy is the writing in question. Further, an examination of the material in Deuteronomy makes clear to us that its instructions and commands

and penalties pertain in numerous ways to conditions of living and of religion which were not, and could not have been, problems present in the days of Moses. Therefore Moses did not write this material. Who then did write it?

We are forced, in the absence of positive historical evidence, to adopt the most reasonable hypothesis, the one with the greatest degree of probability. The hypothesis which has the widest acceptance among modern scholars is the view that the book found in the Temple was prepared toward the end of Manasseh's reign, and during the first years of the reign of Josiah, by deeply devoted men, and by them, with the cooperation of Hilkiah, was secreted in the Temple to await discovery. And here it was that Hilkiah "discovered" it. Whether this is in all respects just exactly what happened may be doubted, but the men who compiled this Book of Instruction believed they were loyal to the Mosaic tradition. They believed the provisions of the book were in the line of development from Moses through the prophets, and therefore labeled it as from his hand.

We must remember the times. We must remember that these men who lived in the prophetic tradition saw, every day and year after year, that Manasseh's regime meant a sinking of Hebrew life deeper and deeper into oriental paganism. Only drastic measures would shake the royal house into reformation activity. The most potent force for such an end would be the fear that Jahweh was about to pour out his wrath over the violations of his expressed will, and the whole set-up of the event reveals that there were divine commands not lived up to, and fear of the accompanying declaration of curses that would befall in the event of disobedience. The prophetic group sincerely believed that this was about to happen. They knew that the current customs could be nothing but an abomination in the sight of God. The insights of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, with which those prophets inspired themselves, were in startling contrast to the immoral, nonspiritual religions that were prevalent. They plainly read of the opposition of Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah to such practices, and must have felt the moral and spiritual enlightenment of these earlier eminent prophets. Their cause, they felt, was a noble one, and under the inspiration of its

beckoning they found no difficulty in justifying the particular measure adopted.

Whatever modifications may be made in this reconstruction, it gives us at any rate an idea of the political-social-religious situation, for the Josiah reform is itself a fact beyond question. It did bring about permanent changes for the better, and temporarily gave a place of authoritative leadership to the prophetic element. It must not be forgotten, however, that even the reforms under Josiah might not have taken place had it not been for the fact that at this time Judah was for a little while free from foreign domination. Assyria would probably not have allowed such reform, for it was her policy to impose pagan practices upon her vassals. But now Assyria's day was over. This empire had been weakened by the exhausting efforts to keep out Cimmerian and Scythian invaders, barbarian hordes from the Asiatic steppes. Before Assyria could obtain a decade or two of time for replenishment of man power, she was overwhelmed by a revived Babylonian Empire, which now for the second time strode high in the ancient world. It captured and sacked Nineveh, the capital of Assyria, in 612 B.C.

There is some reason to think that Jeremiah may not have wholly approved of the new law book.

> What! you say, "We are wise, we do have his directions"—when lo, your scribes have written them wrong, and falsified them? No, the "wise" shall be discomfited, dismayed and tricked. They have rejected the Eternal's word; so what "wisdom" have they? (Jeremiah 8:8-9)

If Jeremiah did not wholly go along with the reformation, it may have been due to certain doubts he had concerning some of the provisions of this written word or more likely that the character of the reformation was still too external. Jeremiah appears to have felt that the reformation would not stave off punishment that was due. Perhaps a more important consideration still is the fact that Jeremiah had begun to think of religion as an individual and deeply personal thing; whereas the basic thought in the Deuteronomic law is the national unity, together with legal religious requirements for national purification and atonement. As time went on, he could see that more and more religious reliance was too much on legal and

external duties, not on spiritual transformation. How could he have started on this line of insight?

We must think of Jeremiah from the time of his call and earlier ministry in terms of a terrifically storm-tossed soul. He was vehemently denounced by his contemporaries, and at times in danger of his life. The first instance occurred after the death of Josiah in the battle of Megiddo in 608 B.C. Jeremiah denounced the popular idea that Jahweh would never allow the Temple to be desecrated or destroyed by an enemy (7:1 ff.; 26:1 ff.). A prophetic associate was killed for this treasonous announcement and Jeremiah very nearly met the same fate. Other occasions of personal danger and actual arrest were frequent. To be regarded as a traitor, when the motives of action could not be more devoted to the common interest, is a heavy burden for any man. And what made it so hard was that Jeremiah himself often had misgivings and felt rebellious at the severe demands of his prophetic task. The task compelled him to forgo thoughts of marriage and home life, for Jahweh had told him:

> You must not marry a wife, you must not have sons or daughters in this place. For this is the Eternal's sentence upon sons and daughters born in this place, on the mothers who bore them, and on the fathers in this place: "They shall die of the pestilence, with none to wail for them and none to bury them; they shall lie like dung upon the surface of the ground." (Jeremiah 16:2-4)

Often his spirit challenged Jahweh and asked why he should have to give up so much and bear so many burdens. At times he became exceedingly bitter toward those who inveighed against him, and he cursed those priests and professional prophets who opposed him. He hated the day that gave him birth. He found it hard to understand what it all meant, but finally there dawned upon him with clarity the individual character of his relation with God. Always, hitherto, the Covenant had meant a relation in which the nation was a unit at one end, and Jahweh at the other. Jeremiah's individual experience brought out the possibility of an individual relation, with the individual soul at one end, and Jahweh at the other. This gave rise to the idea of the "New Covenant," and it occupied an increasing place in Jeremiah's consciousness. The

process was aided by the fact that the nation was on the verge of internal bankruptcy, religiously speaking, and on the brink of political annihilation from the enemy without.

The Babylonians, after years of hoping and planning, had at last overcome the Assyrians in 606 B.C., and the Egyptians in 605 B.C., and now dominated Palestine. The Hebrew King Jehoiakim stupidly revolted against the Babylonians in 598 B.C. Consequently, the next year, the Babylonians under Nebuchadrezzar overran Judah to settle accounts, although by this time another Hebrew king was on the throne. The Babylonians did their work very quickly, capturing Jerusalem and doing much damage. They took most of the leading people, including the king, and carried them off to Babylon. Jeremiah rightly had little faith in the caliber of the populace remaining. In fact, he felt that the future revival of the nation would get its impetus and leadership from those in exile. This analysis proved even more correct when, in 586 B.C., the Babylonians returned to put down another rebellion. The Egyptian army made an effort to assist Judah, and got as far as the Judean frontier; whereupon the Babylonians set forth to meet them. A breathing spell was thus obtained by the besieged city, during which time Jeremiah was imprisoned. Shortly after, when the Babylonians returned, his own countrymen cast him into an empty but muddy cistern from which he was rescued by an Ethiopian slave. The weak king, Zedekiah, now in despair at the Babylonian approach, sought Jeremiah's advice. Jeremiah saw that only surrender would save the city from disaster, and so counseled Zedekiah, but Zedekiah did not agree. When the city was finally captured, the sack of it was a terrible thing. The Babylonians first put to death, in his presence, all of Zedekiah's sons, then all the nobles, and with this for memory they put out his eyes and took him to Babylon. Systematically Jerusalem was laid waste. Everything of value was taken away. Everything that would burn was burned. Walls that remained were pulled down. Most of the inhabitants were lined up and then marched off into exile. As Jeremiah tells it (Jeremiah 52:17-23), we feel certain that we behold a people stricken with a mortal wound from which there is no recovery.

There is not much more to say about this unhappy ending. Some

survivors were allowed to stay in the vicinity, and these settled in Mizpah. Jeremiah was with them and, under the leadership of Gedaliah, a member of an old family, who was left in charge by the Babylonians, some hope of recovery revived. Gedaliah was a man of wisdom and seems to have been quite a noble soul. Jeremiah regarded him highly. But even in this perilous condition of things, a jealous survivor of the royal family, Ishmael, successfully plotted to murder Gedaliah and all of his leading men. This was indeed a stupid measure, for Ishmael had to flee for his life, and the survivors were in a panic lest the Babylonians return and put them to the sword. So they all fled to Egypt, taking Jeremiah with them against his will. In Egypt they lapsed into paganism and were lost to view, just as the Israelites, who were taken to Assyria in 722 B.C., dropped out of sight completely.

That there is any further history of the Hebrews at all lies in the fortunes of the exiles in Babylonia. Perhaps the reader may momentarily wonder how such a history can have any significance for us. Did the Hebrews never profit from experience? So much of their misery came from the stupidity, avarice, and vanity of their own rulers and social lights. All the more reason why we cannot fail to admire the prophetic insights that came out of this environment. The idealism and moral integrity, the spiritual creativity that produced great literature, great religion, and great men, were remarkable products of the decadent situation.

The successive events moving toward collapse certainly justified Jeremiah's clear perception of the direction of affairs, and enable us to see how he came to pin his hopes on the "New Covenant." Compare the following passage with the quotations from Jeremiah at the outset of his ministry.

> A day comes, the Eternal promises, when I make a fresh compact with all the house of Israel—not like the compact I once made with their fathers, the day I took them by the hand to bring them out of Egypt's land, the compact that they broke, till I had to reject them
>
> No, this is the compact I make with Israel in the end; *I will put my law within them, writing it on their hearts;* and I will be a God to them, and they to me a people; no longer shall they have to teach their fellows, each instructing each, how to know the Eternal; for

they all shall know me, both the great and small; for I will pardon their offences, their sin I never will recall. (Jeremiah 31:31-34)

The doctrine of the new compact or covenant was the rock upon which at last Jeremiah set his feet. Here he found the firm ground of assurance which his soul had long sought. Perplexity and doubt were now dissolved in understanding of the divine will and purpose. Just as we saw the personal experience of Hosea give rise to new insight about the love of God, so Jeremiah's struggle between his love for his people and the tragedy of their imminent doom gave rise to the idea of personal love of God for each individual. The national unit might break up, the Temple might even be destroyed, but the individual soul would not therefore be deprived of the worship of the one true God, whose love was eternal and whose Being was everywhere.

This conception of Jeremiah was his contribution to the evolving religious thought. The idea of a new covenant had tremendous influence upon the spiritual leaders of the Exile in Babylon and, therefore, for the distant future. Jeremiah contributed in addition a remarkable life. His adventure of the soul impressed those who came after him with an example of vicarious living which suggested some of the loftiest ideas that have come into our religious heritage.

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## CHAPTER IV

# *RELIGION OF THE EXILE AND THE FOUNDATIONS OF JUDAISM*

When Jerusalem was sacked, and its people led captive by the Babylonians, there was no apparent reason for any observer to think this was not the end of the Hebrews. In modern parlance, the contemporary news flash would have been, "Jerusalem captured and overrun by Babylonians. City sacked and completely destroyed. Last remnants of Hebrew people roped together in long columns making their slow way as captives to Babylonia. History drops curtain on last act of brave little country which resisted invaders for many centuries." This is what happened to innumerable little countries of ancient times, but it is one of the most singular anomalies of record that the Jews did not remain historically dead. The entire explanation of this fact must be found in the unique survival and further development of Hebrew religion. And that survival and development may be attributed to two men, Ezekiel, during the early years, and another, unnamed, prophet in the later years of the Exile. This unknown prophet we shall designate by the term Deutero, or Second, Isaiah.

### Babylon and the Babylonian Exile

In the first years of exile, judging from surface appearances, it looked like touch-and-go whether the Hebrews would survive as a distinct group with a specific religion. Imagine, if you will, how insignificant the average Hebrew must have felt in the ancient city of Babylon. It was a great city, set in the midst of innumerable cities and towns connected by canals, roads, and fortifications. Commercial traffic was enormous. Located as it was on the eastern end of the Persian Gulf, served by the Tigris and Euphrates rivers, it was accessible to the sea, and there was loading and unloading of vessels from foreign lands, especially from Africa and India. Barges

heavily laden with products came down the rivers Tigris and Euphrates, from what we now call Turkey and Syria. Uncounted caravans traversed the roads, from the Ganges in India, through Babylon, on to cities in Egypt. And at this period in the sixth century B.C., Nebuchadrezzar, the king of Babylonia, was at the height of his career. He was ambitious to extend even further his control of territory and commerce. The stream of revenue supported a great army, and made possible extensive building projects. For the immense public works program, including building of dams, irrigation canals, and huge temples, hosts of workers were required. There can be little doubt that one of the reasons for Nebuchadrezzar's removal of the Hebrews to Babylon was their prospective usefulness as laborers in these enterprises. Most of the Hebrews were placed within or not far from the city of Babylon itself, where so much of the work was going on. Many of them lived in villages along one of the great canals which ran east from Babylon to the shrine city of Nippur. We know that the circumference of the city was about forty or fifty miles. It lay on both sides of the Euphrates, connected by a bridge 3032 feet long. Miles of streets were paved with brick set in asphalt. There were walls surrounding certain central areas of the city, and one of these is known to have been 300 feet high, while the towers along the wall rose to 420 feet. An inner wall was even higher. Great buildings, especially the temples and the palaces, would inspire any one of us with awe on account of the magnificence of their dimensions. Add to these the great terraced gardens, with wide series of steps, to break the flatness of the country, and one can recreate somewhat the impressive picture of ancient Babylon. But there are other features which make the picture even more impressive. The great temple services, and the long religious processions in which the king himself sometimes appeared, would contribute still further to the creeping sense of inferiority that was paralyzing the Jewish soul. Among the first captives who came in 597 B.C., some hope of speedy release remained because they had a still-existing national home to look back upon. But when in 586 B.C. Jerusalem was destroyed, and the first exiles were joined by the latest captives, hope dwindled, while doubt and despair set in. After all, how fantastic political ambition

appeared in the presence of Nebuchadrezzar! And how could the mind fail to ask one pertinent question, "What is Jahweh compared to Marduk, 'Lord of Heaven and earth,' and to Bel, 'Lord of lands'?"

We know enough about the Hebrews to foretell that many of them would cast aside their traditions and become absorbed in Babylonian culture. This would be increasingly the case as their economic status improved. Their captivity allowed a great deal of freedom. There was no need to guard them for they could not go away. More and more they became a part of the general population. Many of them gradually found their way into the diversified occupations of the great city, and were merely another of the foreign elements in the polyglot community.

Their commercial interests came to be quite extensive. Commercial interests afforded one way of adjusting themselves to the circumstances of time and place, and they were intelligent enough to make the adjustment. An interesting souvenir of the business activities of the Hebrews is revealed by some clay tablets which archaeologists unearthed at Nippur some years ago. The tablets are commercial documents from the files of a great mercantile house, Murashu Sons. Many of these tablets show dealings with Hebrews, as evidenced by the obvious Jewish names, such as Benjamin, Gedaliah, and Hananiah. Though the dates of these tablets are from the century following the return from the Exile, they bear evidence of the fact that many Hebrews remained in Babylonia and carried on business there.

It is now in order to consider the work of the two men by reason of whom the Exile took rank with the Exodus out of Egypt under Moses as one of the two greatest episodes in Hebrew history. The Exile, like the Exodus, had to do not only with the survival of a people but, what is of vastly greater significance in the world's history, with survival in a higher form of the Hebrew religion.

## Ezekiel

Ezekiel was among the first group who went into exile in 597 B.C. He must, therefore, have belonged to the elite, for the flower of Jerusalem was taken at that time. Ezekiel was either a priest or a

member of the prophetic group. He was probably between thirty and forty years of age. He was well acquainted with the work of Jeremiah and was sympathetic with it. We know that Jeremiah, who remained at Jerusalem until the bitter end, wrote a letter to the first group of exiles, telling them that their captivity would last at least two generations and that they should settle down with patience. Ezekiel, at Babylon, was of the same mind, but at first the exiles would listen neither to the one nor the other. Actually, all of the first half of the Book of Ezekiel, although written in exile from 597 to 586 B.C., was concerned with the situation which existed back in Jerusalem. It is only the later chapters, probably from twenty-five on, which deal solely with the Exile situation.

As the exiles became absorbed in the life and ways of Babylon, including Babylonian religion, soothsayings and magic, it became apparent to Ezekiel that a strong stand must be taken for Jahweh religion. Ezekiel had to wrestle with the many-sided problem of what to do about their faith, now so sorely tried. Even those who were faithful had a good many perplexities which needed a solution before they could find religious peace. It was necessary to recreate faith in God's justice, upon which the Exile had cast some doubt. The prophets had foretold disaster, but Isaiah had also promised the survival of a remnant. Here was an anchor for hope and faith, and avidly it was seized upon by Ezekiel.

But there was another pressing problem about worship. What form should it take in a strange land? How could Jahweh be worshiped adequately apart from the Temple services which were now no more? The Temple had become the central point of Hebrew religion for the popular mind. At the Temple the sacrifices were made and consecrated to Jahweh. It was utterly impossible in Babylon to carry on such forms of worship. A nonsacrificial type of worship had to be devised, and, though they could not know it, this in itself constituted one of the greatest emancipating factors in the spiritualization of Judaism. No doubt Ezekiel was encouraged in this direction by those passages from the pre-Exilic prophets in which the sacrificial system was denounced. What then could a nonsacrificial worship consist of? To begin with, and providing a transition from the old to the new, the Hebrews could at the least

remember their own great holy days. Some gathering together was possible and a memorial service could occur. This provided a start which had in it great possibilities in the way of religious assembly. The obvious helpfulness and inspiration of such gatherings must have been manifest at once. So, under Ezekiel's leadership, the Sabbath day as a regular time of meeting became important. Such meetings provided constant spiritual stimulus, and the Sabbath became the institution through which the religious life was kept alive. Ezekiel promoted this and, as a result, a great amount of attention was given to the literature of the past. Many of its passages were read aloud. Exhortation or preaching, and also, no doubt, public prayer, came from the leaders. A new understanding of the worship of the pre-Exilic prophets occurred. To those who participated in these meetings there came a new morale. They were kept together, not only by deploring the unfaithfulness of large numbers of their compatriots, but by a growing faith that the God who had once delivered them from the Egyptians could not be impotent against the Babylonians, however imposing they might be. These services of inspiration continued, and it is from this beginning during the Exile that Jewish synagogue liturgy and worship developed.

As time went on, there came to be an interesting change in Jewish psychology. The Jews had heard often enough about the Covenant relation, and that they belonged to Jahweh. But they probably did not as a group really think of themselves as essentially different from other people. However, in Babylon, this came upon them very strongly. Their religious practices, such as observance of the Sabbath and circumcision, which were not customs of the Babylonians, set them apart. But more than this, the belief that Jahweh would somehow bring about their release from such a power as Babylon, unquestionably created in the mind of the believer a feeling of assurance and confidence. Only such new-born confidence could overcome that earlier paralysis of inferiority which the first impact with Babylon produced. To be sure, this attitude was attained only gradually. Nevertheless, we should be able to discern how naturally a new morale was a derivative of faith in Jahweh. We may therefore rightly ask, what were the characteristics of Ezekiel's

belief about Jahweh? By what conception of God did he seek to reconcile the nation to the divine justice of their present fate, and to create hope for the future?

We remember that again and again through all the preceding prophets there had resounded a note of impending doom, but such prophecies had been for all practical purposes disregarded. Time after time, prophets had said that Jahweh was a God of justice who had kept the Covenant with them, but not they with him. It was, therefore, possible to maintain that the cup of Jahweh's condemnation had at last so filled to overflowing that he had allowed his wrath to fall upon an unfaithful nation. Ezekiel's own writing is full of this idea. Witness Chapter 20, where he reminds the nation that Jahweh chose Israel as his people, that he fulfilled his part of the Covenant by bringing them out of Egypt into Palestine. They failed to obey him many times but each time he forgave them and continued his protection over them. But now he would no longer forgive. The time had come for punishment and purification:

"So tell Israel this from the Lord Eternal: You befoul yourselves like your fathers, you break your troth with me for their detestable impieties, and you befoul yourselves with all your sacrifices to idols —burning your sons alive—down to this very day! . . .

"By my life! the Lord Eternal swears, I will be your king, with a strong hand, with arm outstretched, in overflowing fury; I will bring you from the nations, I will gather you out of the lands of your dispersion, with a strong hand, with arm outstretched, and in overflowing fury; I will take you into the great desert and deal with you there face to face. . . . I will count you one by one and number you, purging out the rebels and traitors—they shall be brought out of the land where they were living, but they shall never enter the land of Israel. It will teach you that I am the Eternal. . . . On my sacred hill, on the high mountain of Israel, the Lord the Eternal predicts, the whole community of Israel, every man of them, shall worship me; there I will accept them, there I will require your offerings and the very choicest of your sacred dues; I will accept you when I smell this fragrant smoke, after I have brought you from the nations and gathered you out of the lands where you were scattered." (Ezekiel 20:30-41)

It was necessary to fix the idea of deserved punishment upon the

Jewish mind so that their own judgment would assent to the justice of penalty for sin. And that idea did get itself well lodged. They came to believe that the Exile had a purpose, and that by means of it Jahweh intended to purge and purify the nation. This, then, was the first step toward the re-establishment of faith in the goodness and justice of God. It was the first lesson in the religious education of the people on the character of Jahweh. Thus far Ezekiel reaffirmed the point of view about God which we have already seen in Isaiah and Jeremiah, but now it was confirmed also by events. It seems to be the case with Ezekiel, however, that the very fact that events did confirm the predictions of earlier prophets somewhat overwhelmed him by the greatness of Jahweh which it implied. What had been said about Jahweh as a controller of the destiny of nations had been a great intellectual and spiritual affirmation heretofore, but to have it verified, as Ezekiel now believed, was an exciting realization. On that account we do find Ezekiel emphasizing the transcendence of Jahweh, that is to say, his greatness and holiness as the omnipotent power in the universe.

Now, this conviction had two great effects on Ezekiel, one on his beliefs about the prospects for a future return to Jerusalem, and the other on his conception of worship. As to the first, the immediate inference was made that so great a God could not fail to restore his people when the purpose of the Exile had been accomplished. Jahweh had planned the Exile, Jahweh had already planned the return from Exile. In fact, Ezekiel proceeded to forecast in detail the eventual return to Jerusalem, describing the restored community, the new Temple, the purified services and even the reunion of the Northern and Southern Kingdoms, ruled over by a Davidic king. In regard to the second effect of the doctrine of a transcendent God, namely, on the conception of worship, Ezekiel became more and more impressed with the necessity of approaching God properly. Even an earthly monarch like Nebuchadrezzar must be approached with proper ceremony. How much more then should Jahweh, before whom Nebuchadrezzar is but a servant, be fittingly addressed. It is probable that Ezekiel's concern with and frequent reference to angels and heavenly agents was likewise a result of his transcendent, formalistic conception of Jahweh. Some

of his symbols for heavenly beings are Babylonian. He seems to have incorporated these within his own theology. Though Ezekiel insisted that a right ritual must be observed, yet, at the same time, he also insisted that the individual worshiper must be morally pure in heart.

It must be remarked that Ezekiel is a curious mixture of prophet and priest, and it is difficult to say which predominates. Our own view is that he was more the priest than the prophet. It seems to be the case that the prophetic element in Ezekiel was derived mainly from the early impact of Jeremiah upon him. But even so, if we take for example his idea of individual responsibility for moral and spiritual obedience to Jahweh, which is such a major doctrine of Jeremiah, and which Jeremiah himself called the "New Covenant," we find that Ezekiel took it over, but with a difference. The doctrine was taken from Jeremiah. But Jeremiah came to this idea as a result of his thought about God as intimate, close at hand. Therefore, man's relation to God was intimate and personal. Ezekiel retained the idea of individual responsibility. In fact, it was a dominating theme, as it would need to be at a time when no national life as such existed, but man's relation to Jahweh was less personal and had, therefore, to be mediated through appropriate acts of worship. As time went on, Ezekiel emphasized more and more the importance of religious ceremonial prescribed by law. This is plain, for example, in Chapters 40 through 48, which reveal Ezekiel's preoccupation with the prospect of the new Temple and all its services in detail there described.

While it is true that Ezekiel believed that everyone requires forgiveness and a "new spirit" and a "new heart," yet in his mind these gifts of grace are bestowed by Jahweh only upon those worshipers who keep God's commandments and his laws. This is each man's responsibility. Now these commandments and laws are not simply vague moral principles, they are understood as specific requirements. And we may find their source in that Deuteronomic law book which inspired Josiah's reform in 621 B.C., but which had never been wholeheartedly followed prior to the Exile. Ezekiel's efforts and insistence shaped the religion of the Exile in the direction of legalism. Although he may rightfully take a high place

among the prophets, the fact remains that his labor fostered priestly legalistic religion. He set the outline and the mold which made for a type of religion in which freedom of spirit is not primary.

We are touching here on a very old issue very familiar to students of religion. The word "legalism" is a term used to characterize any religion whose requirements can be fulfilled by observing prescribed rules or laws. Now it is a fact that some rules or regulations of worship and conduct are necessary wherever there is any kind of religious organization at all. But it can readily happen that the observance of the regulations is looked upon as itself an adequate fulfillment of religious demands, while the inner spirit of the worshiper may not be much transformed. We shall have ample occasion to see this issue clearly drawn in the conflict between Jesus and the Pharisees. We introduce the subject at this point because the extremely legalistic Judaism, which was so openly opposed by Jesus, had its roots in the religion of the Exile. Ezekiel gave that religion its form, and laid its foundations during the Exile. And, what is more, he left the outline to be followed when the Restoration occurred. Surely no one can read Chapters 40 to 48, with their elaborate details for the reconstruction of the Temple and its services, and the picture of priestly activity, without recognizing the influence that this would have, and did have, upon the development of a priestly ritualistic religion.

Furthermore, Ezekiel introduced another element which played an important part in later Judaism, and this is his eschatology. "Eschatology" and "Apocalypse" are terms of reference for views which anticipate some state of God's rule on earth, to be brought about usually by some sudden act of God's power. It is an appeal to miracle to bring punishment for the evil in the world, and to institute a reign of righteousness under God's rule, or under someone representing him. Ezekiel had not a too clearly defined idea, but he incorporated the messianic conception which we have already seen in Isaiah with his apocalyptic view of a utopian theocratic era. Ezekiel did not altogether originate apocalyptic ideas, but, by adopting them, he gave them a new prominence. Characteristic of apocalytic literature is the idea that enemies of Israel are to be overthrown and the power of Jahweh made so manifest that, "When

my sanctuary remains among them for ever, the nations shall learn that I am the Eternal who sets Israel apart." Surely, it needs no great insight into psychology to appreciate that the motivation engendering such ideas is incubated in an atmosphere of captivity or persecution or domination by rulers who frustrate the hopes and longings of a group. That is why apocalyptic writing is prominent in Hebrew literature. We shall call attention to this again as we meet with it elsewhere in Hebrew history. But Ezekiel set the pattern for this type of literature. It came to be a feature of the Judaism which he fathered.

It has been our intention to emphasize the importance of Ezekiel in the establishment of the Hebrews as a religious community and as the father of the Judaism which developed after the Exile. We have said that Judaism was predominantly priestly and legalistic. While this is not the highest form of religion, we should be very blind indeed if we failed to credit Ezekiel with the astonishing achievement of lifting the religion of the group far above anything which had been attained by the Hebrews prior to the Exile. The legalism that developed from Ezekiel's work was an inevitable stage in the process of lifting the level of religion from a lower to a higher form. Had it not been for the Exile, it is doubtful that the Hebrews as a religious community would have survived. It required catastrophe and suffering to awaken their consciences to an appreciation of what their prophetic wise men had been saying for years before the disaster. Ezekiel built on this foundation and it was largely because of him that the Hebrews did survive. If they had not survived as a religious community, their literature would probably not have been preserved either, and that would have been an irreparable loss. Nor would we have had the Jews' greatest contribution to the race, namely, Jesus of Nazareth, who was in direct line of spiritual descent from the great prophets.

## The Nameless Prophet, Deutero-Isaiah

That the great unknown prophet of the Exile is called Deutero-Isaiah is due to the fact that all the written material from his hand is included within that book of the Bible entitled "Isaiah." Historical scholarship has shown beyond any question that the Book of

Isaiah contains a great amount of material which could not have been written by that Isaiah we know about, of the eighth century, long before the Exile.

We shall not concern ourselves here with many of the interesting discoveries about the composition of the Book of Isaiah, but for our purpose it must suffice to say that this book is divided into three major divisions. We have already been told that most of the first thirty-nine chapters of the book concern the Isaiah with whom we have dealt. Chapters 40 to 55, for the most part, are the work of a prophet who wrote in the very last years of the Exile when the prospect of freedom and release was imminent. We shall think of the author of this portion as Deutero-Isaiah. Chapters 56 to 66 may have been written by one man or several men, but in any case they were written when some of the exiles had already returned to Jerusalem and had re-established themselves there.

Deutero-Isaiah, who must remain for us an anonymous person, is the last of the major prophets to be considered separately, even though some minor prophets did valuable service during the Restoration. He is not only the last of the great prophets, but in some respects he is the greatest of them all in the profundity of his spiritual insight. Much that he wrote was, as we shall see, immediately appreciated by his contemporaries, but the highest level of his thought was on a plane on which he worked alone. No one scaled that height of spiritual eminence until the time of Jesus. Deutero-Isaiah's best thoughts were like treasure hidden in a field. Jesus came upon them and knew their value. They had such a place in his mind that he quoted from them familiarly, and thought of himself in terms described by this prophet.

The first thing that strikes the reader as he takes up the writings of Deutero-Isaiah is the change in tone over any previous prophetic writing. Instead of accusations against popular and official unrighteousness, there is a new note of joy. In place of impending judgment and calamity, there is pardon and optimism. Instead of an angry Jahweh about to strike, we find him merciful, full of compassion, and gracious.

Console my people, console them—'tis the voice of your God—speak to Jerusalem tenderly, proclaim to her that her hard days are

ended, her guilt paid off, that she has received from the Eternal's hand full punishment for all her sins. (Isaiah 40:1, 2)

Up to the high hills, O herald of happiness to Sion! Raise your voice loudly, O herald of happiness to Jerusalem, raise it fearlessly, and tell the towns of Judah, "Here is your God! Here is the Eternal coming in power, maintaining mightily his cause! Here he is bringing what he has won, bringing what he has gained! For he feeds his flock like a shepherd, and gathers them in his arms, he is carrying the lambs in his bosom, and leading the ewes gently." (Isaiah 40: 9-11)

Sing a new song to the Eternal, sing his praise from end to end of earth; let the sea and all within it shout, far lands and all their folk; let the wolds and their townships rejoice, villagers in their settlements; let dwellers in the rock exult, with shouts from the hilltops! (Isaiah 42:10, 11)

Ah come, all ye that thirst, come to the waters, come, eat, O fainting souls! Buy food for nothing, wine and milk without money! Why spend your money on what is not food, your earnings on what never satisfies? Listen to me, oh listen, and you shall feed on good, and thrill over the finest fare. Hearken to me, come to me, listen and you shall revive; by an eternal compact I grant you the favours promised faithfully to David; for as I once made him a witness to the world, the leader and the commander of the nations, so now shall you call foreign folk, and strangers shall come hurrying to you, all for the sake of your God the Eternal, of Israel's Majesty who has honored you. (Isaiah 55:1-5)

The temper of these passages cannot be missed by the most casual reader. Deutero-Isaiah is in the midst of a situation in which he has the unusual distinction for a prophet of declaring good tidings instead of lamentation and doom. When we remember Amos, Hosea, and Isaiah, however, we recall passages from their writings in which they rather wistfully wished they might talk of the mercy and fatherly tenderness of Jahweh toward his people, but their waywardness did not permit. But Deutero-Isaiah is placed in an entirely different historical situation from that of any of his predecessors, which explains a great deal of his optimism. What is this contemporary state of affairs?

Deutero-Isaiah, between 546 and 538 B.C., which is twenty-five or thirty years after Ezekiel, wrote in an atmosphere of expectancy of release. Through all the years of the Exile the hope of return was

present. In the early years it took much faith in Jahweh to keep this hope alive, but Ezekiel kept the light burning. Now it was becoming brighter as the prospect of Babylonian supremacy declined. That prospect had turned into a strong probability that the Babylonian Empire would be overthrown by the rising power of Persia under Cyrus. Such an overturn presaged the freedom of the Hebrews, consequently the exultation. Observe the language by which Deutero-Isaiah refers to Cyrus:

> (The Eternal) says of Cyrus, "He is my friend, he executes my purpose!"
>
> Thus the Eternal, the true God, hails Cyrus, whom he consecrates —whose right hand I have grasped, to terrify nations, to open doors before him, to keep gates from being closed. I (the Eternal) myself will go before you (Cyrus), levelling the mountains, I will shatter doors of bronze, and cut through iron bars; I will give you hidden treasures, secret hoards; for 'tis I the Eternal who call you by name, I the God of Israel. For the sake of my servant Jacob and of my chosen Israel I called you by your name; you know me not, but I delight in you. I am the Eternal; there is no one else, no God besides me: kings I disarm, but you I arm, that, east and west, men may confess that I the Eternal stand alone—no god besides me— I form light and I make darkness, I bring bliss and calamity; I the Eternal, the true God, I do it all. (Isaiah 44:28-45:7)

Why does Deutero-Isaiah refer to Cyrus in such terms? Why did the probable supremacy of Persia under Cyrus hold so great promise of liberation? This is really an interesting question because it can be answered either from a secular or from a religious point of view. If we seek an answer to the above questions in the secular temper of historical science, we can say something like this: In Greek literature, Cyrus stands out as an ideal king. Herodotus and Xenophon have praised him as a great man, and their admiration for him as a man of character is marked. Cyrus rose from being head of a small principality, by successive stages of conquest, to be master in that ancient world. But it is not his successes that are lauded, rather it is the man who is greater than his conquests. Cyrus represents the transfer of empire from the Semitic to the Aryan stock, and with his rise to power he went further than former empire builders in the effort to conciliate the vanquished. To be

sure, he used force, but he tried to maintain his vast organization by methods which allayed hatred and engendered understanding and cooperation. Cyrus did homage to the religions of the conquered territories by himself appropriating their worship for his own. There was no surer way of merging himself with a people. From the standpoint of statesmanship, in terms of expediency and prudence, this policy was extremely wise. Cyrus allied himself with the deepest emotions of his varied peoples. There can be no doubt that, if we discount generously the almost mythical recital of Xenophon about Cyrus, there still remains a man whose personality, genius, and wisdom in handling subjects justifies his traditional reputation as one of the great figures of history. It is also a fact that Deutero-Isaiah called Cyrus, God's "Anointed." Isaiah was very well aware of Cyrus' many successes. Cyrus was quite plainly a household word in those days, and considering Cyrus' reputation for character, wisdom, and generosity, what is more natural than the conviction, fostered by wishes and hopes, that Cyrus is the probable deliverer, who can put an end to the Exile and allow the Hebrews to rebuild their city in the Judean hills.

This appears to be a very plausible explanation, but from a religious point of view it needs to be supplemented. The religious view maintains that the plausible account is a surface description, the outward appearance, not the real explanation. God moves in a mysterious way his wonders to perform. The religious view, and that is the view of Deutero-Isaiah, as of all the prophets, is that the historical events are in the last analysis what they are because God willed them so. There is a divine plan and purpose which God will carry through. According to the religious interpretation, Cyrus was the instrument of Jahweh, the one true God, even though Cyrus was not aware of it. And furthermore, this knowledge that Cyrus was the instrument of Jahweh, was "revealed" to Deutero-Isaiah prior to the event, just as the prediction of the Exile was revealed to Isaiah and Jeremiah. In other words, Deutero-Isaiah exults in the approach of Cyrus, not because Cyrus has the reputation he has, but because Jahweh is the kind of God that he is, using Cyrus for his purposes. Perhaps both the secular and the religious

accounts are correct and therefore it is not necessary to choose between them.

Up to this point we have considered Deutero-Isaiah in the light of the world situation in which he was placed, but we must not forget that he never would have reacted as he did to the historical circumstances without a rich background of his own national history and a profoundly intimate knowledge of what the Exile experience was to the Jewish soul. At first hand he had heard expounded the work of the earlier prophets and the application of their sayings to the Exile. He had been taught their writings. As a Hebrew student he had been close to Jewish scholars in Babylon, absorbed in their efforts of gathering together, writing, and editing the nation's literature. The books of Judges, Samuel, and Kings took form in the Exile. This was one aspect of literary enterprise historical in character. But our prophet was also acquainted with another type of literature, such as Lamentations, and with many of the Psalms, revealing storm-tossed souls casting up out of the deeps bitter hatred toward Babylon and great spiritual unrest. Such writings came from consciences burdened with the nation's sin and remorse. In them was perplexity over the suffering of the innocent. All this was part and parcel of our prophet's inner experience, and he brings to it the touch of his own spiritual genius.

Now we are prepared to follow Deutero-Isaiah's thinking, as he traces out on the eve of a new tomorrow an altered design of the Covenant relation between Jahweh and his people, and the whole outside world.

*Deutero-Isaiah's Monotheism.*—The Covenant between Jahweh and his people has been the theme around which all the prophets have played their separate parts. And they, as we know, inherited this religious legacy from many preceding generations back to the time of Moses. We might very well say that the life and thought of the prophets could be described as an effort to understand Jahweh's will for his people, and to declare that will. We must try to appreciate what this means. It means first that they were men who had passed through much struggle and travail of soul, seeking understanding for themselves. Some terrific personal experience or national experience made them question their understanding of

Jahweh, as in the case of the Jewish soul in exile. Some men cannot be satisfied with scepticism or doubt or indifference; they must find some path through the dark. Their souls are laid hold of; they are prodded by inner compulsion to discover some way to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable elements in the conflict. The nature of this process is known to all sincere seekers after truth. A superb illustration in another sphere was given by the late Supreme Court Justice Cardozo, also a Hebrew, one of the great men of our time. In describing the "misgivings that afflict a judge's mind," he said:

> I have gone through periods of uncertainty so great that I have sometimes said to myself, "I shall never be able to vote in this case either one way or the other." Then suddenly the fog is lifted. I have reached a stage of mental peace. I know in a vague way that there is doubt whether my conclusion is right. I must needs admit the doubt in view of the travail I suffered before landing at the haven. I cannot quarrel with any one who refuses to go along with me; and yet for me, however it may be for others, the judgment reached with so much pain has become the only possible conclusion, the antecedent doubts merged and finally extinguished in the calmness of conviction.[1]

This interesting example of a process of thought in a modern judge's mind is not unlike the struggle through which the prophet passed seeking to understand the meaning of God in human experience. What is Jahweh's will? How is it to be described in human terms? What does the Covenant require and how can it be made plain to the people? Each prophet saw something: either the inadequacy of a former understanding of Jahweh, or some supplementary thought contributed by an insight that had come to him. Always, then, the nature of the Covenant relation, i.e., the relation of Jahweh to his people and they to him, depends on the concept of God that has been attained. By the time of the first Isaiah, Jahweh was described as the God of Justice, and by Jeremiah as a Being who deals with the souls of men. Deutero-Isaiah attained such a clear-cut consciousness of the reality of monotheism that a few scholars hold that only Deutero-Isaiah can be rightly called the first real monotheist. Rather, however, the more accurate way is to recognize Deutero-Isaiah as the prophet who attained the clearest

[1] As quoted in *The New York Times*, editorial, July 11, 1938.

precision of meaning and expression regarding a spiritual conception of monotheism. He has philosophic discernment that there can be but one God. Jahweh is that God, and all the other so-called gods are not gods at all, simply things or statues or graven images. A new insight, not altogether original, yet refreshingly so in a way, is the awareness or revelation that the one God, Creator of the Universe, is the one who, in his infinite wisdom, has chosen this people and made a Covenant with them. Let Deutero-Isaiah speak for himself in regard to monotheism, and then we shall follow with his understanding of what this means in terms of the Covenant.

Here is the word of the Eternal, King of Israel, Israel's deliverer, the Lord of hosts: "I am the first and I am the last, there is no god besides me. Who is like me? Let him come forward with his claim, let him set out his case before me. Who foretold the future long ago? Pray let us hear what is still to be! Fear nothing, dread not in the days to come; have I not foretold it and announced it long ago? You are my witnesses whether there is any god, any Power, any, besides me." (Isaiah 44:6-8)

Makers of idols are all inane, and their adored images are futile; an idol's devotees are blind and dull, their end is shame. Who would ever carve a god or cast an idol?—mere futilities! The spells put on it make a sorry show, and its magic charms are only man-made; let its adherents gather, let them come forward, and they shall quake, they shall at once be disconcerted. The blacksmith works with the coals and hammers the idol into shape, plying his brawny arms, losing strength as he grows hungry, and weary for a drink of water. The worker in wood draws lines on the block, marking them with a pencil; then he shapes the idol with his plane into a human figure, comely as a man, to occupy a shrine. In cutting timber for this purpose a man will fix upon some plane or oak, which God planted and the rain nourished to serve as fuel; men kindle a fire with it to warm themselves, or start a blaze in order to bake bread. But he turns it into a god for worship; he makes it into an idol and bows down to it! Half of it he burns in the fire, roasting flesh upon the embers; he eats the roast meat and he is satisfied, warming himself and saying, "Ha, I am warm now, I feel the glow!" The other half he turns into a god, into an idol, and bows down to it, worshipping it, praying to it, crying, "Save me, for you are my god!" Such men are ignorant and senseless. (Isaiah 44:9-18)

Who can miss the full stature of monotheism here achieved?

There is a sweep of vision that includes the whole of things: the created universe, the movement of history fulfilling a purpose, a deep sense of unity pervading the multiplicities of human experience. There is an intuition of oneness, which came into full flower through searching intellectual meditation and profound religious feeling. Jahweh is God, beside whom there is none else, nor has been nor shall be. The monotheism of Deutero-Isaiah carries with it a certainty and conviction not quite reached by Ezekiel. Deutero-Isaiah has what may be recognized in some measure as a philosophic or intellectual awareness of the necessity for unity. Anything short of the unity of Being was intellectually intolerable.

Deutero-Isaiah combined with his monotheism a degree of personal religious intimacy which Greek philosophy did not share. It is a common feature of Hebrew prophecy that it is concerned with the character of God as well as with the power of God. This, of course, is due to the intense moral earnestness of Hebrew prophetic religion. Deutero-Isaiah followed the tradition of the prophets in this respect, and we can discern especially the influence of the first Isaiah and of Jeremiah.

*Israel as Servant of Jahweh.*—Once the idea of the universality of God had been clearly grasped, it was not a long step to the relevant thought that the nation Israel was in possession of a unique revelation. And this revelation could hardly be meant for a single group among the peoples of the world. It must be intended for all nations, and yet through whom could it be proclaimed except through those who saw the light? There came to Deutero-Isaiah, therefore, another revelation, the counterpart of his monotheism, namely, that Israel was chosen, not as the recipient of national greatness in material terms, but to reveal the oneness and character of Jahweh to the world. All the events of the past are now seen from this new point of view. The history of the Hebrews has been the story of God's effort to reveal his will to a chosen people, chosen for a spiritual mission in the world. Nothing can prevent it. Babylon and Persia were, for all their greatness, episodes along Israel's spiritual odyssey. But what now interests the prophet tremendously is how to prepare the people spiritually for their national destiny. The servant passages are the answer to the question.

The servant passages are in a class by themselves for spiritual beauty. If the God of the universe is at all describable in terms of Deutero-Isaiah's monotheism, then we must credit him for revealing with supreme insight the spiritual privileges and obligations of relationship with God. In referring to and selecting from the well-known servant passages, we shall deal with them all as coming from the hand of Deutero-Isaiah, ignoring some questions about authorship which might be raised. In any case, it is all so manifestly in the same vein and spirit as to be one whole.

In Deutero-Isaiah's prophecy, the term "servant of the Lord," is almost a synonym for the nation, and it is constantly used throughout, but the term takes on increasing significance as it proceeds. The prophecy culminates in a series of famous passages, some of which we here quote:

> But, O Israel my servant, O my chosen Jacob, O race of Abraham my friend, whom I fetched from afar and called from earth's far end, to whom I said, "You are my servant, I have not rejected, I have chosen you," fear not, for I am with you, I am your God, be not dismayed; I will strengthen, I will support you, I will uphold you with my trusty hand. (Isaiah 41:8-10)
>
> Here is my servant whom I uphold, my chosen one, my heart's delight; I have endowed him with my spirit, to carry true religion to the nations. He shall not be loud and noisy, he shall not shout in public; he shall not crush a broken reed, nor quench a wick that dimly burns; loyally shall he set forth true religion, he shall not be broken nor grow dim, till he has settled true religion upon earth, till far lands long for his instruction.
>
> Here is the message of the Eternal, the true God, who spread and stretched the heavens, who made the earth and all it bears, who gives breath to its people and life to those who walk on it: "I the Eternal have called you of set purpose, I have taken you by the hand, I have formed you for the rescuing of my people, for a light to nations, to open eyes that are blind, to free captives from their bondage, darkened lives from prison." (Isaiah 42:1-7)
>
> Behold, my servant . . . yet shall rise, he shall be raised on high; as many were appalled once at his fate, kings shuddering at his doom, so many a nation shall yet do him homage, with kings in silent awe, for they shall see what they were never told, a sight unheard of. (Isaiah 52:13-15)

There has been a good deal of scholarly discussion about the

meaning of the "servant," for in some passages it is plainly the nation that is meant, while others point apparently to a particular person. We should mention that the material in the fifty-second and fifty-third chapters has, in Christian tradition, been regarded as a prophecy of the coming of Jesus Christ, so well do many of the ascriptions meet the circumstances of Jesus' life. We are indebted to George Adam Smith for one of the most reasonable explanations for the increasing particularity of description regarding the servant.[2] Essentially his thought is that Deutero-Isaiah starts with the nation as a whole definitely in mind and, in one sense, the nation never leaves his mind. But the deeper his thought goes, the more he appreciates the fact that the great spiritual task of being a servant will fall upon a comparatively small number, who will be, as it were, a spiritual nucleus energizing the national body. But he perceives also that in the last analysis, as in the case of Jeremiah in times past, the burden sometimes falls upon one leader, one man who is a veritable Messiah, because he alone is the personification of the task to be accomplished, and without whom presumably it would not be carried through. It is reasonable for us to hold, then, that Deutero-Isaiah's "servant" is both the nation and also a looked-for Messiah, depending on the mode of his thought in the particular passage under consideration.

But while our prophet's thought is now on the nation and again on a particular person or Messiah, there is the same note of service for Jahweh. And it is *service which involves suffering*. The character of this service and the reason that suffering or martyrdom is part of it, must now briefly engage us, for we have reached the highest level of Old Testament religion.

First, as to the character of the service God lays upon his people. The quotation given from the forty-second chapter is full of meaning that permeates all these passages. There it will be noted that Deutero-Isaiah has the entire non-Jewish world in mind, and the service to be rendered is, "to carry true religion to the nations" or as it is sometimes translated, "to set justice in the earth." Many commentators have pointed out that Deutero-Isaiah has here passed far

[2] George Adam Smith, *Book of Isaiah* (London: Hodder and Stoughton), Vol. II, chap. XVI.

beyond the bounds of narrow, national conceptions of religion, and has actually come to a discernment of service to Jahweh as primarily an effort to spread righteousness on earth. As stated, it may not seem to have great precision of meaning, yet it reminds us of the analogous conviction of Socrates that there are moral principles rooted in the very nature of things. For Deutero-Isaiah, God and righteousness go together. The service of God is the service of man also, in terms of mercy, humanity, justice, law. The prophet is proclaiming an ideal for humanity, an ideal which may be called the love of justice.

There is here perhaps more definiteness implied than appears. In the conduct of human affairs around him, the prophet saw the results of man's inhumanity to man, the misery, cruelty, greed, avarice, which were the attributes of injustice. He declares, therefore, that man's ways are not God's ways, neither are man's thoughts God's thoughts. Deutero-Isaiah endeavors to lift men's thoughts above all the impoverishments of their lower selves to a new devotion to that omnipotent God whose ways are justice, righteousness, and peace.

Religion in these terms is indeed a service to the world, and Deutero-Isaiah has by it brought to full flower the early promise of such fulfillment already discernible in the earlier prophets. But Deutero-Isaiah has done even more than state what Jahweh's service is. He perceives that such service lays a burden of vicarious suffering upon him who shoulders the task. Why is this so? Jesus called attention to the fact that his countrymen had a way of stoning their prophets. It seems to be a perverse habit of mankind to heap sticks and stones and foul epithets upon the prophetic voices, and then later to build monuments to them. The suffering that is borne by the prophet, whether religious, political, or scientific, is suffering that is purely for others, or, as we say, it is vicarious. Surely any of us can follow Deutero-Isaiah's thought here, and understand a certain inevitableness in the suffering of those who walk ahead of the multitude, calling them out of their complacency, ignorance, and smug moral insensibility, receiving misfortune and persecution as a reply. But it is a little more difficult for us to follow Deutero-Isaiah in his further step, bringing out another aspect of vicarious suffering.

> And yet ours was the pain he bore, the sorrow he endured! We thought him suffering from a stroke at God's own hand; yet he was wounded because we had sinned, 'twas our misdeeds that crushed him; 'twas for our welfare that he was chastised, the blows that fell to him have brought us healing. Like sheep we had all gone astray, we had each taken his own way, and on him the Eternal laid the guilt of all of us. . . . Therefore shall he win victory, he shall succeed triumphantly, since he has shed his life-blood, and let himself be numbered among rebels, bearing the great world's sins, and interposing for rebellious men. (Isaiah 53:4-6, 12)

It is indicative of the prophet's moral genius that he understood the redemptive power which is hidden in vicarious suffering. It does seem to be a fact that the human conscience is sometimes awakened to its own depravity or sterility by the sheer unselfishness of vicarious suffering. Consider Jeremiah, for example, whose life probably inspired Deutero-Isaiah's thought. Recall how he labored to quicken the mind and conscience of his generation. Consider how he saw them involved in political arrangements that proved disastrous. And when the day of doom came, he could have escaped it. But he made himself one with his countrymen. He did not deserve punishment, as the Babylonians themselves saw, but he stayed and did suffer, the just for the unjust; he bore their adversities and received their stripes with them. Looking back upon this during the Exile, the people conceived a great respect and reverence for what Jeremiah had done, an appreciation that never came in his own day. He himself was never fully reconciled to his suffering, and so his life was a tragedy and to some extent a mystery. But Deutero-Isaiah could thank God for a life like that of Jeremiah, and thereby this tragedy was transmuted into a blessing and the mystery into a great light. It is men like that who bear the burden of a nation's sins, suffering under it, dying for it. But with their death humanity has been enriched, revealing by their superlative moral eminence new possibilities toward which others may now aspire. These men redeem human nature from the slavery of sin. Deutero-Isaiah in some related vein of reflection perceived that the moral significance of vicarious suffering in behalf of others is its redemptive character. That amazing revelation is, therefore, appropriately projected by him into the future as the definitive characteris-

tic of enlistment in the service of God. It was personalized in the prophet's conception of the Messiah, and there is nothing again in the Old Testament that touches this sublime conception of character, until men saw it before them in the person of Jesus Christ.

## Judaism After the Exile

The prophecy of Deutero-Isaiah, concerning release from the Exile, was abundantly fulfilled by Cyrus, king of Persia, after his successful campaign against Babylon. Not later than 537 B.C., a royal decree gave the Jews the privilege of return. Many Jews, of course, took advantage of the opportunity, although many others, economically well circumstanced, remained where they were. The wealthier Jews no doubt provided financial aid to the more zealous Hebrews who were imbued with high hopes of the new future waiting God's people in Palestine. But it took courage and hardihood to believe that the new Jerusalem of their dreams could come to earth amid that actual pile of strewn stones that was Jerusalem. This is the story of the Restoration. Various leaders shouldered the load, but the real work of rehabilitation occurred under the leadership of Nehemiah and later of Ezra. We must forgo the details of the heroic efforts at reestablishment of a Jewish nation, which was symbolized by the restoration of the Temple in 516 B.C., and the rebuilding of the walls of Jerusalem in 444 B.C.

Our concern is not to present a history of the Jewish nation. We are interested in the religion and philosophy of the Hebrews and, as we have previously stated, have included only enough of their history and its character to make meaningful the course of religious development. The post-Exilic period is quite different from earlier history, and with the return from Exile a new era in Jewish history begins. Politically, as a nation, the Hebrews were destined to relative insignificance. Popular hope would never be reconciled to such a destiny, of course, but the post-Exilic period may be thought of as the history of a religious community, and not as the history of a secular eastern government with religion present as one aspect of the cultural life. We may state the contrast another way. Before the Exile, with the exception of periods of reformation, politics went its own way independently, more or less indifferent to the

fate of religion. After the Exile, the political relations, both within and without, to whatever world power was dominant, were determined by the religious ideas and practices which were officially authoritative. Religion was now primary. The official religion, despite the fact that it developed a priestly organization and corresponding system of worship and sacrifice, was not at all like that which existed before the Exile. On the contrary, the post-Exilic Judaism was formulated with the earnest desire that the pre-Exilic conditions should never again exist. It was the sincere intention that the lessons of the Exile should be forever enshrined in an institutionalized practice of religion that would keep Israel faithful to Jahweh.

The most effective way to make certain that religious behavior and practice shall follow a prescribed course is to develop a body of law that shall be compulsory for all adherents of the faith. This is just exactly the course followed by the Jewish leaders. Consequently, we can readily understand why the most distinguishing characteristic of Judaism was the development of the Law. There were other important features of Judaism in the five hundred years from the Exile to Christ, but the Law is the most important. As we shall point out, also, some of the world's great literature came out of this period, indicating reflective thinking on some of the enduring problems about which the human mind will never cease to philosophize, such as the problems of suffering and immortality and the nature of wisdom.

In order to get a fairly clear survey of the five centuries under consideration, we shall present a series of short sections under the following headings: The Law; Political Fortunes of the Hebrews; Religious and Philosophical Problems Recorded in Hebrew Literature.

*The Law.*—We indicated a distinction between a prophetic and a priestly way of regarding religion when we called attention to certain differences between Ezekiel and Deutero-Isaiah. The legalistic emphasis of Ezekiel flourished and was more explicitly laid hold of and understood than were the loftier spiritual insights of Deutero-Isaiah. As a matter of fact, Deutero-Isaiah did not make much impact upon Hebrew religion and was not fully appreciated

before the time of Jesus. The course of Hebrew religion after the Exile followed along the lines laid down by Ezekiel, and prophecy was never again, until John the Baptist, represented by such men as those we have considered. In fact, prophecy waned until in time it more or less disappeared in the priestly legalism that came into being. The development of priestly legalism was inevitable, because of the necessary preoccupation of the returned exiles with such matters as rebuilding the Temple and establishing an appropriate and pure Jahweh worship. Indeed, such minor prophets as Haggai and Zechariah, in the early years after the return, were constantly goading the people to build the Temple, although the masses were hard pressed by the need to get on their economic feet. These prophets claimed that even the material conditions of life would be improved when the Temple was rebuilt, and went so far as to state that the Messiah would not come until it was accomplished.

In order to understand the development of the Law, we should first recall that during the Exile serious attention was directed by Ezekiel to the pre-Exilic lawbook, Deuteronomy. Remember that this book was prepared by the prophetic school, and had as its aim the establishment of pure Jahweh religion. This lawbook of Deuteronomy was intended to combine the teaching and traditions of the prophets with the duties of the priests, who were to carry out the necessary services. We also recall that it was this book which brought about Josiah's reform of 621 B.C. This reform, we learned, was extremely revolutionary in that it centralized worship. It put a great many priests out of their jobs at the high places in other parts of the country. Furthermore, local pride was involved, and the reform was never wholeheartedly approved by all. That is why a reaction occurred. In the Exile, however, the Law, as set forth in Deuteronomy, was not only a revered authority, it was also enlarged upon and in some respects changed by Ezekiel. He tells us himself (Ezekiel 40-48) that by direct commandment from God came the instructions for the Temple services. He specifically makes an alteration regarding priests and Levites. In Deuteronomy they are one and the same, but Ezekiel now makes the Levites a lesser order. In fact, it is clear that Ezekiel proposes that those priests and their descendants who formerly attended the "high

places," may look forward to employment, not as priests but, as it were, assistants to the priests, to do the more menial work of the sanctuary. Numerous other additions are made by Ezekiel to the Law in behalf of the prospective future state. It is possible also that the so-called Holiness Code (Lev. 17-26) is also by Ezekiel, or by a priestly group not far removed from him in time or spirit.

After the Exile and the rebuilding of the Temple, there were further additions to the written Law. Since these are written as though coming from Moses, as in the case of Deuteronomy, it would never be obvious to the reader that they are actually post-Exilic. These later written changes are known as the Priestly Code. They are incorporated within the Pentateuch, i.e., the first five books of the Bible, and probably were part of the Law as adopted in 432 B.C., when Nehemiah was governor of Jerusalem for the second time, and which is described in Nehemiah 8-10. It is quite rightly referred to as the Priestly Code, because it is mainly concerned with worship and the functions and status of the priests. Some pertinent passages are Exodus 25 to 31:18; Leviticus 1 to 16, 27; Numbers 1 through 10. The reading of these illustrative passages indicates the marked increase in the written body of the Law. But the process in the development of legalism was not confined to the written Law or Torah. There was also a very large body of oral law, which arose from the fact that it often became necessary for some leader to make application of the written Law to some unexpected situation. In this way precedents were established which, in due course, became equally authoritative and binding as the written Law. It required a great deal of time and ability to master the oral Law, consequently there grew up professionals, called "scribes," who were learned in the Law. After the time of Christ, this oral material was codified and brought together in written form and called the Mishna, but in the preceding period, although unwritten, it was a binding authority.

We shall illustrate the process of legalism, written and oral, by selecting the Law relative to the Sabbath Day. In the Priestly Code, Exodus 31:12-17, it is enjoined upon the people that they keep the Sabbath Day holy: "Anyone who desecrates it shall be put to death. For whoever does any business on the sabbath, that man shall be

outlawed." Now, surely, such a demand and such dire consequences make it necessary to know just what shall be regarded as work, and what shall not be so regarded. Is feeding the cattle on the Sabbath work, or is it a necesary duty exempt from the command and the penalty? Is pulling an ox out of a pit work? How about feeding one's family, or bathing the sick? Questions of this nature required answers. As the years passed, new situations would call for additional answers, so that by the time of Jesus, the accumulation of detail on the acceptable way of keeping the Sabbath had become voluminous. The following passage from the historian Schürer indicates what development of the Law meant at the beginning of the Christian era.

On the whole thirty-nine kinds of work were prohibited, but very few are of course anywhere alluded to in the Pentateuch. These thirty-nine prohibited works are: (1) sowing, (2) ploughing, (3) reaping, (4) binding sheaves, (5) threshing, (6) winnowing, (7) cleansing crops, (8) grinding, (9) sifting, (10) kneading, (11) baking, (12) shearing wool, (13) washing, (14) beating, (15) dyeing, (16) spinning, and (17) warping it, (18) making two cords, (19) weaving two threads, (20) separating two threads, (21) making a knot, (22) untying a knot, (23) sewing two stitches, (24) tearing to sew two stitches, (25) catching a deer, (26) killing, (27) skinning, and (28) salting it, (29) preparing its skin, (30) scraping off the hair, (31) cutting it up, (32) writing two letters, (33) blotting out for the purpose of writing two letters, (34) building, (35) pulling down, (36) putting out a fire, (37) lighting a fire, (38) beating smooth with a hammer, (39) carrying from one tenement to another.

Each of these chief enactments again requires further discussions concerning its range and meaning. And here, properly speaking, begins the work of casuistry. We will bring forward just a few of its results. According to Ex. XXXIV, ploughing and reaping were among the forbidden works. But to gather a few ears of corn was already looked upon as reaping. When on one occasion the disciples did this on the Sabbath, they were found fault with by the Pharisees, not on account of plucking the ears, which (according to Deut. 23, 26) was permitted, but because they were thus guilty of doing reaping work on the Sabbath (Matt. XII, 1, 2; Mark II:23, 24; Luke VI:1, 2). The prohibition of making and untying a knot (Nos. 21 and 22) was much too general to rest satisfied with. It was also necessary to state to what kind of knot this applied, and to what it did not. "The following are the knots, the making of which renders a man guilty: The

knot of camel-drivers and that of sailors; and as one is guilty by reason of tying, so also of untying them. R. Meir says: Guilt is not incurred by reason of a knot, which can be untied with one hand. There are knots by reason of which one is not guilty, as one is in the case of the camel-driver's and sailor's knots. A woman may tie up a slit in her shift and the strings of her cap, those of her girdle, the straps of the shoes and sandals, of skins of wine and oil, of a pot with meat" (*Shabbath* XV:1-2). And to tie the strings of the girdle being permitted, it was agreed that a pail also might be tied over the well with a girdle, but not with a rope (*Shabbath* XV:2). The prohibition of writing on the Sabbath (No. 32) was further defined as follows: "He who writes two letters with his right or his left hand, whether of one kind or of two kinds, as also if they are written with different ink or are of different languages, is guilty. He even who should from forgetfulness write two letters is guilty, whether he has written them with ink or with paint, red chalk, India-rubber, vitriol, or anything which makes permanent marks. Also he who writes on two walls which form an angle, or on the two tablets of his account-book, so that they can be read together, is guilty. He who writes upon his body is guilty. If any one writes with dark fluid, with fruit juice, or in the dust on the road, in sand, or in anything in which the writing does not remain, he is free . . ." (*Shabbath* XII:3-6).

According to Ex. XXXV:3, it was forbidden to kindle a fire on the Sabbath. This prohibition was supplemented by that of extinguishing a fire. With regard to the latter, the question arose, how it was to be observed, when a non-Israelite approached a fire. "If a non-Israelite comes to extinguish a fire, one must neither say to him: 'put it out,' nor 'do not put it out,' and that because one is not obliged to make him rest" (*Shabbath* XVI:6). It is self-evident that the prohibition to extinguish fire would be extended to lights and lamps. Concerning these it was ordained as follows: "He who extinguishes a light because he is afraid of heathen, robbers, or the evil spirit, or for the sake of one sick, that he may sleep, is free. If it is done, however, to save the oil, the lamp, or the wick, he is guilty. R. Joses declares him in each case free, except with respect to the wick, because he thus prepares, as it were, a coal" (*Shabbath* II:5).[3]

The foregoing cases must suffice to illustrate what is meant by the development of legalism in religion. The instances just given could be multiplied into hundreds of pages of other examples of

[3] Emil Schürer, *A History of the Jewish People in the Time of Christ* (trans. by John Macpherson; Edinburgh: T. and T. Clark, 1898), Division II, Vol. II, sec. 28.

the Law regarding every area of life, such as birth, marriage, preparation of food, purification of the body, and provision for the needy.

*Worship Under Law.*—Before closing this brief section on Law, we should consider the form which worship took in a religion so dominated by Law. There are two types of worship to be distinguished; one is Temple worship, and the other synagogue worship. From the point of view of post-Exilic Judaism, the Temple worship appeared to be the more important. It seemed to testify to the reality, not only of a national religion, but of a national existence. The Temple was a place of pilgrimage. It was the fulfillment of past hopes for a loyal Jahweh religion, and the center of all present hopes for a messianic future. The forms of worship carried on there reveal the effort to keep Israel faithful to the Covenant so that no guilt should pile up against a day of wrath, and no prophet should ever again have to denounce the impurities of Temple worship. The transcendent holiness of God, so stressed by Ezekiel, was not forgotten. The sinfulness of man, therefore, stood in dark contrast to the purity of God. Man could not approach God except as his sin was put away.

The manner in which the worshiper was brought into proper relation with God was through participation in sacrifices, among which were the "guilt offering," "the sin offering," "the incense offering," and the daily morning and evening "burnt offering," all of which are set forth in the Priestly Code. Later on, the fire used for the morning and evening burnt offering was made perpetual. Certain sacrificial requirements attended all these offerings, and it is clear that each one stood for a cleansing from sin. In some mysterious way, the blood of the victim provided an atonement, and the conscience of the worshiper was freed from a sense of guilt. Lest there be any unrequited sins, not covered by the particular sacrifices, there was instituted the annual Day of Atonement, recorded in Lev. 16, the purpose of which was to provide atonement for the whole people.

Side by side with Temple worship and its priests was the continuous development of the oral Law, the keeping of which was regarded as an essential duty of the worshiper, whether he had

the advantage of the Temple services or not. This brings us to the synagogue form of worship. Synagogue worship appears to have developed from the religious gatherings during the Exile, and these were never discontinued. Indeed, this mode of worship extended wherever Jews were, and they were scattered everywhere. It was regarded at first as a temporary substitute for Temple worship, but even after the rebuilding of the Temple, the synagogue was recognized as fulfilling a genuine need and in the long run proved to be more important than the Temple. The synagogue congregations made no effort to duplicate the services in the Temple, but they did have a meeting of inspiration at which the written Law was read and expounded. Such exposition had much to do with the development of the oral Law. The following passage excellently states the significance and place of synagogue worship.

> The Law lay at the heart of all the thinking of the later Judaism, and in a very real sense the worship of the synagogue was, and is, the cult of the Law. There were, of course, other elements; prayers were recited and hymns were sung, and instruction of various kinds was given both to children and to adults; but the center of the whole was the reading of the Law; followed by exposition and comments from those best able to expound and apply it. There grew up thus a class of men whose whole time was given to its study, those to whom the name of "scribes" is especially applied in New Testament times.[4]

We have tried to show the process by which legalism permeated more and more all of life, and to indicate how the sacred and secular were merged into one intricate pattern of duties prescribed by Law. It is a fact that this made for undue externalism, and a preoccupation with the letter, rather than the spirit, of the Law. On the other hand, there were aspects of Judaism, some of which reveal a deeper vein of thinking during those years in which legalism was developing. These will receive attention after a brief consideration of a few major political changes—changes which affected powerfully the religious life.

*Political Fortunes of the Hebrews (537* B.C.*-63* B.C.*).*—With the exception of one brief period, the entire political life of the Hebrews after the Exile to the conquest by Rome in 63 B.C. was

[4] Oesterley and Robinson, *Hebrew Religion* (New York: Macmillan, 1937), p. 294.

subordinate to some great world power. The first was, of course, Persia, which continued dominant until its defeat by Alexander the Great in 333 B.C. The Jews during the Persian period were ruled by a succession of governors, the early ones Jewish, but most later ones aliens. The outstanding man among these governors was Nehemiah. He rebuilt the walls of Jerusalem and did more than anyone to fasten the Law firmly upon Jewish life (Nehemiah 9:38-10:39).

When the Persians went down in defeat before Alexander the Great in 333 B.C., it made very little political difference to the Jews, although culturally, Greek ideas were in time to have marked effect. The Greeks ruled Syria as well as the rest of the world of their time, but they interfered little with Jewish affairs which were, after all, quite insignificant from a material standpoint. Alexander died in 323 B.C., and his empire was broken up, divided by the fortunes of intrigue and conflict among various generals of the army. One of these was Ptolemy, whose portion was Egypt and part of Syria. He seems to have been rather ruthless in his treatment of the Jews. Although he was in power over the Syrian area for only a short time, many Jews were required to emigrate to Egypt. Later, Palestine, as a part of Syria, was dominated by the Seleucids, a dynasty begun by Seleucus, an ambitious and scheming general of Ptolemy, who managed to carve out for himself a territory and a career. His capital city was Antioch.

This dynasty of the Seleucids now coexisted in the ancient world between two other powerful dynasties: the House of Ptolemy, possessing Egypt, and the House of Antigonus (Antigonus had been one of Alexander's generals), in control of the Macedonian peninsula. The plots, counterplots, intrigues, and wars that marked the relationships of these groups during the third century B.C. do not concern us greatly, but they help us appreciate the external environment in which the Jews tried to live their religious life. Furthermore, the Jews were an intimate part of it all. They were a completely subject people, required to pay a heavy burden of taxes, and were often apprehensive about their fate in a war-torn world. More than once they resisted efforts to despoil the Temple of the

treasures that had once more accumulated over a long period of time.

*The Maccabean Period.*—The involvement of the Jews in the intricate swirl of world affairs is illustrated by the momentous revolt which inaugurated the Maccabean period, described in the apocryphal Books of the Maccabees and in the writings of the Jewish historian, Josephus. The Maccabees suddenly and unexpectedly rekindled the hope of freedom and independence. There was always the star of hope, but it was usually a very remote star. The Seleucid dynasty was the ruling power in Syria. The culture it represented was Greek, as we would expect from the fact that it was originally connected with the empire of Alexander. Greek culture, which is usually referred to as Hellenism, had been from the time of Alexander permeating the whole ancient world. The Jews were affected by it, so much so that they were divided among themselves with respect to their acceptance or rejection of Greek habits of life and ways of thinking. At least from 200 B.C. to 174 B.C., there were many Jews who desired to Hellenize the city of Jerusalem—that is, to introduce Greek games, build Greek-type buildings, and popularize Greek customs. About 174 B.C., this movement became sufficiently articulate so that appeal was made to the Seleucid ruler, Antiochus Epiphanes, to help forward this "up-to-date" program. There was a good deal of heated argument and tension among the Jews themselves. We are, of course, oversimplifying a very complex political-religious situation, but let it suffice to remark that there were many divisions and lines of cleavage among the Jews, which later produced the two dominant parties, the Pharisees and the Sadducees.

The ultraconservative religious party had a firmly established Judaism with a high priest at the head of a strong organization. But about this time internal troubles occurred, occasioned by a quarrel over the accession of a new high priest. Antiochus Epiphanes, the Seleucid ruler, took a hand in this, and he also tried to foster the Hellenistic movement. In fact, it appears that Antiochus Epiphanes endeavored to replace the Jewish religion itself, and there is no doubt that he was abetted by Hellenistic Jews. No Jew, however, could have approved the great "abomination"

of sacrificing a swine to Zeus in the Temple dedicated to Jahweh. The reaction to this proved to be an exploding volcano that let forth its pent-up wrath upon an astonished ruler. Alien interference with the Jewish faith was just exactly the spark to inflame the zealous. A revolt was led by Mattathias, a priest, who with his sons was prepared to defend Judaism to the death. It is known as the Maccabean revolt because of the early leadership of one of the sons, Judas Maccabeus, who was the soul and brains of the rebellion. It was an extremely bitter contest in which blood flowed copiously. First, the revolt aimed to purge the land of apostate Jews who had turned toward Hellenism. Next, it attempted to gain full religious liberty. Obviously, such rebellion would be countered by strong military measures on the part of the Syrian or Seleucid authorities. But what astonishes us, not less than the contemporary amazement of the Syrians, is the repeated ability to overcome military expeditions which sought to rout the rebels. Judas Maccabeus did succeed in obtaining religious freedom, but he now sought political freedom as well. In his efforts to maintain his position, he sought to ally himself with the rising power of Rome, which now for the first time is heard of in connection with Jewish affairs. In fact, a treaty was entered into with Rome (I Maccabees 8). However, nothing came of this treaty, so far as assistance to Judas was concerned, and Judas was finally overcome by the Syrians. But the Syrians were quite ready to give way on the question of religious liberty.

Although Judas was cut down and slain in battle, his brothers rose in his place and the story of conflict soon began all over again. Jonathan followed as leader and obtained marked success, due to the preoccupation of Syrian rulers with trouble nearer home. He actually controlled a wide area and, in defiance of Syrian power, left no doubt that he intended to be in charge indefinitely. He also became high priest of the Jews. But Jonathan was murdered by a Syrian general, who, under the guise of friendship, pretended to do him honor. And again another brother, Simon by name, took Jonathan's place about 143 B.C. All this while the Jews were once again their own masters. Especially was this the case under Simon who, as high priest also, ruled as a religious leader but not

as a king. To the orthodox Jew, this was an ideal situation and, from our present point of view, it is a great contrast to those far-off days when pagan rites were more served by the Hebrew kings than was the religion of Jahweh. But this state of affairs was only temporary. Peace never seemed to reign long in the ancient world where treachery cast its shadow on every high place. Simon and two of his three sons were murdered by a Jewish army officer. The remaining son, John Hyrcanus, escaped and was able to reach Jerusalem, where he was accepted as lawful high priest, successor to his father. After some preliminary troubles with the Syrian power, which never relinquished its claim to suzerainty over Palestine, a fairly long period of peace followed.

With John Hyrcanus firmly established as high priest, 135 B.C., the Jewish community obtained once again a position of *relative* independence, existing in its own right as a national unit. Religious and political leadership were merged into one. Political freedom and emancipation from Syria, such as it was, seems to have been aided more by Roman suggestions to Syria to keep hands off than by Hebrew strength at home. In any case, John Hyrcanus, though the high priest, was ambitiously intent on enlarging the borders of his land, or "kingdom." There is some ground for supposing that John Hyrcanus allowed the idea of kingship to attach itself to his title as high priest. He had the authority, anyway, and with his personal prestige and Maccabean blood, it would not be impossible for him to believe that destiny beckoned him as king. But if he did not appropriate such title, his son Aristobulus I did. The fact is that a dynasty was started, most likely by Hyrcanus himself. Aristobulus was recognized as king, as well as high priest; so also was his brother, Alexander Jannaeus, who shortly succeeded him. Two other members of this family followed each other in turn, down to 63 B.C., but the high religious motivations which activated the first Maccabeans gave way in their successors before political ambition and royal vanity. It was the worldliness of these Maccabean high priest kings which produced a religious party of protest. From this group the Pharisee party developed. They were ultraconservative, extremely Jewish, abiding by the Law, and hating Greek ideas and ways.

This period ends as tragically as did those earlier kingdoms which fell before Assyria and Babylonia. Pompey, the Roman general, who was extending the Roman power in Syria and Asia, intervened in a conflict between two Jewish royal brothers, Hyrcanus II (grandson of John Hyrcanus), and his brother Aristobulus II, for supremacy. Pompey was inclined to distrust Aristobulus, who was the high priest at Jerusalem, and with little ado laid siege to Jerusalem in 63 B.C. It took Pompey three months to break through into the city. When the Romans completed their work, Jerusalem was again a shambles. With the exception of the royal family of Aristobulus, prisoners did not interest the Romans. They merely slaughtered thousands of the inhabitants. On leaving, the Romans put Hyrcanus in charge as high priest and made him a Roman official, called ethnarch. Once more the dazed and scattered remnants carried on. Again the Jews continued as a religious community, subject to Rome, in which condition we shall still find them at the time of Christ.

## Religious and Philosophic Problems of Judaism

*The Problem of Hebrew Destiny.*—One problem which occupied a great deal of attention in post-Exilic Judaism was the problem of Hebrew destiny. We stated earlier in this chapter that the Temple was a living promise of the messianic future. Some very high hopes about that future were carried in the Hebrew heart. But the golden age of the future never seemed to come, and all promise of it failed of realization and was perpetually postponed. This made for pessimism and despair, and especially so whenever national welfare was critically threatened, as in the days of Antiochus Epiphanes and his attempted abolition of Hebrew religion. The repeated frustration of national hopes raised a genuine problem for Hebrew thought, involving the validity of the prophetic promise and the faithfulness of Jahweh. The immediate solution was apocalyptic thinking, which is a fantastic escape from the realities of life. Apocalyptic is an inferior form of prophecy, purporting to disclose some glorious impending future which God is preparing, and which will be brought to pass by omnipotent power. The writer of the Apocalypse claims divine revelation, is always

unknown, frequently adopts the name of some great one of the past as, for example, in the Book of Daniel, the Book of Enoch, Apocalypse of Baruch, Fourth Book of Ezra, Assumption of Moses.

The apocalyptic element seems to have been operative in Jewish thought even at the time of Amos, for he did use the expression, "a day of Jahweh," as did other prophets after him, especially Ezekiel. Likewise, there was the prediction of a Messiah. We saw this idea in the first Isaiah, and, in a very refined form, we saw it in Deutero-Isaiah. The older apocalyptic strain, that in some miraculous way Jahweh would exalt the Jews above their enemies, was very readily joined with the messianic idea. Since we know that Deutero-Isaiah's concept of the "servant" or Messiah never caught hold of popular imagination, less demanding ideas did. Thus we find the messianic hope combined with all manner of apocalyptic fancies in the post-Exilic period.

Most of the apocalyptic symbols and ideas were drawn from Persian sources. In fact, it seems to be the case that the only lasting influence of the period of Persian dominance is its effect upon Hebrew apocalyptic literature beginning with Ezekiel. The Hebrews could make use of the Persian cosmology and theology, which held that there were two great powers, Good and Evil, at war. The Good was to be supernaturally triumphant, there was to be a Resurrection from the Dead, a Day of Judgment, and the Destruction of this world by fire. These ideas entered deeply into Hebrew, and later into Christian cosmology, as the Books of Daniel and of Revelation respectively show.

Although there is some question whether, in the Book of Daniel, the reference to "the anointed one" really is a reference to a future Messiah, it is nevertheless the case that throughout the apocalyptic literature we do find the messianic idea described in apocalyptic terms. What is pertinent for our study is the fact that such conceptions formed a very great part of Jewish thought, thence to find their way into our own heritage of religious ideas.

*The Problem of Immortality.*—It may strike the reader with some surprise to learn that, until the post-Exilic period, there was remarkable unconcern about life after death. There had been, to be sure, from primitive times, the belief in a shadowy sort of con-

tinued existence. There was assumed to be a "gathering with one's fathers," but we never find any great speculative interest in the subject as a pressing problem. It does appear, however, that this more or less undefined idea of immortality was replaced by a somewhat more definite conception of after-life, which we may call the She'ol doctrine. She'ol was conceived to be a place, an abode of the dead, located in some vast cavernous space within the earth, and here the souls of the dead continued a colorless and misty existence. Certainly this is not a very inviting idea of immortality, although it seemed to be the orthodox Hebrew conception, as we know from the great number of references to She'ol in the Old Testament.

The She'ol idea of immortality was present also among the Babylonians. However, the Babylonians regarded She'ol as inhabited by gods as well as men, whereas the Hebrews thought of She'ol as lying outside of the care or interest of Jahweh.

> Trouble fills my soul to the full, my life is on the verge of death; I am already reckoned among the departed, I am but the shadow of a man, left to myself among the dead, like the slain lying in their graves, of whom thou hast mind no more—they are deprived of thee. (Psalm 88:3-5)
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> For death-land (She'ol) cannot thank thee, death cannot sing thy praise, and those who pass down to the pit have no hope of thy love; 'tis living men who praise thee, as I praise thee to-day. (Isaiah 38:18-19)

The She'ol doctrine, which reminds us of the Greek "Hades" is thought by some scholars to have been originally Babylonian, and to have made its way through Canaanite religion into the religion of the Hebrews. However that may be, it is a doctrine of immortality that leaves much to be desired. In the first place, it just misses being a spiritual conception and, in the second place, it seems to be devoid of ethical significance. Therefore, in the post-Exilic period, other solutions of the problem of immortality were sought.

In short, there were just two types of answer to this problem, one of which taught the resurrection of the body, while the other moved in the direction of belief in a spiritual existence with God. Of the two, that which came to be most widespread was the belief

in the resurrection of the body, with a corresponding doctrine of rewards and punishments. It was popular, first, because it was an integral part of apocalyptic literature, and second, because the masses could grasp it easily. It is unnecessary to enlarge on this view, except to point out that one of the great differences between the Sadducees and the Pharisees was on this very matter of the resurrection of the body. The Sadducees repudiated the doctrine and the Pharisees upheld it. There are two probable causes for the difference. In the first place, the Sadducees, who were loyal to the written Law or Torah, were not at all in sympathy with the development of the oral Law fostered by the Pharisees. The Sadducees, as a small group of aristocratic and sophisticated Jews, did not welcome the large degree of religious encroachment on daily living which the oral Law required. They were, therefore, at odds with ideas which found no clear support in the written Law. But, in the second place, the Sadducees, as sophisticated persons, were influenced by contemporary Greek culture. It does not appear that they were either versed in or acquainted with the great works of Greek philosophers such as Plato and Aristotle. Rather, they seem to have been affected by the worldly and sceptical philosophy current in the second century B.C. This scepticism is apparent in two writings from the Sadducean circle, the biblical Book of Ecclesiastes, and the apocryphal Book of Ecclesiasticus. In the first, Ecclesiastes, especially in Chapter 9, there is scepticism regarding immortality, while in Ecclesiasticus, immortality is confined to the shades of She'ol. The opposition of the Sadducees to the Pharisees on immortality, then, was not occasioned by depth of religious feeling. It was the Pharisees who at this time were representative of greater religious earnestness, and they were closer to the more common aspirations of mankind, among which immortality seems to hold a leading place.

Alongside the official doctrine, however, there was carried within Judaism another type of view concerning immortality, which never developed far, but which was unfolding. Growing out of the lofty concept of God in Deutero-Isaiah, which included the idea of everlastingness, there came to be the relevant idea that Jahweh had an everlasting interest in those who served him. If the God of Deutero-

Isaiah is the great creator and determiner of destiny, what barrier could death be to him? It is possible to hold, as some do, that certain passages of Deutero-Isaiah indicate his hold on a spiritual doctrine of immortality. Again in the seventy-third Psalm we have an expression of immortality in terms of communion and companionship with God.

> Yet I am always beside thee; thou holdest my right hand, guiding me with thy counsel, leading me after thyself by the hand. Whom have I in heaven but thee?

The author very likely is not wholly emancipated from the idea of the resurrection of the body, but the type of thinking is in a direction which emphasizes the spirit, and not the body. This more spiritual form of resurrection seems to be stressed in the thought of Jesus and Paul.

*The Problem of Suffering.*—One of the most difficult problems of religion and philosophy is the problem of suffering or, more generally, the problem of evil. We saw how Deutero-Isaiah found some explanation of the misfortunes endured by Israel by interpreting these sufferings as vicarious, that is, for others. This is well, but there are many other kinds of evil and suffering in life which seem to fall at random upon the just and the unjust, as Jesus himself said. Such disasters as plague, pestilence, blindness, destitution, misery of body and mind, and sudden death are features of human existence. What is the reason for such calamities, and is a religious man exempt therefrom? In the effort to deal with this problem, we may regard the Book of Job as representative of the deeper vein of religious and philosophic thought in the post-Exilic period. We are unable to examine the book in detail here, but it is universally regarded as one of the greatest pieces of the world's literature. Beautifully presented in dramatic form, it repudiates the generally accepted theory that all suffering is punishment for sin, an idea, incidentally, from which the prophets up to Deutero-Isaiah never seemed to get away.

Let us see the problem with which the author of this great drama struggles. Job is the tragic hero of the piece, a man of consequence, well-to-do, loyal to God, respected by all, even by the poor and

fatherless because his human sympathy had encompassed them. Had he not been "eyes to the blind, and feet to the lame"? He is a man blessed of God with what the Hebrews and most of us regard as the good things of life—family, prosperity, health, friends. But suddenly, in succession, one form of destruction after another falls upon him, both from the hand of man and from nature. The Sabeans take away his herds of oxen and asses and kill his servants; lightning destroys the sheep and shepherds; the Chaldeans take the camels and camel drivers; a tornado strikes the house of his eldest son where all his sons and daughters are banqueting, and they are killed. At last Job himself is smitten with a disease of boils from head to foot, and the drama discloses him "as he sat among the ashes." It is the picture of a man laid low—from prosperity to poverty, from health to sickness. The laughter of his sons and daughters has no echo from the silence of their graves. He is a man suffering with pain and sorrow. All he has left is his soul with its thoughts. What goes on there? He had possessed faith in God. That had been his stronghold, but there is creeping doubt. His wife has already thrown her faith in God to the winds. Even more, her bitterness of soul recommends that he too curse God and let death come. Why has God let things reach this pass? What kind of governance of the world is this? Who can fathom the meaning of this evil? He had thought in the days of his prosperity that his affluence was a recompense for righteousness, a sign of God's favor. He had sincerely loved goodness and mercy and justice and had tried to practice them in his dealings with men. He had thought prosperity was a reward for the good life. He had been taught to think these things and to believe that evil was always punishment for sin. Now Job's friends still adhere to this traditional theology and so they insist that he must have sinned grievously. But he knows his own character. He has not violated the integrity of his own soul. He has made no change in life or thought commensurate with these tragic devastations. He can find no voice of conscience confirming their judgment. Rather the deeps of his own soul revolt against that doctrine. He now gives vent to his rebellion and curses the day that gave him birth. How can he believe any more in the moral government of the world? He debates the issue with

his friends. He would like the chance to argue it with God. If only there were life after death! But what comfort is there in She'ol! What recompense! Yet something deep within boldly assures him that God must be just. This is not the end. The last word has not been said. If he could talk with God, the meaning of this would be revealed. There must be more to know about God. "I know that my redeemer liveth." Then after a lapse of time, God speaks. Job's attention is called to the power and beauty of nature, the creation of God. Can Job expect to know the ways of the infinite mind? Does Job know enough to pass final judgment on the universe? Then Job answered that he had been talking without knowledge, uttering words which he did not understand. He was ready to accept the universe with what it brought from the hand of God, so long as he might have peace through trust and worship.

Job's answer is the best light which the author of the book can find for the problem of evil. It is not an intellectual solution at all, but it is a better answer than the doctrine of Job's friends. The earlier theology could make no place for the fact that the righteous do suffer. Job accepted the fact that the righteous can suffer, and at the same time reconciled this with faith in God even though the intellect does not understand. Job retained his faith in the goodness as well as the power of God. "If he slay me, yet will I trust in him." This is the religious way of dealing with one of life's hardest problems. Is the universe a cosmos or a chaos? Is there moral significance in the world? Is goodness deeper than evil? In the last analysis, is the universe in good hands? In what can men put their trust? The problem of evil is the hardest problem which the theologians and philosophers face. The human soul cannot wait until the end of time. It has to live now and it needs some faith to live by. The dramatist who wrote Job reveals that he went through much travail with this problem. He turned away from the traditional view. At least that view was and is false, as Jesus also found. But he concluded that we must add something to our belief in the power which created the world. We need to add faith in the Creator's moral goodness. This enables the worshiper to have faith that there is an infinite wisdom, operating as an inscrutable providence. Somehow all things work together for good. The problem remains

an intellectual mystery so far as man is concerned, but it is boldly affirmed that it is no mystery to the mind of God. In other words, the practical religious solution is a deep hope turned into an adventurous faith that the power in the universe is matched by infinite goodness.

*The Nature of Wisdom.*—Here we deal with another intellectually adventurous phase of Hebrew thought. Philosophy, in the highly advanced systematic form which was developed by the Greeks, never made its appearance among the Hebrews. Yet we do know, of course, that the Jew reflected deeply upon life. He did philosophize, but always in a religious setting, apparently never apart from the fundamental premise or belief in the reality of God and the Law.

Up to now, we have said nothing about wise men or sages, yet there were men singled out by that designation. They were men separate from the prophets and the priests, exercising an office of practical counsel. And this continued to be the case all through the following centuries, so much so that some of our greatest Hebrew literature is the work of sages of the post-Exilic period.

In Hebrew thought the term "wisdom" has a practical side and a theoretical side. The practical side is Jewish ethics or philosophy of conduct, and the theoretical side is Hebrew metaphysics or philosophy of reality.

First, in regard to practical wisdom. When we examine the Wisdom Literature, Job, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, in the Old Testament, and the non-biblical books of Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon, we are very much impressed by the imposing array of suggestions, advice, and observations covering all manner of human relationships and attitudes toward life. We note the great amount of sound common sense; and much of the counsel is just as useful today in dealing with ourselves and others as it was when written. The same is true of many of the Psalms composed by the same school of thought. They are, as it were, a distillation drawn from a vast experience. Observing men discerned types of behavior that were admirable and of intrinsic merit. Also, many of the sayings have resulted from observation of the foolish or unwise behavior of humankind. They recognize a measure of correlation be-

tween clear thinking and sound morals. The counsels of wisdom comprise a practical ethics, but at the same time they always remain close to the Law of Jahweh. The expressed and implied theme of this literature is that a proper relation to God creates an inner spirit that has an outlet in wise conduct. There is carried over in many of the sayings of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes especially the doctrine that the consequence of goodness is prosperity. But it is this very doctrine which Job, the greatest book in the Wisdom writings, has set aside. Regardless of the presence of this prudential element, however, practical wisdom meant for the wise man an intelligent choosing of all those things that enrich human relations. He tried, not abstractly but realistically, to indicate the way toward fullness of life.

The term "wisdom" has another side, the theoretical or philosophical. Here we find some attempt to understand the nature of wisdom. The writers of this literature, while loyal Hebrews, did speculate beyond the boundaries of orthodox theology. There were questions of a religious-philosophic kind which agitated them, and which could not be answered by folk tales or myths. Some of these men not only shared the lofty monotheism of Deutero-Isaiah, but they pondered quite consciously about the relation of God to the world of nature and man. They concluded, from the wonders of nature, that the Supreme Being was infinitely intelligent or wise. The word "wisdom" began to stand out as a divine attribute, and was personified as having almost a separate status of its own. (Proverbs 8, Job 28.) In the Wisdom of Solomon occur these words:

> She (wisdom) is the breath of the power of God, and a pure effluence flowing from the glory of the Almighty . . . the brightness of the everlasting light, the unspotted mirror of the power of God, and the image of His goodness. (Wisd. 7:25, 26)

The Hebrew author of this passage has expressed himself in language about the being of God which is very closely allied to ideas about wisdom that we find in Greek philosophy, and which almost certainly is in part derived therefrom. Furthermore, this writer also regards wisdom in man as a divine presence or visitation or

immanence of the wisdom of God, which idea we also find in Greek thought.

Now, this mode of thinking about God and wisdom, as a manifestation of the power, presence, intelligence, and goodness of God, is the clearest evidence of an intellectual effort to find some unity, system, and order in the universe. The wise man, very evidently, needed some way of making articulate his deeper awareness of the implications of belief in the universality of one supreme God. The Hebrew scholar could have made use of much that had been produced by the Greek thinkers. It so transpired that the Hebrew word "wisdom," so richly laden with a tradition of practical godliness, was the stepping-stone between Jewish religion and Greek philosophy. We have here seen its beginnings only. We shall not now take up the further fruits of this association, which were fully garnered by the great Alexandrian Jew, Philo. However, what has been said here will provide a meaningful point of contact when we consider later on the confluence of Hebrew and Greek thought in the Roman world.

## Summary

Our study of the development of Judaism has shown to us the various sides of Hebrew thought. It has illustrated the tightening hold of the Law, which is characteristic of the legalistic frame of mind wherever it appears in religion, Jewish or otherwise. At the same time, the post-Exilic period shows the need for enlarged answers to problems of nature and destiny, which is a manifestation of a growing intellectual maturity. It has given us an awareness also of the religious and cultural conflicts that take place when one form of culture meets another. We saw this not only during the Exile, when the Jews tried to maintain their ways in the face of Babylonian habits, but again during the Persian and the Greek periods, when the Jews endeavored once more to preserve their spiritual identity in the midst of adverse forces cutting away like ocean waters on an island shore.

We come to the end of the Old Testament portion of Hebrew religious development rather grateful perhaps that we were spectators and not participants in this living drama. Perhaps the nature

of the play, as a presentation of the spiritual adventures of the soul, leaves out many happy episodes by the way, which were necessarily overlooked in a telescopic survey. These reflections, however, are only comments during intermission, for the play goes on and there are many acts still to come before our generation takes its place in the pilgrimage of the human soul.

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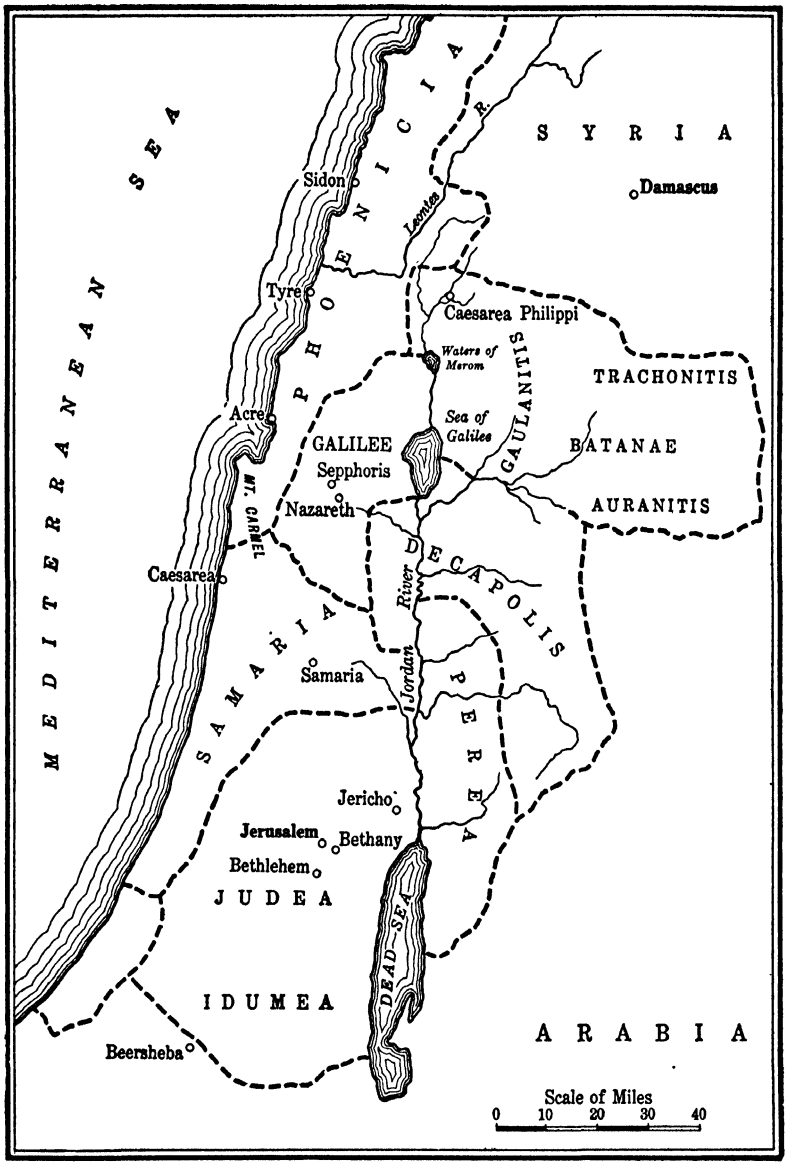
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# PART TWO

## *THE HISTORIC JESUS*




PALESTINE IN THE TIME OF JESUS

At the time of the death of Jesus, *c.* A. D. 29, Herod Antipas, son of Herod the Great, was tetrarch of Galilee and Perea, with his capital at Tiberias; Philip, another son of Herod the Great, was tetrarch of the section including Gaulanitis, Batanae, Trachonitis and Auranitis, and had his capital at Caesarea Philippi. Pontius Pilate was Roman procurator of Judea and Samaria.

## CHAPTER V

# *THE POLITICAL-RELIGIOUS ENVIRONMENT IN THE TIME OF JESUS*

To understand Jesus at all, it is absolutely necessary to consider him in the political-religious setting of the Palestine in which he lived. We shall, therefore, in this chapter present an abridged account of the contemporary scene on its political-religious side. Let us note first the political structure.

### The Political Structure

When Jesus was born, the Romans were still very much the political power that dominated the Mediterranean world. We remember that it was Pompey in 63 B.C. who conquered Palestine for the Romans. At that time the high priest, Hyrcanus II, was made a political deputy of Rome with the title of ethnarch. The Romans thus gave recognition to the Maccabean house and, by this clever arrangement, intended to allay the sting of Roman authority and bring about some measure of political loyalty on the part of the Jews. This state of affairs might have lasted for a long period, had it not been for the fact that the Roman Republic itself was entering upon a period of upheaval, as it changed from a republic to an empire. That period of civil wars in Roman history is marked by such familiar names as Pompey, Caesar, Crassus, Cassius, and Mark Antony. The whole of Syria figured prominently in these struggles for empire. In consequence Judea, in the early stages, suffered rather badly because, first, Gabinius (55 B.C.) exacted heavy tribute from the Jews and took away civil authority from Hyrcanus. Then Crassus, in 54 B.C., not only oppressed the country with ruinous demands for supplies and money but also plundered the Temple of its treasures. Cassius likewise was hard on the country. Caesar, on the other hand, dealt kindly with the Jews. Caesar in 48 B.C. restored to Hyrcanus II the civil authority, and extended other

privileges, but this reprieve was short lived because of the assassination of Caesar in 44 B.C. The political complications which followed were very much involved, for even the Romans were ejected from Syria by the Parthians, who for a short time were in complete possession. However, a period of political stability was finally attained, and the Romans, in 40 B.C., appointed over Palestine a king, who is known as Herod the Great. Herod the Great ruled until 4 B.C., the probable date of Jesus' birth. This Herod is referred to in connection with the slaughter of infants described in Matthew (2:13-23).

From the point of view of the Romans, Herod was a very successful administrator of the Palestinian territory. But he was hated by the Jews for several reasons. In the first place, he murdered too many people, not only important public figures, such as the old high priest Hyrcanus, but also his own wife Mariamme, and her two sons, and a large company of less notable persons. Then again, the Jews hated him because, in spite of a measure of surface respect for Judaism, Herod nevertheless tried to promote Greek customs and habits of life as vigorously as had Antiochus Epiphanes (176-164 B.C.). Not only did he have Greek temples built in Palestine, but he controlled the high priesthood in Jerusalem by personal appointment.

This condition of things was not improved by the death of Herod the Great. In his will he left Judea, Samaria and Idumea as a kingdom to his son Archelaus, and the remaining territory he divided between his sons Antipas and Philip, as tetrarchs. Antipas was assigned Galilee and Perea. The Roman Emperor Augustus accepted the provisions of Herod's will, except with regard to Archelaus, whom he designated an ethnarch, not king, of Judea. After ten years of tyranny over Judea, Archelaus was banished in 6 A.D. by Augustus. Judea was then made a Roman province under a minor official called a procurator, responsible to the Roman governor over Syria. Of these procurators, the one whose name is familiar is Pontius Pilate (26-36 A.D.), who sentenced Jesus to death.

The two political and geographical divisions of interest to us are Galilee-Perea to the north, and Judea to the south, including the city of Jerusalem. Let us observe first the general character of

Galilee where Jesus was born. The Roman ruler here was the Tetrarch Antipas, usually called Herod Antipas, who reigned continuously from 4 B.C. to 39 A.D. Galilee had many large cities and a considerable number of suburban villages, all thickly populated. The city of Sepphoris was next in size to Jerusalem in Judea. Sepphoris was, therefore, the largest city in Galilee and, during part of Jesus' life, the capital city. Of particular importance is the fact that Jesus lived not more than five miles down the road from Sepphoris, in the village of Nazareth. The importance of this fact is often overlooked. There is every reason to suppose that Jesus had a first-hand acquaintance with this city because it was connected by road with Nazareth. Nearer still to Nazareth was the large village of Japha, with a population of about 15,000. The city of Sepphoris had been very important for many years. Herod the Great made it his military center. This city passed through one bitter experience which may throw some light on Jesus' attitude toward political authority. After the death of Herod the Great, a Jewish revolutionary, Judas by name, gained control of Sepphoris and the surrounding area. He was overcome by the Romans after bitter resistance. The city was sacked when it fell, and the populace was severely treated and many were enslaved. But Herod Antipas rebuilt it on so grand a scale that it was known far and wide as a city of great beauty. Here Herod Antipas himself lived until he built up the new city of Tiberias, which then became the capital. These events took place during the lifetime of Jesus. It is this very Herod Antipas to whom Jesus referred as "that fox."

In the light of these facts about Sepphoris, it is of more than passing interest that the city and its surrounding villages had so sufficiently tasted the bitter fruits of revolution that they never again would have any more to do with revolt. That is the reason why, when the last tragic revolt of 66 A.D. occurred, which led to the destruction of Jerusalem in 70 A.D., Sepphoris and its suburban villages did not participate. This sheds very interesting light on one source, at least, for Jesus' attitude of separating religion from the current political hatred toward Rome. He fostered a Kingdom of God ideal, which, in the last analysis, was not conditioned by the presence or absence of Roman rulers.

Now, returning to Judea and the city of Jerusalem, what was the political arrangement which obtained between the Roman procurator and the Jewish officials? Jewish officials were, of course, religious officials, for the Temple was the central fact in Jewish life. Here there was a high priest, who was usually a member of one of the powerful and wealthy Sadducean priestly families. The high priest was chairman of the Sanhedrin or Council of Seventy composed of other priests, some scribes, and elders. This council was a body having both political and religious authority over the Jews. Its political privileges did not extend outside Judea, though its religious decisions did. In Jerusalem the Sanhedrin was looked upon by the Jews as their first loyalty, and as their governing body, although always the procurator had the privilege of approval or disapproval in matters of life and death, or in matters that affected the interests of the Roman government. Otherwise the Sanhedrin exercised complete jurisdiction within Judea, even to the extent of levying taxes. The Sanhedrin usually tried to present a solid front before the procurator, but within itself there were lines of cleavage occasioned by the fact that Sadducees and Pharisees were fellow members of the group.

Despite the wide exercise of authority possessed by the Jews, the Roman legions and the procurator were always on hand, and the Jews writhed under their presence. The Jewish hatred of Roman rule was, if anything, increased by Pontius Pilate, a rather brutal official who had no scruples about putting people to death. Now this hatred was a mixed emotion, composed of political as well as religious elements.

We now have before us the main political divisions into which Palestine was divided, with special emphasis on Galilee-Perea under Herod Antipas, and Judea under Pilate. These are important for us to keep in mind because of the bearing which they had on the ministry of Jesus.

Turning directly to the religious situation, which is so closely related to the political, we shall realize something of the complexity of the factors in the total Palestinian environment at the time of Jesus.

We should at this point recall the development of Jewish reli-

gious life and ideas, which was presented in connection with Judaism after the Exile. The elements that were stressed there were: the Law, Temple worship and synagogue worship, the beginnings of religious parties, the problem of Hebrew destiny with the messianic hopes prominent, the problem of immortality, the problem of suffering, and the nature of wisdom.

Every one of these elements was actively present in Jesus' generation, but there had been many changes caused by the passage of time; variations in thought, changes of emphasis and a totally different political state of affairs. So that, while we do recognize familiar terms and concepts in Jesus' environment, that environment was far different from that of earlier times. We should then try to get ourselves "up to date" on the religious scene contemporary with Jesus.[1]

## Political-religious Parties

The Hebrews had always wanted their good things here in this world—family, possessions, long life, and a utopian prospect of each man sheltered in the shade of his own vine and fig tree. Substantial comfort in a Hebrew society under a Hebrew government, worshiping in the Hebrew Temple, and all under the watchful protection of the Hebrews' God—this was the Hebrew ideal. The Hebrews were primarily this-worldly. The hopes for the future that had buoyed up generation after generation were mainly nationalistic hopes. Their Kingdom of God, which was to come, was patterned after the ideal just described—a reign on earth of righteousness under a messianic king of God's choosing.

There always seemed to be some foreign power in the way of this promised "destiny." The yoke of bondage was always near at hand or else actually across their oft-stooped shoulders. Look down the years—Egypt, Assyria, Babylonia, Persia, Greece, and now Rome! Would there never be surcease from the accursed presence of foreigners? If we could by imagination put ourselves in the Hebrew frame of mind, thinking back over this past, which even now per-

[1] See Sholom Asch, *The Nazarene* (New York: Putnam, 1939) for an extensive and vivid presentation of the political-religious situation in Palestine in the time of Jesus.

sisted pervasively through the whole contemporary life, we too might pass through a whole gamut of emotions, from an extreme bitter hatred of the foreign power to a broad fateful tolerance adjusted to the turn of fortune's wheel. These variations of mood were generated in many minds, and like-minded citizens were attracted to each other. Thus groups were formed because some of the moods crystallized themselves along party lines. The parties so produced represented different degrees of feeling toward the Roman power, and somewhat different conceptions of the Kingdom of God and messiahship.

*The Zealots.*—The Zealots were most bitter in their hatred of Rome. The name itself may have come a little later, but what it represented was fully active in Jesus' day. Many were involved in this group. They were to increase still more until they exploded in open revolt. They caused much nervousness on the part of Roman officials and priestly leaders. These extreme "patriots" abominated the higher clergy for their cooperation with Rome. On occasion they resorted to assassination. Their patriotism was all of one piece with their fanaticism in religion. The Zealots may be regarded as the extreme form of the "Zadokites," who were even more zealous for the purity of the Law than were the Pharisees. The Zadokites were uncompromising in their devotion. They held that the Law was the very essence of the Covenant requirements. Just as of old time, the Zadokites insisted that existing unrighteousness and the oppressive bonds of an alien foe were entirely the result of violating the Covenant. And the human side of the Covenant was the Law. To be sure, this relation between the Covenant and the Law is a characteristic feature of all Hebrew religion, although differently emphasized by the respective parties. The Zealots were also dominated by a messianic hope. They felt delegated to clear the way for God's Kingdom, and they wished to do so by "purging" the land of all alien elements.

*The Essenes.*—This was an ascetic brotherhood of extremely pious Jews. They differed from the Zealots in that they were a religious order primarily, pledged to celibacy and communism. More significant still, they were political pacifists, on the principle that God will carry forth his own plans in his own way and in his own

time. They were devoted to the Law. They would endure death rather than violate it. They believed that a man who took the name of God or Moses in vain merited death. This attitude indicates a weak point in their pacifism. It shows a good deal of emotional dynamite that some day was to override their pacifism and support the Zealot movement. They too wanted the Kingdom of God to come, and they longingly hoped for a Messiah.

*The Pharisees.*—In importance, numbers, and strength, the Pharisees were preeminently the leading political-religious party. It was only the Sadducees who prevented their complete dominance in official religion. When we think of Pharisees, the historical student also thinks at once of the Law. The development of the oral Law, accumulated over many generations, and the extensive application of the Law to the whole of life, was the handiwork of the Pharisees. The Essenes and Zadokites were newcomers by comparison, and were simply much more strict on some points. But it was the Pharisees who rightly regarded themselves as the guardians of the Law. Heaven knows, they were strict enough! They, therefore, resented bitterly the implication that these newer parties were more faithful in their devotion to Jahweh and the Law. The Pharisees were puritans, but they were not pacifists, and the time was to come when they would lose their lives in bloody defiance of Rome. Yet their primary function in Hebrew life was religious. They were dedicated to righteousness, and it was their aim to promote, by precept and example, the righteous will of God as set forth in the Law. They shared, as we shall observe later, a messianic hope, but their task was to spread righteousness. The future advent of the Kingdom was left to the wisdom of God.

In connection with this trust in the wisdom and goodness of God, there is a very important moral-religious problem, namely the problem of immortality. We know that the Pharisees for generations had tried to please Jahweh by keeping the Covenant through obedience to the Law. Their own consciences testified to their sincerity. Yet God's reign seemed indefinitely deferred. What about all those devout souls who had served the Lord and kept the commandments? What was their reward? The silence of the grave? What blessedness was there in that? That might be a just end for

the wicked, but were the good to have nothing more? Should we declare with Ecclesiastes that all things come alike to all, "as is the good so is the sinner"? The Pharisee replied, "No," with earnest conviction. He believed that justice requires a greater reward than annihilation for those who serve God. Serving God had meant vigorous self-denial and discipline. But if, like the Sadducees, one has come to terms with this world and has a broad tolerance toward human frailty, then the feeling of having sacrificed such a great deal in this life is not so strong. As a matter of fact, the Sadducees and their friends had "the good things of this world." They came nearer the Hebrew ideal of possessions and family here and now, than any other group. The masses, however, had very little. Therefore, the hope which the resurrection doctrine provided was more to their need. The position of the Pharisees was, in consequence, closer to the common man, and accounts in part for their dominant place in the religious life of the nation.

*The Sadducees.*—It is appropriate that the party for final consideration is the Sadducees. It was stated earlier that the various parties corresponded somewhat to the degrees of emotion engendered by the presence of the Romans. The range extended from hatred to broad tolerance. The Zealots were at one extreme. The Sadducees were at the other. They were a wealthy priestly class, who controlled the Temple worship and the lucrative concessions subsidiary thereto. They not only were tolerant toward Rome, but were in fact friendly. They were opportunists, so they tried to make the best of the situation. After all, the Romans did make for law and order. So long as the privileges of the Sadducees, and the privileges of the wealthy class generally, were not interfered with, why not accept the situation calmly? The Sadducees were priests, but they were men of the world. The Roman presence did not excite them unduly. Worse still, in the sight of many of their compatriots, was the fact that they were tolerant toward Greek ideas. Thus they were completely unlike the other parties. Nor did they in fact feel any deep bond with the populace at large.

*Rank-and-file Jews.*—We must not overlook the fact that the parties already considered were only a small share of the total Jewish population. There were several million Hebrews in Pales-

tine. After taking account of party affiliations, we need to recognize that there were multitudes of the rank-and-file without party names. They were ordinary people, the common classes, many of whom were devoutly religious but in a simple way. They obeyed the Law in the main. They worshiped on occasion in the Temple with a special sacrifice, but ordinarily they worshiped in the synagogue. Here they heard the Scriptures read. Thus their religious inspiration came from the prophetic writings and the Psalms. It is among these that we must seek for the simple and pure in heart, whom Jesus called the "salt of the earth." Jesus and John the Baptist were nurtured in just such spiritual soil.

## Major Religious Institutions

*The Temple.*—We know that the first Temple was destroyed by the Babylonians. We remember that during the Exile it was Ezekiel who, with faith in a return from Exile, pictured in detail a restored Temple with elaborate ceremonies. When the Jews did return, it was the prophets of the time who seemed never to weary in their insistence that the Temple must be rebuilt. It was finally completed in 516 B.C., standing as the tangible evidence of God's presence. Its purified services were the guarantee that the demands of the Law were carried out, and this meant in turn that the Covenant was being kept. The passing centuries since then only made more solid the foundation of the Temple as the basic institution in Hebrew religion. All parties looked to it with devotion and reverence.

Under Herod the Great, who strove so hard and so vainly to win the affection of his subjects, the Temple was reconstructed in lavish fashion. In fact, it was one of the great imposing edifices even in that day of beautiful buildings. Its position on the eastern elevation of Jerusalem gave it precisely that architectural dominance which so perfectly symbolized its religious eminence.

One approached the Temple through a series of courtyards or enclosures. First, there was a large outer court. Here were those who sold animals for the sacrifices. Here also foreigners could congregate. But into the next court, Jews alone might enter. In like manner, there were several more inclosures, each in turn being

more selective as to its entrants. At last came the Temple building itself, where only priests were allowed. Even here there were divisions. The first chamber contained the famous seven-branched candlestick, which was taken to Rome in 71 A.D. by Titus, and is shown as part of the loot on the well-known Arch of Titus in Rome. Finally, there was the most sacred chamber of all—the Holy of Holies. That is where the Ark of the Covenant would have rested had it been still in existence. Everything else in the way of chambers and courts was but the outer garment for this holy place. Here, almost literally, God dwelt in the midst of his people.

Every day at the Temple, worship took place—a morning sacrifice, an evening sacrifice. The lamb was killed just so, and placed upon the altar the right way. The procedure never varied, and was always accompanied by a ritual of song and prayer. The priests were robed with expensive vestments, and fulfilled their respective duties with impressive dignity. To Jews of all parties, at home and throughout the whole Mediterranean world, the knowledge of such services was a source of comfort and satisfaction. On special holy days, such as the feasts of Passover, Pentecost, and Tabernacles, the Temple services were very elaborate, and to them flocked thousands of Jews from near and far. Josephus, the historian, estimates that in the year 65 A.D. there were three million Jews present in Jerusalem for the Passover feast.

*The Synagogue.*—To the devout Jew, worship in the Temple and worship in the synagogue were complementary. The Temple worship was, of course, the highest form, and it was a blessed thing to be able to worship there always. The synagogue was theoretically a substitute. We remember that it was as a substitute that synagogue worship originated. But by this time, the synagogue had become an extremely important religious institution. The Temple might retain its unique character, yet the synagogue had come to have a vital religious significance. It was less formal, and it was a direct means of religious education. Synagogues existed wherever Jews lived. It was in the synagogues that the Pharisees had their special place of influence. The Pharisees, therefore, were more numerous than the Sadducees, and their teaching was obviously much more widespread. Consequently, the Pharisaic views of Hebrew religion,

and especially the emphasis on the Law, had become the fundamental pattern of Judaism at the time of Jesus. It was through the synagogue that Jesus received the religious heritage of his race. Here he felt himself to be spiritually at home. The disciples he drew around him had likewise received their religious nurture in the synagogue. The fact is that the latter, rather than the Temple, was actually the more important, though this realization came only after the Temple had been destroyed.

*The Law.*—In a preceding chapter it was shown how the Law developed as an increasing regulator of life. The oral law expanded into ever more minute rules of conduct. A religion dominated in this way by detailed regulation is called legalism. We shall attempt here to give an evaluation of the Law.

In discussing the various religious parties, the Law was always a point of reference. Parties were described in terms of their relation to the Law. The Sadducees were the least strict, especially regarding the oral Law. Nevertheless, like the Temple and the synagogue, the Law, too, was always there as part of the very structure of religious life. In evaluating the Law we must recognize that there is a better and a worse side.

On its better side, we recognize the complete, unqualified monotheism that had become an ingrained aspect of Jewish thought. The one true God is holy, which means that he is a moral sovereign. This carried the idea that moral requirements were not subject to human caprice. The Law was believed to be the divine guide to keep mortals on the path of goodness. Keeping the Law was keeping the Covenant. All the hopes for the future depended on this. We should bear in mind here the sincerity of intention, the deep desire to do the will of God. The Jews were aware of the weaknesses of human nature, the ready ease whereby we slide from good resolutions into carelessness and sin. They knew that the way of goodness requires moral effort, so they put the hurdle where one had to rise to it. If one cleared the bar, he was good, for he had kept the commandments. The Law was the Hebrew form of moral control. The elaborate rules about food and drink were a curb on gluttony. The regulations about sex held lust in check. The increasing extension of the Law to all aspects of human endeavor

had at least this worthy aim: it was the legalist's desire to extend the presence of God into daily living. The legalist was conscious of a certain satisfaction or peace of mind in fulfilling the Law. This was a part of his reward. Another element of reward was a confidence in resurrection, which was now a widespread belief. There can be no doubt that many Hebrews found happiness in their religion.[2] There is assurance in the belief that the will of God is known beyond any doubt. It is also true that the religious Hebrew had a message for the sinner. It was always open to human choice to turn away from sin and, by repentance, to receive the forgiveness of God.

On its better side also, we may think of the words of the Shema as representing the intention and spirit of the Law. The Shema consists of the following passages of Scripture:

> Listen, Israel: "the Eternal, the Eternal alone, is our God. And you must love the Eternal your God with all your mind and all your soul and all your strength." These words you must learn by heart, this charge of mine; you must impress them on your children, you must talk about them when you are sitting at home and when you are on the road, when you lie down and when you rise up. You must tie them on your hands as a memento, and wear them on your forehead as a badge; you must inscribe them on the door-posts of your houses and on your gates. (Deuteronomy 6:4-9)
>
> If you listen carefully to the orders which I enjoin upon you to-day, to love the Eternal your God and worship him with all your mind and all your heart, he will give rain to your land at the right season, the spring rains and the autumn rains, that you may gather in your corn and wine and oil, and he will put grass in your fields for your cattle, and you shall eat and be satisfied.
>
> Beware of letting yourselves be fooled into swerving aside to the worship and homage of other gods, till the Eternal's anger blazes out against you, and he shuts up the skies so that no rain falls and your land yields no produce, and you quickly die off the fine country which the Eternal gives you.
>
> So you must lay to heart these words of mine, and you must tie them on your hands as a memento and wear them as a badge on your forehead; you must teach them to your children, talking of them when you are sitting at home and when you are on the road, when you lie down and when you rise up: you must inscribe them on the door-posts of your houses and on your gates—that your life and the life of your

[2] S. Schechter, *Some Aspects of Rabbinic Theology* (New York: Macmillan, 1910) esp. chap. XI, "The Joy of the Law."

children may be prolonged in the land which the Eternal swore he would give to your fathers as long as the sky hangs over the earth. (Deuteronomy 11:13-21)

The Eternal also gave Moses these orders for the Israelites: "Tell them to put tassels at the corners of their robes, attached by a violet thread. This shall be for all time. The tassel will serve to catch your eye and remind you to obey all the commands of the Eternal, not to follow your own wandering desires and fancies, but to remember and obey all my commands, and be consecrated to your God. I am the Eternal your God, who brought you from the land of Egypt in order to be your God; I am the Eternal your God." (Numbers 15:37-41)

These words or a portion of them were repeated morning and night by the Jews of Jesus' day, and by many even to this day. The Shema is still a regular part of Jewish formal worship services. It comes as near to a creed as the Jews have; it is their confession of faith in the one God, and in the Covenant relation between God and his people.

But there is another side to legalism. The universal monotheism was not wholeheartedly applied in practice so as to embrace Gentiles within the Covenant. God hated the people whom the Hebrews hated. He hated the false worshiper. The Hebrew religion, as a great Jewish scholar has pointed out, had not risen to any sense of obligation toward the unrepentant sinner, even among fellow countrymen.

> These people, who had fallen or were falling away from the ranks of those who honestly sought to observe the Law, were neglected and shunned by the teachers and by the law-abiding Jews. They were looked down upon and disliked as ignorant, as law-breakers, as unclean. And it was a marked weakness of this legal religion that, while it taught, and its votaries practiced, compassion to the poor and the afflicted, if they sought to observe the Law, it did not teach redemptive compassion and kindness to those who fell away. It did not say, "seek them out, help them, pity them, and gently bring them back to the service of God." It feared contamination, and bade the honest observer keep away and keep apart from the negligent and the sinner.[3]

Furthermore, the Law, for all that it was a moral guide and a

[3] Claude G. Montefiore, "Contemporary Jewish Religion," in A. S. Peake's *Commentary* (New York: Nelson, 1936), pp. 618 ff.

moral control, overlooked the rich variety and flexibility of life. It attempted to standardize all moral behavior in conformity with one pattern, like a block of houses exactly on the same plan. It could leave very little to individual choice and genius, which suggests a fundamental distrust of human nature. The elaborate extension of the Law went too far, becoming ridiculous in its intrusions, stifling the many spontaneities of behavior. The Law became a burden. The greatest defect of all in legalism is the false notion that goodness is attained by fulfilling commands. Or, to state it differently, legalism centers attention on observances imposed from without to such an extent that the voluntary actions of man as a free moral agent have little room for exercise or development.

## The Messianic Hope at the Time of Jesus

Alongside the dominant place that the Law held in Hebrew religion must be set another important feature of that religion, namely, the messianic hope. It was a common thread which ran through every division of Hebrew life and religion. The term "Messiah" (and we may also include, "Son of Man" and "Kingdom of God") was just as common then in the general vocabulary, and perhaps as hazy, as words like "evolution" and "psychological complex" in the parlance of today.

An account has been given in Chapter Four of the rise and development of the Messianic idea, showing how it became part and parcel of apocalyptic literature. By the time of Jesus, there were different conceptions of the Messiah, but only one messianic hope. The common element in all the ideas was the belief that a messianic age or Kingdom of God was to come. What was the messianic Golden Age? In general, it always meant a miraculous exaltation of the Jews and the universal sway of the one God. But from this point we run into all manner of variations, both as to the characteristics of the messianic age, and as to the nature of the Messiah and the methods of his work.

We may say in general that the masses were hopeful that a human Messiah would rise up in their midst and be a strong deliverer, somewhat in the manner of Judas Maccabeus of glorious memory. A Messiah on these lines would inaugurate an earthly kingdom,

and he would put the fear of God in the hearts of the enemy. This expected Messiah was usually conceived in terms of Isaiah's prophecy, Isaiah 11:1-5, 10. There would be no more foreign conquerors in the land. Hebrew influence would be great in the world.

This naïve confidence in an "arm of flesh" was not held by sophisticated people. Certainly, both Sadducees and Pharisees understood too well the nature of the Roman power to expect an uprising that would overthrow the Roman colossus. But, whereas the Sadducees accepted this fact and came to terms with it, the Pharisees at this time rejected the popular view on two grounds. In the first place, they were not very hopeful of an earthborn "prince." They knew their history, so they knew that the Maccabean period, which in former times had promised so much for a theocratic society, had not fulfilled itself. The Maccabean priest-kings had been more worldly than godly. The Pharisees had had their origin in protest against Maccabean godlessness. Consequently, from that time, there was not the same optimism in Pharisaic circles concerning an earthly kingdom set up through revolt and ruled by an *earthly* prince. And in the second place, their hopes for a future kingdom rested in the fulfillment of a scriptural promise of a miraculous kingdom, created anew by God and ruled by a *heavenly* prince. In the Book of Daniel, an apocalyptic writing, recording visions and dreams, there is a passage of particular importance. It comes from a dream of Daniel. There are references to various powerful nations that shall rise and fall, and we come at last to the Hebrew hope: "And in the days of these kings the God of Heaven shall set up a kingdom never to be swept away, with a sovereignty that shall never pass to others; it shall break all these kingdoms to bits and make an end of them, but it shall stand for ever." (2:44) Here was a scriptural promise which fed religious and political hopes at the same time. It is developed further in the Psalm of Solomon (17:23), where the Messianic idea concerns the nation Israel alone, and the Messiah himself is a perfect ruler. Likewise, there is a variant, but supplementary, conception of Messiah in the Book of Enoch, which in turn is based on Daniel (7:13-14).

> Then in my vision by night I saw a figure in human form coming with the clouds of heaven, coming up to the primeval Being, before whom he was brought and from whom he received dominion, glory, and a kingdom, that all nations, races, and folk of every tongue, should serve him; his dominion is a lasting dominion, never to pass away, and his kingdom never shall be overthrown.

In the above passage, and as developed by Enoch, we get the idea of a preexistent Messiah, who shall come miraculously "with the clouds," and shall rule over all. Here was a wish fulfillment that could not fail because God was supposed to have promised it. This is the expected Messiah that the scribes and Pharisees had in view.

In any event, the messianic hope, with or without precision of meaning, pervaded all ranks of religious thought. Incidentally, all classes were thereby tinged with optimism because the future held out a glorious fulfillment of dreams.

In the political-religious environment which has now been sketched, Jesus lived his unique life. In the following chapter we shall consider his reaction to that environment and something of the great contribution which he made, despite the limitations of the contemporary ideas. However, before moving directly to that exposition, it seems desirable to include as a kind of appendix to this chapter a brief explanation of the nature of the Gospel sources from which most of our knowledge about Jesus is taken.

## Nature of the Gospel Source Materials

Anyone unacquainted with the literature of the New Testament, and unaware of the intensive study that several generations of modern scholars have given to it, can have little idea of the magnitude of that effort. Nor does the average reader appreciate the difficulties which have been encountered in the effort to reconstruct the life and teachings of Jesus. Contemporary history, for example, gives us no information about Jesus. It was only a long while afterward when the "new" religion, called Christianity, had gotten well under way, that attempts were made to recapture historical circumstances concerning him. The general reader naturally thinks at once of the gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, little realizing that the letters of the Apostle Paul are earlier than any of

these. Unfortunately, Paul did not feel the necessity for constructing a biographical account, nor did he feel impelled to quote Jesus extensively as he could have done. Had he not learned the main facts directly from Peter, from James, the brother of Jesus, and from many others? Paul, in his missionary service, preached about Jesus and no doubt quoted from Jesus' sayings. He even refers to an oral tradition (I Cor. 11 and 15) which he received and passed on to his hearers.

However, none of this material from Paul has been preserved. Paul, though primarily concerned with the significance of Jesus, is also a very valuable witness of the nature of early Christianity. His letters bear testimony to the character and spirit of Jesus. At many points in these writings remarks are made which are valuable for the recovery of events as they actually occurred. For example, Paul's references to the Last Supper (I Cor. 11:2, 23 ff.) are of the utmost worth in regard to an understanding of that momentous occasion.

More and more, as the years passed, the need was felt for written documents which would contain the sayings of Jesus. Christian communities required such materials and various efforts were made to acquire them. The very earliest "biography" of Jesus was that of Mark, written about 70 A.D., forty years after the Crucifixion. In the course of time, other accounts appeared, each author or editor in turn doing his best to relate the events in the light of the data at his disposal. The preface to the Gospel of Luke is interesting evidence that there were many life-stories of Jesus, and it also indicates that Luke was not satisfied altogether with those he did know. He says,

> Inasmuch as a number of writers have essayed to draw up a narrative of the established facts in our religion, exactly as these have been handed down to us by the original eye-witnesses who were in the service of the Gospel Message, and inasmuch as I have gone carefully over them all myself from the very beginning, I have decided, O Theophilus, to write them out in order for your excellency, to let you know the solid truth of what you have been taught. (Luke 1:1-4)

The date of Luke is about 80 or 85 A.D., and Matthew is also about

the same time. The Gospel of John cannot be earlier than 90 A.D., and probably its date is the early part of the second century.

Among the early writings is the Book of Acts, which was intended to describe the Christian movement and its major personalities from Jesus' death to Paul's arrival at Rome. The various writings were sometimes composed in widely separated places and they have different points of view, as we shall see. We know that even before the second century, but especially in the second century, the conflicts of opinion about Jesus were so great as to threaten disruption of the Christian fellowship. It was necessary to settle on certain writings as authoritative. Finally, there were four Gospels generally accepted on the basis of being best known and most widely used. These are the four canonical Gospels, Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John.

There are certain established results in regard to these Gospels which should be noted. The first three are called the Synoptic Gospels, simply because modern technique usually considers the three together in order to get a synoptic or general view. The fourth stands in a separate category altogether. The Synoptic Gospels, Matthew, Mark and Luke, have always been recognized as having much in common; therefore, they are sometimes printed side by side in parallel columns. The likenesses and differences concerning the same incident can be readily seen. The accompanying example shows how the tradition in regard to Peter's confession was reported by each of the Gospel writers.

*Peter's Confession*

| *Matthew* | *Mark* | *Luke* |
|---|---|---|
| Now when Jesus came to the district of Cæsarea Philippi, he asked his disciples, "Who do people say the Son of man is?" They told him, "Some say John the Baptist, others Elijah, others Jeremiah or one of the prophets." He said to them, "And | Then Jesus and his disciples set off for the villages of Cæsarea Philippi. On the road he inquired of his disciples, "Who do people say I am?" "John the Baptist," they told him, "though some say Elijah, and others say you are one of the | It happened that while he was praying by himself, his disciples were beside him. So he inquired of them, "Who do the crowds say that I am?" They replied, "John the Baptist; though some say Elijah, and some say that one of the an- |

who do you say that I am?" So Simon Peter replied, "You are the Christ, the Son of the living God." Jesus answered him, "You are a blessed man, Simon Barjona, for it was my Father in heaven, not flesh and blood, that revealed this to you. Now I tell you, Peter is your name, and on this rock I will build my church; the powers of Hades shall not succeed against it. I will give you the keys of the Realm of heaven; whatever you prohibit on earth will be prohibited in heaven, and whatever you permit on earth will be permitted in heaven." He then forbade the disciples to tell anyone that he was the Christ. (16:13-20)

prophets." So he inquired of them, "And who do you say I am?" Peter replied, "You are the Christ." Then he forbade them to tell anyone about him. (8:27-30)

cient prophets has arisen." He said to them, "And who do you say that I am?" Peter replied, "The Christ of God." Then he forbade them strictly to tell this to anyone. (9:18-21)

Careful and exhaustive comparisons of the Gospels have shown that Mark is not only the earliest, but that Mark was known and used by Matthew and Luke. Mark was one of their major sources. In fact, both Matthew and Luke followed Mark's outline in writing their account, and took over a great deal of his material, though sometimes adding to it or giving a different interpretation to the teaching or event recorded. Refer, for example, to the triple account of Peter's confession. It will be noted that Luke's account is different from that of Mark. Luke, for some reason, did not choose to men-

tion Caesarea Philippi, though Matthew followed Mark in naming it. Luke has a different setting for Jesus' question. In Mark, Jesus and the disciples are traveling along the road; in Luke, Jesus is alone in prayer and the disciples then approach him, when suddenly Jesus asks them the question about himself. Matthew is different from Mark in that the question itself is different. "Who do people say the Son of man is?" If "Son of man" is synonymous with "Messiah," as some authorities hold, then by adding "Son of man," Matthew really nullifies the whole point of Peter's confession. In this case Mark's account is more authentic, less affected by later tradition. Matthew writes the only account which includes the name of Jeremiah. Matthew also enlarges the answer of Peter with the words, "Son of the living God." The most striking addition of all is the famous saying of Jesus to Peter, containing the words, "Peter is your name, and on this rock I will build my church." Matthew only has this saying. If Mark or Luke had ever heard of this, it is hard to imagine that they would have omitted it. Consequently, the possibility arises that this saying is secondary, coming from a time in the early church when Peter's name had increasing significance. But at first, Peter, as we know from the controversy between him and Paul, does not appear to have had any special authority in the days when the disciples and Paul were alive. In Paul's letter to the Galatians, one of the earliest and most authentic New Testament writings, (see especially Chapter 2), we have a record of a profound difference of view between Peter and Paul regarding the relation of the Gospel to Gentiles and to Jews. It was a very important issue involving the whole question of an exclusive or a universal interpretation of Jesus' teachings. Peter took the narrower, Paul the broader view. In that letter Peter is not regarded as having any special authority. So much is this the case that we find Paul saying, "I opposed him to his face. The man stood self-condemned. . . . The rest of the Jewish Christians also played false along with him. . . . But I saw they were swerving from the true line of the gospel . . ." There is nothing here which recognizes Peter as having any unique commission from Christ. Consequently, many authorities do not regard the saying about "the rock" as an original part of the Caesarea Philippi incident. For comparison, we

may take notice of the way in which the Gospel of John deals with the confession of Peter.

> After that, many of his disciples drew back and would not associate with him any longer. So Jesus said to the twelve, "You do not want to go, too?" Simon Peter answered him, "Lord, whom are we to go to? The words you have are words of eternal life, and we believe, we are certain, that you are the holy One of God." (John 6:66-69)

The author of John probably followed an independent tradition which, although quite different, has reference to the same event in Jesus' life.

The fact of the existence of different traditions makes it necessary to point out that it does not follow that everything in Mark is necessarily more authentic than some similar but slightly different account in another Gospel. Various standards of historical evaluation are used. The foregoing illustration is just one example of the comparative method. To be sure, we have not begun to exhaust this one example. If we wanted to do that, we would have to turn from the English translation to the Greek original. Many other considerations would then arise, but obviously these lie outside the province of the present study.

When this process of comparison is followed through carefully, it becomes increasingly clear that Matthew and Luke have accepted Mark's geographical and chronological outline as their model. This is shown by the fact that when any variation from Mark's outline occurs, either in Matthew or in Luke, the writer always comes back on the track of Mark's outline. Also, it is noticed that Matthew and Luke do not vary at the same points, so that when Luke varies, Matthew and Mark are together, and when Matthew varies, Mark and Luke are together, proving the priority of Mark and dependence upon him of the other two.

The comparison of the Synoptic Gospels reveals a great deal more than the dependence of Luke and Matthew on Mark. It shows that both authors feel free to alter Mark's account, and the character of the alteration often gives us an insight into the point of view of the writer, or the Christian community, as we saw in the case of Peter's confession. Then again, the comparison also brings to our attention the fact that both Luke and Matthew have a great

deal of material not contained in Mark. This material, common to Matthew and Luke, is referred to by scholars as "Q" (from the German word, *Quelle*, meaning source). Much discussion and research have been directed on this. It is not known whether Q was one document or several, but there are strong grounds for the supposition that it was a written collection of teachings of Jesus, concerned with his Galilean ministry.

In addition to our knowledge that Mark provided the main outline of Matthew and Luke, and in addition, also, to the fact that Matthew and Luke drew upon a common source, Q, there is the further fact that Matthew and Luke both contain material which is not found in any other Gospel. Each must have had some independent source or sources. An excellent illustration of this may be seen in the comparison of their accounts of the birth of Jesus.

*The Birth of Jesus*

*Matthew*

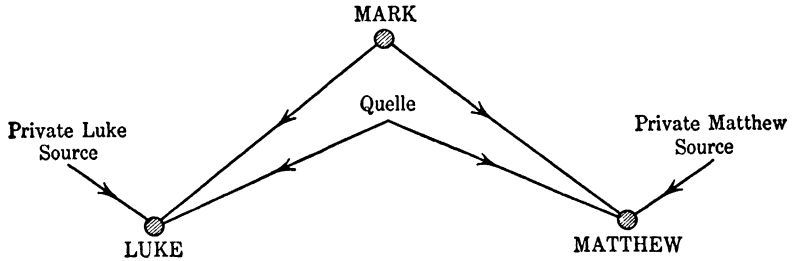
The birth of Jesus Christ came about thus. His mother Mary was betrothed to Joseph, but before they came together she was discovered to be pregnant by the holy Spirit. As Joseph her husband was a just man and unwilling to disgrace her, he resolved to divorce her secretly; but after he had planned this, there appeared an angel of the Lord to him in a dream, saying, "Joseph, son of David, fear not to take Mary your wife home, for what is begotten in her comes from the holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to call him 'Jesus,' for he will save his people from their sins." All this happened for the fulfillment of what the Lord had spoken by the prophet: The maiden will conceive and bear a son, and his name is to be called Immanuel, (which may be trans-

*Luke*

Now in those days an edict was issued by Caesar Augustus for a census of the whole world. (This was the first census, and it took place when Quirinius was governor of Syria.) So everyone went to be registered, each at his own town; and as Joseph belonged to the house and family of David, he went up from Galilee to Judæa, from the town of Nazaret to David's town called Bethlehem, to be registered along with Mary his wife. She was pregnant, and while they were there, the days elapsed for her delivery; she gave birth to her first-born son, and as there was no room for them inside the khan, she wrapped him up and laid him in a stall for cattle. (2:1-7)

lated, God is with us). So on waking from sleep Joseph did as the angel of the Lord had commanded him; he took his wife home, but he did not live with her as a husband till she bore a son, whom he called Jesus. (1:18-25)

These two accounts are so different from each other that it is evident that Matthew and Luke must have had independent sources. In this way it is possible to segregate for special study one strand of tradition from another. There are, of course, many unsolved problems and different "schools" of thought about the best method for getting closest to the real facts of Jesus' life. Nevertheless, the amount of agreement that obtains is sufficient for our purposes.




SKETCH ILLUSTRATING THE GENERALLY ACCEPTED SYNOPTIC THEORY

When all the accounts are set side by side, and a synoptic view is made of all the materials, certain general characteristics of each Gospel stand out, a few of which should be noted.

*Mark.*—The Gospel of Mark is an evangelistic work which contains a very early Palestinian interpretation of Jesus, emphasizing the belief in Jesus as Son of God, the Messiah. The author has written a gospel for Gentiles, possibly for Christians at Rome. One of the evidences of its early date is the way in which the author sometimes allows disciples to be shown in an unfavorable light. (See Mark 4:13; 6:52; 8:17; 9:10, 32, 34). The other Gospels either omit this phase or minimize it, which we would expect to be

the case after the passage of time. Another characteristic of Mark is the realistic description of the human emotions of Jesus that are fortunately included. This is brought out in Mark 10:13-16, where he describes Jesus and the little children, and again in Mark 10:17-31, in the story of the rich young man. Mark also lays special emphasis on the opposition between Jesus and the scribes and Pharisees in regard to the Sabbath. This emphasis is a clue that Mark had Gentile readers in mind.

*Matthew.*—Since almost all of Mark is included in Matthew, whom did Matthew address and what was his unique emphasis? He had much material to add to that of Mark: the Infancy narrative, the Baptism and Temptation, the Sermon on the Mount. Matthew was just as much interested as Mark in presenting Jesus as Messiah, but it is quite clear that Matthew is addressing Jewish readers. He is trying to show how Jesus is the promised Messiah. His genealogy is offered in evidence, and he is frequently presented as the fulfillment of messianic prophecy. The author emphasizes the teachings of Jesus in such a way as to suggest that they are a new law. Matthew at the same time satisfies the demand for a more complete account of what Jesus said.

*Luke.*—In the Gospel of Luke we get a very deep insight into the rich humanity and spirit of Jesus. It is only in Luke that we find the parables of the Prodigal Son, the Good Samaritan, and the Lost Coin. We can hardly believe that Mark or Matthew knew about these, for how could they have left them out? Luke gives us our best knowledge as to Jesus' friendly, neighborly attitude toward non-Jews. Jesus is represented by Luke as a humane, admirable person, who had temptations, who prayed, and who felt the burden of a great task.

Luke was not satisfied with Mark's Gospel at a number of points. He gives more detail about the ministry at Jerusalem. But of special interest is Luke's disagreement with Mark as to the appearances of the risen Christ. Mark says they were in Galilee, Luke says Jerusalem. Luke gives an account of several appearances of Jesus, but these are different from Paul's statement (I Cor. 15:5 ff.). We know that Paul did not believe in physical resurrection, but in the resurrection of a spiritual body. This the fifteenth chapter of I Co-

rinthians makes plain. There Paul affirms his faith in the resurrection of Christ, he himself being a witness, but it is a spiritual not a physical resurrection. Luke, on the other hand, though he must have known of Paul's doctrine, emphasizes the resurrection in terms of a physical body.

*John.*—It is difficult to characterize John briefly. This Gospel reveals at the very beginning the influence of Greek philosophy. "The Logos existed in the very beginning, the Logos was with God, the Logos was divine." (John 1:1) It will be pointed out in a later chapter how Christian ideas came to be clothed in Greek forms of thought. This opening verse of John which makes use of the Greek term "Logos" is a perfect illustration of the way in which the Christian faith in the messianic significance of Jesus would be made meaningful to people of Greek culture. The philosophic idea of the Logos, or Divine Wisdom, was the best Greek concept to serve as an equivalent of the messianic doctrine. This Gospel would hardly have been understood by a Palestinian Jew; certainly not the way Matthew was understood. The gospel of John is not really a history of Jesus' life. Rather, the author has selected various materials in the Christian tradition to support a theology about Jesus, which was intended for use in an environment of Greek ideas. The Gospel of John assumes that the messiahship was known from the beginning by John the Baptist, Jesus, and his disciples. There is nothing in the Gospel of John which suggests any development or struggle in the mind of Jesus. It is an idealization of his life. This does not mean that it is not important. On the contrary, it throws great light on the nature of Christian teaching at Ephesus early in the second century. But from the earliest times it was recognized that there was so much difference between John and the first three Gospels, that it required a great deal of adjustment to harmonize them. Some of the differences reveal that the author of John had access to traditions about Jesus which were not the same as the sources for the other Gospels, and these are of great historical worth. For example, the Gospel of John does not agree with the Synoptic Gospels as to the date on which the Last Supper occurred, yet some scholars prefer John's account to that of the Synoptists. On the other hand, if we compare Mark's account of

the cleansing of the Temple (Mark 11:15-19) with that of John (2:14-16), we notice a very interesting difference. Mark says that Jesus "upset the tables of the money-changers and the stalls of those who sold doves"; whereas John states that Jesus "found, seated inside the Temple, dealers in cattle, sheep and pigeons . . . and drove them all . . . out of the Temple." It has been pointed out by historians that doves could be sold in the Temple, but not sheep and oxen. Minor discrepancies of this kind, however, do not discredit the main issue itself. In fact, the main event, namely, the cleansing of the Temple, is shown to be thoroughly imbedded in early tradition.

The foregoing material on the nature of the source materials of Jesus' life and teachings must be understood to be illustrative only. It offers us but a glimpse at problems which have confronted historical scholars. It gives an impression of the way in which the Gospels came into being, and something of the influences that affected the choice of materials. Most of the effort that has gone into this field of research has been motivated by a desire to come as close as possible to the historical Jesus. We believe that conspicuous success has been achieved. On the basis of that work, there is a great deal of assurance that very much indeed can be said with confidence about Jesus' life and message.

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## CHAPTER VI

## *JESUS' RELATION TO CONTEMPORARY PROBLEMS, AND HIS MAJOR TEACHINGS*

It should be understood at once by the modern student that every item concerning the Gospel record of Jesus has been examined over and over again by New Testament scholars. These items have been compared also with all known data of history and archaeology. We shall draw freely upon this reservoir, and endeavor to provide an account which, in our judgment, has a reasonable degree of historical justification. We are thoroughly aware, however, that many features of this presentation may be unacceptable to one or another of the various "schools" of thought in the New Testament field, but this is unavoidable in any exposition. It should be understood, also, that we cannot proceed on the hypothesis that every detail of the Gospel narratives must be taken literally, just as given. If we did, we would immediately run into insoluble situations. For example, the birth accounts of Matthew and Luke are quite different, as we have seen already. Each gives a different genealogy of Jesus' lineage. They cannot both be accurate. And anyway, if Jesus was born of a virgin, why trace the father's genealogy? Again, if the Virgin Birth is very important, we still wonder why Jesus himself, or Paul, or Mark, never made any reference to it. Those are questions that may be raised, and they are not fully answered in the record. Again, no matter how reverent we may be, we simply have to recognize that we cannot reconcile the variant accounts of Matthew and Luke with regard to the time of Jesus' birth. There is a difference of about six years. Either the one or the other is wrong; or possibly both are wrong. But being incorrect on some point does not mean that the rest of the narrative or book is invalid. There are many instances of variance. Each item, therefore, has to be considered on its merits. Hosts of scholars have labored at this task and, by reason of their labor, we have far more actual knowledge

of the conditions of Jesus' day than any generation since his time. Surely, then, it is far better that we should in honesty seek a comprehensive historical view, than that we should blindly assume an infallibility of Scriptural story which is not warranted by the evidence.

## Jesus' Background and Preparation

We know that Jesus was brought up in the village of Nazareth, in the province of Galilee, under the jurisdiction of Herod Antipas, whose capital during Jesus' boyhood was at Sepphoris, about five miles from Nazareth. The facts of Jesus' life up to the beginning of his public ministry, at about the age of thirty or less, are so meager that we are curious for more details. We are dealing with a name that influenced our culture more profoundly than any other, yet we know very little of Jesus' early life. It is a temptation to speculate about that early career, for he, like all other boys, had a process of development. He played with toys, he had playmates. Like them, and with them, he learned to read and write. He went to the synagogue. He came home to a large family. He had four brothers and at least two sisters. He sat down to simple meals in a humble home. We may not speculate beyond these unadorned facts, as has often been done. Tradition records stories of Jesus which refer to him as a child wonder-worker. The ordinary child pastime of making mud-pies is, in these stories, transformed into the legend that Jesus made pigeons of clay and then successfully bade them fly. Again, in his father's shop, a piece of lumber or beam was too short for his purpose, so Jesus miraculously caused it to be extended to the desired length. Serious attention is not given to such bald fiction. It is remarkable, however, how much can be reconstructed of Jesus' actual life from the general knowledge which has been obtained of life in Palestine during this period, and from many casual remarks in the Gospels.

It requires no stretch of imagination to visualize Jesus' home, built of stone or brick, square in shape, with a single entrance door, possibly with a window also. The dirt floor was quite hard. On this floor, the whole family slept, perhaps with a mat or rug underneath and a thin blanket for covering. The carpenter shop of Joseph, the

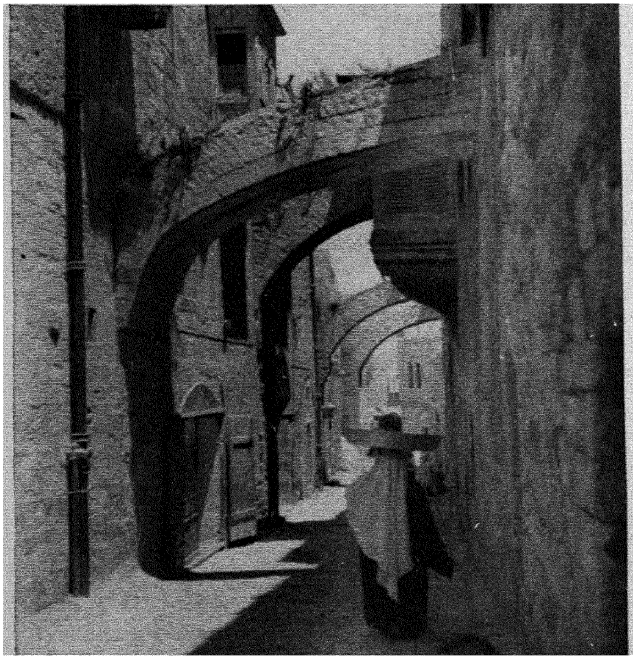


*Photo by J. Calvin Keene*

A Street Scene in an Ancient Part of Modern Jerusalem

The arches are said to date from the Roman period.

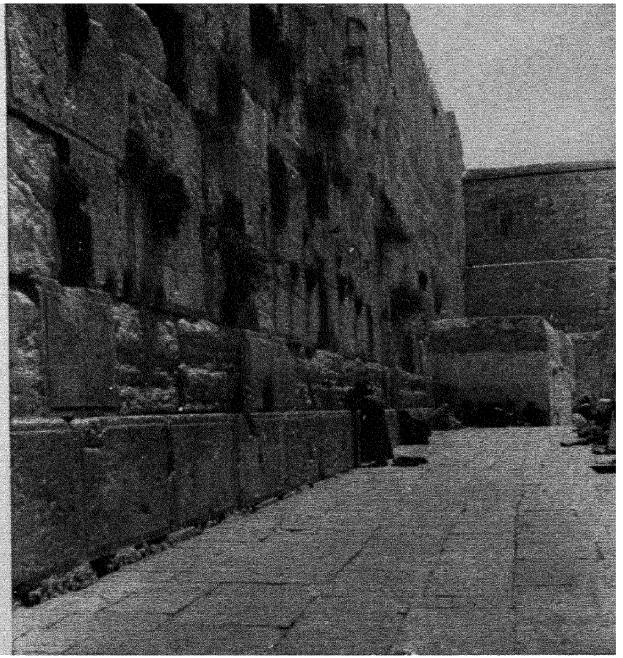


*Photo by J. Calvin Keene*

The Wailing Wall

To this wall in Jerusalem come the Jews to bewail the fate of Jerusalem and their nation. These great blocks were part of the substructure of the temple built by Herod. The Dome of the Rock stands on top of the plateau which this wall supports.

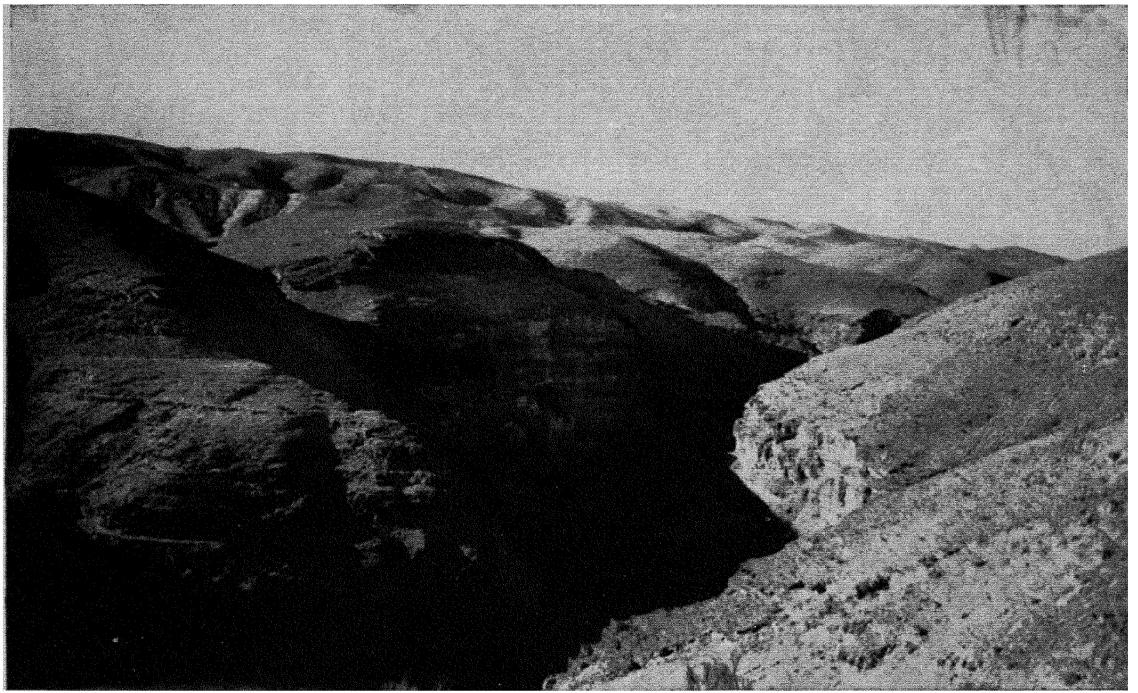


Photo by J. Calvin Keene

THE WILDERNESS OF JUDEA

It was in a section of this stony desert that Jesus spent the forty days of fasting and temptation. The stream at the bottom of the gorge is said to be the one by the side of which Elijah was fed by ravens. (Note the Greek monastery clinging to the cliffs in the center of the picture.)



*Photo by J. Calvin Keene*

THE GARDEN OF GETHSEMANE

The olive orchard, it is said, to which Jesus and his disciples withdrew the night he was betrayed by Judas. The garden contains eight olive trees which are immensely old. Some of them are reputed to date from the time of Christ. In the background can be seen part of the wall of Jerusalem and the dome of the Dome of the Rock.



*Photo by J. Calvin Keene*

THE CHURCH OF THE HOLY SEPULCHRE

**Within** this church is the reputed tomb of Jesus; also the supposed site of the Crucifixion. The present church, erected in 1810, is built on the remains of one constructed by the Crusaders in the twelfth century.

father, was either part of or attached to the small house. The home environment was religious. In fact, it was steeped in the history and religion of the Hebrews. The Old Testament names which are familiar to us, Abraham, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph, Moses, Joshua, David, Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, and innumerable others, were the subject matter of daily speech. Sacred story lived for them as an abiding presence, while the wisdom of the Psalms, Proverbs, and other literature was drawn upon as readily as one drew water from the common spring that served the town of Nazareth. The contribution of conversation and teaching at home was ever enriched by learning these things more diligently in school and synagogue. That literature was the curriculum material. There were no other texts. The foundation of all Jewish education was the Shema, quoted in the preceding chapter. Jesus, like other children, learned this before he knew its meaning. It was recited morning and night. In school, Jesus learned to read it, as well as other Scriptures, in Hebrew, although the everyday spoken language was Aramaic. It is probable that Greek was also learned, because this was a common language of that age. The Old Testament itself was widely used in a Greek translation and, to many Jews, it was more familiar than the Hebrew version.

We can also have first-hand acquaintance with the same natural surroundings which Jesus knew. We can drink at the same spring, which still serves the present village of Nazareth. We can look on the same hills and valleys replete with historic remembrance. One could fill in at some length a reliable account of what Jesus learned at school, what he must have known about the history of his people, and about the contemporary world of his time. Furthermore, we know that despite his religious sensibilities, he chose an artisan's career rather than that of a scribe. This is somewhat surprising if we may judge from the account of Jesus' great religious curiosity during a boyhood visit to the Temple, which portrays a sense of commitment to religious service. But he did learn carpentry, and followed this trade for a number of years. It is not stretching possibilities too far to suggest that Jesus may have been employed in the city of Sepphoris during its great building period, when many artisans were required. After all, Nazareth was but a suburb of

Sepphoris. It is highly probable that Jesus was very familiar with this important city. It is possible that he saw more concerning the rule of Herod Antipas than we have hitherto supposed. His bitterness toward Herod has always been plain enough by the classic designation of him as "that fox."

There can be no doubt that Jesus knew well his own surroundings. When we consider his thorough mastery of the Hebrew past, the years of contact with other men as a workman, and the manifest keenness of observation of life and nature which characterizes all his sayings, we are compelled to recognize that he was thoroughly aware of all the political-religious cross-currents, and of all the hopes and fears of his native land.

### Jesus' Reaction to the Political-religious Situation

Jesus comes prominently into historic perspective in connection with the dramatic ministry of John the Baptist. John was a colorful personality, who had already made a reputation as an effective religious teacher by the time Jesus first came under his influence. The Gospel records are not complete, and they sometimes differ, but we do know that John the Baptist was a preacher of great personal power with a large following. It appears that Jesus was himself so affected by John's message that he accepted baptism from John, and attached himself loyally to John's circle of close friends and disciples. Later on, Jesus separated himself from John and carried forward his work independently of him, although there was always a bond of spiritual kinship. Not only did Jesus frequently refer to John, but John himself maintained a continued interest in Jesus. John preached a Kingdom of God doctrine, proclaimed the imminent coming of the Messiah, and the necessity for repentance. This type of thought was, as we know, quite common, but John introduced a new note, namely, that the judgment exercised by the Messiah would be based on obedience to the law of God, regardless of race. All who obeyed the law were, as he said, children of Abraham. Baptism was a rite of purification, symbolizing cleansing of soul and, possibly, membership in a religious fellowship.

John did not think of himself as a messiah. He proclaimed the

*Coming One*, and he had a message that emphasized the need of getting ready, because when the Coming One (Messiah) arrived, he would act as a judge of the people. The Messiah would first purge the righteous from the unrighteous. In other words, and this is important, John was more concerned with moral and religious goodness than he was with the bare fact of membership in the Hebrew community. Salvation was not attained by virtue of the fact that one was a Jew, but only as a consequence of the righteous character of the individual. That is what he meant by saying that the Kingdom of the coming Judge would be composed only of righteous individuals, even if the Messiah had to make his selection from those who were not Jews. This was extremely revolutionary, and marks him as a genuine prophet. It enables us to understand why he made such an impact on Jesus, though the latter developed this prophetic thought beyond John.

Furthermore, John was a preacher of applied morality, and it is recorded that, like a prophet of old, he rebuked Herod Antipas for dismissing his own wife in order to marry Herodias, a sister-in-law. There is no doubt that Herodias hated John for this and wanted his life, as the Gospel story relates. But that was not the whole reason for John's arrest by Herod. We may add the reason given by the historian Josephus, who not only confirms the high moral quality of John's work, but also states that the popularity of John was a political concern of Herod.

> Herod feared that such a power of persuasion might lead to a revolt, the masses seemingly ready to follow the counsel of this man in everything. Hence he (Herod) preferred to lay hands on him before he caused any trouble, than to have to repent later on, if a movement had taken place, that he had exposed himself to such dangers. On account of these suspicions of Herod, John was sent to Machaerus, the fortress which we mentioned above . . . and there he was killed.[1]

We know that Jesus' ideas went far beyond those of John, so we may think of him as providing a foil for Jesus' own development. Jesus was aware of a great difference, and the consciousness of his own mission caused him to separate from John. The latter, however, even up to the end, was not quite certain what estimate to put upon

[1] Josephus, Book XVIII, chapter 5, sec. 2.

Jesus. He accordingly sent one of his own disciples to Jesus with the question, "Are you the Coming One, or are we to look out for someone else?" (Matt. 11:2-3; Luke 7:18-19). John's arrest and death gave Jesus a very accurate gauge of political boundary lines that could not be crossed without disaster.

When Jesus began his own ministry in Galilee about the year 27 A.D., he immediately got a ready hearing and a large following. But this launching out on his own career had been preceded by much careful thought and travail of soul. Fortunately, we possess some extremely suggestive information which gives us a measure of insight into the mind of Jesus as he reflected upon the total religious-political situation, and his own relation to it. We refer to the accounts of the temptation of Jesus.

*The Temptation in the Wilderness*

| *Matthew* | *Mark* | *Luke* |
|---|---|---|
| Then Jesus was led into the desert by the Spirit, to be tempted by the devil. He fasted forty days and forty nights and afterwards felt hungry. So the tempter came up and said to him, "If you are God's Son, tell these stones to become loaves." He answered, "It is written, Man is not to live on bread alone but on every word that issues from the mouth of God." Then the devil conveyed him to the holy city and, placing him on the pinnacle of the temple, said to him, "If you are God's Son, throw yourself down; | Then the Spirit drove him immediately into the desert, and in the desert he remained for forty days, while Satan tempted him; he was in the company of wild beasts but angels ministered to him. (1:12, 13) | From the Jordan, Jesus came back full of the holy Spirit, and for forty days he was led by the Spirit in the desert, while the devil tempted him. During these days he ate nothing, and when they were over he felt hungry. The devil said to him, "If you are God's Son, tell this stone to become a loaf." Jesus replied to him, "It is written, Man is not to live on bread alone." Then he lifted Jesus up and showed him all the realms of the universe in a single instant; and the devil said to him, "I will give you all their |

for it is written, He will give his angels charge of you; they will bear you on their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone." Jesus said to him, "It is written again, You shall not tempt the Lord your God." Once more the devil conveyed him to an exceedingly high mountain and showed him all the realms of the world and their grandeur; he said, "I will give you all that, if you will fall down and worship me." Then Jesus told him, "Begone, Satan! it is written, You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone." At this the devil left him and angels came up and ministered to him. (4:1-11)

power and grandeur, for it has been made over to me and I can give it to anyone I choose. If you will worship before me, then it shall all be yours." Jesus answered him, "It is written, You must worship the Lord your God, and serve him alone." Then he brought him to Jerusalem, and placing him on the pinnacle of the temple said to him, "If you are God's Son, throw yourself down; for it is written, He will give his angels charge of you, to protect you, and they will bear you on their hands, lest you strike your foot against a stone." Jesus answered him, "It has been said, You shall not tempt the Lord your God." And after exhausting every kind of temptation, the devil left him till a fit opportunity arrived. (4:1-13)

The temptation narrative occurs in the Gospels immediately after the account of Jesus' baptism experience, which seemed to mark a spiritual crisis in his life. There are numerous points of view concerning the temptations. Some writers doubt the historicity of any incident of this sort. Some think they are concerned, one by one, with the positions of the leading religious-political parties. We

follow the view that they go deeper still, and are concerned with some of the central ideas in Judaism that cut across and underlay all party lines. Differences in point of view are inevitable in this field. We are, therefore, forced to choose an interpretation which impresses us as the most valid of numerous possible positions.

The temptations may have occurred very shortly after the baptism, or some time later, but, in any case, prior to the beginning of Jesus' own ministry. It does seem that we have every reason to believe that they were part of his own profound personal struggle to determine the character of his message in relation to the issues of current Judaism. And, more particularly, this struggle was probably concerned with his own effort to gain a clear understanding of the meaning of the "call" which had come to him. He needed to seek guidance about, to think through and come to terms with, the religious-political problems which were all about him. In so doing, he got below the surface of these issues to some of the most fundamental questions of religion. In the light of such discoveries or revelations as came to him, he was enabled to define his own task, the nature of his own sonship and his own messiahship. A brief examination of the temptations will show this.

*The First Temptation.*—"If you are God's Son, tell these stones to become loaves." In the days and nights of his lonely vigil, thinking over the meaning of sonship, Jesus finally became aware of hunger, but there was no bread, no food at all, out there. Then to Jesus' mind came the story of the Hebrews being fed miraculously by Jahweh during their sojourn in the wilderness under Moses. This thought certainly was in Jesus' mind, for the idea of manna in the wilderness is referred to in the eighth chapter of Deuteronomy, from which Jesus now drew his answer to the temptation or suggestion which came to him. In the forum of his own conscience he replied, "Man is not to live on bread alone, but on every word that issues from the mouth of God." This is a most significant response which Jesus selected in answering his difficult problem. What does it signify? Several complementary meanings suggest themselves. As part of the total meaning, Jesus may very well have been tempted to think of the Messiah as uniquely privileged, as one who should possess miraculous power to turn even

stones into bread. But it is far more likely that this temptation is primarily concerned with the major purpose of Messiahship. He turns away from the temptation to think of Messiahship as mainly economic in purpose. The economic need of this people was very great. Jesus had a very pressing awareness of man's need for bread. As he later said, when a son asks for bread, his father does not give him a stone. Nevertheless, Jesus believed that men should be made conscious of needs beyond bread. Therefore, his ideal of Messiahship, without in any way repudiating economic need, reached beyond the material to the spiritual necessities of man. The Messiah must make the higher, more difficult choice—he must lay hold on and distribute the bread of life. This interpretation involves the further view, that the popular Jewish hope in a promised destiny overflowing with economic privilege and prosperity is a false hope that must be discarded. The popular view projected those material hopes upon a Messiah who was expected to fulfill them. It is this conception of the Messiah that Jesus opposed as a temptation of the devil. Furthermore, the realization of the popular ideal, in contrast to Jesus' spiritual outlook, would require a miraculous demonstration of God's power, very fitly symbolized as a turning of stones into bread, and this is a false idea of God also, as the second temptation more fully brings out.

*The Second Temptation.*—This temptation is related to the first. It symbolically states that the devil took Jesus to the pinnacle of the Temple, saying, "If you are God's Son, throw yourself down; for it is written, He will give his angels charge of you . . ." This latter passage comes directly from the ninety-first Psalm, and it is this Psalm as a whole that we should have in mind in understanding the temptation, and Jesus' reply: "You shall not tempt the Lord your God." This Psalm is beautiful poetry, but one may question the truth of its affirmations. It promises to him who trusts in God a covering from danger and protection from pestilence and destruction, for, though "hundreds may fall beside you, thousands at your right hand, the plague will never reach you." "He will give his angels charge of you; they will bear you on their hands lest you strike your foot against a stone." This for the righteous, while the wicked shall fall victims of the pestilence that walks in darkness,

and the destruction that wastes at noonday. This Psalm, so often quoted by religious people in time of danger, can be interpreted to mean that no real evil can touch the soul of the righteous man who keeps his trust in God. In this way it is commonly used today, but originally it had one clear meaning, namely, that no evil circumstances or events can befall one who trusts in God. And to Jesus the words of the Psalm came as a temptation. Jesus did not accept this view of the relation that exists between God and his children. We should not expect that because we serve God the normal flow of life's ups and downs shall be suspended, exempting us from accidents and tragedies. If we did take this view, we might be tempted to see how far we could go in testing out God's providence, even to the extent of casting ourselves down literally from the pinnacle of the Temple. Away with these thoughts and the whole fabric of ideas which leads to them! "You shall not tempt the Lord your God," which passage also comes from Deuteronomy (6:16). Jesus accepted sonship as he accepted life, from the hand of God, for what it brings without fear or hope of favor. This deeply profound understanding of high moral religion was all-important for those days not far in the future, when he faced the necessity to pay with his life, in order to complete his messianic task. In this second temptation, Jesus turned from older to newer ways of religious thinking. Whatever the rewards of religion may be, they are at any rate not equated with the outward circumstances that befall us. Whatever privileges sonship has, they are not to be found in exclusion from the common lot of man. This is a great change, bringing to full development ideas found previously only in Deutero-Isaiah.

*The Third Temptation.*—The ideas of the first two temptations are now applied to the nation. In this case, Jesus is symbolically described as viewing from an exceedingly high mountain all the kingdoms of this world, which are to be his if he will transfer his allegiance from God to Satan. We may without difficulty see the meaning concealed behind this oriental imagery. We have here the culmination of that critical evaluation of Old Testament religion which has been at stake in these temptations. In this case we are especially concerned with Judaism and the general idea of the Messiah. We already know, from our acquaintance with the history

of Judaism, and from the contemporary religious conditions, how much hope and expectation there was that the Hebrew nation would some time be paramount among the nations. Even in Deutero-Isaiah we have this idea, however spiritual the purpose of that international eminence. The attainment of supremacy among the nations was expected to come through the ministrations of a Messiah, who might embody any one of the current ideas of Messiah. Nevertheless, in the temptation under consideration, there is reason to suppose that Jesus rejected the whole notion of national preeminence.

All historical and contemporary hope centered on some kind of national political exaltation. This hope was looked on as a promise, and its realization would be the crowning proof that God had at last redeemed his promises and fulfilled his obligations under the Covenant. It is rather startling, then, to entertain the thought that these nationalistic hopes were false, and not of God at all. Yet it is very clear that Jesus rejected the temptation to adopt such hopes, which envisaged as their goal leadership and power over the nations of this world. Just as in the earlier temptations Jesus rejected as evil all suggestion to think of sonship as uniquely privileged, so he likewise rejected those views which regarded the nation as specially privileged and marked for primary favor at the hands of God. So then it would be a false messiah who would lead his people toward the mirage of national supremacy. It is a temptation of evil to include, in the day by day worship of the Father, the belief that it promises beyond itself some exclusive privilege for the nation.

The implications of the three temptations involve the whole future course of Jesus' ministry, and throw light on it at many points. They bear upon Jesus' reaction to the contemporary political-religious conditions. As a result of this clarifying and emancipating experience, Jesus did not find in the accepted modes of Judaism what could fully satisfy him. Nevertheless, he was a Hebrew, and he drew upon the Old Testament Book of Deuteronomy for each of the answers to temptation. But in drawing upon the spiritual literature which nurtured him, he not only rearranged its ideas but he evolved new insights. Their newness was so marked that it was

inevitable that in due course they would break the bonds of orthodoxy. It may not have been immediately evident but actually, in our attempt to summarize the temptations, we have seen a new religion coming to birth. As he himself said, the new wine would not go in the old bottles. This comes out in his attitude toward political-religious parties, and in his changed conception of the meaning of messiahship and of the Kingdom of God.

Jesus could not ally himself wholeheartedly with any of the parties of his time. Points of common agreement we can find, but something new was born in him. He was well aware that the implications of the experience would bring about a change in the conventional patterns of thinking. That is why he attached himself to no party. He was above all parties, and he aimed to remold and reshape the religious life of the nation along lines which were now clear to him. He had the consciousness of being in possession of a life-giving message for the people—a gospel that could lift them above all party strifes and hatreds, and give to them the Kingdom of God here and now.

Let us examine a little more closely the relation of Jesus to those widely used contemporary terms—the Messiah, and the Kingdom or Realm of God. We have already noted that the popular ideas of the Messiah were rejected as false and illusory, yet Jesus did not discard the term. He reinterpreted it, and because he stood alone in this revelation of its meaning, he came to think of himself as the Messiah. There are numerous indications of this, as the following considerations show. When, after his wilderness experience, Jesus began his ministry in Galilee, we read first of the tremendous effect he had on the populace:

> They then entered Capharnahum. As soon as the sabbath came, he began to teach in the synagogue; and people were astounded at his teaching, for he taught them like an authority, not like the scribes. . . . They were all so amazed that they discussed it together, saying, "Whatever is this?" "It's new teaching with authority behind it!" "He orders even unclean spirits!" "Yes, and they obey him!" So his fame at once spread in all directions through the whole of the surrounding country of Galilee. (Mark 1:21-22, 27-28)

When he entered Capharnahum again after some days it was reported that he was at home, and a large number at once gathered,

till there was no more room for them, not even at the door. (Mark 2:1-2)

These passages testify at once to the fact that the multitudes were eager to hear Jesus. Second, these passages point to the fact that he had a new and different approach to religion. Furthermore, in the Gospel of Luke, in regard to the beginnings of his ministry, we have a specific reference to an appearance of Jesus in the synagogue of his own native town of Nazareth.

Coming to Nazaret, where he had been brought up, on the sabbath he entered the synagogue as was his custom. He stood up to read the lesson, and was handed the book of the prophet Isaiah; on opening the book he came upon the place where it was written, The Spirit of the Lord is upon me: for he has consecrated me to preach the gospel to the poor, he has sent me to proclaim release for captives and recovery of sight for the blind, to set free the oppressed, to proclaim the Lord's year of favour.

Then, folding up the book, he handed it back to the attendant and . . . proceeded to tell them that "To-day, this scripture is fulfilled in your hearing." All spoke well of him, marvelling at the gracious words that came from his lips; they said, "Is this not Joseph's son?" (Luke 4:16-22)

Whether this event occurred exactly as recorded by Luke or not, it is certainly true to the tradition, already firmly established when Luke wrote, that Jesus did exemplify in himself the kind of Messiah portrayed by Deutero-Isaiah, and that he thought of himself in those terms.

The disciples, whom Jesus gathered around him at the outset of his ministry, did not, at that time, recognize Jesus as the Messiah. At first, in Galilee, there were large numbers who came to hear him preach. And no doubt the disciples were rather proud of their leader. But there were difficulties ahead. Persons of various religious and political interests naturally endeavored to find out where the new teacher stood on current issues. The Pharisees were the first to sound him out. They were suspicious, but not immediately hostile, as we may judge from Luke's statement that Jesus accepted hospitality in the homes of Pharisees (Luke 7:36 ff; 11:37; 14:1). However, once they realized that Jesus did not accept their view of the Law, their relations grew cold and were, from then on,

marked by bitterness, as the numerous efforts to embarrass Jesus show. They came to regard him as an enemy and some of them now associated themselves with the "Herodians." We do not know enough about the "Herodians" to deal with them as a separate party. Presumably the term designates those who were loyal to Herod and who favored the extension of his rule in Palestine. Fortunately for Jesus, there were a few Pharisees who remained sufficiently friendly to warn him that Herod sought his arrest.

Despite the fact that Jesus had not yet announced himself as Messiah, and despite the fact that the disciples had not yet recognized him as such, he encountered a serious political obstacle in the threatened arrest by Herod. Why was this so? As in the case of John the Baptist, Herod mistrusted anyone who had great influence and a great following among the people. How could Herod know whether Jesus might, like the Zealots, have a revolt in mind? It is possible that the famous question put to Jesus, whether it is lawful to pay tribute to Caesar, belongs at this point, for it does fit the circumstances perfectly:

> They sent some of the Pharisees and Herodians to him, for the purpose of catching him with a question. They came up and said to him, "Teacher, we know you are sincere and fearless; you never court human favour, you teach the Way of God honestly. Is it right to pay taxes to Caesar or not? Are we to pay, or are we not to pay?" But he saw their trick and said to them, "Why tempt me? Bring me a shilling. Let me see it." So they brought one. He said, "Whose likeness, whose inscription is this?" "Caesar's," they said. Jesus said to them, "Give Caesar what belongs to Caesar, give God what belongs to God." He astonished them. (Mark 12:13-17)

The passage is revealing, because it superbly illustrates the political-religious conditions through which Jesus had to thread his way. The question asked is clever, because it was framed to annihilate Jesus either politically or religiously. The questioners, with simulated sincerity, acknowledged his divine commission and sought guidance on the question of paying tribute to Caesar. If he said, "Yes," the political authorities could relax, but the Zealots would then be after him. If he said, "No," the political authorities would arrest him. In either case, the Pharisees would make his

position untenable. Jesus very ingeniously answered the question in a most unforeseen manner, indicating perhaps that his interests were not touched by the issues which seemed so important to party politics.

Jesus, however, continued to be a political menace in the judgment of Antipas, because of the crowds that followed him and because of their attitude toward him. Popular fancy looked upon every new leader as a possible or potential Messiah. There is an illuminating fragment in John (6:15), which states that the people tried to force Jesus to become king. Herod Antipas was not a man to let budding danger reach full flower. Consequently, the decision to arrest Jesus. Being warned, Jesus had to move quickly and take himself out of the territory. The Gospels, while not clear on the actual order of events, do contain a number of passages which make up the story of his escape. They indicate haste, and a series of appearances in remote spots, such as Tyre and Sidon, considerably to the north of Galilee. From here, after some time, Jesus wended his way back toward Galilee (Mark 7:23, 31). But soon thereafter we find that he went north again into the territory of the Tetrarch Philip. It was here, at Caesarea Philippi, that the conversation took place between Jesus and his disciples which appears in the preceding chapter.[2] It is one of the most revealing passages in the New Testament concerning messiahship. In this incident, it appears that for the first time Jesus allowed his disciples to share his own inner conviction that he was the Messiah. But he wanted them for the time being to keep this to themselves. It was not a propitious time to make it public, when he was already in a difficult position with the authorities. His public declaration came later, at Jerusalem.

Meanwhile, there was the problem of carrying on his work as well as he could in the face of besetting odds. Part of his work was the education of his disciples into some measure of appreciation of the character of his messiahship and the nature of the Kingdom of God. It is somewhat difficult to separate these two concepts, Messiah and Kingdom of God, because they are so intimately bound together, yet we must attempt to do so.

[2] See p. 149 ff.

## Jesus' Conception of the Messiah

In regard to messiahship, we can readily understand that the hazards through which Jesus was passing would cause a great deal of additional reflection on his part regarding the full meaning of his ministry. We believe that the actual events taking place brought more and more into the forefront of his mind those sublime "servant" passages of Deutero-Isaiah. Jesus does plainly refer to the necessity for his suffering. He recognized not only that suffering was an unavoidable feature of his work, but that it was of the essence of it. Goguel has expressed this most clearly.

> When obstacles began to block His way, and He realized that it was part of His mission to be rejected, He did not despair of the fulfillment of God's purpose; He did not think it would be realized in spite of His failure and in spite of His rejection, but by His sufferings and by His rejection. This was a direct result of His faith in the omnipotence of God.
>
> Through the idea that His sufferings were necessary for the coming of the Kingdom of God, Jesus was led beyond the sense of a simple prophetic vocation and to regard Himself, no longer simply as the herald of the Kingdom of God, but as the one who was to realize it Himself, who, after having been humiliated and rejected, would appear as the glorious Son of Man. Thus this Messianic consciousness of Jesus appears as the triumph of faith over experience, of the ideal over reality; it was a faith which surged up from the depths of His being. This is why, as the human outlook became darker, this consciousness increased in force and certainty; this is why He declared it publicly and unequivocally before the Sanhedrin at the very moment when it was evident that His position was desperate. Jesus did not believe that He was the Messiah *although* He had to suffer; He believed that He was the Messiah *because* he had to suffer. This is the great paradox, the great originality, of His Gospel.[3]

It should be clear, now, that Jesus' own experience and religious reflections molded his thinking along lines which follow a course first laid down by Deutero-Isaiah. It is remarkable that the lofty idealistic glimpses of this prophet should have found so much realization in the actual life and thought of Jesus. His very experience seemed to confirm it, and to make a messianic consciousness

[3] Maurice Goguel, *The Life of Jesus* (New York: Macmillan, 1933), p. 392.

almost unavoidable. But the concept of the Messiah that lay in Jesus' mind is laden with a spiritual and ethical content which moves it out of the range of any of the contemporary ideas on the subject.

There is one further point in regard to Jesus' conception of messiahship which should be raised, and this is directly connected with the immediately following exposition of his doctrine of the Kingdom of God. Did his conception share at all in the apocalyptic and eschatological temper of his time? Recall that it was a common notion in his day that the Messiah, whether he came on the clouds of heaven or was in some other way exalted, would come as a divine judge and usher in the Kingdom of God. This we have called apocalyptic thinking. Did Jesus' consciousness of Messiah also include this element? The passage from Goguel, just quoted, does assert that Jesus did think of himself in apocalyptic terms. It is affirmed that Jesus himself expected to return after his rejection, and assume that exalted messianic role which is designated in Daniel and other apocalyptic writings as "Son of Man." There seems little reason to doubt that there is an apocalyptic element in Jesus' thinking, but in the present state of New Testament scholarship there is a tendency to minimize the importance of it as a factor of interpretation. We do not mean that the problem is not important, but we do not now feel that the presence of some apocalyptic features necessarily detracts from the more permanent qualities of Jesus' teaching. It has been asserted that Jesus naturally was required to use the thought-forms of his time, just as he had to use the Aramaic language. But the essentials of his thought are no more confined to apocalyptic concepts than they are to the language forms of the Aramaic tongue.[4]

## Jesus' Conception of the Kingdom of God

We may now consider Jesus in relation to the term, "the Kingdom of God" or "Realm of Heaven." This was part of the common vocabulary and Jesus himself used it constantly. Here, again, we know that the popular usage of the term was shot through and through with political and with apocalyptic connotations, but the

[4] *Ibid.*, p. 572.

most casual reader of the Gospels is aware of something different in Jesus' references and figures of speech concerning the Kingdom of God.

Jesus' idea of the Kingdom seems to have been entirely divorced from national and political implications. He particularly emphasized that it is a misguided activity to calculate when the Kingdom is coming. "The Kingdom of God does not come with observation." Furthermore, "the Kingdom of God is within you." This is a spiritual not a materialistic conception. Note, for example, what takes place in Mark (10:35-45), where two of the disciples seek the highest positions in the Kingdom of God. Their very request reveals how influenced they were by current political and materialistic concerns. They were far from an appreciation of what Jesus was talking about. No wonder he replied, "you do not know what you are asking." And he went on to explain, that the cup which he had to drink was not filled with what they had in mind. Furthermore, he said,

> You know that the so-called rulers of the Gentiles lord it over them, and their great men overbear them: not so with you. Whoever wants to be the great man among you must be your servant, and whoever of you wants to be first must be the slave of all; for the Son of man himself has not come to be served but to serve, and to give his life as a ransom for many. (Mark 10:42-45)

It is obvious that Jesus was trying to lift the thought of the disciples to a loftier level. He strove to teach them that the Kingdom of God is a kingdom of God's will, which should be sought first above all things. There seems to be both an inner and an outer side to the Kingdom idea. No doubt that in one strain of thought the Kingdom of God has an outward or social significance, in another an inner meaning. But the primary prerequisite for entrance into the Kingdom is a condition of will which is at one with the will of God.

We may also raise the question whether the Kingdom is something which is to come in the future, or is possibly here now. Traditionally, the tendency has been to lay emphasis upon the future realization, suggested by the phrase in the Lord's Prayer, "Thy kingdom come." In that sense, also, we have taken passages such as:

"The Realm of heaven," he said, "is like a grain of mustard-seed, which a man takes and sows in his field. It is less than any seed on earth, but when it grows up it is larger than any plant, it becomes a tree, so large that wild birds come and roost in the branches of it." (Matthew 13:31, 32)

"The Realm of heaven," he said, "is like dough, which a woman took and buried in three pecks of flour, till all of it was leavened." (Matthew 13:33)

The parable of the mustard seed has usually been interpreted as indicating the way in which God's reign *will come* in the world, from small beginnings to ever larger dimensions. And as to leaven, it suggests that the spirit of a righteous man or group will permeate the whole of society. Certainly, this is a very useful and valid way to use these and other parables, but it is quite possible that Jesus was also making a present, rather than an exclusively future, application. The fact that he does say that the Kingdom of God is within one, suggests that it is here now, waiting to be appropriated. In that case, the grain of mustard seed is the Kingdom of God planted now, but which will grow more and more, thus combining the present and the future. Likewise, the leaven *is now* at work, and *will* fulfill its function of leavening the whole. If this turn of thought is stressed, as we think it should be, then the Kingdom of God or messianic age that has been hoped for through all the past, *is now come*. This point of view has been beautifully expressed by Professor Dodd of Cambridge University, in the following way:

> Not, indeed, that there is any spectacular exhibition of divine power. There is no *coup d'état*, and no summoning of legions of angels. There is only a Galilean Carpenter preaching in the streets and healing the sick. The careless scoff: "Only one more of these religious enthusiasts. We know them: there was John, but he was mad; and now there is Jesus, and he is not even respectable."—like peevish children, said Jesus; but all the same, "The Kingdom of God has come upon you." For there is a power which works from within, like leaven in dough, and nothing can stop it.
>
> Jesus has not come as a religious reformer, to patch up the ragged robe of Pharisaic Judaism (foolish idea! patching would only hasten the end of the old coat). This is a new departure in the relations of God and man; and new especially in that His grace is exhibited to the undeserving. "The Lord loveth the righteous, and His ear is open to

their cry," said the old religion. But this is not now the whole story. To whom should the doctor come, if not to the sick? And so the Son of Man, in whom the Kingdom of God comes, is content to be known as "the friend of publicans and sinners." The strayed sheep is the especial object of the shepherd's care, as a frugal housewife will count no trouble too great to recover one lost coin out of her store. So Jesus went about the towns and villages of Galilee, seeking the lost; and that was how the Kingdom of God came. He launched out into the deep, and all was fish that came to His net. Nor was His appeal without results. The outcasts could be seen flocking into the Kingdom of God as the birds fly to roost in the branches of a stalwart tree (which not long ago was an almost invisible seed). And for those who accepted the Kingdom of God there was pure happiness, like the joy of a wedding-feast.[5]

The concept of the Kingdom of God, then, is one of the religious coins of the realm to which Jesus gave a new value. With this concept, as with the Messiah idea, we are struck by the manner in which Jesus took thought-forms of his own generation and transmuted them into something more profound and significant. That is the originality of spiritual genius. His reaction on the political-religious environment is never an identification with the issues, but a transformation of those issues. We shall now take one more instance of his reaction to a dominant religious form, and consider his relation to the Law.

### Jesus' Attitude Toward the Law

There is on the surface a paradox in the teaching of Jesus about the Law. He said, in the Sermon on the Mount (Matt. 5, 6, 7; Luke 6:20-49):

> Never imagine I have come to destroy the Law or the prophets; I have not come to destroy but to fulfil . . . therefore, whoever relaxes a single one of these commands, were it even one of the least, and teaches men so, he will be ranked least in the Realm of heaven . . . (Matt. 5:17-19)

Notwithstanding, Jesus also in the Sermon on the Mount has a series of sayings like the following:

> *You have heard how the men of old* were told "Murder not: who-

[5] C. H. Dodd, *The Parables of the Kingdom* (New York: Scribners, 1936), pp. 198-199.

ever murders shall come up for sentence . . ." *But I tell you,* whoever is angry with his brother without cause will be sentenced by God. (Matt. 5:21-22)

*You have heard how it used to be said,* Do not commit adultery. *But I tell you,* anyone who even looks with lust at a woman has committed adultery with her already in his heart. (Matt. 5:27-28)

Again and again, there is the same phraseology: *You have heard . . . But I tell you. . . .* This contrast is noteworthy. Jesus had a profound reverence for the Old Testament, and great respect for the authority of the Law, yet he exercised discretion in the use of Old Testament and the Law. The authority of the established ways was not in his mind absolute. For him the revelations of God were still open, not closed. He had the genius to see that this followed from his conception of God as a present reality, and of his Kingdom as the reign of his law in human hearts. Seeking to know and to do the will of God is not simply consulting a lawbook, but a warm and living experience flowing out of a soul's communion with God.

There was a place for individual freedom of interpretation and action in Jesus' view of religion. He simply did not accept for himself the detailed prescriptions of the Law as absolute. This is well illustrated in regard to Jesus' attitude toward Sabbath Law. When we bear in mind that the sanctity of the Sabbath day was a most firmly established feature of Judaism, we marvel at the complete emancipation which Jesus attained, both intellectually and emotionally. The Sabbath issue came up frequently. The following is one of the passages on that subject which is especially interesting:

Now it happened that he was passing through the cornfields on the sabbath, and as the disciples made their way through, they began to pull the ears of corn. The Pharisees said to him, "Look at what they are doing on the sabbath! That is not allowed." He said to them, "Have you never read what David did when he was in need and hungry, he and his men? He went into the house of God . . . and ate the loaves of the Presence, which no one except the priests is allowed to eat, and also shared them with his followers." And he said to them, "The sabbath was made for man, not man for the sabbath: so that the Son of man is Lord even over the sabbath." (Mark 2:23-28)

Even the Old Testament, as distinguished from the detailed

development of the oral Law, is very definite about the Sabbath. In the Book of Numbers (15:32 ff.), a man gathering sticks on the Sabbath is put to death by alleged command of Jahweh. In later prophetic writings, such as Jeremiah and Deutero-Isaiah, Sabbath observance is made a condition of Jahweh's favor. Out of such weighty support, the laws of the proper observation of that holy day evolved through the years. Yet Jesus did not feel bound by Scripture where it ran counter to his own ethical insight. When the Law makes it necessary for hungry men to forego food, simply because rubbing the grain from some ears of corn violates a rule of Sabbath observance, then, in his judgment, the rule should be sacrificed, and not the men. The value of an institution, such as the Sabbath, lies in its service to man, and not the other way around. We cannot overestimate the importance of this point with regard to the Law. It reveals beyond any possible doubt the new approach to religion which Jesus made.

Jesus perceived with transparent clarity the shortcomings of the Law. Its motivations were not sufficiently spiritual, and its duties were too external. No one ever understood better than he that obedience to the will of God involves the transformation of our own wills. Moral conduct should flow as a consequence of an inner spirit of devotion or love to God and man. If we have that, we do not need to look in a book to learn our duty in a given case. Jesus put this very pointedly when he answered the question, "Teacher, what is the greatest command in the Law?" He replied, "You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, and with your whole mind. This is the greatest and chief command. There is a second like it: you must love your neighbour as yourself. The whole Law and the prophets hang upon these two commands." (Matt. 22:36-40)

It was not unusual to raise questions about the most important commandments, and it is quite possible that Jesus had heard this discussed. For in his reply he used part of a verse from the Old Testament (Leviticus 19:18), but the originality of the answer lies in the recognition that the spirit and intention of the Law is adequately summarized in his answer. The essence of the Law is contained in it, and if we adhere to these two commandments, con-

duct will take a course which makes the Law in detail unnecessary. Our need, says Jesus in effect, is not so much a set of rules covering all manner of duties, but an inner spirit creative of such character as will fulfill life's obligations joyously. This is a very high ideal. The Christian Church has never come up to it, substituting for the old Law new authorities which too often have stifled the liberalism and freedom which Christ brought it.

## The Teachings of Jesus

There are several precautionary remarks which should be made at the outset of any attempt to indicate the content of Jesus' teaching. First, he did not think of himself primarily as a teacher at all, but as one clothed with a prophetic message about the Kingdom of God. In the course of his messianic task he did teach, and from the relatively small amount of it that has been preserved, we are struck by the power and originality of his thought. Second, in attempting to give some account of this teaching, we must quite humbly acknowledge that whatever is said is but the merest sampling of Jesus' genius, artistry, and character. Third, we must avoid the modern temptation to confine his thinking to the pigeonholes of contemporary thinking. For example, we shall not expect to classify or list Jesus' teaching around such questions as, "What did Jesus say about war, about capital and labor, about voting a straight political ticket?" Rather, we shall try to catch the spirit of his thought, which may then have great significance for us in meeting the problems of our own time.

In considering Jesus' reaction to the political-religious environment, we were made aware that he had profound personal religious experiences which determined his attitude on current issues. In his own mind, he rearranged the conventional and familiar patterns of Judaism. He was forced by his own conscience to accept in a new form the messianic role. He labored to spread a Kingdom of God, which had already begun. He strove to make religious faith such a thing of spirit that even the Law was superseded thereby. Thus we know something already of his teaching and his freshness of approach to problems of religion. But can we not say something more in detail about his ideas? What was the content

of his thought about God and man, and about social relationships? Since Jesus did not write out, nor presumably at any time present systematic discussion of these topics, we have to gather his teachings on these matters from the wide variety of sayings which the Gospels record.

*Teaching About God.*—Jesus believed in God as readily as he believed in the sun. He believed that he had as immediate experience of the one as of the other. Therefore, we find no persuasive argument for the existence of God. We find, instead, sayings which persuade men to think of God in certain ways. The parable of the Prodigal Son is particularly significant in this regard.

There was a man who had two sons, and the younger said to his father, Father, give me the share of the property that falls to me. So he divided his means among them. Not many days later, the younger son sold off everything and went abroad to a distant land, where he squandered his means in loose living. After he had spent his all, a severe famine set in throughout that land, and he began to feel in want; so he went and attached himself to a citizen of that land, who sent him to his fields to feed swine. And he was fain to fill his belly with the pods the swine were eating; no one gave him anything. But when he came to his senses he said, How many hired men of my father have more than enough to eat, and here am I, perishing of hunger! I will be up and off to my father, and I will say to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I don't deserve to be called your son any more; only make me like one of your hired men. So he got up and went off to his father. But when he was still far away, his father saw him and felt pity for him and ran to fall upon his neck and kiss him. The son said to him, Father, I have sinned against heaven and before you; I don't deserve to be called your son any more. But the father said to his servants, Quick, bring the best robe and put it on him, give him a ring for his hand and sandals for his feet, and bring the fatted calf, kill it, and let us eat and be merry; for my son here was dead and he has come to life, he was lost and he is found. So they began to make merry. Now his elder son was out in the field, and as he came near the house he heard music and dancing; so, summoning one of the servants, he asked what this meant. The servant told him, Your brother has arrived, and your father has killed the fatted calf, because he has got him back safe and sound. This angered him, and he would not go in. His father came out and tried to appease him; but he replied, Look at the years I have been serving you! I never neglected any of your orders, and

yet you have never given me so much as a kid, to let me make merry with my friends. But as soon as this son of yours arrives, after wasting your means with harlots, you kill the fatted calf for him! The father said to him, My son, you and I are always together; all I have is yours. We could not but make merry and rejoice, for your brother here was dead and he has come to life again, he was lost but he is found." (Luke 15:11-32)

This masterpiece of parable and short story has so many implications that we may think of it as a summary of Jesus' entire message. However, with reference to the idea of God, Jesus declares that God is like a father. This heavenly Father does not prevent people from doing foolish things. They may take their entire inheritance, whether money or whatever else has come to them from their fathers and, failing to appreciate its value, waste it. They may indulge themselves sensually in all manner of ways. They may even end up with pigs. God does not step in to prevent it. He just waits. But if, having turned from folly, men seek newness of life, God graciously grants forgiveness and reinstatement. The analogy of fatherly love at its best serves to portray Jesus' idea of God. It is very personal and intimate. To be sure, this is not altogether original, for in the Old Testament there are numerous references to the people of Israel as children and sons of Jahweh. Nevertheless, the course which Judaism had taken had tended to make God an austere judge, rather than a loving Father. It is in the nature of things that this must be so whenever law becomes exalted. And it is against this austerity and impersonal remoteness that Jesus protests, when he so greatly emphasizes the divine fatherhood.

It is at this very point that we can appreciate part of the motivation for thus regarding God. The multitudes needed something like this. A tremendous number of the common people felt that no one had any real spiritual concern for them. There simply was no emphasis on the thought that God loved all the children of men. In practice, the idea of God's love extended to those who kept the Law, though there is much in Old Testament prophecy that might have produced a more generous application of the concept of love. Jesus, in addition to the great inspiration he received from the best in the Old Testament, derived a sincere liking for people out of his

own experience. Right along through the entire development of Hebrew religion we have seen the close correlation between personal experience and new religious ideas. It was illustrated in all of the prophets. In Jesus, we see the very same thing. He was one of the people. He knew toil, humble circumstances, and frugal fare. He knew at first hand the many ills of the common man—sickness of body, sickness of mind. He saw pain, and he saw sin. But he saw also the downright goodness which flows through human life. He loved people for what they were, and for what they might become. And the love he felt for them was like the love he thought God had for them. If we, with all our evil, know how to give good gifts to our children, how much more our heavenly Father! Thus Jesus came to think of God as a loving Father because he himself felt that way toward his fellows. He was like an elder brother who possessed great human sympathy, tolerance, and understanding. It is this attitude on Jesus' part which he attributes to God also, but in more exalted measure. And if the God of the universe is in reality a loving Father, it follows also that the Father will be more than ready to forgive sinners where there is sincere repentance, as in the parable. Consequently, the Gospel message to all manner of men was, and is, a gospel of love and of forgiveness, graciously bestowed by a heavenly Father who eagerly awaits their return, that they may take up their proper status as children of God.

Jesus, furthermore, thought of God as near at hand, and everywhere present. God is not located on some mountain top, nor is he confined to a Temple at Jerusalem. God is a spirit, and they who worship him must worship him in spirit. God is everywhere accessible to the souls of men. Jesus' own personal religious life indicates a very intimate feeling of God's presence. There are many references to his meditations and prayers in solitary withdrawal.

There seems to be no question that Jesus believed this personal God to be the God of nature, with infinite power and knowledge, even to awareness of a sparrow's fall. On the other hand, however, he appears to think of God's jurisdiction as orderly and not modified in relation to man's goodness or badness. The rain falls on the just and unjust, he said. The fall of the Tower of Siloam destroyed a

random group of people, but Jesus held that this fact was entirely irrelevant to their moral or religious condition. Again, he said, it is not at all a proper question, when seeing a man born blind, to ask whether he sinned, or his parents. Physical infirmity is part of life, and the idea of sin is not at all the touchstone by which we make clear the meaning of these circumstances. What their meaning is, Jesus does not say, but he suggests for our part an attitude of complete trust in God, and a consequent resignation toward whatever life brings. If this is thought through carefully, it will be understood why Jesus could suggest that those who shared his trust in God need have no fear or anxiety about life. A religious attitude which promotes or retains the belief that whatever is happening to us is being ordered by God in this particular way, at this time, because of what we are or have done, is neither healthy nor normal. In the first place, it will cause great religious conflict since, as Job discovered, our own souls may testify that such a belief is not true. While there are penalties for sin, it does not follow that all suffering is such punishment. Failure to make this distinction is morally wrong and psychologically unhealthy. In the second place, there is also a certain degree of anxiety and uncertainty produced when we doubt the orderliness of external events that occur indiscriminately to the just and unjust alike. If we learn to accept hardships as accidents of life, there is a firmer basis for peace of mind.

Jesus' view of God, then, has carried the profound ethical monotheism of Judaism to a new level. The concept of God is at once more personal and more universal. The attribute of love is ascribed to God as it never had been before, and it is applied universally to include all mankind. God is equally approachable by the reverent spirit of any man, whether his body be clothed in rags or in regal garb. God is fatherly, forgiving, and eager to have his children enjoy all the riches of a spiritual kingdom. Entrance into this kingdom of God's will is like the homecoming of a lost son, filling the household with joy and radiance.

*Jesus' Teaching About Man.*—It is already foreshadowed in the preceding paragraphs about God and his attitude toward men, what Jesus' conception of man will be. The point has been made

that Jesus had a remarkably warm fellow feeling for human beings. This deep-going humanitarianism is usually designated by the word "love." Unhappily, the word has so many connotations that it is unsatisfactory unless understood in the humanitarian sense. If anyone feels about people the way Jesus did, it follows, necessarily, that a high value is placed on them. What you love, you value, and the greater the love, the greater the evaluation. Jesus' identification of himself with the joys and sorrows of the whole human family was the keystone of all that he taught about man as well as God. He taught that the value which he placed on men, they had in the mind of God also.

Any value which love places on a person is an intrinsic value, not an instrumental value. Let us see what this means. There are various ways by which to value people. We may value them from the standpoint of an army general, as worth so much as defensive or offensive units. Or from the standpoint of a politician, who values them as so many votes rather than as so many citizens. Or again, from an industrial point of view, as so many coal miners at so many tons a day. This instrumental way of regarding or valuing people is not necessarily bad. Instrumental evaluation is necessary in any kind of society, and in the economic order it is supposed to have some relation to income. Jesus knew that as well as anyone, but he insisted that the value of man is first and foremost intrinsic. For example, a child has an intrinsic value to the parents. It may have red hair or brown, be fat or lean, brilliant or slow, but the parents love the child just the same. It has value in and of itself. This is intrinsic value. Jesus taught that all men have an intrinsic worth as men, as children of God. In his time, as now, men were too much thought of as instruments for use and for exploitation. The saddest commentary of all is that the religious leaders themselves had not grasped the essential worth of men as men. Jesus recognized that to view them with humanitarian love is to value them otherwise than instrumentally. This distinctive worth, if recognized, will alter and modify all human relations so that the instrumental features of existence will be subsidiary to, and at the service of, the primary value of men. Therefore, as was

said, love is the keystone, and love is the quality which religion must generate and contribute to social relationships.

Where there is love, there is hope, faith, and confidence. So, Jesus' conception of man is not marked by pessimism and futility. There is no morbid view of human nature, no assertion of total depravity. Sin, yes; but even the outcasts and the prostitutes are redeemable. Lost coins must be sought for and put back into circulation. Lost sheep must be found. Prodigal sons may return. Despite his direct acquaintance with man's inhumanity to man, Jesus believed that motivations could be transformed, and would be, if men really understood what manner of heavenly Father they had. Then they would be eager to follow the will of God.

*Society and Social Relationships.*—The question of social relationships is closely linked with the conception of the Kingdom of God. In fact, it is part and parcel of Jesus' teaching about God and man. Jesus was thinking in terms of the issues not of our time, but of his own. Nevertheless, the comments he made affecting social and economic matters are remarkably illuminating. The insight behind them could well bear wide application to the complexities of our era. Jesus gave unforgettable lessons toward a social consciousness by redefining neighborliness, by his references to poverty and wealth, and by his teaching on marriage and divorce.

*Neighborliness.*—

Now a jurist got up to tempt him. "Teacher," he said, "what am I to do to inherit life eternal?" He said to him, "What is written in the law? What do you read there?" He replied, "You must love the Lord your God with your whole heart, with your whole soul, with your whole strength, and with your whole mind. Also your neighbour as yourself." "A right answer!" said Jesus; "do that and you will live." Anxious to make an excuse for himself, he said to Jesus, "But who is my neighbour?" Jesus rejoined, "A man going down to Jericho fell among robbers, who stripped and belaboured him and then went off, leaving him half-dead. Now it so chanced that a priest was going down the same road, but on seeing him he went past on the opposite side. So did a Levite who came to the spot: he looked at him but passed on the opposite side. However a Samaritan traveller came to where he was, and felt pity when he saw him; bound his wounds up, pouring oil and wine into them, mounted him

on his own steed, took him to an inn, and attended to him. Next morning he took out a couple of shillings and gave them to the innkeeper, saying, 'Attend to him, and if you are put to any extra expense, I will refund you on my way back.' Which of these three men, in your opinion, proved a neighbour to the man who fell among the robbers?" He said, "The man who took pity on him." Jesus said to him, "Then go and do the same." (Luke 10:25-37)

In this superlative illustration of Jesus' teaching method, let us note several incisive points. The man robbed is given no name or place. He is simply a man who has been maltreated and needs help. A priest comes along, sees the man, and passes as far over on the other side of the road as possible. So does the Levite, another representative of formal religion. But the man who does stop to take care of the victim is a Samaritan. And Samaritans were despised by the Jews. It becomes clear that Jesus wished to get across several ideas in one illustration. One may be a representative of religion, and still not be a good neighbor. One may belong to a despised people, and yet have all the qualities which make an exemplary neighbor. Neighborliness must extend beyond the circle of one's religion and one's race, to every fellow traveller on the road of life. The parable of the Good Samaritan is two thousand years old, but the principle of it is ageless. Can we imagine any time, however far in the future, when it will not teach a valuable lesson in human relations? In any given society, the extent of its application is great.

Another form of the good neighbor teaching is the Golden Rule. "As you would like men to do to you, so do to them." (Matt. 7:12; Luke 6:31). The Good Samaritan was doing for the other fellow what he would like to have had done for him, if the situation had been reversed. Jesus tried to get men to see things from the other man's point of view, and the more the idea is put into practice, the less the number of people who will need to be rescued from the side of the road. It may seem at first sight impractical to suggest that we should treat other people in the way that we ourselves would like to be treated by them. It is extremely difficult, of course, so long as people are regarded impersonally. It was not difficult for Jesus because he had learned to love people. We treat people with respect when we care for them. Essentially, that is

precisely what the Golden Rule is, and what neighborliness is. It is a recognition of other people's value. It goes back to our discussion about the nature of man. When our neighbor is every man, when every man is an end, not a means only, an intrinsic and not just an instrumental value, then we have laid the foundation of social responsibility and acquired a social conscience.

Having the mind of Christ on modern social problems would appear to be, first, the attainment of a social conscience. Second, it is a problem of application, and here there is great diversity of opinion. The modern world is so complex that there simply are no easy answers for the sincere student of applied Christianity, yet it ought not to be difficult for anyone to see that the good neighbor principle and the Golden Rule apply to many specific situations. Does this principle or rule not apply to the ten-year-old child who developed tuberculosis while working in a cotton goods factory? It applies not only to the care of the sick child—that is only the beginning. If we were in earnest about applying the Golden Rule there would be no children working in factories. There is little likelihood of satisfactory answers for the problems of any social order that does not make some start with the principle of individual worth and universal neighborliness.

*Poverty and Wealth.*—It is quite understandable that Jesus had very little to say about poverty. Most of the people of his time were living on a scale of life not far removed from poverty. He did not single it out for special consideration. He seems, rather, to have been concerned with the total situation of the masses. That they should have daily bread was important enough to include in the Lord's Prayer, but there was so much that they needed beyond bread. Jesus had no economic panacea to offer which called for a reorganization of the economic order. However, he did think he could vastly improve men's well-being, and bring them far more happiness than they then possessed, even within the political-economic order which existed. Given that situation, Jesus was deeply concerned for all those men and women who fell below the level of sufficient daily needs. These were the poor of his day, and we may suppose they were much on his heart as a social responsibility.

The incident which is usually selected for illustration is the conversation between Jesus and the rich young man.

As he went out on the road, a man ran up and knelt before him. "Good teacher," he asked, "what must I do to inherit life eternal?" Jesus said to him, "Why call me good? No one is good, no one but God. You know the commands: do not kill, do not commit adultery, do not steal, do not bear false witness, do not defraud, honour your father and mother." "Teacher," he said, "I have observed all these commands from my youth." Jesus looked at him and loved him. "There is one thing you want," he said; "go and sell all you have; give the money to the poor and you will have treasure in heaven, then come, take up the cross, and follow me." But his face fell at that, and he went sadly away, for he had great possessions. (Mark 10:17-22) (See also Matt. 19:16-22 and Luke 18:18-23.)

Very few professing Christians care to take the above passage literally as a universal requirement. The most famous instance of one who did was Francis of Assisi, in the thirteenth century, who was a rich young man. Yet he took a vow of poverty as a disciple, and established the Franciscan order. It may be that Jesus intended his advice to the young man to be taken as a requirement for all followers. Some students think so. As a matter of fact it would probably be impossible to apply this passage universally. That is not the point of the incident. Jesus nowhere advocated poverty as such, for he was interested in the alleviation of poverty.

We must recognize that we have before us a remarkably vivid snapshot of a vital contact between Jesus and a contemporary. The Gospels are an album of such word pictures. The main features of these scenes speak for themselves. In this instance we see a young man, whose well-groomed appearance and dress mark him as wealthy. He is seeking as much light as he can get on the business of living. He really wants to live the good life. His conduct has been set to a line prescribed by the Law. He now seeks the Master's formula for the way toward life eternal. It is not certain at this point whether the young man is dissatisfied with his life modeled after the Law and is, therefore, in search of something better, or whether he is satisfied and looks for approval from the Great Teacher. We are inclined toward the latter interpretation. However, a degree of uncertainty does not becloud the main issue. In

any event, the young man is so obviously sincere and forthright that Jesus looks upon him with affectionate regard. But all the while Jesus sees that the youth is a long way from any deep appreciation of what it means to possess the Kingdom of God within.

Let us bear in mind for a moment all that Jesus had passed through in formulating the character of his message and messianic task; what it meant in spiritual debate to separate the chaff from the wheat of Judaism; what it involved of meditation and reflection to garner those new insights on the way of life. And here, in the episode before us, was an unripe soul who thought he had done all, or nearly all, to warrant a prize in righteousness. The youthful seeker had no conception of the spiritual dimensions that stretched beyond him; no idea of the measure of Jesus' mind. But Jesus understood him better than he understood himself. He knew that where a man's treasure is, there his heart is likely to be also. Had he not said, "Ye cannot serve God and Mammon"? Jesus himself had given up everything for the Kingdom of God and had become the servant of all. What had the young man given up? For all his sincerity and good intentions, his spiritual life had not cost him very much. Jesus perceived that the well-favored young man had not thought there was any connection between his well-to-do position and the good life. It had not occurred to him that pursuit of the highest ideals might make any change in his income or social status. It looked to Jesus as though the man's wealth was more important to him than anything else; that there was no cause really big enough to capture the whole man, wealth and all. It was doubtful whether he actually sought the Kingdom of God first. Jesus had a way of putting things very straight, and sometimes very hard. He sought to test whether the inquiry was profoundly deep and wholehearted, and to hold up to the man his innermost self. So he said, "There is one thing . . . sell all . . . give to the poor . . . follow me." The test was too hard to pass. The young man wanted the Kingdom of God, but not at that price.

It would be a mistake to generalize and claim that now we should make a rule that every rich man should sell all that he has. But it is taught that doing the will of God, or devotion to the highest, may require more from us than we anticipated when we pro-

fessed a desire to walk on the highroad of God's service. The Kingdom of God sets a very high level. We are asked to give all—not merely lip service, not even complete obedience to the rigorous discipline of the Law, but the whole heart, and mind and soul and strength, and to love our neighbor as ourself. That is the Christian ideal, and so long as it is there, it remains a standard to remind us that all our achievements are compromises and not full realization of the goal. The task of realizing the Kingdom is never finished. The ideal is an eternal measure which should save us from self-righteousness. Now we can see why Jesus never proposed any economic or social plan *per se*. No plan can be final. Plans are good as far as they go. The Christian ideal will always sit in judgment on our plans and always leave over something to reach for. But the possession of an ideal is no ground for discouragement, but an invitation to practice its spirit at all times.

That brings us to a very practical consideration. Granted that the main point of the episode is not poverty and the distribution of alms, it is none the less true that Jesus did mention the poor. He was greatly concerned about them. In challenging the young man to follow him, Jesus directed his attention to these people. It is clear that Jesus, if he had money at his disposal, would like to have done something to alleviate the condition of the masses. We know that their situation in his day was nothing short of desperate. How then could any man be so concerned about his individual salvation and so unaware of the social needs of a great portion of the population? Life was no Realm of God for them. Jesus felt at first hand the distress of these multitudes. The young man was not distressed about them. Life had been very kind and agreeable to him here, and he wanted to make sure he had the situation well in hand for the hereafter. Perhaps a man's salvation really depends on the identification of himself with the needs of his fellow men. So we may well discern in Jesus' mind the thought that, if the well-garbed questioner could follow him around for awhile, he would have his eyes opened to what life meant for so many of that time. The good life or the Kingdom of God in social terms would bring about a very great modification in the point of view of this rich and privileged person.

Jesus followed his comments to the rich ruler with a few remarks about wealth:

> Jesus looked round and said to his disciples, "How difficult it is for those who have money to get into the Realm of God!" The disciples were amazed at what he said; so he repeated, "My sons, how difficult it is for those who rely on money to get into the Realm of God! It is easier for a camel to get through a needle's eye than for a rich man to get into the Realm of God." (Mark 10:23-25)

The needle's eye may mean an actual needle, in which case Jesus is using a rhetorical exaggeration to make the point that it is impossible or else very difficult for a rich man to enter the Kingdom. It is more probable that stress is on the word "difficult" rather than on "impossible." In that case we should point out that the needle's eye may refer to a small gate in the wall of the city, which might be opened to let in a traveler after dusk when the main gates were closed. In order to get a camel through this gate, it was necessary to take off all his baggage and trappings. Only then, by much pushing and pulling, could he be got through. Likewise, said Jesus, it is with a rich man entering the Kingdom of God. There is nothing arbitrary about this. Jesus was simply making an observation. If we may take the account of the young man as an approximation of what Jesus meant, then we have an idea of what a rich man is not likely to know either about the nature of the Kingdom or about poverty or other factors that make for human misery. The rich man is not only removed from this knowledge, but he would rather not possess it. If he developed a social conscience, he could not enjoy his riches as before.

Furthermore, it is well known that most of the riches obtained at this period were gained by exploitation or graft or extortion. Rulers especially were expected to "feather their nests" in this way. Take, for example, the instance of Gabinius, who held the Roman consulate over Syria in 55 B.C. He came back to Rome with a fortune estimated in our money at fifteen million dollars.

There is not only the question of how riches are acquired, there is the fact of what riches may do to a man. What is the motivation toward gaining riches? Is it the desire to make the world better, or to alleviate distress, or to start a foundation for education or

medicine? No, that is rarely the motive. It is usually a very self-centered motive, a desire for power, or display, or the means to do as one pleases. In the pursuit of that end a man may have to sacrifice many qualities of character which otherwise tie him to his fellow men. It is not then an arbitrary rule which Jesus makes when he speaks of riches. He merely points out what anybody can discern in any generation, namely, that it is a remarkable man whom riches do not disqualify from wholehearted service to the Kingdom of God. The Realm of God is made up of people interested in and devoted to human well-being and other spiritual ideals. The only possible way that a rich man can be a member of this kingdom is for him to regard the possession of his riches as a stewardship, or as a means to foster spiritual ends.

*Divorce and Marriage.—*

*Matthew*

Then up came some Pharisees to tempt him. They asked, "Is it right to divorce one's wife for any reason?" He replied, "Have you never read that He who created them male and female from the beginning, said, Hence a man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave to his wife, and the pair shall be one flesh? So they are no longer two, but one flesh. What God has joined, then, man must not separate." They said to him, "Then why did Moses lay it down that we were to divorce by giving a separation-notice?" He said to them, "Moses permitted you to divorce your wives, on account of the hardness of your hearts, but it was not so from the beginning. I tell you, whoever divorces his wife except for unchastity and marries another woman, commits adultery, and he who mar-

*Mark*

Some Pharisees came up and asked him if a man was allowed to divorce his wife. This was to tempt him. So he replied, "What did Moses lay down for you?" They said, "Moses permitted a man to divorce her by writing out a separation notice." Jesus said to them, "He wrote you that command on account of the hardness of your hearts. But from the beginning, when God created the world, male and female, He created them: hence a man shall leave his father and mother and the pair shall be one flesh. So they are no longer two but one flesh. What God has joined, then, man must not separate." Indoors, the disciples again asked him about this, and he said to them, "Whoever divorces his wife and marries another woman is an adulterer to the former, and she is an adulteress

ries a divorced woman commits adultery." The disciples said to him, "If that is a man's position with his wife, better not marry at all!" He said to them, "True, but this truth is not practical for everyone, it is only for those who have the gift." (19:3-11)

if she divorces her husband and marries another man." (10:2-12)

A casual comparison of these two accounts is very revealing. It is doubtful that Jesus could have said both. Mark's report is simpler and probably closer to what Jesus actually said. It expresses Jesus' disapproval of divorce, and so far as Mark is concerned, Jesus does not recognize any justifiable grounds for divorce at all. He objects to divorce on principle, and says that the man who does put away his wife and marries another commits adultery. In Matthew, however, divorce is allowable on one ground only, namely, "unchastity." Under such a condition, divorce is permissible, and remarriage is allowable for the offended party, otherwise remarriage itself is called adultery. Observe that it is the older account of Mark that is amended in Matthew to make room for some allowable divorce. The standard set by Mark appears to have been too strict even for the early Christians. By the time Matthew was written, it had become the practice of the early Church to make some allowance for divorce on the extreme ground of sexual infidelity. By immemorial custom and law, this had been an acceptable basis for divorce. The writer of the Gospel of Matthew, despite the statement of Mark, did not think that Jesus really disallowed all divorce.

What then is Jesus' teaching—that no divorce is permissible, or that there is only one ground alone for it? The Roman branch of the Church has for the most part stood by the Marcan account, while Protestantism has held in practice to Matthew. All Christians, however, have upheld the ideal of marriage emphasized in Mark. It certainly seems possible to say without equivocation that the account on marriage and divorce, particularly as recorded by Mark, shows us what Jesus' ideal of marriage was. As stated in Mark, all that Jesus intended to say on the subject in answer to the Pharisees' question ended with the passage, "What God has joined, then,

man must not separate." It was only on being questioned by the disciples afterward that he made the further comment that whosoever breaks the ideal and remarries is committing adultery. We may gather, therefore, that Jesus, as elsewhere in his teachings, is more interested in the positive than in the negative side of morals. The primary concern is not a matter of finding ways to obtain divorce, but rather one of finding how to make marriage a permanent partnership. It is as though he told the Pharisees that they should raise their conception of marriage to a new level.

We miss a great deal if we fail to recognize here, as in so much of Jesus' counsel, that he is setting up ideals to aim at, guides for action. His teachings are direction-finders. Human nature being what it is, very few ideals are wholly realizable. All the great teachers of the race knew that. But our ideals do make a difference in our conduct, even when we fall short of them. In other words, our behavior, imperfect in spite of our ideals, is better than it would be if we had no ideals. Monogamy is an ideal. Those who are really able to achieve and maintain a monogamous union, mutually compatible in all its relations, are very fortunate indeed. Such a union is of the greatest value to the partners, to their children, and to society. The truth is that when young people marry, that is what they hope for. It is imperative that we educate as much as possible for this desirable end. It does happen, however, that in the actual world, conditions are not ideal. The early Christians realized that too. They quite rightly recognized that when the sexual bond is broken, there is ground for divorce, which is but a confirmation of a dissolution that has already occurred in fact.

In the modern world an increasing number of Christians, who adhere to Jesus' ideal, believe that there are additional grounds for divorce which mar the marital relation as much as sexual infidelity. In other words, they make a further concession to the practical realities of life just as Matthew made an allowance not provided by Mark. These people hold, in opposition to Christian orthodoxy, that to insist upon people remaining together because of a scriptural or ecclesiastical tradition, when they are in fact no longer compatible partners, is an adherence to the letter and not the spirit of Jesus' teaching. It is of interest to note in this con-

nection that the Church, in the face of stern realities, has sometimes kept the letter of Scripture only by resorting to the fiction of annulment of marriage, instead of by granting a divorce. The bond is severed just as effectively by annulment as by divorce. Annulment is held to be warranted because in the first instance there was no genuine marriage, no real "joining together" by God. The question at issue involves the practical one of whether the ideal teachings of Jesus are to be regarded as absolutely authoritative, or whether in our kind of world we may not have to depart on occasion from the letter of that teaching. We may remember that, as with the Sabbath, Jesus was more intent on the spirit of the institution than on the letter of its observance. In any event, whether we feel compelled to interpret Jesus' teaching on divorce rigorously or liberally, there can be little ground for difference as to the sanctity of marriage. Jesus understood so profoundly the importance of monogamous marriage in the development of character, and in the education of children, that he necessarily described it as an ordination of God.

*Rewards of the Good Life.*—What reward does a man get for following Jesus' way of life? The doctrine of rewards current in Jesus' day was the quite familiar doctrine that suffering is always the result of moral failure. We have gone to some length to show the inadequacies of that view. But, obviously, wherever such a circumscribed view of life is taken, it will also carry the expectation that goodness should bring attendant success or good fortune. Jesus repudiated this latter form of the doctrine as much as he did the former. The question then is, what rewards, if any, are there for following Jesus? This question was in the minds of his disciples. Peter actually asked what he and his fellow disciples were going to get as a reward for following Jesus (Matt. 19:27 ff; Mark 10: 28 ff; Luke 18:28 ff.). The answers, which the various gospels record, vary somewhat. That of Luke is as follows:

> No one has left home or wife or brothers or parents or children for the sake of the Realm of God, who does not receive ever so much more in this present world, and in the world to come life eternal.

With the exception of the last clause about eternal life, the statement above is not at all consistent with what else we know

about Jesus' attitude on rewards. The passage, and the related ones in Matthew and Mark, bear evidence of later interpretations. It reminds one of the final verses of the Book of Job, where Job, in this life, gets manifold more than he lost. That, too, is a later addition and misses the whole point of the book, just as the above quotation is out of line with Jesus' teaching. Life simply does not happen that way, though it might on occasion do so. It is not right to tell people that virtue and material reward necessarily go together. Jesus was thoroughly aware of this, and his entire message is designed to free ethical religion from the whole idea of material rewards.

We can, in the first place, be certain that Jesus did not wish any prospect of material reward to be used as a motive for following him. There is an inner spirit that men may have, the possession of which is its own reward. It was certainly his own experience that there is a level of spiritual living free from anxiety and worry, wherein the very fact of being emancipated from greed, avarice, lust, anger, and jealousy is reward enough. He offered, for endless emulation, the moral perfection of God. Sincere striving for this perfection, or attempted oneness of will with the will of God, has two rewards. The first is a state of happiness or, as he called it, "blessedness"; the other is eternal life with God.

There is some advantage in using the term "blessedness" instead of happiness. Happiness so often connotes pleasure merely; whereas "blessedness" suggests a condition of life which, to the element of inner satisfaction, adds also the note of high moral approval. A blessed state is a result of fine living, humanitarian and sacrificial. The word "blessed" is used frequently by Jesus, and is associated particularly with sayings called the Beatitudes.

Blessed are those who feel poor in spirit!
the Realm of heaven is theirs.
Blessed are the mourners!
they will be consoled.
Blessed are the humble!
they will inherit the earth.
Blessed are those who hunger and thirst for goodness!
they will be satisfied.

Blessed are the merciful!
they will find mercy.
Blessed are the pure in heart!
they will see God.
Blessed are the peacemakers!
they will be ranked sons of God.
Blessed are those who have been persecuted for the sake of goodness!
the Realm of heaven is theirs.
(Matthew 5:3-10)

It would be interesting to comment upon each beatitude individually, for they are full of suggestion. Taken as a whole, one cannot fail to note the calm serenity and confidence and spiritual poise which generated these passages. They are the products of a "blessed" state of mind. Jesus himself knew these rewards, and he testified that they are worth what it takes to gain them. Such values, however, are spiritual; they do not consist of material things and are independent of them. Spiritual rewards only should be our concern.

The assurance of immortality, as a reward, is quite in keeping with Jesus' doctrine of God and man. Jesus regarded man as of infinite value in the sight of God. The relation was intimately personal, like that of father and children. The idea that this relation could be, or would be, dissolved by death, was incredible to him. Behind his thought is the moral argument for immortality, often advanced by philosophers and theologians. Essentially, this argument proceeds from the conviction that this is a moral universe. The task laid upon man, of developing his moral character, requires a longer period than this finite life affords; therefore, it would be unjust were this possibility of development unfulfilled. Furthermore, even though one did attain a degree of moral blessedness in this life, to destroy the intrinsic worth of moral character when the physical organism ceases to function, to annihilate the personality and prevent its eternal enjoyment of God, would be satanic and terribly unjust.

It does appear that Jesus thought of blessedness then, not only as a reward in itself, but as a condition of spiritual being which is continuous beyond the grave. Blessedness here is already the beginning of the life eternal.

## Jesus Meets Death at Jerusalem

An account of Jesus' death at Jerusalem would be ironical indeed, following a consideration of rewards, if rewards were material and were to be fully gathered in this life. All that we wish to bring out here is that this unique person was brought to his end like a criminal for what he was and for what he taught. His continued presence was an implied threat to the constituted authorities in politics and religion.

Earlier in this chapter reference was made to the experience, very soon after the beginning of Jesus' ministry, when he was forced to flee from Galilee. He always had to be cautious, and he never remained long in one place.

The records show him to have been in many different parts of Palestine. For one period of several months he seems to have been in and around Jerusalem, but he remained more or less mobile. Hostility, however, became so active that for safety Jesus had to withdraw into Perea. But he returned, and this time, judging by his entry into Jerusalem and the incidents that followed, Jesus appears to have counted on a possible popular demonstration that would bring some measure of change in the religious conditions at Jerusalem. He now took a bold course, entering the Temple, and with the backing of the multitude, "upset the tables of the money changers and the stalls of those who sold doves; and told them, 'It is written, *My house shall be called a house of prayer*, but you make it a *den of robbers*.' " This was clearly a symbolic proclamation of messiahship. Apparently the sympathy of the crowd made it unsafe to arrest him then, but a delegation from the Sanhedrin challenged him, saying, "What authority have you for acting in this way? Who gave you this authority?" Jesus replied, "Well, I will ask you a question . . . Where did the baptism of John come from? From heaven or of men?" Jesus thereby implied that he who carries out the will of God has a divine commission.

Jesus was, of course, aware of the possibility of death along the path he had chosen. The Pharisees and Sadducees would not have been opposed to him simply on the basis of a messianic declaration. But they would not countenance or admit messiahship on his terms.

He had criticized the Pharisaic conception of "religion as law," and he stood in opposition to all the vested interests of the Sadducees, including their materialism and preoccupation with the comforts and pleasures of this world. Differences between Pharisees and Sadducees could, for the moment, become secondary to the common attack which threatened the interests of both groups. They really feared Jesus' influence on the people, apprehensive that a mass movement might arise as a result. From their point of view, this would have been disastrous on two counts. It might cause Pilate to intervene and insist on greater civil control. Or, it might conceivably bring about religious reforms. To avoid either calamity, a man's life was a small premium to pay. It was not too difficult to have Jesus arrested and tried before Pilate, on a charge of inciting revolt against Rome. That is why Pilate insisted on referring to Jesus as the "King of the Jews," after he had condemned him to die by crucifixion.

Jesus' arrest took place toward the end of the eventful week at Jerusalem, which began with the Triumphal Entry into the city. He had forebodings of impending disaster. He either knew, or intuitively discerned, that Judas Iscariot was in collusion with the high priests for his arrest. Yet he desired to have a last fellowship meal with the entire group of his disciples in Jerusalem. This event is known as the Last Supper. It has become memorialized in the rites of all Christian churches. It was after this Last Supper that Jesus went to the Garden of Gethsemane, outside of the city on the Mount of Olives. He knew he was in danger, and asked his disciples to watch while he went into the garden to pray. The following moments were for him so soul-searching that it is recorded the sweat came upon his brow like drops of blood. He prayed that the bitter cup before him might be set aside: "My Father, if this cup cannot pass unless I drink it, thy will be done." This is rightly remembered as the supreme example of loyalty to the will of God, which will fulfill its mission even though the road ends with a cross.

Meanwhile his disciples slept and therefore did not see the approach of a multitude led by Judas and the high priests. Jesus' arrest was followed almost immediately by his trial and his crucifixion.

Jesus' career was apparently closed. But within a few days his discouraged followers were imbued with a new hope. The report was circulated that Jesus had risen from the dead. Several were certain they had seen him. Others supported their testimony. The result of this assurance of his resurrection was a new and irresistible movement that spread with astonishing vitality. Following chapters will take up the beginnings of Christianity from this point.

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# PART THREE

## *PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION AMONG THE GREEKS*

## CHAPTER VII

## *GREEK RELIGION*

A survey of philosophy and religion need not be a history but it cannot help being at least partly historical. Ideas, like people, have parents, grandparents, and great-grandparents, *ad infinitum*, and just as one can understand a person's behavior better by knowing something of his heritage, so one comes to understand ideas better by learning something of their history.

This is especially true of our own religious and philosophical ideas, for their dominant ancestors are relatively easy to distinguish. To continue our analogy between ideas and persons, it is a fairly modest oversimplification to say that the modern Westerner's *Weltanschauung*, or world view, is the offspring of a Greek father and a Hebrew mother, who lived in Rome. The child, to be sure, was educated in a number of different centers, but despite the alien influences that affected it, the religious side of that world view still bears the family seal with its Greek profile and Hebrew conscience.

If it strain credulity too far to talk about *a* world view in so individualistic a period as our own, we can at least speak about a family of ideas whose roots go back to Palestine and Greece. We have already met the mother of this family in our consideration of the Hebrews, and credentials for establishing a Greek paternity are not hard to obtain. As Gilbert Murray has put it:

> We start from the indisputable fact that the Greeks of about the fifth century B.C. did for some reason or other produce various works of art, buildings and statues and books, especially books, which instead of decently dying or falling out of fashion in the lifetime of the men who made them, lasted on and can still cause high thought and intense emotions.[1]

Let us stop long enough to look at a few Greek relics which affect the daily life of modern men.

[1] *The Legacy of Greece*, ed. by R. W. Livingston, p. 11. (By permission of The Clarendon Press, Oxford.)

## The Greek Heritage

At the very beginning of life we are made aware of our indebtedness to Greece, for we usually have a doctor in attendance at childbirth. The doctor has, we hope, gone somewhat beyond the Greek science of medicine, but we are not surprised to learn that he has taken the Oath of Hippocrates to do his job as becomes a gentleman and a scientist. The shadow of a Greek from the fifth century B.C. stalks the modern hospital to supply medicine with an ethic scarcely less important than its art. The child grows a bit and needs to be amused, and for this emergency another ancient Greek, Archytus, so Aristotle tells us, invented the rattle for children "in order that having the use of this, they may not break any of the things in the house, for little creatures cannot keep still."

So we might continue, in following the life of a modern man, to show how in things trivial or momentous, secular or religious, relics of early Greece are ever with us. We go to the *theater* to see a *comedy* or a *tragedy*—and here we discover that the very words, as well as the institutions they represent, are a part of our Greek heritage. The spirit of Greek plays is found in many of our New York offerings, and not infrequently the substance itself is Greek, for we still have occasional opportunity to be amused by some comedy such as *Lysistrata*, with which Aristophanes pleased audiences in the fifth century B.C. All the forms of our literature, such as *epic*, *didactic*, and *lyric*, have Greek names because they have Greek origins. In our religious life we are likely to join in rituals or recite creeds which owe their form and substance to Greek practices or modes of thought. We go to a schoolhouse which probably is supported by *Doric* or *Ionic* columns, and study plane *geometry* in almost the exact form that students of Euclid learned it more than 2000 years ago. We enjoy Olympic games, often without remembering that they were religious festivals in Greece, of sufficient importance to become the basis of Greek calendars; and the statuary inspired by those early athletes is the despair of many a modern imitator. Finally we die, only to find that the shades of Hellas follow us to the grave, for the presiding clergyman is very likely to read something from Saint Paul at our funeral, and Paul's

thoughts about death and what comes after reflect his Greek training even more surely than his Hebrew upbringing.

Our debt to Greece in things religious and philosophical will become more evident as we proceed to a more or less systematic outline of Greek religion and philosophy. But before turning to these specific fields it might be well to say a word or two about the Greeks themselves. What manner of men were they in general, where and when did these famous intellectual ancestors of ours live, and what happened to them? Our answers to these questions must be painfully brief but they cannot be passed over entirely.

## The Greek People

To begin with, it is almost impossible to assign geographical boundaries to the ancient Greek people, for they did not assign such boundaries to themselves. "Wherever were Hellenes (Greeks) there was Hellas (Greece)." And the specific location of the Hellenes varied from century to century. The earliest home of a truly Greek people was doubtless the southern end of the Balkan peninsula, that part which lies south of Macedonia and points its nose toward the island of Crete in the Mediterranean Sea. To the east lies the Aegean, studded with islands which provide access, by easy stages, to Asia Minor, and to the west is Italy, which was settled by Greek colonies as far north as Naples. By the sixth century B.C., Greek colonies had spread Greek civilization not only to all of these points but to coastal areas throughout the Mediterranean world and northeast along the coast of the Euxine sea. Later on, of course, Alexander the Great was to make the influence of Greek culture felt as far east as India. But let us turn back for a moment to a pre-Greek civilization in the Aegean; then catch a hasty glimpse of the rise and fall of the Greek people.

Legends point to, and archaeological investigations seem to confirm, the fact that 2000 years or more before Christ—or about the time the nomadic Abraham was deciding that maybe he did not have to sacrifice Isaac after all—the island of Crete was the home of a fairly advanced civilization, now called Minoan after a legendary king of Crete by the name of Minos. Artistically these people were

highly developed and had a culture rivaling that of the older East, with which they probably had contact. But they were not Greeks.

The Minoan civilization gave way in time to the supremacy of what is called the Mycenaean age, called by this name because Mycenae, on the mainland of Greece, became the seat of a new empire. This new empire, if it can be called that, flourished from some time around fifteen hundred B.C. to about the time of the fall of Troy, traditionally set at 1184 B.C. During the Mycenaean period, newcomers of Aryan stock appeared—Achaians, Ionians, Aeolians, and finally Dorians—and it was from these people that the classical Greek emerged. What they did from the fall of Troy until the eighth century can only be guessed at, for there are no authentic records before the first Olympiad (776 B.C.) which ushers in the historic, or what is called the Hellenic, period of Greek history.

One thing is certain, they must have busied themselves with the elementary business of settling their new country in a permanent way, for with the dawn of the historic period the Greek city-state had become a firmly established institution. Compared to their predecessors these new people were barbarian groups who had destroyed a civilization. Fortunately they were destined, in time, to supplant it with a much grander one.

What is called the Hellenic or historic period of Greek history is that stretch of time between the first Olympiad and the conquest of Alexander the Great, who died in 323 B.C. It embraces the golden age of Pericles which produced so many of those artists, sculptors, philosophers, and dramatists to whom the Greeks' immortality is due.

Following the conquests of Alexander came that era which is characterized by the spreading of Greek influence to a large part of the civilized world and the lapse of political independence of the city-states. It is referred to as the Hellenistic (as opposed to Hellenic) period of Greek history and is especially important as being the time when Greek and Hebrew ideas were merged into religious and philosophical patterns which still dominate much of our thought. As we shall see in later chapters of this book, Rome may have conquered Greece by force of arms, but the victor was

largely vanquished in the battle of ideas which resulted from the impact of one culture upon another.

Such in very brief outline runs the course of Greek history from almost neolithic times to the growth of the Roman Empire. Many things of importance to the development of Greek religious and philosophical thought should be pointed out in detail, but we have time to consider only a few, and these but briefly.

Perhaps the most important single factor in shaping Greek culture was the relatively early formation of city-states, each city having its own independent government which was sometimes monarchical, sometimes oligarchical, and sometimes—as in the case of the most famous of the city-states, Athens—democratic. While these states achieved a cultural solidarity, having a common language (albeit many dialects), common customs, and some community of religious ideas, yet they never achieved political unity. Confederations were sometimes tried but always failed. At times a common "barbarian" enemy, such as Persia, forced the various states into temporary harmony but the common danger had no sooner passed than old state jealousies appeared to keep the Greeks a divided people. Athens, Sparta, and Thebes each dominated the political scene at times but never for long.

This political disunity had natural causes and cultural effects which ought to be observed. Regarding the first, it should be enough to point out that Greece is mountainous country with many small valleys, some big enough to support an economically independent people, and where people are economically independent they are likely to insist on political autonomy. But mountains were not the only natural invitation to state self-sufficiency; there was also the matter of separation by seas, for, as we have noted, Greek colonies were scattered throughout the Mediterranean area in such a way as to be at once aloof and yet accessible. Aloof enough from all the rest to make defense against aggression relatively easy, and yet accessible enough to make the interchange of goods and ideas possible. The pattern of Greek culture was very largely due to the fact that Greece was a maritime civilization.

But let us consider briefly the consequences of this political disunity which geographical factors had induced. In the first place, it

meant that Greece was not likely to withstand forever the aggression of more united people from whatever quarter they might come. They threw back the Persian invasion only to lose eventually to Macedonia. But their very disunity was not without some merit. The many city-states, with their various forms of government, provided an efficient laboratory for the growth of political science. We find Aristotle was able to study 158 state constitutions (and innumerable revolutions) when he came to write about political philosophy. Of chief importance, of course, was the many-sided genius of the Greeks, which must be attributed in part to their very lack of unification. Finally, even in decay, the city-states were to influence philosophic thought, as we shall have reason to see when we come to look at the development of Stoic and Epicurean schools of philosophy.

Other factors which influenced Greek thought must wait to be referred to incidentally as we develop the conceptions of religion and philosophy of these people. To the first of these we now turn for more extended discussion.

To begin with, there is no reason to doubt that the evolution of Greek religion included practically every primitive practice that we found among the Hebrews. There are evidences of magic to rival any that Moses tried; there were fetiches even as Jacob had them, and tabus as demanding as the ones practiced in Palestine. Doubtless these things sprang from an animistic root in both cases. Moreover, such habits of behavior persisted throughout both cultures long after more enlightened religious ideas had been introduced. As often happens, the majority of people, while not altogether unwilling to accept something new, were quite loath to give up something old.

Apart from these most primitive elements, evidences for which can be found at almost any stage of Greek culture, there are two main movements in Greek religion, one leading to the Olympian, or state religion, and the other to the mysteries, which provided a more personal form for religious experience. In addition to these, there was finally, of course, that body of religious conceptions which emerged as the result of philosophic criticism of the earlier forms. Let us consider each of these religious movements in turn.

## The Olympian Religion

According to the Greek historian, Herodotus, it was Homer and Hesiod who gave the gods their names, disclosed their functions, and made known their forms. Unquestionably, the development of Greek notions about the gods was far more gradual than Herodotus imagined, but it is true that these early poets became the religious teachers for all of Greece. They were read in the schools and out, and the tales they told about the gods were known to all. In short, they provided religious conceptions which, although modified by later poets and philosophers, never ceased to influence the Greek religious consciousness. What were the central ideas expressed by these early poet-teachers?

Homer probably lived sometime around the ninth century B.C., but his stories (*Iliad* and *Odyssey*) have a twelfth-century setting and probably reflect the customs and beliefs of the late Mycenaean age, when Agamemnon was king and heroes were plentiful. Thus, his portrait of the gods, living together on Mt. Olympus under the overlordship of Zeus, probably had its prototype in the feudal society of the period. To use Professor Gray's striking simile, "Though Zeus was lord and master, the gods, like Agamemnon's vassals, were frequently unruly and insubordinate."[2]

To begin with, then, we can describe Homer's religion as an anthropomorphic polytheism; that is to say, the gods had human form (anthropomorphism) and there were many of them (polytheism). They were of varying degrees of importance. The gods had not only human form but many human personality traits. They ate and drank even as you and I, although their food and drink were different, for they lived on ambrosia and nectar instead of on common things; and in their veins ran the divine ichor rather than blood. But they could be wounded, even by men, and sometimes had to be carried from the battlefield. Petty jealousies were no less evident on Olympus than in Athens, and the goddesses were very like ordinary women, quite capable of tears and deceit. But if the Olympian divinities were almost human,

[2] G. A. Hedger, and others, *An Introduction to Western Civilization* (New York: Doubleday, Doran, 1933), p. 179.

yet there were enough important differences to make them a race apart.

Most important of all was the fact that they were believed to be immortal beings, which meant to Homer merely that they had already lived a very long time and would continue to live without the grim fear of death which casts so great a blight upon the lives of men. Even in regard to immortality, the difference between gods and men seems at times to have been a practical rather than a theoretical one for we are told that Odysseus *might* have escaped the clammy claws of death had he eaten some of the divine food. The hero, Heracles, managed to crash the gates of Olympus and make himself one with the gods. Of course, he had a slight advantage to begin with, for although his mother was the mortal, Alcmene, his father was no less a god than Zeus himself, whose adventures with women were most vexing to his goddess wife, Hera. That Homer should tell such shocking tales about divinities is one reason, as we shall see, that Plato wanted to ban his works from the ideal republic.

Immortality was not the only mark of distinction between gods and men, for the gods were far more powerful in every respect. They were to mortals about what Paul Bunyan (he whose baby tears made rivers) would be to the ordinary hanger-on in a logging camp. Thus, Poseidon could cross the Aegean Sea in four strides and could shout as loud as nine or ten thousand men. Indeed, the gods were thought to be omnipotent—almost; except that they were limited by Fate, of which we must say more presently. Just as they were more powerful physically than men, so, too, they far outstripped them mentally. They were omniscient—almost; except that even the great Zeus could be deceived, at least by his wife!

So much for the nature of Homeric gods. They are a rather human lot, infinitely more powerful and wiser than men, but not particularly moral. To the *early* Greeks, morals and religion were not so closely associated as they were among the Hebrews. But even more important to men than knowing the nature of the gods, is knowing the nature of their relationship to the world and the people who live in it. What can they be counted on to do, provided they are approached in the proper manner?

For one thing, they were powers who controlled nature. The winds and the waves obeyed their will, and many of them were so closely identified with particular phases of nature that it seems evident they were originally simply the personification of natural forces. Their power was also expressed in civic affairs, as evidenced by the fact that Troy's destruction was planned by Zeus; and in the destiny of individuals, as shown many times over in Homer's story. Thus, we are not surprised to find that every city had its shrines dedicated to some protecting deity, and no home was without its ritual of the hearth, whereby to woo the gods.

To classify the gods of Homer would be a tedious task which he was too wise to try, but we might do well to become acquainted with the major ones which figure in his stories. Three who stand out in importance are Zeus, Athena, and Apollo. In fact, prayers to be most efficacious named all three. Zeus, "father of gods and men," we have already met. He had many shrines and oracles dedicated to him throughout Greece, and came in time to be looked upon as almost the sole dispenser of the gifts of fortune. In short, as the Greeks approached almost to monotheism, we find that it was Zeus who took over the functions of the other gods. Athena, who, according to a later legend, sprang full grown from the brow of Zeus, was the very personification of wisdom and appropriately enough became the patron goddess at Athens. She was also a goddess of war, and had, in fact, been born in a full panoply of armor. In Homer she was not only a favorite of Zeus but patron of the arts. Apollo, god of the archers, was the patron of war but gentle enough to inspire seers and poets. He was also god of prophecy and, like Zeus, had many important oracles dedicated to him, the one at Delphi being perhaps the most famous.

Next in importance to these three stand Hera and Poseidon. Hera's importance came chiefly from the fact that she was the proper wife of Zeus. She was something of a scold and at times needed to be disciplined, as when Zeus strung her up and hung two heavy anvils from her feet, but, being queen, she demanded respect and presided over the Olympian court. Poseidon, brother of Zeus, had the sea for his special domain but appeared on Olympus in council with the other gods.

Hephaestus, god of fire, builder of homes, and skillful artist; Aphrodite, the beautiful goddess who controlled the passions of love and desire; and Ares, embodiment of the war spirit but himself not so good a fighter as Athena, were three more relatively important figures in Homeric times.

There were innumerable other gods of lesser rank, and a host of divinities not even named who, along with Fate, were responsible for all natural phenomena. But we have seen enough to give us some idea of the beginning of the Olympian deities.

To view the world as governed by personal agencies was one step toward the reconciliation of man with his environment. Nature no longer needed to be considered alien to man and his desires for she was seen to be presided over by beings who could be approached and appeased. How important these deities were to become for Greek history must be judged from the fact that no important civic enterprise was ever initiated, nor any important individual act undertaken, without asking guidance and protection from the appropriate ones. There were many ways of finding out the will of the gods, including such primitive modes of divination as observing the flights of birds for portentous signs, or peering into the entrails of animals for propitious omens. Sometimes, indeed, decisions were thrown literally into the laps of the gods by taking recourse to the casting of lots. But the mode *par excellence* for determining whether human plans would have the backing of the gods was divination by means of oracles such as we have mentioned in speaking about Zeus and Apollo, where the gods spoke more directly. These oracles became such important institutions throughout Greece that special consideration must be given to them. Since one can stand as an illustration for the many, we shall confine our discussion to the most famous Apollonian oracle, the one at Delphi.

It was here that Socrates was told he was the wisest man in Athens, a sentiment which he took to mean that he, at least, had knowledge of his own ignorance whereas other men lacked even this. He looked upon the oracle as giving him a divine mission to expose ignorance wherever he found it. It was here the mighty king of Lydia, Croesus, came to ask about the advisability of going

to war with Cyrus, of Persia, and received the famously ambiguous reply that if he attacked Cyrus "a great empire would be destroyed." History records the fact that a great empire was destroyed, but that it was not Persia. To Delphi came civic leaders to ask Apollo's instruction in founding new colonies; still others sought religious advice on how best to worship certain gods. Invariably sanction was required to elevate the dead to the rank of hero or to bestow on them such divine honors as came to Asclepius and Heracles, who were admitted to Olympus. In short, the oracle could be relied upon to provide answers to the most vexing problems, be they economic, political, religious, or moral—and frequently the answers were very wise. The morals of the institution changed, of course, with time and, whereas in its more primitive stages it might recommend human sacrifice as a way of placating the gods, in later days it offered more enlightened—or at least less drastic—ways of achieving the same end.

As we have suggested, much of the advice given by the oracle was wise, which doubtless had much to do with its continued popularity. The naturalistic explanation for this lies in the fact that the attending priests were learned men who had opportunity to converse with people from all parts of the Greek world, for these shrines became Panhellenic centers. To the Greeks, however, the oracle was infallible for the simple reason that it was literally the voice of a god. The medium through which Apollo spoke was a young woman—almost any maiden might be chosen for the office—who, by virtue of chewing laurel leaves and inhaling the vapors which tradition says came forth from a crevice in the rocks at Delphi, achieved a trance state in which she was divinely inspired to superhuman knowledge. Her prophetic utterances were voiced in frenzied and incoherent cries but were taken down and interpreted by the attending priests. To a critical modern it will doubtless occur that the priestly translations may have had a large element of the creative in them, but to a Greek the proof of the pudding was in the eating and Greece had done pretty well by feasting on the oracular as it might be found at Delphi and elsewhere.

Before leaving this discussion of oracles, one thing more ought

to be said about the character of their advice to those who came for help. We have already suggested that such shrines as the one at Delphi became real Panhellenic centers and thus provided a unity to Greek religious ideals that could never have been achieved without them. But at the same time, the pluralistic character of Greek life was expressed here as elsewhere. Cities asking advice on constitutional changes might be advised to "take counsel with the majority," i.e., form a democracy; or they might be told to retain their monarchical system. The oracle apparently did not seek political unity for Greece so much as it sought to satisfy each individual client to the best of its ability. And in religion, too, the oracle continued the pluralistic tradition, for Apollo often advised the worship of other gods, not infrequently even very obscure and local ones.

There is a notion, associated with Homer's picture of the gods, which we have mentioned in passing but which deserves fuller consideration because it played an important role in all subsequent theological and philosophical speculation. It is the notion of Fate, or Destiny, as being a power superior even to the gods themselves. In the Hebrew tradition God created the heavens and earth, and there was no real occasion for surprise if his handiwork showed evidence of divine purposiveness; but to the Greeks it seemed to be rather the other way around, the gods came later than the world which they and men inhabited. This meant, of course, that there was a force outside themselves which had to be reckoned with—a force which they called Moira and which we might translate Destiny, and of which some of the meaning can be discovered in a conflict of the gods described in the fifteenth *Iliad*.

In this story Zeus finds fault with Poseidon and orders him to cease from battle and return to his proper abode, the sea. But Poseidon feels that Zeus has no right to be so dominating and relates how the three gods, Zeus, Poseidon, and Hades, were all of equal rank, having been born to Cronos and Rhea. Finding the universe at their disposal was composed of three separate spheres, they assigned, by chance, one portion to each. To Zeus fell the heavens, to Poseidon the sea, and to Hades the misty darkness of the nether world. Earth and the high Olympus were common to

all three; therefore, reflects Poseidon, let Zeus confine his commands to his own undisputed third part and not impose his will beyond his proper realm.

This notion of a "proper realm" for each suggests the setting of boundary lines beyond which even the gods either *cannot* or *may not* go. The sense of complete impossibility (the cannot) is less evident in Homer than is the second meaning, but it is not absent entirely and in time becomes the basis for the mechanical philosophies which emerge during the classic period. Once philosophy liberates itself from theology and demands an explanation of the cause of things in naturalistic language, it is quite likely to grasp hold of this early meaning of Moira and interpret it simply as Necessity. Then the world will be viewed as the result merely of blind mechanical motion, for Necessity need not be either moral or purposive. The second meaning of Moira mentioned above, as that beyond which even the gods *may not* rather than *cannot* go, is the familiar one which runs through the whole of Greek literature. It is like saying that you may not break the law. Obviously you may break it, but not without setting in motion a certain train of events which *might*, according to the modern, and which inevitably *must*, according to the Greeks, overtake you and exact full toll for your trespass. The spirits of vengeance, the Erinyes, are quick to visit any god or man who goes beyond his proper sphere.

When Moira is given this second meaning, it becomes a moral force imposing penalties for wrong acts, and as such it played an important role in the development of Greek ethical considerations. In Homeric times the greatest sin was that of unbecoming pride which led one to neglect the gods because of imagined self-sufficiency. Punishment was sure to be visited on that man who thus went beyond the modest station assigned to him. It was wrong to want to be like the gods because that implied an attempt to avoid one's destiny. The idea that the good man does "naught in excess" is implied in Homer (ninth century B.C.?), stated clearly as early as Hesiod (eighth century B.C.), and made explicit in Aristotle's doctrine of the "golden mean" (fourth century B.C.), which we must examine later. It is one of the rich developments of the early

concept of Moira, which is essentially a principle of order with implications for both metaphysics (theory of reality) and ethics (theory of conduct).

So long as we hold to polytheistic ideas there are only two ways to avoid the anarchy which might result from a clash of the divine wills. One of these is to have some type of order imposed from the first by the very nature of things, thus making Moira more fundamental than the gods. The other is to have one of the gods act as the supreme arbiter in cases of dispute, but this way logically leads from polytheism to monotheism, with the divine ruler finally being thought of even as the creator as well as the sustainer of the universal order. The tendency to elevate Zeus to this supreme position is present in the Greek writers but fails to succeed completely because of the heavy hand of tradition.

So far, our picture has been that of the Olympian deities as described by Homer. Some added touches from the pen of Hesiod, who lived a century or more later, must serve to complete our description of this phase of Greek religion. Two works of his which give us much material on the subject are the *Theogony* and the *Works and Days*. The former is the first systematic attempt at explaining the origin of the world and the generations of the gods. According to Hesiod, there have been several dynasties of the gods, of which Zeus simply happens to be head of the current one. Before him there was the rule of Uranus, who gave way to Cronos, who in turn gave way to Zeus and his cohorts. And men, too, have gone through a series of generations, for there have been five different ages of man, ranging from the perfectly good original age of gold, in which gods and men dwelt together under the reign of Cronos, to the age of iron in which Hesiod lived. The silver, the bronze, and the heroic ages came in between, but in the whole series each age was more degenerate than the last. Hesiod, like the Hebrew prophets, looked back to a golden age such as the Hebrews found in the Garden of Eden before man's disobedience "brought death into the world and all our woe," and forward to a Utopia which the Hebrews would have called a Kingdom of God. He felt certain (how ancient and how modern he sounds!) that his own age represented the very depths of man's depravity.

In general, there are no great differences between Hesiod's outlook and that of the earlier Homer, except as Hesiod reflects a more settled type of society. In so far as religion is concerned, one of the chief differences lies in his attributing to Zeus a passion for absolute justice which far exceeds anything like it belonging to the Homeric Zeus. In fact, justice is personified as the daughter of Zeus who is very dear to him; and she has innumerable assistants ("thrice ten thousand") who, clad in mist, go to and fro upon the earth searching out the righteous and unrighteous that the former may be rewarded and the latter punished. All this suggests that Zeus and Moira are more closely related than they seemed to be in Homer. Now, Zeus is looked upon as the determiner of destiny, whereas in Homer Zeus was not wholly master. It is true that there are passages in Homer which are not unlike Hesiod's idea. Chief of these is found in the twenty-fourth *Iliad* where we are told that Zeus has two urns, one containing evils, the other blessings, and that he determines the destiny of men by giving them portions from both urns, apparently in whatever measure pleases him. But against this passage we must place one from the *Odyssey* in which Zeus repudiates all responsibility for evil and attributes its presence to the perverseness of men who insist on doing things "beyond that which is ordained," and thus incite the avenging spirits who see that men do not exceed their destiny with impunity.

This problem of how best to account for the evil and apparent imperfections in the world is one that was to trouble the Greek thinkers as much as it did the Hebrews, and the attempts at its solution are strikingly similar in both instances. Adam and Eve's disobedience in the Garden of Eden is matched with the deception of Prometheus and the consequent creation of a woman, Pandora, who introduced all manner of evils into man's early age of innocent pleasure. Hesiod did not get much beyond the Garden of Eden story in accounting for the origin of evil nor beyond the adversaries of Job in explaining why evils befell some individuals and not others. Wealth comes to men because they are righteous and poverty is punishment for wrongdoing. The author of the first Psalm was no more explicit about such matters than was Hesiod; nor were the prophets of Israel more certain about the corporate

character of guilt. Ofttimes, says Hesiod, a whole city will reap the recompense of an evil man, who sins and contrives works of foolishness. Sin was foolishness to the Greeks because it meant that a man was stupid enough to fly into the face of Destiny. Later on, Socrates was to remind the citizens of Athens that "knowledge is virtue."

Let us summarize that phase of Greek religious thought which might properly be described as Olympian and then pass on to a consideration of the mystery religions. The Olympian deities were brought to Greek consciousness largely through the works of Homer and Hesiod. The gods described by these men were essentially human in characterization except that they were immortal and infinitely wiser and more powerful than men. They, along with men, were subject to Fate but had a good deal to do with the fortunes of mankind. They had not created the world but had considerable to do with its behavior. They were proper objects of worship for citizens, either as members of the state or as members of the family. Thus, both private and public shrines were erected in their honor. The gods were oracular and willing to dispense their knowledge to citizens for a consideration. The consideration was ritualistic, sometimes attaining extravagant proportions and demanding enormous sacrifices. There was no real immortality for men, but only a shadowy after-life in which men were more to be pitied than envied.

What happened to the Olympian deities as the result of subsequent criticism by poets and philosophers must engage us in a later section, but let us consider next that movement in Greek philosophy which led to the establishment of those mystery religions which made up for the recognized deficiencies of Olympianism.

## The Mystery Religions

That the pale and unreal character of the future life of men was rather unsatisfactory to the Greek mind is fairly well evidenced by the often quoted speech of Achilles, whose shade says to Odysseus: "I would rather be on earth as the hired servant of another, in the house of a landless man with little to live upon, than be king over

all the dead."[3] It is not surprising that in the face of such a dreary prospect the Greeks should be ready converts to any new religion which might point the way to a more promising future. The acceptance of new religious ideas is not, in any case, a particularly difficult adaptation for people with a polytheistic background to make. To a people already used to the idea that there are many gods there is nothing very startling about the appearance of a new god, or about the discovery that an old one has some new function. At any rate, the mystery religions once introduced to Greece made fairly rapid progress, although myths do indicate that they had something of a struggle in the beginning. However, they never did supplant the Olympian religion but merely lived along with it.

As an introduction to the subject, let us say that a mystery religion is one encompassing certain rituals which must not be disclosed to a novitiate without preliminary rites of purification. These rituals are thought to provide the initiate with a better way of living in this life and to guarantee blessed existence in a life to come. The mystery religions differed from Olympianism in many respects. Whereas the Olympian religion was of a natural or spontaneous character which developed gradually, disclosing no particular founder in its history, the mysteries generally give indications of belonging to the class of revealed religions whose founder frequently becomes a central figure in acts of worship. The Orphic mystery, like Christianity or Buddhism or Judaism, was of this latter type. Moreover, the mysteries, again in common with many revealed religions, were likely to develop fairly elaborate creeds and more or less abstract theological notions, all of which were quite foreign to natural religions in general and Olympianism in particular. These differences were sufficient to indicate that with the introduction of mystery religions into the country there was something new under the Greek sun. In fact, the mysteries were destined to become far more influential for subsequent theological and philosophical thought than were the gods of Olympus. These latter found their biggest sphere of influence in the life and culture of the people who worshiped them, but the mysteries contained ideas

[3] As quoted by F. M. Cornford, *Greek Religious Thought* (New York: Dutton, 1923), p. 18.

for future generations who would have considered their Olympian heritage to be chiefly artistic rather than religious.

The two great Greek mystery religions were the Eleusinian and the Orphic. The Eleusinian mysteries took their name from the place, Eleusis, where they were thought to have their origin, while Orphism was named after its supposed founder Orpheus. Neither of these achieved great Panhellenic significance until about the sixth century before Christ, but the history of each goes well beyond these times. Each was associated with a myth which provided the basis for its several doctrines, acquaintance with which is necessary if one would understand its wide appeal.

The myth behind the Eleusinian mysteries is the familiar story of Demeter and her daughter, Persephone. According to the story, Persephone while picking flowers one day is snatched away through an opening in the earth by Hades, lord of the underworld. For nine days, without tasting either food or drink, Demeter goes to and fro over the earth vainly looking for her daughter. Finally she learns from Helios, whose position in the heavens permits him to see all, that Zeus has given Persephone to his brother Hades to become his bride. Demeter in her distress refuses to go to Mt. Olympus but disguises herself as an old woman and wanders aimlessly about the earth until she comes to the house of Keleos, who was a prince in Eleusis. Here she breaks her fast with a mixture of meal and water and leaves of pennyroyal tea and takes a job as nurse to Keleos' son. She feeds the child ambrosia and is about to make him immortal by plunging him into the fire except that Keleos' wife, who has spied on the proceedings, cries out in fear and so fills Demeter with great wrath. Removing her disguise, Demeter tells the king's family who she is—earth goddess, giver of all their grains—and demands that the people of Eleusis build her a great temple with an altar where, by worshiping her, they may gain her favor again.

But Demeter is so distressed by the continued absence of Persephone that, despite the building of a temple according to her order, she sends a great famine which threatens mankind with utter destruction. This is a matter of concern not only to men but to Zeus too, for starving men cannot be counted on to offer generous sac-

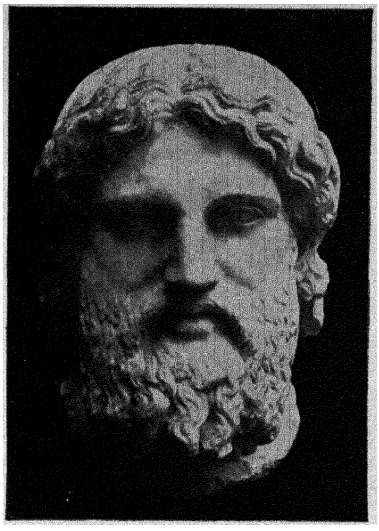
rifices to the gods—and the gods do like generous sacrifices offered to them. So great is his concern, in fact, that Zeus gets all the gods of Olympus to try their hand at persuading Demeter to return to them. Failing in this attempt, he persuades Hades to release Persephone, but not until it is almost too late, for Persephone first eats a pomegranate seed in the nether realm and is then returned to Demeter. Upon her return she learns that anyone who has eaten food in the world below must return there for three months of every year, although she may spend the remaining nine months in the bright atmosphere of Olympus. Demeter, heartened at having her daughter back again, restores grain to the earth. It springs up generously in the spring, grows vigorously in summer, and yields a bountiful harvest in the fall. But in the winter the earth is, and always will be, dead, because Persephone must ever spend three months of each year with Hades in the underworld. Such is the myth behind the rites which annually took place at Eleusis. Let us see what it must have meant to the Greeks and what it implied to those who took part in the mysteries.

In the first place, it is plainly evident that we have here an allegory of the seasons. Earth does seem to be alive about nine months in the year, and dead for three. Since nature had become completely personified in terms of deities, there had to be a personal explanation of all this. The story about Persephone and Demeter was a good pictorial explanation but it was also vastly more than this, for the myth was not only history but prophecy as well. If one of Earth's (Demeter's) children can die and live again, perhaps that possibility is open to all, and man's apparent mortality may be naught but appearance. To the Greek mind this was not an unappealing thought. But how did one put on the cloak of immortality? It was not a natural gift yet certainly one worth having. Fortunately, a goddess herself had shown the way in the rituals which she disclosed to those fortunate people at Eleusis. To them had come the key to eternal life in the form of sacred rites, which must be kept secret lest they be corrupted through too general use of them by men not qualified to understand them. Yes, they must be kept as secrets belonging to the cult but any true Hellene was eligible to membership in the mystery society and, in fact, a con-

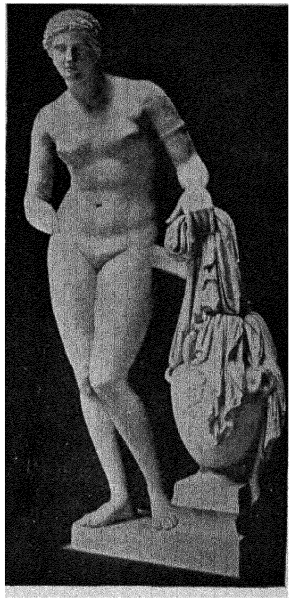
siderable amount of missionary zeal was displayed. The rituals whereby one gained immortality have never been fully disclosed, so safely guarded was the secret, but certain aspects of it have become tolerably clear.

One way to enjoy the privilege of godly immortality was to become godlike. This could be achieved by ceremonial repetition (on the theory of imitative magic) of the activities of the god described in the myth. Thus, the candidate for membership in the Eleusinian cult was first introduced, in spring, to the Lesser Mysteries, which were essentially rites of purification and preparation. Then he was treated to the dramatic repetition of important phases in the life of Demeter early in the fall, at a festival of the Greater Mysteries. Many aspects of Demeter's life were reenacted. The candidate fasted as Demeter had fasted when searching for her daughter, and the fast was broken with a mixture of meal and water such as that employed in the myth. The candidate went over some of the same country through which Demeter had traveled and sat on the same stone where she had mourned for her lost child. Finally, as a climax to the long celebration, initiates were allowed to handle items which the goddess herself had touched, and were given final instruction in all the mysterious meaning attaching to these rites.

It is not hard to see that religion as it was represented by such mysteries was of an infinitely more personal and emotional type than anything the Greeks had known prior to them. Here each individual participated in such a way as to be made over into the likeness of the god he worshiped. The fasting and the drama combined to induce an ecstasy of religious fervor such as mystics always prize above the more routine experience of ordinary worship. The promise that membership in the right cult meant sweet immortality was not less pleasing to the Greeks than it is to many moderns who expect their association with the Christian cult to bring them similar results. Little wonder that the mysteries celebrated at Eleusis came to have Panhellenic significance, that they were made a part of the state religion at Athens and that they lasted on well into the period of Roman domination. It was at Eleusis that the Roman, Julian the Apostate, was initiated in his youth; and the sanctuary remained until Alaric the Goth, who destroyed Rome, destroyed it. Even



ZEUS
(Museum of Fine Arts, Boston.)

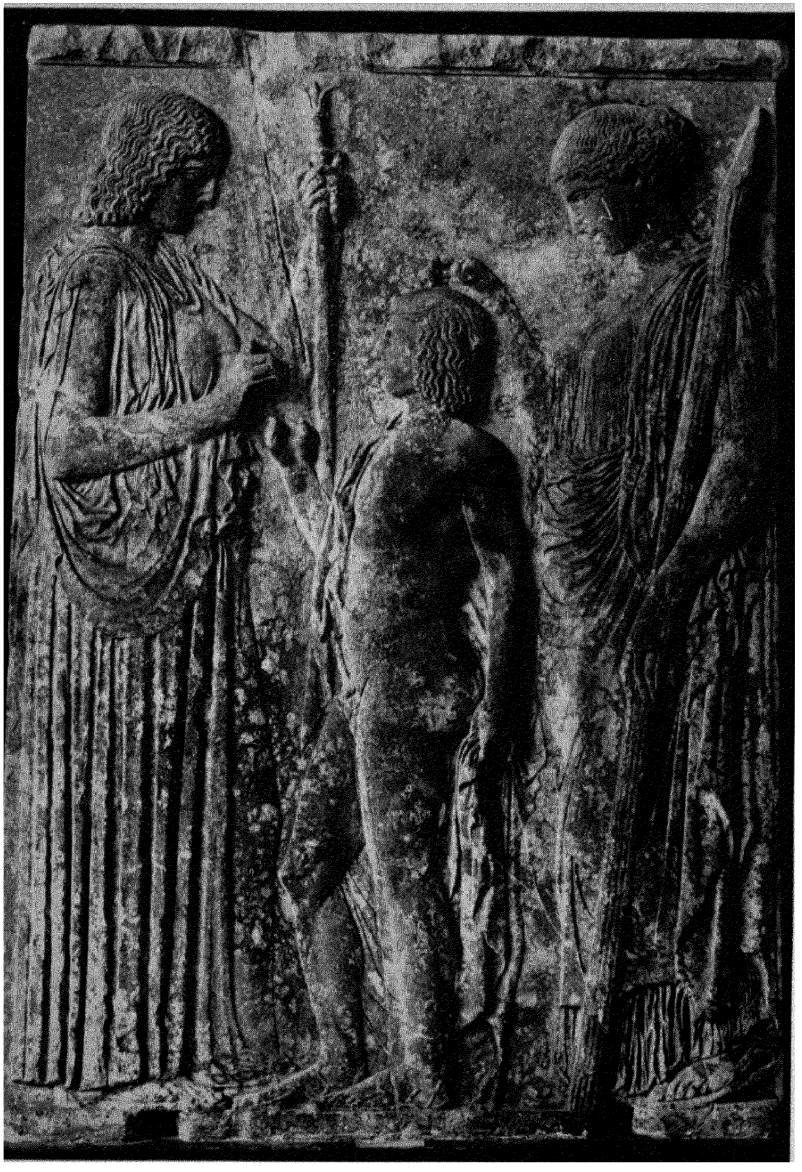


APHRODITE OF CNIDUS
(From *Journal of Hellenic Studies*, 1887, pl. 80; from a cast.)



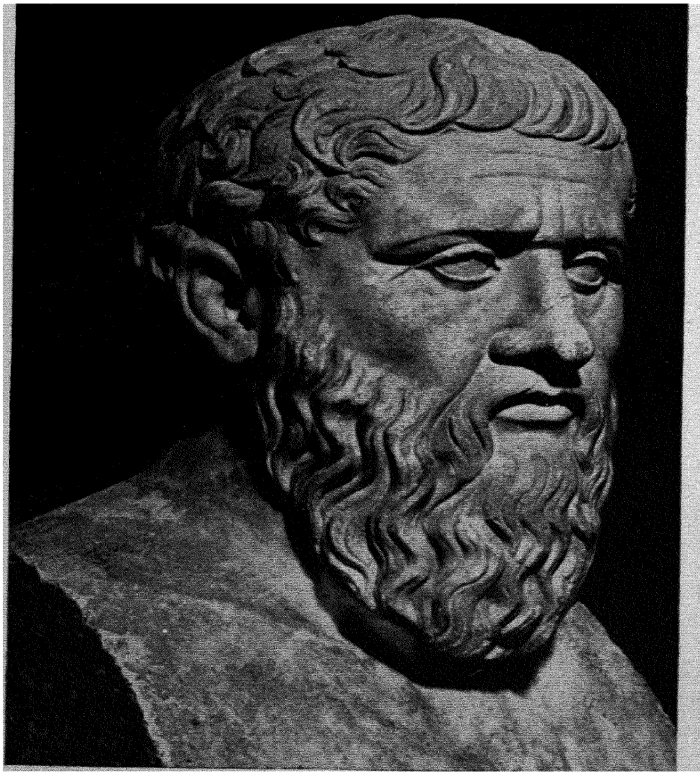
*Photo by J. Calvin Keene*

REMAINS OF THE TEMPLE OF APOLLO IN DELPHI
Within this temple the oracle spoke. (Note the naturally wild setting of Delphi provided by the cliffs of Mount Parnassus.)



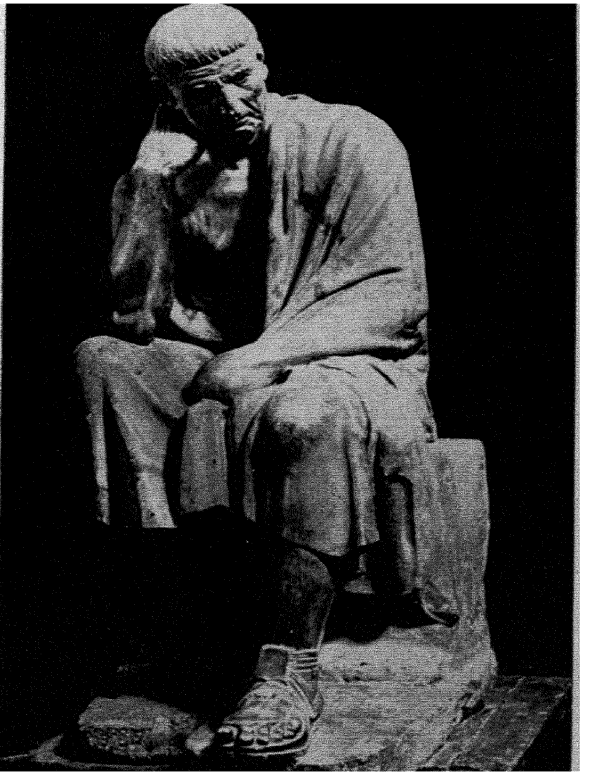
RELIEF FROM ELEUSIS

Demeter, at left, presents to Triptolemus the grain of barley so that he may go to teach all men the arts of agriculture. Persephone, at the right, holding an Eleusinian torch, places a crown on his head. Athens Museum, 5th century B.C.



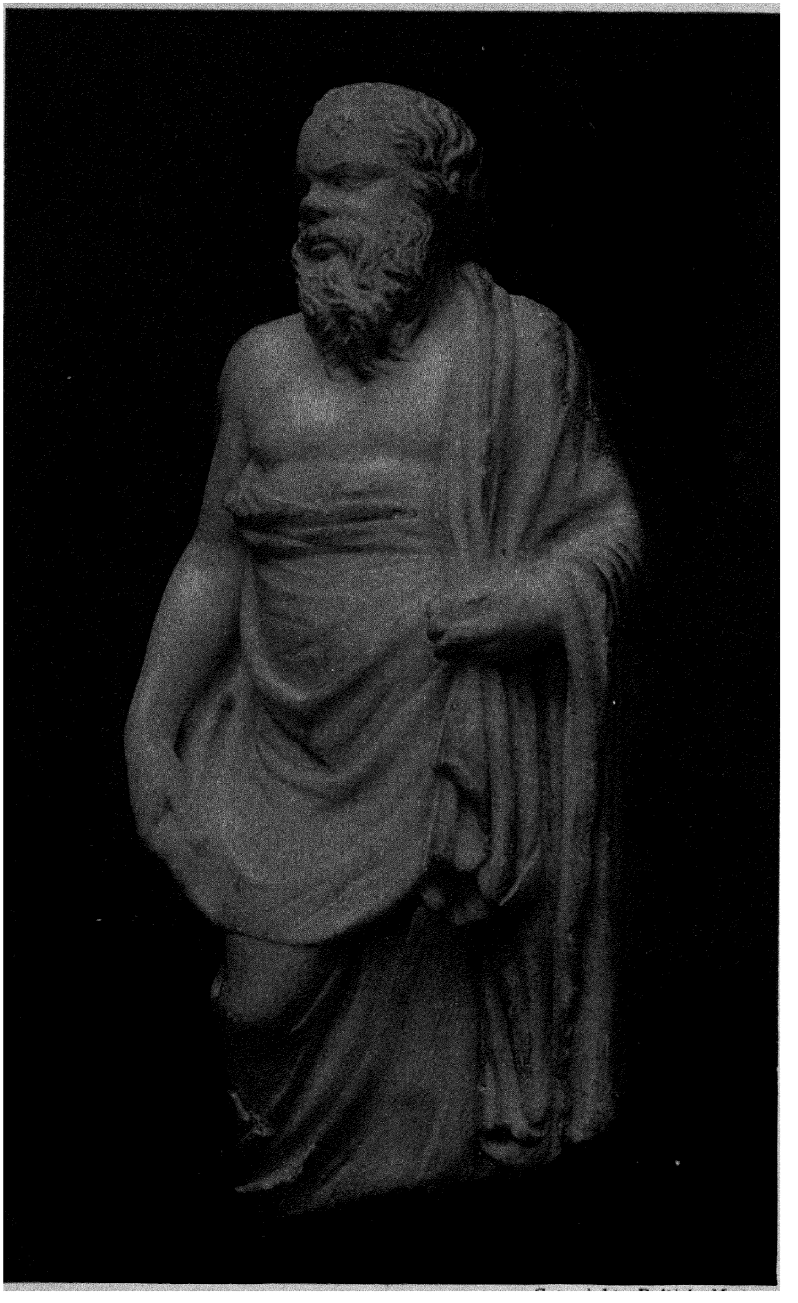
The Bettmann Archive

PLATO



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ARISTOTLE



*Copyright, British Museum*

SOCRATES

after the sanctuary was destroyed, the myth lived on, for Demeter (true to her reputation for immortality) became St. Demetra for the Greek Catholic Church and her statue was worshiped until 1801 when a couple of Englishmen carried it off to be a museum piece.

Of all the Greek mysteries, those celebrated at Eleusis were the most widespread; yet for subsequent thought they were probably less influential than the Orphic mystery which seems to have come from Thrace and was at first a wildly orgiastic affair. It took its name from Orpheus, real or fictitious founder of the cult, but its ritual centered around various myths of Dionysus, a nature deity who, although mentioned in Homeric times, was not then distinguished enough to be classed among the Olympians. The important features of the Dionysiac myths can be summarized briefly.

One common story relates how Zagreus, son of Zeus and Persephone, is torn to pieces and devoured by the Titans, who are warring against Zeus. However, Athena rescues Zagreus' heart and returns it to Zeus, who swallows it. Zagreus is then reborn as Dionysus, and men come into the world from the ashes of the Titans whom Zeus destroyed.

Here, as in the case of the Demeter-Persephone story, we have a myth centered around a nature deity. The god is twice-born and consequently, like Persephone, suggests the possibility of immortality to his worshipers. The myth is a savage one, a testimony to its Thracian origin, and the rites celebrating it were, at first, very savage too. We are told of women so inspired by music, wine, and religious ecstasy that they tore their children to pieces and devoured them as the Titans had done to Dionysus. As the cult made progress in Greece, however, the rituals became more sober and Orphism was even promoted by the oracle at Delphi. The second part of the myth which we have summarized contains material for explaining man's dual nature and the necessity of putting off the mortal man in order to enjoy true being as an immortal.

According to the account, men sprang from the ashes of the Titans who were destroyed by a thunderbolt from Zeus. Now, the Titans before their destruction had eaten Dionysus (Zagreus) and consequently men born from their ashes contained not only the mortal element of the deposed Titans, but also a spark of the divine

from the devoured Dionysus. The goal of a man's life, therefore, was to free the divine and immortal element within him from the mortal element which was also a part of his natural heritage. The soul was identified as the immortal part, while the body was looked upon as its mortal prison-house. The Orphic mystery provided a means of setting the prisoner free, but the task was not an easy one, and had in fact to be done by degrees. The rituals employed consisted essentially in dramatic repetition of the various myths of Dionysus, just as the Eleusinian rituals reenacted phases of the life of Demeter. And the dramas were so important that they can be looked upon as the beginning of Greek tragedy.

We have said that the soul's salvation came only by degrees and this introduces the notion of successive incarnations of the soul, the doctrine of metempsychosis. According to later Orphic teaching, man's soul at death went to Hades, where the righteous lived more or less pleasantly and the wicked suffered; but the stay there was only temporary, for the soul was fated to pass into another body and begin life over again. It might pass into the body of another person or into an animal, depending on the extent of its purification. This weary round of existences in various forms was the result of sin, and to help the soul escape from such a cycle was the primary object of Orphic ritual and the Orphic way of life. Vegetarianism was demanded of members of the cult, for since human souls might inhabit animal bodies, the slaying of animals could conceivably have disastrous effects. Certain other foods were tabu for different reasons, and a moderately ascetic life seems to have been the general rule. Whether the purified soul was finally united with the god worshiped, or lived on in a blissful individuality, is not altogether clear; but it is clear that souls were rewarded and punished throughout the course of their transmigrations, especially during their temporary visits to Hades, for which Purgatory is the Christian equivalent. The description of souls immersed in mud and filth suggests such punishment for the wicked as even Dante could hardly exceed in his picture of the Christian's Inferno.

Let us look briefly at the general religious outlook of the mysteries as contrasted to the Olympian religion, and then pass on to the critical stage of Greek thought. In the first place, the mysteries

were an other-worldly religion as opposed to the Olympianism whose values were all for this world. To the mystic, man is a son of earth and starry heaven, and his heavenly nature can be fully realized through the right rituals. The Olympian gods were worshiped that they might be pleased and so send immediate benefits to the worshiper; whereas the dramatic rituals of the mystery religions were attempts to become godlike and so share in the glory of immortality. It was supernaturalism versus naturalism, and these two trends in religion were to be translated over into philosophical terms as we shall see when we come to look at Greek philosophy. Orphism was destined to loom large in the philosophical teachings of Pythagoras and Empedocles. It colored the work of Heraclitus, the Eleatics, Socrates, and Plato, as we shall have occasion to see, and in Christian times it influenced Neo-Platonism, coming directly from them into the Christian tradition.

One tendency in the Orphic mysteries which was new to Greek thought but which was destined to be important historically, was the drift toward pantheism which is also a step toward monotheism. Certain Orphic verses express the thought that there is "One Zeus, one Hades, one Sun, one Dionysus, *one god in all.*" This suggestion of a unity in all things is a far cry from the pluralism of the Olympians and is a foretaste of the more carefully elucidated pantheism of later philosophy.

How similar Orphism is to Christianity in many respects will be apparent to anyone who cares to make the comparison. Even the original Dionysiac myth shows points of resemblance. Zagreus is the son of Zeus as Christ is the son of God. Each is killed and resurrected, whence he goes to heaven and receives his father's kingdom. So, too, the means whereby worshipers achieve eternal bliss show marked comparisons. Sacramental meals, combined with proper beliefs and modes of conduct, are the *sine qua non* of salvation in each instance. *How* the mysteries came to influence Christianity is a subject to be discussed in a later chapter but that marked similarities exist between the two religions must be evident already. Fortunately for Christianity, the moral requirements for salvation were considerably higher than for the Greek mysteries and this moral superiority played a large part in assuring the Christian triumph

over the Greek mysteries after these latter had been carried to Rome and had become competitors with Christianity for survival in the Western world.

The lack of rigorous moral requirements, in many instances, and the idea that simple initiation into the mysteries was both a sufficient and a necessary basis for salvation, were to prove repulsive to many Greek minds who were not slow to advance criticism of this notion. When told that association with the mysteries could guarantee salvation of the soul and that no salvation was possible apart from such association, Diogenes is said to have asked: "What do you mean? Is Pataikion the thief going to have a better lot after death than Epaminondas, just because he was initiated?" This type of moral criticism of Greek religious ideas came largely from the poets and philosophers of Greece and we now turn to view their contribution to the subject.

## Religion Among the Later Poets

Among the Hebrews the priests became the conservators of traditional religious ideals, and the prophets were the innovators. The history of Judaism could be largely written in terms of these two classes. But in Greece it was Homer, a poet, who provided the people with a bible and it was the later dramatists and philosophers who refined the religious teachings handed down to them. The philosophers especially remind us of the major prophets of Israel for they were bold enough to insist that religious ideas are not necessarily good simply because they happen to be old. The fifth century B.C. in Greece saw the development of those great dramatic and philosophical figures whose names are more permanent than the statues of them which immortal artists produced in the same age. During this period Greece repulsed the Persians and the Greek spirit expanded with the new feeling of power which victory brings. The dramatists of the times, especially Aeschylus, Sophocles, and Euripides, became, along with poets like Pindar, important religious teachers. Their conceptions were based very largely on Homeric ideas but they refined the earlier notions and so got rid of many of the crasser elements which belonged to the sixth century. The real radicals among the new religious teachers were, of course,

the philosophers like Xenophanes, the Sophists, Socrates, and others, but before turning to them let us take a hasty glance at how religion fared among the literati.

A century before the Periclean age there appeared one poet whose sentiments about religion are strikingly like those expressed in the Old Testament by the author of Ecclesiastes and by Job. It was Theognis, and while he wrote ostensibly to show the importance of humility and of proper worship of the gods, and while he believed that good and evil both came from Zeus, yet like Job he was much troubled by the problem of human suffering. When he tells us that it were best not to be born at all and second best to die young, we see that his despair was equal to that of his spiritual cousins in Palestine. But, like Job, Theognis could afford to be inconsistent and so his message is not one wholly of despair. Poverty and evil may be the test of a man, sent to try his character if it be good, for the good man will think always of justice regardless of the price it costs him. This marks some moral progress over anything found in Homer, but in most other respects Theognis contributed little to traditional conceptions.

The greater poets and dramatists whom we have just mentioned carried religion to new heights of moral significance. Their work was very largely of a religious nature, for much of Pindar's was in the form of odes dedicated to the victors at the great religious-athletic festivals, such as those held in honor of Zeus, Apollo, or Poseidon; and the great tragedians, Aeschylus and Sophocles, produced their plays for performance at the religious festival connected with the worship of Dionysus. While the primary purpose of each of these men was artistic, their subject matter was such as to disclose the current religious tendencies.

Pindar (*c.* 522 B.C.) is conservative in his religious outlook and does not depart far from the Homeric pattern. However, there are some new emphases evidenced in his work. His gods are thought of as omniscient and omnipotent, whereas Homer presented them as being merely very wise and unusually powerful. Furthermore, Pindar insists on truthfulness as a prime characteristic of deity and this distinguishes him from Homer, for whom veracity was not an outstanding virtue. Another aspect of Pindar's writing

which indicates an increased moral sensitivity is his unwillingness to relate many of the grosser tales which had been told about the gods, and his insistence on absolute justice as being characteristic of divinity. For him, as for many of the Hebrew prophets, righteousness and reverence were virtues which heaven rewarded, and no wicked man could know bliss for long. On the question of human freedom Pindar is ambiguous, as are most of his colleagues, and seems torn between the notions that everything is assigned by Fate and that man's own actions bring his fate to pass. Quite in keeping with the Greek tradition, Pindar looks upon excess as the chief sin of man; but, unlike Homer, he envisions the results of sin as reaching indefinitely into the future, for he has not been untouched by the mysteries and so shares their doctrine of future rewards and punishments. Morality and religion, as reflected in his *Odes*, were lifted to a higher plane, but he provided no radical innovations nor could he have been as important from a religious point of view as were Aeschylus and Sophocles.

Aeschylus, the father of the drama, and Sophocles, his slightly younger rival, derive the subject matter for their plays from the old tales which had been handed down, but in their treatment of them a new morality is fostered. In Aeschylus' famous trilogy which includes the *Agamemnon*, the *Coephorae*, and the *Eumenides*, we find laid bare the cause, the course, and the cure of sin in terms as certain as those commanded by the greatest of the Hebrew prophets and with all the force that tragic drama can provide. The highlights of the story which these three plays unfold can be told briefly and the implications for morality and religion pointed to, but the influence which the dramatic presentations must have had on Athenian audiences can only be guessed at.

According to the conventions of antiquity, it became the task in every case of murder for the next of kin to seek blood vengeance. Greek tradition was, in this respect, just like the Mosaic Code as outlined in the thirty-fifth chapter of Numbers. Blood vengeance, places of refuge, and the doctrine of "an eye for an eye," were provided for by both the Hebrew and the Greek traditions, and it is altogether possible that Aeschylus wrote this particular trilogy to

win the Greeks away from what must have struck him as a very primitive custom.

In the *Agamemnon* we learn that a curse has fallen on the house of Atreus and is now made manifest in the life of Agamemnon, son of Atreus. Pride has made King Agamemnon a fit subject for punishment and, to placate the gods who deprive him of favoring winds while he and his fleet are sailing for Troy, he sacrifices his daughter, Iphigenia. On his return his wife, Clytemnestra, slays him, ostensibly to avenge her daughter's death but partly for selfish reasons. She thus sets the stage for the next step in the endless business of blood revenge. The second phase constitutes that part of the trilogy called the *Coephorae* and introduces Orestes, son of Agamemnon and Clytemnestra, as the central figure.

The *Coephorae* opens with the exiled Orestes returning home for no other purpose than to avenge his father's blood, i.e., to slay his slayer. The horrible dilemma in which Orestes has become involved provides a most intense dramatic situation. The son does his religious duty by avenging his father but only at the cost of slaying his mother, and he is revolted by the deed he has done.

The *Eumenides* is the concluding part of the trilogy and opens with Orestes seeking solace at the temple of Apollo. The god appears and directs Orestes to go to Athens where he will be tried by a just jury. The jury is deadlocked and a verdict of acquittal is brought about when Athena, goddess of wisdom, herself casts the deciding vote in Orestes' favor. Thus in brief outline runs the famous story. Let us review some of its implications for religion.

In the first place, Aeschylus is convinced that men live in a moral universe where things happen according to the will of almighty, and eminently just, Zeus. Even suffering can be explained, for "Justice doth wait to teach wisdom by suffering," and Fate is made bearable because it is made moral.

The tendency to believe both in Fate and in individual responsibility (with its implication of human freedom) is marked in Aeschylus as in most of the Greek writers; and if the two ideas are never thoroughly reconciled let those complain who can do greater justice to the facts of experience. Aeschylus says bluntly: "Fate will have its way"; but he then proceeds to show that Orestes escapes

what would normally be the fated consequences of his act. He does this by acts of piety, obedience to the will of Apollo, and by willingness to be judged by wisdom, for, as we have seen, the final verdict rests with Athena. Moreover, Orestes alone of all the characters in the drama is innocent of any other evil than that for which he is tried. "Impious deeds conspire to beget an offspring of impious deeds," but apparently an honorable man, willing to walk according to the law of Zeus, can break the evil spell of Fate which may have dogged his family for generations. To some extent the destiny of individuals is not beyond their own control.

That Aeschylus is conscious of introducing something new into Greek religious ideas is evidenced by the fact that the Furies, spirits of vengeance, become in the closing part of the drama the Eumenides, or spirits of a kindlier nature. Moreover, when the law of wisdom deprives the avenging spirits (before their transformation) from taking full toll for Orestes' crime, they sing:

> Curse on your cause,
> Ye gods that are younger!
> O'er the time hallowed laws
> Rough ye ride as the stronger.
> Of the prey that was ours,
> Ye with rude hands bereave us.

To which Athena answers: "Be ruled by me!" In short, Aeschylus seems to be conscious of introducing a new and more moral element into religion, but he is less radical than Euripides, of whom we must make brief mention.

As slightly younger contemporaries of Aeschylus, both Sophocles and Euripides did much to shape Greek religious ideas. Of the two, Sophocles was much the more conservative in temper and looked upon piety and discretion as fundamental virtues. He might be compared with the Hebrew prophet, Hosea, in contrast to the Amos-like Aeschylus, who spoke much about divine justice but not so much about mercy. One passage from Sophocles should indicate this contrast: "Zeus on his almighty throne keeps mercy in all he does to counsel him." Regarding human suffering, Sophocles teaches, like Aeschylus, that it may be an avenue to wisdom. But for all this, Sophocles was still conservative and retained most of

the traditional notions about the gods. The difference between this essential conservatism, common to both Aeschylus and Sophocles, and the more radical temperament of Euripides can be brought out by comparison of one fundamental concept.

According to a fragment from Sophocles: "Nothing to which the gods lead men is base." While this shows some moral progress over Homer, it is still a far cry from the humanistic radicalism of Euripides, who says: "If the gods do aught that is base, then they are not gods." This latter statement shows a willingness to judge theology by human standards of justice rather than to judge justice by the traditional standards of theology; and indeed, Euripides, unlike his forerunners, was willing to hold the traditional notions up to scorn. The immoralities of the traditional gods, the futility of divinations, and many other religious foibles of the period are mocked in his dramas. One of his characters says of Hera, who through jealousy has wronged him, "To such a Goddess who shall pray now?" Another, in answer to the question, "What is a seer?" replies: "A man who speaks few truths and many lies." Here is a radicalism not evident before but it does not mean that Euripides was bent on ridiculing all religion; it means merely that he had caught a glimpse of something better than was being practiced. He seems to point the way to a monotheistic conception such as that held by some of the later philosophers. Witness the following passage:

> O Earth's upbearer, thou whose throne is Earth,
> Whoe'er thou be, O past our finding out,
> Zeus, be thou Nature's law, or Mind of Man,
> To thee I pray.

This is the articulation of a new spirit that was dawning among the intellectual leaders of Greece, a spirit which found its fullest fruition among the philosophers of the Periclean age.

Because Euripides was less serious than Aeschylus and more sensational than Sophocles, he outstripped them in popularity and his iconoclasm doubtless helped to pave the way for the revolutionary ideas of later thinkers. Those who contributed most to the development of Greek religious ideas from the time of Euripides

on were the philosophers, and we shall postpone discussion of their notions until we consider their philosophical systems in the next chapter. One of the earliest, who was as much religious teacher as philosopher, may be mentioned here by way of introduction to philosophy proper. He is Xenophanes of Colophon who lived about the middle of the sixth century before Christ.

Xenophanes struck out boldly at the anthropomorphism of the period, ridiculing the Greeks for making the gods in their own image by pointing out that the Ethiopians looked upon their gods as black and as having flat noses, while the Thracians were sure the gods were blue-eyed and had red hair. If cattle could draw, says Xenophanes, they would doubtless present the gods as being in their image too. In view of all this it was high time the Greeks got away from the primitive notions bequeathed them by Homer and Hesiod and developed more rational conceptions of deity. A more rational conception was to be found in pantheism—the doctrine that god and the universe are identical. This doctrine will be found in subsequent writers and we shall pay fuller attention to it later on. Meantime, we might notice that the free spirit of criticism which is manifest in Xenophanes indicates the initiation of a new movement in Greek culture, one which is destined to offer in the course of several centuries a more radical reconstruction of religious and philosophical ideas than had come about in the whole history of Greek thought up to this time. This new movement is the birth of philosophy proper.

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## CHAPTER VIII

# *PHILOSOPHIZING ABOUT THE NATURE OF THINGS*

When we distinguish philosophy from religion we are separating two things which have had much in common. We have already discovered that Greek religion involved some speculation about the nature of things, and so it was to that extent philosophical. That is to say that it included a primitive sort of metaphysics, or theory of reality. Then too, Greek religion was concerned with human conduct, and was to that extent like another branch of philosophy called ethics. When men concern themselves with problems of reality and conduct for their own sake, quite apart from their implications for worship, we detect the emergence of a distinctively philosophical attitude as distinguished from a typically religious one. In the old Greek tradition this more objective attitude appears first in connection with a man named Thales (*c.* 640-550 B.C.), and in the course of several hundred years develops into a number of fairly complete philosophical systems. Not all of these systems are favorable to religious ideas, for as the speculative intellect matures it emancipates itself from earlier notions and may even find itself entertaining ideas wholly foreign to the traditionally accepted ones.

Everyone has some sort of philosophy of life. We believe that the world is thus and so, and that we can live best in such and such a fashion. In short, we entertain at least primitive notions about metaphysics and ethics. The trouble is that few of us take the pains necessary to make sure that our various attitudes and ideas are consistent with each other. This is what distinguishes the ordinary layman from the philosopher. The latter makes a business of analyzing his various beliefs and arranging them into a systematic and consistent whole. If he is concerned chiefly with problems of the nature of reality we describe his interest as metaphysical; and if his emphasis is placed on problems of conduct, or on determining the

meaning of the good life, we describe his interest as ethical. Now it happens that the Greek philosophers were interested in both of these problems. We shall discover that there are a number of different theories about each, and we ought to get acquainted with the more important types of them. Let us begin by looking at some of their theories of reality.

## A Physical Theory of Nature

All of the things with which we become acquainted in ordinary experience come into being, persist for a while, and then disappear. Even the "everlasting hills" are not *ever*lasting. They simply last a little longer than the squirrel who makes his home there. Eventually they too will fall prey to the gnawing tooth of time. But whence came these hills, and whither do they go? What is the stuff from which they are made and to which they return? To ask questions like these is to betray an interest in metaphysics. Thales is credited with having been the first of the Greeks to be interested in such questions, and is often called the father of Greek philosophy.

What Thales actually did was to pose a question to which he found no thoroughly satisfactory answer. Naturally others took up the problem in hope of finding a better solution, and so the history of philosophy was on its way. No doubt you will want to think up your own answer to Thales' question before you finish with this section, but it will be worth while to see what the Greeks had to say about it first.

And what was this important question which has kept the world guessing for some two thousand years? Really it all seems very simple. Thales merely dared to wonder if there might not be some fundamental world-stuff which never passed away, but which was truly permanent; something which might turn into squirrels and mountains but which persisted after these particular things had gone their way. In other words, Thales dared to ask the question: What is the true nature of reality? Most people are content to believe that the world is made up of a number of things; but when you stop to think about it, it does seem reasonable to believe that perhaps these many things all have something in common, some underlying substance which is the basic material of all existence.

A moment's reflection on a glass of milk may show the reasonableness of thinking along these lines. What is the *stuff* which by virtue of cow chemistry changes from clover to breakfast food, and then by virtue of your own body chemistry turns into bone and flesh and blood? What is it that remains permanent through all these changing forms? Thales guessed that the underlying substance which could be transmuted into all the items of experience was *water*. This turns out to be a bad guess, but let us not call it a completely foolish one. What is more, let us give him full credit for having guessed at all. By doing so he started something that turned out to be rather important.

Anyone who has thawed out a frozen radiator, or noticed the steam rising from melting ice, will understand one reason why Thales might have thought of water as the ultimate reality. Anything that can take on the form of a gas, or of a liquid, or of a solid, simply through a shift in temperature, might conceivably be the clue to understanding all gases and liquids and solids. Moreover, water seems to permeate the universe pretty generally, and can be found above, below, and in the earth. Still there is one fatal objection to Thales' choice. If water could, in some unknown way, change into and constitute all other experienced things, why not choose any one of these other things as primary and say that it changed into each of the remaining ones, including water? The logic of the situation seems to require that the underlying substance be something which could not be identified with any one experienced thing, but which could be the basis for all of them.

Anaximander (611-547 B.C.) seemed to sense this logical demand and governed his speculations accordingly. If the one fundamental substance must provide a basis for all experienced things but cannot be identified with any especially privileged one of them, what should it be but a boundless or indeterminate something, capable in turn of becoming a bounded or particular anything? So Anaximander called it simply the "boundless" or the "indeterminate" and let it go at that. This may seem like substituting a mystery for an explanation but it was really a step in the right direction. The process whereby the one indeterminate something becomes the differentiated things of experience Anaximander called merely

"separating out." Obviously it would be good to know something more definite about this process, and the next thinker, Anaximines (588-524 B.C.), gives particular attention to this problem.

In some respects Anaximines was a reactionary, for he passed over Anaximander's insight into the "boundless" and returned to Thales' way of thinking about things. Consequently, he made the same mistake Thales did in choosing one of the particulars of experience to account for each of the others. Anaximines thought the fundamental world-substance was air, and that the differentiated items of experience could be accounted for by the process of condensation and rarefaction. Thus solids, liquids, and gases represented merely different stages of condensation of the primal stuff, air.

Because Thales, Anaximander, and Anaximenes all came from Ionia and were interested chiefly in metaphysical problems, they came to be known as the Ionian nature philosophers. Before noting the further development of the lines of inquiry which they initiated, let us consider briefly some of the implications of the thing they were doing.

In the first place, these Ionians were endeavoring to account for things in a way quite different from the pattern which Hesiod had set in his *Theogony*. Hesiod had referred all things to the will of the gods working in conjunction with Fate. The new mood which we discover in the Ionians was far more secular than this. True, Thales is reported to have said that "all things are full of gods," but this statement, instead of being a pious pronouncement, was probably merely his way of saying that the causes of things must be found within the phenomena themselves, rather than in the will of some external agent. Nature had become important in her own right and men no longer sought her secrets through the medium of traditional myths. We can see in all this the beginnings of a scientific interpretation of things, an interpretation which seeks to know the mechanisms of nature rather than the will of capricious beings thought to govern nature from afar.

In the second place, these Ionians proceeded on the assumption that nature was all of a piece, and that life, mind, and matter, all were to be explained ultimately in terms of the fundamental sub-

stance, or arché, which their speculations sought to disclose. Acting on the assumption that this primal stuff was physical, the Ionians paved the way for the development of a purely materialistic philosophy such as finally emerged with the atomism of Democritus. To this later development we now turn our attention.

Between the time of the Ionian nature philosophers and the development of atomic materialism by Democritus (*c.* 460-350 B.C.), there appeared a great many thinkers who contributed to the growing stream of speculation. Indeed, there were so many of them that we shall not be able even to name them all, much less say anything about their doctrines. For a picture of this period, the reader must be referred to any standard history of Greek philosophy. However, several names were of considerable importance in setting up the issues which led to an atomistic solution, and we would do well to consider those names and issues briefly.

We have already seen that to a large extent the problem confronting the Ionians was to find that substance which could remain permanent through change, and to discover the process whereby this stuff changed from its primal form into all the other things which experience indicated to be real. This problem is sharpened into a real issue by the boldness with which subsequent philosophers defended opposing points of view concerning it.

Heraclitus of Ephesus (535-475 B.C.), drawing his theory of reality from the obvious facts of experience, boldly declared that there was nothing permanent in the universe but that all things were in a constant state of flux. We cannot, he would say, step into the same river twice, for by the second step it would no longer be the *same* river. The tempo of change may vary with different things, as we can see it does if we compare the duration, say, of a rainbow with that of a mountain, but both things change none the less, and we will look in vain for anything that does not change. Consequently, if one would think in terms of some fundamental substance, let that substance be *fire*, for fire is something that anyone can see is constantly kindled anew and is always in a state of flux. If anything is permanent it is only the fact or pattern of change itself, for things do pass into and out of existence in a rhythmic or lawful way. The *law* according to which the drama of existence

unfolds itself Heraclitus called the "*logos*," or "reason," and in so doing provided the Greek world with a concept which was destined to be very important. We shall find out later that it was employed by the Stoics, and that it became a bridge between Greek philosophy and Christian theology. But for the present we are chiefly interested in Heraclitus' denial of any permanent substance such as the Ionians had sought. Doubtless, in pointing to the fact of change, he drew attention to a very evident aspect of the nature of things, but did he not go too far in insisting that nothing abides? Must there not be something which underlies change itself? What is *it* that changes?

As frequently happens in the course of history, one lopsided view was countered with another in the opposite direction. Just as Heraclitus championed change to the exclusion of permanence, so certain other philosophers upheld the doctrine that only that can be called real which is permanent, while changing things must be classed as illusory. The men who made this latter doctrine popular lived at Elea, in the fifth century B.C., and are called the Eleatics. Xenophanes, Parmenides, and Zeno defended the principle of *Being* (the doctrine that the real is permanent) against the doctrine of *Becoming* (the idea that the real is ever-changing), but of these three, Parmenides was probably the most outstanding.

Parmenides started from the principle that only that is real which is thinkable or rational. Next he found it unthinkable that non-being should exist. Things either *are* or they *are not*, and nonexistence would be merely the absence of existence or Being. But if pure Being is to be conceived at all, the very conception carries with it the impossibility of all motion. A thing, to move, has to move from where it is to where it is not; but there is no "where it is not" (that would be only the absence of being and wouldn't really *be*), consequently real things cannot move. Motion must be thought of as belonging only to the realm of appearances rather than to reality. The real must be one, eternal, immutable, and rational substance; a thing disclosed to reason alone and not to be denied by the doubtful testimony of the senses.

Now things seem to have come to a pretty pass. Heraclitus and Parmenides seem poles apart and yet they were ostensibly talking

about the same world. Thus the stage was set for someone to come along and reconcile their differences. The situation demanded a point of view which would do justice to the apparent facts of both permanence *and* change, some mediating philosophy which would combine the insights of Heraclitus and Parmenides in such a way as to satisfy the chief demands of each. Stated in another way, the problem was not only that of saving both permanence and change but of explaining how the indivisible One of Parmenides could be squared with the apparent fact of the plurality of things. What is the relation of the One to the Many? This is one of the most inclusive problems of philosophy and has many ramifications, but we mention it here merely to show another aspect of the issue which was raised by the divergent philosophies we have mentioned. To return to the main problem of permanence versus change, let us glance briefly at some of the preliminary attempts to solve it and then skip directly to the atomic solution.

Empedocles (490-430 B.C.) and Anaxagoras (500-429 B.C.) are sometimes called "the Mediators" precisely because of their attempts to reconcile the different points of view we have just been discussing. Empedocles hit upon the idea of having four permanent elements, fire, earth, air, and water, which would remain permanently what they were but which were so constituted that they could combine with each other to produce other things. Thus the fact of change was accounted for by their ability to combine in different ways, while permanence was retained as a characteristic of each of the units which combined. The forces or agencies which moved the various elements into their destined conformations Empedocles called Love and Hate—positive and negative things, vaguely suggestive of the positive and negative charges of electricity with which we are wont to explain things.

Anaxagoras carried this pluralism of Empedocles still further, for he taught that there must be as many elements as there are different things in the world. It is as if he took the "boundless" of Anaximander and cut it up into little pieces. This too would account for both permanence and change, since the individual units remained eternally what they were but had the power to combine with other

things and so provide for movement and change. The force directing all this movement Anaxagoras called *Nous*, or Mind.

These Mediators seem to have made a great step forward in dealing with the central problem which we have been discussing, but the real achievement is the atomic theory which was developed by Leucippus and Democritus. The trouble with Empedocles was that his selection of four elements seemed completely arbitrary, and the difficulty with Anaxagoras' point of view lay in the fact that he really didn't solve the problem at all. To make the elements of things as numerous in kind as the qualities of the things themselves is hardly a simplified explanation of experience, it is only a duplication of the facts. Leucippus and Democritus really took the final step in giving a simplified explanation of phenomena, and in so doing provided the world with a systematic philosophy which has been influential to the present time.

Briefly, what Democritus did (for it was he rather than Leucippus who gave the best exposition of the system) was to assert that the world could be explained in terms of the mass movement of invisible particles which were qualitatively similar but which varied in size and shape. In short, he presented a systematic atomic materialism as the key to understanding nature. Here is a philosophy that is magnificent in its simplicity, and far reaching in its implications. Let us try to sense its systematic grandeur.

Since all that we have said about the previous philosophers was said merely to indicate the development of a problem, we have slighted many aspects of their work. We have mentioned only those elements which contributed directly to a solution of the problem of permanence and change, and indicated that reality was to be understood in material terms. In regard to these two aspects, the system of Democritus is a logical culmination of what went before. Both permanence and change are comprehensible in this system, because permanence attaches to the character of the individual atoms and change results from their free movement in space. It is a thoroughgoing materialism because everything under the sun, including *thought*, is explained as resulting simply from the one ultimate reality of material atoms in motion. Here is a model of the universe simple enough to please almost anyone.

Democritus takes as his original assumptions only two things, atoms in motion and a void, or space. The atoms are infinite in number and varied in shape and size. As they tumble through space (something like a cosmic snowstorm with atoms as the snowflakes) they collide with each other to form the things of ordinary experience. While each atom is so small as to be invisible by itself, yet enough of them taken together can make an object of any size. The density of experienced objects can be explained in terms of the amount of void, or space, which separates the combined atoms. Light objects of great size simply have more space between the clinging atoms than smaller objects of great weight. Physical films stream off objects, as the outer skin can be shed by a snake, and these strike the eye and make vision possible. The mind itself is physical, the atoms which constitute it being only a finer texture than those which combine to make up the more tangible items of experience. Moreover, the mind, like the body, is made up of a number of atoms in combination and so is no more permanent or eternal than other things. The mind *atoms* may be eternal, but not the mind which results from their joint combinations. Everything reduces to the eternal drift of atoms in space. As old combinations of atoms are broken up, new ones take their place, and so the world moves on. The atoms can be used over and over again, but each particular object which results from them has its little day and then is gone.

Since simplicity is one of the goals of all explanation, one cannot help but admire the model of the universe which Democritus has provided. What could be simpler than explaining everything in terms of atoms in motion? The old Greek doctrine of Fate is reinterpreted to mean mechanical necessity, which is the only law governing the fall of these procreant atoms. Let us examine some of the implications of this beautifully contrived, but perhaps overly simple, explanation of the mysteries of existence.

First, let us notice that the universe is interpreted in terms of a mechanical model. Things do not happen because Zeus or any other intelligence wills them so; things happen because the primordial atoms fall together of a blind necessity. Teleological, or purposive, explanations have no place in such a system. This concept of pure

determinism, or necessity, has contributed much to scientific progress. So long as men are content to believe that things happen because of the will of some capricious agent, control over nature is impossible. Men may supplicate the gods, employ magical incantations, or resign themselves to whatever circumstances befall them, but until they grasp the notion of mechanical law, they are helpless to redirect the forces of nature to their own end. The notion of mechanical necessity is a very important one for science but perhaps atomic materialism has carried the concept too far in applying it indiscriminately to things and persons. At least, many other philosophers have rebelled at the notion that *everything* must be determined simply by the laws of motion. To them it seems that such a rigid determinism robs rationality, and value, of any meaning. How can my ideas be said to be more rational or valuable than yours (or vice versa, if you prefer) if both your ideas and mine are merely the result of completely non-rational atoms indulging in thoroughly non-rational movements?

Another way of describing this atomic materialism is to observe that it reduces all qualitative differences to mere quantitative ones. This too has been an important concept for science, and has greatly extended scientific understanding and control of the forces of nature. Things that once could not be understood because they seemed so completely different, turn out to have enough in common to make understanding possible. The kinetic atomic theory of heat which was developed much later is a good example of how productive it may be to find quantitative similarities underlying qualitative distinctions. The mechanical equivalent of heat which Joule demonstrated is a concrete illustration of this fact. Again, our whole modern physical theory of color is a recognition that Democritus was on a good track. We sense some things as blue, others as red, because of differences in wave length of the rays involved. In short, we account for the experienced qualitative differences between certain colors by reference to underlying quantitative differences in the phenomena. Failure to recognize the importance of the atomist's insights led Aristotle to formulate doctrines which retarded science for centuries, as we shall see when we come to study his philosophic

ideas. Meantime, let us note some more implications of Democritus' world view.

It is evident that in a universe such as we have been describing, there would be little room for the usual religious ideas. The atoms are eternal and so no Creator-God is required to put the world in motion. The combinations of atoms are not eternal and so immortality is a vain dream. Hence, atomic materialism cuts the ground out from under two of the most fundamental of religious ideas. If there were gods, thought Democritus, they surely had nothing to do with the creation of the world, for they themselves could be but atomic combinations which blind necessity had brought together. It is because of the anti-religious implications of atomic materialism that many people dismiss the theory as woefully incomplete, despite its workability in illuminating certain areas of experience.

So much for the metaphysical view which interprets reality as material. We have tried to show briefly the development of this philosophy and its culmination in a completely systematic world view. Later on this way of looking at things was made popular in Rome through the work of the poet Lucretius, and its major outlines have lasted on through the centuries, being especially popular with those philosophers who drew their inspiration from the established facts of science. However, there are other ways of looking at the world and the Greeks provided several other fairly complete systems which we must examine.

The general features of any philosophy are determined to a large extent by the starting point and by the sort of problems with which the philosopher is most directly concerned. The philosopher with a religious temperament is quite likely to emphasize aspects of experience different from those emphasized by one who is motivated exclusively by scientific interests. In both cases, the thinker will strive for completeness and all-inclusiveness in his system, but invariably we find that he does more justice to some aspects of experience than to others, primarily because certain of its presuppositions have been directed toward the problems which he finds most pressing at the time. It is for this reason that philosophy is a going concern, and that no one system seems to have a monopoly on the whole truth. It is also for this reason that ultimately every

man must be his own philosopher, let him gather his specific insights where he may.

Since there are different ways of looking at the same world, we want now to turn our attention to some men who emphasized the importance of what they took to be immaterial realities, which the atomists neglected. The chief exponent of the sort of philosophy we want to talk about was Plato, but, like the atomists, he too had antecedents, of whom one of the most important was Pythagoras.

## A Mathematical Theory of Nature

To the question, What is Reality? we have found that some of the Greeks gave the direct and simple answer, "Reality consists of material atoms." That is to say that atoms were thought of as the only things that did not change their fundamental character. To the Greeks, apart from Heraclitus, the real was invariably identified with the unchanging aspect of things. Transience was the mark and seal of non-being, or Becoming, and things which are continually *becoming* never really *are*. But even if the permanent alone be classified as real, there are reasons for believing that atoms are not the sole reality. Pythagoras (*c.* 580-500 B.C.) was one of the first and most influential of those who found other realities, in a different dimension. He was the father of those who find the universe to be a mathematical harmony, the order of which is as important as the stuff which is ordered. To atomic materialism the order which nature displays is merely the chance result of atomic collisions. A philosophy which makes rational order more fundamental than this contains all sorts of new possibilities. Many of these were developed by Plato, whose general world view we shall examine presently; still others remained to be discovered by Copernicus and other astronomers of his period, and in subsequent chapters of this book we shall see how really fruitful this mathematical interpretation of nature became, especially when men were able to combine it with the atomic view, about which, of course, Pythagoras knew nothing.

Let us see what sort of consideration it was which led Pythagoras to his revolutionary interpretation of things. First, it would be well to remember that his theory begins with the results already achieved by the Ionian philosophers. Like Anaximander, Pythagoras was

quite willing to think of the universe as involving an "indeterminate," or, as he called it, an "unlimited," aspect. Like Anaximines, he seems to have thought of this "unlimited" as being air. Unlike either of these Ionians, however, he sought a definite explanation of how the unlimited became differentiated into particular things. Anaximines' doctrine of "condensation and rarefaction" and Anaximander's "separating out" were both very vague explanations at best. To the "unlimited" there must be added another principle of the "limit" and these two together must explain the world. Mere indeterminateness, or lack of particularity, would be mere vagueness, or chaos. Consequently, the limiting or differentiating principle looms up as the really important factor in understanding things. Now what is the principle of order which takes things out of the realm of chaos? Pythagoras found it to be mathematical, and even went so far as to say that all things were composed of number. Of course, by this he hardly meant an abstract figure, for mathematical abstraction had not got very far in those days. What he did seem to mean was that things were differentiated from the original matrix of the unlimited by virtue of there being so much and no more of the primal stuff adapted to the making of this or that type of thing. In other words, he meant that if we would understand anything we should discover the mathematical proportion which that thing represented. Everything had some number, and the universe was thought to be a completely rational or mathematical harmony. Pythagoras was apparently led to his conclusion by having studied the mathematical correlations between different lengths of string on the lyre, and the harmonies which these mathematically related lengths could produce. Henceforth such immaterial things as patterns, harmonies, or mathematical relations had to be reckoned with when one tried to understand his universe.

If this were intended to be a complete story of Greek philosophy, we should have to say many more things about Pythagoras. We should have to mention the fact that he was the founder of a religious order, that he was much influenced by the Orphic mysteries and believed thoroughly in their doctrine of reincarnation, that he thought of philosophy as medicine for the soul, just as proper diet was medicine for the body. Pythagoras, however, was included in

our discussion here merely to show that he provided the Greeks with the basis for a new philosophy about the nature of things; and since he has already served that function we shall pass on to consider the philosophy of Plato, for it was he who developed the Pythagorean way of looking at things into a system whose completeness is comparable to the completeness with which Democritus developed the earlier materialism.

## The Platonic World View

Plato (427-347 B.C.) was influenced by Pythagoras and other pre-Socratic thinkers, but his greatest influence doubtless came from Socrates himself, for Plato was Socrates' most distinguished pupil. Socrates (469-399 B.C.) was chiefly concerned with problems of ethics and pretended to spurn metaphysical investigations. His speculations about ethics, however, had implications which must have influenced Plato tremendously. How Plato developed them on the ethical side we shall see in a subsequent chapter, but, since the Socratic ideas throw light also on Plato's metaphysics, we would do well to examine one of his favorite notions now.

Socrates made quite a nuisance of himself by asking people to define the terms they employed when they were talking about things.[1] By a series of skillfully directed questions he was generally able to show them that they had no clear notion of what it was they were talking about. Thus jurists who used the word "justice" every day could soon be shown, when they tried to define the term, that it included either more or less than they had intended before the meaning was examined. Men would likewise talk about beauty or virtue or some other abstract term readily enough without first stopping to analyze the meaning of the word. To make men intellectually more critical seems to have been Socrates' interpretation of his mission in life, and he described himself as the "gad-fly" of the state. But his interest in definition led him to some further

[1] As often happens, the people whom he accosted thought Socrates was trying to make fools of them (little realizing that they had accomplished this end for themselves) and eventually they brought about his death, thus giving philosophy its foremost martyr. Doubtless Socrates' unpopular political views had a good deal to do with the people's decision to be rid of him, but his rigorous method of cross-examination had already made him unpopular.

considerations and it is these with which we are particularly concerned.

When he tried to analyze the meaning of beauty (or any other abstract term), Socrates was led to make some assumptions about the thing defined. For example, men talk about beautiful houses, or beautiful sunsets, or beautiful girls, and so on. What is it that these different things have in common to warrant describing them with the same adjective? In order to make such judgments, men must have in mind some absolute notion of beauty, by participation in which this or that particular thing becomes beautiful. Perhaps we can clarify this idea by making reference to a comparative judgment. Suppose I say that one picture is more beautiful than another. Must I not have in mind some notion of beauty to which each of these pictures is compared, just as I might have a standard measure in mind when I say that one object is longer than another? And must not this idea of beauty, which I have in mind, be an idea of a *real* thing, if it is to stand in judgment over other things? At least Socrates seems to have thought so. Universal terms, such as we have just been talking about, are surely not material things, and yet, as we have seen, Socrates felt constrained to call them real. Perhaps they are the only things that deserve to be called real, in the sense of unchanging, for they are truly timeless, or eternal. *This* beautiful picture, or *that* one, may pass away, but *beauty* outlasts them all.

Couple such considerations as the foregoing with Pythagoras' notions about the reality of mathematical relationships, and you can see the makings of a new philosophical outlook, which might be described by the term "*idealism*." Although this is a slippery term, there are several senses in which Plato's philosophy might properly be characterized by it.[2]

[2] The most general philosophic meaning of the term *idealism* springs from its association with the word idea, rather than ideal. Many philosophers have suggested that we can never know anything except ideas. Thus, if you analyze what I mean by saying that I know Joe Smith, you will discover that what I really know is the set of ideas which I have formed concerning him. Some philosophers have been so impressed with the fact that we seem forever confined to the circle of our own ideas, that to them it seems impossible to assert existence of anything else. Such philosophers are called *subjective idealists*, and their cardinal principle is that nothing is a real object save as it is an object in somebody's (or subject's) mind. "To be is to be perceived," is the classical expression of this notion. Other

In the first place, Plato's system might be called an idealistic one because of his treatment of universal, or abstract, *ideas* in the manner which was suggested by Socrates' quest for true definitions. We have seen that Socrates was led to think of "beauty," rather than this or that beautiful thing, as existing in its own right; and that consequently the *idea* of beauty was an objectively real thing. Since Plato developed this same notion, we can see why he is sometimes described as an *objective idealist*. Another reason for calling him an idealist is found in the popular meaning of that term. In ordinary discourse, we call a man an idealist if he tries to live his life according to certain ideals, or standards of perfection. Since Plato's philosophy included the doctrine that these ideal or perfect ends were a part of the very structure of reality, the term seems appropriate enough when applied to him. But let us attempt to understand the main features of Plato's variety of idealism.

The problem of substance, which we have already seen was a major one for the Greeks, and the problem of knowledge (what knowledge really is, and how we get it), were the important problems which Plato set about to solve. His resulting philosophy represents what he believed to be the only genuine solution. The problem of what is real, and the problem of knowledge, are so closely intertwined in Plato's thinking that we must discuss them together.

The reader will recall the issue between Parmenides and Heraclitus regarding the nature of things, whether reality be permanent or changing. The theory of Ideas which Plato advances comes down on the side of Parmenides in regard to this controversy, but Plato also tries to do justice to the fact of change. To account for both permanence and change, he finds it necessary to introduce a distinction between the world of sense experience and the world as it is

philosophers, impressed with this line of argument but finding it impossible to think that the world depends for its existence on being an idea for any finite subject, have postulated an Absolute Mind, which is forever having ideas which the finite mind can have after It. The stability of ideas is thus guaranteed by the Absolute Mind, and "things" are no more precarious than if they were made of "matter." Such systems of philosophy are called "Absolute Idealisms." Plato was not an idealist in either of the senses we have just mentioned. While it is true that he thought of ideas as real, these ideas were not necessarily the content of somebody's consciousness—be it a finite individual, or God. Plato, however, is frequently called an idealist for reasons listed in the text above.

disclosed to reason. At the level of sensation, the world *is* in a constant state of flux—Heraclitus was right to this extent—but if this were the whole story, knowledge would be impossible, according to Plato. An object of knowledge must be an unchanging object, otherwise one would never come to know the truth about things, for truth would be constantly shifting. Consequently, at the level of experience, we never get true and certain knowledge, but only opinion, whereas reason alone can carry us to those eternal ideas which never change and so provide us with the truth about things. All this may seem a little abstract and difficult to understand, so let us pursue the notion a little further. Perhaps we can make it clear.

If a man were to come into a room of sixty degrees temperature, after having spent several hours in the sub-zero weather outside, he would be likely to report the room as "warm"; but another man, who had just spent several hours working in front of a blast furnace, would find the same room "cold." In other words, according to the testimony of the senses, the same room is both hot and cold—which, to reason, is an outright contradiction. Again, one man may find a picture beautiful, while another finds the same picture ugly; such is the relativity introduced by the testimony of the senses. Our natural skepticism about affairs of direct experience is well summed up in the familiar dictum: "About tastes there is no disputing." Plato believed that a *real* object could not possibly be described, truly, in terms of contradictory qualities. The very fact that we can describe a room as hot and not hot, at the same time, indicates that, at the level of the senses, there is no certain method for ascribing qualities to things. A real thing could not, in itself, be contradictory; hence, the objects of experience, to which contradictory qualities can be attributed, must lack true being, or reality. The world of experience is, then, only partly real at best, and leads merely to opinions which can only approximate true knowledge of the real state of affairs. If this be so, what is the true reality, apprehension of which would give us genuine knowledge? As we have already suggested, Plato's answer to this question is that the real world is one of eternal Forms or Ideas, which are disclosed only to reason and not to the senses.

We have already observed the sort of consideration which led Socrates (and Plato) to the doctrine that abstract ideas have a reality over and above the particulars which manifest them. At the risk of overexplaining what we have been talking about, let us note one more reason for thinking about the world of Forms as real.

Plato was convinced that the most certain and demonstrable knowledge which men could have was to be found in the realm of mathematics. Both because it disclosed the nature of permanent truths and because it taught men to think abstractly, mathematics was a required course in Plato's school and was prerequisite to everything else. In this field of study, as every freshman has discovered, there is little room for private opinion. In mathematics we talk about straight lines and perfect circles, but surely no man ever *saw* such things. The world of experience may suggest ideas like these, but it does not seem to contain them. The lines we actually employ in our blackboard demonstration of theorems can be far from straight (and, of course, never are absolutely so), without invalidating our conclusions, which are reached by reason rather than sensation in any case. Here is the surest knowledge we have, and it is attained, independently of sensation, by virtue of reason's ability to grasp realities in their complete abstractness. If we were talking about experienced triangles, instead of ideal ones, it would only be more or less true that the sum of their angles would add up to 180 degrees. We should never have demonstrable knowledge that such is the case, but only opinion, for each experienced triangle might vary in its angular structure, however minutely, and our best calculations would thus go astray. Mathematics, then, provides another clue to the fact that knowledge must concern itself with that which does not change, and that the only avenue to true knowledge, and hence to reality, is through reason rather than sensation. The upshot of all this might be summarized as follows:

For Plato, the real world is one of eternal and immutable Forms. Understanding these Forms is the very nature of knowledge, and such knowledge is achieved through reason. Of course, there is also a world of experience which is in a constant state of flux, but it cannot be thought of as the real world because one can make contradictory judgments concerning it, each of which will have an equal claim to

acceptance. What reality this experienced world has it owes to its participation in the immutable Forms which constitute reality proper. Thus, a white object gets what whiteness it has by reason of the fact that there is an absolute whiteness from which the experienced one gets its nature; a good act is really a good one in so far as it participates in the universal Form, goodness, and so on. Plato has divided the world into two distinct compartments. First, there is the world of experience, about which contradictory judgments can be made; and second, there is the world disclosed to reason, about which contradictory judgments cannot be made. This latter world must represent the true reality, because whatever *is* must have a definite character which cannot be described in contradictory terms. The dualism which Plato thus introduces into things had many historical consequences, but before mentioning some of them let us return to one of the Forms mentioned above, the Form of the *Good.*

When God created the world, he did so in accordance with the pattern provided by the eternal Forms, of which the most inclusive and important is the Form of the Good. Perhaps an illustration will indicate why this form holds such an important place in Plato's philosophy. In the science of physics, for example, we may begin by observing this or that particular falling body, but we end with a *law* of falling bodies, which applies to all of them in general. We explain the movement of particular things by reference to a general law. Just see how this simplifies our understanding of things. The infinitely varied movement of particular things is made meaningful, or comprehensible, by being subsumed under a general law of motion. But, there are laws of physics, laws of biology, psychology, astronomy, and so on. Would it not be good to have a "science" of all these sciences, so that their relation to each other might be understood, just as each science renders understandable the multitude of particulars which it relates together? Plato believed there was such a "science" of the sciences, and that its name was philosophy. Through philosophy we are brought to understand how all the forms of existence are related to the most inclusive of forms. In our attempt to understand things, we frequently ask what they are good for; which is a way of asking what they do, or what their

meaning is. That form of understanding which enables us to see what things are *good for,* and how they are related to other things, must be nothing less than the Form of the Good itself. Since it is the ultimate form, by which even the generalizations of science are illuminated, there is little wonder that Plato accords it a special place in the real world of being. Once realize that God has made the experienced world in accordance with the Good, and you will see that the whole of existence is shot through with purpose and rationality. In short, Plato conceived the world as thoroughly teleological, or purposive, rather than blindly mechanical in the manner of the materialists. Our experienced world would be wholly good if it were wholly real, i.e., if it were completely identified with the eternal forms. Evil turns out to be merely lack of true being. This doctrine was made quite central in Neo-Platonism, which is a term describing the philosophy of a later thinker named Plotinus.[3]

One more aspect of Plato's philosophy which deserves some elaboration centers about his famous doctrine of recollection. Plato was apparently influenced by the mystery religions of Greece no less than Pythagoras was, and seems to have adopted their belief in immortality. In fact, he was so impressed with the Orphic doctrine of reincarnation that he used it as one of his explanations of how the world of Forms could be understood. Learning consists, according to this view, merely in recollecting. The soul, in one of its earlier stages, became acquainted with reality, and so learning about reality in this life consists merely in the art of contriving to remember

[3] In the third century A.D., Plato was reinterpreted for the Roman world by Plotinus, who emphasized Plato's immaterial world of Ideas, or Forms, to such a degree that he wept because he had a body. So gross a thing must reek of unreality! Plotinus was a mystic, and, naturally enough, found access to Plato's *real* world through the ecstasy of religious mysticism. Compared to this *real* world, everything else paled into insignificance. It is no accident that the otherworldliness of that period of history which we call the Dark Ages is closely associated with the dominance of Platonic philosophy. Why center attention on a world of mere appearances when the soul's real destiny is tied up with an entirely different realm? We shall discover later that St. Augustine was one of the most important of all those religious leaders who molded Christian doctrine, and we would do well to remember that Augustine was a Platonist before he was a Christian. It was he who contributed the Platonic element to Christian ideology, and when we recall how influential this ideology was for the whole of Western culture, the importance of Plato's thinking becomes evident.

what was once immediately evident. He illustrates this theory in a dialogue in which his spokesman, Socrates, is able to have an uneducated slave boy prove a theorem in geometry. Obviously no slave boy has learned the principles of geometry in this life, but Socrates, through skillful questioning (and without *telling* him anything) is able to lead him to a correct demonstration. The slave boy is simply reminded of something he originally knew by direct apprehension, but which he has long since forgotten because of the confusion which the partly unreal world of experience has engendered in him. Socrates speaks of himself as a midwife to ideas because of his ability to elicit truths from those who are unable to bring them to light without help. Plato suggests the possibility of generalizing such an experience as this. How should we ever be able to identify truth if we didn't have *some* knowledge of what it was before we began our quest? The obvious connection between this doctrine of recollection and arguments about immortality need hardly be mentioned. Plato makes the most of it.

There is obviously much more that should be said about Plato's philosophy, but we have tried to concentrate attention on some of the more important aspects. We have found that it offers a world view very different from that presented by the atomists. Plato presents the world as meaningful and purposive, rather than as blindly mechanical. He provides for the possibility of an immortal soul, which was denied by the atomists; and his scheme of things includes a belief in a creator God, which is wholly foreign to materialism. Little wonder that this philosophy was to prove influential in subsequent religious thought about the world. Christianity owes much of its content to a pagan philosopher who lived four hundred years before Christ. What philosophical background Plato did not provide for the changing concepts of Christianity was largely supplied by his most important pupil, Aristotle, and we turn now to consider his world view.

## A Functional Philosophy

"Master of them who knew," such is Dante's description of Plato's famous intellectual successor, Aristotle (384-322 B.C.), who contributed to nearly every field of learning and was one of the

most versatile men of history. Biology, astronomy, physics, poetics, philosophy, and other disciplines show the impress of his thought. One branch of philosophy, logic, owes its formulation almost entirely to him, and so completely did he analyze this field of study that nearly every college curriculum still includes a course which owes its chief content to the work he did. However interesting it might be to get acquainted with his many-sided genius, our remarks here must be limited to a discussion of his metaphysics and natural philosophy. Much as Aristotle owes to Plato, he was not completely satisfied with the solution which Plato offered to the metaphysical problems which we have been considering in this survey; consequently, he formulated a world view of his own. If Plato's theories were influential for early Christianity, Aristotle's were preeminently important for much in the more modern formulation of Christian doctrine. In fact, Christianity has been intimately associated with his philosophy ever since the thirteenth century when Thomas Aquinas used it as the basis for explaining Christian theology.

We have seen that the philosophy of Plato, at least as it has been historically interpreted, involved a distinction between the *real* world and the world of *experience*. The former consisted of the absolute Forms which we have discussed, while the latter had real being only in so far as it participated in these Forms. To Aristotle, this distinction seemed invalid and he sought to give a better account than Plato had, of how form and matter are related.

Perhaps it was in order to emphasize his own originality that Aristotle interpreted Plato as having set the real world of Forms so completely apart from the world of experience that any sort of relationship between the two would seem impossible. At any rate, he thought there was no use talking about the forms of knowledge as being *outside* the world of experience, for this latter world is the one we actually live in, and which we are anxious to have knowledge about. Consequently, while it is true that the world has a formal aspect, and that universal terms must represent some sort of reality, and that knowledge is especially concerned with the formal aspect of things; yet the universal must be thought of as being *in* (and not apart from) the particular objects of experience. Plato's

forms must be brought closer to the particulars which manifest them, if they are to serve any real purpose. Before he got through with his system, Aristotle turned out to be more Platonic than he would have us believe, but it is true that history has interpreted his philosophy as being less other-worldly in its implications than was the philosophy of his teacher.

To the materialists, atoms were the primary reality, and the order or pattern which the world displayed was a secondary factor, resulting from the chance combination of the atoms themselves. To Plato, the pattern or order, or Forms, as we have called them, were primary and everything else was secondary. In a sense, we might say that Aristotle tried to effect a synthesis of these opposing views about matter and form. To him, they were both inadequate in the way they had been formulated. *Both* form and matter must be thought of as real but neither is real independently of the other. Experience indicates that there is no form without matter, and no matter without form. Try to imagine a formless gob of matter as really existing—it has *some* form! Try to imagine the existence of completely disembodied form—it has some substance! Aristotle, as we shall see, made one important exception to this principle that form and matter are inseparably related, for he had to think of God as completely disembodied, and so became thoroughly Platonic in this respect. Why he did so will be discussed later.

Logically we can separate form from matter all right, but we must not mistake this separation for a real division of the things themselves. By mental abstraction I can think of matter without form, but what is it that I am thinking of? Mere possibility, or potentiality, for real existence. Pure matter turns out to be merely something that can be a particular thing only after it has realized some form. Even after it has become a real thing by realizing some form, it may also be capable of achieving some new, or higher, form of being. Let us see how relative a concept matter is when we consider it in these terms.

Perhaps it will be easiest to understand what Aristotle meant by matter by thinking of it as the materials out of which a thing is to be made. Suppose one must write a theme for some English class. The materials, be they books, discussions, prejudices, or what not,

are the things out of which the theme will be made. The finished product, the theme, will be those materials plus whatever form has been imposed upon them. The theme could have no existence apart from some form, nor could it exist apart from some materials. But these are relative terms. Suppose the theme turns out to be an especially good one and gets published. While it was a formed thing relative to the materials which went into it, it may now become the material out of which some new formed thing may be made. In other words, another person may use the ideas in the theme as *material* for a theme he wants to write. Thus what was a completed form for one situation becomes matter to be realized in some new form for a different one. Perhaps another illustration will clarify this issue and prepare the way for understanding another point about Aristotle.

A relatively unformed mass of clay (only relatively unformed, because it already has at least the form of a mass) is the material out of which a brick can be made. Relative to the clay, the finished brick is form—it is what the clay achieved; relative to the brick the clay is matter—something to be formed. The brick, which represents accomplished form relative to the matter, becomes, itself, mere matter in relation to the wall of which it may be a part. That is to say, anything is matter relative to some higher form, and the wall represents a higher organization of matter than the mere brick. And so it is with the whole universe of things: matter and form are correlative aspects of the dynamic process of being itself. But to speak of the universe of things as in process involves a new conception which we must try to grasp.

If matter is pure possibility, or potentiality, there must be some such thing as pure form, otherwise we should have only the possibility of a universe and not its actuality. That is to say, if matter always includes the possibility of realizing itself in some new form, there must be an immaterial form somewhere, one not mixed with matter, or potentiality, at all. Some such form, representing completest actuality, is the logical counterpart to matter, thought of as pure possibility. At this point Aristotle becomes Platonic and assumes that there is one existence which is unmixed with matter. It is God, or, as Aristotle would call it, the Unmoved Mover.

This concept of an Unmoved Mover is important in Aristotle's philosophy, because it accounts for both the fact that things *actually* exist and the fact of motion. Since God represents completest actuality, he moves things; not by reason of some mechanical push, but by virtue of the fact that all materialized things attempt to share in that which is actual. In short, God moves things in much the same way that a beautiful girl moves the young swain to her side. She need not exert physical pressure upon him; the prospect of things to be is sufficient motivation. Whatever has matter (or potentiality) as part of its nature, is moved to realize its highest possible form, and the ultimate guarantor of this movement is the highest of all forms, God. No doubt all this seems pretty abstract and hard to follow. Perhaps we can understand Aristotle better by coming at his problems in another way.

We have indicated that Plato's philosophy was much influenced by the science of mathematics, and that it emphasized the type of ideal truths which mathematics discloses. Aristotle was primarily influenced by his extensive researches in biology and it was only natural that he developed an organismic, or functional, way of looking at things. Try to understand so simple a thing as an oak tree, and you may be forced to think in Aristotelian terms. For the atomist, an oak is a certain conglomeration of atoms which came together in a manner which only God, if he existed, would know. For the Platonist, this oak tree is a real oak only in so far as it participates in the ideal form of "oakness"—we are reminded again that "only God can make a tree," and pity the mortal who attempts to understand how *this* oak came into existence. For Aristotle, the oak tree has a natural history, which is a necessary part of understanding it. In some sense, the oak is contained even in the acorn and its history is not complete until the acorn grows into a tree and withers away. In short, the processes of birth, development, and decay are all real parts of this dynamic universe. Both the materialists and Plato lacked a real understanding of the developmental character of things. And even Aristotle, alas, didn't understand it well enough!

If Aristotle had understood the principle of development in the way we do today he might have been a full-fledged evolutionist,

or if he had been a less faithful student of Plato he might have reached the same goal. As it was, he came to think of nature as including a series, or hierarchy, of fixed ends, and it was only within the limits of these ends, or fixed forms, that individuals evolved. In short, he believed in a doctrine of the fixity of the species, breaking over of which was impossible because each particular thing was predisposed to become simply a specimen of that species, and nothing more. Of course, individual things could fall short of realizing their true nature as members of a species, just as some men fail to live rational lives although it is a natural part of their nature (or essence) to be rational; but nothing could *exceed* its ideal essence, or nature. The acorn, for Aristotle, was predestined to be an oak, and no amount of individual variation could carry it beyond the limits of its species. This doctrine of limited evolutionism became very important in Aristotle's ethical system; but it became a great stumbling block to those who tried to understand nature before Darwin—not to mention the fact that it was still a stumbling block for many who came after him.

It is too bad that Aristotle, who promised to be so different from Plato, turned out to be so much like him. The ideal form of things which made Plato divide the world into two separate compartments still haunted Aristotle sufficiently to make him think in terms of preordained forms, or species of existence. What advantage his system had over Plato's lay in the fact that Aristotle interpreted the Platonic forms as being intimately associated with matter, not set apart in a special world which alone deserved to be called real. *Real* things involve both form and matter in mutual interaction, and the developmental process which things undergo is just as much a part of reality as are the forms which decree how they shall grow. Perhaps this common-sense completeness of Aristotle can best be understood in terms of his doctrine of the four "causes" of things.

Try to understand how any particular thing came into being and you will find yourself searching for four different causes of its existence. Suppose you are talking about a watch. First, you will attempt to discover that *out of which* it is made. This, Aristotle called its *material cause*. In the second place, you will readily un-

derstand that there has been the watch-making process, the process *by which* materials are made into something. This, Aristotle called the *efficient cause* of things. In the third place, the materials employed actually did go into the making of a watch, and not a fountain pen or some other object, so surely one of the reasons or causes of this thing being a watch is the form *into which* the materials were cast. This, Aristotle called the *formal cause* of things. Finally, there would hardly be any watch at all if someone did not want to tell time, so our explanation of the thing is not complete until we list a fourth cause, that *for which* the thing comes into being. Aristotle called this the *final cause*. Nothing can be accounted for without mention of all four of these causes, which bring matter and form into a real conjunction, but the most illuminating of all the causes was the *final* one, according to Aristotle. It represented the purpose for which all things evolve and, as Aristotle put it, "the process of evolution is for the sake of the thing evolved, and not this for the sake of the process." In short, the final end toward which things move, the goal they are trying to achieve, is really the decisive factor in understanding things. This final goal is not external to the thing which evolves, but is inherent in it; just as the oak is in some way inherent in the acorn. This purpose, or goal, which is inherent in a thing, Aristotle called its *entelechy*. It is this notion of an entelechy, or the completed form which inheres in a thing from its beginning, which we have referred to as the stumbling-block which prevented Aristotle from becoming an evolutionist in the modern sense, for it set a limit beyond which things could not change. How important the concept was for his system of ethics we shall see in a subsequent chapter. One reason that Aristotle fitted so well into the teachings of the Church is to be found in this idea of an entelechy. By the doctrine of internal design, he provides a philosophy of evolution that harmonizes cosmic purpose with natural law. The operation of natural causes *is* divine providence; for at the top of the hierarchy of form and matter stands God as the supreme Form, the Unmoved Mover, the Final Cause of all that is, the Entelechy of the world.

So much for the main features of Aristotle's metaphysics. Our exposition has been fairly abstract, but certain aspects of Aristotle's

way of looking at things should have become clear. In the first place, it is evident that Aristotle sought to be more "realistic" than Plato, for he found the pattern of things to be immanent in the things themselves. Knowledge, for Aristotle, begins with particular experiences and not with any form of "recollection" such as Plato talked about, for each particular thing embodies the universal form as a necessary part of its being. Aristotle's greater emphasis upon the facts of experience was, doubtless, influential in giving later Christianity a less "other-worldly" flavor than it had when Plato was its philosophical patron.

In the second place, Aristotle's philosophy was no less teleological than Plato's. In fact, its doctrine of internal design made it more meaningful in its teleology than Plato's had been. Later on, many a Christian theologian was to try to prove the existence of God by means of teleological arguments, and no man ever provided better ammunition for such an argument than Aristotle. Despite the fact that he did not have a doctrine of creation, nor a belief in individual immortality, Aristotle was destined to become a great influence for Christian theology, even if he did live almost four centuries before Christ. The reason Aristotle did not argue for *individual* immortality lay in the fact that only the generic form of rationality in man was eternal, whereas each man was an individual by virtue of his unique, or non-common character, which was not his true essence.

Before leaving a discussion of Aristotle's influence on subsequent thought, it should be pointed out that his strength was coupled with a weakness which was not his fault. In the medieval period of history Aristotle came to be accepted as almost as authoritative as the Scriptures, with the natural consequence that certain mistaken notions which he held in physics and astronomy came to be perpetuated long after they should have been given up. Unwittingly enough, Aristotle became one of the chief inquisitors of men like Galileo. More recently, his doctrine of the fixity of the species made the sailing rough for Darwin. The specific conflict of ideas between Aristotelian and later science will occupy us in later sections of this survey. For the time being, let us remember Aristotle as one who gave the world one of the three outstanding philosoph-

ical systems developed by the Greeks, and who provided a philosophical foundation for later Christianity.

## Summary

So far in our consideration of Greek philosophy we have discussed three general world views, which we have called respectively, physical, mathematical, and functional theories of nature. The first of these is delightful in its systematic simplicity, but in the opinion of many people it fails to do justice to many of the facts of experience, including the religious consciousness. The mathematical world view emphasizes the formal aspect of things, which materialism neglected, but fails to clarify the issues of this changing world sufficiently to satisfy many people. The functional theory of Aristotle attempts to overcome the deficiencies of the first two theories of nature, but fails to provide an account of things which can be squared with many of the facts of modern science. These three theories logically exhaust the fundamental problem of the relations of form and matter, and any successful modern view will be essentially an adaptation of one or another of them. Each view has been paramount at one time or another in the history of the Western world, and we shall meet with all of them again before we finish with this survey.

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## CHAPTER IX

## *PHILOSOPHIZING ABOUT THE GOOD LIFE*

To be concerned with problems of conduct, or problems centering about the quest for the good life, is to be concerned with ethics. In other words, ethics is a branch of philosophy which attempts to systematize our beliefs about the good life, just as metaphysics is an attempt to systematize our notions of reality. Since the way one lives is conditioned pretty much by the kind of world one lives in, it is fairly evident that our theories of ethics will be largely determined by our ideas of what the world is *really* like, after we have seen through the superficial aspect of things. In short, ethics will be related to metaphysics; so we should not be surprised to find that our present discussion about Greek ethics will involve some reference to the three theories of nature which we discussed in the last chapter.

The earliest Greek philosophers provided us with no systematic ethics comparable to their contributions in the field of metaphysics. In fact, it was not until about the time of Socrates (469-399 B.C.) that men began analyzing the nature of the good life with the same zeal that earlier philosophers had shown in analyzing the nature of reality. We want, in the present chapter, to survey four major systems of philosophical ethics: namely, Platonism, Aristotelianism, Stoicism, and Epicureanism. Before considering each of these in turn, however, we would do well to sketch a brief background of the problem to be considered.

### Background of Greek Ethical Thought

Among the contemporaries of Socrates were some men, called the Sophists, who became professional teachers, willing to dispense knowledge on almost any subject, for a sum. Many of these teachers were characterized by a skepticism regarding man's ability to know any absolute truth about either metaphysics or ethics. Conse-

quently, they came to be looked upon with distrust by the conservative mass of people.[1] Doubtless some of these Sophists were simply charlatans, anxious only to turn a penny, but many of them were first-rate critics of established ways of thinking. Now a critic is a disconcerting fellow at best, and we are quite likely to forget his real value because of the immediate discomfort which he causes us. Moreover, viewed without sufficient perspective, the critic seems to be a dangerous person, for he overthrows the currently accepted values without providing immediately workable substitutes. Many an underclassman has looked back upon some course in philosophy and religion and bemoaned the fact that it was so critical of the ideas which he brought to college, that it robbed him of whatever religion he had and, moreover, did not replace it with a new or better one. Frequently this same fellow, by the time he is a senior, has commenced the task of religious reconstruction for himself and is willing to admit that his old ideas needed to be criticized. Sometimes, however, the student who has been "robbed" of his adolescent ideas falls into deep despair, and sighs for the good old days when he had that peace of mind which he can find no more. Shall we, therefore, stop being critical because criticism sometimes leads to unhappy confusion? Certainly not. Our faith that free criticism of ideas is the only road to intellectual progress, in the long run, has been justified over and over again. So we owe a debt of gratitude to those Sophists who introduced a critical skepticism into the discussion of philosophical issues long ago in Greece. But let us see what sort of ideas they were criticizing, and what all this had to do with Socrates and those who came after.

Most Greeks of the fifth century before Christ, like most people of any other place, or any other time, accepted their beliefs on authority of one sort or another. Among the forms of authority is custom. People are inclined to assume that ideas are, somehow, authoritatively binding if they are old, and have the prestige of a long tradition behind them. Among the ideas inherited by the fifth-century Greeks was one which had been even more pronounced among the early Hebrews, to the effect that virtue and justice were

[1] Perhaps the fact that Aristophanes and other influential people classed Socrates among the Sophist group had something to do with the latter's martyrdom.

absolute requirements of the gods, and that the virtuous and just man would be rewarded with a prosperous life. Job was the chief figure to protest this idea among the Hebrews, and the Sophists did a similar service for the Greeks. It was relatively easy for them, just as it would be easy today, to point out instances where the righteous man suffered and the scoundrel prospered, but this sort of criticism carried them still further. What is the nature of virtue and justice in the first place? When we actually try to put content into these terms, don't they turn out merely to represent the things which are expected of us, by reason of some custom which probably originated in the interests of some privileged and dominant class of people? If I am a rich man I will probably believe in "property rights" as a moral requirement. Also, if I am rich, I will probably be influential in making the laws for the country, and my moral requirement is likely to have some teeth put into it by being enacted into law. Some of the Sophists were quick to point out that laws, in the legal sense, were human contrivances, frequently enacted in the interest of influential groups. They were not absolute things, which represented *absolute* values. If this was true in the legal sense of the term, it might also apply to "moral law." In short, some of the Sophists became complete individualists in their interpretation of laws, legal and moral. What men call justice may be merely a fiction to serve the interests of those in power. Even if there were such things as *absolute* justice and virtue and goodness, how should we ever be able to determine *what* they were? A thoroughgoing skepticism about man's ability to answer such questions as these led many of the Sophists to reject any notion of an absolute morality. Each man alone was to be the measure of what was, and what was not, good. Likewise, in metaphysics, each man was to be the measure of what is, and what is not, real, for why should any one man's interpretation of such matters be any better than another's? All this, of course, suggests some kind of intellectual and moral anarchy. How were these critics of the *status quo* to be answered?

Naturally enough, there were many who thought the most effective answer was to silence them, by exiling them from the state if necessary. This "answer by force" was a very part of the

thing the offenders had been talking about, and many Greeks were dull enough to want to clinch their argument for them! But browbeating ideas into submission is not answering the ideas themselves. Men usually resort to such techniques because they are afraid to face the issue boldly, on even grounds. One man among the Greeks, however, was able and willing to meet the Sophists in the intellectual arena. To him, issues were things to be examined, not throttled. This man was *Socrates*.

If the Sophists were right, thought Socrates, in saying that one man's opinion is as good or true as another's, how could they claim any superiority for their own doctrines? Truth, in becoming a purely relative matter, becomes also an inconsequential one, for the Sophists could not call any system false, even if it contradicted theirs completely. To take seriously the doctrine that "man is the measure of all things" seemed to Socrates to imply that things had no fixed nature whatever. Why, then, can't we mold things completely to the heart's desire? Certainly, reality does seem to have some stubborn traits about it! As we have pointed out previously, Socrates did not concern himself very much with the metaphysical side of philosophical discussion, but he was tremendously interested in the ethical problems which the Sophists raised. He found it quite impossible to believe that virtue and justice were the purely relative things they were said to be. His chief reason for dissent lay, no doubt, in the thing we have just pointed out, that to make judgments about morals, or anything else, completely relative, is a self-defeating piece of business. You can never prove that the exact opposite of this point of view is not the true one.

To believe that truth, beauty, goodness, justice, and so on, must have some absolute or objective meaning, is one thing; to find out what that meaning is, is something else. Socrates never did develop a complete ethical system, in which such terms could be given a specific content, but he did point the way for subsequent philosophers. Even if he did not arrive at any very definite conclusions himself, he showed that the sophistic approach was barren and that whatever hope there was for bringing order into the chaos of moral speculation lay in a different direction. On the positive side, his chief contribution consisted of unceasing insistence on the prin-

ciple that virtue and knowledge go hand in hand. All people would do that which is best for them if they only knew enough. The notion that the devil is an ass was destined to become a fairly integral part of Greek ethics. The unexamined life was likely to be the bad one. Socrates thought it strange that so many men who believed in physical examinations never took the time to search their souls.

## The Ethics of Plato

As we have discovered in our section on metaphysics, Plato was greatly influenced by Socrates. Nowhere is this influence more notable than in the development of his ethical doctrines. In fact, the task which Socrates' pupil set for himself was nothing less than that of attempting to discover the objective content of those ethical terms, which Socrates insisted must have some such content, even if he had not disclosed it. In one of his longest and best-known dialogues, the *Republic*, Plato gave his answer to the question, "What is justice?" In doing so, he outlined the meaning of the good life generally and so provided material for understanding his ethical system in its entirety. We shall look at several of the major concepts which emerged in the course of the *Republic*, but first let us see why he cast his ethical discussion in the form of what sounds and looks like a political tract.

No one who has grasped the meaning of Plato's metaphysics will be surprised to learn that justice turns out to be a form of order. Briefly, for him, the just man is one who subordinates the appetitive and spiritual sides of his life to the rule of reason. The good life turns out to be the well-ordered one, and Plato thought it would be easier to demonstrate this by pointing first of all to a just state, which is merely an "individual writ large" in any case. Once one had discovered the meaning of justice in the state, he would be able to find what it stands for in the individual. This is one reason that Plato wrote about an ideal state, but there is a further reason as well. Man automatically lives in society; he is not a complete individual, living aloof from all other individuals. Hence, the good for him is intimately associated with what is good for the state, and the two things can hardly be discussed separately.

In his analysis of the ideal state, Plato finds that it would consist of three distinct social classes. First, there would be the farmers, artisans, traders, and so on, men whose business is that of providing for the production and distribution of economic goods. Second, there would be a professional class of warriors, whose job would be to safeguard the state in time of trouble. Third, there would be the class of rulers, philosophically trained persons, whose sole business would be that of governing. A state consisting of these three classes would be a just one only if the first and second classes were subordinated to the third class, and if the third class governed solely in the interest of the common welfare. To assure that the state would be ideal in these respects, Plato suggested an extensive scheme of education. Those too stupid to learn very much would be subjected to the right forms of propaganda to make them want to do the things which would be most advantageous to the state. The ruling class, on the other hand, would be thoroughly trained in the arts, sciences, and philosophy. This latter discipline, as we have seen when discussing Plato's metaphysics, would make it possible for them to pierce through the superficial shell of things, and come to know the form of the good. The soldiers, of course, would be trained in the art of fighting and would spend a good deal of time in the gymnasium, preparing their bodies for a rigorous life.

Another feature of the ideal state was the communistic way of life which Plato would impose upon the ruling class. Their life was to be communal, even to the extent of not having private families at all. The idea behind banishing private property and families from the rulers was, obviously, to safeguard their integrity. The public official who has property and family interests is not likely to devote his sole attention to the welfare of the state. In America we have seen, all too often, the unhappy situation of judges reaching their decisions because of financial rather than judicial considerations. Plato sought to minimize the possibility of men ruling more for personal aggrandizement than for the common weal. This ideal of a self-abnegating, intelligent, and well-educated ruling class, devoted only to the state they rule, is a very appealing one when compared with the fact of stupid and greedy political ineptitude, which is too often the lot of more democratic techniques.

Since, however, our purpose is not to discuss Plato's ideal state for its own sake, let us turn to see what ethical consideration Plato has attempted to demonstrate by reference to the Republic.

We have seen that the state consists of three classes of people, and that it will be ideal only when each class subordinates itself to the welfare of the whole. There are certain virtues which are peculiarly applicable to each of these several classes when they are performing in ideal fashion. If those whose duty it is to produce economic goods do their job well and do not aspire to rule or to do things for which they are not fitted, they may be described as having the virtue of *temperance*. The warriors who do their job well are best described as having the virtue of *courage*, for the warrior's job involves danger and the good warrior is he who faces danger courageously. The virtue which is most applicable to the ruler who is doing his job well is, naturally enough, *wisdom*, for to rule well can mean nothing else than to rule wisely. These three virtues—temperance, courage, and wisdom—are all to be found in the ideal or perfect state. Any state which had these three would automatically have a fourth, or all-inclusive, virtue, which is *justice*. Here, then, Plato has discovered the meaning of justice, at least so far as it applies to the state. A state is just when its several parts are all subordinated to the jurisdiction of reason which comes from the philosopher-kings who rule. Another way of putting it is to say that a state is just if each of its divisions can be described in terms of the cardinal virtues of temperance, courage, and wisdom. But how does this apply to the individual?

Plato believed that a correct analysis of the individual soul would disclose three parts, or faculties, which correspond to the three classes of society. The first of these faculties is *appetite*, which is a form of assenting to something, drawing something to oneself, or reaching out toward something. It has to do with bodily wants, or the desire for wealth as the means of satisfying those wants. To the second faculty Plato gives the name *spirit*. It represents the fighting element in a man; the sort of thing which makes him indignant in the face of unfairness. Perhaps you can understand best what he meant by this element if you will think how the word spirit is used when people talk about a "spirited" horse. A third faculty

of the human soul is the rational principle in man, or *reason*. It is that which enables a man to understand things in their true light. You can readily see how these three aspects of human nature are comparable to the divisions of society: the appetite corresponding to the producing class; the spirit to the warrior class; and reason to the ruling class. Consequently, the virtues which applied to these divisions of society apply also to the individual.

Temperance is the control of the appetites by the reason. The glutton, or the drunkard, is an unjust man simply because he has let his appetites run away with him. Courage is a virtue which attends the proper or rational use of the spirited faculty. The fellow who takes unnecessary risks is not a courageous one, he is merely foolhardy, for courage implies the control of reason quite as much as temperance does. Wisdom results from the correct functioning of the rational element in man. Once more, justice turns out to be simply the inclusive virtue, the virtue of the harmonious life which results from reason's being always in control. As Plato himself has put it: ". . . the just man does not permit the several elements within him to interfere with one another, or any of them to do the work of others—he sets in order his own inner life, and is his own master and his own law, and at peace with himself . . ."

This, then, is our picture of what justice really is, and of how the good and wise man will conduct his life. A just life is one lived in accordance with the principles of reason, wherein the appetites and passions are subordinated to the interests of the whole man. For Plato, the good man is a well-integrated individual. Today, when more and more people are consulting psychoanalysts in an attempt to become integrated, instead of divided, personalities, Plato's picture of the just and well-adjusted man seems like a modern psychological ideal, as well as a philosophic one. Let us look at another question which Plato put to himself. Granted that we know what justice is, is it better to be just or unjust? Who is the happier man, the just or the unjust one?

To these questions Plato unhesitatingly answers that the just man is happier than the unjust one, and for two main reasons. The first is simply a sound psychological observation. A nature in which the various parts are at war with each other is constantly

tormented by conflict and frustration. The very fact that people *go* to analysts to have their conflicts reduced indicates that they are hardly happy with the state of their souls. Even if the unjust man could grow tough-minded enough not to worry about the state of his soul, and if his unjust acts should go undetected, Plato would still insist that the disintegrated soul was absolute evil for him. He would be like a man who had some undetected disease of the body, slowly sapping his vitality. Until he found the disease, he could not even begin to effect a cure. Hidden injustice can destroy the soul just as surely as hidden disease can destroy the body. But there is a further reason that the life of the just is better and happier than the life of the unjust, and it springs from Plato's notions of metaphysics.

You will recall that, for Plato, the very essence of reality was to be found in the eternal Form of the Good, which was the source of all true being. Very well, then, you will see that the good man simply shares more fully in the nature of reality than does the evil one. Since it is man's nature to share in the reality of the Good, he who falls short of this never attains to real being. His life is spent in the vague world of semi-reality. Even if, through lack of knowledge, the unjust man should never come to understand this himself, wiser natures can see how vain, shallow, and unsatisfactory a life injustice involves. Perhaps you can see what Plato means by all this if you compare his idea here with what you have probably experienced in a different realm yourself. The moron, whose taste for poetry never gets beyond the jingle stage, probably thinks he is getting genuine satisfaction from his daily reading of newspaper poetry; but the person whose tastes have been a bit more cultivated cannot help but feel the horrible superficiality of it all. Plato generalizes situations like this. The only one qualified to judge about the reality of things is he whose knowledge is great enough to encompass the widest variety. Intelligent men, Plato would say, testify to the fact that the life of reason is superior to a life of the senses. If some sensualist begs to disagree with this sentiment, let him hold his tongue; for whereas the sensualist knows only the sensual type of life, being incapable of reason, the reasonable man knows both sorts, for everybody has sensation, and consequently he

alone is in position to make a judgment about the merits of each type of existence.

So much for what Plato has to say about justice and its intrinsic superiority to injustice. He has pointed out a way of life which has been an inspiration to many. The psychological validity of what he has to say can be attested both by those who have tried to follow his precepts, and by those who live under the tyranny of some all-consuming appetite or passion. These latter might readily admit that had they *known* enough, they would have curbed their appetites before the nobler part of them became enslaved to their baser elements. But Plato has meant to write more than human psychology. He stands as one of the most important guardians of the theory that values have a real existence quite apart from the accident of our evaluating them. Good and bad are not relative to the casual judgment of fickle times and periods; but the good is a reality in the nature of things, to be sought for as truth is sought for. It must be searched for and grasped by the mind, and does not have its roots in sentient experience, as some other philosophers seem to suppose. Plato attempts, once and for all, to lay the ghost of relativity in ethics. Goodness does not depend upon the way you or I choose to think about it; but if we would be happy men we would better choose to think about it as it *really* is. That this is not an easy task, Plato would agree. That it is the most important task in life, he would insist.

Anyone who understands the spirit of what Plato was writing about in the *Republic*, will understand the prayer which he attributes to Socrates in another dialogue, the *Phaedrus*.

> Beloved Pan, and all ye gods who haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward soul; and may the outward and inward man be at one. May I reckon the wise to be the wealthy; and may I have such a quantity of gold as none but the temperate can carry. Anything more? That prayer, I think, is enough for me.

## The Ethics of Aristotle

With Aristotle, as with Plato, any discussion of the "good life" starts necessarily with the assumption that man is a social, as well

as a rational, animal. It would hardly be an exaggeration to say that, for Plato, the state was of such preeminent importance that man existed for it, and not it for man. The good for each individual lay largely in finding his proper place within the superstructure of the state. Personal deprivation, such as Plato spoke of imposing upon the ruling class, was to be accepted because it was necessary to the welfare of the state as a whole, and on this depended the welfare of the individual. Aristotle, too, imputes great importance to the city-state. In studying his metaphysics we discovered that the real measure of things was determined by their ideal outcome, the fulfillment of their entelechy. The oak represented the real essence of even the acorn. In like fashion, the state might be thought of as the end for which even the family unit originated. Even if the family came first in time, just as the acorn came before the oak, yet it might be merely the material means for realizing the higher social form of the state. This concern for the state, which was common to Plato and Aristotle, would seem to promise some similarity in their ethical outlooks, and this promise is adequately redeemed. Not only did Aristotle think of ethics as a branch of politics, much as Plato did, but many of his fundamental ideas are thoroughly Platonic in general conception. Whatever is different in their two systems is conditioned almost entirely by their different metaphysical views, and it would be well to remember that their theories of nature probably were more nearly alike than Aristotle thought, or than their differences in language might suggest. Still, there are some differences, and they conspire to give Aristotle's philosophy a flavor of realism and common sense which we sometimes miss in Plato.

This common-sense element is made manifest in Aristotle's express denial that in looking for the highest good of life (the *summum bonum*, as philosophers like to call it), he is looking for anything so abstract and transcendental as Plato's self-existing form of the Good. It is only the good-for-man that concerns him, and this is to be discovered by starting with the facts of personal experience. Any theory of the good life must be based on an examination of human nature, and not on some preconception of what the good ought to be.

To begin his theory, Aristotle agreed with what he took to be the general opinion of men, that *happiness*, or well-being, is the goal of life. But what is happiness? And how is it to be achieved? To these questions he finds varying answers among the previous philosophers and so his problem turns out, like Plato's, to be that of putting specific content into an honorific but vague and empty generalization. Just as Plato tried to fill up the empty word, justice, with specific content, so Aristotle turns to finding out the meaning of, and means to, happiness. Since it is man's happiness that he is concerned with, his first task is to find out the true meaning of man.

Applying his metaphysical principle, that the real nature of a thing is determined by its entelechy, or the ideal fulfillment of its character, Aristotle finds that man is ideally a *rational* animal. Consequently, his greatest well-being, or happiness, must lie in developing the rational element which is his distinguishing characteristic. Of course, man has a vegetative side to his nature, he takes nourishment and reproduces his kind—even as cabbages do; he has an animal side to his nature, he feels things and has sensations—even as rabbits do; but his distinguishing feature is the rational element in his make-up. In this, he is unique among the forms of life, and in the ideal fulfillment of this capacity must lie his highest good.

According to the doctrine just described, the highest good for man must be sought in the exercise of his reasoning faculty. He will be called a good man if this faculty is employed in helping him to realize his highest nature. But what is the function of reason? Aristotle finds that it can be thought of in two ways. First, as an instrument for regulating the feelings and desires, which are a part of man's general nature. Second, as an end in itself, to be cultivated for its own sake. When reason is used in its instrumental capacity it leads to the development of *moral virtue*,[2] and when it is used as a thing worthy of cultivation for its own sake, it issues

[2] For Aristotle, virtue meant merely "excellence of functioning." The later Christian connotation of goodness through "self-denial," or something of that sort, is absent.

in a typically *intellectual virtue*. Let us consider these two types of virtue in turn.

Some philosophers (notably the Cynics, whom we shall discuss briefly in a later section) taught that the life of sensation was entirely evil, and that all emotions ought to be suppressed. Even Plato depreciated the importance of the irrational side of man. Aristotle's common-sense attitude prevents him from sharing any such opinions. For him, desire and feeling are still a part of man, even if not his highest part, and they are to be used rather than suppressed. Natural impulses are neither good nor bad in themselves, but become good or bad in so far as they are controlled or uncontrolled by reason in its attempt to help man realize his highest possibilities. Proper control of these natural impulses issues in moral virtues, which Aristotle describes as representing a mean between excessive and deficient expressions of the impulse. This doctrine of the golden mean is merely Aristotle's version of the old Greek notion that extremes are dangerous. We met it first in Homer. Let us see what Aristotle intends by it.

The first thing to notice is, as we have observed, that the passions and impulses are not in themselves vices, but are rather the raw material out of which either vice or virtue may develop. Whether they be vicious or virtuous depends upon whether they function in excess and disproportion, or in measure and harmony.

> In such matters as we are considering, deficiency and excess are fatal. It is so as we observe in regard to health and strength. . . . Excess or deficiency of gymnastic exercise is fatal to strength. Similarly, an excess or deficiency of meat and drink is fatal to health, whereas a suitable amount produces, augments, and sustains it. It is the same then with temperance, courage, and the other virtues. A person who avoids and is afraid of everything, and faces nothing, becomes a coward; a person who is not afraid of anything, but is ready to face everything, becomes foolhardy.[3]

In like manner, Aristotle applies his doctrine of the golden mean to many other moral qualities. Following is a partial list of virtues which can be represented as the mean between extremes.

[3] *Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics*, Welldon trans. (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1927), pp. 36, 38.

| *Defect* | *Mean* | *Excess* |
|---|---|---|
| cowardice | courage | rashness |
| insensibility | temperance | intemperance |
| illiberality | liberality | prodigality |
| humble-mindedness | high-mindedness | vaingloriousness |
| want of ambition | right ambition | over-ambition |
| boorishness | wittiness | buffoonery |
| shamelessness | modesty | bashfulness |

In the instances listed above, as with all the moral virtues, the golden mean is a mid-point dictated by reason and is not a mere arithmetical mean. Thus, a wrestler might find that a one-pound steak is neither too much nor too little to sustain his strength, whereas the same amount of steak might be far too much for another person. Aristotle's common sense tells him all too well that this is no mathematical formula which can guarantee the achievement of virtue by some simple application. Making the right choice between extremes is an art, achieved, like all arts, only after careful practice and earnest study. It involves the building up of right habits, and this is work for a lifetime.

No doubt you have already sensed a difficulty with this doctrine of the golden mean. If it differs for each individual, who is to be the judge of whether or not it is actually achieved in any given case? The most vicious man imaginable may insist that he is acting on this principle in accord with his own individual needs! In answer to this possible type of objection, Aristotle stops even trying to provide a rigorous and logical answer. The philosopher becomes the epitome of common sense. He bluntly begs the question, i.e., assumes the thing to be proved, as he tells us that a good act is the sort of thing that a good man would do. And who is the good man? Obviously, he is the one who does good things! This kind of circular argument does not seem to get us very far in a strictly intellectual sense, but it certainly accords with the ordinary common-sense discussion. There are certain men who, by common report, are considered outstandingly good men. Very well, let them be the pattern in your quest for the good life. Through practice you may gain the necessary moral insight to achieve even greater virtue than your teachers. Meantime, don't despise such

a roundabout technique in moral matters, unless you are prepared to despise it elsewhere, for the same procedure is followed in many departments of life. The young artist studies with the master long before he knows wholly why the master is a great artist. In the course of trying to become like him, he not only comes to appreciate the master's skill, but manages even to acquire it.

Development of the moral virtues is obligatory for all who would lead a good life, for it is a way, or technique, of realizing life's highest possibilities. The college track man who aspires to be an Olympic champion must augment his native ability with the best of training, if he is to succeed. In this, he is no different from all other people, for they too must train themselves, through the careful development of right habits, to realize their fullest potentialities. The real failure in life is the fellow who "might have been." The only way to avoid becoming a "might have been" is to start training now to become a "would like to be," and in order to avoid going on a wild goose chase after what you would like to be, it would be well to find out as nearly as possible what your *real* potentialities are. The Socratic advice to "know thyself," is indispensable to a successful employment of Aristotle's system.[4]

So much for a discussion of Aristotle's theory of moral virtues and their achievement through the principle of the golden mean. Let us turn now to the development of the intellectual virtue. You will recall that the faculty of reason can be considered in two different ways. In so far as reason is instrumental in controlling the natural impulses in man, it leads to the development of moral virtues. But Aristotle believes that the reason is of importance in its own right. If the thing that distinguishes man from the other animals is reason, it follows that the full development of this faculty for its own sake is man's highest possible accomplishment. Virtue represents the excellent functioning of a faculty in man. The highest faculty a man has is that of reason; therefore, the highest of all virtues lies in the perfect development of this faculty.

[4] Aristotle was so impressed with the individual differences among men that he defended the principle of slavery on the ground that some people are "naturally" slaves, and so are destined to become merely the "living property" of other people. For a "natural slave" to aspire to something else is merely an example of the vice of over-ambition.

Hence, the best life of all is reserved for the contemplative sage or philosopher. Indeed, the sage leads a life that is most nearly god-like, for the Unmoved Mover is best characterized as being engaged in unending self-contemplation. If you understood Aristotle's metaphysics you will understand this final principle of his ethics. It is man's highest nature to be rational. In fact, Aristotle describes the rational soul as the "form" of the body. Virtue consists in realizing one's highest nature; hence to realize one's fullest use of reason is the highest virtue. Moreover it assures the highest bliss, as we can see if we stop to consider it for a moment.

Even he who practices the moral virtues can be assured of a happy life and one filled with a pleasurable sense of well-being. This is so because pleasure is really a by-product of doing things well, and any life that is functioning smoothly because it is controlled by reason is bound to be a pleasant one. But if as much self-realization as the moral virtues make possible brings pleasure and happiness in its wake, how much more, then, will the development of that highest virtue of the intellect bring? The sage is not only the best of men, he is also the happiest, for he shares the bliss of God, who leads the life of pure reason.

He who finds a good life will find a pleasant one, but the converse of this is not necessarily true. Some things may be pleasant in themselves but may not contribute to a lifetime of happiness, and they must be shunned. Some philosophers whom we shall study presently are satisfied to define the *summum bonum* of life in terms of pleasure, but to Aristotle this seems to be getting the cart before the horse. A properly heated house may issue in a thermometer reading of seventy degrees, but it would surely be a mistake to assume that the thermometer reading is the thing of paramount importance; it is merely the by-product of a more fundamental value. Likewise, pleasure is the by-product of a well-organized life and must not be considered as itself the primary value.

Except that Aristotle employs the idea of perfect functioning of the organism as his criterion of the good life, whereas Plato inclines toward the more static description of order, their two ethical systems have an amazingly large number of values in common.

Each emphasizes the life of reason; each finds man to be a social animal, and each finds pleasure to be a subordinate value, although they agree that the good life is the happiest one. Aristotle makes a somewhat larger place for individual differences than Plato did, and so seems in some respects less ascetic in his ethical demands. Some of the things which Plato might consider as unworthy, because they represent a lesser realm of being than the good itself, Aristotle gratefully accepts as material means to the good life. Perhaps he had Plato in mind (although it is more likely he had the Cynics) when he said: "Those who say that the victim on the rack or the man who falls into great misfortunes is happy if he is good, are, whether they mean to or not, talking nonsense." Aristotle likewise ridicules those extremists who say that money, or goods, or any other material means to life are bad. In themselves they are neither good nor bad, but to the good man they are the instruments which can help him realize his fullest possibilities in life. To the fool, they may well be stumbling blocks, but the fault here lies within the fool and not in the things he stumbles over.

Since we have said much about the good man and how, for Aristotle, he becomes the very measure of the good life, let us close our section on Aristotle's ethics with a pen portrait of such a gentleman, drawn by the philosopher himself.

He does not run into danger for trifling reasons, and is not a lover of danger, because there are few things he values; but he will face danger in a great cause, and when so doing will be ready to sacrifice his life, since he holds that life is not worth having at every price. He is fond of conferring benefits, but ashamed to receive them, because the former is a mark of superiority and the latter of inferiority. . . . He will not compete for the common objects of ambition, or go where other people take the first place. . . . He must be open both in love and in hate, since concealment shows timidity; and care more for the truth than for what people will think; and speak and act openly, since as he despises other men he is outspoken and frank. . . . He does not bear a grudge, for it is not a mark of greatness of soul to recall things against people, especially the wrongs they have done you, but rather to overlook them. He is no gossip . . . as he neither wants to receive compliments nor to hear other people run down . . . and so he is not given to speaking evil himself, even of his enemies, except when he deliberately intends to

give offence. In troubles that cannot be avoided or trifling mishaps he will never cry out or ask for help, since to do so would imply that he took them to heart.[5]

## The Stoic View of Life

We have seen how the philosophic spirit of Socrates leavened the work of his most distinguished pupil, Plato; and how Plato, in turn, transmitted some of that Socratic concern about the good life to his own best pupil, Aristotle. There are two other schools of philosophy which might trace their ancestry back to Socratic teachings, although it is doubtful whether Socrates would have claimed them as his progeny. One of these is Stoicism, which had its roots in the Cynicism of Antisthenes (*c.* 446-366 B.C.), who claimed to be practicing the Socratic doctrine of virtue. The other is Epicureanism, which sprang from the Cyrenaic philosophy of Aristippus (435-350 B.C.). He too had been a student of Socrates and claimed that the pleasure philosophy which he developed was inspired by the life of his teacher. What probably happened was that Socrates' martyrdom made him a symbol of what was best in philosophy, and succeeding schools sought the prestige of his name, in much the same way that even rival political parties in America claim to be in the "spirit of Abraham Lincoln." In a succeeding section we shall discuss the pleasure philosophy of Cyrenaicism and Epicureanism. For the present, let us examine Stoicism and its forerunner, Cynicism.

Antisthenes, the founder of the Cynic[6] school of thought, considered himself a follower of Socrates and, like many "followers," he chose certain aspects of his master's teachings and developed these into an extreme view. Socrates had certainly suggested that pleasure was not the end of life, and that a life of virtue was to be sought above a merely pleasant one. Antisthenes emphasized this aspect of his teaching and exaggerated it to the point where virtue and pleasure became contradictory notions. "I should rather go mad than feel pleasure," he exclaimed. Pleasure not only fails

[5] *Aristotle, The Nicomachean Ethics* tr. by H. Rackham (New York: Putnam, 1926), pp. 221, 223, 225.

[6] *Cynic* means little dog, and was an abusive term frequently applied to Antisthenes and his followers.

when regarded as the *summum bonum* of life, but it is man's most seductive foe. How many men, lured on by its prospect, walk straight to their doom? The wise man, seeing this, avoids pleasure as he would the plague. This is certainly an extreme point of view and hardly one that Socrates would claim to be the inspiration for. Still, there is some justification for the Cynics' claim to be within the Socratic tradition. The master himself had been careless of his attire, independent of luxury, and seemingly indifferent to pleasure and pain. Was this, then, not the very pattern of the good life? Antisthenes and his followers, especially the well-known Diogenes (404-323 B.C.), apparently thought so, and carried the Socratic independence of external goods to the very limit. Diogenes is said to have lived in a tub, and to have begged whatever minimum of food he needed. He seemed unreasonably proud of his humility, and was as likely to abuse as to thank a patron. Although he was a slave, he felt superior to his master, because his master was tied down by things and responsibilities, whereas Diogenes was free from such servitude. To sum up this whole point of view as briefly as possible, the Cynics taught that complete independence of external goods, of public opinion, and of social responsibility constituted the wise man's way of life. Virtue, in this ascetic ideal, meant mastery of desire, and the good man sought only virtue. If others found some of their acts shocking, the Cynics suggested that it was merely because they were fettered by custom and fear of public opinion, neither of which was of any concern to the good man. Before turning to see how Stoicism toned down the most extreme aspects of Cynicism and built a very influential philosophy with it as a foundation, let us see how strikingly different the individualism expressed in this point of view is from the previous philosophies we have studied.

For Plato and Aristotle, the good life involved definite social considerations. The good man was a citizen of the city-state first and an individual afterward. A conception of the ideal state, based more or less on the actual ones with which they were acquainted, was the constant background for the ethical philosophy of both philosophers. Moreover, both had a rather aristocratic outlook on life, as evidenced by Plato's class divisions and by Aristotle's philosophical

defense of slavery. Both seemed to assume that some form of the city-state would survive and that the life of the good man and the life of the state would continue to be interwoven indefinitely. History, however, through the conquests of Alexander and the subsequent change in the status of the city-state, decreed otherwise. By the time Stoicism and Epicureanism had been developed, men's ideals had to find a new home. As the political horizon changed, the philosophical outlook changed with it. If one could no longer find his highest realization in being a citizen, if his first allegiance was no longer to the city-state, where should it be? There were only two possible answers to this question. First, the soul could look within and find an object for its allegiance within the self. This is the way of individualism which turns in upon itself to find the security which it can no longer find in the external world. It is the way which was developed into a consistent philosophy by Epicurus and his followers. We shall examine it shortly. In the second place, if the local state was no longer an object worthy of complete allegiance, perhaps some larger social unit could take its place. But what was this larger object of allegiance to be? The Stoics found their answer in a doctrine of universal brotherhood which implied that men were really citizens of the whole world rather than Athenians or Spartans, and so on. The seed of this doctrine is to be found in the Cynic philosophy, for Diogenes used to boast that he was a "citizen of the world." With him, no doubt, this was chiefly a way of avoiding the responsibility of being a citizen anywhere else, but the Stoics developed this idea into a consistent philosophy which was destined to be influential not only in Greece, but especially in later Rome. Let us turn now to the philosophical system which bears their name.

Stoicism has been, from its very beginning, essentially a cosmopolitan philosophy. It is not specifically Greek, although its founder and early leaders lived in Athens. It was adopted later on by the Romans and was popularized and modified by them. Seneca, the poet, Epictetus, the slave, and Marcus Aurelius, the emperor, became its chief Roman interpreters, and it gained many adherents. The very fact that its three great Roman spokesmen had such different social stations in life indicates its universal appeal, and,

as we shall see when we come to study the philosophies and religions of the Romans, the doctrine of "world citizenship" fitted admirably into the needs of an expanding Roman empire. But let us return to its beginnings in Athens.

Zeno, the founder of the school, was born in Cyprus about 340 B.C., and probably had at least one Semitic parent. On coming to Athens, he fell under the influence of the Cynics and was much impressed with their rigorous devotion to virtue. Soon, however, he grew weary of their excesses and established his own school in the *Stoa Poikile* (Painted Porch)—a circumstance which led people to call him and his followers Stoics. Apart from Zeno himself, the most influential of the Athenian Stoics were probably Cleanthes and Chrysippus. We shall not attempt to distinguish the contributions of those different members of the school, nor shall we even separate the Greek from the Roman brand of the philosophy. Instead, we want merely to consider a few outstanding doctrines of the completely developed system. We will consider first the metaphysical foundations.

According to the views developed by the earliest Stoics, nature was thought to be a material reality, but not in the sense that Democritus had talked about it. Whereas he had thought of nature as a blind and irrational material, the Stoics believed it to be both rational and purposive. God is identified as the rational element within nature, the *logos* which guarantees nature's rational and teleological character. Since God is identified with nature itself, this philosophy might be designated properly as pantheism. To put it in another way, the universe is a corporeal thing which can be thought of in two ways. In its passive aspect it is sheer inert matter, but in its active aspect it is reason, the *logos*, or God. While these two things can be thought of separately, they are still an indivisible unit, and God and nature are one.

Man is a creature not only in the world, but of it. Each human individual has within his nature a spark of the divine rationality. He is literally an offshoot of the *logos* and so is equipped to understand the world he lives in. This gift of rationality is the highest gift of man, and in its development lies his highest good. This fact provides the beginning of the Stoic ethical theory.

If the universe is a well-ordered, harmonious, and purposive thing, the laws whereby it operates are themselves good and reasonable. Virtue for man, then, must lie in identifying himself with the universal law. The reason in man enables him to understand the reasonable aspect of things. Virtue resides in living in accordance with nature, and nature's ways are disclosed to reason. The good man subordinates his will to the will of the world, and indeed is a free man only in so far as he does so. Those who demand the impossible are children crying for the moon. They are stupid on two grounds: first, because they are trying to avoid the law of necessity; and second, because they do not see that what is impossible would not be good for them in any case. If it were good, a purposive universe would have arranged to make it possible.

This doctrine that virtue resides in living according to nature, which is exclusively the life of reason, has several important consequences. In the first place, since the rational soul in each of us makes us all sons of God, it implies a brotherhood of man. This leads to the doctrine of world citizenship which we mentioned earlier. In the second place, if the rational life is the good one, what place is found in the scheme of things for the life of sensation and emotion? In regard to this the Stoics are more drastic than any of the philosophers we have met. Whereas Plato and Aristotle sought to control the passions, the Stoic is called upon to suppress them. Even impulses which in themselves may be good, like the impulse of sympathy, must be curbed lest they become too violent and give rise to false judgments about things. It is not enough to be moderate or temperate. The truly wise man will live without passions entirely and will develop a completely apathetic attitude toward life. To pity some poor wretch bowed down with trouble might be the first step toward sharing his emotional attitude in regard to it. Consequently, pity had better be left for weaklings, while the Stoic wise man hardens himself to all such emotions.

Another Stoic teaching which reflects a Cynic origin has to do with man's relationship to the world of things and the favors of fortune. All things can be divided into three groups: those which are good, those which are evil, and those which are indifferent. The good and evil things are entirely within the control of man,

while the indifferent things are external and not within his control and become good or evil only in so far as they affect his life in some specific way. Let us illustrate this idea with an example.

Suppose you fall and break a leg. The external fact is a broken bone, which *in itself* is neither good nor bad, but strictly indifferent. You can find a dozen broken bones in any butcher shop and can discover for yourself that *in themselves* they are matters of indifference. What is not a matter of indifference about your leg is the way you let it affect you. Good and evil reside solely in your attitude toward what in itself is an indifferent matter. Be crushed or downcast about the whole business and evil has appeared. How? As a defect in your character. In short, the only evil is vice. Triumph over the experience and good has appeared. How? As a triumph of your reason over your emotions. In short, the only good is virtue. All that is good or evil, being simply virtue or vice, is within the control of man. All else is neither good nor evil, but simply indifferent. Nothing is really disastrous to a good man, because he will let nothing hurt him. Even pain is no evil unless we choose to think of it as such. This doctrine must not be confused with the much less defensible teaching of Christian Science. There is no hint in Stoicism of the notion that disease and pain are *unreal* if we choose to think them so. Stoicism insists merely that they are not in themselves *evil*. Since we have fallen into a discussion of the nature of evil, this might be a suitable time to consider the religious aspects of Stoicism a little further.

We have already pointed out how God is conceived of in pantheistic terms, and that he is thoroughly rational. We have indicated that the rational element in man is akin to the nature of God, and that the conception of a universal brotherhood in man is based upon the idea of the fatherhood of God. All of this sounds much like later Christianity and there can be no doubt that to the true Stoic his way of life was as much a religion as it was a philosophy. Cleanthes' hymn to Zeus will indicate something of this religious spirit.

> O God most glorious, called by many a name,
> Nature's great King, through endless years the same;
> Omnipotence, who by thy just decree

Controllest all, hail, Zeus, for unto thee
Behooves thy creatures in all lands to call.
We are thy children, we alone, of all
On earth's broad ways that wander to and fro,
Bearing thine image wheresoe'er we go.
For thou by knowledge, art made strong to reign
O'er all, and all things rulest righteously.
So by thee honored, we will honor thee,
Praising thy works continually with songs,
As mortals should; nor higher meed belongs
E'en to the gods, than justly to adore
The universal law for evermore.[7]

Here is a perfect blending of the ethical and the religious impulses, such as characterized the Old Testament prophets. Compare the closing lines of the hymn we have just quoted with Micah's famous words: "What doth the Lord require of thee but to do justly, and to love mercy, and to walk humbly with thy God?"

The other aspect of Stoic religion which we ought to mention is its treatment of the problem of evil, a problem which we met earlier among the Hebrews. We have already seen that the Stoics deny any reality to objective evil, for they have declared the world to be genuinely purposive and good. Why then is there even the appearance of evil? Here too we have found a partial answer. Things seem evil only to the man who has not developed a sufficiently Stoic character. To the truly virtuous man evil does not even appear to exist. If those poor creatures who seem plagued with the fact of evil would only see things in a proper perspective, it would disappear for them too, for what seems evil to the limited vision may, in the whole harmony of things, be good. The child must fancy every bit of punishment to be an evil, but could he reckon it in terms of the good it is intended to produce, he might revise his opinion.

Since Stoicism is most popularly known in terms of its doctrine about the indifference of external things, perhaps we might end this discussion of its ethics with a poem which emphasizes this aspect.

[7] Trans. by Dr. James Adam as quoted by R. D. Hicks, *Stoic and Epicurean* (New York: Chas. Scribners, 1910), pp. 14-16.

It is the *Invictus* of William Ernest Henley, and while it misses the essential teleology of Stoicism, it does have a Stoic flavor.

Out of the night that covers me,
Black as the Pit from pole to pole,
I thank whatever gods may be
For my unconquerable soul.

In the fell clutch of circumstance
I have not winced nor cried aloud.
Under the bludgeonings of chance
My head is bloody but unbowed.

Beyond this place of wrath and tears
Looms but the Horror of the shade,
And yet the menace of the years
Finds, and shall find me unafraid.

It matters not how strait the gate,
How charged with punishment the scroll,
I am the master of my fate:
I am the captain of my soul.

## The Pursuit of Pleasure

The six hundred years between 300 B.C. and 300 A.D. encompass the waning glory of Greece and the waxing grandeur of Rome. During this period Stoicism had as one of its chief philosophic rivals a school of thought which took its name from Epicurus. Just as Zeno, the Stoic, found his immediate inspiration in the radical rationalism of the Cynics and developed their point of view into a consistent and unified philosophy, so Epicurus found a starting point for his philosophy in the sensationalistic pleasure doctrines of an earlier group known as the Cyrenaics, so called because they came from the city of Cyrene. Before considering Epicureanism itself, therefore, let us take a hasty glance at the earlier formulation of a pleasure theory.

Aristippus (*c.* 435-350 B.C.), the founder of the Cyrenaic school, had been a pupil of Socrates and had doubtless heard much talk about virtue, but the thing which seems to have impressed him most about his teacher was Socrates' ability to find pleasure in

almost every circumstance. Instead of following the Cynics' lead in taking simplicity and disregard for public opinion as the Socratic pattern which it might be best to follow, Aristippus sought to find the clue to Socrates' ability to find enjoyment in life. Moreover, it must have occurred to him to ask what the virtues, which were so loudly extolled by the Cynics, were good for. To say simply that virtue makes for the good life and that the good life is a virtuous one seems to be a pretty vicious circle. There must be something of which men will not ask, "What is it good for?"—something final, something that any man will recognize immediately as a good in itself. What should this be but pleasure? Nothing mysterious or esoteric about this! What men really want is to lead a pleasant life, i.e., a life crammed full of particular pleasures.

Socrates was wrong, Aristippus would say, in trying to distinguish between higher and lower kinds of pleasures. There had been rumors to the effect that pleasures of the brain were somehow superior to those of the belly, but Aristippus found the evidence unconvincing. On the contrary, pleasures seemed to him to be qualitatively alike, differing only in a quantitative way, i.e., only in intensity. The more intense the pleasure, the more we prize it. Viewed in this way, the pleasures of the mind are, if anything, less to be sought after than those of the body. Compare the pallid pleasure of a philosophical discussion with the intense and robust satisfaction to be derived from a well-cooked meal! Why waste our time in idle prattle about virtue and logic and aesthetics when there are still some foods to eat, some women to love, some happy aspect of nature to feast our eyes upon. The truly wise man (according to this Cyrenaic position) is the one who exploits his sensuous possibilities rather than his reason, for the most intense pleasures are to be realized in that way.

To the Cyrenaic, the real end, or *summum bonum*, of life was not happiness but a series of particular pleasures. "Particular pleasure is desirable for its own sake, whereas happiness is desirable not for its own sake but for the sake of particular pleasures."[8] This emphasis upon particular pleasures for their own sake is quite

[8] *Diogenes Laertius, Lives of Eminent Philosophers*, tr. by R. D. Hicks (New York: Putnam, 1925; London: William Heinemann), p. 217.

likely to lead to a philosophy of pure immediacy. It is true that Aristippus and some of his followers counted prudence a good thing, not in itself, of course, but because it led to good things; but the natural consequence of emphasizing momentary pleasures is to forget about consequences and indulge each moment to the utmost. This is especially so when philosophy has a tinge of skepticism about it, for what guarantee do we have that we shall even be alive tomorrow? Trying to calculate pleasures in such a way as to promise a lifetime of happiness seemed, to the Cyrenaic, a rather irksome, if not an impossible, piece of business. Find the pleasures first—enough of them is all you mean by happiness!

To give up prudent calculation of the future in a careless surrender to present joys would seem to be a philosophy which many people practice but which few have been willing to defend, although the sentiments of Cyrenaicism have cropped out in the literature of nearly every age—usually as a philosophy of disillusionment. Turn to the Old Testament and note the Cyrenaic flavor of Ecclesiastes:

> Too much wisdom is much grief and he that increaseth knowledge increaseth sorrow. . . . For what hath man of all his labor, and of all the vexation of his heart, wherein he hath labored under the sun? . . . Then I commend mirth, because a man hath no better thing than to eat, and to drink, and to be merry.

Turn to Omar Khayyám and find a similar idea. Although Aristippus said little about metaphysics, his ethical philosophy does contain an implicit assumption about the nature of things. It is that we are creatures of time rather than of eternity. His logic is expressed by Omar, who starts from the assumption that our life is but:

> A moment's halt—a momentary taste
> Of Being from the well amid the waste—
> And lo! the phantom caravan has reached
> The nothing it set out from.

and then argues:

> Some for the glories of this world; and some
> Sigh for the prophet's Paradise to come;
> Ah, take the cash, and let the credit go,
> Nor heed the rumbles of a distant drum.

In the writings just quoted, we catch the flavor of a Cyrenaic economy of life, even if they are not the precise expressions of Aristippus and his immediate followers. The sentiment expressed is frequently referred to as Epicurean, but we shall see presently that the Epicurean point of view is considerably different from this and should not be confused with it. As George Santayana has put it, the true Epicurean would modify the statement from Ecclesiastes to read: " We should eat, drink, and be merry, but moderately and with much art, lest we die miserably, and die today."[9] In short, by the time we advance to the Epicurean school we find that the Socratic principle of calculation in conduct has been pretty largely incorporated into the pleasure philosophy. Before turning to a more extended discussion of the Epicureans themselves, let us summarize and evaluate briefly the major principles of the Cyrenaics.

The good life is a life filled with pleasures, preferably of the bodily sort. Its wise administration consists in making each individual moment of life a pleasant one, never sacrificing a present moment to a later one. Diogenes Laertius tells us that Aristippus "derived pleasure from what was present, and did not toil to procure the enjoyment of something that was not present." The fallacy of this ideal is evident. In our careless surrender to the momentary pleasures we may, and do, make bad bargains with life. The Cyrenaic notion that we should make the most of each moment has a good deal to be said for it, but if we are going to live for an hour it may be wise, at times, to dedicate some of the earlier moments to the service of later ones—thereby gaining an even fuller hour than we could by treating each moment separately. Probably the best that one can find in Cyrenaicism is its solemn warning not to take the passing moments too lightly, and its assurance that pleasure is no sin. The man who has no pleasures now will probably end his miserable existence still looking for pleasure in the tomorrow, which never comes. The worst that can be pointed to in Cyrenaicism is its failure to see that one can live well today only if he has at least one eye on tomorrow, and that some things may be more important than a pleasant sensation in the middle of the stomach. Epi-

[9] George Santayana, *Three Philosophical Poets* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1910), p. 5.

cureanism modifies the philosophy of Aristippus considerably. How considerably, we shall now try to discover.

## Epicureanism

Epicurus (341-270 B.C.), although born on the island of Samos, was of Athenian descent, and in 306 started the famous Epicurean school which was held in his garden in Athens. He was a much venerated teacher and has been immortalized in the lines of a later Roman disciple, Lucretius, as "A god . . . who first found out that plan of life which is now termed wisdom."

The general term applied to those philosophies which make pleasure the goal of life is hedonism. Epicurus' philosophy represents a modified form of the Cyrenaic hedonism, combined with the atomic materialism of Democritus. Let us see in what way he modified the earlier teachings of Aristippus. The following are quotations from Epicurus' own writings:

> When, therefore, we maintain that pleasure is the end (of life), we do not mean the pleasures of profligates and those that consist in sensuality, as is supposed by some who are either ignorant or disagree with us or do not understand, but freedom from pain in the body and from trouble in the mind. For it is not continuous drinkings and revellings, nor the satisfaction of lusts, nor the enjoyment of fish and other luxuries of the wealthy table, which produces a pleasant life, but sober reasoning, searching out the motives for all choice and avoidance, and banishing mere opinions, to which are due the greatest disturbance of the spirit.[10]

> And since pleasure is the first good and natural to us, for this very reason we do not choose every pleasure, but sometimes we pass over many pleasures, when greater discomfort accrues to us as the result of them: and similarly we think many pains better than pleasures, since a greater pleasure comes to us when we have endured pains for a long time. Every pleasure then because of its natural kinship to us is good, yet not every pleasure is to be chosen: even as every pain also is an evil, yet not all are always of a nature to be avoided.[11]

> Of all this the beginning and the greatest good is prudence. Wherefore prudence is a more precious thing even than philosophy: for

[10] *Epicurus, the Extant Remains*, tr. by Cyril Bailey, pp. 89, 91. (By permission of The Clarendon Press, Oxford.)

[11] *Ibid.*, pp. 87, 89.

from prudence are sprung all the other virtues, and it teaches us that it is not possible to live pleasantly without living prudently and honourably and justly. . . . For the virtues are by nature bound up with the pleasant life, and the pleasant life is inseparable from them.[12]

In these several quotations we find that hedonism has undergone several very important changes. The first quotation points to the fact that although Epicureanism is still a "pleasure philosophy" it has given a new and somewhat strange and negative definition of pleasure. Whereas, for Aristippus, pleasure was the positive and definite thing with which we are all acquainted through immediate experience, for Epicurus it is merely "the absence of pain." In trying to avoid the sensuous excesses of Cyrenaicism, Epicureanism seems to lean over backwards. If we are to add to a man's happiness by decreasing his desires, perhaps the greatest boon we could confer upon the human race would be painless extermination. Dead men have no desires! Doubtless a great deal of our unhappiness is the result of thwarted desire, but this insight is badly employed when it leads to the theory that the man with the fewest desires is destined for the best imaginable life. Paradoxical as it may seem, Epicurus, champion of the happy life, is, in his logical extreme, more ascetic than the medieval saint.

Quotations two and three suggest that by his appeal to prudence Epicurus has recovered for philosophy the Socratic principle of calculation which had become lost amid the excesses of Cyrenaicism. This marks progress in so far as it provides the means for judging the relative merit of our acts in terms of their conceivable consequences. Here the ethical method seems indisputably good, but to combine it with so negative a goal as the mere absence of pain seems to be wasting its efficacy on a very desert air. It must be apparent to all that Epicurus was something of a pessimist. If life has nothing to offer except escape from pain it can hardly be thought of as good. Doubtless Epicurus' pessimism is connected with the fact that he was living at a time when social institutions were unstable. After the breakdown of the city-states, Greek life became more introspective and egocentric. When social institutions begin to

[12] *Ibid.*, p. 91.

crumble on all sides the soul turns inward for security. Both Epicureanism and Stoicism, as we have seen, are monuments to a period of unrest and uncertainty.

The relation of Democritus' atomism to the philosophy we are discussing is well shown in Epicurus' attitude toward religion and death. Having defined pleasure as the absence of pain and worry (most painful of all pains), Epicurus felt it incumbent upon him to teach his followers how to avoid the two great fears that seemed to him to haunt the human race. The first of these is man's fear of the gods. Once come to see the truth of atomism, says Epicurus, and this fear is readily banished. Surely there are gods (they were too real a part of the times to be doubted) but even the gods are merely atomic combinations, and certainly not eternal judges of the human race. They are far too busy enjoying life themselves (for are they not said to be wise?) to bother about the affairs of men.

Just as atomism provided logical reasons for dispelling fear of the gods, so also did it contain the material for an argument against the fear of death. If we are temporary atomic structures, death is merely a disassembling of the parts. Since we are we, only while the organic structure is complete, there is nothing to fear from death. "Death, therefore, the most awful of evils, is nothing to us, seeing that when we are, death is not yet, and when death comes, then we are not. It is nothing then either to the living or the dead, for it is not found with the living, and the dead exist no longer." After thus trying to show that death is no evil, Epicurus adds the following: "Foolish, therefore, is the man who says that he fears death, not because it will pain when it comes, but because it pains in prospect. Whatsoever causes no annoyance when it is present causes only a groundless pain by the expectation thereof." To one who is thoroughly enjoying life, Epicurus' logic may not be entirely convincing. Nonexistence may not be an annoyance to the nonexistent, but such considerations hardly increase its charm for the living. We may well agree with the philosopher that one should not worry about death—chiefly because worrying does no good—without admitting his contention that destruction is no evil.

One thing that Epicureanism had in common with the Cyrenaic philosophy which preceded it, is an egocentric attitude toward life.

Much as these systems differ about what pleasure is, they are agreed that it is the individual's pleasure which is the important thing. There is no social urge to seek the "greatest happiness of the greatest number," such as characterizes a more modern version of hedonistic theory. The self-centered character of Epicureanism is attested by the following remark of its founder: "A wise man will not enter political life unless something extraordinary should occur." In other words, while the Epicurean may enjoy the advantages of society, he is not willing to sacrifice his personal pleasure in helping to make a good society possible. The same sentiment has been even more forcefully expressed by that earlier egoist, Aristippus, in a discussion which is reported to have taken place with Socrates. He said:

> I do not dream for a moment of ranking myself in the class of those who wish to rule. In fact, considering how serious a business it is to cater for one's private needs, I look upon it as the work of a fool not to be content with that, but to further saddle oneself with the duty of providing the rest of the community with whatever they may be pleased to want. Why, bless me, states claim to treat their rulers precisely as I treat my domestic slaves. I expect my attendants to furnish me with an abundance of necessaries, but not to lay a finger on one of them themselves. So these states regard it as the duty of a ruler to provide them with all the good things imaginable, but to keep his own hands off them all the while. So, then, for my part, I beg to be enrolled amongst those who wish to spend their days as easily and pleasantly as possible.[13]

Here we have a free confession of the parasitic nature of the philosophy under discussion. Without the benefit of government (and slaves) the true Cyrenaic or Epicurean way of life is impossible—and yet the method of this egoistic hedonism prohibits participation in the thing on which its very existence depends. We have seen, in the paragraph just quoted, that Aristippus depended pretty largely on wealth and luxury for the happy life. In this respect he and Epicurus differed considerably and before leaving this latter's philosophy, it might be interesting to see specifically what he says about this subject.

[13] *Works of Xenophon*, v. 3. *Memorabilia.* H. S. Dakyns, translator (London: Macmillan & Co., Ltd., 1892), Book II, chap. 1, no. 8.

Since, for Epicurus, pleasure means merely the absence of pain, we are not surprised that he expresses himself on wealth in the following fashion:

> We regard independence of outward goods as a great good, not so as in all cases to use little, but so as to be contented with little, if we have not much, being honestly persuaded that they have the sweetest enjoyment of luxury who stand least in need of it, and that whatever is natural is easily procured, and only the vain and worthless hard to win. Plain fare gives as much pleasure as a costly diet, when once the pain of want has been removed; while bread and water confer the highest possible pleasure when they are brought to hungry lips. To habituate one's self, therefore, to simple and inexpensive diet supplies all that is needed for health, and enables a man to meet the necessary requirements of life without shrinking, and it places us in a better condition when we approach at intervals a costly fare, and renders us fearless of fortune.[14]
>
> He who understands the limits of life knows how easy it is to procure enough to remove the pain of want and make the whole of life complete and perfect. Hence he has no longer any need of things which are not to be won save by labour and conflict.[15]

In this respect Epicurus is perhaps more comprehensible in his egoism than is Aristippus. Whereas the latter wanted the fruits of hard labor without the effort it required to attain it, Epicurus was quite willing to diminish desire for more than the bare necessities of life, in order to render hard work as unnecessary as it was undesirable.

The recurring negativism of Epicurus emphasizes the fact that psychologically he and Zeno of the Stoics had a great deal in common, different as their metaphysical presuppositions were. Both Epicureanism and Stoicism seem to be philosophies for those who are afraid of life. The Stoic development of virtue was largely for the sake of training oneself to withstand the buffets of any misfortune; the Epicurean withdrawal from life also suggests that philosophy is a sort of insurance against disaster. If we do not trust the world too far she cannot hurt us through frustration. Stoicism was optimistic enough about the ultimate nature of things, which represented a divine harmony, but treated the facts of experience

[14] Diogenes Laertius, *op. cit.*, Book X. Epicurus, secs. 130-131, pp. 655, 657.
[15] *Ibid.*, sec. 146, p. 671.

with a haughty disdain which smacked a little too much of simple distrust. In expanding the world of man beyond the confines of particular experience, Stoicism reached an infinite world which psychologically was hardly distinguishable from the infinitesimal world of the self, into which Epicurus withdrew because he too distrusted experience. Aristotle would hardly have thought that man's fullest self-realization could be attained by either of these techniques.

## Summary

Among the things which Socrates taught the Greeks was this: that it was the primary business of philosophy to make men wise, in the sense of acquainting them with themselves, that they might lead more intelligent (which for him meant better) lives. Man should devote time to ethics, i.e., the study of morality and conduct, if he would be a true philosopher. Speculation about the nature of the world seemed to him of little account unless it led to increased wisdom in the matter of conducting one's own life. Since it happens that one's view of the nature of things (his metaphysics) does influence his notions about how he ought to live, we have found occasion to refer to some of the metaphysical principles underlying the ethical philosophies which were discussed. Plato's view of things in general, and the state in particular, led him to the conclusion that the *summum bonum* for man was a life ordered by the ruling principle of reason. Man's multicolored nature, with its undeniable sense elements, was perfectly blended when the individual subordinated his instincts to his reason, himself to his state. For Aristotle, the *summum bonum* for man was "self-realization." Since he was quite sure that the self's proper nature was that of a rational and social being, his ethics, in the end, were not greatly unlike Plato's—even if the goal of life was differently defined. Both emphasized the rational and social character of life, and both believed in subordinating pleasure to other ends. Stoicism sought the good life through the cultivation of Spartan virtues, and the exercise of complete rationality. All this involved the attainment of a detached attitude toward the things and occurrences of daily experience. The Epicureans developed a negative pleasure philosophy, which set

out in a direction quite different from the Stoics, but like them, found the good life to consist essentially in self-sufficiency, the attaining of a calm indifference to the favors of fortune. The latter two philosophies were both more individualistic than either Platonism or Aristotelianism.

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# PART FOUR

## *PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION IN THE GRAECO-ROMAN WORLD*

# CHAPTER X

## *THE SITUATION AT THE BEGINNING OF THE CHRISTIAN ERA*

### "Marriage of East and West"

Socrates, Plato, and Aristotle are among the philosophical immortals. From the fourth century B.C. to the first century A.D. there arose no constructive genius of comparable greatness. Therefore, this period has been referred to as one of intellectual decadence. Historically, however, these centuries were highly significant, witnessing as they did the intimate contact of Greek and oriental cultures and the ultimate unification of the world under the political guidance of Rome. If the historian finds little new in the way of ideas he is nevertheless impressed by the extent to which the heritage of Greece mingled with that of the oriental nations and later with Rome. This fusion, although never complete, inevitably wrought profound changes in the various cultures, produced interesting combinations of philosophies and religions, and gradually replaced the older provincialisms with a new cosmopolitanism.

Alexander the Great, whose military conquests of the Orient laid the foundations for a unified world, is usually referred to as a Greek, and his empire as a Greek empire. This notion has some justification. It is true that the Macedonians had a high regard for Greek literature, philosophy, and art, and had consciously become rather thoroughly Hellenized before Alexander's time. Alexander's father, Philip, had brought Aristotle to his court to become his son's tutor. It is true, therefore, that the culture which Alexander was responsible for carrying to his conquered lands was Greek. But it is equally true that the rise of Macedonia to world power brought profound changes to Greece proper. An important feature of Greek culture had been the city-state. The idea of nation or empire was foreign to the Greek mind. There had been temporary alliances of the Greek cities against a common foe, and there was a unity of

language and customs which differentiated the Greeks from the "barbarians," but the typical political unit was the "polis." The polis or city-state was sufficiently small to give all the citizens the feeling that they actively participated in its government. The individual found life's meaning in living for the state—even his religion was local—and his significance depended upon the function which he served. The fall of the independent city-state brought about an important change in Greek culture. Thus the civilization which arose as a consequence of Alexander's exploits is usually called "Hellenistic" in order that it may be distinguished from the earlier "Hellenic" culture of Greece proper.

Alexander's career was brief but almost incredibly brilliant. The eleven years between 334 and his death in 323 B.C. were sufficient for him to become master of Greece, Persia, Babylonia, Syria, and Egypt, and even to penetrate India. Also, he proved to be a new kind of conqueror. A victory over one oriental nation by another had usually meant merely destruction and plunder, but Alexander showed respect for local customs and religions, and consciously tried to bring about the "marriage" of East and West. Egypt, for example, seemed to look upon Alexander as a deliverer rather than as a conqueror, and, indeed, he must have appeared so in contrast with the less sympathetic Persians. It was here that he founded the city of Alexandria which was destined to become an important intellectual and commercial center, fostering the cosmopolitanism so typical of the Hellenistic age. Following the death of Alexander the empire soon fell apart. Over Macedonia, and claiming Greece and Thrace as well, the Antigonids eventually became the rulers and continued in power until the appearance of the Romans in the second century B.C. The Asiatic territory fell to the Macedonian, Seleucus, who, upon gaining control of Syria, founded the city of Antioch and made it the capital of his kingdom. He and his successors did not have an easy time holding this territory and the history of their rule is a succession of wars. Ptolemy, the son of a Macedonian nobleman, was the founder of the ruling dynasty of Egypt.

During these years the Greek cities of the European mainland became less important than Antioch, Alexandria, and other newly

founded cities in the Orient. There was a series of revolutions in Greece which eventually resulted in many of the most talented citizens migrating to the Hellenistic monarchies of the East. The majority of these "foreigners" became influential leaders and were thus instrumental in furthering the process of laying the veneer of Greek culture over the lands of the East. Although there was progression toward cultural mingling and unification, there was neither peace nor political stability in the Hellenistic world until the time of the Roman Empire. The Roman Republic had gained control of Italy by the middle of the third century B.C., and at the time of the birth of Christ had increased its territory until it possessed the whole Mediterranean world. The addition of so many provinces made the republican form of rule impracticable, however, so that political power now rested in the hands of the emperor. After so many years of civil wars and wars between the various Hellenistic monarchies, the peace and stability achieved during the reign of Augustus (27 B.C.-14 A.D.) was heartily appreciated throughout the empire. The rise of Rome to world domination added little to the philosophical and religious mixture. The dominant elements remained primarily Greek and secondarily oriental, while Rome's contribution was chiefly that of providing a measure of political stability and governmental efficiency which the people of the ancient world had never before experienced.

No one distinct philosophical system or religious institution characterized the world culture of this period. It was inevitable that the large cities should become melting-pots, however, and that men with one type of background should mingle with their own heritage other ways of thinking with which they came in contact in the great cosmopolitan centers. Thus the philosophies and religions tended to become eclectic or syncretistic, that is, they were blends of ideas drawn from various philosophies and religions without resulting in a consistent system. Within this syncretism it is possible to discover at least two outstanding needs which philosophy and religion tried to meet, both of which needs arose partly because of the sheer size of the empire as the new political unit. The Greek, as we have pointed out, had been accustomed to a very small political unit which was now swallowed up in a huge empire. The oriental was

accustomed to a larger, but still culturally homogeneous, kingdom. The empire was anything but homogeneous and there was a felt need for something besides the presence of the army to unify the whole. The first need, therefore, which philosophy and religion sought to meet was that of a spiritual and intellectual basis of unity. Men wanted to feel at home in the Roman world.

It was impossible, however, that individuals could really feel the unity of the empire in any sense comparable to the way in which they had formerly felt themselves functional elements within smaller political units. No attempt at unity was entirely successful in conquering the sense of loneliness and insecurity. Thus individualism, economic and religious, became a marked characteristic of the period. Never before in history had the concept of the *individual* become so clear, the individual as a distinct human atom within society, the individual with his own private, inner life. The older religions, with their national gods, could not supply the demands of this new individualism. The city dwellers, in particular, had lost the sense of nationality and thus were less interested in gods whose function it was to protect one nation against another. These cosmopolitan individuals were interested rather in a god with whom they could have communion, who would bring them salvation as individuals, who would guarantee them personal immortality. The second need, then, which philosophy and religion tried to meet was that of spiritual, intellectual, and emotional support for individuals trying to make their way in a world society. So great was this need that even the philosophies of the period took on the characteristics of religion, emphasizing ethical instruction, consolation, and ways of salvation. Nothing was more typical of this age than the increasing importance of religion and religious institutions in men's lives.

## Emperor Worship

The varieties of philosophy and religion which, at the time of the appearance of Christianity, were prominent in meeting the needs of the age were: the imperial religion or emperor worship, Roman Stoicism, religious versions of Platonism, Hellenistic Judaism, a number of mystery religions, and a syncretistic religio-philosophical movement known as Gnosticism. Among these it was

the practice of worshiping the emperor which furnished the emotional, and Stoicism which furnished the intellectual basis for the process making for unity. It is obvious that in a world of many nationalities and traditional national religions, the worship of the emperor as the personification of the entire empire would become a conspicuous force in bringing about a spiritual unity and would serve in the various provinces as a pledge of their loyalty to the whole. Emperor worship was not an artificial ritual consciously created and promoted by the emperors themselves. On the contrary, Augustus tried to curb the tendency to deify him during his own lifetime. This practice was rather a result of certain tendencies already present in the Hellenistic world.

For centuries such nations as Egypt and Babylonia had endowed their political affairs with a religious significance. Kings were always special agents of the gods and enjoyed a peculiar relationship with them. The Egyptian rulers, although in ancient times not objects of worship, were nevertheless regarded as the incarnation of gods, and were thought not to suffer the fate of ordinary mortals at death. The Babylonian kings were not actually deified, but it is certain that they were looked upon as definitely set apart from the rest of mankind and as enjoying a unique relation with the gods. Although the political tradition of Greece had been democratic, the practice of hero worship was widespread, and some of the more distinguished of these heroes were elevated to the rank of divinity. Even the philosopher Empedocles was so honored by his followers. Within this background it is not surprising that in many quarters there should have been a spontaneous according of divine honors to a man like Alexander. During the Hellenistic age the Ptolemies in Egypt and the Seleucids in Syria, being foreign kings, found the practice of worshiping the ruler helpful in maintaining their positions. In both of these monarchies it was not long before even the living kings were deified. Thus the transition to the worship of the Roman emperor was an easy one and had its origin in the Eastern provinces rather than in Rome itself.

When Julius Caesar returned to Rome from his wars in the East, he was given unusual honors and this marked the beginning of

emperor worship there. Upon his death he was deified, given the name *Divus Julius*, and an official cult of Caesar was established in 42 B.C. The reign of Augustus was marked by the termination of the civil wars and the restoration of prosperity. In view of these achievements, it was natural that Augustus should enjoy great popularity throughout the empire. He was looked upon by the masses literally as a higher being than man, as a savior, benefactor, and restorer of peace on earth. The worship of Augustus was an act of genuine appreciation. In the East, even during his lifetime, numerous temples were built in his honor and these temples had their official priests and rituals. Upon the death of Augustus in 14 A.D., the Senate at Rome made him one of the gods of the state. Thus emperor worship became firmly established in the West.

This imperial cult was not intended to be the exclusive religion of the empire. The syncretism of the times made it possible for other cults to flourish so long as there was obedience to the state. Furthermore, the influence of traditional Greek polytheism made it possible for one to be devoted, without contradiction, to more than one god. Again, it was not the emperor as a person who was thought of as a god, but the emperor as the personification of the state. In reality it was the Roman state which was deified and the head of that state was accorded divine honors on condition that he served well. One was not made a god merely because he held the title of emperor, and among those who were thus honored there were some the worship of whom was merely perfunctory, while for others the masses felt a genuine religious awe.

Thus the practice of worshiping the emperor served as an emotional force binding together the people of various cultures. That this practice became so easily established indicates also a general religious characteristic of the time, namely, an almost universal hope of salvation from present ills, a salvation to be brought about with the aid of a messenger, helper, or agent possessing divine power. In the case of the imperial religion this hope took the form of a heaven-sent emperor who would deliver them from such collective evils as war and economic distress and would usher in a golden age of peace and prosperity.

## Roman Stoicism

Of all the philosophies of Greece, Stoicism was the one whose influence became most widely diffused in the Graeco-Roman world. In a very real sense, however, this philosophy, even in its origin, was more Hellenistic than Greek. Zeno, its founder, although he taught in Athens, is said to have come from Phoenicia and was probably of Semitic descent. He lived (350-258 B.C.) after the golden age of Athens and he saw the rise of the Macedonian Empire. In their purpose and teachings both Epicureanism and Stoicism reflected the needs of the Hellenistic world. They were practical philosophies whose purpose was to furnish a plan of life for the individual, a plan which would enable him to become self-sufficient, secure in his own inner peace of mind, despite the changes and the evils in the world about him. Epicureanism, with little modification, entered the Graeco-Roman world and attracted a goodly number of followers. Its influence, however, compared with that of Stoicism, was limited. The message of Epicurus was consoling only to that minority of intellectuals who felt that the world had come to such a pass that all striving was vanity, who felt fearful and oppressed. For them Epicureanism provided a way of escape. The metaphysics of atomic materialism showed that the world, so dreaded by the unenlightened, was a machine, and that consequently the fear of the gods and of future punishment was merely superstition. The good life was one of pleasure to be gained by withdrawing from the outer world and ceasing to worry about changing or influencing it. This teaching, although it met a genuine need, could never become a philosophy for the majority because most men do not wish to run away from life; they feel that they belong to the world and wish to find a satisfactory and purposeful way of living.

Stoicism had the advantage of offering individual consolation and a good deal more. If it had been merely an ethical teaching of self-sufficiency and withdrawal from the world, its influence would probably have been as limited as that of Epicureanism, but there were strains within Stoicism which made it peculiarly adapted to

the needs of a world society so that it became the primary philosophy of the empire.

Stoicism, like Epicureanism, had an individual ethic which taught men to be independent of their environment. One is unhappy only if he allows events in the outer world to make him so. His peace of mind is upset when his reaction to objective facts is of the emotional sort. Weeping and complaining are derived from the emotions and must be avoided. Thus the wise man will forever keep reason in control, will suppress the emotions with uncompromising consistency. Self-sufficiency is achieved by a strengthening of the will, devotion to duty, and an indifference to both pleasures and pains. In this way does a man become captain of his soul. He builds a citadel within himself which nothing can destroy, which stands the bombardments of fortune and misfortune.

This much of the Stoic teaching would seem to be serving the same purpose as Epicureanism, but the individual ethic was supported by a quite different view of nature. The Stoic metaphysics offered two reasons which reinforced the resolution of man not to rebel against the events of the outer world. In the first place, the universe is run according to inexorable law. What happens *must* happen. Therefore, the wise man realizes that to complain is futile and only adds to his misery. In the second place, it is not only futile but immoral to rebel, because the law of nature is providential. Not only are all things determined, they are so determined that ultimately they all work for good. The beneficent universal law, called Providence, God, Logos, or Divine Fire, is itself rational. This divine fire which pervades the universe is of the same stuff as the sparks which light the rational souls of men. Both the Logos and man are rational, and the good man, sensitive to the call of duty to become godlike, interprets this call as the duty to become completely rational and thus to recognize the working of Providence in all that happens.

The universe is a moral order. Human beings are not alien creatures living in a morally indifferent nature. They, unlike the lower animals, are endowed with divinity since in their souls is a spark of that same divine fire which animates the world. Just as all things fit into a unified nature, so all men are parts of a single

society or unified nature of human beings. This is why the Stoic talks of a world city or world state, and says that a man is not merely a citizen of Athens or Sparta but a citizen of the world as well. Above and beyond the local cities there is a world-wide human brotherhood, and this means that equality among men is more fundamental than social and racial distinctions.

This is the part of Stoic philosophy which had important consequences for social and political theory in the Hellenistic and later in the Graeco-Roman world. The notion of equality gave a philosophical basis for minimizing the importance of social classes and race distinctions. The Greek, after the time of Aristotle, was forced by circumstances to abandon his disdain for barbarians and to recognize the positive values in cultures other than his own. Stoicism provided him with an intellectual justification for doing so. Politically, the idea of a world state was particularly well fitted to an age which saw the breakdown of independent cities. Every man belongs to two political units—the local city which his body inhabits, and the world city which is ruled by reason. The first has its laws and customs which are different from those of other cities. The latter is under one divine law, the law of reason, binding together all people as citizens, not by force, but, in so far as men have attained rationality, by willing consent. Since the laws of cities are local and derived from custom, while the law of the Great City is one and derived from reason, it is the latter which should be used as the norm. Behind the variety of local customs there is one set of principles for human relationships and this offers a point of view from which the value of particular customs can be intelligently estimated. Behind the variety of local laws there is one law which forms the basis of settling disputes between regions and for criticizing the justice of particular laws. The influence of this concept on the development of Roman law has been universally recognized.

It should now be clear that Stoicism was a philosophy which met both of the needs of the age which we are discussing. It provided an ethic for the individual and at the same time had a cosmopolitan social and political philosophy. However, the early version of Stoicism had to be revised before it could become generally effective. There were two features of the earlier version which were severely

attacked by rival schools of thought and which were modified before this philosophy had a marked influence in Rome. In the first place, the Stoic description of the ideal wise man made him a completely emotionless, rational being. He had the capacity neither for sorrow nor for joy, neither for hate nor for love. It is certain that no living person has ever completely attained this ideal, and it is even questionable whether such an ideal is desirable. And yet the Stoic maintained that either a man was virtuous and wise or he was evil and foolish. No provision was made for stages of development between these two extremes. In the second place, early Stoicism did not make clear any meaningful relation between the universal law of reason, or the world city, and actual social relationships which men knew in the world of experience. The ideal community of wise men was so ideal that it seemed to have no bearing upon actual communities.

In respect to both of these features important modifications were made by Panaetius (*c.* 180-111 B.C.) and his pupil Posidonius (*c.* 130-50 B.C.), the former being responsible for bringing Stoicism to the Romans. These men were not averse to introducing ideas drawn from Plato and Aristotle, emphasizing, for example, the Aristotelian golden mean and the virtue of temperance. They also helped in gaining acceptance of Stoicism by appealing to the native Roman virtues of courage, self-control, and devotion to duty in daily life. Gradually, the ideal of the austere and emotionless wise man gave way to the ideal of a public-spirited, urbane, humanitarian citizen of the empire. In this way there was a lessening of that gulf between the perfect virtue which none could attain and the virtues actually practiced by the better men in ordinary life. A large number of intellectuals, for whom the traditional religions had lost their meaning, found in Stoicism not only a helpful philosophy but an adequate substitute for religion as well. Panaetius was also instrumental in helping Stoicism abandon the sharp opposition between the ideal community and the everyday social relationships. Although he always had Stoic theory as the background of his thinking, he talked less about it as a philosophical system than about its application to specific cases of conduct and to actual social practices. His ethic was thus made applicable to the real world.

No changes in the development of Stoicism dimmed the clarity of its central ideas—the individual virtues of fortitude, devotion to duty, and inner strength of the soul; the ideal of the equality of all men and a world-wide human brotherhood; the notion that even a world state can have ethical foundations and impose a moral demand of obedience upon all its citizens. And so Stoicism not only formed the basis of a political theory adequate for the Graeco-Roman world in which there was, in fact, one world empire, but also helped to idealize the results of the Roman conquest by showing the possibility of making the empire a partial fulfillment on earth of the ideal world state.

## Religious Platonism

The complex of religions and philosophies of the century preceding the beginning of the Christian era produced many curious combinations. An interesting and important example of the fusion of East and West is found in the work of Philo, a Jew who lived in Alexandria, and who was a contemporary of Jesus. Philo was loyal to the religion of his race and believed thoroughly in the divine origin of the Hebrew Scriptures. But he was also at home in Greek philosophy. He used the Greek language and read widely in Greek literature, particularly the dialogues of Plato. Just as his own spiritual life was nourished both by the Jewish religion and by Platonic philosophy, so his writings not only reflect these same influences but are designed to show that there is no fundamental conflict between the two. This attempt to fuse Greek philosophy and Hebrew revelation was not limited to Philo. He is but the most conspicuous figure in a process which was typical of the intellectual and religious environment in which he lived.

In order to understand Philo it is necessary to know something of the Platonic influence of the first century B.C., and also to review some of the more important features of the Judaism which was familiar to the Jew who lived in Alexandria and other cities of the Graeco-Roman world. First, let us see what happened to the Platonic tradition. Plato, as we know, founded the Academy during his own lifetime and this school had a continuous existence until 529 A.D. This explains the fact of the preservation of Plato's dia-

logues and the fact that the Platonic influence was never completely eclipsed by other philosophies. Stoicism, as we have said, enjoyed a greater vogue and for a time (from 241 to 129 B.C.) the leaders of the Academy concentrated their attention upon criticizing certain features of the Stoic philosophy, especially its theory of knowledge. By the first century B.C., the bitterness of the rivalry between these schools had been replaced by an eclecticism which brought the two together. Not only were Panaetius and Posidonius rendering a Platonic version of Stoicism, but there were also attempts to read Stoicism into Plato. The reappearance of the philosophy of Plato as a preeminent influence did not take place until the third century A.D., when Plotinus, in Rome, became the outstanding leader of the school of Neo-Platonism. We shall discuss that in a later chapter. But there is abundant evidence that even in the first century B.C. a popular Platonism had reached many parts of the empire.

There were two factors which influenced the course of the Platonic tradition. The first was the separation of science and philosophy. When the intellectual center of the ancient world shifted from Athens to Alexandria, the sciences were developed independently of philosophical schools. Plato himself had been devoted to mathematics and cosmology, but his successors in the Academy confined their speculations to technical and often barren work on the theory of knowledge. The second factor was the dominant religious interest of the Hellenistic world. There was in Plato an emphasis on moral idealism and religious aspiration, and it was this emphasis which found its way into the religious syncretism of the times.

We have seen that central in Plato's metaphysics was his theory of Ideas. Although the world of experience presents itself as a constant flux, the eye of reason perceives that more fundamental than change is a world of eternal and changeless Forms or Ideas. Illustrations were most frequently drawn from mathematics where such concepts as equality can be known intellectually although not experienced absolutely by way of sensation; from ethics in which moral goodness is eternally what it is, while in the experienced world there may be instances of morally good acts; from aesthetics in which a piece of sculpture, a sunset, or a person is called beau-

tiful in so far as each of these participates in the absolute Idea of Beauty. Furthermore, this intelligible world of Ideas was given unity by making the Good the greatest Idea of all. Just as all beautiful things are subsumed under the Idea of Beauty, so are all the Ideas subsumed under the Idea of the Good. The Good came about as near as anything to what, for Plato, was ultimate reality, and yet there is no evidence that Plato himself consistently identified the Good with God. This identification was made, however, in later religious versions of Platonism.

Religious Platonism transformed the Idea of the Good into a God who, unlike the Stoic Logos which pervaded the world and thus was completely immanent, was distinctly and wholly other than the world and thus transcended it. One analogy which Plato used in the *Republic* in describing the Good was later employed, in a slightly different fashion, to make clear the relation of God to the world. The Good, he said, serves the same purpose in the intelligible world as the sun does in the sensible world. The sun is the very condition of our seeing anything. We can open our eyes but if all is dark it is impossible to perceive any objects whatever. Only when rays of light are thrown upon these objects can we distinguish them. And it is almost impossible, indeed it is blinding and dazzling, to look upon the sun itself. So in the intelligible world the Idea of the Good is the very condition of our understanding, although it is difficult to climb to that place where we can know the Good itself. This same analogy was used later to describe the nature of God. God is like the sun. The sun remains what it is and is not diminished in any way by giving off heat and light. Furthermore, all we know of the sun is what it does. It is not a part of the earth and yet, by way of its rays, it is the source of life and light and energy on the earth. In like manner, God himself is not intellectually comprehended although the effects of his reality—his power and divine rule—are experienced in the world.

Another analogy suggested by religious Platonism is that of likening God to a mind. The only way in which the mind of one person is known by another is through bodily behavior or through language. The mind itself always eludes the attempt of others to know it directly, but it can express itself through gestures, ac-

tions, and words. Thus the contact between God and the world is through his utterance, his expressed wisdom, his word (logos).

There are three things in this point of view which must be clearly seen if we are to understand the religious Platonism of Philo and of the Christians. The first is the sharp distinction between God and the world. God is spirit and God is good, while the world, in so far as it is material, is evil. The dualism of spirit and matter becomes a dualism of good and evil. In the second place, there is no direct contact between God and the world. Such relation as there is between the two is effected by intermediary powers, which are described as streams of light, or God's ideas, or God's word. Third, God can be known only through mystical intuition. There is some precedent for this in Plato's own writings—in the *Republic*, for example, where he pictures the ascent of the mind from the perception of shadows to perfect knowledge. The knowledge of the Idea of the Good is really of the nature of a mystic vision. These were among the interpretations of Plato which Philo and others elaborated. Let us turn our attention now to Philo's other main spiritual fount.

## Philo and Hellenistic Judaism

We have seen that from the time of the Babylonian exile many Jews had to learn to live away from their homeland and to carry on their traditions in the midst of other peoples. By the first century B.C., there were Jewish colonies in most of the important cities of the Graeco-Roman world, hundreds of thousands of Jews in Alexandria alone. These Jews of the Dispersion were determined to remain loyal to their religion and customs, but it was inevitable that they should feel the influence of their new environment, particularly the Greek element.

Hellenistic Judaism was a complex affair, but we can distinguish three general characteristics which, for our purposes, it is necessary to keep in mind. The first was its exclusiveness. We know how strongly nationalistic was the historic religion of the Jews. Jahweh was Israel's God and Israel was Jahweh's nation. Hellenistic Jews could not consistently share the earlier nationalistic hopes, but they could still think of themselves as a special race of people having a peculiar relationship with their God. The emphasis was

shifted from nation to race, and so in the Hellenistic cities the Jews lived together in the same sections, built tabernacles, carried on the traditional customs and teaching of the Law. This exclusiveness was one of the chief reasons for the anti-Semitism of that day, but was also responsible for the maintenance of the Jews' racial identity. Their strict monotheism prevented them from participating in many public festivals where gods other than Jahweh were shown respect. Even worse, they could not take part in the imperial cult and this, of course, was the cause of their being suspected of political disloyalty. They were strict in their observance of the Sabbath, the regulations concerning diet, and the time-honored rite of circumcision.

It may seem strange, in view of its exclusiveness, that a second characteristic of the Judaism of this period was its extensive and successful missionary effort. This does not mean that there were professional Jewish missionaries who went to Gentile lands in order to make converts. That was not necessary. There were communities of Jews living in cosmopolitan centers all the while, and they merely exerted their influence upon the Gentiles through the local synagogues. That Judaism should become a missionary religion is logically understandable. The development of this religion had reached the point where the God of Israel was definitely regarded as the one God of all mankind. Along with the traditional nationalism or racialism there was also the claim to universality. The children of Israel alone knew the true religion and worshiped the one God, but one day, through Israel as his instrument, Jahweh would be recognized throughout the world. There were indeed many Gentiles who were attracted by the teaching of the synagogues. To some, accustomed as they were to the variety of philosophical systems of the day, Judaism appeared to be one more philosophy possessing an admirable ethic. They probably found difficulty in understanding the strange customs of the Jews, and in an age of religious syncretism they may have been puzzled by the authoritarian character of Judaism in claiming exclusive possession of the truth revealed in a sacred literature. Others were impressed by this very authoritarianism and the version it gave of the coming golden age. They wanted to become members of the

group which served the one true God. Many converts were made, but Judaism, unlike Christianity at a later date, did not become an international church. Conversion meant not only accepting the tenets of a religious faith, it meant also becoming naturalized in the Jewish nation or race. The converts, or proselytes, were circumcised, were baptized in water, and they offered a sacrifice at the Temple. In addition to the proselytes there was another group known as "God-fearers," who were not circumcised and thus never became Jews in the full sense. But they received instruction in the Law, believed in its religious principles, and observed some of the Jewish rites. Many from this class of people turned later to Christianity.

In spite of its exclusiveness and authoritarianism, it is also true, in the third place, that Judaism could not avoid Greek influence. It was not long, for example, before the Alexandrian Jews knew only the Greek language and had to have their Bible translated. Since words have rather subtle connotations, the Jews, reading their Hebrew Scriptures in the Greek language, necessarily imbibed something of the Greek spirit as well. No matter how carefully they observed their Law, they could not avoid becoming partly Greek in a cultural sense. And, indeed, there were many things about the Hellenic intellectual heritage which attracted them. Chief among these was the Platonic notion of an immaterial reality with which the souls of men could mystically commune. Philo was one of these racial Jews who were culturally both Jew and Greek. He wrote extensive commentaries on the Bible in which he tried to show the Greeks that all the values of their philosophical wisdom were already present in the Law and the prophets, and he also tried to show the Jews that Greek ideas were not always in sharp opposition to the Mosaic Law. In other words, he tried to fuse his revealed religion and his Greek philosophy. In order to make this plausible he resorted to the technique of interpreting the Bible as an allegory in which is set forth a great parable of the way of salvation. The use of allegory made it possible to retain the belief in the divine authorship of the Bible and at the same time read into it certain philosophical ideas. The familiar stories of the Old Testament were interpreted as descriptions of the process of mysti-

cal salvation. The call of Abraham to leave Ur of the Chaldees and to set out in search of the Promised Land was explained as the call to leave the world of physical things and sensory experience in order to rise to the spiritual realm of God. In like manner, Jacob's flight from his brother Esau was interpreted to mean that Jacob was turning away from the evils of the flesh in order that he might attain a mystical vision of God. The philosophy of religion which resulted from this fusion of Old Testament religion and Greek philosophy was both interesting and influential.

Philo's discussion of God sometimes suggests the Jahweh of Israel, a personal, living God. At other times Philo seems to have in mind the transcendent Being of religious Platonism; and again he gives the impression of insisting on the Stoic doctrine of a completely immanent God. Such is the way with eclectic philosophies. They try to reconcile irreconcilable ideas. In view of the whole of Philo's thought, however, it seems that the most important of these notions of God was the Platonic one. There can be no doubt that, in opposition to Stoicism, he had a dualistic conception of the universe which can be expressed in such pairs of opposites as God and nature, spirit and body, good and evil. This God transcends the world. The biblical references to God are not meant to be philosophical descriptions of his nature but rather are helpful myths. The real Jahweh is this same transcendent, unchanging, perfect Being that Greek philosophy is searching for. Over against the one unchanging Reality is a world of flux, a world of matter which, since it seems by its very nature to resist the work of divine creation, is evil.

Since the good God so completely transcends the evil world, the only contact between them is through intermediary powers. The word which Philo uses in connection with these powers is the word "logoi" which was taken from the Stoics. The logoi are not only the Stoic creative powers, but are also the angels of the Lord referred to in the Old Testament, and are Philo's equivalent for the Platonic Ideas. Although the language which Philo uses would indicate that the logoi are personal entities and beings distinct from God, it is fairly apparent that they are primarily attributes of God or thoughts in the mind of God. Of these attributes the most im-

portant are God's goodness and power, and together these constitute the head of the hierarchy of all the lesser logoi. Indeed, this combination is referred to as *The Logos*. Although, as we have said, this term is borrowed from the Stoics, there are two ways in which Philo's Logos is different. First, the Logos is not identical with God and does not exhaust the divine nature. It is the chief of the intermediaries between God and the world. Second, the Logos is not material, but spiritual. This doctrine, we shall find, was enormously important in the development of Christian thought.

The dualism of God and the world is reflected in man as a dualism of flesh and spirit. To be in the material world is to be contaminated with evil. Man's soul, derived from God, is held captive in the body and thus the goal of the moral life is to escape from the chains of the flesh. This can be accomplished by meditation and communion with God. Philo believed, of course, that the Jewish Law was a perfect guide to life in the material world, and he also believed with the Stoics that since we must live in the world we should bear our social and political responsibilities dutifully and cheerfully, but that the ultimate good is a mystical experience in which the soul, turning its back on the world of matter, reaches at last a beatific vision of God.

## Mystery Religions

No religious influence was greater at the beginning and in the early years of the Christian era than that of the mystery cults. We have become acquainted with the Orphic cult and the Eleusinian mysteries in our study of Greek religion. Similar to these, and greatly influenced by them in the religious syncretism of the empire, were the mysteries of the East, especially the Phrygian cult of Cybele and Attis, the Egyptian mystery of Isis and Osiris, and the religion of Mithra which was of Persian origin. These mysteries, even in their earliest stages of development, had so many similarities that it seems reasonable to suppose that they all met a common psychological need. The similarities also made it possible, whenever there was contact between two mysteries, to identify the gods of one with those of the other. The Greeks, for example, at a comparatively early date identified the Egyptian Osiris

and Isis with their own Dionysus and Demeter. After the time of Alexander the mysteries showed an amazing ability to adapt themselves to the needs of the time, and there was such interaction and mutual borrowing that by the time of the Christian era they had so closely approximated each other that they became in many respects indistinguishable.

There were several reasons for the growing popularity of the mysteries during this period. In the first place, unlike Hellenistic Judaism, they had become emancipated from national or racial affiliations. A person did not become a member of a mystery cult by being born into it or by becoming a naturalized citizen of a nation. Membership was both voluntary and international. In this way the needs of a cosmopolitan society were met. Second, they reached the masses to a far greater extent than the religious philosophies of Stoicism or Platonism ever could. Their appeal was based not on intellectual concepts but on drama and ritual. In the third place, they offered their votaries assurance of personal salvation and individual immortality, thus appealing to the individualism of the day.

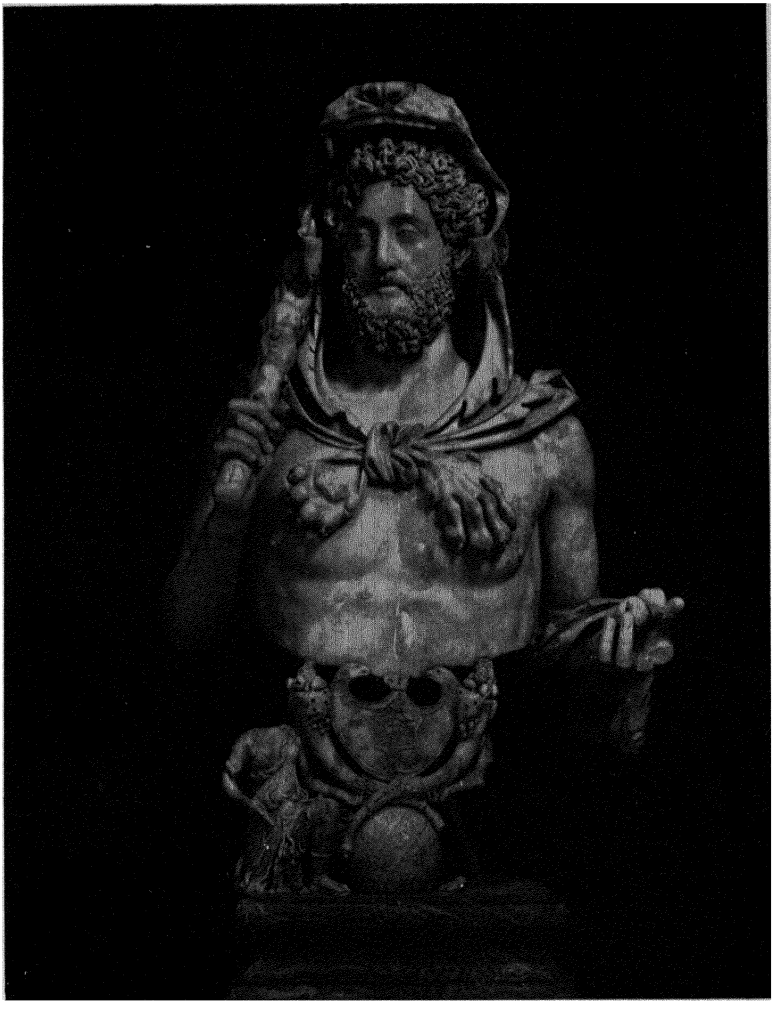
The mysteries possessed certain features not wholly unlike a modern college fraternity. Ordinarily a student is not immediately initiated into a fraternity after he has been accepted by the brothers and has decided to become a member. There may be several months during which he is a "pledge," and he undergoes a training which is designed as a preparation for full membership. Then comes the ceremony of initiation in which he is first sworn to secrecy and then witnesses the revelation of the meaning of the various symbols of the fraternity. So the mystery religions were characterized by a period of preparation and initiation.

If a person wished to avail himself of the advantages of a mystery cult he presented himself to the priests of the religion. It was a matter of personal choice and personal responsibility. The priests admitted him only if he proved himself sincere and capable of becoming fit for membership. He was examined and underwent a period of disciplinary preparation. There were undoubtedly many motives which sent people to the mysteries, not all of which were of a particularly high moral or spiritual nature. Some people were

attracted for the same reasons that men today like to join secret fraternal organizations. Some found an emotional outlet and an opportunity for self-indulgence in the ritualistic orgies. The superstitious looked for magical protection from evil spirits. But the predominant religious motive was the desire to be at one with the divine. It was connected with a feeling of loneliness on the part of individuals living in a world society, and also with a feeling that sins on their part had created huge barriers between them and the deity. During the period of preparation, therefore, the neophyte submitted to certain processes through which his unworthiness and uncleanness were removed and expiation was made for his sins. Such preparation consisted of a variety of things. The practice of confession was fairly common. The priests of the mystery god heard the confessions of the penitent in much the same fashion and for the same purposes as did the priests of later Catholicism. Also there were ceremonial washings and baptism by immersion. These were symbolic both of the process of becoming spiritually cleansed and also of regeneration, that is, the death of the old sinful self and the birth of the new man. Among the disciplines to which one was subjected during his probationary period were such ascetic preparations as long fasts, periods of continence, and bodily mutilations. All of this suggests a point of view which we have mentioned in connection with Philo, namely, the evil nature of the body and the desire to achieve spiritual emancipation.

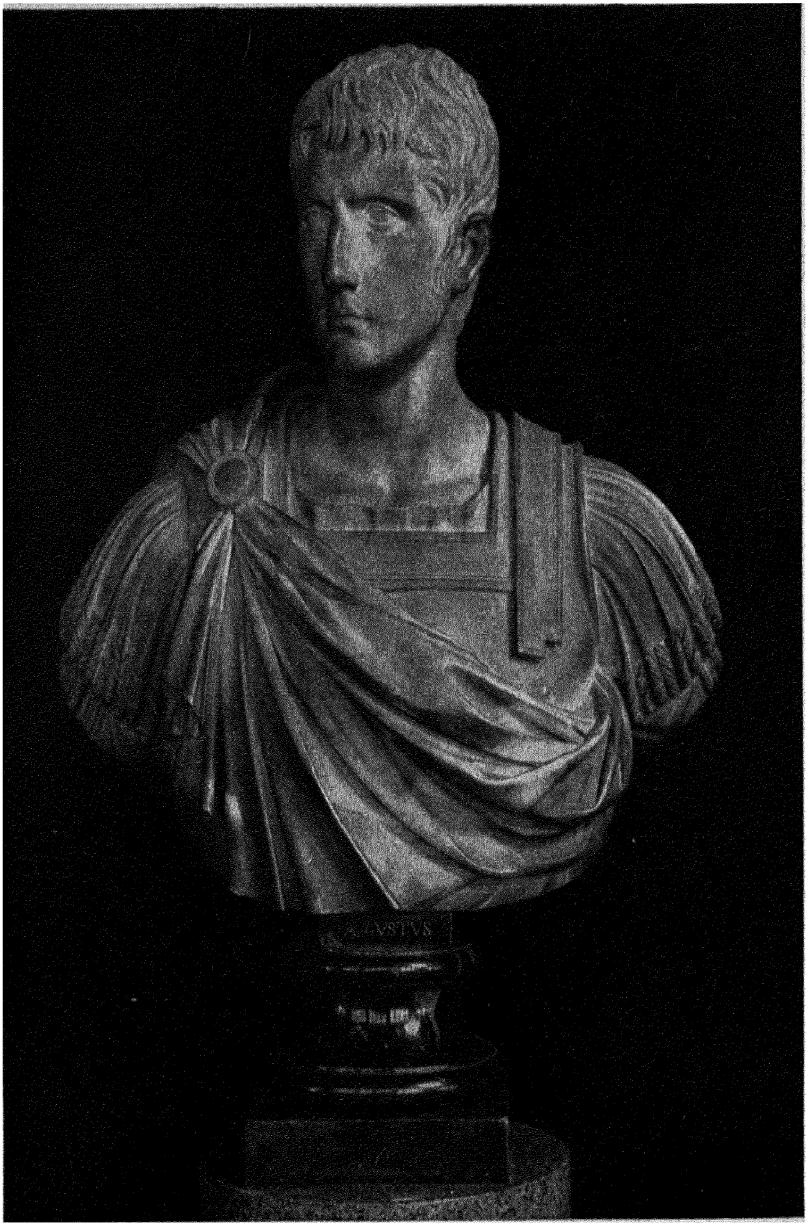
In Mithraism, a mystery which had attained immense popularity by the second century A.D., largely through its appeal to the members of the Roman army, there were definite grades or degrees of spiritual progress of which three preceded actual initiation. At each stage of development the candidate was tested by certain ordeals such as passing through fire, swimming rivers, or jumping off a precipice. These ordeals may have been real at one time, but probably in the later refinements of the religion they were feigned in a way similar to the techniques employed by a modern secret fraternity. In any case, there was meant to be a serious testing of the candidate's courage, fidelity, and sincerity of purpose.

Historians have found it impossible to discover exactly what happened in the actual initiation ceremonies because the vow of



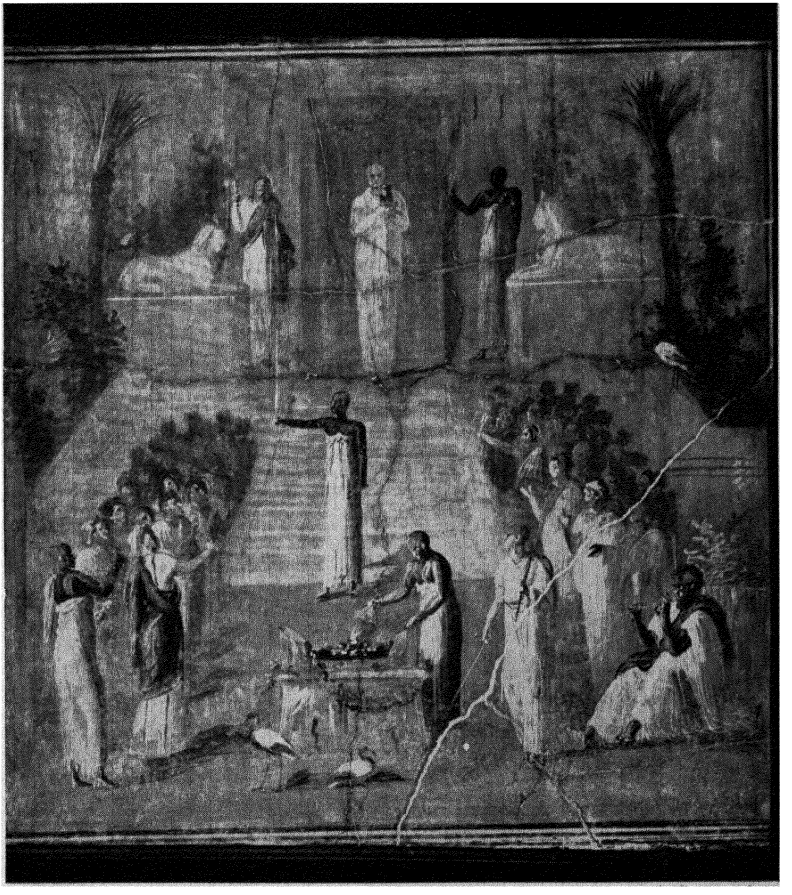
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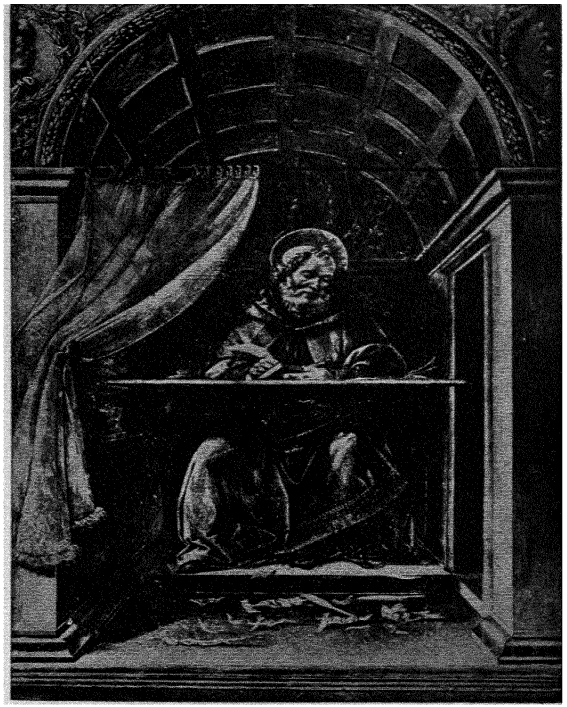
*Anderson photo*

NAPLES—RELIGIOUS CEREMONY



MITHRA SLAYING THE BULL

The bull was the first of all created beings. Mithra captured and killed it and from its body came forth useful herbs and plants; from its blood came the vine; out of its spinal cord sprang wheat and out of its seed came all the species of useful animals. The snake and scorpion represent the powers of darkness and of destruction which try unavailingly to halt the process of creation by consuming the genital parts and drinking the blood. By this act, Mithra becomes the creator of all beneficent beings on earth. (From Huart's *Ancient Persia and Iranian Civilization*, Kegan Paul, Trench, Trubner & Co., Ltd.)



ST. AUGUSTINE

(From West's *St. Augustine*, D. Appleton-Century Company, Inc.)

secrecy was conscientiously kept. A number of researchers, however, have given us some information on this point. It is certain, for example, that there were sacred objects which the candidate was allowed to see for the first time. Among these may have been holy books which not only were looked upon but which were used as the basis for instruction. Theology and religious concepts were not entirely missing, but they had little prominence compared with visible symbols and drama.

One of the more famous of the initiation ceremonies, and one which was employed by at least two cults, Attis and Mithra, was the *Taurobolium.* The person who was to receive the benefits of this rite descended into a large pit over which had been built a perforated platform. On the platform a bull was killed and his blood dripped into the pit below. The person in the pit allowed himself to be covered with the blood, being particularly careful to allow it to touch all parts of his face, and even to take some of the blood in his mouth. The origin of this practice is obscure, but its symbolism by the second century A.D. is fairly apparent. The bull was consecrated and the initiate was thus bathed in divine blood which washed away his past sins. When he emerged from the pit, drenched with sacred blood, he was a new man, he had been born again.

The taurobolium illustrates one of the most important features of the mysteries because it was a vivid symbol of the process of redemption. Initiation meant, above everything else, the death of the former self and birth into the life of the spirit. This perhaps explains the fact that the ceremonies often took place at midnight. Just as midnight is both the death of the former day and the birth of a new one, so the initiate experienced both death and rebirth. His former life, in which he was subject to the domination of fleshy evils, was gone, and he now entered into a life of spiritual emancipation.

Rebirth was accompanied by a feeling on the part of the individual that he had achieved an intimate communion with the deity through whom his transformation had taken place. Frequently there were ecstatic experiences in which there was a loss of the normal functions of personality and a feeling of emotional

exhilaration. Such experiences had all the dangers and all the values of mysticism—the dangers associated with the possibility of inducing a more or less permanent psychopathic condition, and the values of the certainty of contact between the human and the divine.

Salvation meant not only the purification of one's life in this world but assurance of personal immortality as well. Usually there were myths concerning the mystery god to the effect that he had died and had risen from the grave, thus demonstrating his supremacy over death and his ability to confer immortality on those who worshiped him. The stories concerning such gods as Attis and Osiris are instructive on this point. In the Phrygian mystery, Attis was a youth associated with Cybele, the Great Mother. In a state of fury he emasculated himself and died of his wounds beneath a pine tree, violets growing where his blood touched the earth. Then he was raised from the dead by the Great Mother. All of this was dramatized by the members of the mystery religion each year about the middle of March. A pine tree was cut down, decorated with violets, and carried to the temple; the worshipers entered into and mourned for the suffering of Attis, sharing in his tragedy; the mourning was followed by rejoicing over the resurrection of Attis, the worshipers becoming identified with him as a risen god and partaking of his immortal life.

The Isis-Osiris myth has much the same meaning. The Egyptian god Osiris (also known as Serapis) had been a beneficent deity, universally loved for his goodness and the benefits he bestowed on mankind. He was killed by his evil brother Set, and his body was placed in a chest and thrown into the Nile. Isis, sister and also wife of Osiris, wandered about in search of the body. After a long search, during which she suffered many persecutions, she was successful in recovering the body of Osiris. But again Set obtained possession of the body and this time dismembered it, scattering its various parts about Egypt. In the meantime Isis had given birth to Horus whom she secretly reared. Again she went in search of the dismembered Osiris, eventually recovering all the parts of his body. This time Osiris was miraculously restored to life, not only becoming the god of the dead, but actually visiting his son Horus.

Horus was able to take vengeance upon Set and eventually received the crown and throne of his father. In this myth is symbolized the struggle between good and evil in the world, the suffering of the good god, and the eventual victory over death.

It is interesting to note the ideas which lay behind the process by which a human being took on immortality. Undoubtedly these ideas were, for the most part, of Greek origin. To be a human being was to be mortal, while the essence of divinity was immortality. Thus, if mortal man was to become immortal his very essence had to be changed. To put it in philosophical terms, man took on a different metaphysical status. In entering into the sufferings and ultimate resurrection of the god whom he worshiped, a man actually became divine, or the divine took possession of him in such a way as to alter his essential nature. Another version of this point of view was that the spirits of both men and gods had originally been the same. The spirits of men, however, dwelling in physical bodies, had been contaminated and thus had lost their right to immortal life. Salvation both in this world and in the future life, therefore, meant the recovery by the soul of man of its original nature. In any case, salvation in the mystery cults was generally associated with the idea of a metaphysical change occurring in man. Another notion current at the time of the birth of Christ was that salvation was the result of some secret or esoteric knowledge. But this leads us to a discussion of Gnosticism.

## Gnosticism

Gnosticism was a typical product of the Hellenistic world. It belonged to the development of thought which we have called religious Platonism; it made its way into Judaism and later into Christianity; it was in many ways like a mystery religion; it contained elements of Greek philosophy, Babylonian mythology, Persian dualism, Egyptian mysticism, and Jewish theology. It was philosophical but not in the sense of promoting a disinterested quest for truth. Its philosophy and religion were fused in a practical and serious search for a way of salvation. It was more eager to receive ideas from diverse religions and systems of thought than

it was to work out a consistent system of its own. It resulted, therefore, in a prime example of eclecticism and syncretism.

Since Gnosticism was typical of the religious and philosophical quests of the Graeco-Roman world, and since it had a marked influence upon the development of early Christianity, we shall point out what seem to have been some of its more important features, although it is impossible to give a completely accurate summary. It was not a cult. It was rather a name for a general way of thinking which was found in many cults. This is why it easily attached itself to a particular religion like Christianity. The word *gnosis* means knowledge. The connotation of the term had some affiliation with the Greek reverence for knowledge. The Socratic dictum, "Know thyself," was interpreted to mean that if one really did know himself and his place in the scheme of the cosmos he could attain salvation. Grafted to this Hellenic notion was the oriental distrust of merely human knowing. Knowledge which was to be efficacious in bringing about salvation had to be of a higher order, it had to be divinely revealed. The purpose of Gnosticism was primarily ethical. It had the same dualistic philosophy which we have discussed in connection with Philo. The Persian physical dualism of light and darkness was transformed into an abstract metaphysical dualism of spirit and matter. As in the mysteries, salvation meant the gaining of freedom from the body. Unlike the mysteries, more emphasis was placed upon living the life of the spirit than upon immortality, and, also unlike the mysteries, salvation came through the possession of a higher order of knowledge.

The Gnostic metaphysics can best be expressed in the form of myth. At the head of the universe is God, an impersonal and indescribable Being. From him proceed a number of lesser beings who as a group constitute the Pleroma. Over against the Pleroma, or world of spirit, there is Chaos. The lowest member of the Pleroma, Sophia, falls from the higher realm and her son, the Demiurge, is the cause of creative work being done in the realm of Chaos. This results in the creation of the physical world in which there is both matter and spirit. Man's ethical vocation is that of rising to the realm of spirit, an achievement which can be the

privilege of only a part of mankind, the elect, and which results not from man's own efforts but from the work of a saving god. It is easy to see how the Gnostics, when they came in contact with Christianity, found in Christ the God who brought his saving truth into the world.[1]

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[1] See diagram, p. 341.

## CHAPTER XI

# *THE EARLY DEVELOPMENT OF CHRISTIAN THOUGHT*

### Relation of First-century Christianity to Judaism

The earliest followers of Jesus were Palestinian Jews. Even before the Crucifixion they had come to look upon Jesus as a unique figure, probably the fulfillment of messianic prophecy. That his death did not bring them complete disillusionment and utterly shatter their hopes is a tribute to his commanding personality. In its long history Christianity has changed so radically and has absorbed so many influences that it becomes a problem to define its essence. Even in the first two centuries of our era there was such a variety of interpretations of the nature and significance of Christ that it is difficult to determine the common factor. It seems safe to say, however, that there has been from the beginning at least one thread running through the complex pattern which we know as historic Christianity, namely, the ideal of devotion to the person of Jesus Christ who has always been regarded as in some sense worthy of receiving a unique loyalty. This devotion characterized the simple and uneducated Jews who confidently awaited the early return of Jesus to establish his kingdom on earth, as well as the philosophically sophisticated Gentiles who later identified Christ with the Logos.

The first followers of Jesus were not Christians in the sense of belonging to a distinct cult. They were provincial Galileans who had been fired with a new moral purpose, a distinct view of righteousness, and a wholehearted enthusiasm for the life of the spirit. The source and focus of this new religious passion was Jesus, who had taught and lived the ideals to which they were devoted, and whom they inevitably regarded as more than an ordinary man. Their loyalty to Jesus as a unique being was not intended to be at the same time a mark of disloyalty to the religion of their race.

They built no synagogue of their own, but worshiped with other Jews. They did not construct a new theology nor did they fashion new sacramental forms. It was their attitude toward Jesus, and this alone, which differentiated them from the other Jews of Palestine. It is natural that they should have explained the significance of Jesus in terms of Jewish national hopes, just as the Gentiles later explained him in terms familiar to them. The Jews of Palestine had received some severe blows to their faith in the eventual supremacy of their nation and Jahweh, but the faith was still very much alive. We know how prominent in Jesus' day was the messianic idea. Thus, if Jesus was to be thought of as more than man and as a special messenger of God, the most obvious interpretation of his mission would have to be in terms of a Messiah of the Jewish nation. But he had not succeeded in fulfilling the popular expectations. He had not led the Jews to political independence. Instead, he had passively allowed himself to be arrested and crucified. Why had he thus failed to set up a Kingdom of righteousness? Was it not because the majority of Jews themselves had failed to heed his warning to repent and become purified? The coming of the Kingdom must wait until the Jews had adequately prepared themselves, and then Jesus would return to destroy the works of the devil and establish the Kingdom of God. The proof of Jesus' messiahship was the Resurrection. And so the mission of his earliest followers was perfectly clear and they entered into it with boundless zeal. Their mission was that of persuading their friends to share their faith in the messiahship of Jesus and to make themselves morally and spiritually ready for his early return.

Thus the earliest form of Christianity was that of a sect of Judaism in Palestine. Had it remained merely that it is probable our historians of today would not bother to record its existence. There are several reasons why this early form of the religion was doomed to be short lived. In the first place, the majority of Jews were not converted to the new sect. In the second place, the return of Jesus was longer and longer delayed, a fact which it became increasingly embarrassing to explain. Third, patriotic uprisings in Palestine resulted ultimately in the destruction of Jerusalem in 70

A.D., a decisive blow to nationalistic hopes. Finally, the message of Jesus proved to be much larger than the provincial interpretation it at first received, so that, with the waning importance of Palestine, Christianity began its progress toward becoming a universal religion.

It is difficult to give a detailed account of the transition of Christianity to the Gentile world, but the general outline of the process is fairly clear. It is certain that the Jewish colonies in the great cities of the Graeco-Roman world kept in close touch with their Palestinian brethren. The pilgrimages to the Temple alone would explain how the new Christian sect became known in other parts of the empire. Furthermore, there was a conscious effort on the part of the followers of Jesus to bring the Gospel to the attention of the Jews of the Dispersion. In this way there developed Christian groups among the Hellenistic Jews. The Judaism of this period was a missionary religion. Not only were many Gentiles inducted into the Jewish race as proselytes, but there were many more who were friendly to Judaism and who knew something of the Law. It was inevitable that these Gentiles should hear of the new Jewish-Christian sect. Now it happened that many Gentiles were attracted by the Gospel while many Jews rejected it. This created a problem, the solution of which proved to be highly significant. The problem had two phases. One of them concerned the relation between the non-Christian and the Christian Jews; the other the relation between two groups of Jewish Christians. Apparently the followers of Jesus in Palestine had enjoyed comparatively amicable relations with the Jewish authorities. The Christian Jews of the Dispersion were at first very careful to be good Jews as well as loyal to Christ, but soon they were accused of being lax in their observance of the Law. This accusation, together with the Gentile acceptance of the Gospel, resulted not only in a growing tension between Jews and Christians, but also in the development of two parties of Jewish Christians. One party, anxious to remain in good standing as faithful Jews, was particularly zealous in its observance of the Law. When Gentiles were converted they wished to follow the example of Judaism in insisting that the converts be circumcised and obey all the dietary regulations. The other party tended more and more to regard Christianity

as supplanting the old Law, and wished to permit the Gentile converts full privileges of membership in the Christian community without insisting that they become naturalized citizens of the Jewish nation.

The outstanding champion of the latter point of view, and the most distinguished missionary to the Gentiles, was Paul. Paul was a Jew whose home had been the important city of Tarsus. He was well educated and it is possible that he was also a man of considerable weath and high social position. In his younger days he had studied at Jerusalem, had been devoted to the Jewish Law, and for a time had been so convinced of the evils and laxity of the Christian sect that he was a leading persecutor of the followers of Jesus. The ninth chapter of Acts tells about his sudden conversion to Christianity and much of what follows in the book has to do with Paul's work as a Christian missionary to the Gentiles. Paul insisted that the Gentiles live according to the high moral code of the Jewish Law, but was equally insistent that it was unnecessary for them to be circumcised. Salvation, he said, was through "faith in Jesus Christ and not by doing what the Law commands, . . . for by doing what the Law commands *no person shall be justified.*" (Galatians 2:16) And so it developed that a man could be a Christian without being a Jew, and that Christianity became a universal religion rather than a sect of Judaism.

As Gentiles became Christian, Christianity became Gentile. The new converts were impressed by the Gospel, and, for the most part, were just as devoted to the person of Christ as the first followers of Jesus had been. They, too, thought of him as more than man but, not being Jews, the notion of Messiah was foreign to them. They worked out their own theories as to his nature and significance. This question, known as *Christology*, occupied the major portion of Christian thought in the earliest years of Gentile Christianity.

### Pauline Christianity and the Mysteries

It is understandable that as those who were familiar with the mystery religions listened to Christian preaching they should think of Christianity as a new mystery cult and of Jesus Christ as its God.

To be sure, Jesus was an historic figure who had only recently lived on earth and he had preached an ethical message, but, like the mystery gods, he had suffered, died, risen from the grave, and promised life eternal to those who believed in him. Such an interpretation had already been made in some of the Gentile Christian communities before missionaries such as Paul visited them. It was this fact which helped to create a problem for the Jewish Christians. Was this Christian mystery religion really Christian? The Judaizing Christians felt that it was not, but Paul, seeing the good results in the lives of the worshipers, insisted that it was genuine. As Paul's own religious thinking developed he more and more gave an interpretation which seemed to make Christianity a redemptive religion similar to the mysteries. This is not to say that he consciously made such an adaptation merely for the sake of making Christianity a successful rival among the competing religions where the mysteries enjoyed great popularity. On the contrary, he was critical of many phases of the mystery cults, particularly those which placed more emphasis on magical rites and sacraments than upon high moral living. But as he reflected on the meaning of Christ in his own experience and on what Christianity could do to change the lives of others, he found much in common with the mysteries.

Paul said little about Christ as the Messiah for a particular race of people and much about Christ as a savior for individual men, no matter what their race or nationality.

> You are all sons of God by your faith in Christ Jesus (for all of you who had yourselves baptized into Christ have taken on the character of Christ). There is no room for Jew or Greek, there is no room for slave or freeman, there is no room for male and female; you are all one in Christ Jesus. (Galatians 3:26-28)

Just as the cult of Isis and Osiris became emancipated from its Egyptian affiliations, and just as the religion of Mithra was universalized, so Paul was influential in freeing Christianity from a narrow Jewish connection by his teaching that membership was open to both Jews and Greeks so long as they accepted Christ as the Lord of their individual lives.

In his own religious experience Paul had really felt the dualism

between spirit and flesh which was current in Gnostic and Platonic thought as well as in the mysteries. The spirit was good, the flesh evil, and there was a war being waged between them in the life of every man. Salvation meant the defeat of the flesh and living the life of the spirit. This was far more than a mere philosophical dogma or magical rite for Paul. He was talking about real experiences, moral principles to be followed in this life, and specific things.

> Now the deeds of the flesh are quite obvious, such as sexual vice, impurity, sensuality, idolatry, magic, quarrels, dissension, jealousy, temper, rivalry, factions, party-spirit, envy, murder, drinking bouts, revelry, and the like; I tell you beforehand as I have told you already, that people who indulge in such practices will never inherit the Realm of God. But the harvest of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, good temper, kindliness, generosity, fidelity, gentleness, self-control:—there is no law against those who practice such things. Those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its emotions and passions. As we live by the Spirit, let us be guided by the Spirit; let us have no vanity, no provoking, no envy of one another. (Galatians 5:19-26)

The last part of this quotation suggests certain further parallels with the mysteries. Not only does salvation mean turning to the life of the spirit, but a genuine death of the former self and the birth of a new person through union with Christ. This is essentially the same point of view as obtained in the mystery religions except that, in the latter, the union effected was between the individual and the god worshiped. Paul brought his Jewish monotheism to his Christianity, so that it was impossible to make of Jesus another god. There was only one God and he was the father of Jesus. Yet the transforming power of Christ in the lives of men certainly meant that he was not an ordinary human being. He was divine in a real sense. We shall find that the attempt to deify Christ and still retain a thoroughgoing monotheism raised some delicate questions for Christian thought. For our present purpose it is sufficient to note that although Paul always distinguished between God and Christ, he did endow the latter with uniquely divine characteristics. In his letter to the Philippians, Chapter 2, verses 5 to 11, he writes:

Treat one another with the same spirit as you experience in Christ Jesus. Though he was divine by nature, he did not set store upon equality with God, but emptied himself by taking the nature of a servant; born in human guise and appearing in human form, he humbly stooped in his obedience even to die, and to die upon the cross. Therefore God raised him high and conferred on him a Name above all names, so that before the Name of Jesus *every knee should bend* in heaven, on earth, and underneath the earth, *and every tongue confess* that "Jesus Christ is Lord," to the glory of God the Father.

Thus, there was a complete indwelling of the divine spirit in Christ and through him this same spirit could take possession of men. One ceased to live according to his own evil ways and allowed Christ to live in him. "It is no longer I that live, but Christ liveth in me." Paul interpreted the sacraments of baptism and the Lord's Supper in this light. Baptism was the death of the former self and being born in Christ. The Lord's Supper was eating of the body and drinking of the blood of Christ, signifying the entrance of the Savior into the very being of the worshiper.

Finally, much of Paul's preaching about Christ emphasized the Crucifixion and Resurrection. Christ was a savior who had suffered and died for the sins of men. He had also risen from the grave. This was central in the whole Christian message: "And if Christ did not rise, then our preaching has gone for nothing, and your faith has gone for nothing too" (I Corinthians, 15:14). The importance of the Resurrection was not, as for the first Jewish Christians, that of proving that Christ was the fulfillment of messianic prophecy, but rather that of assuring immortality to those who became united with him.

Here is a secret truth for you: not all of us are to die, but all of us are to be changed—changed in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trumpet-call. The trumpet will sound, the dead will rise imperishable, and we shall be changed. For this perishing body must be invested with the imperishable, and this mortal body invested with immortality; and when this mortal body has been invested with immortality, then the saying of Scripture will be realized, *Death is swallowed up in victory. O Death, where is your victory? O Death, where is your sting?* The victory is ours, thank God! He makes it ours by our Lord Jesus Christ. (I Corinthians 15:51-57)

## The Fourth Gospel

John, the author of the fourth Gospel, had much in common with Pauline Christianity. He thought of Christ, not as a Jewish Messiah, but as a savior bringing personal salvation to individuals. He emphasized the importance of the sacraments of baptism and the Eucharist in the process of salvation, and his idea of God was similar to Paul's. But in his interpretation of the nature and work of Christ he seems to have been influenced more by the Gnostics than by the mystery religions. We have already pointed out that although there were many similarities between Gnosticism and the mysteries, there was at least one important difference, namely, that in the former salvation was brought about through esoteric knowledge, while in the latter it was through union of the worshiper with the god worshiped. Paul's idea of the way in which men were saved through Christ was essentially like that of the mysteries, while John's writings show, among other things, a definite kinship with Gnosticism.

The first chapter of the Fourth Gospel makes clear this point of view.

> The Logos existed in the very beginning, the Logos was with God, the Logos was divine. He was with God in the very beginning: through him all existence came into being, no existence came into being apart from him. In him life lay, and this life was the Light for men; amid the darkness the Light shone, but the darkness did not master it. . . . The real Light, which enlightens every man, was coming then into the world: he entered the world—the world which existed through him—yet the world did not recognize him; he came to what was his own, yet his own folk did not welcome him. On those who have accepted him, however, he has conferred the right of being children of God, that is, on those who believe in his Name, who owe this birth of theirs to God, not to human blood, nor to any impulse of the flesh or of man. So the Logos became flesh and tarried among us; we have seen his glory—glory such as an only son enjoys from his father—seen it to be full of grace and reality. (John 1:1-5, 9-14)

These passages are very illuminating. The term "Logos" was used both by the Stoics and by Philo. The Logos has existed eter-

nally, has always been "with God," and in some sense is of the very essence of God. As in Philo, the Logos is spoken of both as a separate being from God and as identical with God or as an attribute of God. It was through the Logos that the world was created and this suggests the notion of an intermediary power. That the Logos is described as Light bringing light to men indicates a similarity to the Stoic idea of the Divine Fire, sparks of which illumine the souls of men. But immediately in the next passage there is a return to a Persian-Platonic dualism: "Amid the darkness the Light shone." Here is the Platonic opposition of God and world phrased in the Persian terminology of light against darkness. The world was made through the Logos and whatever light or goodness there is in the world is due to his presence. But since he was not recognized, the Logos assumed the form of flesh and blood and lived among men. All of the Fourth Gospel is written with a view to showing that Jesus was the Logos incarnate, and the true revelation of God. For John, indeed, becoming a Christian meant essentially the recognition of Christ as the Logos. The goal of salvation was the knowledge of God which came to men as a heavenly illumination through the work of Christ. Thus the significance of Christ was that of bringing men out of the darkness of ignorance into the true light of knowledge. But a man was not saved merely by uttering the words, "I believe," any more than salvation meant for Paul a mere magical rite. In both men the ethical note was very strong. To believe was also to live an ethical life, the central virtue of which was love. "I give you a new command, to love one another" (John 13:34). "If ye know all this, blessed are you if you really do it" (John 13:17). "He who believes in me will do the very deeds I do" (14:12). "If ye love me, ye will keep my commands" (14:15).

### The Christian Gnostics

Although John was like the Gnostics in his interpretation of salvation through knowledge, he was not classified as a Gnostic Christian. There were at least two things which set him apart from this group. In the first place, while John made some distinction between spirit and matter, his dualism did not go so far as Paul's, and did

not even approach the Gnostic pessimism concerning the utterly evil nature of the world. In the second place, although John interpreted the work of Christ to be that of a revealer of new knowledge, he was equally insistent upon the efficacy and necessity of the sacraments in the process of salvation, and thus did not disturb the development of the organized Christian Church.

Before the appearance of Christianity, Gnosticism had developed a philosophy in which the need of a savior was clearly defined. In their interpretation of Christ, therefore, the Gnostics tended to disregard whatever of tradition had already developed and to fit Christ into the pattern which they brought with them to Christianity. The outline of their philosophy was stated in the last chapter. Let us see specifically how Valentinus, in the first part of the second century A.D., fitted the person and work of Christ into the Gnostic pattern. The one true God in the system of Valentinus was an impersonal, spiritual Being, far removed from the world. The lesser beings which constituted the spiritual realm or Pleroma were called Aeons, and they were graded in pairs, male and female, from those nearest God to those farthest removed from him. Again it was Sophia, the lowest of the Aeons, which fell from grace, and the Demiurge, perhaps her son, who created the world by trying to bring order out of chaos. The Demiurge, although not necessarily an evil power opposed to the good, was quite ignorant of the realm of the spirit and thus could not be the creator of a good world. Because Sophia had actually belonged to the Pleroma before her fall, it was through her that certain sparks of light, or atoms of spirit, descended to the world and became imprisoned in the bodies of men. They were forever foreigners in the world of evil matter and the salvation for which they yearned was escape from it. There was no such thing as salvation *of* the flesh; there was only salvation of the spirit *from* the flesh, the return of the spirit to its true home. This desired escape could be brought about only through a divine illumination, which meant that one of the Aeons, closer to God and therefore more nearly perfect in knowledge than Sophia had been, must bring to the imprisoned spirits a saving truth. Valentinus identified Christ with such an Aeon, the Aeon closest of all to God himself.

Such a doctrine had some interesting and important consequences. In the first place, the implication of the uncompromising dualism of flesh and spirit was that it was impossible to find any place for the salvation of the flesh. Only spirit was saved. This ran counter to another line of Christian thought which had incorporated the Jewish view of man. The Jews never had been able to think of man as a combination of body and soul in which these two elements had merely a loose connection. That was a Greek idea. In Plato's discussions of immortality he had defined the soul as an eternal substance which, although it inhabited a body, was not dependent upon the body for its existence. This notion led to the interpretation of salvation as the escape of the soul from the body. But the Jews thought of soul and body as forming an intimate union and as being mutually dependent. That is why their idea of immortality always included faith in the resurrection of the flesh.

In the second place, early Christian thought had not developed a distinctive idea of God, but had more or less taken over the Jahweh of Israel and made him universal. But Jahweh, the God of the Old Testament, was a creator God, and the Gnostics had assigned the work of creation, not to the real God, but to the Demiurge. Did this mean that the Being whom the Jews worshiped was not the true God after all? Such a conclusion seemed almost inevitable, and was preached openly and unequivocally by Marcion, a wealthy shipmaster, who had much in common with the Gnostics. Marcion thought of himself as the interpreter of true Christianity which, for him, had its essence in the teachings of Paul. Paul had said a great deal about salvation through Christ bringing freedom from the Law, and Marcion felt that Christianity was developing its own legalism in opposition to Pauline doctrine. It was the Jewish influence which had brought about this new legalism and Marcion set about the task of purifying Christianity by destroying the Jewish influence. He began with an explicit argument that the God of the Old Testament was not the God revealed by Jesus Christ. The former was the God of the Jews, creator of the evil world, possessing characteristics directly antithetical to the true God of love and mercy. Jahweh was a warrior God, often cruel and even unreliable. But essentially Jahweh was

a law-giver, the author of the very legalism which characterized Judaism and which was threatening to corrupt Christianity. Marcion was led to reject the Old Testament as divine truth and to construct a genuinely Christian body of literature. This was to consist of an expurgated edition of Luke's Gospel and a number of the letters of Paul. Our New Testament had not been formed in Marcion's time and thus his was the earliest Christian Bible. The generally hostile attitude of Marcion toward Judaism was shared by all the Gnostics, even though there were some Jews among them.

In the third place, the thoroughgoing Gnostic dualism of flesh and spirit had its influence on the interpretation of the nature of Jesus Christ. Having such a low regard for the body, the Gnostics thought it inconceivable that their Savior was really born of woman, had actual flesh and blood, and genuinely suffered on the cross. They threw doubt on the true humanity of Jesus by working out a theory that either he brought with him from the Pleroma a heavenly body, or that he merely appeared to be born and to suffer on the cross, but really did not go through these and other human experiences.

Finally, Christian Gnosticism was no more "cult conscious" than pre-Christian Gnosticism had been. It was still a speculative system and a practical program of individual salvation which included the person and work of Christ. It was a salvation which could occur in the life of an individual without help of priest or sacrament. Herein lay the essential weakness of Gnosticism, for a religion must have its cult in order to survive.

And so Gnosticism raised some new and important problems for Christian thought—the problem of the resurrection of the flesh, the problem of the nature of God, the problem of determining what literature was divinely revealed, the problem of the humanity of Jesus, the problem of the function of the Church as an organization.

### The Apostolic Fathers and the New Law

The problems raised by Gnosticism were particularly acute because the main line of the evolution of Christian thought was so different from the Gnostic interpretation. The point of view most

popular in the early Church is reflected to some extent in the Synoptic Gospels, and especially in the later New Testament writings, such as James, Jude, the letters of Peter, and other contemporary literature, an example of which was a kind of handbook called *Teaching of the Twelve Apostles* or the *Didache*. The authors of this literature, through which runs the same general interpretation of Christ and the meaning of the Christian life, are usually referred to as the Apostolic Fathers.

On one point the Apostolic Fathers agreed with Paul, John, and the Gnostics. They had all moved away from the early Jewish Christian interpretation of Christ as a national Messiah. For all of them Christ was a personal Savior. But the Fathers did not share either the Pauline antipathy toward the Law or the Gnostic hostility toward the Old Testament. Their God was the same as the God of Israel. This God was partially revealed to the writers of the Old Testament and was fully revealed by Jesus. It followed that the Jewish Scriptures were of value to Christians. Those parts of the Law which were the particular objects of Pauline attack were disregarded by the Fathers, that is, such things as regulations concerning meats and the rite of circumcision. The Fathers agreed with Paul that salvation did not depend upon becoming a citizen of the Jewish nation and obeying all the Jewish customs. But they found much of value in the ethical teachings of the Old Testament as well as prophecies concerning the coming of Christ. Thus the God of Israel was the Christian God and the Jewish Scriptures were Christian Scriptures.

Marcion had *rejected* Jahweh because he was a law-giver, and the Fathers *accepted* Jahweh for the same reason. God had given a moral law which all men were to obey, and he meted out rewards and punishments on the basis of obedience and disobedience. The Jews had not taken advantage of their privileged relationship and so God had sent Jesus Christ to reveal the law and to summon a loyalty from Jews and Gentiles alike. In one sense Jesus brought a new law and the Christians were the new and true heirs of the promises formerly given to Israel. In common with other interpretations, the Fathers thought of Christ as a divine being who had existed prior to his appearance on earth, but essentially he was the

revealer of the true morality which was divinely sanctioned. To be a Christian was to obey the will of God as this was revealed in Jesus Christ.

Although Christ was a unique character and the most important means through which the will of God was revealed to men, there were other ways of making known the divine law. Before the earthly existence of Jesus there was the Old Testament in which can be found eternal ethical truths. After the time of Jesus the Apostles were authentic interpreters of the Christian law, and the Holy Spirit, present in the Church, often inspired Christian prophets to declare the will of God. The Jews had always had their prophets as special mouthpieces for divine instruction and undoubtedly the Christian prophets of the early Church were their spiritual descendants. This sort of prophecy soon died out in Christianity because of abuses and the consequent difficulty of distinguishing between true and false prophets. But the authority of the Apostles and the idea of the Holy Spirit remained as important parts of the Christian tradition.

The idea of salvation, for the Apostolic Fathers, showed the influence neither of the mystery religions nor of Gnosticism. The means of being saved included repentance for failure to lead the good life, baptism as the rite of being inducted into the Christian fellowship, and faith—by which was meant the willingness to do God's will. Most important of all was actually living a life of obedience to the divine moral law. The meaning of salvation was neither a mystical knowledge of God nor a union with Christ. So far as this world was concerned it was merely living a good life, but the most explicit statements on the subject refer to the future in which salvation meant being spared the eternal punishment accorded to sinners, and the positive enjoyment of a reward. Immortality is explicitly defined as the resurrection of the flesh. This line of thought had made the Christian Church the substitute for Israel in God's affections. At first the hope was present that Christ would return to set up his earthly Kingdom at which time the good people would be brought back to life to enjoy their reward, and the wicked to suffer their punishment. As the years passed we find

less and less reference to the second coming of Christ, but the belief in the resurrection of the flesh persisted.

## The Apologists

Thus far we have been telling the story of the various responses the Gentiles made to the Christian message. Different groups, having in common a devotion to Christ, had different ways of explaining to themselves his significance. We come now to another motive for speculation concerning the nature of Christ and the Christian religion. As Christianity became more widely known throughout the empire it was natural that it should be criticized. Intellectuals studied this new religion and concluded that it was entirely lacking or at least inadequate in regard to a philosophical foundation, and it included altogether too many superstitions. Others accused the Christians of being morally lax, while the governmental officials suspected them of being a subversive influence as regards political loyalty. This suspicion had led to outbursts of official persecutions. But it happened that there had entered the Christian fold some able philosophers who, in the face of external criticism, set about the task of making Christianity intellectually respectable, and of explaining its worthiness both to the pagan philosophers and to the public officials. The interest of these men was not so much that of interpreting Christianity to Christians as of showing non-Christians its meaning and its right to exist.

These Christian philosophers were known as Apologists. Typical of the group was Justin Martyr, who, before his conversion to Christianity, had studied with the Stoics and was well trained in the Platonism of his day. His motive in studying philosophy was that of knowing ultimate reality, or God, and of discovering the correct set of moral principles according to which a man should live. Upon a careful consideration of the Christian religion Justin concluded that here was not only a philosophy but the final answer to the philosophical quest.

It was the Christians who had the answer to the question of the nature of ultimate reality. Their God was the one true God. He was a moral Ruler of the universe, demanding righteous living on the part of men. His moral order was such that virtue was ulti-

mately rewarded and vice punished. The whole philosophical quest was that of knowing God and the divine moral law. Human reason could go far in search of the correct answers to this question, but it could never gain absolute knowledge. Most men lived at least in partial ignorance and even though their intentions were good their lack of knowledge caused them to be led astray.

The superiority of Christianity lay in the fact that God and divine law were clearly revealed in Jesus Christ. Without revelation man can know much about God, but certainty and completeness of knowledge depend on revelation. Justin now proceeded to the task of demonstrating to the skeptical intellectuals that Christ was the one true revelation of the divine. In order to do this, he pointed to the fulfillment of prophecy. Justin avoided the circular argument of assuming the Bible to be the inspired word of God and then concluding that Christ was God's messenger because the Bible said so. Rather, he pointed to the fact that there were statements in the Old Testament to the effect that a Messiah would come and would do certain things. Jesus had lived and had done the things predicted, thus showing himself the fulfillment of prophecy. Since the predictions agreed with Jesus' actual performance there is evidence of the divine origin of the book which contained the predictions and of the man who fulfilled them.

Jesus Christ came from God. The Platonists had conceived of God as a transcendent Being whose relations with the world had to be meditated through a secondary power or Logos. The philosophers had speculated concerning both God and Logos, but the Christians had definite answers to these questions because the Logos had become incarnate in Jesus, leaving no doubt as to his character, and giving an explicit revelation of God and God's will. Christ was preexistent, a divine Being, not identical with God, but having the same character and purpose. Christ was the Son of God, his only Son, both in his preexistent state and in his earthly existence as the man Jesus. Christ was also the Logos. Logos had the same meaning for Justin as for the non-Christian contemporary philosophers. It was divine reason, sometimes thought of as a personal being, sometimes as the wisdom of God. The Logos was begotten before the creation of the world and was the agent through whom

creation was brought about. The Logos was the source of rationality in human beings. Both the Hebrew prophets and the Greek philosophers had been partial vehicles for the voice of the Logos. In so far as these men possessed the truth they possessed the Logos, and in so far as they possessed the Logos they possessed Christ. Thus, in a very real sense, there were Christians before Christ. Christianity is justified in having a high regard not only for Moses and Isaiah but for Socrates and Plato as well.

In spite of the fact that the Logos had been partially present in the prophets and the philosophers, there was still such a lack of understanding that the world was in need of a full and complete revelation. This was effected by the Logos becoming incarnate in the man Jesus. In order to show that Jesus was actually the Logos incarnate and not merely a man, Justin appealed to the idea of the virgin birth. Evidently the tradition of the virgin birth of Jesus was current in the second century and, as we know, was employed by two of the Gospels, Matthew and Luke. This doctrine was employed to account for Jesus' unusual personality and the faith in his divine character.

Justin's final and practical justification of Christianity lay in his appeal to the moral fruits of this religion in the lives of the worshipers. He stressed both the superior ethical teachings of Jesus and the lofty moral practices of his followers. In particular there was a unique steadfastness in the Christians which, on many occasions, made it possible for them to be willing and even anxious to die for Christ.

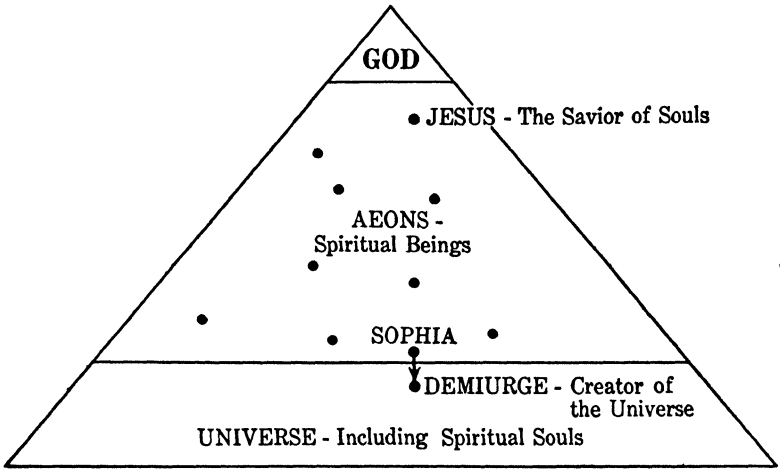
## The Gnostic Heresy and the Apostles' Creed

The first two centuries of Gentile Christianity produced a variety of interpretations of the nature of Christ. We have seen that Christ was thought to be a mystery god, a Gnostic savior, the revealer and judge of the moral law, the Logos. Each of these interpretations had further consequences concerning the meaning of the Christian life and salvation. The question now arose whether all of these could be fitted into one Christian tradition. Was it possible, for example, to fuse Pauline Christianity—its dualism of flesh and spirit, its emphasis on mystical union with Christ, its idea of

salvation through crucifixion of the flesh and spiritual rebirth bringing freedom from the Law—with the legalistic conception of Christianity which characterized the Apostolic Fathers? Whether or not such a fusion resulted in a logically consistent philosophy, it is a historical fact that both of these types of religion remained in the Christian tradition. Paul's name had early acquired a prestige and authority on a par with those of Jesus' disciples, so that by the second century the term "Apostles" usually referred to the Twelve and Paul. Again, there was little in Paul's writings which was definitely contradictory of other points of view.

In the case of Gnosticism, however, the situation was different. It was impossible both to affirm and to deny that God created the world, that Jesus really suffered on the cross, that the Old Testa-

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ment was divinely inspired, that there was resurrection of the flesh. Furthermore, the Gnostics irritated their Christian brethren by their theory of the elect, claiming that only a part of mankind was capable of salvation, and that they were the favored few. On the other hand, the Gnostics were sincere Christians and could find some sort of support in tradition for most of their doctrines. But the general trend of Gnostic Christianity was so antithetical to

the main line of development that the two could not live in harmony.

The most influential character in bringing this issue to a head was Irenaeus, bishop of Lyons in Gaul in the latter part of the second century, and one of the greatest thinkers produced by the early Church. He was the author of a work called *Against Heresies*, in which he attempted to demonstrate the errors of Gnosticism. And so Christianity had reached the stage of development where a distinction had to be made between orthodox belief and heresy, and this in turn created the necessity of discovering some standard of truth beyond mere personal experience or individual thinking. The criterion explicitly laid down by Irenaeus, and one which had already been generally assumed, was that true Christianity must be in agreement with apostolic teaching. That which was in harmony with what one of the Twelve or Paul had taught was orthodox, and anything to the contrary was heretical. This principle had some interesting consequences. In the first place, it led to the formation of an authoritative Christian literature, or New Testament, to supplement the Old Testament. Marcion, we recall, had arranged his own Christian Bible which consisted of the Gospel of Luke and ten letters of Paul. Irenaeus criticized this for its incompleteness. He maintained that there were four Gospels of apostolic origin. Matthew and John were themselves Apostles, Mark's Gospel presented the views of Peter, and Luke was a follower of Paul. In addition to these and the ten letters of Paul, there were other letters written by Apostles which should be included in the Christian Scriptures.

But the solution of the problem of heresy was a difficult one. Not only did Irenaeus have to prove the authentic apostolic origin of all the books he wished to include in the New Testament, he also had the problem of determining the correct interpretation of the various points of view which they contained. The Gnostics could accept his Bible and still interpret certain passages in such a way as to substantiate their doctrines. Thus was Irenaeus forced to discover an authoritative interpretation of an authoritative literature. He was sincere in his belief that all the Christian churches except the Gnostic ones were agreed on the genuine apostolic tradi-

tion or central meaning of the New Testament. This tradition, he said, was briefly expressed in a "rule of truth." The "rule of truth" which he had in mind was the baptismal formula used by the church of Rome. It was the formula from which our Apostles' Creed developed. In its present form the creed contains more phrases than were used in the Roman baptismal formula, but the latter probably included the following familiar items:

> I believe in God the Father Almighty;
> And in Jesus Christ, His only Son,
> who was born;
> was crucified and buried,
> rose again on the third day,
> ascended into heaven,
> sitteth on the right hand of the Father,
> is to come to judge the quick and the dead;
> And in the Holy Spirit;
> Resurrection of the flesh.

The purpose of appealing to this creed as the statement of true Christian belief was obviously that of demonstrating the falsity of Gnosticism. "God the Father Almighty" leaves no doubt that the Christian God is the same as he who exercises absolute control over the universe; it was also this and not some other God who was the father of Jesus and who was revealed in him; Jesus was actually born of woman and was crucified; it is stated unambiguously that there is resurrection of the flesh. It is not strange that this formula should be so apt a refutation of Gnosticism. Irenaeus, to be sure, claimed for it apostolic origin, but in fact it was a creation of the Roman church of the middle of the second century as a safeguard against the doctrines which Marcion was preaching there. However, the idea became firmly intrenched that this creed came directly from the Apostles and consequently was authoritative. In this way there developed not only an official New Testament but also an official creed or brief statement of belief.

Irenaeus worked out still a third way of meeting the problem of heresy, a way which would provide for situations where the Apostles' Creed might prove ineffective and where contradictory interpretations of the New Testament might threaten the unity of the

Christian Church. He maintained that the tradition which came from the Apostles was guarded in successive generations by the bishops of the various churches. The theory was that the Apostles themselves had appointed the first bishops as their official representatives and that the authority vested in them had been passed on to their successors. In each generation, therefore, there was resident in the officials of the Church an authority which could be traced directly to the Apostles. Bishops, in other words, were not elected by congregations and responsible to them. They were appointed by the original Apostles through an unbroken succession and possessed an authority independent of the churches over which they presided. Since the bishops were the true guardians of the Christian tradition, it followed that they could make official pronouncements concerning heresies.

By means of the threefold apostolic authority—Scriptures, creed, and succession of bishops—the Gnostics were eliminated from the Church. But Gnosticism had nevertheless taught the Church some valuable lessons. It was largely through this crisis that Christian thinkers saw the need of developing more clearly the philosophical basis of their faith and the true function of their ecclesiastical organization.

## The Idea of God

One of the consequences of the Gnostic controversy was the development of a theory of the nature of God. Christianity had been essentially a religion of salvation, and intellectual speculation had concentrated on the nature of the Savior or Christ. But we find that Origen, an Alexandrian theologian of the third century, introduced his systematic work with a discussion of the nature of God. This indicates that the problem of God was coming to occupy a place of importance in Christian thinking equal to the problem of the nature of Christ.

The theological issue between orthodox and Gnostic Christians had concerned the God of the Old Testament. The victory of orthodoxy was the vindication of the sole reality of the divine being worshiped by Jesus and the early Christians, but the problem was not closed. The increasing influence of philosophically trained

theologians as champions of Christianity led to metaphysical descriptions of the nature of God. The Old Testament God was a manlike king, judge, friend, or father. There had never been reasoned arguments which were designed to prove that God exists. There had been merely prophetic pronouncements concerning his superiority to the gods in whom other people had faith. But the Christian theologians created a philosophical literature concerning both the existence and the nature of God. The framework for these discussions was mainly Platonic, and the arguments uniformly stressed the transcendence, spirituality, and oneness of God. His transcendence and spirituality were maintained in opposition to Stoicism, his oneness as a refutation of Greek polytheism and chiefly as a vindication of the universal appeal of Christianity.

The God of Stoicism was a kind of material which pervaded the universe. The God of the theologians was absolutely incorporeal and was "wholly other" than the world. This is not to say that the theologians contrasted God and world after the fashion of Gnostic pessimism concerning evil matter. The contrast was of a different sort. On the one hand there was inert matter which could not move unless acted upon, which was created and was divisible. On the other hand there was spirit, infinite, incorporeal, indivisible, incomprehensible, creative. Although this God may seem to us much more like a metaphysical abstraction than a loving father, he was meant to be the same as the object of simple Christian faith.

If the essence of God is spirit, he must be one. Unlike matter, spirit cannot be divided into separate parts, and thus to say that God is spirit is to say that he is one. Furthermore, it is necessary that such a spirit should exist. We can observe the regular and orderly motions of material in the physical world, and since matter cannot move itself there must be an eternal and immaterial reality more powerful than matter which is the ultimate cause of the orderliness of the universe.

Such was the general pattern of the contributions of Greek philosophy to Christian thinking about God. But logical minds eventually saw difficulties in the practice of worshiping both God and the Logos or Son of God as though they were equals. God was one,

yet he was referred to as God the Father, a deified Christ, and the Holy Spirit. What, precisely, was the relation among these divine beings? It was an established part of the Christian tradition that Jesus Christ had been a reality prior to his earthly existence, and that he was in some sense divine. That God could be one spiritual reality in which both the Father and the Son shared was comprehensible to Christian Platonists. It was that same Platonic principle which affirmed the oneness of the Idea of Beauty in which, nevertheless, a number of beautiful things participated. But it was also a part of Christian tradition that somehow the Son was subordinate to the Father. The identification of the Son with the Logos had helped to make clear the latter notion because of the general conception of the Logos as an intermediary power. There was still the question, however, whether the Logos was fully God or a being less than God.

### The Arian Controversy and the Nicene Creed

Arius, a presbyter of the Alexandrian church, was a theologian whose motivation in thinking about this problem was primarily philosophical. He insisted on the oneness of God to such an extent that it was impossible for him to see how the essential divine nature could be shared by any other being. God alone existed from the beginning and was uncreated. All other things were created by God out of nothing and thus had a beginning in time. Even the Son was a created being although he existed before all other things and was the power through whom the world was made. Since he was a creature and had a beginning in time, it followed that the Son was not of the nature of God. God was eternal and uncreated. Arius spoke of the Son as the Logos but was careful to point out that by Logos was not meant the reason or wisdom which had been eternally an attribute of God.

The Son or Logos became incarnate in Jesus Christ but had only a human body, not a human soul. The Logos, in other words, was of the essence of nothing but itself, both in its earthly existence and in its preexistent state. The Logos was not fully God, nor in Jesus fully man. Here was a logical and consistent system, but it caused a bitter doctrinal battle in the fourth century. Arianism was

opposed, not on logical grounds, but for religious reasons. Christianity as a religion of salvation needed a theory in which Jesus Christ was both fully God and fully man, a position difficult to make logically consistent but one demanded by practical considerations.

It was from the work of Irenaeus that the current idea of salvation had developed. He had been the first Christian thinker to emphasize what proved to be the important doctrine of "the fall." Salvation was necessary, he said, because of Adam's fall due to disobedience. Adam was the occasion of mankind's losing its original likeness to God and becoming enslaved to Satan. Salvation meant the gaining of freedom from the prison in which Satan held men captive, and the reuniting of men and God. It was Jesus Christ who brought this salvation into the world. Christ had undone the mischief created by the fall of Adam. Christ had been consistently obedient, had resisted the temptations of Satan, had been faithful even unto death. The temptation experience had demonstrated Christ's personal supremacy over Satan, and his death was a ransom paid to Satan for the release of the rest of men. This implied that Jesus must have been both man and God. He had to be a man in order to bring about a just victory of mankind over Satan. None other than a human being could atone for the sins of men and break the power which Satan had exercised since the fatal disobedience of Adam. But in order to be able to accomplish his saving work, Christ had to be God. He was able to overcome Satan only because he was more powerful than Satan, and, therefore, more than man. Furthermore, salvation meant the transformation of human into divine nature. This, too, was accomplished through Christ. Therefore, he was not only more than man, he was actually God in man.

If one does not have this doctrine of salvation in mind he cannot appreciate the significance of the Arian controversy. The meaning of Christianity as a redemptive religion had as its focus the meeting of divine and human natures in Jesus Christ, and Arianism made of the Logos an essence neither completely divine nor completely human. The leader of the opposition was Athanasius, also of the Alexandrian church, a deacon at the time of the outbreak of the controversy, later its bishop. It is not surprising that this man who

led the opposition was lacking in philosophical ability and that his arguments against Arius were based on some deep religious convictions. Athanasius had a good mind, however, and was able to brush aside a good many technical problems in order to get at the main point. He was convinced that the idea of the incarnation of God in Christ was central in Christianity and the most distinctive thing about the religion. He also saw that it was this fundamental doctrine which Arianism threatened to undermine. Because of his able writings in which he argued for the necessity of believing that the Son was truly God and that he really became man, Athanasius was soon recognized as the leader of the anti-Arian group. This dispute was by no means limited to the church at Alexandria. It involved a large part of the Christian world and was of sufficient importance to threaten the unity of the Church.

Under the Emperor Constantine, Christianity had become legalized. Constantine was courting the support of Christians and was anxious to have the Church as powerful as possible. A powerful Church must be united. Although he was personally quite ignorant of the real issues in the Arian controversy, he called a council of bishops at Nicaea in 325 in order that the matter might be settled and the danger of a divided Church averted. Only a minority of the bishops who attended this assembly were extreme Arians or extreme anti-Arians, and so it was the large middle group who took the leadership. A statement was prepared which was designed to placate both of the extreme parties, but the anti-Arians, with brilliant political skill, said that although they were willing to sign the statement they would like to change the wording merely for the purpose of clarity. The revised statement, which was the original of our Nicene Creed, read as follows:

We believe in one God, Father Almighty, maker of all things visible and invisible; and in one Lord Jesus Christ the Son of God, begotten of the Father, only-begotten, that is from the substance of the Father, God from God, Light from Light, true God from true God, begotten, not made, of one substance with the Father, through whom all things were made, both the things in heaven and the things on earth; who for us men and for our salvation came down and was made flesh, was made man, suffered, and rose again on the third day, ascended into heaven, and cometh to judge quick and dead;

and in the Holy Spirit. But those who say, "There was once when he was not," and "Before his generation he was not," and "He was made out of nothing," or pretend that the Son of God is of another subsistence or substance, or created or alterable or mutable, the Catholic Church anathematizes.

This was a clear-cut defeat of Arianism. As a matter of historic fact, however, Arianism came back in official favor for a time and it was half a century before orthodoxy rested secure in the hands of the opposing group.

We should note in passing that although the discussions at Nicaea concentrated on the relation between God the Father and God the Son, God in Christian tradition was conceived as a Trinity—Father, Son, and Holy Spirit. Reflection on the nature of the Holy Spirit revealed difficulties similar to those we have already mentioned in connection with the first two persons of the Trinity. There was the problem as to whether the Spirit was of the same substance as the Father, whether it was a separate being and, if so, how it was related to the Son. In general the tradition became universal of recognizing the Holy Spirit as one of the three persons of the Godhead and as having an importance equal to the others.

## The Church Universal

The principle of apostolic authority had proved effective in defeating the Gnostics, but showed weaknesses in handling the Arian controversy. Arian Christianity persisted and carried on successful missionary activity for years. This showed the need of a definitive doctrine of the Church as a universal and united organization. Irenaeus' principle of the apostolic succession of bishops had given to the individual officers of the Church an authority independent of the congregations they served. But apparently there was unwarranted optimism concerning the ability of the several bishops to agree on matters of doctrine and practice, the Arian controversy being a case in point. Even though each individual bishop was an authoritative guardian of the true Christian tradition, it was demonstrated in the councils that there could be disagreement among them. Yet it was impossible that there really could be more than one truth. So a further principle was laid down that a council of

bishops had precedence over the individuals who attended the council. The will of the council expressed the true apostolic teaching and had to be recognized by all. This principle needed for its practical application a central authority to enforce the will of the council, and although the papacy was a matter of later development, we can see that there was need of a "bishop of bishops," the centralization of authority.

There were several factors which contributed to the idea that there was a Church universal beyond and above the local congregations, and that this Church was in a peculiar sense both the guardian of truth and the instrument of salvation. For one thing, the efficacy of the sacraments for salvation had long been a part of Christian tradition. Baptism and the Eucharist were everywhere the same and possessed a holiness independent of the individuals who administered them. At the same time, the administration of the sacrament was controlled by the Church, and thus salvation was impossible outside of the Church.

In our review of the early development of Christian thought, we have seen that one important strain was the legalistic conception of Christianity. God was the ruler of the universe and had one moral law which all men were obliged to obey. The law was revealed by Jesus Christ who had established the Church as his official earthly representative. This type of thinking was strong in North Africa, Spain, Gaul, Italy, and especially Rome, where important contributions were being made to secular legal thinking. It is fairly apparent that the Stoic political philosophy influenced, at least indirectly, Christian thinking on the ecclesiastical problem. There might be differences of opinion and of practice within the Christian brotherhood, but above these was one truth and one Church discipline. Christ had revealed the moral law, had appointed his Apostles and through them the present officers of the Church, and it was sinful that there should be permanent division. To have factions in the Church universal was like having civil war in the empire. The divine moral law and the means of salvation were everywhere the same. Therefore, the Church, as God's own institution and instrument of salvation, must be united.

Historical events helped to make these ideas applicable. Chris-

tianity was legalized during the reign of Constantine and was made the official religion of the empire by Constantine's successors. The Christian God was installed as the official guardian of the affairs of the empire and thus Church and state shared a common responsibility. The emperors were of practical help in enforcing Church discipline because it was to their advantage to have a united organization. But the close of the fourth century saw the disintegration of the empire in the west and the migration into Italy of barbarians from the north. Although the foundations of the Church were shaken by this turn of political events, there had developed such an efficient organization that the claim of the Church to be superior to the state was partially justified in fact as well as in theory. It was the Church which was able to bring something of Graeco-Roman culture and a civilizing influence to Western Europe.

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## CHAPTER XII

## *TOWARD A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY*

Christianity had entered the Roman world as a new religion in an ancient culture. It entered the world of western Europe as a well-established religion in an infant culture. The Christianity which Europe inherited from the ancient world was, for the most part, a version which had passed through the temperament and intellect of Augustine and had emerged as a relatively complete philosophy.

### The Life of Augustine

Augustine (354-430) was a native of the town of Thagaste in that part of North Africa which is now Algeria. His mother was a Christian and gave her son the best religious instruction of which she was capable. Undoubtedly her understanding of Christianity was decidedly limited and clouded with superstition. However, she seems to have had sufficient wisdom, possibly prompted by her husband who did not share her Christian faith, not to urge Augustine to be baptized in the Catholic Church as a boy. It seemed better for him to pass through the fiery years of youth before availing himself of the cleansing power of the sacraments. Although his younger days were spent outside the Church, he acquired a deep religious interest of a philosophical variety. He was convinced that the meaning and goal of life was the attainment of a knowledge of God. Both during his training and later in his practice of the profession of teaching rhetoric, he had as his avocation the contemplative search for the truth.

Intellectually restless and religiously starved, Augustine was attracted by those societies and systems of thought which he felt might bring peace to his mind and sustenance to his soul. The Catholic Church was too loaded with dogma and ecclesiastical authority to suit his temperament, and the crude Latin translation

of the Scriptures offended his cultivated literary taste, so he formed his early associations elsewhere. While still in North Africa he became attached to Manichaeism, a form of Persian Gnosticism which had included in its system the person and work of Christ. It seemed more rationalistic and intellectually respectable than orthodox Christianity and claimed Augustine's loyalty for a period of nine years. His later writings offer some explanation as to his disillusionment with this movement, his criticisms emphasizing the inadequate solution of the problem of evil in the Manichaean dualism of light and darkness, or the eternal opposition of a power of evil to the power of good.

Augustine's temporary attachment to Manichaeism did not prevent him from following the individualistic path toward the goal of knowledge. His professional interests led him from North Africa to Rome, and there he fell under the influence of Skepticism. The Skeptics were busily arguing that it was impossible to attain certain knowledge concerning matters of experience. Not knowledge, but opinion, is the best that the physical sciences can give us. But if such doubt clouds the most persistent efforts of the human mind in trying to understand the physical world, what hope is there that we can determine the true causes which lie behind the world of appearance, and how can we possibly ascend to the knowledge of God and the moral principles inherent in the nature of things?

While wrestling with the doubts which his acquaintance with Skepticism had awakened in him, Augustine happily came upon a way to truth furnished by Neo-Platonism. The ultimate Reality or Being which formed the apex of Neo-Platonic thought seemed to Augustine the true object of his philosophical and religious quest. There were two results of his studies of Neo-Platonism at just this period of his life. In the first place, he felt that the God of Neo-Platonism was in essence the same as the Christian God, the Being whose will was revealed in the Scriptures and the Church. There appeared to be no reason, therefore, why he should longer remain outside the Catholic fold. In the second place, his delight in the teachings of the Neo-Platonists was followed by an experience not unlike a conversion. He made up his mind to forsake the concern

for earthly fame and devote himself exclusively to philosophical contemplation. But this conversion was soon followed by his baptism and membership in the Catholic Church. Thus Christianity and Neo-Platonic philosophy were intimately united in Augustine's personal experience, and through him this union passed into the main stream of Christian thought in the West.

After this experience, Augustine retired to his native town of Thagaste with a few congenial friends to cultivate a life of personal piety and philosophical contemplation. Soon, however, he was made, against his will, a presbyter in the church of the near-by city of Hippo and later he became its bishop. The task of administering an ecclesiastical organization led him more and more to substitute an interest in the authority of the institution for Neo-Platonic philosophy, although the latter never ceased to exert an influence on his thinking. Indeed, inconsistencies run through the Augustinian writings precisely because he was both philosopher and bishop. We shall here not be concerned with the intricate development of the thought of the man Augustine so much as with those ideas of his which formed the framework of Christian philosophy for centuries. First, it is necessary to learn something of the nature of Neo-Platonism.

## Neo-Platonism

This philosophy grew out of the same soil which had nourished the mystery religions, Gnosticism, Christianity, and the other philosophies and religions of the period. It is not strange that Neo-Platonism should have had certain features in common with them, but the verdict of history is that this philosophy, as set forth by Plotinus, was a more carefully developed system of thought than the others, and compared with them, was quite free from an undigested eclecticism. There does seem to be little question that it grew out of a scholarly reading of Plato's own works and a true appreciation of one aspect of the Platonic spirit. Plotinus, of course, could not escape the spirit of the third century A.D. any more than a modern philosopher can free himself from the scientific spirit which characterizes our day. The Platonic teachings which appealed to Plotinus were those which emphasized religion

and myth, imaginative flights and allegory, rather than those which were concerned with science.

The founder of Neo-Platonism was Ammonius Saccas, the place was Alexandria, and the time was the first half of the third century. We know little about Ammonius save that he was a Christian in his early life but later left the Church. The school which he founded proved to be very influential and some of his own pupils acquired a fame greater than that of their teacher. Among these were Origen, the great Christian theologian of Alexandria, and Plotinus. Plotinus was born in Lycopolis in Egypt about 204 A.D., and at the age of twenty-eight became a student in the school of Ammonius in Alexandria, where he stayed for about eleven years. He then moved to Rome and became the center of the Neo-Platonic school there. It is his writings which form the best source of our information concerning the actual doctrines of the philosophy.

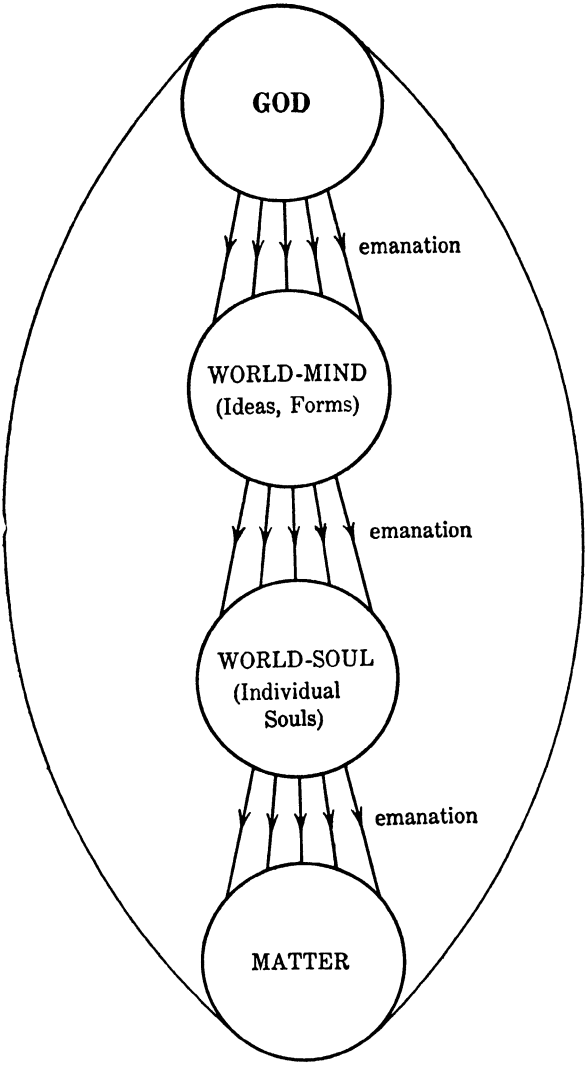
One way to understand the philosophy of Plotinus is to interpret his metaphysics in terms of his theory of human nature. Whereas Plato had said that "the state is the individual writ large," Plotinus saw in the universe as a whole those same elements which compose the human individual. If we know the nature of the self we have a good start in understanding the nature of reality. In his analysis of the self, Plotinus discovered three factors. In the first place, there is the physical part of one's nature, or the *body*. The second factor is *soul*. This term refers to the life function, the principle which accounts for such processes as nutrition and breathing, for sensation and practical reasoning. In the third place, there is *mind*. In addition to having sensory experiences, and in addition to the practical reason, man possesses a higher faculty of theoretical reason. By the term "mind" is meant this lofty rational faculty, the ability to understand those eternal principles, forms, or Platonic Ideas which constitute the structure of reality. Body, soul, and mind are the three parts of the human being.

The philosophy of Plotinus was built on this psychology and also on mysticism. In a mystical experience one tries to overcome his sense of individuality and to go beyond mere knowledge to an immediate intuition of that which lies at the very heart of reality. The climax of the mystical experience is the feeling of being ab-

sorbed in "The Whole," of being united with that which is the source of all existing things. The steps through which the mystic passes are three. First, he loses his awareness of his body, of the physical part of his nature. Next, he passes beyond any sense of his individual personality, his life functions, or soul. All that is left is the impersonal and universal realm of ideas. Finally, the ideas vanish and the mystic is united with the ultimate source of all things. This experience suggests the ascending order of importance of the four factors involved. The lowest in the scale is body. Above body is soul, and above soul is mind. That which has absolute being is that which lies beyond mind, and which Plotinus calls "The One." If we make The One the ultimate reality, and if we universalize the other three factors, we have a picture of Plotinus' world view. There is The One, the World-Mind, the World-Soul, and the physical world.

Let us consider this picture a little more in detail. The ultimate reality is neither the world of things of which we have sensations, nor the world of Platonic Ideas. It is much more like the Aristotelian Pure Form, or the Platonic Idea of the Good. It is beyond any of the Ideas of which we can conceive or to which we can assign names, such as number, equality, beauty, or justice. It is pure Being in which is contained all the possibilities which, when they are realized, make up the variety of things which we experience in our universe. Such a reality is so rich in possibility, and yet so definitely a unit, that the only term Plotinus is willing to use in referring to it is The One.

The One is the ultimate reality and the source of all else. The next problem is that of deriving the universe from its source. This is solved by pointing out that The One, being what it is, cannot help pouring out its essence any more than the sun, being what it is, can help sending out its heat and light. Just as the sun pours out its light until all the corners of the solar system are illumined, so from The One emanates reality until all possible forms and types of existence are actualized. Following the analogy of the sun a little further, we can see that although within a few miles of the sun the heat is almost as intense and the light almost as brilliant as the sun itself, this area is nevertheless different from the sun. In




The above sketch is oversimplified. God is the center of the Universe and the emanations proceed out of him in all directions.

like manner, as reality emanates from The One, it is separated from its source, is different and slightly less than The One. Thus the first emanation, although close to the source of all reality, becomes aware of its independence and experiences a yearning to turn back to The One. It becomes a subject seeking its object. This first emanation is the World-Mind, because the meaning of mind is to be a knowing subject seeking the object of knowledge. The World-Mind is merely a generalization of that type of intellectual activity which goes beyond the multiplicity of things to a contemplation of the Platonic Ideas, and which desires to come to rest in an apprehension of the unity of the universe.

Mind is only the first emanation. The real world is, as we know, much more than a system of timeless patterns or Ideas. In man himself contemplative reason is only a small part of his conscious life. He also has emotional drives and appetites, ears that hear and eyes that see, and an imagination which brings up memories of sights and sounds experienced in the past. That which accounts for all these familiar attributes of the self is a second emanation. Just as the World-Mind is an emanation from The One, so the Mind cannot help pouring out itself and having its emanation. That to which the Mind gives rise is the World-Soul. When the Soul realizes its separation from Mind it wishes to return to its source just as the Mind wishes to return to The One. But the best it can do in the realm of thought is to carry on the problem-solving sort of activity which we study in our courses in logic. It is not in its province to arrive at self-evident truths. As those rays of light, removed by a considerable distance from the sun, are still brilliant, but quite different from the sun itself, so the Soul, as a second emanation, is a vehicle of reality different from the Mind. The Soul, in addition to being the principle of reflective thinking, is also the principle of sensation and life which men and animals have in common. It may be that Plotinus was influenced by the Christian idea of the Trinity, or that both Plotinus and Christians drew from a common source. In any case, it is interesting to note that Plotinus' timeless reality was a trinity—The One, Mind, and Soul.

In the Soul emanation there is both a unity and a division into many souls. The Mind is a unity forming a single system of Ideas,

but Soul, although from one point of view a unified and single World-Soul, is also divided into the particular souls of individual beings. Furthermore, the souls of individuals are not merely parts of a general soul, but are quite separate and distinct from one another. The individual souls are also immortal. But we still have not accounted for the existence of the physical universe and the presence there of living bodies. The universe is one more emanation. The Soul, like The One and the Mind, necessarily generates something beyond itself and the result is the physical world and its law-abiding structure. Another phase of the Soul's emanation is its descent into individual bodies. The One, Mind, and Soul, although different from each other, have in common the attribute of spirituality. But the universe of experience is material. This means that by the time the light of reality has gone so far from its original source as to result in the physical world, it has begun to lose its brilliance and has grown dim. Whatever natural harmony the universe displays is an indication of its success in approximating the likeness of the World-Soul, but in the process of actualizing the many forms of existence, reality approaches at last the exhaustion of logical possibilities. As it approaches this end, the light of reality fades more and more until it comes at last to nothingness or complete darkness.

Although this result reminds us of that dualism of spirit and matter, good and evil, which we have found in Philo, the Gnostics, and Paul, we must note that there is nevertheless no dualism of eternally opposed positive powers of good and evil. The material world is an emanation whose ultimate source is the good God. It is merely so far removed from ultimate reality that the clear light has become crossed with shadows and finally fades into darkness. Thus evil is not a positive power, but merely the absence of good. In the darkness which is matter, the universe loses its absolute harmony and gives way to operations which involve conflict between the various beings of the world, bringing suffering to men, frustration of desires, limitation, strife, and destruction. The individual soul, having generated a material body, becomes involved in the evil of the darkness, often yields to the temptation to serve,

rather than to master, the passions of the body, and thus falls from its original state, bringing sin into the world.

Like the other religions and religious philosophies of the Roman world, Neo-Platonism had its theory of salvation, a theory which called for a long and arduous process of redemption. It had no dying and rising Savior-God with whom one could identify himself and thus become deified, and it tried to avoid the vulgarity of the initiation rites of the mysteries. Plotinus taught that if the soul were to extricate itself from the evil results of its fall, it must pass through a long period of self-discipline. In the first place, it must learn the value of the Stoic self-sufficiency and indifference to external things. Man must accept cheerfully his social obligations and discharge them honestly and unselfishly, but he must cease to look for his pleasure or life's meaning in the events which take place in the world about him. If this self-sufficiency is achieved, the soul has become emancipated from concern for the affairs of the body and is free to concentrate on higher things. This concentration is directed toward the intellectual task of trying to understand the permanent Ideas which lie behind the world of experience. There is no short-cut. One simply has to become a philosopher, and do some hard, metaphysical thinking, if he is to be saved. Philosophy carries him to the place where he can intuit at a glance the unity of the world, and finally he has a mystical experience in which he becomes re-united with The One. This is the final goal of the process of salvation.

### Neo-Platonism and Christianity

The relations between Neo-Platonism and Christianity were alternately friendly and antagonistic. Ammonius, as we have said, was himself brought up a Christian, and Origen, the Christian theologian, had much in common with Neo-Platonism. Plotinus' attitude was one of disdain rather than of hostility, but some of his followers, Porphyry, for example, were open and direct in their attack upon Christianity. In the fourth century, indeed, Neo-Platonism became the center of a united pagan effort to prevent the final triumph of Christianity in the Roman world.

From the beginning of its history, Christianity displayed an

amazing talent both to absorb the ideas and practices of its rivals and at the same time to be intolerant toward them. There is no doubt that by the fourth century Christianity was indebted not only to Judaism, but to the mysteries, Greek philosophy, and Gnosticism, for much of its intellectual content and many of its ritualistic forms. Unlike Judaism, it had become an international church. But it did not share the attitude of mutual tolerance which characterized the pagan religions. It stood firm in its conviction that it had the one and only truth. It refused to allow itself to be classed as one of many valid ways to salvation. Its Christ was not to be added to the list of deities all of whom were worthy of worship. He alone was the true Savior. The ability to draw unto itself the best of paganism made Christianity a strong contender in satisfying the religious yearnings of a large number of people. Its intolerance led it into many difficulties, but was also one of the chief factors leading to its ultimate triumph.

The growth of the Church resulted in its becoming a kind of religious nation within the empire, an organization which even dared to defy the supreme secular authority by refusing to worship the emperor. Like Judaism, Christianity could not reconcile its monotheism with the practice of offering sacrifices at the temples of the imperial cult. In the eyes of the public officials this attitude was the same as political disloyalty, and was evidence of the real danger which the growth of the Church presented. But official persecutions only served to strengthen the internal ecclesiastical organization. The struggle between Church and state took a new turn after Constantine's famous edict of Milan in 313, which was the beginning of Christianity's ascent to becoming the official religion of the empire.

But this political victory did not mean that the Church was victorious over pagan culture. Oriental, Greek, and Roman religions came to look upon Christianity as their common foe, and Neo-Platonism served as an intellectual basis for unifying a divided paganism. If the universe is a series of emanations from the One Absolute Being, and if it is the nature of The One to overflow until all possible types of existence are realized, then all the deities known to the Roman world had their places in "the great chain of being."

Each pagan cult was one way of realizing the divine presence in the world and of giving men a partial understanding of ultimate reality. In becoming a Neo-Platonic philosopher one became a cultivated gentleman-scholar, urbane and tolerant. He did not have to be "converted," or to forsake the religious cult to which he had formerly belonged. The more enlightened realized that the official creeds of old Greek and Roman religions were to them quite meaningless, but in turning to Neo-Platonic metaphysics they did not set out to destroy whatever of value these ancient beliefs had for the less cultivated part of the population. Such a doctrine turned out to be more than mere theory. It was also a fact that the oriental gods came to take their places at the empire's capital along with the old Roman gods. Only Christianity was despised by the others, and only Christianity appeared to be on the way to becoming *the* religion of the empire.

Persecutions of the Church had uniformly failed to impair its strength. Constantine himself had realized this fact and he took the attitude of toleration toward Christianity as well as toward the other religions. But Constantine's sons, themselves professing to be Christians, moved on toward a position diametrically opposed to the policy pursued before 313. They made Christianity official and set out to destroy paganism by legislation. It was now paganism's turn to resist persecution by becoming unified and instilled with new life. Its opportunity for official support arrived in the person of Julian who became emperor in 361. Like all members of the royal household, Julian was nominally Christian and received instruction from Christian teachers. But at heart he had a contempt for Christianity, while he admired everything that was Greek. When he became emperor he openly forsook Christianity and did everything he could to restore the power of pagan culture. He forbade Christians to teach classical literature, he opened the pagan temples, he tried to unify the non-Christian religions under the one religion of Hellenism with Neo-Platonism as its intellectual foundation. But his attempt failed. As a matter of fact, Christianity was not a barbarian religion at the opposite pole from Hellenism, for it had incorporated much of the wisdom of Greece in its theology. Julian had tried to bring to life a dying religion, and this

proved to be no match for the young, vital, well-organized, influential Christian Church. The final blow was that Neo-Platonism itself, which was to have been the center of the religion of Hellenism, was instead made an ally of Christianity. But this brings us back to Augustine.

## The Augustinian Synthesis

Augustine's first contact with Neo-Platonism followed upon his period of doubt which was awakened by association with the Skeptics. He was an apt pupil in the lesson of doubting everything, and upon this strange foundation built his theory of knowledge. He felt that one would remain a Skeptic only if he did not carry his doubting far enough. It may be the case that certainty is impossible concerning matters of sense experience, but of one thing there is certainty, namely, the fact of one's own existence. Doubting is thinking, and therefore one's very doubting is a demonstration of his own self-conscious reality. The more skeptical one is, the more certain he becomes that he, the skeptic, exists.

When we turn our attention to self-knowledge, we find that this self has possession of many ideas. Some of them, to be sure, have come to us by way of the senses, and about these there can be no certainty. Such experiences as sweet and sour, cold and hot, are not reliable and tell us nothing about the permanent nature of things. In true Platonic fashion, Augustine goes on to show that there are ideas of a different kind in our minds, ideas arrived at by the necessity of logical processes. These are not dependent upon shifting sense experience, but are the product of intellectual activity. Two and two are always four, and the sum of the angles of any triangle must be equal to two right angles. About such ideas there is no uncertainty. The intellect also perceives the difference between good and bad, beautiful and ugly, distinctions which are eternally valid and independent of changing circumstances.

So there is the intellectual sphere in which real knowledge can be found. But how can we account for the fact that our intellects do reveal the unchanging realities? It must be because the light of eternal truth illumines the inner eye of reason, and this truth can be none other than God himself. It is God who makes known to

men the eternal verities and in so doing makes himself known. Thus, if one starts out by doubting everything, he comes first to the certainty of his own self-consciousness, then to a knowledge of the eternal ideas, and finally to a knowledge of God, the source of truth.

In no part of his philosophy is Augustine's Neo-Platonism more apparent than in his idea of God. God is the one eternal Being; he alone is absolutely good and real; he is the source of all other things and without him there is nothing. Everything depends upon God for its existence and would lapse into nothingness were it not for the constant and creative divine energy. The world is essentially good inasmuch as it has its source in God. Evil is not a positive power; it is the absence of the creative activity of God. So far as the world is truly real it is good, but the actual world is neither completely real nor perfect. God alone possesses these characteristics because he is the one eternal Being. He is above time, his consciousness is an eternal present, he is changeless. Time and change belong to the created world and this accounts for the imperfection of existence. Only the changeless is completely good. And yet God's creative activity is continuous and because of this fact there is some reality even in the changing world.

These notions of the sole reality of God, and of the utter dependence of man and nature on God for their very existence, were central in Augustine's philosophy. Since God alone has true being, Augustine formulated the doctrine that God created the world out of nothing. The only opposition to God is non-being, and therefore the only opposition to goodness is the lack of goodness. Like Plotinus, Augustine gave a negative definition of evil. It follows that the only worthy goal of the intellectual quest is the knowledge of God. Nature as such is nothing. Its only reality consists in its reflection of the divine will. Augustine was no more interested than the Neo-Platonists in studying the physical world as an independent reality. The object of his quest was God, and the physical world meant nothing beyond an expression of God's creative activity and eternal providence. Providence was seen in all that truly had existence. This attitude and dominant set of interests account for the fact that the Augustinian Christian philosophy seems other-worldly.

Men habitually direct their energies toward things which seem to them important and, in the case of Augustine, what was important was the realm of spiritual realities. Christianity was not responsible for the growing lack of interest in natural science. Rather, Christianity had its early development in an intellectual environment where science was already unpopular. This same intellectual environment had fostered a reverence for writings of the past, and Christianity had its Bible. On questions of the nature of the physical world it is not strange, therefore, to find Augustine appealing to the Scriptures as the source of all necessary information. An interesting example of this point of view is found in *The City of God*, where Augustine is discussing the possibility of people living on the other side of the earth.

> But as to the fable that there are Antipodes, that is to say, men on the opposite side of the earth, where the sun rises when it sets to us, men who walk with their feet opposite ours, that is on no ground credible. And indeed it is not affirmed that this has been learned by historical knowledge, but by scientific conjecture, on the ground that the earth is suspended within the concavity of the sky, and that it has as much room on the one side as on the other: hence they say that the part which is beneath must also be inhabited. But they do not remark that although it is supposed or scientifically demonstrated that the world is of a round or spherical form, yet it does not follow that the other side of the earth is bare of water; nor even, though bare, does it immediately follow that it is peopled. For Scripture, which proves the truth of its historical statements by the accomplishments of its prophecies, gives no false information.[1]

Just as a modern person, impressed by science, will contrast scientifically proved statements with primitive biblical legends and myths, so we find Augustine contrasting scientific *conjecture* with the propositions of the Scriptures which are verified by means of the fulfillment of prophecy.

Man has no more independent existence than does nature. He too is nothing apart from God. To realize his true vocation and to live fully, man must cleave unto his Creator. To turn from God is to choose non-being rather than being, to choose death rather than life. And yet whatever goodness men possess is not an achievement

[1] Book XVI, chap. 9.

of their own; it is a gift from God. It seems that those to whom salvation comes are merely the fortunate ones upon whom God bestows his saving grace. And certainly a part of what it means to be saved is to have a mystic union with the divine source of being, an experience very much like salvation as described by Plotinus.

On these points Augustine is a loyal Neo-Platonist, and the essential emphasis of this philosophy colors his treatment of every item of Christian faith. To be sure, there were some modifications which his conversion to Christianity caused him to make. His God was far less removed from the actual world than was Plotinus' impersonal One. God was conscious of his creatures and loved them so much that he sent his own Son to redeem them from sin. Again, Augustine rejected the notion of emanation in favor of the Christian doctrine that God created the world out of nothing. The Christian Trinity also found a place in his theology. Yet in his discussion of this doctrine it was Neo-Platonism which led him to stress the unity of God and to employ psychological analogies in his explanation of the mutual relations among the three Persons of the Godhead. He seemed to think of God, not as a spiritual substance in which three persons share, but as the One Absolute Being who has three attributes, or three ways of manifesting himself. In this connection Augustine used the analogy of mind which has the three attributes or functions of memory, understanding, and will. "Since, then, these three, memory, understanding, will, are not three lives, but one life; nor three minds, but one mind; it follows certainly that neither are they three substances, but one substance."[2]

As a Christian theologian, Augustine faced a problem of knowledge which carried him beyond the philosophical speculations referred to at the beginning of this section. Christianity was a revealed religion and Augustine had to face the question as to the relation between revealed truth and philosophical knowledge. He seems to have arrived at no clear-cut solution of this question, but his general point of view was based upon two principles which became important elements in the Christian tradition. The first was a confidence in the ability of the intellect to demonstrate the reasonableness of the whole body of Christian doctrine. In his

[2] *On the Trinity*, Book X, chap. 11.

later years there were times when he seemed to despair of the power of human reason. By this time he had come to depend almost entirely on revelation, but in his philosophical moments he was still a seeker of truth and confident in man's ability to find it. In the second place, he laid down the principle that faith precedes knowledge, that is, that one must have faith in God in order to know him, one must have faith in Christian teachings in order to understand them. As the modern student comes upon this principle he may be inclined to smile at its naïveté. Reason, he believes, should be allowed to come to its own conclusions even though they may be contrary to the content of faith. All this principle seems to do is to limit intellectual activity to the task of demonstrating the truth of what is already accepted on faith. But if we look a little further we can see that Augustine had a valid psychological insight. Reason is not merely a machine which grinds out impersonal truths. It is always associated with purposeful activity and follows acts of the will. The whole line of modern physicists had faith in the intelligibility of the physical world prior to their discovery of specific physical laws. Men are by faith attached to the ideals of democracy before they offer rational justification for that political philosophy. A man standing outside the Christian tradition can no more understand the real content of Christian doctrine than he can see if he keeps his eyes closed. Faith in God must precede the perceiving of divine instruction. In Augustine, the dictum, "I believe in order that I may understand," had a real vitality. It becomes artificial when the "I believe" does not issue from a genuine act of will, but is merely giving a perfunctory intellectual assent to the authority of the past.

Among Augustine's theological teachings there are three which command our attention because of their influence on later Christianity. One of the these is his doctrine of man, including the ideas of the fall and original sin, and of salvation through the grace of God. The treatment of this theme is an illustration of Augustine's attempt to blend Neo-Platonism with his personal experience of the struggle against evil in his own soul, and with the prophetic religion of the Old Testament. The other two teachings to which we refer are his philosophy of history and his doctrine of the

Church. His thinking on both of these questions was influenced by the practical tasks he faced as a bishop of the Catholic Church. Let us consider each of these teachings.

### The Doctrine of Man

Men are among the beings of the created world which are dependent upon God. Their true vocation is to attend unto the divine voice and live according to the divine will. To turn from God to one's own personal ambitions is to turn from reality to nothing.

We shall see that Augustine had a doctrine of "the fall" which occupied an important place in his thinking, but he differed from Plato and the Neo-Platonists in that he denied the eternality of immaterial souls which descended into material bodies. On the contrary, man—soul *and* body—is a creature who has a beginning in time, and thus there is no preexistence of the soul. We find in Augustine those same two views of the nature of man which were a part of earlier Christian thought. On the one hand is the Platonic view that there is only a temporary and loose connection between man's soul and his body, and the former is the only really worthy part of his nature. Immortality and salvation are easily explained as the soul gaining its freedom from bondage to the body. As Platonist, Augustine seems to define the essence of man's nature as a soul inhabiting the body. On the other hand, man is much more a unity of soul and body in Augustine's philosophy than in Plato's. Thus, in Augustine, death, or separation of soul from body, is not looked upon as a desirable thing, but as a punishment. The final good is postponed until the day of resurrection when the soul and body can be reunited. Although apparently incompatible, both of these views of man were for a long time a part of Christian tradition. The former furnished a philosophical foundation for belief in immortality, but the latter better served the idea that the *whole* man was to be saved, and that the body was not merely to be despised. In retaining the latter view along with its Platonism, Christianity has always had a doctrine of man the full implications of which lead to a recognition of the value and dignity of the human body. That Augustine himself was puzzled by the problem of har-

monizing these views is shown in the fact that he asks more questions than he answers.

> What is man? Is he both of these (body and soul)? Or is he the body only, or the soul only? For although the things are two, soul and body, and although neither without the other could be called man (for the body would not be man without the soul, nor again would the soul be man if there were not a body animated by it), still it is possible that one of these may be held to be man, and may be called so. . . . This dispute is not easy to settle. . . .[3]

A good deal of Augustine's teaching about man centers around the problem of human freedom. What he has to say on the subject, when compared with his doctrines of original sin and of the need of grace, gives his philosophy the appearance of a mass of contradictions. And yet any attempt to think clearly on this problem is fraught with difficulties. Let us first state in a purely modern setting some of the assumptions which most of us make concerning this matter. In the first place, we all assume that we are to some extent free to act in this way or that way. Our whole system of justice rests upon the idea that any man who has not been officially diagnosed as insane is morally responsible for what he does, and deserves to be punished for criminal acts. To be a human being is to have moral responsibility. But, in the second place, we also assume that there are many determining factors, over which the individual has no control, which nevertheless are operative in influencing his behavior. For example, he cannot help having been born of his parents. He had no choice in that matter, and yet our biological studies make clear the part which one's heredity plays in determining the kind of person he becomes and consequently the acts which he performs. Again, the individual does not choose the sort of neighborhood, social class, or economic status of the family of which he is a member. However, sociological investigations leave no doubt that more criminals come from one type of social background than from another, and that in general one's social environment is added to one's heredity in determining his behavior. Analytical psychology, too, has revealed the fact that in each of us is a mental and emotional life which rarely reaches the level of consciousness, and

[3] *On the Morals of the Catholic Church*, chap. 4.

yet which accounts for many of our choices. Thus we assume both that we are free and that we are compelled by factors beyond our control in choosing alternatives which lie before us. In the third place, we are painfully aware of the inability of men to extricate themselves completely from the evils that beset them. In a period of economic distress it is impossible to know with certainty the cause of unemployment or the halting of the wheels of industry, and no plan has ever been put in effect which has resulted in permanent prosperity for all men. When someone paints a utopian picture we immediately grow skeptical and say it "won't work," that human beings are too selfish, and so we affirm a permanent moral weakness in human nature as such.

These same assumptions, elaborated from a theological point of view, run through Augustine's philosophy. Man has been created by God, is dependent upon him for his very existence, and yet has been created with free will. He can choose the greater or the lesser good, and his acts are his own. Still, men habitually choose the lesser good. They turn to a concern for themselves rather than to living for God. Indeed, mankind as a whole is so depraved and so bound by evil that the only way to account for its present condition is to assume that it has become infected with a moral disease. In other words, there has been a "fall," and that occurred in the life of the first man, Adam.

Augustine gives a detailed description of the nature of Adam's fall. He pictures the Garden of Eden as possessing the means to satisfy all good human desires. Adam has been created with free will, and, in the beginning, he possesses the highest imaginable righteousness and perfection. He is endowed with immortal youth and health, is immune to sickness and even death. He has superb mental powers and is able, both because of his innate character and because of his intelligence, to choose not to sin. Eve is given to him as a companion in the lovely garden, and they will have children, but only according to the dictates of high morality and superior wisdom, not accompanied by the disturbing emotions of sex which are experienced by people in their fallen state. But Adam eats of the forbidden fruit, and in so doing becomes the leading character in a cosmic tragedy. There is more than enough food in

the garden, and Adam has quite sufficient knowledge. Yet he goes out of his way to eat of the fruit of the tree of knowledge, wantonly disobeying the precise command of God. This act is symbolic of putting oneself before God, of serving selfish interests rather than living for the good of the whole. Thus Adam, who was created a perfect being, willfully turns from God and life and reality to self and death and nothingness.

There are two tragic results of Adam's fall. In the first place, having been created morally perfect, Adam becomes morally diseased. Instead of the good will and reason controlling his activities, he becomes subject to the tyranny of personal interests and ambitions. His moral degeneracy shows itself in the tendency to turn from the supreme and immutable good, or God, in order to find his satisfactions in that which is less than God, that is, in created things. An example of this is the arousing of the sexual passion and the desire to make of its satisfaction an end in itself. Thus the very act of begetting children is tainted with the original sin. Furthermore, since Adam becomes morally diseased before he has any children, he passes this disease on to all his progeny, and this means, of course, the whole human race. All of us, therefore, find that our freedom to choose the good life is limited by the evil nature we have inherited. We are still free to choose a lesser rather than a greater evil, we can choose to live a relatively virtuous life rather than the life of a criminal, but, no matter how hard we try, we cannot by our own efforts become wholly unselfish and live for God.

There is a second result of the original sin. Not only have we inherited Adam's moral weakness, we have also inherited the guilt of his disobedience and are subject to his punishment. The best way to make plausible the notion that all men are guilty of Adam's fall is to resort to Platonism. The Idea of Man is the reality in which individual men participate. According to this view, Adam was not merely the *first* man, he was *Man*. Adam is a name which stands for the whole human race, and in him the whole of mankind fell from its perfect state. In so far as we participate in the Idea of manhood, including its fallen condition, we are subject to punishment because we are all involved in the original guilt.

Up to this point Augustine's philosophy of man is pessimistic. It seems that all of us are depraved and have freedom only to sin. But optimism enters the picture when we remember that what man cannot do for himself God can and does do for him. Man, by his own efforts, can do nothing to overcome his initial handicap of original sin, but the grace of God can lift him from the level of sin to a life of devotion to divine purposes, restoring him to godliness and immortality. This grace comes as a free gift from God and not as a reward for man's goodness. Indeed, it is undeserved by any of us, and issues only from God's mercy and love. The great example of divine grace is the incarnation of God in Christ through whom we receive salvation. It is important to note that men do not achieve salvation, but that salvation comes to them as a free gift of God. Those upon whom grace is bestowed constitute the elect, and the rest of mankind continues to suffer the punishment which all men deserve.

The idea that God chooses some men to be saved and allows others to remain in their condition of depravity is known as predestination. Although this was a part of Augustine's philosophy, it was only one part. There was also the emphasis on individual endeavor and personal responsibility, even though this may be logically inconsistent with the doctrine of predestination. The notion that God saves some and damns others suggests an arbitrariness on the part of the Ruler of the universe, whereas Augustine's feeling for God was warmly devotional and he thought of God as loving and kind as well as the Supreme Being. It was the so-called Pelagian controversy which was the occasion of bringing out more emphatically and clearly the idea of predestination. Pelagius was a contemporary of Augustine, a British monk who was highly respected as a Christian teacher in Rome. He denied the doctrine of original sin and preached that each man has the same start in life that Adam had, except that all men since Adam have had the unfortunate example of the wickedness of others before them. Each of us is free to live the Christian life or to choose the life of wickedness. Pelagius was sincere in his belief that the idea of an inherited evil nature deterred men from doing their best, and he was anxious to raise the standard of moral living. But the Augustinian position

prevailed, largely because it provided a better basis for demonstrating the importance of the sacraments and the saving work over which the Church presided. If man could be saved only by the grace of God, and if the benefits of grace were mediated through the sacrificial work of Christ and the sacraments, then Christ was a unique figure and the Holy Catholic Church had a necessary place in the process of salvation. But if man could save himself, if Christ was merely a good example to be followed, there was little about Christianity which was distinctive. Furthermore, observation of certain facts concerning human nature suggests that Augustine had a valid insight. Whatever freedom men possess is decidedly limited, and selfishness is a deeply rooted characteristic in us all. It is at least reasonable to believe that the miracle of divine grace is necessary to make a man godlike.

## The City of God

In 410 Rome was sacked by the Goths. Plunder and destruction, exile and murder, were a part of this event which shook the very foundation of the world. Rome, for centuries the capital of a great empire, had fallen prey to barbarians. This seemed to be the end of the order which civilized Christians and pagans had known. Paganism, as a concerted movement to combat Christianity, was long since dead, but there were still many individual pagans who felt in their hearts a deep resentment of the empire's official religion. The sack of Rome brought forth from these pagans a literature of criticism, in which it was argued that Rome's disaster was a direct result of its abandoning the old gods and turning to the impotent God of the Christians. It was under the protecting care of the pagan gods that Rome had grown to a mighty power, and under the banner of Christianity it had seen its army defeated and its empire crumble.

Men seldom reflect on the meaning and destiny of the historical process when there is a well-established social order. There is a recognition of time and change, to be sure, and there is a vague awareness of the rise and fall of political powers in the past. But there is also the feeling that the social order to which they and their fathers and grandfathers have been accustomed cannot pos-

sibly give way to something entirely new. Certainly the Romans had good reason for feeling this way. Their city had been the first to create a genuine world empire. To Rome had come poets and philosophers and merchants from the far corners of what was thought to be the inhabited world. And yet the mighty Rome had fallen. No wonder reflective pagans pondered this extraordinary event and looked for an explanation of history.

Christians did not allow the pagan interpretation to go unchallenged. Augustine was in a particularly favorable position to refute the charge that Christianity was responsible for Rome's misfortunes. His diocese of Hippo was comparatively free of the devastating results of the sack of Rome. North Africa, as a matter of fact, was a refuge for many whose property had been confiscated but who had themselves escaped murder. Augustine was a native of North Africa where the heavy hand of the Roman government had aroused considerable resentment. He had never felt the pride in Rome which many Christians, as well as pagans, had known, and did not experience the same grief in its misfortunes. The renewed pagan attack on Christianity did not escape him, however, and in answer to it he produced *The City of God*, a monumental philosophy of history.

The first ten books of *The City of God* are devoted to refutation. Historical evidence is produced to show that the pagan gods did not, in fact, save Rome from perils in the past. They were not reliable in guaranteeing worldly success to those who worshiped them, and they were utterly useless in bringing men salvation in eternity. Augustine does not claim that the acceptance of Christianity by a nation necessarily means that the nation as such will be preserved. Christianity is not a religion which guarantees happiness on earth. The salvation which it brings is other-worldly. Still, one is better off, even in this life, if he is a Christian. On the one hand, then, pagans falsely claim for their gods the power to lead a nation to greatness, while these gods do nothing whatever to bring other-worldly salvation. On the other hand, the Christians correctly believe their God capable of bestowing eternal bliss on his worshipers, and, while not particularly concerned with earthly happiness, it nevertheless follows that Christians are better off even here

than are pagans. Augustine offers the following summary of the argument of the first ten books:

> And, therefore, in these ten books, though not meeting, I dare say, the expectation of some, yet I have, as the true God and Lord has vouchsafed to me, satisfied the desire of certain persons, by refuting the objections of the ungodly, who prefer their own gods to the Founder of the holy city, about which we undertook to speak. Of these ten books, the first five were directed against those who think we should worship the gods for the sake of the blessings of this life, and the second five against those who think we should worship them for the sake of the life which is to be after death. And now, in fulfillment of the promise I made in the first book, I shall go on to say, as God shall aid me, what I think needs to be said regarding the origin, history, and deserved ends of the two cities, which, as already remarked, are in this world commingled and implicated with one another.[4]

In the eleventh book Augustine begins his constructive philosophy of history. He finds the meaning of the historical process in an opposition of two cities—the City of God and the City of Satan. Men cannot clearly distinguish the outlines of these because in this world they are fused together. The origins of the two cities lie in a prehistorical event. God had created angels, all of whom were originally good. One of these angels committed the sin of pride, and tried to set himself up to be equal to God himself. Having ceased to abide by his true vocation of cleaving unto God, he became the founder of an evil city opposed to the City of God. To the former belong, not only Satan, but all those angels who, though created good, nevertheless suffered a defect of the will and put personal pride before the glory of God. To the latter belong those angels who persevered in their loyalty to God and who have remained eternally blessed.

History proper began with the creation of the world and of man. Adam, too, as we have seen, fell from his original condition of righteousness and passed his evil nature and his guilt on to successive generations of mankind. And yet the City of God was not completely lost in the affairs of the world, because God promised to redeem some of Adam's descendants and restore them to eternal

[4] Book X, chap. 32.

bliss. The meaning of history, between the fall of Adam and the coming of Christ, centers in the progress of the two cities, the City of God claiming for its membership those who somehow have not entirely lost the ability to be loyal to God. Thus Noah and his family were saved from the wholesale punishment at the time of the flood. The earth was repopulated through Noah's sons, from whom developed seventy-two nations and seventy-two languages. But the original language and people were Hebrew, which name comes from Heber, in the line of Shem and an ancestor of Abraham. The Hebrews, as a group, live closer to God than the others, and thus their history is the only significant history. All others are of the City of Satan. Only among the Hebrews do we find an appreciable number of individuals who cleave unto God, and only among the Hebrews do we find events which foreshadow the great revelation in Christ.

The all-important historical event was the Incarnation. The full and complete revelation arrived in Jesus Christ, the God-Man, and henceforth those who receive salvation through him are members of the City of God. The outlines of the two cities, after the time of Christ, are somewhat more easily distinguished. The Christian revelation is opposed to pagan knowledge, the Christian supernatural morality to natural morality, the Christian Church to worldly institutions. All those whose fortune it is to belong to the City of God are also members of the Christian Church. This does not mean that all members of the visible Church are also members of the elect.

> We must understand in one sense the kingdom of heaven in which exist together both he who breaks what he teaches and he who does it, the one being least, the other great, and in another sense the kingdom of heaven into which only he who does what he teaches shall enter. Consequently, where both classes exist, it is the Church as it now is, but where only the one shall exist, it is the Church as it is destined to be when no wicked person shall be in her.[5]

The consummation of the historical process is to be a "beyond history" event, or the end of the present order and the complete separation of the two cities. In that day, all members of the City of

[5] *The City of God*, Book XX (chap. 9).

God shall experience a resurrection of their bodies, which are to be reunited with their souls and enter into their perfectly blessed existence. All members of the City of Satan shall arise only to endure their eternal punishment.

In the light of such an exalted view of the meaning and destiny of human history, the fall of Rome is seen to be a relatively minor event. Rome had possessed some real virtues which enabled it to enjoy a measure of temporal greatness, but its downfall was inevitable because it did not see its true function as service of the one God. Rome, like all earthly powers, was ultimately a representative of the City of Satan. Only the Holy Catholic Church is permanent because this is the one earthly institution of the City of God.

## The Holy Catholic Church

After his conversion to Catholicism, Augustine was consistently loyal to the institution of the Church. His *City of God* was a philosophical justification of the importance of the Church in human history, and of its superiority to worldly institutions. But his ideas on the practical problems of ecclesiastical organization came out of his experience as an administrator trying to maintain a united Christendom. The defender of the Catholic Church had to do more than answer the pagan criticism of Christianity. It was all very well to talk of the Church against the world, but the facts were that there were divisions within Christianity itself. Arian churches still existed and had succeeded in gaining the patronage of barbarian princes. Manichaeism was still alive and, in spite of Augustine's refutation of Pelagius, the latter's influence continued to make itself felt. As philosopher, Augustine could turn his criticism upon these because they were heretical. They all had doctrines which were at variance with orthodox Catholic belief. But his most pressing problem in North Africa was the Donatist church which had been in existence for a century and which had the very same doctrines as Catholicism. It was in his conflict with the Donatists that Augustine worked out his ideas on the Church and the sacraments.

The origin of the Donatist church was a result of the persecution of the Christians under Diocletian in 305. At that time the govern-

mental officials demanded that the Christian clergy turn over their Scriptures to be destroyed. Those who refused were killed. Mensurius, bishop of Carthage, and Cecilian, his archdeacon, presented, not the sacred Scriptures, but a collection of heretical writings. Thus they were able to escape the death penalty and at the same time, so they hoped, avoid the stigma of being thought "traitors," as those members of the clergy were called who actually turned over the Scriptures in order to save their own necks. Several years later, when Mensurius died, Cecilian succeeded him as bishop and this brought forth serious objections from other bishops. The latter insisted that Cecilian and those who consecrated him were traitors. These bishops encouraged a group to secede from the church and elect a bishop of their own. Their first bishop, Majorinus, was soon replaced by Donatus from whom the new sect took its name. The Donatist church became rather powerful, particularly in North Africa, and in several towns, including Augustine's own diocese of Hippo, had a larger membership than the Catholics.

The only theoretical issue between the two groups was on the matter of the purity of the clergy. The more primitive doctrine was that the efficacy of the sacraments was related to the quality of life of the members of the clergy who administered them. Actually, the theory had been developing, and had come to be widely accepted, that the *office* of the bishop was holy, not the man who held the office, and the sacraments were holy, not the man who administered them. The Donatists, therefore, were appealing to the more primitive view. The important thing to note is that there were no differences of doctrine. That the Donatists succeeded in gaining so many adherents was probably due to two things. In the first place, it became popular with those puritanical souls who felt that a holy church must have a holy clergy. In the second place, it gained a following among the North Africans whose economic misery made them feel more at home in a persecuted church, a church which was not intimately associated with imperial power. The Catholic Church had come to be the religious side of the Roman government, while the Donatist church was more distinctively an expression of the situation in North Africa.

In his controversy with the Donatists, Augustine was led to state

more clearly than ever before the nature and function of the Church. On this question Augustine is not original, but merely clarifies the Christian tradition. Thus he starts from the well-established principle that the Church was founded by the Apostles and that the bishops of each generation were in direct line of apostolic succession. There is only one Church and in this organization alone is salvation to be found. The true Church of Christ is a unity both in doctrine and in organization. The heretics are to be condemned because they have wandered from true doctrine, such schismatics as the Donatists are to be condemned because they have seceded from the true organization. That Catholicism was the true Church and the Donatists schismatics is seen not only in the fact that the former is in direct line from the original Church founded by the Apostles, but that it is now world-wide in its actual geographical influence and is therefore catholic in the literal sense of the word.

On the real issue between the Donatists and the Catholics, Augustine reaffirmed the doctrine that the efficacy of the sacraments is independent of the personal worth of the clergy. But he brought out clearly two arguments in support of this. In the first place, he logically accused the Donatists of destroying the real meaning of the sacraments by making their importance depend upon human beings. In reality the sacraments are instruments of divine grace and are thus from God and not from men. No quality of personal life of the members of the clergy, however bad, can destroy the holiness of that which God has consecrated. In the second place, the philosophy of *The City of God* had made clear the fact that the company of the elect is not coextensive with the membership of the Church, although all the elect are in the Church. Thus there are two Churches, one invisible which includes only those predestined to salvation, the other visible which includes both the saved and the damned. It follows that both in its membership and in its clergy, the visible Church is composed of good and bad. But the sacraments are consistently holy.

Since it is only in the visible Church that members of the invisible City of God are to be found, it is clear that there is no salvation outside of the Church. Furthermore, since grace is so important in

Augustine's philosophy, the sacraments too, as the means through which grace is conferred, are magnified. Baptism, for example, is the sacrament through which the forgiveness of original sin takes place, but it does not automatically produce a fully disciplined life. When one has been very ill with a fever, says Augustine, he cannot regain health until the cause of the sickness has been removed. Baptism removes the cause of moral infirmity. On the other hand, there is the long process of growing well and regaining strength after the fever has been removed. These

> . . . two things are plainly shown in the psalm where we read, "who forgiveth all thine iniquities," which takes place in baptism, and then follows, "and healeth all thine infirmities," and this takes place by daily additions, while this image is being renewed.[6]

In the Donatist controversy Augustine had the further problem of deciding whether or not the sacraments were valid even when administered by a schismatic or heretical bishop. We should expect that he would have to admit their validity since the personal life of the bishop was supposed to be irrelevant. As a matter of fact, he does say that the benefits of baptism and of ordination remain even when conferred by a schismatic.

> For the sacrament of baptism is what the person possesses who is baptized; and the sacrament of conferring baptism is what he possesses who is ordained. And as the baptized person, if he depart from the unity of the Church, does not thereby lose the sacrament of baptism, so also he who is ordained, if he depart from the unity of the Church, does not lose the sacrament of conferring baptism.[7]

On the other hand, grace does not follow until one returns to the Catholic fold.

> But as, by reconciliation to unity, that begins to be profitably possessed which was possessed to no profit in exclusion from unity, so, by the same reconciliation, that begins to be profitable which without it was given to no profit.[8]

Here was an ecclesiastical theory which affirmed the infallibility and the unity of the Church, the superiority of the Church to

[6] *On the Trinity*, Book XLV, chap. 17.
[7] *On Baptism, Against the Donatists*, Book I, chap. 1.
[8] *Ibid.*

worldly institutions, and the Church as the exclusive means of salvation. But the theory still lacked one thing. There could be no real unity, and there could be no practical application of the idea of infallibility, until there was a recognized central authority. This difficulty was later removed when the bishopric of Rome was elevated to the papacy.

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# PART FIVE

## *MEDIEVAL PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION*

## CHAPTER XIII

# *THE MEDIEVAL THEOCRACY*

The death of Augustine in 430 A.D. marked the end of an epoch. In Augustine, as we have seen, the several elements which combined to form Christianity had been blended into a fairly harmonious whole and given theoretical formulation in terms of Neo-Platonic philosophy. Augustine's work was the last creative product of philosophers, whether Christian or pagan, in the Roman period. Within half a century after Augustine's death, Rome was finally conquered by the Goths. Rome had been attacked and overrun before, but the old empire had retained enough vitality to expel the invaders. Now the old order was exhausted. The barbarians, able to conquer but unable to rule, left the Roman world in chaos. The Middle Ages had begun.

While the Middle Ages did not inherit a stable government from the Roman Empire, they did inherit the idea of a world state. This inheritance was transmitted by the Church and idealized by St. Augustine's *City of God*. The form of this world state was conceived as an absolute monarchy ruling through a centralized hierarchy of officials. The bishops of Rome were especially devoted to this ideal, and lost no opportunity to impose their spiritual supremacy over other bishops. As the only probable successors to the Roman emperors in the West, the Roman bishops also began to entertain notions of temporal power and supremacy. In this way the Church transformed the Roman idea of world government into the Christian idea of a theocracy, governing the world through an ecclesiastical hierarchy with the pope at its head.

### The Growth and Theory of Papal Power

The only agency of law and order in the chaos following the fall of Rome was the Church. Divorced from political life, the Church was spared by the victors over the empire; impressive in her mag-

nificence, she aroused feelings of awe and respect in the minds of the barbarian conquerors. Thus it came about that during the period which followed the sack of Rome by the Goths, the Church was able to stand as a defense against anarchy. Here was an institution claiming supreme authority on earth in spiritual affairs, with its organization reaching throughout the empire, impressing men of all ranks and stations with its stability, its dignity, and its power. Hence the Church was in a position to begin the remarkable career which was to make her not merely the sole dispenser of eternal life and the arbiter of the intellect, but a great, and at times the supreme authority in civil affairs also—in short, the embodiment of the theocratic ideal.

*The Extension of Spiritual Power.*—Its leaders were not slow to rise to their opportunity and their responsibility. The bishops of Rome, claiming the title of pope, now rapidly extended their ecclesiastical as well as their temporal power. Let us consider first the extension of ecclesiastical authority by the Roman bishops. Leo the Great, who held his office from 440 to 461, asserted the supremacy of the bishop of Rome over the churches of the empire in "judicial and military matters." He supported his claim by the tradition that the church at Rome had been founded by Peter. Since Peter was the prince of the Apostles, to whom Christ had said, "Thou art Peter and on this rock will I build my church," the Roman bishops were held to be the successors of Peter. This claim was indorsed by the Emperor Valentinian in 445 and, although its legitimacy was questioned for a time, it finally was generally recognized.

We may suspect that the ultimate establishment of Leo's claim for the Roman See was due not alone to his appeal to Scripture and the imperial indorsement, but in the last analysis to the practical achievement of another pope, Gregory the Great. Pope from 590 to 604, he was so competent as statesman and administrator that he was able to convert the theoretical power of Rome over distant churches into actual influence.

Leo's appeal to scriptural support of the papal claim proved to be of capital significance. This scriptural basis remains the principal support of papal authority among Catholics to this day. Moreover,

the successful establishment of papal authority over the ecclesiastical organization was easily extended to the claim of papal infallibility.

In a previous chapter we have seen how the practical necessities of dealing with heretics developed the doctrine of an infallible Church: the appeal in case of dispute to an infallible Scripture, in turn to an infallible Church to determine what books were to be accredited as Scripture and what their authoritative interpretation was to be. Only by this principle of authority was the Church enabled to achieve unity in its formative years and to maintain it thereafter. The belief that the Church was infallible and that the pope was its head led to the natural conclusion that the pope too was infallible. For this extension of the doctrine of authority to include papal infallibility there was the powerful motive of maintaining unity in the Church. Was there not a scriptural injunction that there should be one faith in all the church? St. Paul had urged that all Christians agree and permit no schisms among themselves.[1] "This," as St. Thomas said, "cannot be assured unless when a question of faith arises it is determined by him who presides over the whole Church, so that his opinion may be firmly held by all the Church."[2] If Christendom is to be one in faith and order, there must be a final authority accepted by all. The only alternative to the doctrine of an infallible pope is to vest the final authority in a council. But councils cannot always agree. In any event, the Conciliar Movement in the fourteenth century was not destined to succeed, and while the doctrine of papal infallibility did not become an official dogma of the Church until its pronouncement by the Vatican Council in 1870, it was common in medieval times.

*The Growth of Temporal Power.*—After the time of Gregory the Great the claim of the bishops of Rome to the position of supreme head of the Church in the West was not seriously challenged. Just what this primacy involved, was, however, disputed. Some held that it had to do only with religious and churchly affairs; others held that it included also authority of the pope over civil states and their rulers.

The popes did not, in the first place, compete for civil power.

[1] I Cor. 1:10.

[2] *Summa Theologiae*, IIb, 1:10.

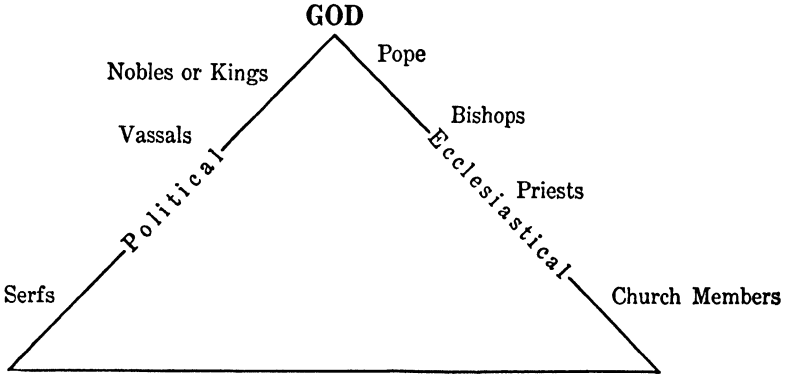
They took it by default. Thus, when the Vandals sacked Rome in 445, Pope Leo, mentioned above, represented the city in treating with the conquerors. Again, Gregory the Great conducted the defense of the city against the Lombards and negotiated the final peace with them. These popes assumed temporal functions because there was no civil power remaining for these necessary tasks. Having assumed command in the dark days of confusion after the barbarian invasions, it was but natural that the popes should continue to claim temporal power even after kings and emperors once more asserted their own prerogatives. Except under Charlemagne, whose rule was complete, even over the pope, the latter claimed and exercised authority over medieval rulers and thus over their states until the end of the thirteenth century.

Theory as to the proper division of jurisdiction between Church and state, pope and king or emperor, underwent various changes in response to the actual power any given pope had or hoped to achieve. All versions of papal claims did, however, root in Augustine's assertion, in general terms, of the supremacy of the Church over the state. Pope Gelasius I, in 494, gave classic formulation to the doctrine of the two powers, the spiritual and the civil. This formulation is known as the Gelasian theory. According to it the supremacy of the Church and the duty of the temporal sovereign to submit to the pope in religious matters are asserted. While the papacy thus claimed spiritual jurisdiction over the persons of rulers as well as over their subjects, its claims did not extend to any political authority. The emperor was recognized as having complete control over political matters. This significant recognition of the mutual independence of the two spheres—the spiritual and the temporal—long remained normative.[3] It found biblical support in Jesus' own words, "Render unto Caesar the things that are Caesar's and unto God the things that are God's."

This nice theoretical distinction between the two powers or spheres was difficult to maintain in practice. As the actual power of the papacy over temporal rulers grew, theoretical defense kept pace with existing fact. Thus, when Gregory VII came to the throne of

[3] It was adopted by St. Thomas and remains the authoritative Catholic formula for the division of spiritual and temporal authority at the present time.

St. Peter in 1073, he not only ruled the Church and all her clergy with an iron hand, but, in his *Dictatus Papae*, asserted that the Roman Church has never erred, and never would. He deduced from the pope's religious supremacy the power to absolve subjects from their oath of allegiance to civil rulers, the right to depose emperors, and the exclusive use of the imperial insignia for himself. If put into effect, then with the pope as God's vice-regent, the Church would absorb the state, and the government of the world




SKETCH ILLUSTRATING THE HIERARCHICAL STRUCTURE OF MEDIEVAL EUROPEAN SOCIETY

(If the pope were regarded as superior to the civil rulers, he would take his place at the apex of the triangle, above kings as well as above bishops.)

would be a great theocracy, with emperors, kings and princes as vassals holding their domains as papal fiefs.

Nor was this an empty dream on Gregory's part. Faced with rebellion by the German King Henry IV against certain papal measures of reform, Gregory excommunicated and deposed Henry, released his subjects from their oath of allegiance, and forbade anyone to serve him as king. Gregory knew that he had won at least the first phase of this struggle when Henry, in the midst of winter, made his way over Alpine passes into Italy to stand humiliated before the pope and beg absolution.

With the election of Innocent III in 1198 the greatest of the medieval popes came to office. He extended his power at the expense of the emperor. He enlarged the independent papal states by conquest, decided between candidates for the imperial throne, undercut

the support of the German crown by "freeing" German churches from royal control. When Otto IV, who had become emperor by Innocent's decision in 1200, turned against the papal policies, the pope did not hesitate to foment civil wars that brought about Otto's undoing. When this had been achieved, Innocent III confirmed in office a new emperor and deposed and excommunicated Otto.

This powerful pope justified his intervention in temporal affairs on the theory that the pope, as the Vicar of Christ, is lord of earthly states as well as of the Church. He held that princes, like bishops, are his agents since the successor of Peter "has been established as mediator between God and man, below God but above man; . . . who shall judge all and be judged by no one."[4] Specifically, Gregory held that the papal function of crowning emperors implied the function to examine and, if need be, to reject them.

The claims to papal supremacy reached their apex with Boniface VIII (pope from 1294 to 1303) who, in the bull *Unam sanctam*, held that in the power granted to Peter "there are two swords, the spiritual and the temporal. . . . Both the spiritual and the material swords are in the power of the Church; the latter is wielded for the Church, the former by the Church; the one by priests, the other by kings and soldiers but at the command or with the approval of the priest. Moreover, one sword ought to be under the other and the temporal power ought to be subject to the spiritual." He went on to make subjection to papal authority an article of faith and therefore necessary to salvation, saying that "it is altogether necessary

[4] Another defense of churchly temporal power was made by appeal to the so-called Donation of Constantine. This purported to be an official decree of the Byzantine Emperor Constantine declaring that the See of Peter should be supreme over all the churches of the earth, conveying to the Bishop Sylvester (999-1003) not only the Lateran palace in Rome but the city itself, and transferring to Sylvester sovereignty over "all provinces and cities of Italy or the western regions." A forgery, this document "acquired canonical authority and until the fifteenth century, when its spurious character was exposed, it constituted one of the strongest supports to the papal claim to political authority. If Christ's words to Peter formed the charter of the Pope's spiritual power, Constantine's supposed gift to Sylvester was widely appealed to as the charter of his temporal power." A. C. McGiffert, *A History of Christian Thought* (New York: Scribners, 1933), Vol. II, pp. 336-337.

for the salvation of every human creature to be subject to the Roman pontiff."[5]

But Boniface was unable to make good his bold claims to temporal supremacy. Involved in a dispute with Philip IV of France over the King's power to tax the clergy, the pope announced the old principle that the clergy were not to contribute to the support of the state without the consent of Rome. Philip replied by forbidding, on pain of death, the export from France to Rome of any money and negotiable paper whatever. The financial structure of the papacy was thus threatened and the pope had to retract. The resultant peace was brief, however. A few years later the contest was renewed over the question of whether a member of the clergy could be tried in secular courts. When the pope denied the secular courts this power, and reasserted his supremacy over the king, the latter worked up public opinion against the pope. The quarrel flourished. Philip planned a general council which would try to depose the pope. Part of this scheme was that Boniface was to be seized and made a prisoner of Philip. A new papal election was to determine Boniface's successor. In return Boniface prepared a bull in which Philip was excommunicated.

While Philip's plans partly miscarried, the shocking turn of events probably hastened the pope's death. The aftermath demonstrated the complete victory of the French king. The papacy, with its seat removed to the French town of Avignon for seventy years after 1305, its incumbent elected by a French college of cardinals, became subordinate to the royal power in all matters of dispute.

The results of the conflict between Boniface and Philip illustrate how the papacy, trying to carry out the theocratic ideal, met with an opposition of fact and theory that it could not overcome. The temporal power, represented by the young and vigorous monarchies of western Europe, grew too strong for continued subordination to papal domination. The opponents of the theocratic claims of the papacy did not lack theory to support the growing independence of kings. Such theory centered in the doctrine of the divine right of kings. Like the papal party, the nationalists also could quote Scripture to buttress their position. Had not Peter and Paul both con-

[5] As quoted by McGiffert, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 340-341.

ceded that kings rule by divine right? As it turned out, the doctrine of civil independence from the Church had to wait for its practical triumph until the rise of nationalism which gave to monarchs the actual power to withstand the encroachments of the papacy. The triumph of Philip the Fair over Boniface VIII was a sign of the decline of papal power. But it was a sign also of the end of the Middle Ages.[6]

The full development of the doctrine of authority, which lies at the root of the Catholic system, does indeed involve the superiority of Church over state. It is the medieval version of the ancient conception of control over the whole of life by priests, who as divine agents administer God's rule directly. Under this theory of priestly omnipotence, the state is theoretically subordinated to the Church, as an organ under the control of the Church for the governance of temporal things, for the bringing of temporal relations and values under the absolute spiritual purpose of life which the priestly hierarchy guards and promotes. "The dogma of the universal episcopate required as its complement the dogma of theocracy."[7] Thus regarded, the Church is the divine empire; the pope is God's vice-regent, a terrestrial governor-general, and all the machinery of civil government is subject to ecclesiastical control. Any challenge to such control or disobedience to it becomes heresy and idolatry—a challenge to the principle of authority, and as such, treason against the divinely established order. Since the salvation of souls was believed to depend upon that order and upon the authority behind it, the opponent of theocracy was regarded as a traitor against the Church and a rebel against God. As such, he was held to deserve the usual penalties of excommunication or death.

This somewhat extravagant claim to authority by the Church over the lives of men did not, in the end, rest upon theory very far removed from practical concerns. The theocratic ideal, indeed, had

[6] In our time the Church adheres in general to the Gelasian formula, with its division of jurisdiction between Church and state; but there are areas of conflict, since it is not always possible to draw a line between matters of faith and morals on one side and matters of state on the other.

[7] Ernest Troeltsch, *The Social Teachings of the Christian Churches* (New York: Macmillan, 1931), Vol. I, p. 229.

a good deal of practical justification and reason for being. There is, in the first place, the fact that in the Middle Ages temporal power came to the Church by default. We have already seen how, after the fall of Rome, the Church alone stood against anarchy and possessed machinery for the maintenance of law and order. There was throughout the early Middle Ages no civil ruler who could successfully rule, without the help of the Church, beyond his own city or district, nor was there any civil administrative machinery to carry on more than local government. Moreover, the Church as a central authority, universal in scope, actually served the equivalent of a powerful league of nations. While the Church herself was not above crass interests which she sometimes pursued with military weapons, the fact remains that she did mitigate strife between petty principalities and was able many times to enforce her peace upon European civilization.

The beneficent effects of the medieval theocracy extended also to economic and commercial life. It subordinated commercial considerations to the religious goal of life and held that economic activities were just one phase of personal conduct to which the rules of morality fully applied. Hence there was in the Middle Ages no separation between "religion" and business. All of life's activities were held to be subject to religious interpretation and regulation. Speculation, profiteering, and the taking of interest were effectively condemned on religious grounds.

The Church claimed and seized power, she defended her authority in theory and partially, at least, justified it by her works. But her power might be challenged, its rationale disputed, and her good works annulled by venery and abuse. There was, however, a foundation stone of the Church's authority in the unquestioned belief that the Church was the "Ark of Salvation," that outside of the Church there was no possibility of eternal life. To challenge the authority of the Church meant to jeopardize one's hope of Heaven.

### The Church as the Ark of Salvation

The Church's claim to a virtual monopoly of the means of salvation has its roots in the old distinction between the natural and the supernatural, between the flesh and the spirit. This dualism,

which we first encountered in connection with the Orphic mystery, found its way into the very heart of Christian belief. St. Paul interpreted his own struggles with sin as the warfare between the flesh and the spirit; the natural man must be overcome by the spiritual before there is any triumph over sin and any hope of eternal salvation. Moreover, for Paul, the spiritual life does not develop out of the natural; it is a supernatural gift. This dualism between body and soul, flesh and spirit, between the natural and the supernatural, was central also in the religious Platonism which we found dominant in early Christian thought. This pessimistic view of human nature and of the world filled men with a sense of human corruption and of the worthlessness of the present world. The only hope of salvation was from supernatural power of some sort. To gain salvation man must be born again; he must indeed be *re-created.* As St. Paul said, Christ must be born in him. All of man's efforts, unaided, were held to be vain. It was upon this sense of man's corruption and consequent hopeless state that the Catholic system was erected. While Augustine's extreme doctrine of original sin and predestination did not command popular belief (it had to await Protestantism for this) the conviction of man's impotence to save himself by his unaided efforts was part of both popular and official Catholic doctrine in the Middle Ages. Indeed, there was always some emphasis on human effort and merit, stemming back to the Jewish strain in the Christian heritage. But this never came to mean more than that man must make right use of the divine help that comes to him through grace. Without grace man could not even begin to be good; without regeneration he was doomed to destruction.

The medieval view of man regarded him not only as corrupt, but as fallen. Unlike the modern theory of evolution, which regards man as having ascended from lower to higher moral levels, the Christian notion was that man had been created in a condition of perfection—holy and innocent—from which he had fallen. Having fallen and offended against the divine law, man is doomed to eternal punishment. God in his righteousness can allow no sin to go unpunished. But God is also merciful, and has provided for guilty men a way of escape from the consequences of their sin. This way of escape God has provided in Christianity, with its scheme of salva-

tion. Central in this plan for man's salvation is the work of Christ as Savior. His sacrifice on the cross atoned for man's sin and satisfied the divine justice. Moreover, by grace Christ may come to take possession of man's soul, transforming his natural nature into the supernatural, liberating him from the bondage of the flesh into the freedom of the spirit.

The view of the Church as the exclusive ark of salvation, then, was based on the belief in the essentially evil character of human nature and in man's consequent need for salvation. To be saved one had to be a member of the Church, since the power of conferring saving grace was assumed to have been conferred by Christ upon his Apostles, and by these in turn on their successors, the bishops. To be out of communion with the bishop meant, therefore, to be out of communion with Christ. The priests, ordained to their tasks by the bishops, became the mediators of saving grace. But even as the laity were dependent upon the priest, so the priest was dependent upon the bishop. Thus we can see how important in the medieval scheme of salvation the bishops were; where they were, there was Christ's Church, there was the fount of grace, the source of salvation.

The importance of being in communion with the Church, as this presented itself to the medieval mind, can be made most clear in connection with the sacraments. The sacraments are the means of grace, by which the Church mediates salvation to the faithful. Once it is believed that there is no salvation without grace, that the sacraments are the means of grace, and that the Church alone has power to administer the sacraments, we have sufficient basis for the acceptance of the *authority* of the Church. She who controls the "medicine of immortality" can effectively command obedience in all things! As McGiffert has well summarized the point:

> Upon one thing there was general agreement. If a person is to be saved he must have the divine grace which is imparted through the sacraments alone. As the authorized dispenser of these sacraments the Catholic church seemed to most men indispensable. This it was above all else that gave it its hold upon them and kept them loyal to it even when they might, as was often the case, chafe under its restrictions, or feel impatient with its failures, or deplore the frequent worldliness of its rulers and the unworthiness of its priests. Not only de-

vout believers but even the most indifferent and least religious-minded men might well hesitate to cut themselves off from its ministrations, or die outside its pale, when to do so meant possibly if not certainly to forfeit the hope of eternal life and incur the risk of everlasting punishment.[8]

Therefore, instead of saying that the Church dispenses sacramental grace *and* is the supreme authority on earth, we may with reason say the Church was regarded as the supreme authority on earth *because* she dispensed sacramental grace. Once this point is grasped, it will be clear why Luther could not remain within the fold of the Church after he had enunciated his doctrine of salvation by faith alone; this made the sacraments unnecessary as a means of grace and consequently undercut the authority of the Church.

## The Sacramental System

From the beginning of our survey of philosophy and religion we have seen that religion is intimately connected with man's quest for well-being. All religions we have encountered provided their adherents not only with a body of beliefs about the supernatural world which was supposed to control the destiny of men and to prescribe the nature and condition of salvation; these religions, whether primitive, Hebrew, Greek, or Christian, have also provided a more or less elaborate technique for coming to terms with the divine and for appropriating supernatural powers for the fulfillment of life's meaning and destiny. Medieval Christianity, being a thoroughly other-worldly religion, was concerned chiefly with those techniques or ceremonies which were designed to keep men out of the clutches of Satan and to forward their progress toward eternal life. The Catholic sacraments constitute this system of ceremonies that surrounds the Christian with the means of divine help, i.e., with grace, from birth to the grave.

St. Augustine had recognized but three sacraments: baptism, ordination, and the eucharist; but the tendency in medieval religion was to enlarge the number to include any holy act or rite which was thought to symbolize divine things or transmit grace. But since they were not all of equal importance, some being thought necessary

[8] A. C. McGiffert, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 357-358.

to salvation, others not, it came about that the theologians began to give more specific definition to the nature of a sacrament and to distinguish between sacraments and sacramentals. Abélard recognized five sacraments: baptism, confirmation, the eucharist, extreme unction, and marriage. To these were added penance and ordination, making a total of seven; these were adopted by Peter Lombard (1100-1164), accepted by St. Thomas, and officially sanctioned by the Council of Florence in 1439.

Augustine had defined a sacrament as "the sign of a sacred thing." Some held that they were signs only; others said that they were effective signs, actually conveying grace. Opinion wavered for a time between these symbolic interpretations on the one hand and the more realistic view on the other. The debate was finally settled, first by a papal bull and then by the Council of Trent, with the official declaration (1563) that the sacraments contain and confer grace. Moreover, they convey grace *ex opere operato*, i.e., by virtue of what they are, independently of the character of the priest who administers them (so long as he is a duly ordained priest and intends to perform the rite) and of the faith of the recipient, though Catholics since the Middle Ages have agreed that they must be received worthily.

In the sacraments, then, the medieval Church had a mantle of ceremony with which to cloak every significant stage of life. Baptism removed the stain of original sin. Confirmation confirmed the adolescent in his faith. Ordination brought the special benediction of God upon the young priest about to assume holy orders. Marriage redeemed sex relations from their sinful character and blessed the union of man and wife. Penance provided for the possibility of absolution from sinful conduct after baptism, while extreme unction restored to health a person in the presence of death or tided him safely into eternity. The chief of the sacraments was the holy eucharist, which in Catholic hands lost its early significance as a memorial meal and became the repetition of the sacrificial death of Christ with its attendant renewal of divine grace. This involved the doctrine of transubstantiation according to which the bread and wine were miraculously transformed into the very body and blood of Christ. As the Mass, this sacrament remains the central act of

Catholic worship. Here, it is taught, the sacrifice of Christ on the Cross is repeated with every celebration, bringing a renewed outpouring of its gracious benefits to the faithful communicant.

### Medieval Other-worldliness

The pessimistic view of human nature which dominated medieval thought and determined its scheme of salvation had its counterpart in a similar attitude toward man's world. The present world was regarded as sharing in man's corruption and his doom. The world was not something to be improved, much less to be enjoyed; it was something from which to be saved. Hence the dominant note in the medieval outlook was other-worldliness. The real Christian regarded himself as belonging already to the other world. His interest was directed to higher things, his goal was the future life. He who would possess this goal must forgo the pleasures and enjoyments of this life. Indeed, the restraint of worldly desires and the self-denial of worldly pleasures were regarded as aids and conditions to the enjoyment of heaven. The more one denied himself here, the greater his joy in heaven. Without the sacrifice of earthly joys, heavenly delight could not be had. This life, accordingly, was significant only as a period of probation before the next. If one was a good probationer, he might look forward to the rewards of the future. Quite logically, therefore, the monastic life with its vows of poverty, chastity, and obedience was regarded as ideal.

This concentration upon the next world was reflected also in the prevailing social attitude. To love one's neighbor entailed no responsibilities toward his present lot; earthly conditions were of no importance; the only thing that mattered was the salvation of immortal souls. These were of such transcendent importance that it might even be considered a kindness to place a heretic, whose soul was in danger, upon the rack or to burn his body in the flames of the holy Inquisition. Moreover, the medieval religious life knew nothing of social service; charity was useful only as a discipline for him who gave it; and social reform was without religious motive. These interests had to wait for a totally different estimate of the present world.

Finally, medieval other-worldliness was reflected in the attitude

toward nature. The natural environment lost all independent interest. If it was studied at all, it was for the light it might shed on supernatural things. Any importance natural science might have was as an aid to theology. Like ourselves, the medieval man desired to understand his world; not for itself, however, but as a clue to life's eternal meaning and as a sign of God's purpose. His ready faith in miracle was consistent with this attitude. While each sacrament was a *special* miracle, bearing witness to the intervening power of God, the medieval mind was prepared to see the hand of God in *every* event. The unseen world was always very near and miracle everywhere. This faith in the miraculous ranged all the way from the credulity of the ignorant peasant to the basic assumptions of the scholar. It was simply part of the medieval man's outlook to view the world as a stage where one act, at least, of a cosmic drama was being performed. He accordingly sought an explanation of every detail in terms of the ideas and intentions of the cosmic playwright and director. Nothing that happened was either too great or too small to be explained in terms of God's purposes in his providential control of the world. Contrary to our modern scientific attitude which seeks to find out *how* things happen, the medieval attitude sought to know *why* they happen. Hence it came about that the medieval science was theology, which concerned itself with God and his purpose for the world. Instead of interpreting nature and human experience in material and mechanical terms, the medieval thinker sought to interpret what he saw in moral and personal terms. He had the same motive as we, namely, to understand; but since his prime concern was to reach heaven, not to control this world, his speculative efforts were directed to the ways of God. The result was not a science of natural law but a science of divine purposes, namely, theology. This leads us to the next chapter, where we shall seek to find our way through medieval thought.

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# CHAPTER XIV

# *CHRISTIAN SCHOLASTICISM*

## The Degradation of Learning

The political decline of Rome was paralleled by intellectual decadence. Neo-Platonism, the dominant philosophy of the late empire, had given large place to feeling and faith. This pagan accent on faith was congenial to the necessity of the Christian Church to elevate authority above individual opinion if she was to preserve her unity and fulfill her aims. The ultimate subordination of free intellectual inquiry to obedient acceptance of religious authority finds classic expression in Augustine's dictum that we should believe in order to know—a complete reversal of the Greek spirit which sought knowledge, based on reason, before believing. The triumph of Christianity, with its doctrine of authority, resulted in the subordination of all forms of pagan learning to the demands of Christian education and defense. Philosophy was regarded, not as an independent search after truth, but as a tool for the defense and formulation of Christian doctrine. History was transformed into a Christian apologetic, as when Orosius wrote his *Seven Books of History against the Pagans*. Written at the suggestion of Augustine, this work was a reply to the pagan charge that the troubled times were due to the spread of Christianity. As such, it was a case of special pleading rather than impartial historiography. The ultimate degradation of pagan learning is aptly illustrated in the famous rebuke which Gregory the Great (died 604) administered to the Bishop of Vienne. "A report has reached us," wrote Gregory, "which we cannot mention without a blush, that thou expoundest grammar to thy friends. Whereat we are so offended and filled with scorn that our former opinion of thee is turned to mourning. The same mouth singeth not the praises of Jove and the praises of Christ."[1]

[1] As quoted by A. K. Rogers, *A Student's History of Philosophy* (New York: Macmillan, 1929), p. 203.

With this attitude toward pagan learning prevailing, we are prepared to find the decadence of learning which characterized the period of three hundred years from the fall of Rome to the time of Charlemagne, when creditable scholarship began to revive. Scholarly activity did not wholly cease, but it spent itself in compilations of learning designed as aids to Christian instruction. Governed solely by the test of promoting the faith, what passed for works of scholarship was a hodge-podge of ancient science, pseudo-science, and myth—uninteresting as well as inaccurate.

## Birth of Scholasticism

Charlemagne revived the Roman Empire and had himself crowned emperor in the year 800. We may profitably fix upon this event as the symbol of the restoration of centralized secular authority and its attendant improvement of public order in western Europe. The coronation of Charles had not only political significance; it marked also the revival of a measure of original scholarship and intellectual activity. But when men once more had time and security to devote themselves to intellectual pursuits, these were carried on within fixed limits of interest, attitude, and method.

The dominant interest of every medieval thinker was eternal salvation. Following Augustine, who had written, "God and the soul, these will I know, and these are all," the medieval mind was filled with contempt for the things of this world except as these might serve as a symbol of the supernatural and a means to eternal life. Along with this center of interest, the medieval scholar believed that the truth which guides men to life's supreme goal lies in old writings—in the Scriptures and in the works of the Church Fathers. This conviction led them to approach the writings of the past with an attitude of deference and respect. Given his central interest in theology and his attitude of respect for authoritative writings, the scholar had his method already determined. Instead of free rational inquiry and investigation, with independent speculation, the medieval scholar devoted himself to a careful, reflective reworking of old materials. Reason, of course, was active in this process, but it acted only within the framework of doctrine assumed to be true. Its function was to explain, not to criticize. The deference to authority

and the method which this involved are admirably set forth in the following passage:

> The medieval scholar could hardly read a classic poet without finding authoritative statements upon every topic brushed by the poet's fancy, and, of course, the matter of more serious writings, history, logic, natural science, was implicitly accepted. If the pagan learning was thus regarded, how much more absolute was the deference to sacred doctrine. Here was all authority. Scripture was the primary source; next came the creed, and the dogmas established by councils; then the expositions of the Fathers. Thus the meaning of the authoritative Scripture was pressed into authoritative dogma, and then authoritatively systematized. The process had been intellectual and rational, yet with the driven rationality of Church Fathers struggling to formulate and express the accepted import of the Faith delivered to the saints. Authority, faith, held the primacy. . . .[2]

The mechanical conception of scholarly work described above may properly be defined as *scholastic*, and its products as *Scholasticism*. "Scholastic" was originally the term used to designate the teacher in the medieval school. Later it came to mean the teaching of the Middle Ages. While there are writers who insist that the word Scholasticism should be applied only to the philosophy of Thomas Aquinas as the definitive expression of medieval doctrine, it seems useful and defensible to employ the term more broadly. The broader meaning which we here adopt includes the approach to learning which all medieval scholars shared—an approach not peculiar to medieval Christians. As Sarton, the historian of science, has said,

> When we speak of "Scholasticism," we generally think of Christian scholasticism, because it is the one which has been most elaborately studied and the one with which we are familiar. But the mental attitude which we designate by that term was not by any means specifically Christian. If we define scholasticism in a general way as the attempt to reconcile lay knowledge with theology, and if we recognize as its characteristics the habit of premature generalization, excessive deduction from arbitrary beliefs and from a small and limited body of experimental data, also excessive reverence for canonical

[2] Henry Osborne Taylor, *The Mediaeval Mind* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), Vol. II, p. 297.

writings and other authorities, then scholasticism was almost universal during the Middle Ages.[3]

We shall, then, think of Scholasticism as a certain type of approach to learning, a mental attitude, a method followed in philosophical and theological study which prevailed in western Europe between the ninth and the fourteenth centuries. The method was to start with certain general assumptions taken on authority and to work out as many logical implications as possible. There was little attempt to gain new knowledge by methods of experiment and observation. The material in theology was furnished by revelation, set down in Scripture and in the dogmas established by the Church Fathers. Starting with this body of doctrine the Schoolmen would show its meaning and attempt to make it consistent and compatible with reason. In philosophy they acquired their first principles from the teachings of Plato and Aristotle, which they possessed in part only, and followed the method of deducing logically all the implications of these first principles. Since God was thought to be the source of both theological revelation and philosophical first principles, it became the task of the Scholastics to see to it that their philosophical and theological deductions were harmonious.

## The Problem of Faith Versus Reason

Here, in the fundamental approach of Scholasticism, lies also the first problem to engage the serious attention of medieval thinkers. Granted that faith comes first—and that the ancient body of Christian truth, as set down in Scripture, defined in the creed, interpreted in the writings of the Fathers, and taught by the Church, is on no account to be questioned—was it not the case that the Fathers *had* invoked reason to defend dogma and to make it acceptable to the understanding? What then is the true relation of faith and reason, of natural knowledge and revealed truth? This is a question with which every religious philosopher must deal, and medieval philosophers were no exception. Augustine had been confident that the whole body of Christian doctrine could be shown to be reasonable,

[3] G. Sarton, *Introduction to the History of Science* (Baltimore: Williams & Wilkins, 1927), Vol. I, p. 26.

though he was careful to say that for Christians faith precedes reason. For him the authority of the Catholic Church covered not only the moral realm but the intellectual as well. This position was first challenged by John Scotus Erigena (*c.* 810-875), perhaps the first original thinker of importance in the Middle Ages. Born and educated in Ireland, where the ancient culture had escaped the ravages of barbarian invasion, he had a knowledge of Greek and of Greek philosophy that gave him an advantage over most of his contemporaries. On the question of faith and reason, he held that in the investigation of the truth of things we must follow reason, and set forth the results of rational inquiry unshackled by authority. Accordingly, he did not hesitate to disagree with the Fathers. The truth and authority of Scripture he did not, indeed, question; instead, he interpreted it allegorically, on the assumption that it uses figurative and symbolical language. Erigena was confident that true authority does not oppose right reason, nor right reason true authority, believing that both come from God. It may thus be seen that Erigena enunciated the principle of the priority of reason, but softened his radicalism by the allegorical interpretation of Scripture and by his confidence that in the end true authority and reason cannot contradict each other.

Over against the incipient rationalism of Erigena may be set the position of Anselm, Archbishop of Canterbury in the eleventh century. Although an able thinker, Anselm's speculative efforts were subordinated to his piety. Like Augustine, he said, "I believe that I may know." "No Christian," says Anselm, "ought in any way to dispute the truth of what the Catholic church believes in its heart and confesses with its mouth. But always holding the same faith unquestioningly, loving it and living by it, he ought himself as far as he is able to seek the reason for it. If he can understand it, let him thank God. If he cannot, let him raise not his head in opposition but bow in reverence."[4] In short, it is fitting and proper that reason should try to understand dogma, but in the event this cannot be done, reason must yield gladly to authority. But it was

[4] As quoted by A. C. McGiffert, *A History of Christian Thought* (New York: Scribner's, 1933), Vol. II, p. 186.

Anselm's own confidence and his public claim that *all* the accepted doctrines of the Catholic Church could be demonstrated by the use of reason alone, without recourse to revelation. This, as we shall presently see, was not destined to become the official position of the Catholic Church in apportioning to reason and faith what she considers the just place of each.

The question of the respective claims of reason and faith was brought to a head by Abélard, born in 1079, one of the principals of the famous and tragic romance of Abélard and Héloïse, and the most famous professor of philosophy and theology of his century. On the question under discussion, Abélard quoted with approval the words of an ancient skeptic, Ecclesiasticus, "He that believes quickly is light minded." A man of dialectic temper, he was as admirably suited to be a professor of logic as he was unsuited for getting on with his colleagues. He wrote a book entitled, *Yea and Nay*, in which he set down a large number of doctrines and then set opposite each quotations from the Fathers both for and against, thus showing that the Fathers, at least, were not of one mind on important items of the faith. It was his hope, he said, that students might be inspired by his disclosure of patristic discrepancies to search out the truth for themselves and thus sharpen their wits. "For by doubting," he adds, "we come to inquiry, by inquiry we discover the truth." This is doubtless a fine educational principle and true, but it must have been very shocking to his ecclesiastical superiors to have him parade the fallibility of the Fathers in order to train theologians of the Church. The net result was that Abélard was condemned by the Church council. It was only too apparent that in his teaching, "that it was impossible to believe what was not understood in the first place," there was a plain reversal of the accepted Augustinian principle to believe first in order to understand. Although Abélard's teaching was condemned, it continued its influence and the question of the relationship between faith and reason survived as the central problem of theology for some time. The problem was not definitely settled, so far as Catholic teaching is concerned, until the advent of Thomas Aquinas in the thirteenth century.

## The Debate Over the Status of Universals

We have already seen that medieval thought was scholastic, both as to method and as to attitude. Scholastic method and attitude are seen when intellectual activity busies itself with reverent study of old materials which are assumed to contain significant truth. From this standpoint the business of the scholar is to lay bare the truth that lies in the writings of the past, as in Scripture, or the writings of the Fathers, and to draw from this truth further meaning that may be implied in it. Now the tool for drawing out meaning is logic, or dialectic, as it was called in the Middle Ages. Hence it was that medieval thinkers occupied themselves with logical considerations: the meanings of terms, the implications of statements. This being the case, we are prepared to understand that perhaps the most prized philosophical work which the medieval scholar possessed was a portion of Aristotle's logic. This was the manual of method and the guide of dialectic.

While the medieval scholar looked to Aristotle for method, he looked to Plato for content. The one was his master in logic, the other, in metaphysics. Of course, he did not go to Plato directly; as we have seen, he went to Augustine and to other expressions of Neo-Platonism. Like Plato, Neo-Platonism, too, interpreted reality in terms of a hierarchy of Forms or Ideas, which alone were believed to have reality while individual things like men and chairs and books were believed to be but shadows or reflections of the universal realities. Given, then, a consuming interest in dialectic and an accepted system of philosophy which attributes reality to universal Ideas or Forms alone, it was perhaps inevitable that some philosophers should question the *way* in which these universals exist. Just what is the meaning of such terms as mankind, justice, the Universal Church? Just what place in existence do class terms and the names of species have? The question had been inherited by medieval thinkers from Porphyry, whose Introduction to the *Categories* of Aristotle's logic had been transmitted to medieval scholars along with the logic itself. Porphyry had inquired whether *genera* and *species* actually exist or exist merely in thought; and whether their existence is separate from sensible things or only in

and through them. Perhaps the beginning student will agree with Porphyry's own opinion that this "is a very lofty business, unsuited to an elementary work." But to this business medieval thinkers gave their energies and debated the question with vigor. For, as we shall presently see, it bore directly upon the philosophical interpretation of the nature of the Church and of many of its central doctrines, and thus was related to the most lively concern of medieval times, the salvation of the soul.

Philosophers were divided into three schools of opinion as to the status of universals—Nominalists, Realists, and Conceptualists. The Nominalists, as represented by Jean Roscellinus, born about 1050, held that universals were "mere breathings of the voice," names that we give to the qualities that things of a class have in common. From this, Roscellinus reached the theological conclusion that the Trinity was merely a *name* given to the similarities of three individual Gods. As a result, he was tried by a council of the Church for teaching polytheism. The Realists, as represented by William of Champeaux (1070-1121), sought to combat such heresy by attacking its philosophical root. Declaring that the universal alone has real existence, William held that individuality is only an accidental variation of the universal essence. But this also has distressing theological implications, in that it reduces the three persons of the Trinity to unessential and accidental modifications of God. This is to deny that Christ was a real person and leaves the Incarnation a mere appearance.

Realism, going back to the Platonic theory of Ideas, is actually a form of "logical faith."[5] Finding that the characteristics of individual things change, and assuming that to be real means to be permanent, thinkers in the "realistic" or Platonic tradition have tended to attribute reality to unchanging ideas and to necessary logical implications. Logical faith, therefore, attributes reality to all necessary ideas. Anselm (1033-1109), Archbishop of Canterbury, developed the famous *ontological* argument for the existence of God from his realistic premises. Since all beings share the universal attribute of existence, there must be a Universal Existence

[5] Cf. Irwin Edman, *Four Ways of Philosophy* (New York: Holt, 1937), Chapter I.

from which individual existence is derived. Moreover, the presence of various grades of existence—the higher and the lower, the more and the less perfect things in nature—*necessarily* drives our thoughts to the idea of one absolutely complete and perfect being. The idea of a universal ground of existence, single, complete, and perfect, that is, of God, is therefore a *necessary* idea. But since, on realistic premises, the existence of a necessary idea in the mind involves its existence in objective reality, the demonstration that the idea of God is necessary demonstrates also God's existence.

This argument was promptly attacked by the monk Guanilo Granting that Anselm's arguments *do* lead to the *idea* of a single complete, and perfect being, Guanilo denied the conclusion that this idea has a counterpart in objective reality. The modern mind, sharing Guanilo's Nominalism, is inclined to grant him the victory. Nominalists, denying reality to universal ideas, lack the logical faith which leads to the identification of the necessities of thought with objective reality.

The third point of view in the debate over universals was known as Conceptualism, and its chief representative was Abélard. Having studied with both Roscellinus and William of Champeaux, he rejected the extreme conclusions of both and sought to work out a compromise position. In this attempt, he held that the universal concepts which the mind entertains are more than empty names for surface resemblances of things, but that universals do not exist apart from the things in which the mind discovers them. Instead, they are abstractions from objects of those general characteristics which really exist *in* the objects. Abélard's Conceptualism foreshadowed the view finally accepted as the philosophy of the Catholic Church. But its ultimate formulation had to wait for the advent of the greatest of medieval philosophers, St. Thomas of Aquino.

The "battle over universals," appearing on the surface as a philosopher's debate of a technical issue unrelated to practical concerns, was seen to bristle with theological implications. Remembering that theology was by medieval minds considered a vitally practical subject, since it deals with the central concern of eternal salvation, we can understand how the issue over universals should have generated so much excitement.

The Church, naturally, inclined toward Realism. The Church Universal, not individual congregations, was held to be the depository of faith and the source of sacramental grace. Mankind must come before individual men, else how put meaning into the notion of original sin incurred by Adam's fall or into the notion of redemption through Christ's sacrifice? Nominalism would make of the Holy Catholic Church merely a name for a collection of congregations, and free the individual from the taint of Adam's sin and remove him from the reach of Christ's redemption.

Moreover, Nominalism, finding reality in individual things, gives significance to observation, repudiates the theory of knowledge on which Neo-Platonism rested, and thus becomes an ally to the naturalistic spirit which is directly opposed to ecclesiastical dogma founded in revelation. To direct attention to particular facts may lead to new generalizations in conflict with traditional generalizations crystallized in dogma. Nominalism, accordingly, is pregnant with the principle of private judgment which in modern times was to displace, except for the Catholic minority, the principle of authority.

On the other hand, there were hidden dangers in Realism for Christian belief. The exaltation of the universal which allows the individual merely accidental status as an instance of the universal is at heart inconsistent with the Christian belief in the worth and dignity of every person and, moreover, makes the theoretical possibility of personal immortality, to say the least, difficult![6]

It is customary to say that common sense is on the side of Nominalism, which attributes reality to individual things and holds general terms to be descriptions of common features. But in contemporary thought there is a good deal of Realism, hidden or expressed. When we speak of the law, of the church, the state, society, the "laws of planetary motions," the "periodic table of the elements," the "second law of thermodynamics," do we mean that these actually exist, or are they merely in thought? Are they separate from sensible things, or are they in them? What answer shall we give? Like Porphyry, we shall probably withhold our answer; at least we must

[6] See Corliss Lamont, *Issues of Immortality* (New York: Holt, 1932).

admit that medieval thinkers grappled with an issue whose significance is quite alive today.

## The Resurgence of Aristotle

The twelfth century is marked by a new temper in intellectual life. Although Abélard's rationalism, which was willing to expose the lack of agreement among the fathers and to advocate doubt as a stimulus to inquiry, was condemned by the Church, the independent spirit which he embodied continued to flourish. The new rationalism was soon encouraged by the growing acquaintance with the main body of Aristotelian philosophy. While Europe had known only fragments of Aristotle's logic and had an incomplete acquaintance with Plato, the works of Greek philosophy, especially Aristotle's, were preserved and studied in the great Moslem universities that flourished at Bagdad, in Persia, and at Cordova, in Spain. The close geographical proximity of Cordova and the intellectual interests of Christian scholars combined to bring Aristotle to Europe. Aristotle's works had virtually to "go around Robin Hood's barn" in order to reach the medieval Christian world. His Greek text had been translated into Syriac, thence from Syriac into Arabic. The first acquaintance which Christian scholars had with Aristotle's metaphysics, physics, psychology, and ethics consisted, therefore, of Latin translations of Arabic translations of Syriac translations of the Greek original! But however it came, alert thinkers found here a veritable mine of knowledge already arranged, classified, and interpreted by a set of first principles—in short, a full-grown science. Tired of threshing over the dry bones of old issues, keen minds began to make this "find" their own.

The first reaction of the Church to Aristotle's works was sharp condemnation. The advent of the complete Aristotelian philosophy in the twelfth century shocked medieval Christendom no less than the doctrine of evolution aroused angry opposition from orthodoxy in the ninteenth. Aristotle's works in natural philosophy, i.e., science, were banned at the University of Paris in 1210 and his *Metaphysics* was condemned five years later. Consider now the reasons for this opposition.

From the standpoint of ecclesiastical orthodoxy, the most obvi-

ously objectionable elements in Aristotle were two: his teachings that the universe is eternal—and hence that there was no creation—and that personal immortality is impossible. As to the first, Aristotle teaches that form and matter both are eternal, and that the function of God consists solely of being the Unmoved Mover, a conception quite alien to the Jewish-Christian notion of creation. As to the second, Aristotle teaches that all men are *essentially* one, that the individual is produced by the union of the *form of the species* with matter, and that such individual differences as we possess are due not to our essential nature but to the accidents of the matter in which the form of our species happens to be embodied. From this it follows that, while the essential form of man does not die with the body, that which survives is neither personal nor individual. These aberrations, from the Christian standpoint, the medieval Church perceived and condemned.

There is, moreover, another aspect in Aristotelianism which is even more fundamentally dangerous to the Catholic position—though this the Church at first failed to perceive. The aspect in question is Aristotle's interest in natural science, expressed in his observation, collection, and analysis of natural phenomena, and to which his books in biology, psychology, physics, and astronomy give testimony. Believing that reality is to be found not in a realm of pure forms but in the world of experienced things, Aristotle had confidence in the worth of natural knowledge based on sense perception—upon touch and sound and sight. Given this confidence, men may undertake to probe the secrets of the world by observing it, and, in reflection upon what they observe, reach conclusions not in harmony with authoritative dogma. At least, we have in Aristotle's science a principle of knowledge and a method of gaining truth that brook no authority except their own results.

Moreover, Christian theology under the guidance of Neo-Platonic thought had allowed for the possibility of a direct vision of God. If by philosophic effort one came to understand the supposed ladder of Platonic Forms which ascends finally to the One, and by virtuous life removed moral unworthiness, it was held that the reward of immediate apprehension of God might come. This possibility Aristotle implicitly denied. For him, knowledge con-

sisted of sense experience and logical conclusions based upon it. While Aristotle held that we could know God, the Unmoved Mover, this knowledge was mediated by thought. For him there was no such thing as the Augustinian notion of a special form of religious knowledge which brought immediate apprehension of divinity.

Finally, the Aristotelian interest in the natural world is alien in quite another way to the spirit of medievalism, which concentrates attention upon the things of the next world and regards this world as but a transient scene in the drama of salvation, whose denouement is in heaven. The Aristotelian study of nature and of man as a part of nature, might easily direct attention to earthly matters and might even suggest that the meaning and destiny of human life could find fulfillment against the background of nature without reference to the supernatural. In short, this study of nature may lead to naturalism in philosophy of life as well as in philosophy of reality. A naturalistic philosophy of life, reacting sharply against supernaturalism, becomes a humanism that is ready to dispense with divinely revealed ideals and divinely mediated aid to goodness. It finds this world sufficient and man's powers adequate to make the best of it. This is, of course, the very antithesis of Catholicism.

Though censored, Aristotle permeated the universities, and the scholars' interest in his work was not to be denied. Faced with defeat on the issue, the Church was astute. If Aristotelian philosophy was destined to triumph, why not seek to make of it an ally for the advancement of faith? Moreover, if the intellectual interests of the time demanded a knowledge of physics, biology, and psychology, perhaps it was better to adopt the work of Aristotle in these fields than to risk even more dangerous results. Aristotle had, after all, built a *theology* upon his natural science, and with a few changes Aristotle's God might be rendered acceptable to Christian belief and his argument for the existence of God made a powerful instrument for the defense of the faith. Thus revised, Aristotle's work might be given the stamp of official approval and made the authoritative logic, science, and metaphysics. This indeed happened. The result was that the teaching of Aristotle became a body

of scientific dogma—a veritable bible of natural truths which dared not be questioned. It thus came to be that in matters of science as in theology the final appeal was to authority. The question was not what nature revealed but what Aristotle had said. This state of affairs is illustrated by an anecdote of a student who thought he had discovered spots in the sun. "My son," replied his teacher, "I have read Aristotle many times, and I assure you there is nothing of the kind mentioned by him. Be certain, therefore, that the spots which you have seen are in your eyes and not in the sun." Thus it was that the spirit of Aristotle was smothered and his results embalmed. When the new science began to emerge in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, it had first to destroy this medieval mummy of what had been a living body of science eighteen centuries before. "Aristotelian" had become a synonym for reaction and a barrier to progress.

In accordance with her policy of revision and adaptation, the Church retracted her condemnation of Aristotle and, at the bidding of Pope Gregory IX, began to edit him so as to expurgate the most obviously "dangerous" elements, such as the teaching about the eternity of the world and the mortality of the soul. Within forty years after being banned, the Aristotelian works—in expurgated editions, to be sure—were being officially taught in the University of Paris and at Oxford. Thus was begun the process of harmonizing the new philosophy with the old theology of the Fathers, an undertaking that reached its highest form in the work of Thomas Aquinas. What had been feared as a source of dangerous innovation, a challenge to authority, was in a short time turned into a new and authoritative system of Christianized philosophy.

## The Thomist System: Mature Scholasticism

Thomas was born a nobleman in the Italian city of Aquino in 1227. He attended the University of Naples, after which he had the opportunity of a political career. This he rejected and joined the Dominican Order. He then went to Cologne, in Germany, to study with Albert the Great. Following Albert to Paris, Thomas took his degree there and was teaching in the university by the time he was twenty-five. He early gained an international reputation;

he was in demand as a teacher in Italy, acted as adviser to the papacy, and spent his last days in reorganizing the University of Naples. When he died in 1274, although less than fifty years of age, he left, in seventeen folio volumes, a comprehensive synthesis of Aristotelian philosophy and Christian theology. Although his work in theology is a monumental achievement, Thomas was more than a theologian; his intellectual interests had a very wide range. He left a manuscript on mechanical engineering and was the moving spirit behind the translation of Aristotle directly from the Greek. Thomas' place in medieval scholarship may be compared to that of Innocent III in medieval politics, with the qualification that the scholar's work and influence outlasted that of the politician.

The two works in which Thomas most fully elaborated his system are the *Summa contra Gentiles* (*Summary against the Gentiles*) and the *Summa Theologiae* (*Summary of Theology*). In the first and third parts of the *Summa Theologiae*, Thomas treats of the whole Christian drama of salvation, while in the second part he presents the most elaborate treatment of Christian ethics ever produced. Popular in its own time, this *Summa* remains an authoritative statement of Catholic doctrine to this day. In the *Summa contra Gentiles*, Thomas worked out the relationship between revealed theology and philosophy. As the title suggests, this work is a defense of the Christian faith against the attacks of those who relied on Aristotelian teachings to challenge Christian belief. Thomas' teacher, Albertus Magnus, had already laid the groundwork for the huge task of harmonizing natural knowledge as represented by Aristotle with revealed knowledge as represented by Church dogmas. This was a task needed to bring about the defeat of unbelief; it was accomplished by showing that Aristotle, instead of being a challenge, could be used as a thorough philosophic foundation for Christian beliefs. Begun by Albert, this undertaking was brought to a brilliant conclusion by Thomas in the *Summa contra Gentiles*, a work scientific in arrangement and magnificent in scope.

In approaching his task, Thomas employed a fundamental Aristotelian conception as a touchstone of reconciliation. Aristotle, as we

have seen,[7] regarded reality as a vast hierarchy of matter and form. In this scheme, matter is the seat of potentiality. Its *capacity* to become something can be made actual only when matter is combined with some form. Only in such combination can form find embodiment and matter realize its possibility of becoming an actual thing. This relation between matter and form as the necessary elements in the completion or fulfillment of the nature of anything, is the basis for Aristotle's evolutionary conception of reality, since an actual thing may be matter for a form having a superior position in the hierarchy. The essential principle of this conception is that the lower and the higher are not opposed; the material and the ideal (i.e., the formal) do not conflict; they are mutually necessary. Without matter, form is empty; without form, matter is bare possibility. Both are needed for the existence of actuality.

It is this notion of mutual necessity of the lower and the higher which St. Thomas took as his central principle of reconciliation. The complementary relation of matter and form is the touchstone with which he solved the urgent problems which the resurgence of Aristotelian science had raised for Christian thought. With this formula to hand, Thomas resolved the conflict between the natural and the supernatural, and harmonized natural science with revealed theology, natural virtue with the virtues of grace, and the temporal government of the world with the Kingdom of God. How he worked out his solution with due recognition of the place of supposedly conflicting elements must now claim our attention.

## The Harmony of Science and Theology

Consider first the problem of reason against faith. The earlier Scholastics, like Anselm, had been certain that all the dogmas of the Church could be shown to be reasonable. But this optimistic view had already been challenged by Abélard in the early part of the twelfth century. A little later, when Aristotle became known and his teachings accepted as the conclusions of reason, it was plain to all that theology and philosophy—beliefs based on revelation and beliefs based on reason—did not coincide. It was no longer possible to demonstrate the reasonableness of all Christian dogmas. Before

[7] See Chapter VIII.

Albert and Thomas, some theologians had recognized this problem, and in desperation had invented the doctrine of the *twofold* truth, according to which something may be true for science and philosophy which is not true for theology, and vice versa. Thomas, following the lead of Albert, accepted the distinction between philosophy and theology, between doctrines of natural knowledge and those which are revealed. He accepted the distinction, but he divested it of the suggestion of opposition. For Thomas, the two kinds of truth are not opposed; they are supplemental. We must have both kinds of knowledge if we would possess the full actuality of saving truth. With this formula Thomas brings reason and faith, philosophy and theology, into a harmonious, consilient system by assigning to each a distinct sphere. There are truths which fall into the province of philosophy; there are other truths which fall into the province of theology. Each has its place and the two cannot contradict. But Thomas does not commit himself to a theory of two realms of truth when he says that a thing may be true for philosophy but false for theology. This solution Thomas, like any other careful thinker, would have abhorred. There are *two sources* of truth, not *two kinds*. Philosophy begins with the world and ascends to God; theology begins with God and descends to man. While this results in two *bodies* of truth, they merely supplement each other. Philosophy consists of all those truths concerning God and his relation to man and his world that may be derived from sense experience, i.e., by science and speculation based on science. Theology rises above the reach of philosophy and, drawing upon *its* source, i.e., revelation, adds the superstructure of knowledge needed by man in his quest for eternal life and the ultimate vision of God.

Since for Aristotle any actual thing consists of the union of form and matter, so the actuality of saving truth is a combination of revelation and natural knowledge. Philosophy is incomplete without theology, while theology presupposes the foundation of philosophy. The supernatural does not refute the natural; it completes and fulfills it. But not perfectly in this world. The combination of philosophy and theology produces the actuality of truth sufficient for salvation, but it does not provide the vision of God so central

in medieval thought. This beatific vision is not realized until the saved individual passes into the next world.

As Thomas wrote,

> Man may have a three-fold knowledge of divine things. The first he gains by the natural light of reason which ascends through creatures to God. The second is when divine truth exceeding human understanding descends to us by way of revelation, not as it were proved to sight but offered for belief. The third is when the human mind is raised to a perfect insight into the things that are revealed.[8]

The last and highest form of knowledge can be achieved only after death. In the hierarchy of knowledge it is supreme; it is reached when the actuality of saving truth becomes invested with a higher form to become the reality of the vision of God himself.

In this way Thomas is able to reconcile the doctrine of natural knowledge with the Neo-Platonic theory that God can be known directly through a mystical experience, that man has a faculty of direct vision by means of which he can attain a vision of God and of the spiritual world. Here the issue between Neo-Platonism and Aristotle was sharply drawn: the one declares that there is a special way of religious knowledge; the other insists that all human knowledge is rooted in the deliverances of the five senses. The one is mystical, the other is naturalistic. The problem was to show how, on the supposition that all knowledge is derived from the senses, the Christian can yet know God and come into communion with him. Thomas' solution on this point was to draw a distinction between the conditions of knowledge in this world and in the next. In short, he said that reason and faith are the only modes of knowledge in this life, but that in the next the mystic vision is possible. In this world, human knowledge is limited to natural facts and such conclusions as reason may base upon them, together with certain revealed doctrines. In the next world we shall be freed from our bodily nature and with God's help shall be able to look upon him directly. Accordingly, if Thomas is to have his way, the mystic must await his goal until death translates him into the future life. Only then shall he have the beatific vision.

[8] As quoted by A. C. McGiffert, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, pp. 272-273.

## Natural Knowledge

Let us observe what sort of religious knowledge man may gain, in Thomas' way, "by the natural light of reason which ascends through creatures to God." In the first place, we may by means of philosophy prove the existence of God. In accordance with his Aristotelian theory of knowledge, Thomas rejected Anselm's ontological proof. He likewise disposed of the argument that the idea of God is inborn, or that it is self-evident and needs no proof. Nor could he use the familiar cosmological argument which asserts that there must be a creator to account for the existence of the universe. Aristotle, it will be remembered, taught that matter and the universe are themselves eternal and uncreated.[9] Nor can we perceive God directly, as Augustine and other Neo-Platonists had held. Yet, said Thomas, following his Greek master, if we observe the world we can see about us the effects of God's activity. Motion and growth are the most evident of facts; since objects are not self-moved but remain at rest until moved from without, philosophy must account for motion. Here there are two avenues open to thought. We may seek to explain motion by reference to previous motion, and so on, but this leads to an infinite regress. The alternative is to trace it back to God as the prime mover who is himself unmoved, who does not move the world in mechanical fashion, but rather as the fully actualized perfection that draws the whole universe in pursuit of it.

This, the essential theme of Aristotle's argument for God's existence, has been admirably formulated by Santayana:

> Everybody has heard that God is love and that love makes the world go round; and those who have traced this latter notion back to its source in Aristotle may have some notion of what it means. It means . . . that we should not try to explain motion and life by their natural antecedents, for these run back *in infinitum*. We should explain motion and life rather by their purpose or end, by that unrealized ideal which moving and living things seem to aspire to, and may be said to love. What justifies itself is not any fact or law; why should these not have been different? What justifies itself is what is good, what is as it ought to be. But things in motion, Aristotle con-

[9] Aquinas, indeed, believed in creation, but he did so as a matter of faith, not as a matter of philosophy.

ceived, declare, as it were, that they are not satisfied, and ought to be in some different condition. They look to fulfillment which is as yet ideal. This fulfillment, if it included motion and life, could include them inwardly only; it would consist of a sustained activity, never lapsing nor suffering change. Such an activity is the unchanging goal toward which life advances and by which its different stages are measured. But since the purpose of things, and not their natural causes, is that which explains them, we may call this eventual activity their reason for being. It will be their unmoved mover.[10]

Each life, each moving object, has its own unmoved mover within it. But these principles of motion, these ideals and goals, all find their present actuality in the mind of God. As Santayana adds, "the goal of life is a separate being, already existing, namely, the mind of God, eternally realizing what the world aspires to."[11] Thus the fact of motion indicates dissatisfaction, growth indicates incompleteness; they are to be explained ultimately only in that perfect existence toward which all things aspire. This is God.

Thomas, indeed, used other arguments, including the *teleological*, according to which the order of the universe points to an intelligent governor. But the cornerstone of his natural theology is the argument from motion to its Prime-Mover.

Still restricting himself to the methods of philosophy, Thomas proceeds to say a good deal about God's character. God is the sole example of pure actuality, hence he is one and unchanging; being perfect, he is good; being infinite, he is possessed of infinite intelligence, knowledge, goodness, freedom, and power, attributes but partly possessed by finite beings.

The two chief grounds of objection to the advent of Aristotle were, as stated before, his doctrines of the eternity of the world and of the mortality of the soul. Aquinas' treatment of the first we have already noted; we may add here that he held that philosophically the honors are about even for and against the doctrine of creation, leaving the decision to faith. To conform Aristotelian philosophy to the Christian belief in personal immortality was somewhat more difficult. The former, with its cardinal doctrine

[10] George Santayana, *Three Philosophical Poets* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1910), pp. 99-100.

[11] George Santayana, *op. cit.*, p. 101.

that matter is the principle which differentiates all individuals of a class or species, leans its whole weight against belief in such immortality. Thomas loyally follows Aristotle in asserting that man is a body-soul, not a soul inhabiting a body. Nevertheless, he holds that personal immortality is possible and that it can be demonstrated philosophically. It would seem, however, that he did this at the cost of some consistency, for it does not appear *how*, if matter alone *individuates*, an individual soul can survive the death of the material body.[12] But at this point, in the words of Fuller,

> Theology . . . came to the rescue with the revealed teaching of the resurrection of the body and its eventual reunion with the soul. So the individual might hope to put them together again at the Day of Judgment. The somewhat unclothed condition of the soul in the interval, and her natural curiosity and even anxiety as to whether and how she could be sure of getting back in the end her own clothes and not somebody else's, were hushed up as a mystery of faith.[13]

## Supernatural Knowledge

We have now seen that Thomas accepted the doctrine of creation on faith alone, and that the teaching of the resurrection of the body rested on revelation. Chief among the other theological items known only by revelation are the doctrines of the Trinity, the Incarnation, original sin, the sacraments, and the future life with its rewards and punishments. These, then, are examples of the second body of knowledge which men may have of divine things, a knowledge that exceeds the human understanding and "descends to us by way of revelation, not as it were proved to sight but offered for belief." That a revelation had actually been given in Christianity, Thomas never doubted, and considered it proved by miracles and by the fulfillment of prophecy. Revealed knowledge supplements philosophy in bringing saving knowledge of God. Indeed, revelation covers truth discoverable by natural theology as well as those which are not, since there are few persons who have either the time or the ability to become philosophers. Hence, if it were not for revelation, even the truths of natural theology would remain a

[12] See Corliss Lamont, *op. cit.*, for further discussion on this point.

[13] B. A. G. Fuller, *A History of Philosophy* (New York: Holt, 1938), Vol. I, p. 385.

closed book to most people. But over and above these truths that *might* be known by natural knowledge, God has revealed truths that are *beyond* the reach even of the philosopher's understanding. The proof of these must be found in revelation, and while they are not contrary to reason, all that the latter can do is to show that they are not unreasonable.

### The Sacraments. The Status of Universals

Thomas' use of the Aristotelian principle of the union of matter and form in the constitution of actuality is further illustrated in his theory of the sacraments. Here again, the natural and the supernatural supplement each other to make a sacred thing. In a sacrament the words of institution are the form and the materials employed are the matter; when these are brought together in authorized fashion they constitute the sacrament. Applying this principle to the eucharist, Thomas was able to explain the difficult doctrine of transubstantiation, i.e., that the bread and the wine are really changed into the substance of the body and blood of Christ. The bread and wine, natural substances, become matter for the sacred substances of Christ's body and blood when they are informed by the priestly words of institution. When this is done, there is nothing left of the bread and wine but their appearance. That this is not also changed with the substance, Thomas explained as follows:

> First, because it is not customary but horrible for men to eat the flesh of a man and drink his blood, the flesh and blood of Christ are offered to us under the form of things which are more frequently used, namely, bread and wine. Secondly, lest this sacrament might be ridiculed by unbelievers if we ate our Lord in His own form. Thirdly, that while we receive the body and blood of our Lord invisibly this may contribute to the merit of our faith.[14]

Thomas' work in philosophy inevitably brought him to the second great problem of the earlier Scholastics, namely, the status of universals. For Thomas, this was a question as to how forms exist. Aristotle had sought to hold that forms exist only *in* sensible

[14] *Summa Theologiae*, III, 75:5, as quoted by McGiffert, *op. cit.*, Vol. II, p. 323.

things;[15] Aquinas deserts the exclusive reliance on this position and supplements it with the Neo-Platonic teaching that forms exist also as ideas and archetypes in the divine mind. Moreover, they may be abstracted in thought and thus be concepts. Thomas, as a harmonizer and synthesizer, felt the force that motivated realists, nominalists and conceptualists alike, and sought to give each due justice in his catholic solution.

This solution is that universal terms or natures exist before the particulars, *and* in the particulars, *and* after the particulars: for God, before he made the world, knew how he intended to make it, and had eternally in his mind the notions of a perfect man, horse, etc., after which the particulars were to be modeled, to which, in case of accident, they were to be restored, either by the healing force of nature or by the ministrations of grace. But universal terms or natures existed also *in* the particulars, since the particulars illustrated them, shared in them and were what they were by virtue of that participation. Nevertheless, the universals existed also after the particulars: for the discursive mind of man, surveying the variety of natural things, could not help noticing and abstracting the common types that often recur in them; and this *ex post facto* idea, in the human mind, is a universal term also. To deny any of these three theories, and not to see their consistency, is to miss the mediaeval point of view, which, in every sense of the word, was Catholic.[16]

## Ethics and Social Philosophy

Thomas continues his synthesis of Aristotle and Christianity by applying it to ethics also, with his distinction between natural and theological virtues. The natural virtues of prudence, justice, fortitude, and temperance are held to be within the power of man's own achievement. By his own efforts man can realize a measure of happiness and well-being. This, however, is only an earthly good; in order to realize eternal blessedness, the supernatural or theological virtues are needed—supernatural because they are beyond the ability of natural man, theological because they have God as their object and are revealed and communicated by him. These supernatural virtues are three: faith, hope, and love, which are to be

[15] Although inconsistently, since God and the "intelligences that move the spheres" were held to exist as pure, disembodied forms.

[16] George Santayana, *op. cit.*, pp. 93-94.

had only through the grace of God. As revealed theology does not contradict but supplements natural theology, so the theological virtues do not contradict but crown the natural virtues. Grace does not destroy our human nature, but strengthens and perfects it.[17]

Finally, St. Thomas rewrote Christian social philosophy with Aristotelian principles as a groundwork. Before this, Augustine's distinction between the City of God and the City of Satan had been applied respectively to the Church on the one hand, and to the state and other strictly human institutions on the other. The conditions of this world were something to be *saved* from; the highest Christian ideal was the monastic life, withdrawn from all natural human relations. This dualism or opposition between Church and state, between earth and heaven, is alien to the Aristotelian world view. Thomas, accepting the latter outlook, finds in nature the possibility of the supernatural, in human society the possibility of the Kingdom of God. Society, like the natural order of which it is a part, is a system of ends and purposes, in which the lower strives to become the higher. The ultimate end, of course, transcends nature; the ultimate society is in heaven; but the orderly political life is a contributing cause to this ultimate goal.

We may find in Thomas' social theory a rationalization of the feudal society of his time, but his description of ideal social organization also follows Aristotle. The fact is that Thomas believed the existing social order to be the embodiment, in more or less perfect form, of the Christian conception of society. He sought in his philosophy to justify the existing order. In his attempt to give a place to all its parts in a rational scheme, he found the Aristotelian social philosophy well adapted to his purpose. Accordingly, society is compared to an organism in which the many members contribute each its part for the good of the whole. The farmer and the craftsman supply material goods; the priest supplies prayer and religious observance; and, even as God rules the world or the soul rules the body, so the civil ruler must govern and maintain the social

[17] This latter teaching, still part of Catholic doctrine, was not adopted by Luther, with his radical view of original sin and the consequent corruption of the natural man. The result was that while Catholicism encouraged moral effort as being an aid to grace, Luther had no place at all for the saving value of moral effort. Cf. chap. XVII.

order. The power of the ruler is, according to this scheme, derived directly from God. This does not mean the somewhat later doctrine of the divine right of kings. For Thomas, the social and political order is divinely ordained just as is the Church. Both are part of the providential order. The state and the Church each, therefore, has its charter directly from God. Since the state must have a ruler, the latter derives his authority out of the divine ordination of his own sphere. This is both the ground of the independence of the civil ruler's authority from the Church and the basis of restrictions and limitations upon it by law and morals. Thus, in purely political affairs, the ruler, while independent of the Church, is subject to human law which is itself divinely ordained. The ruler's authority, while derived from God, is part of the divinely instituted political order and subject to the demands of that order. The divinely granted authority of the ruler is not, therefore, a license to tyranny but a commission to just statesmanship.

As to the relations of Church and state, pope and emperor or king, Thomas took a moderate position. He accepted the traditional Gelasian doctrine of the division of jurisdiction between the spiritual and the civil powers, and rejected the tendency to elevate the admitted supremacy of the spiritual power into legal supremacy. The fact that the Church represented to him a higher form of organization than the state did not lead him to question the power and authority of the state in its own sphere. Nor did he emphasize any theoretical difficulty over the division of jurisdiction. Thomas, it should be remembered, regarded the actual situation as divinely ordained. His duty as social philosopher was not, therefore, to present some ideal blueprint toward which reform might move—far from it. On the contrary, he regarded his business as merely to find reasons for the society which he found. Since this included civil society as well as the Church, Thomas set about to find for both a place in a rational scheme of things even as they coexisted in the actual situation. This required a recognition of the division of authority between the two powers. That the formula which he accepted soon ceased to be applicable to the facts Thomas did not anticipate. It is enough that here, as in other parts of his philosophy, he gave mature expression to the rationale of medieval civili-

zation. While this civilization lasted, his philosophy was adequate. When the times changed, philosophy too had to change.

## The Disintegration of Scholasticism

Although Thomas Aquinas did his work so well that his is still the official philosophy of the Roman Catholic Church, there were certain problems and tendencies in his synthesis that contributed eventually to the disintegration of Scholasticism as a universal philosophy and to the triumph of modern modes of thought and life. We shall consider two of these inherent weaknesses of Scholasticism.

In the first place, the Aristotelian respect for sense experience as a reliable mode of knowledge—with its corollary that observation is a fruitful method—asserted itself in new explorations and investigations, like those of Columbus, Tycho Brahe, and Galileo. These discoveries, and the new theories that followed from them, entailed revolutionary consequences. If nothing more, the results of looking at and probing into nature destroyed the medieval preoccupation with the supernatural and led eventually to modern naturalism and humanism.

In the second place, the Thomistic reconciliation of faith and reason left some tension between philosophy and theology. Thomas, it will be remembered, taught that there were certain truths which cannot be dealt with by reason but must be taken on faith. Johannes Duns Scotus (1270-1308), a Scottish scholastic logician, saw that one must decide whether reason *or* revelation is the final test of truth. Boldly he declared that he believed in the Bible and ecclesiastical doctrines only because these conform to reason. He thus held reason to be the final test of all truth, although still believing that Christian teaching can be shown to be rational. But his English pupil, William of Ockham (d. 1349), said there was no rational proof of doctrine and called upon the leaders of the Church to abandon their futile speculations and become practical propagators of faith. So philosophy became divorced from theology, claiming reason for itself alone and leaving theology to faith unchecked by logic. It was inevitable that philosophy, thus free, should bring forth theories of the universe contradicting those of the Church,

while theology, thus isolated, tended more and more to crystallize. Besides these disintegrating tendencies inherent in the Scholastic synthesis, there were other movements and events that, crowding upon the European scene, tended to disrupt Scholasticism by making it irrelevant and inadequate as the intellectual explanation of an actual cultural situation.

If it be true to say that a philosophy is always a reflection of life, a theoretical justification of actual practices and living ideals, then it follows that a philosophy cannot survive the actuality which it served to rationalize. On this theory of the nature and function of philosophy, we shall expect to find Scholasticism, the intellectual synthesis of medieval civilization and culture, declining and disintegrating along with the life whose substance it mirrored. This was indeed the case. The break-down of the Holy Roman Empire and the rise of nationalism marked the end of Scholastic social philosophy; the medieval theory of spiritual supremacy gave way to the doctrine of the divine right of kings. The Protestant Reformation with emphasis on salvation by faith alone made the sacramental system of the Church superfluous and undercut the doctrine of ecclesiastical authority in the sphere of religion. The interest of the Renaissance Humanists in the values of this world and in the individual who could enjoy them meant the repudiation of the medieval ethics with its other-worldliness and asceticism. Discoveries in astronomy and physics discredited theology as the supreme interest of scholars and brought forth new philosophies to replace Scholasticism.

In the next two chapters we shall undertake a brief survey of these movements, disruptive of medievalism and transitional to the modern world.

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# PART SIX

## *MIND AND SPIRIT IN TRANSITION FROM THE MEDIEVAL TO THE MODERN WORLD*

# CHAPTER XV

# *EMANCIPATION FROM OTHER-WORLDLINESS AND AUTHORITY*

## The Renaissance

The period from 1350 to 1700 is often called the Renaissance. It is permissible to use this term if by it we mean not a unified cultural epoch, but the whole transitional movement from the medieval to the modern world. This movement had many currents and many stages. It may be regarded throughout as a slow process of emancipation from medieval other-worldliness and reliance upon religious authority. But the modern concern with strictly human problems and trust in science as the agency of their solution was then only in the making. As described in the *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences*,

> It is best to characterize the period of the Renaissance not as a wholly distinct cultural epoch, but rather as a transition period between the mediaeval and modern ages in which old and new, religious and profane, authoritarian and individualistic principles and concepts existed side by side, while at the same time certain marked transformations and changes in ideas and ways of living took place. . . .
>
> The man of the Renaissance lived, as it were, between two worlds. The Christian world of the Middle Ages, in which the significance of every phenomenon was ultimately determined through uniform points of view, no longer existed for him. On the other hand, he had not yet found in a system of scientific concepts and social principles stability and security for his life. He was suspended between faith and knowledge. The Renaissance may be interpreted in different ways, depending on whether this epoch is more closely associated with the world of faith of the Middle Ages or with the scientifically grounded approach of modern times.[1]

When the Italian poet, Petrarch (1304-1374), climbed to the top

[1] B. Groethuysen, "Renaissance," *Encyclopaedia of the Social Sciences* (New York: Macmillan, 1935), Vol. XIII, pp. 279, 284.

of Mt. Ventoux, taking with him a copy of St. Augustine's *Confessions*, he symbolized the transitional spirit of his age. To ascend a mountain for the enjoyment of the panoramic landscape showed a modern regard for nature as something valuable to be observed and enjoyed by man. To permit his mind to dwell upon thoughts of sin and human carnality, as he read Augustine in the midst of splendid mountain scenery, marks him still a medieval man.

The Renaissance did not burst upon the Western world. It represented rather the slow maturing of forces that had already existed in medieval times. Among such forces may be mentioned the Crusades, which brought to Europeans experiences of Moslem culture that shattered their provincialism and stimulated their imagination. The revival of learning of the twelfth century, bringing a knowledge of Aristotle and of Moslem science, and an interest in classical texts, left seeds that were later to bring forth the flowering plants of Humanism and modern science.

Chief among the causes of the Renaissance was the growing prosperity of cities. Trade and commerce brought a concentration of material riches and opened the possibility of luxury to an expanding merchant class. Once the luxuries of life were at hand, it was inevitable that men should begin to enjoy them—and in doing so, come to question the ideal that salvation depends upon mortification of the flesh. Men began to take a new interest in this life and its possibilities—in themselves and their environment. To quote Randall,

> This new spirit consisted at bottom in an increasing interest in human life as it can be lived upon earth, within the bourne of time and space, and without necessary reference to any other destiny in the beyond or the hereafter. It meant the decay of that Oriental dualism in which the flesh for so many long years had lusted against the spirit, and the growth in its stead of the conviction that the life of flesh and spirit merged into one living man is not evil, but good. It meant that when society offered more than a rude mining-camp existence of blood and toil, the monastic temper declined, and gave way to a new and vital perception of the dignity of man, of the sweetness and glory of being a rational animal.[2]

[2] John Herman Randall, Jr., *Making of the Modern Mind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1926), pp. 114-115.

This interest, this spirit that turns to human experience for its satisfactions and attributes dignity to human nature and worth to the world—the very antithesis of the theological depreciation of man and nature—is known as Humanism.

## Humanism

The Humanistic movement was marked by a great interest in first the Latin, then the Greek, classics. The connection between the Humanism of the Renaissance and the collection and study of classical manuscripts was so close that many writers have held that the discovery of the classics was the cause of Humanism. But the classical manuscripts had been, for the most part, always available on the back shelves and forgotten chests in libraries all over Europe. Their "discovery" had to wait upon the emergence of an interest in what classical authors had written. As Henry Osborne Taylor has said,

> The apparent stimulus came from antique letters, including antique philosophy and political enlightenment, yet, in a way, these had been there always, and the palm of precedence might just as well be awarded to the advancing humanity which, with increasing intellectual capacity, turned to them for illumination.[3]

But, regardless of which was cause and which effect, Humanism began with a zeal for the classics, for Cicero and Lucretius, for Homer and Plato. That Humanists should turn to antiquity for the nurture of their spirits was but natural, since the pagan intellectuals, unlike the Christians who dominated medieval thought, were not primarily interested in the supernatural. Their primary interest was centered in man, the good life for him, the best forms of political organization, and his knowledge of the natural world through science and philosophy. They were concerned not with the assurance of life after death but with the worth of life on earth. Thus it was that the Humanists found in pagan literature a great authority for their break with the medieval spirit. But they found more than an authority for freedom; they found also wise counsel for its exercise.

[3] Henry Osborne Taylor, *Thought and Expression in the Sixteenth Century* (New York: Macmillan, 1920), Vol. I, p. 28.

The natural appetites and passions were regarded by classical writers as the means out of which man as a rational animal could order a good life. The conduct of life was regarded as an art and its successful ordering, according to temperance and moderation, true virtue. Their ideal of excellence meant the harmonious and complete functioning of the natural man in a rich world. How different from the medieval ideal of asceticism and obedience! While in their new-found freedom to taste the joys of life and nature ardent spirits forgot the principle of moderation and burned their candle at both ends, many others remembered it and were able to show that freedom does not mean baseness and violence. While the first intoxication with the possibilities and delights of a free life brought forth the brutality of a Cesare Borgia and the sensuality of a Benvenuto Cellini, the humanistic spirit produced also the magnificence of a Leonardo da Vinci and a Michelangelo, examples of what genius may become when freedom is subjected to rational control. If the characters of Leonardo and Michelangelo fulfill the Humanistic ideal, they also dramatize its sharp divergence from the monastic and ascetic pattern idealized by medieval Christianity and enforced by the fear of hell and the hope of heaven.

Humanism in glorifying the possibilities of this life was really a revolution against Christian ethics, repudiating not only the other-worldly ideal but also the theological reasons for being virtuous. Christian ethics always appealed to supernatural sanctions for a life of virtue. Had not St. Paul declared that if the dead rise not we may as well "eat and drink; for tomorrow we die"?[4] While the Humanists did not trouble to deny the immortality of the soul, they did insist that morality should be divorced from the assumption of rewards and punishments after death. "The reward of virtue is virtue itself, while the punishment of the vicious is vice," declared Pompanazzi (1462-*c.*-1525). He thus repudiated St. Paul and indorsed the sentiments of Plato's *Republic*. The rebellion against the medieval ideal, as well as against the Churchmen who through human weakness failed to live up to it, was carried on in vigorous fashion by the Frenchman, François Rabelais

[4] I Cor. 15:32.

(1490?-1553). His *Pantagruel* and his *Gargantua* give riotous expression to his delight in the full range of human animality and his scorn for the hypocrisy, vice, and intolerance of the clergy. By means of lewd and obscene stories he pillories monks and nuns, their ideals as well as their vices.

Perhaps the greatest of the Humanists was Desiderius Erasmus (1466-1536). Though born in Holland, he became virtually a citizen of the world, equally at home in Florence, Cambridge, and Basle. His reputation was so great that Colet, the great English Humanist, on hearing him converse, was able to say, "You are either Erasmus or the devil." Keenly aware of the abuses within the Church, he sought to reform them from within. His *In Praise of Folly* heaped satiric ridicule on Church dignitaries, yet in the hope of instructing and improving them. In the *Enchiridion*, he denounced religious rites and ceremonies as worthless apart from inward spiritual qualities. He sought to free Christianity of dogma and to identify it with a life following the moral teachings of Jesus. As much opposed to the excesses of a pleasure-bent life as to the irrationalities of theology, he conceived it his mission to Christianize the Renaissance and to humanize Christianity. The result was a religion of simple morality which included the Greeks along with the gospel in its "philosophy of Christ."

Central to the Humanistic movement was a new emphasis on the individual. In the medieval world, the individual had been fettered and subordinated. The obedient acceptance of its authority which the Church demanded had left little room for individual expression. Any self-assertion was promptly stamped as rebellion due to sinful pride. Particularly if any tendency toward individuality involved a man's body and its activities, it was condemned as carnal, the manifestation of original sin likely to forfeit the hope of heaven. Moreover, the social organization of the age centered about the principle of the subordination of the lower to the higher, with the attendant emphasis on the duty of one's station. The hierarchy of the Catholic Church was matched by the pyramid of feudalism. Medieval society, accordingly, assigned to each person his station, and bound him by the duty of fidelity and perfect

obedience to his superiors. Against this virtual regimentation of life the humanistic spirit rebelled.

There is a sense in which the Renaissance represents the revival of the individual, his discovery of his world, his powers of observation and thought, the delights of self-expression in literature, art, and religion. Men began to express their own idiosyncracies in dress, so that the time came when in the city of Florence there was no prevailing fashion in clothes for men. In literature, individuality once more asserted itself. Thus Petrarch, sometimes called the first modern man, was ready to declare that the highest conditions of culture could be realized only by the free development and interaction of intellects. Art, sculpture, and painting departed from the stereotyped artistic forms of the Middle Ages and became the individual expression of the artist, each stamping his own personality upon his work to give it a character of its own. Curiosity drove men to exploration and discovery, sent Columbus across the Atlantic and Galileo to drop his weights from the Tower of Pisa or to focus his telescope upon the moons of Jupiter. Even in religion, men began to appeal to their own reason and conscience against the dictates of the Church and thus to assert the right of private judgment and to inaugurate reform. In almost every area of human interest, the individual burst his bonds, asserted himself and sought in his own way to realize his possibilities. The achievements of the Renaissance, more than of most periods, are the products of untrammeled individuality seeking to taste and to express fully what it means to be human.

Let us endeavor, now, to assess Humanism as a bridge between medievalism and modernity. In the first place, the Humanists, with the exception of Leonardo, had little or no interest in science. Erasmus, for instance, was actually hostile to the scientific interest because it turned men's minds from the human problems of morality. Although too narrow in interest to include science, Humanism indirectly made a very valuable contribution to it. The Humanistic spirit, feeding on the classics, gave impetus to the collection and translation of many sorts of antique books. Along with Homer came Plato, with Cicero came Archimedes. So from the beginning of the Humanistic revival of Greek manuscripts there existed as

a sort of by-product a smaller circle of men here and there in Europe who gave their attention to the scientific treatises of the ancients. The importance of this for the rise of modern science was immense. But over against the credit of this valuable, although indirect, contribution to the birth of modern science must be set a large debit.

When Humanistic scholars turned to Latin and Greek manuscripts, they had to master the tools of research, the criticism of texts and rules of grammar. Because of the perpetual tendency of men to elevate means into ends, the tools of scholarship came to be studied for their own sake. People began to study "Latin" and "Greek" with little appreciation or understanding of classical thought. This classical pedantry came finally to dominate the curriculum of secondary schools and universities to the neglect of other matters. The very names of secondary schools founded even in America during the age of the Renaissance reveal its educational preoccupation. Witness the Boston Latin School (1635) and the Hopkins Grammar School (1666) in New Haven. If the academic subjects centering in classical grammer, syntax, and mechanical translation "did not," in the words of Randall, "stifle scientific thought, they at least guaranteed that no schoolboy should hear of it."[5] Thus the educational results of Humanism were definitely not helpful to the expansion of the scientific spirit.

Indeed, Humanism, starting as a revolt against Christian Scholasticism, substituted for the latter not modern intellectual independence, but a different kind of scholasticism. Like medieval Christianity, it was rooted in a literature of other times and other peoples. Where the Christians found an authoritative philosophy of life in the Old and New Testaments, the Humanists sought their guidance for life in the literature of Greece and Rome. In their revolt against the monastic and ascetic ethics of medieval Christianity the Humanists foreshadowed and laid the foundations for modern humanitarianism. But being concerned with the best of the past, they were not oriented to the oncoming future. The battle against asceticism, superstition, intolerance, and dog-

[5] John H. Randall, Jr., *Making of the Modern Mind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1926), p. 121.

matism could not be fought on even terms until Humanism was allied with science. But this alliance had to wait until the age of reason, two hundred years later. Finally, the individualism which animated Humanism directly produced much that has found a place in the modern outlook and foreshadowed much more than it actually produced. Modern theories of education reflect the humanistic emphasis on the worth of the individual, while the Humanists' confidence in reason and private judgment has been preserved in modern liberalism in religion as well as in politics. It is probably not too much to say that the principles of democracy have their root in Humanistic ideals.

If we compare European culture to a growing person, Humanism may perhaps be called the first manifestation of growing up. The strict rule of Mother Church served him well through his infancy. The Humanistic spirit is the spirit of the adolescent, enthusiastic about his first taste of freedom and its possibilities. Some of the things he does show him to be a man; others mark him as still dependent upon parental modes of thought and action. There is much yet to be learned before he can claim the full maturity of the modern world. To the first of these lessons we now turn as we consider the rise of science.

## The Rise of Science

The gradual emancipation of the medieval mind found clear expression and powerful support in the rise of modern science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It is, therefore, fitting that this rise should be considered along with the discussion of Humanism. In the direction of their interests Humanism and science are both similar and different: similar, in that both are in revolt against other-worldliness; different, in that the interest of Humanism is directed toward self-expression and enjoyment while that of science is directed toward understanding and control. The one represents the spirit of the artist, the other the combined interests of the metaphysician and the engineer. One is interested in individual man, the other in his world.

The revolutionary character of science is shown by its bearing on the old issue of reason against revelation. While medievalism,

with its interest in the supernatural, assigned the supreme position to revelation, the founders of science gave first place to reason and experience. The medieval preoccupation with theology gave way to a lively interest in the knowledge and control of nature. While the goal of medieval knowledge was God and his control of human life, that of modern knowledge is the understanding of natural causes and the control of nature to the service of human ends. We may speak of modern science as having its beginning in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries if we remember that this beginning was not without roots. We have already noted in the previous chapter how the complete works of Aristotle, introduced to the Western world in the twelfth century, might have meant the beginning of a scientific movement in the modern sense. Aristotle's trust in observation and his insistence that theory must have a logical basis in experienced fact contained the seeds of a thoroughgoing naturalism and a revolt against theological authority. It was, unfortunately, the fate of Aristotelian science that the Church should adopt its conclusions as a body of scientific dogma but should repudiate its method.

Modern science was, however, clearly foreshadowed by Roger Bacon (1214-1294). As a Franciscan, he shared the chief medieval convictions: the truth of Scripture, the absolute validity of revealed religion and the divine sanction of its dogmatic formulations. Although concerned with science, he yet believed that the purpose of science is to serve theology. But over against this he had also the liberal's objection to the blind reliance on hearsay and untested authority in intellectual matters. He held that "the example of frail and unworthy authority, long established custom, the sense of the ignorant crowd, and the hiding of one's own ignorance under the pretense of wisdom" are the four great stumblingblocks to comprehending truth. The three worst arguments, accordingly, are: "This was the way of our ancestors, this is the custom, this is the common view." Thus we have Bacon's opinion about belief based on authority and tradition. He also condemned pretentious systems spun out of logic and without content of experienced fact. He considered Scholasticism as such a system, and charged St. Thomas with having manufactured his theology out

of "dialectic," that is to say, by mere argumentation. Against such proceedings he advocated another method, namely, the method of experience. This most perfect of all approaches to truth he called "experimental science." Experimental science "neglects arguments, since they do not make certain, however strong they may be, unless at the same time there is present the *experientia* of the conclusion. Experimental science teaches *experiri*, that is, to test by observation or experiment, the lofty conclusions of all sciences."[6]

In his appeal to experience, and the derivation of knowledge by generalization from many experienced instances (induction), Bacon sounded a modern note. The method of induction was to have a large place in modern science and the reference to experience was to become one pole of scientific method. But induction and observation alone do not constitute the method by which some of the most spectacular advances of science have been made. Nature, after all, is reticent about her secrets. Like a cooperative witness in court, she answers only yes or no to proper questions addressed to her. The questions which the scientist must ask, the hypotheses which he must subject to proof, are themselves rarely derived from observation. They flow rather from antecedent theory in the scientist's mind, suggested either by some prior writer or by some general theory of things, i.e., a metaphysics, held by the scientist. The truth of this view is dramatically illustrated by both aspects of modern scientific development which we shall here consider. The first is the change in astronomy known as the Copernican revolution; the second is the creation of a new physics by Galileo Galilei, known as the Cartesian revolution.

## The Copernican Revolution

We have already noted that the Humanistic revival of Latin and Greek literature produced, as a sort of by-product, the rediscovery of classical science. Scholars here and there made the acquaintance of Alexandrian physics and mathematics. Moreover, in their revolt against the Aristotle of the Scholastics, the Humanists turned avidly to Plato for intellectual ammunition. The Neo-

[6] Roger Bacon, *Opus tertium*, Chap. XIII. Quoted from Henry Osborne Taylor, *The Mediaeval Mind* (New York: Macmillan, 1911), Vol. II, p. 502.

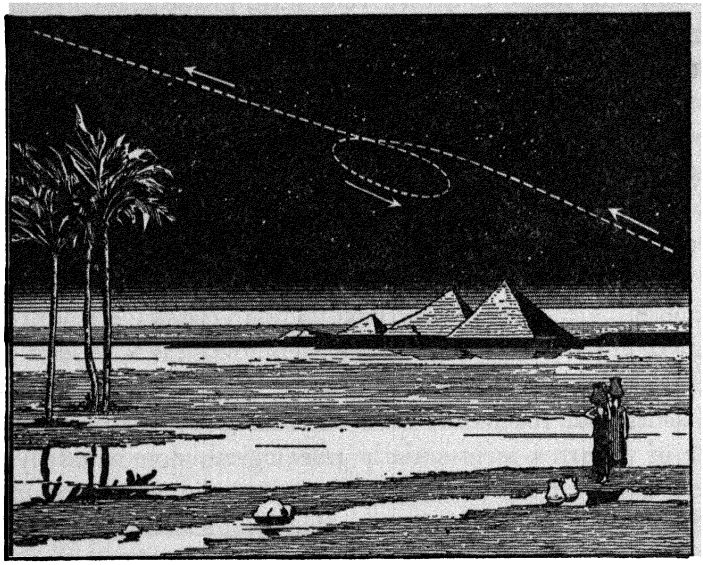
Platonic writings eagerly studied were full of the Pythagorean faith that the truth about reality is somehow wrapped up in numbers. Both of these factors, the acquaintance with Hellenistic science and the revival of Platonism were of tremendous effect. The knowledge of particular Alexandrian scientific writings provided specific suggestions in the way of hypotheses to be employed. Thus Copernicus was helped to his momentous discovery not by observing the stars—he added very little to the known facts—but by reading Cicero, who reported an ancient theory that the earth turns upon its axis daily. The notion that the earth not only rotates, but also revolves around the sun, he derived from Aristarchus (third century B.C.). On the other hand, the Platonic faith that the secrets of the world were to be discovered by tracing out the mathematical relations among observed facts gave to the founders of modern science their fundamental assumption. That assumption is: *The key to the interpretation of nature is mathematics.*

Copernicus, indeed, did not have to go to classical science for the faith that the world is an orderly system. This faith, at least as old as Greek notions of fate and destiny, had been shared by the Scholastics. But the latter, following Aristotle, had held that the order of nature was essentially teleological, dominated by final causes. Things were what they were and did what they did in fulfillment of a cosmic purpose that permeated everything. In Christian terms, nature was regarded as the scene of a divine drama, whose every act and event expressed the purpose of God. From this point of view, the key to the interpretation of nature is theology. Hence, theology was for the Scholastic mind the queen of the sciences.

Plato, and the Renaissance Platonists after him, held that mathematics was the dominant science. Had not Plato placed above the entrance to his Academy the words, "Let no one ignorant of geometry enter here"? His theory of ideas is an elaboration of the doctrine that number, quantity, and the mathematically fixed relations and proportions lie at the base of reality. Thus it was that the rediscovery of Plato gave form to the scientific revolt against medievalism. Influenced by this Platonism, Copernicus' faith that the world is orderly took on the form that *this order is*

*mathematical.* If this be the case, then theology must give way to mathematics as the key which will unlock the mysteries of nature.

Part of the Platonic philosophy of nature was to regard astronomy as the geometry of the heavens, a branch of mathematical science. Geometry is the science of space relations in which the starting point or point of reference is of no consequence so long as the relations, e.g., the size of angles and the length of lines, re-



BACKWARD LOOP DESCRIBED BY A PLANET (From H. T. Stetson, *Man and the Stars*, McGraw-Hill Book Company, Inc.)

main constant. Thus, in surveying—a form of applied geometry—it does not matter at which part of a plot of land one begins, whether at the northeast corner or at the southwest, so long as one observes the field notes carefully. Astronomy has always been concerned with the survey of the heavens—an attempt to set down the field notes of the positions and motions of the heavenly bodies with reference to each other and to the earth. The point of observation being the earth, it was but natural that in the growth of astronomy, the earth should be taken as the stationary, fixed point with reference to which the positions and motions of the stars and planets should be measured. This was the technique which the

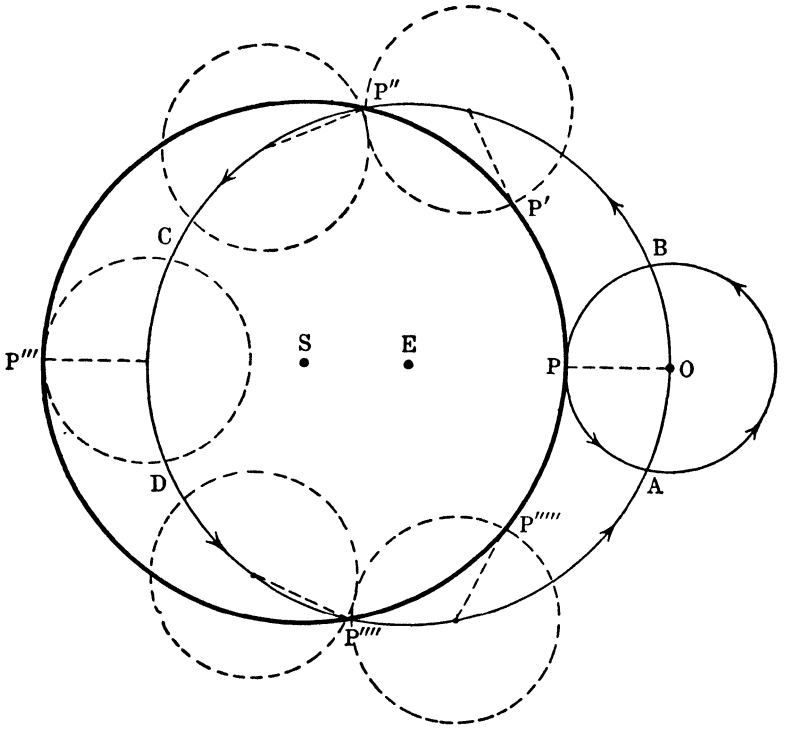
Greeks had followed: the assumption that the earth was the center of the universe was the basis of the whole system of astronomy which bears the name of Ptolemy. This system was an elaboration of the early Greek theory that around the earth as the center a number of transparent spheres move. These spheres were conceived as being like big hollow glass balls, one each for the sun, moon, each of the planets, the fixed stars, and the outermost sphere of the *primum mobile*. But this simple system did not prove adequate to explain the observed facts that the planets do not move directly across the heavens like the moon. The planets seem to move backward as well as forward. This latter phenomenon is known as retrograde motion (see diagram, p. 442). To include retrograde motion, the system outlined above was modified by treating the spheres as hypothetical and by adding more spheres, as well as epicycles. Some of these additional spheres were supposed to be concentric with the original ones but moving in the opposite direction; while the epicycles described the paths of planets supposed to revolve around centers which in turn revolved with one or another of the concentric spheres. By the sixteenth century the numbers of spheres had been raised to seventy-seven, which, together with the epicycles, left a system of overwhelming complexity.

The revolutionary achievement of Nicholas Copernicus (1473-1543), a Polish astronomer, was simply the successful attempt to rewrite the geometry of the heavens with the assumption of a different point of reference. He saw that by treating the sun as stationary and the earth as one of the movable planets, he could simplify astronomy and reduce to a more manageable order the complex movements of the heavenly bodies. How this was brought about as an exercise in geometry can perhaps be made clear by reference to the diagram on the next page, in which E represents the earth, S the sun, and P any one of the planets.[7]

Let us assume, as in the Ptolemaic system, that E is our center of reference and that we are trying to reduce to geometric order the observed motions of P. To do this successfully, we must explain, not only the retrograde motions shown in the first diagram,

[7] Cf. E. A. Burtt, *The Metaphysical Foundations of Modern Physical Science* (New York: Harcourt, Brace, 1925), pp. 36-37.

but also the fact that the planet appears larger (and hence nearer) when it is at P than when it is beyond S at P‴. On the assumption that E is the center of reference, the only way to describe the motions of P in terms of mathematical regularity is by means of a combination of two circles, ABCD with E as a center, and ABP with its center at O. Let us suppose that each of these circles revolves as indicated by the arrows, and that each of them completes




a full revolution in the same time. The point P will then trace out an epicyclical path with reference to the circle ABCD, thus accounting for retrograde motion as well as for the difference in the distances between E and the planet at the two positions P and P‴.

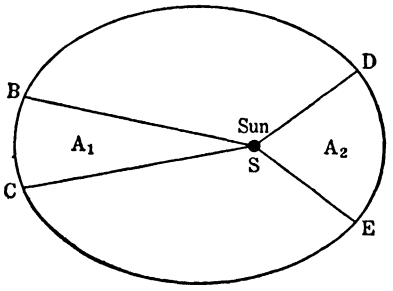
But if we now study our diagram carefully, we shall see that while P is making its epicyclical motions with reference to the circle ABCD, it is also describing the circle P P′ P″ . . . having

S as a center. This suggests abandoning E as the center of reference in favor of S. By the simple assumption that both E and P revolve around S as a common center, the variation in the distances between E and P and E and P''' are explained, and the fact of retrograde motion can be accounted for in terms of the difference in the velocities and size of the orbits of E and P. The extra circle (epicycle) ABP then becomes unnecessary and can be eliminated. This is the way in which Copernicus thought out his new system. By placing S at the center of his universe and by supposing that both E and P revolve around S, he put astronomy in a position to rid itself of the cumbersome epicycles of Ptolemy. The result was more simple and fitted the observed facts more adequately than the older theory had. Thus, we see how Copernicus, without significant new information, was led to the heliocentric view of the astronomical world through his antecedent conviction that this world was orderly and that its order was mathematical in character.

The work of Johann Kepler (1571-1630), the German mathematician and astronomer who shares with Copernicus the honor of founding the new astronomy, illustrates further how the Platonic faith that the universe consists of harmonious mathematical relations was foundational to the new theory. The Danish astronomer, Tycho Brahe (1546-1601), following Copernicus, made some very accurate observations of the movements of heavenly bodies. His charts showed beyond doubt that the orbits of the planets could not be interpreted as circular as had been supposed in Copernicus' published work. But Brahe's own interpretation of the facts did not prove fruitful. It remained for Kepler to bring his Platonic mathematical philosophy to the consideration of the data supplied by Brahe. Kepler was greatly disturbed by the fact that he could not express the planet's orbit in the "perfect" geometrical figure, the circle. Still convinced that in some way all these relations could be reduced to geometrical form, he finally discovered that the planetary orbit is an ellipse of which the sun is one focus. This is Kepler's first law of planetary motions. The planets' departure from pure circular motion did not, after all, destroy the geometric constitution of the heavens!

Kepler was disturbed further by the fact, shown in Brahe's

calculations, that the planet moved with irregular speed. That is, the speed of the planet is greater in one part of its elliptical orbit than in another part. It seemed that the "harmony of the spheres" might, after all, be a romantic illusion not supported by fact. Unable to rest until he had found explanation of this apparent lack of order, he at last found that the planet moves faster when it is near the sun and slower when it is farther away. Not knowing the amount of variation in a planet's speed, Kepler calculated the



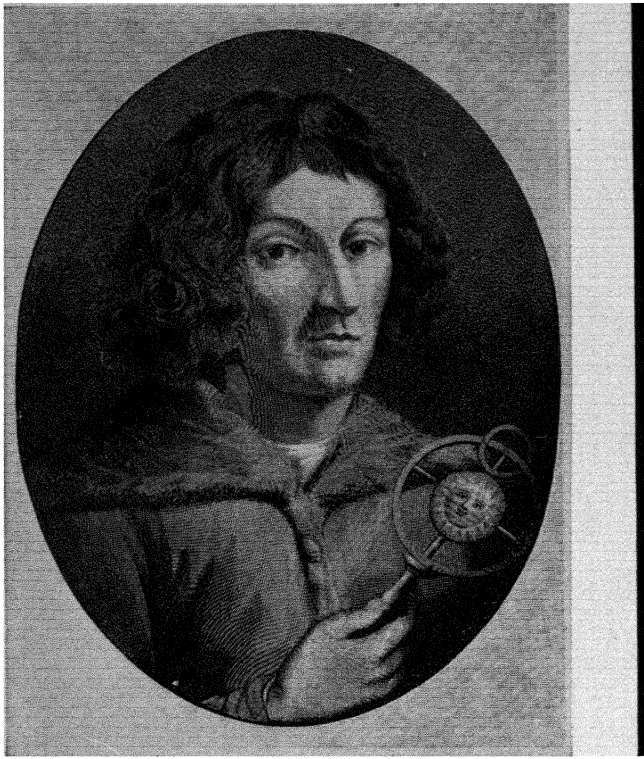

Sketch to illustrate Kepler's discovery that although the earth moves more rapidly when nearer the sun, yet the areas of the sections SBC and SDE, marked out by the earth moving for the same period of time in its orbit, are equal. Thus if the time required for the earth to move from B to C is equal to the time required for it to move from E to D, even though the distance ED is greater than the distance BC, the area of the section SBC ($A_1$) is equal to the area of section SDE ($A_2$).

orbit and velocity of Mars seventy times and found that its velocity in all parts of its orbit is such that the areas of all segments swept in equal times by a radius drawn from the sun to the planet are equal. This may perhaps be made clear by reference to the accompanying diagram, in which the ellipse represents the planet's orbit and S the sun. Although BC is a much shorter distance than DE, it takes the planet the same time to travel the one as the other. But if we draw the lines BS, CS, DS, and ES, and if we measure the area BSC and compare it with the measurement of the area DSE, we find these areas to be the same. Although velocity may vary, the geometric harmony is saved by the equality of areas. Designating the radius drawn from the sun to the planet as the planet-vector, we have the formulation of Kepler's second law: The planet-vector sweeps



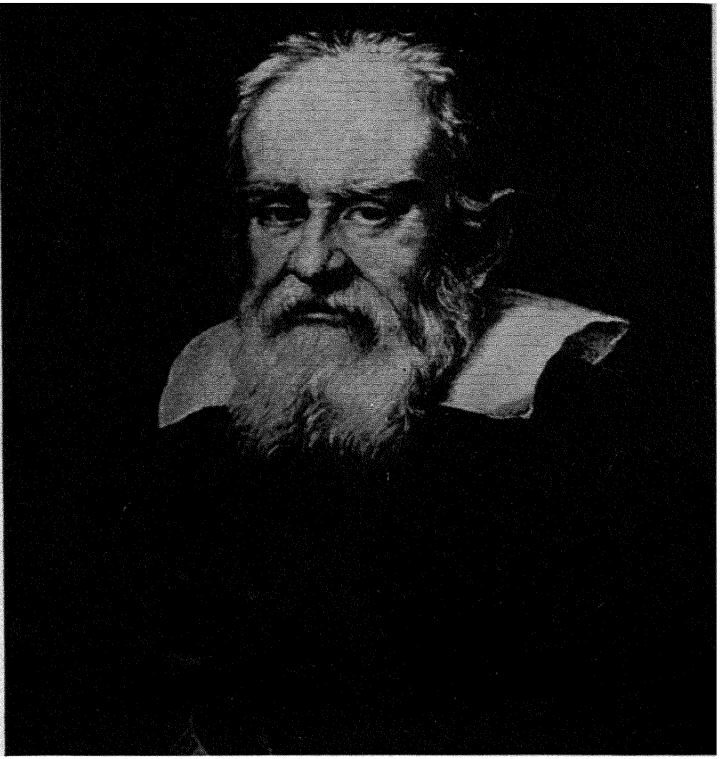
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ST. THOMAS AQUINAS



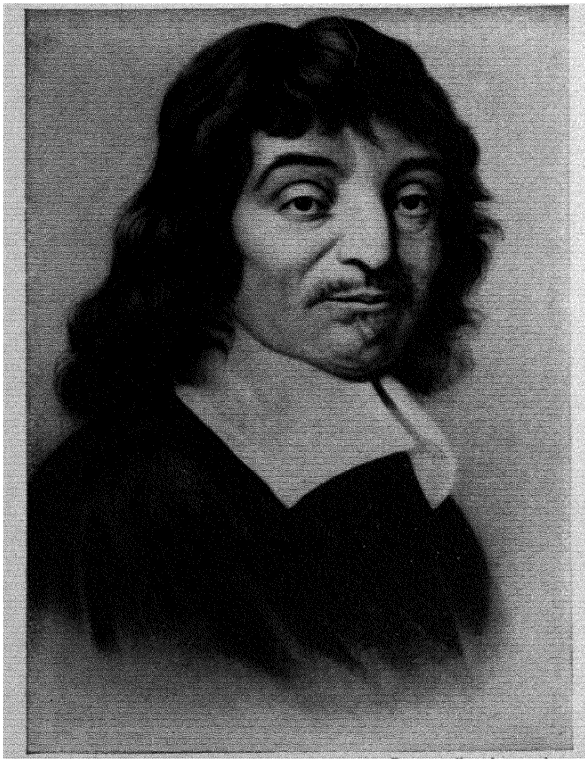
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COPERNICUS



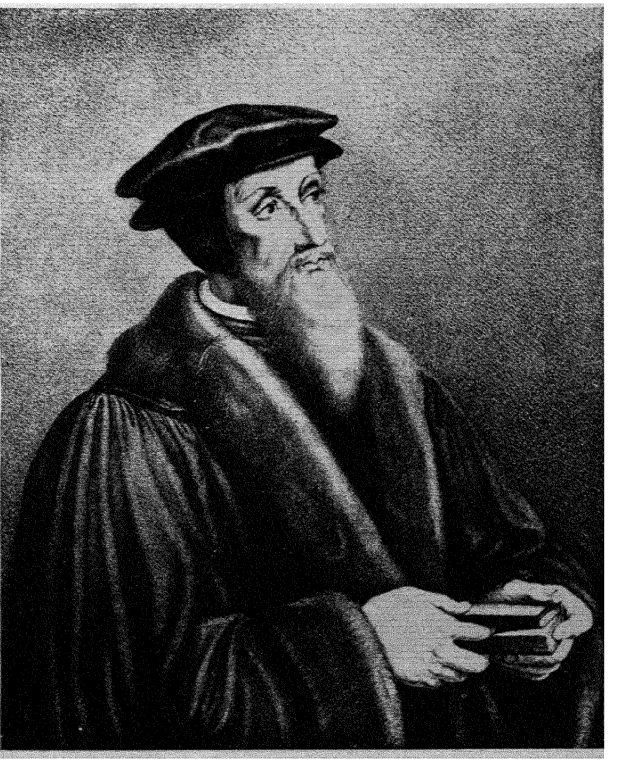
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GALILEO



*Brown Brothers photo*

DESCARTES



CALVIN



*The Bettmann Archive*

LUTHER AT THE DIET OF WORMS

out equal areas in equal times. Following out the principles underlying the second law, Kepler discovered also a mathematical relation between the times of revolution of the various planets—the planetary years—and their distance from the sun. For example, the planet Saturn, with an orbit about nine times that of the earth, has a year about twenty-seven times as long—actually twenty-nine and a fraction years. As formulated by Kepler, this third law reads, "The squares of the periodic times are proportional to the cubes of the mean distances of the planets from the sun."

The role played by philosophy in the Copernican revolution was great. Not only was it the inspiration for a new synthesis of empirical knowledge already available; it also supplied astronomers with a set of general ideas from which they could proceed. Nature does not willingly yield her secrets to men; she answers only those questions which are put to her directly. The Platonic mathematical philosophy helped the scientist of the time by suggesting the sort of questions to ask.

The ascendancy of the Copernican astronomy sealed the triumph of Platonism over Scholasticism. It thus established the independence of philosophy from theology. The early philosophers of the modern period no longer were theologians seeking to reconcile reason with revelation. Two of them, Descartes and Leibniz, are known quite as well for their work in mathematics as for their work in philosophy. Descartes invented analytical geometry, while Leibniz, independently of Newton, discovered the calculus. A third, Spinoza, certain that only mathematical knowledge was worth while, wrote his *Ethics* in the form of geometrical theorems and demonstrations.

The mathematical interpretation of nature, so brilliantly employed in the Copernican revolution, involves at least four principles which are important to observe, for they lie close to the center of modern science. These principles follow:[8]

1. The mathematical harmony discoverable in the observed facts is the cause or the reason for things being as they are. As Kepler put it, God created the world in accordance with the principle of perfect numbers, hence the mathematical harmonies in the mind of

[8] Cf. *ibid.*, pp. 52 *et seq.*

the creator determine the size, number, and motions of the heavenly bodies.[9]

2. Of a number of variant hypotheses about the same set of facts, that one is true which shows why the facts are what they are, i.e., which demonstrates their orderly and mathematical connection. Thus, the Ptolemaic theory of the heavens had been forced to rest content with the simple statement that the completion of certain planetary epicycles *happens* to coincide with the time of the sun's apparent revolution around the earth. According to the mathematical interpretation of nature, the Copernican theory is true since it shows mathematically why astronomic events *must* be as they are.

3. The real world has quantitative characteristics only. Sensory qualities are not real qualities of things, but only signs of them; and real differences are quantitative only.

4. All certain knowledge must be knowledge of the quantitative character of objects. Perfect knowledge is always mathematical. Sensory experiences lack mathematical clarity and consistency, and therefore do not yield certain knowledge. This principle is reflected in the goal of contemporary scientists to express their results in mathematical formulae.

The Ptolemaic astronomy had become the background for the medieval religious view of the world, rationally described by Aquinas and poetically pictured by Dante. Accordingly, the revolution in astronomy involved also a revolution in man's whole picture of his world. Professor Preserved Smith has admirably described this upsetting situation:

> The Copernican astronomy changed the whole picture of the world as it had been viewed by all generations. Hitherto the universe had been a snug little place, and the earth occupied its center both in space and in importance. Around a globe not too big to make one feel comfortably at home the concentric spheres of the heavens curtained off the scene on which was enacted the drama of the universe. Like convenient coulisses, hell, purgatory, and heaven were at hand to receive the several actors after their exits, while on the stage of the world men played that absorbing melodrama, conceived and put on by God, half spoiled by Satan as impresario and villain, and

[9] For a contemporary expression of this principle, see Sir James Jeans, *The Mysterious Universe* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), pp. 140, 146-147, 148.

viewed with rapt attention by a large audience of supernatural beings. And as a guarantee that this idea of the universe was correct, man had the witness of his own senses which could see the sun and the planets rise and set, and he had also the testimony of . . . prophets inspired by God to write the first acts of the divine comedy. . . .

And now, at one blow from an infatuated star-gazer, the world, which had stood so fast on its foundations for six thousand years, began to twirl giddily on its axis and spin like a fretful midge around a candle. Though the implications of the new scene were not worked out immediately, it began even from the first to be suspected that, if the theories advanced were true, man had lost his birthright as the creature for whose sake all else existed, and had been reduced to the position of a puny and local spectator of infinite forces unresponsive to his wishes and unmindful of his purposes. . . . With the possible exception of Darwinism, there has never been such a blow to man's pride, nor one involving such a complete subversion of all his most cherished prejudices. The war between the old and the new beliefs was long and bitter.[10]

Catholic and Protestant alike arose to do battle against the new theory. John Calvin quoted Psalm 93:1, "the world also is established that it cannot be moved," in refutation, while a Catholic cardinal appealed to the story of Joshua commanding the sun to stand still. Even Francis Bacon, who might have known better, argued that the earth must be the center of the universe because of its weight. The Catholic Church went into action. Galileo Galilei, who invented the telescope and popularized the new astronomy, was called before the bar of the Inquisition, forced to deny his true opinions, and sentenced to prison. But all opposition was in vain. Neither ponderous quotations from Scripture nor the Catholic decrees of condemnation could prove that the earth remains stationary or refute the testimony of Galileo's telescope. Even the Catholic Church had finally to accept the new astronomy. Since 1845 the works even of Copernicus, Kepler, and Galileo no longer appear on the *Index of Prohibited Books*, although the Church has, characteristically, never admitted that she was wrong.

In spite of the Copernican challenge to the medieval world view and the resultant struggle that could end only in the defeat of

[10] Preserved Smith, *A History of Modern Culture* (New York: Henry Holt, 1930), Vol. I, pp. 39-40.

theology, it is altogether possible that the theologians might have been able to reconcile their religious beliefs with the new science. The Platonic philosophy on which the revolutionary theory rested was no stranger to Christianity. Until the time of Aquinas, Christian philosophy had been almost entirely Platonic; it might have been shifted back again with proper theological statesmanship. But such statesmanship was lacking, and before it could arise the Copernican was followed by the Cartesian revolution. This proved to be even more radical than the first. Its mechanistic interpretation of the world was so inimical to the theological view that the Church withdrew more positively and dogmatically into its stronghold of scholastic Aristotelianism. The latter accordingly fell to the position of one rival philosophy among others, a position which it has held to this day. In the thirteenth century, thanks to the genius of Albert the Great and Thomas Aquinas, theology had been able to absorb the science of the newly discovered Aristotle; but in the sixteenth century the changes came so rapidly and in such varied form that the possibilities of reconciliation were dissipated in a futile theological attack on the new science, with the consequent hardening of dogma and the perpetuation, in Catholic thought, of the medieval outlook. Philosophy and science shook off the apron strings of the conservative Church and hurried along the road of secularization.

## The Cartesian Revolution

Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) was an Italian scientist. Popularly known as the champion of the new astronomy, his greatest contribution to the emancipation from medievalism was in the field of physics. After the Inquisition had forced him to recant the Copernican heresy, he was allowed, with unusual lenience, to retire to his home in Florence. Forbidden, on pain of death, to publish anything in astronomy, he turned his attention to the commonplace objects on this earth and sought, with brilliant success, to discover and formulate the mathematical laws of their motions.

Aristotelians of Galileo's day assumed that every object seeks its natural place, the place of heavy bodies being below, that of

light bodies above. Such physics as they had was a science of purposes and as such ultimately a branch of theology. But Galileo repudiated this probing into the *purposes* of things, and sought instead the *laws* of their behavior. Accepting the principle of Leonardo da Vinci that "proportions are found not only in numbers and measures, but also in sounds, weights, times and places, and in every force," Galileo no longer asked, "*Why* do bodies fall?" but asked instead, "*How* do bodies fall?" What mathematical formulation describes the motion of a freely falling body? The story is told that by dropping iron balls of different weights from the Tower of Pisa he first destroyed the old belief that bodies fall with a velocity proportional to their weight, and then proceeded to prove that velocity is proportional to the time of descent. As it had been observed that the free motion of a falling body is continuously accelerated, he demonstrated that "the distances traversed during equal intervals of time, by a body falling from rest, stand to one another in the same ratio as the odd numbers beginning with unity." He thus answered his question, "*How* do bodies fall?" with a mathematical formulation, a proportion between units of time and degrees of velocity. By means of this sort of investigation, Galileo did for physics what Copernicus and Kepler had done for astronomy. Where the latter had liberated science from the Ptolemaic astronomy, Galileo achieved liberation from Aristotelian physics.

Basic to Galileo's method were certain fundamental assumptions. Of these we may mention three. The first is his belief, shared with Copernicus, Kepler, and others, that nature is a simple, orderly system, whose every proceeding is regular and necessary, governed by "immutable laws which she never transgresses." Moreover, he shared the faith that the order of nature is fundamentally mathematical in character. As he himself wrote,

> Philosophy is written in that great book which ever lies before our eyes—I mean the universe—but we cannot understand it if we do not first learn the language and grasp the symbols, in which it is written. This book is written in the mathematical language, and the symbols are triangles, circles, and other geometrical figures, without

whose help it is impossible to comprehend a single word of it; without which one wanders in vain through a dark labyrinth.[11]

But Galileo's originality lies in the combination of the mathematical faith with the Baconian emphasis on experimental verification. The confidence in the validity of controlled sense experience marks the second of Galileo's fundamental assumptions. Accordingly, he continually stressed the need of direct appeal to nature, of observation and empirical verification. He implemented the new astronomy by the development of the telescope and verified his theories in physics by experiment. He once wrote to Kepler, inviting him to share a hearty laugh at some professors of philosophy, one at Padua who refused to look through the telescope, another at Pisa who sought "with logical arguments, as if with magical incantations, to charm the new planets out of the sky." Galileo thus illustrated his contempt for the pretensions of knowledge that ignore facts or refuse to be corrected by observation. For him, knowledge was the mathematical *interpretation* of the sensible facts of the world about us. Ignore the facts, and knowledge is left without content. This does not mean, however, that naïve sense experience is to be given priority over scientific conclusions. The reasoned conclusion of Copernicus is to be trusted above the uninterpreted experience of the peasant who sees the sun rise and set. Accordingly, Galileo could not sufficiently admire those scientists who, like Aristarchus of Greece and Copernicus of Poland, had courage to base their opinions on the dictates of reason even when these seemed a manifest "rape on their senses." The tempered combination of faith in the mathematical order of nature with the appeal to experiment, first achieved in the Western world by Galileo, brings us close to the assumptions and methods that have dominated modern science to this day.

The third basic assumption of Galileo is the atomic theory of matter. Invented by Leucippus and Democritus and put into poetry by the Roman Lucretius in his famous *De Rerum Natura*, this theory was known to Galileo and employed by him. The astronomers had not needed this philosophy. The mathematical harmonies

[11] As translated by E. A. Burtt, *op. cit.*, p. 64, from *Opera Complete di Galileo Galilei* (Firenze, 1842), Vol. IV, p. 171.

which they were so zealous to discover were vast geometrical relations among celestial bodies. But Galileo, extending the mathematical interpretation to the motions and relations of objects on the earth, found atomic materialism a convenient theory. The changes of solids into fluids and gases, the phenomena of cohesion, expansion, and contraction, could be explained by the atomic theory without admitting the existence of empty spaces within solid bodies or the penetrability of matter. The atoms, regarded as alike in quality and as differing only in the quantitative characteristics of size, shape, and motion, could readily be incorporated with most of the principles of the mathematical philosophy. The conjunction of atomic materialism, the mathematical philosophy, and the appeal to experience, marks Galileo as a modern scientist. The materialism of Democritus, the mathematical faith of the Platonists, and the experimentalism of Roger Bacon—these three—are the working principles of modern science. Having merged these in his work, Galileo leaves behind the medieval world of revelation and authority and steps over the threshold of the modern era.

The philosophical effects of Galileo's work were tremendous. Mechanical force—the tugs and thrusts of moving bodies—replaced divine purpose as the cause of natural events. The real world was henceforth held to consist of physical bodies moving in space and time according to laws capable of mathematical formulation. The qualitative aspects of things, their odors, colors, tastes, and sounds, must accordingly be regarded merely as effects in the minds of men—effects caused by the motions of atoms which in themselves are odorless, colorless, tasteless, and without sound. The distinction was, therefore, drawn between primary and secondary qualities. Primary qualities are the absolute, immutable, objective qualities which belong to the world independently of human knowledge. These are the qualities of number, figure, magnitude, position, and motion. The secondary qualities are the relative, fleeting, and unstable characteristics which depend upon the mind of the perceiver. These are the qualities of taste, smell, sound, and color. Since real knowledge consists of mathematical formulations, the primary or measurable qualities alone constitute its subject matter. The secondary qualities, subjective and beyond the reach of mathe-

matical description, constitute the realm of opinion and illusion. Such is the logic of Galileo's philosophy of science. Having committed itself to this philosophy, modern science, despite its brilliant achievements, has had as a sort of skeleton in its closet the fact that it has actually no place in its theory for the whole realm of secondary qualities. The color of the sunset, the sound of the surf, the perfume of the rose, the flavor of food and drink—as these are seen and heard and smelt and tasted—science, following Galileo, has designated as merely subjective, and therefore of no scientific interest.

Galileo himself was primarily a scientist, who hesitated to generalize his methods and his principles. It remained for his contemporary, the French philosopher, René Descartes (1596-1650), to express the wider significance of Galileo's achievement. Believing that mathematics is the most powerful instrument of knowledge, he set to work on the twofold task of perfecting this instrument and of applying it to the mysteries of nature. He accordingly combined geometrical analysis and algebra, producing analytical geometry, and then proceeded to employ this as the tool of philosophy. Faced with the problem of primary and secondary qualities, he believed that the geometric quality of matter, i.e., extension, alone is really primary. The resultant Cartesian revolution has been eloquently described by Professor Randall:

> To Descartes thenceforth space or extension became the fundamental reality in the world, motion the source of all change, and mathematics the only relation between its parts. . . . He had made of nature a machine and nothing but a machine; purposes and spiritual significance had alike been banished. . . . He had reached the notion of seeking an explanation of all things in the world in purely mechanical terms. Intoxicated by his vision and by his success, he boasted, "Give me extension and motion, and I will construct the universe." The whole working-out of mechanical physics in the next two centuries is but the development of this idea. All energy is reduced to kinetic energy, the energy of motion; all qualitative differences in the world to quantitative differences of size, shape, and speed of motion of particles of matter. Living beings form no exception; life becomes a mere matter of chemical and physical changes, all animals are mere automata, even the body of man is a purely physical machine. The world of the Middle Ages has been explicitly

and entirely rejected for the world of modern physics. Descartes in his enthusiasm suggested mechanical explanations too simple and too little checked up by observation; but Newton, in actually working out in detail the *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy,* set the keystone in the arch of Cartesianism.[12]

How different is this Cartesian world from that of Aquinas! For the latter, God exists as the final cause of all that is, with man occupying a place just a little lower than the angels but superior to the rest of nature. In Descartes' world, the function of God is reduced to that of an engineer who brought the world machine into being. This being quite able to go on its mechanically determined way without further divine assistance, the work of God seems to be over. Even the body of man is a part of this machine, although his soul, indeed, is held to be in some mysterious fashion independent of it.

But the independence which Descartes allowed to the soul did not alter the emphasis of his total picture. In the first place, the soul was theoretically useless in the world. If only physical forces are effective causes, and the soul is by definition not physical, how can it influence human behavior? In the second place, the really important world continued to be quantitative, mechanical, and mathematically computable—the world of primary qualities. The soul is merely the ineffective spectator of secondary qualities which depend for their existence on being perceived.

The Cartesian division of the world into primary and secondary qualities and the designation of body and soul (or mind) as separate entities, has given to modern thought one of its most persistent problems. How, if at all, can this divided world be brought together again? Or, how are the independent sets of things, primary and secondary qualities, body and mind, related, since they are, after all, in one world? Or yet again, if they really belong together, what blunder of speculation separated them? These questions are part of the heritage of the age of transition, the bone of contention among modern psychologists, theologians, and philosophers.

[12] John Herman Randall, Jr., *The Making of the Modern Mind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1926), pp. 241-242.

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# CHAPTER XVI

## *THE PROTESTANT REFORMATION*

The Protestant Reformation was the religious aspect of the whole movement of rebellion against medievalism. Where the Humanists attacked other-worldliness and self-denial, and the scientists rejected the sanctified Aristotelian astronomy and physics, the Reformers repudiated the Catholic claim to an exclusive control over the means of salvation and the authority of the Church that rested on it.

Like Humanism and the rise of modern science, this religious movement of transition was but the maturing of forces that had their roots in the past. Especially important in the background of the Reformation were medieval mysticism and the teachings of the so-called Pre-Reformers.

### Mysticism

Mysticism represents personal religion at its most intense level. The mystic believes that the goal of religion is to see and know God directly, even to become one with him. By a process of self-purification and contemplation, by quiet brooding and waiting for light, he frees himself from all things that separate him from God—the lusts and passions of the flesh, the distractions of sense experience. Finally, if the mystic's quest be successful, he has an experience which he calls indescribable because it is like nothing else, but which is for him the apprehension of divinity with his inner spiritual vision, the reflection of God in his own soul. Such mysticism had been present in the Church from the time of St. Paul. As long as Catholic thought was patterned after the Neo-Platonism of Augustine, mysticism had a logical place in the Christian scheme. When Augustine gave way to Aquinas, whose system deferred the beatific vision to the next world, mysticism continued as a sort of minority tradition, always making its appeal to certain temperaments and frequently associated with the piety of saints. But in the

thirteenth and fourteenth centuries, when the sacramental system had become an external ceremonialism and the careful calculation of merit acquired by "good works," which often had no moral significance, had made religion seem like trading for eternal life, a school of mystics sought once more to bring health and integrity to Christianity. They deplored the substitution of mechanical religious observances for personal spiritual experience. The interposition of a mediating priesthood seemed to these mystics a hindrance to the essence of religion which for them was the union of the soul with God. They did not, indeed, reject the Church with its priests, its sacraments and ceremonies, but they sought to restore these things to their proper place as helps to the spiritual life.

Greatest among the mystics were Meister Eckhardt (1260-1327) and John Tauler (1300-1361). Eckhardt emphasized the philosophical and speculative side of mysticism. Tauler, his disciple, emphasized its practical side. He spent his life preaching, in the common language, the necessity of a pure life and the possibility of communion with God through the Bible and through prayer. Stressing conversion from a bad to a good life, he held simple faith as better than theological learning or monkish exercises, and taught that all honest labor, whether shoemaking or preaching, might be a divine calling.

Although Tauler's sermons, published in 1498, influenced him, Luther acknowledged more indebtedness to *The German Theology*, a mystical book of anonymous authorship. Emphasizing man's sinful state and the necessity of absolute self-surrender as the condition of reconciliation with God, *The German Theology* was translated from Latin into German by Luther himself in 1516. Apart from the Bible and the works of St. Augustine, said Luther, he had never met with a book that taught him so much about "God, Christ, man and all things."

While the mystics were not rebels against the Church, their piety embodied at least one of the principles of the Reformation. The mystics' rejection of all ceremony and formal ritual, as in themselves inadequate for salvation, foreshadowed the Lutheran emphasis on justification by faith alone. But mystical piety alone did not lead to revolution against the established order. Dissatisfaction

with the ecclesiastical scheme of salvation had to be coupled with other powerful forces, economic and patriotic, before a full-fledged revolution could be generated.

## The Pre-Reformers

The most influential of the Pre-Reformers were the Englishman, John Wyclif (1324-1384), and the Bohemian, John Huss (1369-1415). Wyclif was primarily concerned to abolish the temporal power of the Church and to reform the character of its priesthood. In working for these ends, he attacked the laziness, luxury, and dishonesty of the clergy, denied the effectiveness of sacraments administered by sinful priests, and characterized the sale of indulgences as robbery. When the Church declined to reform, he referred the matter to Parliament. He judged the Church and its teachings by appeal to the Scripture, which, with the help of friends, he translated for the first time into English. With Augustine, he defined the true Church as those chosen by God to salvation, not as the Roman organization with its hierarchy of priests. He was thus prepared to say that membership in the visible Church and participation in its sacraments were not necessary to salvation.

By training "poor priests" to go about preaching this new gospel among the people, he attained some success. But the power of the Church was great enough, finally, to force Wyclif's personal followers to recant. Thus robbed of its leadership, the movement all but disappeared. But Wyclif's attempt to link religious reformation with national sentiments, his rejection of sacramentalism and, above all, his appeal to the authority of Scripture, pointed the way of later reformers and provided a platform of revolt.

Some Czech students at Oxford carried Wyclif's doctrine to Bohemia. Thus the University of Prague became the center of reformation and John Huss, a professor there, its leader. His advocacy of Wyclif's doctrines got Huss into difficulties with his superiors and papal bulls were issued against him. He burned the bulls and withdrew from Prague. But he was summoned to the Council of Constance where he went with the safe-conduct of the Emperor Sigismund. Refusing to recant, Huss was burned alive. Sigismund made no effort to make good his safe-conduct, and the

princes of the Church adopted a resolution that no pledge like Sigismund's safe-conduct, prejudicial to the Catholic faith, was binding.

In Bohemia national consciousness was growing strong and it came to the support of religious rebellion. The Bohemian Diet remonstrated against the betrayal of Huss. The principles which he had espoused left their mark in certain reforms in the Church in Bohemia and became the animating principle of a separate religious body known as the Bohemian Brethren. These held to the supremacy of the Bible literally interpreted, rejected the primacy of the pope, the validity of indulgences, Masses for the dead, and all ceremonies not authorized in Scripture. The Bohemian Brethren continue to this day as the Moravians, a Protestant sect whose piety influenced John Wesley in the eighteenth century and Frank Buchman in the twentieth.

Wyclif and Huss are with justice called Pre-Reformers. While Luther did not know of Wyclif, he recognized his indebtedness to Huss. Given a more favorable political and cultural situation, Luther was able to put the program of reform into effect. We shall now consider some of the factors that helped the latter succeed where his predecessors had failed.

## Nationalism

In listing the various elements contributing to the transition from the medieval to the modern world, it is essential to refer to the rise of nationalism along with Humanism, the rise of science, and the religious Reformation. But here we shall have to confine ourselves to a consideration of the growing national consciousness and power as these were related to the success of Luther's revolt. Some writers have gone so far as to say that the causes of the Reformation were largely secular rather than spiritual—economic rather than religious. A writer in the *Cambridge Modern History*, for example, declares that "we may dismiss the religious changes incident to the Reformation with the remark that they were not the object sought, but the means for attaining that object."[1] While we may

[1] H. C. Lea, "The Eve of the Reformation," *Cambridge Modern History* (Cambridge: the University Press, 1902-1912), Vol. I, p. 653.

reject this estimate of the religious motive as a causal factor, we must recognize that the Reformation had a secular side, that it was a phase of the clash between the secular national state and the international ecclesiastical state—between the modern nation and the medieval Church with its pretensions of superiority over the temporal power. We have already seen most of the religious principles of the Reformation enunciated by Wyclif and Huss, but the spirit of religious rebellion did not find embodiment in an effective *movement* of reform until it was allied with nationalistic sentiments and power.

The sense of country which we call patriotism is today so common and so intense that it is difficult to realize that it has not always existed and that it emerged during a definite period in the history of the Western world. It is tempting to speculate as to the influences that created national sentiment. People always have a sentimental attachment for that spot in the world which they call home. They usually share this with members of their own family, tribe, or race, with whom economic prosperity and security against attack are a common concern. Living together in the same geographical setting with rivers and mountains as natural boundaries, members of the same family or race, speaking a common language, and having common economic and military interests, accumulate a set of memories of the past and a traditional pattern to govern the conduct of life in the present. Geography, language, economic and military interest, common memories and traditions—these are the ingredients of national sentiment.

In the Middle Ages, the centers of loyalty were small and numerous. Each feudal manor and each town was itself the object of devotion. Speculating for a moment on the influences that transformed this local sentiment into national patriotism, we may list several factors. First, the Crusades, bringing together men from all parts of Europe, made them conscious of group similarities as well as differences. Other wars, transcending the limits of feudal struggles between one baron and another, united men from diverse groups; by joining men in military association, war served to amalgamate custom and tradition into more inclusive units. Exhausted by long civil wars between feudal powers, the common people were

ready to turn to the centralized power of the king for peace and order.

Second, the invention of printing made possible books in the vernacular, which tended at once to remove the medieval differences between the language of one town and the next and to make the language more permanent and stable than a merely spoken tongue can be. Once put into printed form, the common languages replaced Latin as the means of communication between manor and manor and between town and town. While Latin had been the language of the learned, the common people now had a means of communication that was uniform over areas wider than feudal divisions, yet less universal than the language of the Church.

Bernard Shaw, in his play, *St. Joan*, dramatizes these essential factors making for the spirit of nationalism. Burgundians and men of Brittany, speaking a common language and dwelling on the same side of the English Channel, respond to the declaration of the Maid of Orléans that those who speak French are Frenchmen and have the divine right to kill Englishmen who seek French soil. The necessities of repelling foreign invasion made obsolete the medieval loyalties both of feudal particularism and of ecclesiastical internationalism; the possession of a common language defined nationality and helped bring forth the nation as the center of loyalty and love.

Coupled with the rise of patriotic sentiment were other factors making for nationalism and its consequent disruptive influence on the medieval hegemony of the Church. Chief among these was the growth of commerce. The medieval exchange of goods and services was replaced by the use of money. The guild organization of manufacture and trade proved inadequate and gradually gave way to other methods. Banks and bankers, prepared to extend credit, appeared in the towns. Great commercial companies used their cash and credit in promoting far-flung enterprises that involved risk and the prospect of large profit. New trade routes were opened up. America was discovered and the rich treasures of Mexico and Peru poured into Europe. Since towns proved too small as units of commerce, it was seen that trade must be at least national in scope to satisfy the new capitalism. The disorders of feudal strife and

Catholic restrictions on the taking of interest and profiteering definitely interfered with business. It was, therefore, quite natural that the merchant class should turn to the kings to police the barons and to restrain the Church. The economic support which the commercial class could give the kings, chiefly through taxes, enabled the latter to cut loose from feudal levies and to establish strong professional armies. It was thus possible to consolidate the national domain and to establish the "king's peace." "If the consequence of this was an increase in royal power," says Preserved Smith, "the kings were among those who had greatness thrust upon them, rather than achieving it for themselves. They were but the symbols of the new, proudly conscious nation, and the police commissioners of the large bankers and traders."[2]

The growth of national sentiment and power reacted on the Church. Before 1500, there was a strong movement to subordinate the Church to national laws—a movement inspired almost entirely by economic and political motives. We can list here but a few illustrations. Thus, England forbade the practice of withdrawing land from civil taxation by deeding it to the Church, and repealed the right of its subjects to appeal from the civil courts to Rome. France, in the Pragmatic Sanction, denied the papal right of taxation and threatened anyone bringing into the country a papal bull against this law with penalty of death. In Germany, where there was no central government, but pronounced national consciousness nonetheless existed, minor princes and free cities demanded from the papacy the same powers as those claimed by kings. The imperial Diets in Germany got into a virtual habit of drawing up lists of grievances against the Church. By 1520 it was an established principle that no German could be tried in Rome without being tried first in Germany—a circumstance that probably saved Luther's life. Thus, we see that before the outbreak of the Reformation, national and secular rulers had challenged the papal claims of unlimited power, asserted control over patronage and taxation, and curtailed the jurisdiction of papal decrees. When Luther revolted against the Church, there existed strong national interests that were ready to capitalize his religious motives for political purposes.

[2] Preserved Smith, *Age of the Reformation* (New York: Holt, 1920), pp. 5-6.

The electors of Saxony protected and encouraged Luther because he offered religious justification for their political struggles with the Church.

### Corruption of the Church

Finally, in tracing out the causes of the Reformation, we must mention the corruption in the Church. While this may easily be overemphasized, the fact remains that the immorality of the clergy and the abuses in connection with financial matters entered effectively into the total picture. We have seen how the Humanists Rabelais and Erasmus attacked the failure of monks and nuns to live up to their vows. While there was a leaven of saintly priests like the one described by Chaucer,

> Who Christes lore and his apostles twelve
> He taught, but first he folwed it himselve,

a large proportion were both ignorant and immoral. Many were unable to understand the Latin of the service or to repeat the Lord's Prayer or Creed in any language, and failed to keep their vows of celibacy or to conform to decent standards of sobriety and temperance.

Historically more important were the abuses connected with money. These involved the sale of church offices, of pardons and dispensations. The papacy collected dues and percentages from the clergy, who passed on the tax by charging high fees for their services. The popes through wars and extravagance ran into debt, and sought to repair their financial affairs by the sale of indulgences, a distortion of the sacrament of penance for the sake of profit.

Penance, one of the seven sacraments finally adopted by the medieval Church, involved four steps: contrition, confession, absolution, and satisfaction. While absolution removes the eternal consequences of sin, there remain certain temporal penalties which have to be satisfied. Satisfaction or penance consists of such penitential acts imposed by the priest for the removal of the temporal consequences of sin. Proper forms of penance might be the saying of prayers, fasting, the payment of money to charity, or a pilgrimage to a holy place. The theologians of the thirteenth century,

however, invented the doctrine that the Church had at her disposal a treasury of the excess merits of Christ and the saints, which could be applied to anyone by the pope in lieu of the temporal penalties for sin, whether penance in this life or purgatory after death.

An indulgence, then, was a papal excuse from penance or a pardon from purgatory. A full indulgence might be granted to Crusaders against the Moslems, or for making a pilgrimage to Rome. By the fourteenth century a pardon might be had for money payment, and the sale of indulgences had thus become a means of papal income. When in the fifteenth century the assumed power of the popes to free living men from purgatory was extended to include the dead, so that one might by the payment of money release one's dead parents or other loved ones from purgatory, this "holy trade" began really to flourish. Bankers became the papal agents to organize the sale of indulgences on commission; civil rulers and bishops got a share for permitting sales in their jurisdictions; and the agents sent out to distribute these pardons—and to collect the money—participated in the profits in accordance with their zeal. Temporal rulers, who wanted the revenues for themselves, were incensed at the amount of money carried to Rome in connection with the sale of indulgences. Religious leaders like Wyclif and Huss opposed these practices as a travesty on religion. It was this traffic in indulgences that aroused Luther. Attacking a patent abuse of the sacrament of penance, he came to deny the whole sacramental system. Thus we see that the financial abuses of the Church aroused political opposition from the princes and religious rebellion from the Reformers. The one supported by the other meant ultimate success; the temporal power of the Church was ultimately broken and its religious authority repudiated in half of Europe and in the British Isles.

## The Lutheran Revolt

In Martin Luther (1483-1546) the forces of revolt became personified. He was at once the product and the leader of the seething discontent against Rome. The time was ripe and Luther, with his gifts of popular speech, his strong will, and his earnestness, dominated his age. Born at Eisleben, he grew up in the home of a hardheaded, practical, and ambitious peasant who had confidence

in education. Accordingly, Luther was sent away to school at the age of thirteen, first to Magdeburg, then to Eisenach, and finally, at the age of eighteen, to the University of Erfurt. After taking his degree of Master of Arts four years later, he began the study of law. Then one day, as he was returning from a visit home, he was caught in a violent thunderstorm. Interpreting this as a divine warning to "forsake the world," he then and there made a vow to become a monk. To his father's great disappointment, Luther entered the Augustinian monastery at Erfurt in 1505, and was ordained priest in 1507.

Luther, like Paul and Augustine before him, was troubled about the state of his soul. He felt himself to be a sinner in danger of the wrath of God. Perhaps this feeling had driven him into the monastery in the first place; now it drove him to undertake with complete abandon the "good works" of the monastic life, all sorts of privations and ascetic exercises, prayers, fasts, and even scourgings. "If ever monk," said he, "had got to heaven by monkery, I should have been he." While he succeeded in winning the admiration of his brother monks, he could not eradicate his own sense of sin and guilt. Then he read Augustine, who wrote that man cannot be saved by merit but only by the grace of God. From Tauler he learned the importance of complete surrender to God. Brooding over the words of St. Paul, that "The just shall live by faith" (Rom. 1:17), he found his answer. It is by faith that man is saved, by trust, by wholehearted surrender to God's will. A man cannot be justified by his works, but only by the grace of God who through his love forgives. *This* is the gospel, the *good news* that Jesus brought and Paul preached. Man, on his part, must only have the faith to accept this gospel and to appropriate this grace. Thus was born Luther's revolutionary doctrine that man is justified by faith alone. This doctrine makes irrelevant and superfluous the whole medieval system of salvation by sacraments and "good works." Once the Church system of salvation is seen to be no longer necessary, her authority over men's lives must also go; her bonds are broken and independence is regained.

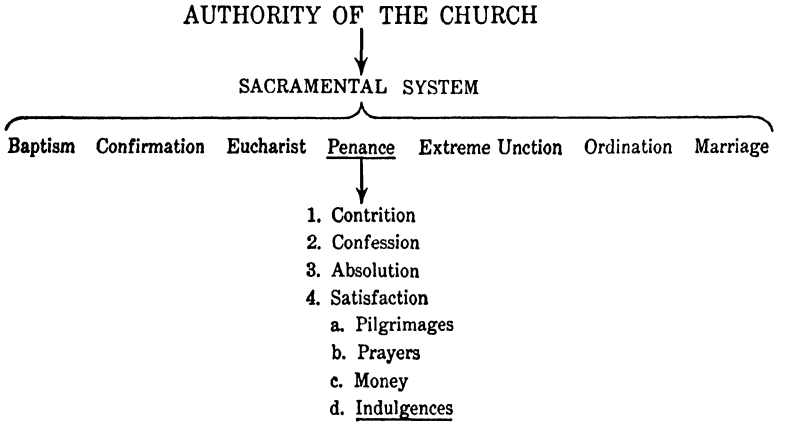
Armed with this new conviction that man is justified by faith alone, it was inevitable that Luther should come to grips with the

most infamous of "good works," the traffic in indulgences. Although the indulgence sellers were forbidden to enter Saxony, many people from Wittenberg, which lay near the border, went out to buy the assurance of heaven. Offended at this deception of the people who were led to trust their salvation to a certificate of indulgence instead of faith, Luther posted his Ninety-five Theses against the sale of indulgences on the door of the Castle Church at Wittenberg on October 31, 1517. The effect was tremendous. John Tetzel, the supervisor of the sales of indulgences, was mobbed and the market for his certificates vanished. Luther was ordered to retract his theses; he responded with a sermon that reiterated and stated more strongly his position. The papal lightning descended and Luther was summoned to Rome for trial. But the scene of the trial was changed to Augsburg and Luther was provided with a safe-conduct by Frederic the Wise, Elector of Saxony. At the trial Luther was ordered to recant his statements about indulgences. He refused and appealed "from the pope badly informed to the pope to be better informed." He had not yet challenged papal authority. But he was soon to be drawn into a debate with the Catholic theologian, John Eck. The latter declared that the Ninety-five Theses challenged the authority of the papacy. Luther admitted as much and supported his denial of the superiority of the Roman Church by the appeal to history, the Bible, and the Council of Nicaea. Pressed further by Eck, Luther declared that the Council of Constance had erred in connection with Huss. Not only the pope but even a general council of the Church was held possible of error!

Starting with an attack on an obvious abuse of a sacrament, Luther was led to deny first the whole sacramental scheme of salvation and then the authority of the Church which rested upon it. He had appealed from indulgence sellers to the pope, from the pope to a Church council, from council to Scripture. In place of salvation through sacraments and good works, he put salvation by faith; in place of the authority of the Roman Church he put the authority of Scripture. The basic principles of the Reformation were now complete.

Luther, continuing his attack on the established order, found himself at the head of a lively movement. When the imperial Diet

met at Worms in 1521, the question of what to do with Luther had a prominent place on the agenda. After stormy debate he was summoned before the Diet. With the safe-conduct of Frederic of Saxony, Luther appeared. He heard the titles of his books read and was asked whether they were his and whether he would recant the heresy they contained. He asked for time and was granted delay until the next day. Having had the night to think over the matter—




LUTHER AND THE CHURCH

Challenging the abuse of the Sacrament of Penance through the sale of indulgences, Luther went on to deny the whole principle of Sacraments and, finally, the authority of the Church which depended on it.

his life might be at stake—he made a great oration before the august assembly the following morning. Admitting that the books were his, Luther closed with the famous words:

> Unless I am convicted by Scripture or by right reason (for I trust neither popes nor councils since they have often erred and contradicted themselves). . . . I neither can nor will recant anything since it would be neither safe nor right to act against conscience. God help me. Amen.

This bold declaration brought forth the Edict of Worms that put Luther under a ban, commanded his surrender, and forbade anyone to give him shelter or to read his books. Once again he was saved only by the intervention of his prince, Frederic the Wise of Saxony, who made good his safe-conduct and hid Luther in a castle near Eisenach. With this open alliance of political independence and

religious rebellion, the Reformation came to maturity and the Lutheran Protestant Church was established in open defiance of Catholicism. By the time of Luther's death in 1546, Lutheranism had spread over all of central and northern Germany, to a part of southern Germany, to Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, and to the Baltic provinces.

Since there were inevitable differences of belief among Lutherans, it became necessary to define the new faith in an authoritative statement. This was done in the Augsburg Confession, drawn up by Luther's scholarly friend, Philipp Melanchthon (1497-1560). Central to this Lutheran creed are the following points:

1. The only final authority for either conduct or belief is the Scriptures. In them the will of God, and the love of God as exhibited in Jesus Christ are revealed to such as have power through the Holy Spirit to understand.

2. The one condition of salvation is faith or trust in the divine love, thus revealed.

3. Faith itself is a gift of God, not an achievement of man. God in his mercy grants to whom he will the power freely to trust him, leaving the rest to their own evil devices.

4. The community of the faithful constitutes the true Church, whose only head is Christ. The growth and unity of the Church are fostered by preaching the "gospel" and the observance of *two* sacraments—baptism and the Lord's Supper, the only ones clearly authorized in Scripture.

## Calvinism

Just as Luther was the outstanding figure in the German revolt against the Catholic Church, so the leading figure in the Swiss revolt was Ulrich Zwingli (1484-1531). There are many similarities in the teachings of Luther and Zwingli. Both preached the doctrine of justification by faith only; both erased the distinction between priest and layman by declaring the "priesthood of all believers"; both rejected the authority of the Church for the authority of the Bible. But Zwingli was more intellectual in temper and more radical in reform than his German colleague. In his intellectualism he drew out the logical implications of man's absolute dependence

on the grace of God for salvation. The result was the Augustinian doctrine of predestination and the definition of the Church as those, both within and without the visible Church, who are predestined to salvation. His radicalism led him to change the forms of worship, to eliminate musical instruments from the service, to abolish the Mass entirely, and to establish the sermon as the central element in worship.

The Zwinglian Reformation brought about civil war in Switzerland between Catholic and Protestant armies, and Zwingli fell in battle in 1531. The monument on the Sonnenquai in Zurich, presenting Zwingli with uplifted sword in the right hand and the Bible in the left, serves both to commemorate his role in the Reformation and to remind us of the two weapons with which Protestants severed the bonds of the medieval Church.

The spiritual successor of Zwingli in the work of reform was John Calvin (1509-1564). He was born in a little French town some sixty miles from Paris. His parents, of the middle class, had a high regard for education and sent their son to the University of Paris to study theology. Calvin, however, later abandoned theology for the study of law at Orléans. Then, after the death of his father, he decided to devote his life to writing. But it was not long before he found himself swept along in the swelling tide of the Protestant Reformation. This was destined to claim his time and energy and to give him a place of outstanding influence in Western history.

By temperament unemotional, cold, calculating, and rationalistic, Calvin lacked the religious experience which had given Luther his warm humanity and sympathy. For Calvin, Protestantism was something to be analyzed and defined with the logic of the theologian and put into practice with the unbending rigor of a lawyer obeying a court decree. The result was a doctrinal system of uncompromising intellectual rigor and a form of life modeled more on the legalism of the Old Testament than on the Gospel in the New Testament.

Calvin's theology was set down in his *Institutes of the Christian Religion*, a monumental work whose very title suggests the logician's interest in first principles and the lawyer's concern with authoritative precepts and rules. Most of its principles probably *are*

implicit in Luther's doctrines also, but in the latter's writings the warm, enthusiastic appropriation of the gospel of a forgiving God was made the touchstone of everything else. But since Calvin lacked Luther's religious experience, cold logic had its way, unhindered by emotion. The most characteristic passages of the *Institutes* affirm:

1. The unconditional sovereignty of God, revelation of which is to be found in the Holy Scriptures. There the elect, guided by the Holy Spirit, can find God declared as triune, and as a just Creator and all-powerful Governor, whose purposeful providence is all-embracing. Whatever happens, happens because God wills it so.

2. Man's total depravity and abject helplessness, which have followed from his original sin of disobedience, make the help of a superhuman savior indispensable to man's salvation. To extricate man from this condition it was necessary, according to the will of God, that the eternal Son should become man and suffer in man's stead.

3. There is rigorous predestination by which the divine mercy shows itself in the election of some to salvation through faith in the sacrifice of the eternal Son, the divine justice in the condemnation of the rest to everlasting punishment.

4. The elect constitute the Church. To preserve pure and unmutilated this true religion is the concern of civil as well as ecclesiastical rulers. Divine law is over all; and every rebellion against divine law demands punishment, temporal as well as spiritual. Civil officials, therefore, are called upon to act under the direction of ecclesiastical authorities in the service of God.

Calvin's temperament was reflected also in his ethics. The form of life which he advocated has little place for emotion or spontaneous joys. Life for him is a serious business, requiring a concentration of effort and strict discipline. Emphasizing the absolute sovereignty of God, he held that the meaning of human life was to glorify God by obedience to his will. Sobriety, industriousness, and thrift he regarded as divinely ordained virtues; frivolity and the enjoyment of luxuries were vices to be shunned. Believing that divine law was to govern all of life, Calvin held it the duty of both Church and civil authorities to enforce Christian ethics. When he

settled in Geneva, he soon became the virtual dictator of the city. He was thus armed with power to transform the habits of the people according to his own pattern. Their fondness for the gay pleasures of dancing, music, and masquerades had to be curbed. No longer could old men while away an afternoon or young men find an evening's recreation in the cafés, gossiping over a glass of wine or a friendly game of cards. Women must dress soberly, and brides must forgo the traditional adornments of unbraided hair and flowers at the breast. All citizens must attend two sermons on Sunday. Violation of any of these restrictions and injunctions made one liable to public exhibition in the pillory.

From Geneva the teachings of Calvin spread to France, where the Huguenots, mainly bourgeois, were his followers. Here it was not only a religiously significant movement, it was socially and politically important as well, resulting ultimately in setting up a kind of "Protestant state" within France. Calvinism became important also in the Netherlands where it played a large part in bringing about Dutch independence from the Spanish. The chief exponent of Calvinism in Scotland was John Knox, who led the Protestant nobles in revolt against the Catholic queen, Mary Stuart. The influence of Knox led to the downfall of the queen, and committed Scotland to Calvinism. A large number of the middle class of England also became followers of Calvinistic teaching in the form of Presbyterianism, Separatism, and Puritanism.

With the completion of this brief sketch of Calvinism, we may now profitably go on to a comparison of the two original systems of Protestantism, the Lutheran and the Calvinistic.

### Comparison of the Two Forms of Protestantism

While the teachings of Luther and Calvin obviously have much in common, they are marked also by important differences. Some of these are explicit, others appear only by drawing out implications. Other differences, still, are merely a matter of emphasis, reflecting the temperaments and personal experiences of the great reformers.

The point of divergence between Lutheranism and Calvinism is in the conception of God. The central conviction of Luther is the love and mercy of God, who through his graciousness forgives

man's sin and guilt and reinstates him in the divine favor. This divine grace cannot be bought by human merit; its only prerequisite is faith—faith that God is the loving Father as revealed in Jesus. This has its consequences for ethics. If faith brings freedom from the fear of punishment, man becomes free also from time-serving religious duties. The Christian man is free—free to devote himself to the spontaneous service of man in the confidence of God's love. Such freedom is, of course, far removed from license. It is rather the freedom of life that knows no master but love, that recognizes no rules but those of tenderness. In conformity with this principle, Lutheran piety has always found a place for the amenities of life. The old German *Gemütlichkeit* could be cultivated without conflict with the religious ideal. Luther himself was full of fun, liked his beer, and was famous for his conversation. How different from the austerity and drabness of life under Calvinistic regulations!

The Lutheran appropriation of the gospel of salvation by faith alone is reflected also in the conception of the Church. If the means of salvation is faith in the Gospel, then the chief business of the Church—the association of the faithful—is to teach and evangelize. The Church became primarily a society for the spread of the Gospel.

This conception of the Church and its function is responsible for the almost total divorce of religion and secular affairs in Lutheran cultures. Since the primary business of the Church is to preach the gospel, that is, to bring to men the message of divine grace, which may be appropriated by the experience of faith, religion becomes a personal and subjective matter. Coupled with the Lutheran dependence upon and regard for the rulers of the secular state, this conception of religion as an affair of the individual's inner life has left churches of this denomination with little to say as to the ethics of either business or politics. A vivid illustration of this point is seen in the conflict between the contemporary National Socialist government and the Lutheran Church in Germany. In this struggle the Lutheran pastors have claimed primarily the right to conduct the internal affairs of the Church, free from interference by the state. They have not emphasized the duty of the Church to make critical pronouncements on National Socialist policies from the

standpoint of Christian ethics. For Lutherans, the Church is concerned principally with religion; the way this is understood it has nothing directly to do with secular affairs, whether of business or politics. Besides questions of internal organization, all that it claims for its province is the personal life of individuals. It is ready even to draw distinctions between the duties of a man as Christian and as an officer of the state, to defend a double standard of morality, the one religious, the other secular.

Turning now to examine the Calvinistic position on these several points, we find ourselves in a rather different atmosphere. For Calvin and his followers, the starting point is the conviction of God's absolute sovereignty, his dominating will and power. God is the celestial King to whom man owes absolute obedience. Being all-powerful, he will save those whom he so predestines. That he saves some shows his mercy; that he condemns others shows his justice; that he does both enhances his glory. The supreme test of religious devotion is the willingness to be damned for the glory of God—the religious counterpart to the patriotic willingness to die for the glory of one's country.

Since God's glory demands absolute obedience, it is necessary that man should know and perform the divine law. The pious man, accordingly, obeys God's commands not because they are good but because God has given them. The criterion of the Christian life, then, is the strict and literal performance of religious law. Calvin does not share Luther's ideal of Christian liberty, because he has no faith in the spontaneous goodness of the saved man. In his opinion, men always remain sinners at heart, in perpetual need of discipline and restraint.

The Calvinistic conception of the business of the Church follows from the above. It is not primarily, as with Luther, to teach the Gospel, but to train its members in holiness, to enforce upon them the divine rules. The Church is thus given a practical regulatory function, which we have seen illustrated by Calvin's work in Geneva. To exercise this duty, ministers must be men of superior learning and holiness, dependent, not like Catholic priests upon the authority of their holy orders, but upon their own personal superiority in the accepted virtues.

This brings us to the social teachings of the Calvinistic churches. Nothing distinguishes them more sharply from their Lutheran neighbors. Since God claims to regulate human life after his standards, since it is the business of the Church to enforce these standards, Calvinists recognize no separation between religion and secular affairs. On the contrary, the Church is regarded as supreme in all things. Not only must it thrust its regulations upon the private life of men; it must also order state and society, politics and commerce. Education, law, and industry fall under its control. Although a reformer, Calvin here reasserted the medieval doctrine of theocracy, the supremacy of the Church over secular powers. This theocratic principle was actually employed by the Calvinistic founders of certain New England colonies, notably New Haven, where the distinction between ecclesiastical and civil powers all but vanished and church membership was a prerequisite to the right to vote. Or again, the Calvinistic principle of church responsibility for all actions of men found illustration in colonial Boston in the expulsion from church membership of those found guilty of profiteering. Calvinism, then, has always had within itself the ideal of religious regulation of all of life. That the churches professing this principle have not done more to soften the brutalities of modern industrial life is probably due to the fact that their conception of God's will was too narrow. Turning for its standards to the laws of the Old Testament, rather than to the principles of Jesus in the New, the Church had often nothing constructive to say. The very men who, from the standpoint of Jesus' teachings, are the worst sinners—violators of Christian principles of love, brotherhood, and cooperation—might successfully exemplify the Calvinistic virtues of thrift, industry, and sobriety. While Lutheranism washed its hands of secular problems, the tragedy of Calvinism was that, claiming responsibility for them, it had no ideals worthy of application. It frittered away its marvelous moral energies in condemning petty vices; was indeed often unable to distinguish between the vital and the trivial. Since gambling is wrong, all card-playing must be wrong. Since some dancing might lead to improprieties, all dancing is sin. This was the logic of Puritanism. Its moral fervor undirected by discrimination and unilluminated by social ideals, it missed

much of its opportunity in the modern world. Instead of disciplining and restraining the growing capitalism, it served as a handmaid to it, gave religious sanction to the virtues making for success and had no eyes for the vices, save luxury, that accompanied its pursuit and achievement. Indeed, accepting the teaching of Psalm 1, it tended to accept economic success as the mark of virtue and to equate failure with vice. According to this theory in a decadent form, he who can afford a Cadillac deserves it, and he who is poor must be lazy!

And yet, despite these strictures, we must recognize the value of the Calvinistic principle that religious ideals must govern the whole of life, that it is the business of the Church to declare these ideals. The criticism of existing institutions and practices from the standpoint of religion holds the possibility of great social value. While it is to be regretted that Calvinism in the past has conceived religious ideals too narrowly, we can be grateful that it has at least preserved the principle that religion and social affairs belong together. When, in the last generation, Protestant churches turned once more to Jesus for their social ideals, they found Calvinism far more congenial than Lutheranism to their attempt to apply these ideals to economic and international affairs. Some writers, indeed, hold that the contemporary social gospel is an outgrowth of Calvinism.

### Consequences of the Protestant Reformation

One of the most obvious results of the Protestant Reformation was the creation of a number of relatively independent churches. The division of Protestantism into followers of Luther and Calvin, respectively, represents only the most general line of distinction. Within each of these general Protestant groups appeared many separate churches, usually coordinate with separate political divisions. Thus, in Germany there were about as many Lutheran churches as there were Lutheran princes and free cities, while the Lutheran churches in Scandinavian countries were divided on national lines. There were, in the end, some two hundred separate churches subscribing to the Augsburg Confession, but actually dominated by political rulers. This was the result of two factors. The first factor was the principle of compromise between Lutherans

and Catholics according to which the religion of the ruler should be the religion of the land. Another factor making for the division of churches on national lines was Luther's practice, mentioned later, of appealing to the prince for the settlement of disputes over the interpretation of Scripture and for the enforcement of orthodoxy. The nationalization of Protestant churches operated among Calvinists also, as in Switzerland, the Netherlands, and Scotland, with some variety of doctrine and discipline. The Lutheran Church in Sweden and the Reformed (Calvinistic) Church in Holland are the established churches of these lands today, enjoying special favors from and subjected to some control by the civil government.

The most familiar example of an established church outside of Catholic lands is the Church of England. While there had been in this land the same national sentiment and criticism of the abuses of the Catholic Church as we have encountered in Germany and Switzerland, the incident that finally led to open revolt was not primarily religious but personal and political. When the pope refused to annul the marriage of Henry VIII to Catherine of Aragon —so he could marry Anne Boleyn—Henry ordered the archbishop of Canterbury to do what the pope had refused. This was followed by the Act of Supremacy, in 1534, in which Parliament declared the king to be the sole and supreme head of the Church, and the Defender of the Faith. This latter is still part of the official title of English kings.

Since the revolt in England was the work of the political ruler, there was no Protestant theology worked out to replace Catholic dogma. Despite the fact that the *Book of Common Prayer* contains the Lutheran teaching of salvation by faith alone, this mixes rather curiously with many Catholic ideas and practices that survived in the Anglican Church. Above all, this church retained the Catholic principles of unity and authority, except that the ultimate authority was transferred from pope to king. Here is an excellent illustration of the manner in which the genuine desire for religious reform played into the hands of princes and kings, who wanted independence from Roman interference, and control and possession of ecclesiastical property. The result was that the new Protestant

churches became essentially state churches, controlled and directed by secular, political rulers.

In addition to the Lutheran, Calvinistic, and Anglican forms of Protestantism, usually incorporated in nationally established churches, there grew out of the Reformation also a large number of sects. That this should happen was the inevitable result of social as well as theological factors. Consider first the social factors. The reformed churches soon proved themselves to be the expression of the religion of the middle class and of the nobility more than of the poorer classes. Appealing rather to Paul's theology than to Jesus' ethics, the churches of the Reformation gave scant satisfaction to the religious needs of the poor and exhorted them to obey their masters and to rest content in their economic misery. As a result there was needed some religious outlet for the socially submerged classes. This necessity gave rise to "the churches of the disinherited," like the Anabaptists and later the Methodists.[3] The theological factors making for the rise of sects were rooted in the possibility of disagreement in the interpretation of God's word. All the Reformers substituted the Bible for the Church as the repository of divine truth. That the Bible really was God's word was held to be guaranteed by the witness of the Holy Spirit, in the minds of the faithful. The Holy Spirit was also expected to guarantee correct reading and interpretation of Scripture. The reformers apparently did not foresee the different interpretations that could be made of scriptural teachings. But differences were inevitable, and each group naturally believed that it had been led by the Holy Spirit to its particular interpretation. The underprivileged classes thus formed their own churches and justified themselves by appeal to Scripture and religious experience. Among these additional Protestant movements we shall mention three—the Anabaptists, the Arminians, and the Socinians.

The Anabaptists ("Re-baptizers") were so called because of their belief that a person must be baptized in adult life, after he has understood the meaning of the Christian life and submits voluntarily to its sacraments. They discarded infant baptism as unscrip-

[3] See H. R. Niebuhr, *The Social Sources of Denominationalism* (New York: Henry Holt, 1929), chap. II.

tural and thus baptized in adult life many people who had been baptized before as infants. They believed that the Church should be composed only of those who had undergone a genuine experience of conversion, persons who had been "born again." They took their Bible very seriously and literally and felt, on the basis of Jesus' teachings, that it is wrong to take oaths, bear arms, or take any part in civil government. Extremely unpopular both among Catholics and among other Protestants, the Anabaptists had plenty of opportunities to become martyrs.

The Arminians preached a doctrine which was more heartening to emotional people than was Calvinism. They softened the rationalistic rigor of the doctrine of predestination, holding that everyone is free to choose whether or not he will accept Christ and be saved. Calvinism was a fine religion for him who was sure he was of the elect; Arminianism gave moral strength and courage to him who was a bit more modest and thus somewhat doubtful as to whether he was of the company of the elect.

The Socinians were the theological radicals of their time. Named after the brothers Socini, they rejected the doctrines of predestination and original sin. With these rejections the saving work of Christ, as this was viewed by traditional Catholic and Protestant teaching alike, lost its dramatic role. If man is not corrupted by original sin, he has within himself latent powers of goodness which by education and effort can be developed. All that is needed for salvation from sin is proper teaching and example. The sole mission of Christ, then, is as guide and teacher. To fulfill this, it is not only unnecessary but also undesirable that he should have been uniquely divine. Hence, the Socinians rejected the deity of Christ and the doctrine of the Trinity.

In these sects, as well as in the great national Protestant churches, can be found the spiritual ancestry of many of the denominations with which we are familiar today. The Lutheran Church is still an important Protestant denomination, as is the Church of England, and the Episcopal Church in America. Calvinism has become a part of many denominations, particularly the Presbyterian. The Methodist Church shows the same evangelical fervor which be-

longed to the Arminians, while both the Friends and the Baptists clearly reflect certain teachings of the Anabaptists. The Socinians were the spiritual ancestors of the liberal movement in Protestantism, especially of our modern Unitarians.

A direct consequence of the rise of sects like the Anabaptists was the hardening of thought in the established churches and its crystallization in what is known as Protestant orthodoxy. This process is well illustrated by the development of Luther's own thought with especial reference to the authority of the Bible. The factors that changed Martin Luther from a devout and credulous monk into the arch-rebel of the Church were not primarily intellectual or moral. It was rather that in his experience he discovered a new gospel, an experience of faith and assurance of the fellowship and love of God *not* mediated by the Church and its works. With this new principle of assurance, further dependence upon the ministrations of the Church was unnecessary. Hence it was that Luther broke first, not with the Church's claim to authority, but with its conception of salvation. Not until *after* he was sure that every Christian could go immediately to the springs of grace did Luther take the next step of repudiating the Church's claim to authority.

Once driven to break with the authority of the Church as the spokesman for God and the revealer of his will, Luther at first substituted for it the word of God. But this was not the literal word of the Scripture, but rather Scripture as it mediated the good news of God's forgiving love in Christ. That part of the Bible which brought to men knowledge of this gospel and roused in them the response of faith and brought them the assurance of forgiveness—that part was God's word. In the words used by Luther himself in his *Introduction to the New Testament*,

> Christ is the Master, the Scriptures are the servant. Here is the true touchstone for testing all the books: we must see whether they work the works of Christ or not. The book which does not preach Christ is not apostolic, were St. Peter or St. Paul its writer. On the other hand, the book which preaches Christ is apostolic, were its author Judas, Annas, Pilate, or Herod.

From this passage it appears that the actual authority for Luther

was a kind of experience, and that the parts of the Bible were evaluated in terms of their power to produce this experience regardless of their authorship. Luther, in fact, was quite willing to discard from the sacred canon certain books, such as the Revelation, and he thought St. James' Epistle "a mere letter of straw." In short, his authority was inward, not external.

But Luther's principle of looking to Scripture, illuminated by faith, as the supreme authority had in it the seeds of disagreement and disunity. If the authority of the Bible replaces the authority of the Church, it follows that every believer has the right to interpret Scripture for himself. Moreover, the inner light of faith may shine differently for different people. It was possible that the Bible could be interpreted in divergent ways, and that each interpreter might claim spiritual guidance for his own reading. This possibility became an actuality in the rise of the sects, like the Anabaptists and the Arminians, who justified their "heretical" beliefs and practices by Luther's own principle of private judgment. While Luther had found the principles of scriptural authority and faith useful—even necessary—weapons with which to fight Rome, they proved worse than useless for bringing heretics to the mark. These too could quote from the diverse riches of Scripture and appeal to their inner light. But Luther could not tolerate heresy, since this threatened to bring the religious confusion which his Catholic opponents had predicted and contained a threat to political stability also, since the heretics showed an alarming tendency to draw their members from among the poor, the politically rebellious and the economically rejected. Luther, feeling that he must combat heresy in the interests of unity and order, sought to undercut the ground on which his adversaries stood. In doing this, he virtually repudiated his own elastic and subjective principle of authority. He was thus led, as McGiffert has said,

> to substitute the Bible for the gospel, and to put . . . the Scriptures of the Old and New Testament in place of . . . the indwelling Spirit or inner light to which his radical adversaries were appealing. . . . The Bible to which he then appealed as his authority, often reading it in the most slavish literal fashion, had long been the favorite resort of all critics of the principles or practices of the Church, and by his

use of it gave it permanent and supreme authority within Protestantism.[4]

With the establishment of the letter of Scripture as the authority of Protestantism, the Bible became a textbook of doctrine and ethics and of the whole Christian revelation. Since faith was held to be the only condition of salvation, correct belief as to what Christian revelation contains became of prime importance. It is not surprising, therefore, to find Protestant churches anxious about the soundness of their belief, and intolerant of beliefs differing from their own. The consequence was that intellectual agreement in matters of doctrine became the basis of fellowship. Instead of securing unity biblical literalism bred division. Every doctrinal disagreement gave rise to a new sect, each with its own set of "fundamental" beliefs that formed the limits of thought for its members. Instead of there being one body of dogmatic Protestant thought, to rival the inclusive unity of thirteenth-century Scholasticism, there were now as many orthodoxies as there were denominations and sects. This new Protestant scholasticism not only suffered from lack of unity, it was more narrow and sterile than its Catholic predecessor. Where Aquinas had approached his task with great breadth of knowledge, understanding, and vision, orthodox Protestant theologians ignored philosophic, scientific, and political thought. Grubbing around for scriptural proof-texts, they were untouched by the vitalizing influences of the science and philosophy of their time. Thus isolated from other intellectual concerns, theology became justly regarded by the best minds as reactionary and possibly irrelevant to the main concerns of the growing age.

But the various sects and denominations, despite their bitter disagreements over details of belief, yet shared a common core of Protestant theology. Apart from questions as to authority and the means of salvation, this common body of belief was not different from the historic doctrines of the Catholic Church. The doctrines of the Trinity, of Adam's fall, and man's consequent original sin; the need for supernatural salvation; its provision through the work of Christ; the divine inspiration and authority of the Bible—these

[4] A. C. McGiffert, *Rise of Modern Religious Ideas* (New York: Macmillan, 1915), pp. 282-283.

are some of the traditional Christian beliefs common to Protestants and Catholics. Their acceptance among Protestants was the test of orthodoxy. Orthodoxy as thus constituted still survives. Among Protestants, the clearest example is now usually known as fundamentalism, so called because of the insistence of its advocates that they alone adhere to the "fundamentals" of the faith. Contemporary fundamentalism, like post-Reformation orthodoxy, makes no serious attempt to harmonize religious belief with secular knowledge. It is content to rest its case on an appeal to a final revelation given in an infallible Bible.

If the rise of sects caused Protestant thought, by way of reaction, to harden into a new scholasticism, the Protestant revolt caused a strong reaction within the Catholic Church. The Catholics themselves were by no means indifferent to abuses which were criticized by Protestant Reformers. They endeavored to bring about reform within the Church, and made some attempt to bring about a reconciliation with the Protestants. Such attempts failed, however, and so the Council of Trent (1545-1563), while seeking to continue the work of reform, reaffirmed the Scholastic theology of Thomas Aquinas, declaring it to be the official dogma of the Roman Catholic Church, allowing no compromise with the Protestants or with the new ideas of the Renaissance. There was a growth of Catholic religious orders, such as the Jesuits, which made great achievements in missions and in education and which helped to save large areas of Europe for Catholicism.

## The Reformation as a Transitional Movement

We began this chapter with the statement that the Protestant Reformation was the religious aspect of the transition from the medieval to the modern outlook. Perhaps we can most profitably conclude with an attempt to evaluate the Reformation from this standpoint.

Let us begin by estimating its effects in the political and economic spheres. The religious revolt against Rome played into the hands of modern nationalism; the Protestant principles gave religious sanction for the political movement away from the medieval ecclesiastical state. Likewise, Protestantism proved to be more congenial

to the growing capitalism than the medieval Church had been, with its prohibition of interest on loans, its attempt to regulate prices and to restrict profit. The Lutheran conception of its function denied the Church any right to legislate business ethics. Calvinism, while claiming the regulation of all life as the duty of the Church, early permitted interest and profit—the essence of the capitalistic economy. The Puritan ethic, emphasizing the moral quality of work, frugality, and self-restraint, gave religious reinforcement to those qualities in men that make for business success and the accumulation of capital as its reward. Moreover, both Lutheranism and Calvinism taught that any life work might be a religious vocation. Thus a man in business might feel that he was fulfilling God's will. This naturally gave a sense of dignity to money-making. Protestantism, instead of restraining commercial behavior, sanctified and indorsed it. In respect to both nationalism and capitalism, it can therefore be said that Protestantism hastened the transition to the modern world.

In respect to its influence on education, the Reformation both helped and hindered progress. By emphasizing the worth of the common man, it gave theoretical justification for the education of the masses. While it took a long time for this principle to find practical application, popular and public education in Protestant countries bears witness to its influence. On the other hand, the Reformers feared and opposed secular learning. "The triumph of the Lutherans," said Erasmus, "is the death of good learning." Luther damned the intellect as the bride of Satan, and Calvin declared natural science to be godless and harmful. Modern science and philosophy had to move forward against the opposition of both Protestantism and Catholicism.

In theology, the Reformation was a step on the way to the modern outlook. Its central principles of salvation by faith alone—without priestly mediation—and the authority of Scripture privately interpreted are the foundation stones of religious individualism. While these principles were somewhat submerged in Protestant orthodoxy which was quite ready to destroy heretics—witness Luther's outcry against them and the burning of Servetus in Calvin's Geneva—they contained the seeds of the modern principle of

the right of private judgment in religion. On the other hand, the appeal to Scripture was not a break with the medieval reliance upon authority and revelation. It was merely the substitution of one authority for another. Those who held Scripture to be the depository of final truth had their intellects still oriented toward the past, not toward new truth brought forth by advancing knowledge. This element of medievalism in the Reformation is emphatically illustrated by the theology of Protestant orthodoxy which, as we have seen, is in most essentials not different from the Catholic.

In spite of all that has been said, it is true that toleration and the recognition of the right of private judgment and opinion did spring from the Reformation. Many individuals, inspired by the Protestant doctrine concerning the great importance of their own consciences, were willing to die for what they believed. Minority groups such as the Anabaptists consistently stood for individualism and tolerance and were able, little by little, to cause those in power to recognize their claims. In Holland, for example, where persecution had been as bitter as in any place, toleration became so established by the seventeenth century that that country was the refuge for such ardent individualists as the Pilgrims and for advanced thinkers like Descartes and Spinoza.

The Reformation, then, was a movement of transition. Like the Humanism of the Renaissance, it contained within itself principles both reactionary and progressive, both medieval and modern. Even as Humanism had to wait for an alliance with science to become modern humanitarianism, so Protestantism had to wait for the contributions of eighteenth-century rationalism and nineteenth-century romanticism before its religion could be expressed in terms congenial to the modern mind.

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# PART SEVEN

## *PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION IN THE MODERN WORLD*

CHAPTER XVII

# *THE ENLIGHTENMENT*

The term "modern world" is open to a variety of interpretations. It may be used to differentiate the postwar years from the social, political, and intellectual environment of Europe and America prior to 1914, or it may refer to the whole of history since the period of the Renaissance. To decide upon what divides that which is modern from that which is not modern is to be somewhat arbitrary.

From one point of view, our entire survey of philosophy and religion has been modern. Thus, the Old Testament, which forms the main source of our information concerning Hebrew religion, is a contemporary document in the sense that it is read as a part of the worship service in our Christian churches and in Jewish synagogues. Similarly, the New Testament, a product of the early Christian Church, continues to exert a genuine influence upon our thinking. The relevance of Greek thought to our present outlook has been clearly demonstrated. On the other hand, we are aware of the fact that what was commonplace to the man living in ancient Israel, or in Greece, or in the Roman world, or in medieval civilization, is unfamiliar to us. The setting in which religious and philosophical ideas were produced was radically different, in many respects, from our own.

## Meaning of Enlightenment

We tend to believe that those ideas are modern which we take for granted and which to a great extent control our thoughts and actions. Therefore, the period of the Enlightenment, that is, the latter part of the seventeenth century and the eighteenth century, may very well serve as the point of departure in our discussion of philosophy and religion in the modern world because we still live under the control of such a large proportion of the ideas which

that period produced. Americans are particularly indebted to the Enlightenment because their democratic ideas and ideals were formed at that time. When Thomas Jefferson wrote the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence, he was not writing as an individual divorced from the intellectual atmosphere in which he lived. He was merely giving expression to the tenets of a political philosophy which was widespread in the eighteenth century. To Jefferson it seemed axiomatic that "all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their creator with certain unalienable rights, that among these are life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness; that to secure these rights governments are instituted among men, deriving their just powers from the consent of the governed; . . ." We still live on the assumption that men are politically equal and equal before the law, that governments are instituted by the people and are responsible to them. It was the age of Enlightenment which undermined the belief in the supernatural origin of the power of government or the divine right of kings, and laid the foundations of democracy. It was also the eighteenth century which witnessed the rise of popular enthusiasm for science, the beginning of the process of secularizing education, the breaking of the bonds of tradition and authority in many areas, including religion, and a number of other cultural movements which are definitely a part of the world in which we live today.

The development of science in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries had created certain attitudes in philosophy and religion which, by the time of the Enlightenment, were moving forces in men's lives. The success of astronomy and physics in understanding nature suggested the possibility of a universal application of the concepts and methods which these sciences employed. Particularly important were such notions as "reason," "experience," and "nature," and the greatest of these was "reason." Indeed, the eighteenth century is frequently called "the age of reason." On the other hand, it is almost impossible to speak of the place of "reason" in the eighteenth century without referring to "experience" and "nature" as well. The history of philosophy usually emphasizes the difference between rationalism and empiricism as sources of knowledge, but so far as the general movement of thought in the eight-

eenth century was concerned, the quarrel between these two philosophies was negligible. Rather, they became allied in the common task of setting human intelligence against divine revelation, human rights against intrenched privilege, and progressive social change against custom and tradition. Furthermore, the criterion for judging what should take the place of revelation or tradition was "nature." Rational religion and natural religion were one and the same thing. Recognizing the mutual dependence of these three concepts we shall proceed to clarify the meaning of each.

## Reason: The Cartesian Method

To say that the Enlightenment was the age of reason does not mean that this was the only period in which men resolutely tried to employ their rational faculties in dealing with human problems. Thomas Aquinas undoubtedly had as much respect for reason as did any eighteenth-century thinker. The difference was not that one believed in reason while the other pursued nonrational methods. The true difference lay in the determination of the meaning of the term. For Aquinas, human reason was not supreme in the sense of being the sole criterion of truth. There was the authoritative Christian revelation, the reasonableness of which could be demonstrated by human intelligence, but which, as divine revelation, contained suprarational elements. Likewise, the Humanism of the Renaissance and early Protestantism were unable completely to enthrone human reason because they both looked back to an authority of the past; Humanism to the pagan classics, Protestantism to the Bible. But the eighteenth-century philosophers believed that reason was the judge of all things, including even the value of Church or Bible which had formerly been considered authoritative. Almighty human reason became the unrivaled judge of truth.

In its relation to custom, tradition, and religious authority, reason may be used for one of two purposes. On the one hand, it may be used to provide an intellectual foundation in support of these things, just as Aquinas had tried to demonstrate the reasonableness of Christian doctrine. On the other hand, it may become an unfriendly critic, and it was this which characterized the Enlightenment. Rationalism, allied with empiricism, set out consciously to destroy

whatever was left of the medieval spirit. Undoubtedly there was a widespread feeling that the essence of medievalism was, as Goethe believed, the view that nature is sin and the intellect the devil. This view was to be destroyed in order that nature might be deified and reason enthroned.

We shall find that the eighteenth century developed a rational religion which openly opposed the idea of special revelation and unpredictable interference with the orderly processes of nature on the part of God. In the political sphere rationalism served to undermine the myth of the divine right of kings and to make the actions of these kings themselves subject to rational criticism. In economics there was a critical appraisal of the established privileges of the ruling classes. All of this was based on the rationalistic philosophy which had been formulated in the previous century, and which was most closely associated with the method pursued in physical science, a method which sought to banish magic and mystery from the world.

The method which was bringing success to astronomy and physics involved, as we have seen, both empirical and rationalistic elements. There was the direct observation of the behavior of natural phenomena and the development of experimental techniques. But the science of mathematics had proved to be particularly valuable in furnishing the clue to the interpretation of the data observed. Mathematics is a rationalistic science in that it can be pursued by the mind without observing the behavior of things. Starting with certain axioms, one may sit in his study and work out all of the inferences. But the strange thing was that this rationalistic science did prove to be applicable to the real world in which we live. Not only was it applicable, it was absolutely essential in giving meaning to men's observations. No wonder the idea developed that the language of nature was the language of mathematics. And no wonder that it occurred to the alert mind of Descartes that this method might be made the basis of a universal method, a way of dealing with all problems.

Descartes was the first modern philosopher to affirm unambiguously the supremacy of reason. This is what is meant by his famous method of doubt, a method strangely reminiscent of St.

Augustine, but used for different purposes. Descartes had come to distrust the validity of all his beliefs and, like Augustine, doubted everything until he found the one certainty that, since he was doubting, it followed that at least he, the doubter and thinker, existed. Thus, he boldly set himself against every accepted authority and resolved to accept no belief as true until it passed the test of reason. And what was reason? Descartes, mathematician and philosopher, had for some time been working on a theory which, when perfected, became that branch of science known as analytical geometry. This was nothing more than a unity of algebra and geometry. Then it occurred to Descartes that the same principles which he had used in inventing a science which provided so great a gain in simplicity and generality, and which had demonstrated the complete correspondence between algebra and the realm of space, could be used in handling any problem. In his *Discourse on Method* he enumerated four principles which he resolved to follow as constituting the method of reason.

> The first of these was to accept nothing as true which I did not clearly recognize to be so: that is to say, carefully to avoid precipitation and prejudice in judgments, and to accept in them nothing more than what was presented to my mind so clearly and distinctly that I could have no occasion to doubt it.
>
> The second was to divide up each of the difficulties which I examined into as many parts as possible, and as seemed requisite in order to that it might be resolved in the best manner possible.
>
> The third was to carry on my reflections in due order, commencing with objects that were the most simple and easy to understand, in order to rise little by little, or by degrees, to knowledge of the most complex, assuming an order, even if a fictitious one, among those which do not follow a natural sequence relatively to one another.
>
> The last was in all cases to make enumerations so complete and reviews so general that I should be certain of having omitted nothing.
>
> Those long chains of reasoning, simple and easy as they are, of which geometricians make use in order to arrive at the most difficult demonstrations, had caused me to imagine that all those things which fall under the cognisance of man might very likely be mutually related in the same fashion; and that, provided only that we abstain from receiving anything as true which is not so, and always retain the order which is necessary in order to deduce the one conclusion from

the other, there can be nothing so remote that we cannot reach to it, nor so recondite that we cannot discover it.[1]

This clear formulation of method proved to be highly influential in spite of the fact that Descartes himself, in attempting to use it, worked out a theory of physics which was very soon replaced by that of Newton. Descartes' only permanent contribution to scientific knowledge was his brilliant work in analytical geometry, but his ambitious hope of universalizing the mathematical approach in solving problems was the beginning of that faith in the supremacy of reason which became fundamental for the eighteenth-century philosophers. This rationalism provided one of the most potent instruments in the bombardment of those citadels of authority and tradition which had tyrannized the minds of men.

## Experience: Locke's Theory of Knowledge

In addition to the mathematical side of scientific method there was the empirical, or the direct observation and experience of things. A correct perspective shows us that these two sides were equally important, but it is natural that a philosophy should tend to emphasize one more than the other. If Descartes stressed the rationalistic or mathematical phase, it was John Locke (1632-1704) who laid the foundations of an empirical philosophy. In some respects, Locke was just as rationalistic as Descartes, but he made certain new emphases which placed him in the empirical tradition. Locke was neither a mathematician nor a particularly learned philosopher. His chief claim to fame is that he had an amazing amount of common sense which enabled him to understand and state clearly the ideas which the more advanced minds of his generation shared. He managed to write so persuasively on the enlightened view in politics, philosophy, education, religion, and morals, that his philosophy became one of the chief "gospels" for the eighteenth century.

Locke was above all a champion of toleration, of freedom of thought and speech, and thus was opposed to both political and ecclesiastical control of man's beliefs. Nevertheless, even though he wished to remove all artificial and arbitrary restrictions on human

[1] *Discourse on Method*, cf. *Descartes Selections*, edited by R. M. Eaton (New York: Scribner, 1927), pp. 16-17.

thinking, he came to see that there were certain *natural* restrictions. It was this insight which led him to write his famous *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*. In "The Epistle to the Reader" concerning this work, he says:

> Were it fit to trouble thee with the history of this Essay, I should tell thee, that five or six friends meeting at my chamber, and discoursing on a subject very remote from this, found themselves quickly at a stand, by the difficulties that arose on every side. After we had a while puzzled ourselves, without coming any nearer a resolution of those doubts which perplexed us, it came to my thoughts, that we took a wrong course; and that before we set ourselves upon inquiries of that nature, it was necessary to examine our own abilities, and see what objects our understandings were, or were not, fitted to deal with.

And so he set about the task of examining the natural powers and limitations of the human mind.

The first thing which Locke attacked was the notion of innate ideas. He could find no reason for believing that the mind, apart from experience, has any ideas whatever. On the contrary, the mind at birth is like a blank sheet of paper, a *tabula rasa*, upon which are written ideas gained through experience of the outside world. Many people seem to believe, says Locke, that there are certain general principles which are believed universally, and must, therefore, be known independently of experience. That is, they believe that certain ideas are always found among men, whether they be Europeans or Asiatics, ancients or moderns, and that such ideas must be innate. Locke points out that even if there were universal beliefs, the fact of their universality would not prove them to be innate. But, as a matter of fact, he fails to discover any ideas which are universally believed. Moral principles, for example, vary from age to age and from place to place. Our ideas of right and wrong are demonstrably based on experience.

Experience, then, is the sole origin of the furnishings of our minds, and by experience is meant sensation and reflection. Knowledge is not present at birth but the process of learning begins as soon as one has sense experience. Thus one sees and feels things, and these sensations make their marks on the blank tablet which is his mind. These marks do not always fade immediately but re-

main as items of memory upon which there is reflection. Thus, a person can compare one idea with another, make distinctions between them, give them names, find qualities which are present in several things, and so build up a complex mental content. But the origin of it all is experience.

This is a point of view very different from rationalism. Mathematics as a model of thinking suggests the notion that there are axioms which the mind intuits independently of experience. Leibniz, a mathematician and philosopher, wrote that Locke did not "sufficiently distinguish . . . the origin of the necessary truths, whose source is in the understanding, from that of the truths of facts drawn from the experience of the senses, and even from those confused perceptions which are in us."[2] Rationalism had offered the hope that axioms could be intuited in physics, ethics, politics, and religion, as well as in mathematics. Spinoza actually worked out a system of ethics on the geometrical plan. Locke's analysis of human understanding seemed to undermine this hope, although Locke himself retained something of the rationalistic spirit.

In any case, the eighteenth-century philosophers were able to make effective use of both rationalism and empiricism. Following Descartes, they asserted the supremacy of human reason. Following Locke, they were able to condemn ideas they disliked by showing that such beliefs were merely written on the mind by an objectionable social environment which ought to be replaced by a better one. Professor Becker has described the influence of empiricism in this respect. He writes that Locke's *Essay Concerning Human Understanding*

> became the psychological gospel of the eighteenth century. Its great service to the men of that time was to demonstrate that the mind owed nothing to inheritance, to "innate ideas"; everything to environment, to the sensations that flowed in upon it from the outer world. . . . What Locke aimed at no doubt, what the eighteenth century acclaimed him for having demolished, was the Christian doctrine of total depravity, a black, spreading cloud which for centuries had depressed the human spirit. For if, as Locke maintained, the mind

[2] Leibniz, *New Essays Concerning Human Understanding*, tr. by A. G. Langley (New York: Macmillan, 1896), p. 71.

at birth was devoid of implanted and ineradicable ideas and dispositions, was in fact no more than a blank white sheet of paper upon which the outer world of nature and human association was to write whatever of good or ill repute might be found recorded there, why, then, the mind of man was a record made by that outer world: jazzed and discordant now that the outer world was so; a satisfying and ordered symphony when that outer world should become, as it might, what men had conceived it ought to be. This was Locke's great title to glory, that he made it possible for the eighteenth century to believe with a clear conscience what it wanted to believe, namely, that since man and the mind of man were shaped by that nature which God had created, it was possible for men, "barely by the use of their natural faculties," to bring their ideas and their conduct, and hence the institutions by which they lived, into harmony with the universal order.[3]

Empiricism and rationalism satisfied the eighteenth-century philosophers' zeal for reform by offering an effective intellectual instrument for attacking existing beliefs and institutions. Beyond this, there was the faith in nature as offering the pattern according to which the new ideas, relationships, and human institutions were to be constructed. Physical nature, as described by Newtonian mechanics, was a harmonious system, and human nature, if freed from the artificial and harmful bonds of custom, would also develop a harmonious social system.

## Newtonian Natural Philosophy

It seems almost incredible that a generation should become really excited over Newton's work in astronomy, mechanics, mathematics, and optics. His *Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy* was hardly written for popular consumption. This work contained not only a great deal of mathematics, but new mathematics; and no interesting illustrations, literary gems, or amusing stories relieved the detailed statement of his scientific method and achievements. Nevertheless, those who were able to read it were highly enthusiastic, and in a short time a large number of popular expositions of the new science were published. Voltaire, who was instrumental in introducing Newton to the French, made the remark:

[3] C. L. Becker, *The Heavenly City of the Eighteenth-Century Philosophers* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1932), pp. 64-65.

"Very few people read Newton because it is necessary to be learned to understand him. But everybody talks about him."

The world of the late seventeenth and early eighteenth century had come to the place where something called "nature" was virtually the object of worship, and it seemed that Newton had revealed what this nature was. Every schoolboy knows the story that the idea of gravitation first came to Newton as he watched an apple fall to the ground. A good insight into one type of popular acclaim which he received is found in the humorous lines of Byron, who, in referring to that momentous event of discovering gravitation, wrote:

> That Newton was the first man to grapple
> Since Adam with a fall or with an apple.

Humor frequently contains profound truth, and it is probable that these lines of Byron are an accurate index of public opinion during the Enlightenment. The story of Adam's disobedience in eating the fruit of the tree of knowledge had occupied a central place in the Christian view of man and history. The result of that disobedience had been to plunge the whole of mankind into a state of moral weakness which could be relieved only by the grace of God. The age of reason was trying to substitute for this traditional Christian outlook a different morality and a more optimistic view of human nature. Thus, Newton's observations seemed to symbolize the realization of a new era. Using the method of rationalism and experimental science, he truly discovered what God's world of nature was like. And so the men of this age rejoiced with Pope:

> Nature and Nature's laws lay hid in night:
> God said, Let Newton be! and all was light.

The discovery for which Newton is best known concerns that law of nature called gravitation or the universal attraction of matter. The history of this discovery, and, indeed, the history of the *Principles*, takes us back, as Professor More says,

to the time when he spent the greater part of the years 1665 and 1666, quietly at Woolsthorpe to escape the plague. He had just been graduated from college and had been successful enough to be appointed to a scholarship. As a boy, he had spent his days on the farm, medi-

tating on the childish problems which interested him, and now as he comes back, a man, he takes up again his former life; but his mind is now full of profound ideas, and his meditations are to change the course of all future thought. In the long summer afternoons, he sits in the orchard which still stands near the old gray stone house; on one memorable day, an apple falls with a slight thud at his feet. It was a trifling incident which has been idly noticed thousands of times; but now, like the click of some small switch which starts a great machine in operation, it proved to be the jog which awoke his mind to action. As in a vision, he saw that if the mysterious pull of the earth can act through space as far as the top of a tree, of a mountain, and even to a bird soaring high in the air, or to the clouds, so it might even reach so far as the moon. If such were the case, then the moon would be like a stone thrown horizontally, always falling toward the earth, but never reaching the ground, because its swift motion carried it far beyond the horizon. Always falling toward the earth and always passing beyond it, the moon would follow its elliptical path if these two motions were equally balanced. How simple the idea seems to us now as we look backward, but how difficult it was to foresee can be gathered from the fact that even a Galileo, who had solved the problem of the projectile, did not have sufficient imagination to guess that the moon was only a projectile moving swiftly enough to pass beyond the earth. . . . Perhaps even more significant of Newton's genius, was the fact that he not only guessed the law of attraction, but he immediately set himself the task of calculating what would be the law of the force which could hold the moon in her orbit.[4]

The law of gravitation, or the universal attraction of matter, was central in Newton's natural philosophy. By means of this, he felt that he could account for the motions of the heavenly bodies, and also for the movements of objects observed on the earth. In other words, he brought together the work which had been done in the science of astronomy and in the science of physics. Primarily, he successfully completed what Galileo had started, namely, the formulation of a science of mechanics, in which the motion of matter could be measured. The universe which Newton described was a vast and harmonious machine. It consisted of particles of matter possessing measurable masses. These bits of matter moved in an empty space and variations in their motions were due to forces the laws of which could be determined. Such a universe has little

[4] L. T. More, *Isaac Newton* (New York: Scribner's, 1934), p. 288.

to do with men and their joys, sorrows, and aspirations. Men are not actually parts of this universe, but are merely observers and interpreters of it. This philosophy nevertheless stimulated the imagination. It meant that if one could know the positions, velocities, and masses of the various particles of matter at any one moment, then he could calculate with mathematical precision all the positions and velocities of these masses in the future.

Furthermore, the fact that Newton demonstrated the harmony and intelligibility of physical nature suggested that the "natural" could be discovered in other fields as well. As compared with Newtonian nature, for example, the realm of politics was decidedly chaotic. This chaos, the eighteenth century believed, was the result of the blunders of men. Undoubtedly, there is discoverable a true social system in which men can live together in a well-ordered society. A scientist of human nature could do for this area what Newton had done for physical nature. Religion, too, had become loaded with crude superstitions and had often led to cruel persecution. But the philosophers of this age were confident that in contrast to the objectionable forms of Christianity among which they lived there was discoverable by reason a natural religion. They believed that the original religion was natural and reasonable, but that this had been corrupted by priests who deliberately cultivated religious magic and superstition in order to keep people under their power. Intelligent reform would mean the revolt against existing states and the return to the natural harmony of society; it would mean the revolt against current religious superstitions and the return to natural religion.

### Theory of Natural Rights and Social Contract

It may be that no thinker achieved a success in the science of human nature comparable to that of Newton in the science of physical nature, but, in the eyes of the eighteenth century, John Locke came very close to enjoying this distinction. J. H. Randall, Jr., illustrates this by referring to an engraving in the front of an old edition of the works of Rousseau.

Rousseau is seated at his writing table, facing a pleasant pastoral landscape of green fields, sheep, and graceful willows—that rationally

ordered Nature which he and his contemporaries accorded so respectful an admiration. On his desk are two volumes, which, in the absence of any other books, seemed designed to sum up the learning of the age—the *Principia Mathematica* of Isaac Newton, and the *Essay Concerning Human Understanding* of John Locke.[5]

Certainly, as applied to the political realm, Locke's philosophy was influential. It was the intellectual defense of the English revolution of 1688, the theoretical foundation of a radical attack on vested interests in France, and the basis of those principles which guided the American colonists.

Seventeenth-century England had been the scene of political, religious, and social strife. There had been the struggle between Parliament and a succession of Stuart kings, each of whom had sought to gain absolute power. There had been the aim of the Anglicans to impose their religion upon all people in the British Isles. This was met by the attempt of the Scotch Presbyterians, who had dominated the "Long Parliament," to have religious uniformity on the pattern of their brand of Calvinism. There was the struggle between the middle classes who, on the whole, leaned toward Calvinism, and the upper classes who were high churchmen and Catholics. These struggles involved the revolution under the leadership of Cromwell, the beheading of Charles I, the restoration of monarchy under Charles II, and the deposing of James II in 1688. Parliamentary government, religious toleration, and recognition of the middle class became secure in the so-called "glorious revolution." After James II was dethroned, William of Orange—the husband of Mary, Protestant daughter of James II—was made king. The principles which William and Mary accepted before being placed upon the throne led to religious toleration, Whig leadership, and the decline of royal power.

Locke's political writings belong to the period immediately following the "glorious revolution" of 1688 and apparently were designed to give theoretical justification of constitutional government and the other principles which had emerged victorious from the civil wars.

[5] *The Making of the Modern Mind* (Boston: Houghton Mifflin, 1926), p. 253.

The starting point of Locke's social and political philosophy was, strangely enough, not society or the state, but the individual. We will remember that in his theory of knowledge Locke compared the mind of man to a blank sheet of paper. There are no innate ideas and the whole of one's mental content comes from the environment by way of experience. But now we find that there is something innate in individual human beings after all, something which they have not received from their environment. Each individual is born with certain indefeasible rights, such as "life, liberty, and estate (property)." The individual and his rights are the basic principles of Locke's political philosophy. To introduce this notion of innate rights, the existence of which cannot be empirically verified, seems inconsistent with other portions of his philosophy. However, Locke never did achieve a consistent empiricism, and in his political philosophy he merely gave expression to the growing emphasis upon individualism. The state exists only to preserve the rights of individuals, and the sanctity of these rights imposes a natural limitation on the power of any government.

In order to make this clear, let us imagine with Locke the "natural" condition of mankind, that is, the mode of life which men followed before they had organized themselves into political units. Hobbes, another English philosopher, had described the prepolitical condition of mankind as one of warfare, every man against every other man. But Locke insisted that men always lived under a moral law in which each other's rights were respected. Not only does a man have his own rights, he recognizes those of others as well. The right to private property, for example, is examined in some detail. The general principle upon which Locke defended this is that when a person "mixes" his own labor with some natural object he has, in fact, projected his own personality upon it and has a natural right to it. If a man comes upon some uninhabited land, places a fence around a portion of it, tills the soil, and constructs some buildings, he has a natural right to the land. Therefore, the right of individuals to property is prior to the existence of society or of the state.

The natural condition of mankind, then, is a situation in which men, endowed with certain natural rights, live under a moral law

in peace and mutual respect. Such a condition is prior to society or the state. But if this is the case, how did civil society come into being? The answer is that the state exists only because of the fact that individuals created it for their own convenience. In the state of nature each man had to take personal responsibility for defending his property against those who, on occasion, failed to obey the moral law. So, by mutual consent, or "social contract," a whole group of men decided to give up their own natural power of defending their property and to put this power in the hands of the community or public as a whole. The state, then, is something created by a group of individuals and exists for the purpose of protecting private property and "the execution of . . . laws . . . for the public good."[6] This, in brief, was the philosophy which gave priority to the individual and his rights, and which measured the value of government by its success in serving the interests of individual men.

Such a philosophy was particularly popular among the American colonists. For them, the social contract was more than fiction because they actually witnessed this process in the formulation of their governments. By the time of the Revolution, the ideas of Locke were taken as self-evident truths. Jefferson had read Locke so much that he used not only his ideas but his very phrases. Reference has already been made to the second paragraph of the Declaration of Independence which so clearly reflects the political philosophy we have been discussing. A letter in which Jefferson discusses his writing of the Declaration points out that he was trying,

> not to find out new principles, or new arguments, never before thought of, not merely to say things which had never been said before; but to place before mankind the common sense of the subject, in terms so plain and firm as to command their assent. . . . Neither aiming at originality of principle or sentiments, nor yet copied from any particular and previous writing, it was intended to be an expression of the American mind. . . . All its authority rests then on the harmonizing sentiments of the day, whether expressed in conversation, in letters, printed essays, or the elementary books of public right, as Aristotle, Cicero, Locke, Sidney, etc.[7]

[6] *Of Civil Government*, Book II, sec. 3.

[7] *The Writings of Thomas Jefferson* (ed. 1854), Vol. VII, p. 407.

In America the influence of Locke's political philosophy was that of clarifying the common sense of the subject, but in France it was the basis of revolt. Absolutism in France reached a higher degree and lasted longer than in England. At the beginning of the eighteenth century there were sporadic criticisms of the government of Louis XIV but these were aimed at specific and obvious abuses. There was no philosophical basis for making a fundamental attack on absolutism as such. Voltaire, whose residence in England gave him the opportunity to learn Newtonian science, learned also the principles of Locke's philosophy, and was in large measure responsible for introducing both of these to the French. Here the idea that governments exist only for the purpose of serving the rights of individuals was revolutionizing in its influence. This was largely due, as Professor Sabine points out, to the peculiar social conditions in France.

> French society was a tissue of privilege which made the cleavage between classes more conscious and more irritating, if not more real, than in England. . . . To the middle class both clergy and nobility seemed parasites decked out with social privilege and with substantial exemptions from the burdens of taxation. . . . In French political writing there was a class-consciousness and a sense of exploitation such as had appeared only sporadically in English political writing. And in fact the French Revolution was a social revolution as the English Revolution was not; it compressed into three or four years an expropriation of church lands, crown lands, and lands of *émigré* nobles comparable to that spread through the reigns of Henry VII and Henry VIII. It is hardly an exaggeration to say that Locke's philosophy in France before the Revolution was an attack on vested interests and in England after the Reformation a defense of them.[8]

## Natural Religion

Just as the political philosophy of the Enlightenment was based upon an allegedly natural condition of mankind, so religious thought turned to the notion of natural religion. This was inevitable in the light of the current deification of nature and the unbounded trust in the capacity of human reason. If magic could be banished from the physical world and all material motions be

[8] G. H. Sabine, *A History of Political Theory* (New York: Henry Holt, 1937), p. 549.

explained in a rational science of mechanics, if the myth of the divine right of kings could be destroyed and replaced by rational political principles, so also religion might be freed from superstitions and made completely rational.

The eighteenth-century philosophers were opposed to the idea that religion is an affair of the heart. It does not issue from basic human needs, but is just as objective as physical science, consisting of a system of rational propositions which is to be tested as any other system is tested. The utility of religion is that it promotes virtuous living. Anything which goes under the name of religion, and which is either contrary to reason, or fails to stimulate ethical activity, is to be rejected as bad. There is, and always has been, a religion which is perfect and which all men can know solely through the activity of their rational faculties. The content of this perfect religion can be summarized in three propositions: First, there is one supreme and omnipotent God. Second, God demands virtuous living on the part of men. Third, there are rewards for the virtuous and punishments for the wicked both in this life and in the future life.

But if this is the real and perfect religion, what place has Christianity, which claims a divine origin and the possession of truths which come through special revelation? There were two types of answer which the defenders of natural religion gave to this question. One group, of which John Locke was typical, did not reject completely the idea of revelation. Locke argued that revela tion is necessary, not because it adds anything to our knowledge, but because men sometimes lose their awareness of God even though they are naturally endowed with the ability to know him. They also become lax in their obedience to the moral law and thus need a special revelation to bring them back to God and virtue. Reason is still superior to revelation, and those parts of revelation which are particularly valuable are those which we can also discover by natural reason. Revelation may contain certain items which are above reason, but anything found in revelation which is contrary to reason must be rejected. On the whole, then, revelation adds nothing to natural religion, but, in the opinion of

certain philosophers, it does serve to make religion more effective in promoting the good life.

But, if we take this position, how are we to know whether or not the claims of a religion to be divinely revealed are genuine? There are two tests which we can apply—one negative, one positive. The first test is that of determining whether or not a so-called revealed religion contradicts any of the tenets of natural religion. If it does, we may be certain that its claim to divine origin is false. In the second place, there must be positive reasons for supposing a religion to be revealed. In the case of Christianity two such reasons can be advanced. One is that Jesus Christ fulfilled the prophecies of the Old Testament, thus proving that he was the Messiah. The other is that he demonstrated his divine nature by his ability to perform miracles. A great deal of emphasis was placed on this latter point. A miracle Locke defined as "a sensible operation, which being above the comprehension of the spectator and in his opinion contrary to the established course of nature, is taken by him to be divine."[9] The important points in this definition are: first, that a miracle is an event actually observed by somebody; second, that it is thought to be contrary to the laws of nature; and third, that this supernatural event is a sign proving the divine origin of him who performs it.

There were other religious philosophers, known as *Deists*, who rejected the idea of revelation entirely. They argued that reason could demonstrate the existence of a universal God, and the way of salvation could also be known to everybody through natural reason. It would be quite irrational to suppose that God actually made known the truths of religion through special revelation, because this would mean that only a portion of mankind has access to the means of salvation. A particular religion like Christianity has added some needless and even harmful items to the perfect natural religion. The sacramental ceremonies and other additions which we find in such a religion are due to the cunning of priests who, playing upon the superstitions of people, have tried to increase their personal power and prestige. Such practices have weak-

[9] As quoted by A. C. McGiffert, *Protestant Thought Before Kant* (New York: Scribner's, 1911), p. 205.

ened the true religion and obscured the fundamental religious truths. That the Deists used this argument does not mean that they were uniformly opposed to the whole of Christianity. Most of them remained in the Church and thought of themselves as good Christians. However, they were convinced that much of Christianity was bad. Locke, too, had tried to determine the "essence" of Christianity and thus to distinguish between what was truly Christian and what were unnecessary additions.

The Deists also attacked the particular arguments used by Christianity to support its claim to revelation. They made careful biblical studies to show that there were disagreements between prophetic statements as recorded in the Old Testament and the actual deeds of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament. Thus, there was no basis for believing that Jesus was the fulfillment of prophecy. Also the reported miracles of Jesus were carefully examined and the decision reached that it is doubtful whether he really did perform miracles, and, even if he did, whether these so-called miracles are evidence that he was a messenger sent from God. The most brilliant criticism of the use of miracles in defending Christianity was made by the skeptical philosopher, David Hume, whose arguments on this and other points are summarized in the next section. Deism, then, made natural religion absolutely supreme. Whatever value Christianity has is due to those features which are merely a restatement of the tenets of natural religion.

Just when Deism seemed to be victorious in its battle with supernaturalism, there began a critical attack on the tenets of natural religion itself, and this led to skepticism. Criticism of natural religion came both from the camp of orthodox Christians and from skeptical philosophers. Representative of the former group was Bishop Butler, who argued that natural religion was on no surer rational ground than was revealed religion. His purpose, of course, was to use this argument for establishing once again the specific Christian revelation, but from the point of view of logic what he actually accomplished was to show that since neither natural nor revealed religion rested on a firm rational foundation, there was no coercive reason why men should not reject both. Of the skeptical phi-

losophers, Hume was the most outstanding, and the importance of his work is such that we shall devote a separate section to him.

### Hume's Criticism of Rationalism

Locke, as we have seen, laid the foundations of an empirical philosophy by asserting that none of our ideas are innate, that our whole system of ideas comes from experience. This was in opposition to the rationalistic claim that the source of necessary and universal truths lies in the understanding. But Locke did not follow out the implications of his theory of knowledge. We have discovered that when he came to his political and religious philosophy he made use of ideas which are to be taken as self-evident truths and which are not derived from experience.

It remained for David Hume (1711-1776) to develop a consistent empiricism, and this had important consequences for science, political theory, and religion. Let us see what it means to say that all knowledge comes from experience. It means, in the first place, that we have impressions, such as an awareness of a patch of color if our eyes are turned in a given direction, or an emotional feeling such as anger or joy. In the second place, what we call an idea is nothing more than a copy of one of these impressions. Now among our ideas are those complex ones which form a part of the system of science or of theology. When we begin to wonder whether or not these ideas are true, the only thing we can do, says Hume, is to see if they really do correspond to, or resemble, any impressions which we have had.

When we employ this method we find that doubt is cast upon many important notions. In Newtonian science, for example, there was the idea that a necessary system of relations obtains among the particles of matter. The very meaning of physical science, in other words, was tied up with the notion of rigid causality. A natural law, most people felt, expresses a relation which simply *must* take place. But now, Hume asks, how have we arrived at this idea of necessary causality? To what actual experiences, or impressions, does this idea correspond? The ideas of cause and effect seem to be derived from nothing more than our experience of two events, one of which immediately precedes the other in time. That which

comes first is known as the cause and that which follows is called the effect. Thus, I go to the wall, push a button, and lights go on in the room. All the impressions I have are those of pushing a button, seeing lights, and noticing that one follows the other. Nowhere do I find an impression of a necessary relation between the two. Where, then, if there is no such impression, does the idea of causal necessity come from? The answer is that it is based upon psychological habit. That is, after I have pushed the button on the wall a large number of times, and on each occasion light goes on in the room, I come to expect the light whenever I push the button. There is no necessary connection between events in the outer world, there is only the psychological awareness of the repeated association of events which leads me to expect, when I see one of these events, that the other will follow. A scientific law, then, does not describe a necessary and universal relation in the objective world. It is rather a summary of certain regularities which we have observed up to the present time and which we suppose, but do not know, will hold in the future.

Such an analysis led to quite a different view of science from the one held in the eighteenth century. The older view was that science is a system of mathematical equations which correctly expresses the necessary connections inherent in nature. Hume's analysis suggests that science is a description of a certain group of impressions in the mind of the scientist. The latter position is more in accord with the philosophy of science at the present time. For example, in their popular exposition of modern physics, Einstein and Infeld say:

> Physical concepts are free creations of the human mind, and are not, however it may seem, uniquely determined by the external world.[10]

Hume's empiricism had consequences also for political philosophy. In the first place, it was not hard to show that the notion of innate and sacred rights of individuals has no basis in experience and is merely a dogmatic assertion. In the second place, it is by no means empirically demonstrated that the social contract is

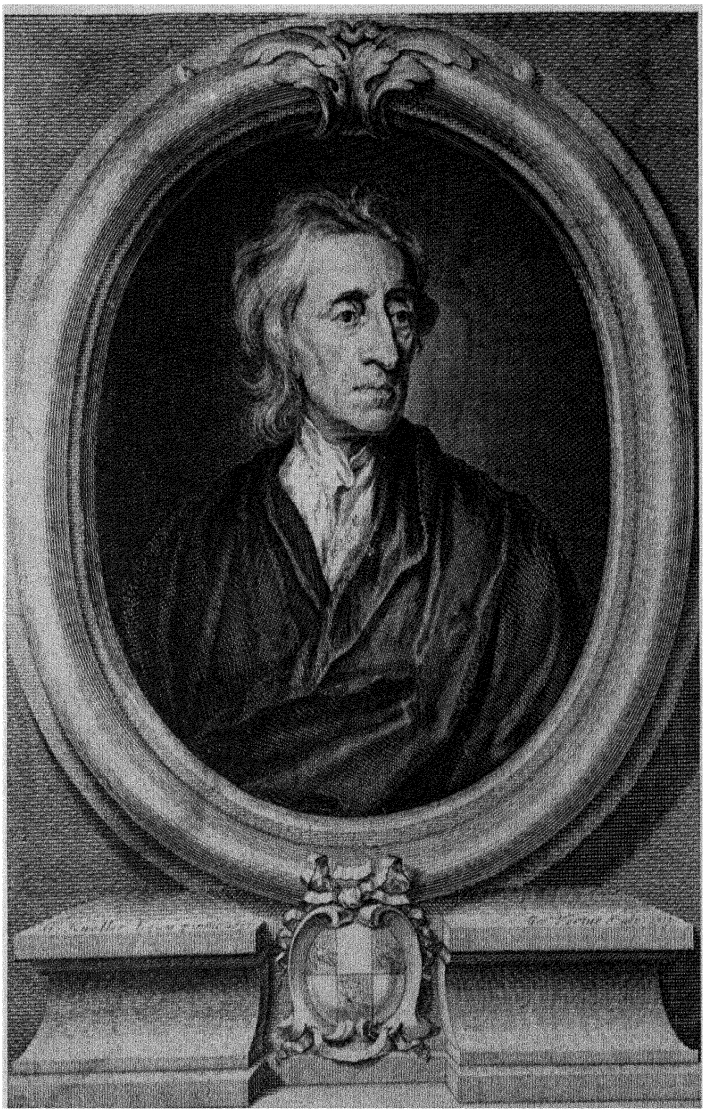
[10] *The Evolution of Physics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1938), p. 33.

the origin of states, and, even if it were, there is no indication that political loyalty is based upon the obligation of contracts. Empirically, it seems that habits have developed among people which lead them to a feeling of loyalty to their nation. There are no necessary and universal moral or political principles. There have been built up through the years certain conventions or "rules of the game" and, on the whole, people habitually obey these because by doing so they can live in a stable and orderly society. They rebel against the rules, and try to change them, only when oppression becomes too great to bear. The influence of Hume in the field of social philosophy is hard to estimate. It is true that social science has become more and more empirical and that there has been a decreasing use of the notion of "natural law" in this field. However, the philosophy of individualism, which the theory of natural rights sought to justify, has continued to exert an influence in England, France, and America.

Finally, Hume's critical work had implications in the field of religion. We have seen that a crucial point in the Deistic controversy was whether or not one could use miracles as a basis for believing in the divine origin of Christianity. Again, all of the defenders of natural religion, the Deists included, were confident that the existence of an omnipotent God and the fact of a future life could be demonstrated rationally. Let us see what Hume had to say about miracles, God, and immortality.

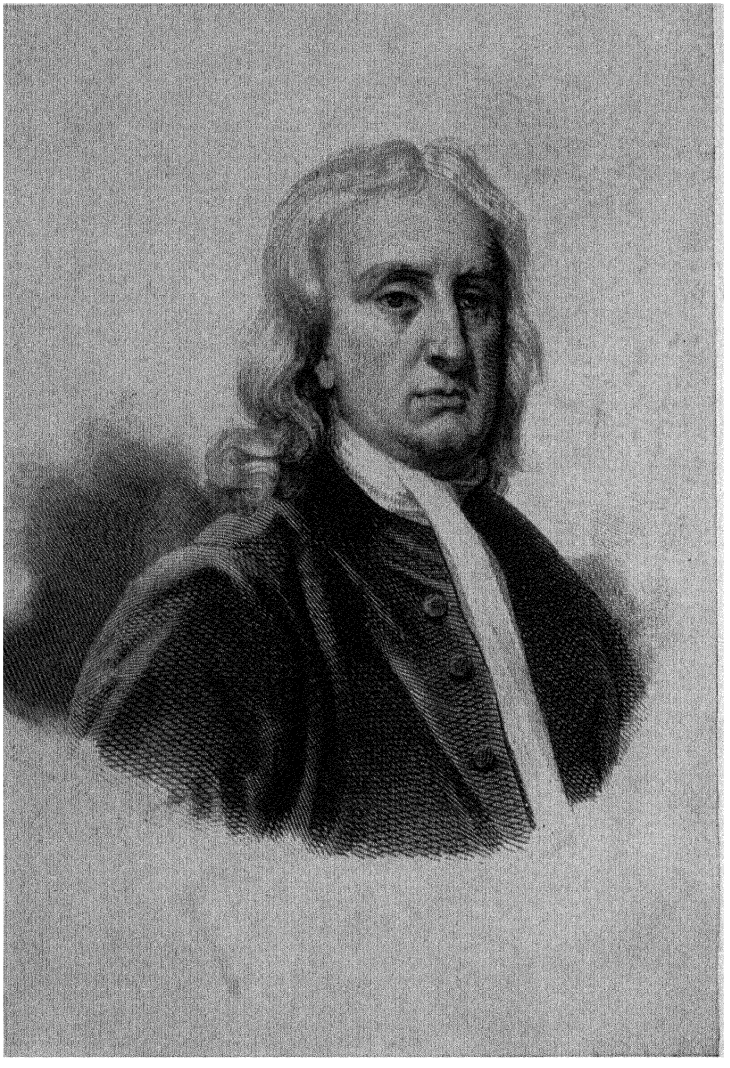
The definition of miracle always involved the statement that it is an event which is thought to be contrary to the laws of nature. Now, according to Hume, a law of nature is nothing more than a summary of observed regularities. Thus, it is impossible to see anything which is contrary to a law of nature. One merely sees something which is different from what he had formerly observed. But having witnessed this exception, what he had formerly called a law ceases to be one, and he may quite properly expect to run across other "exceptions" in the future. Thus it is impossible to have a direct experience of a miracle.

However, as regards the so-called miracles which are supposed to demonstrate the divine origin of Christianity, we have had no direct experience but have merely read the reports of others. These



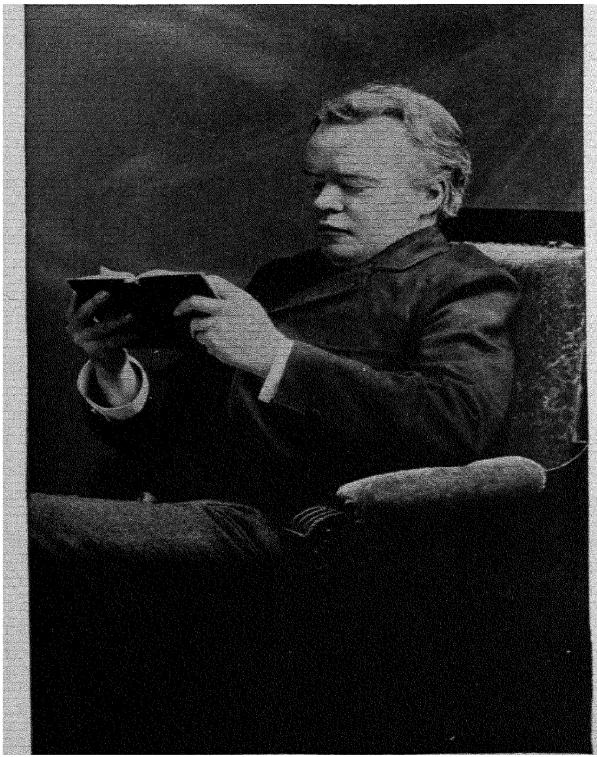
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JOHN LOCKE



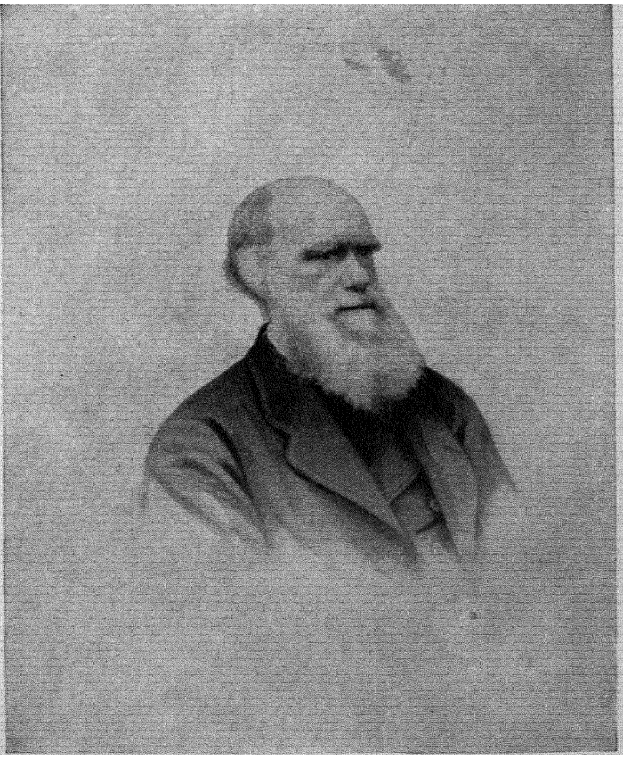
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SIR ISAAC NEWTON



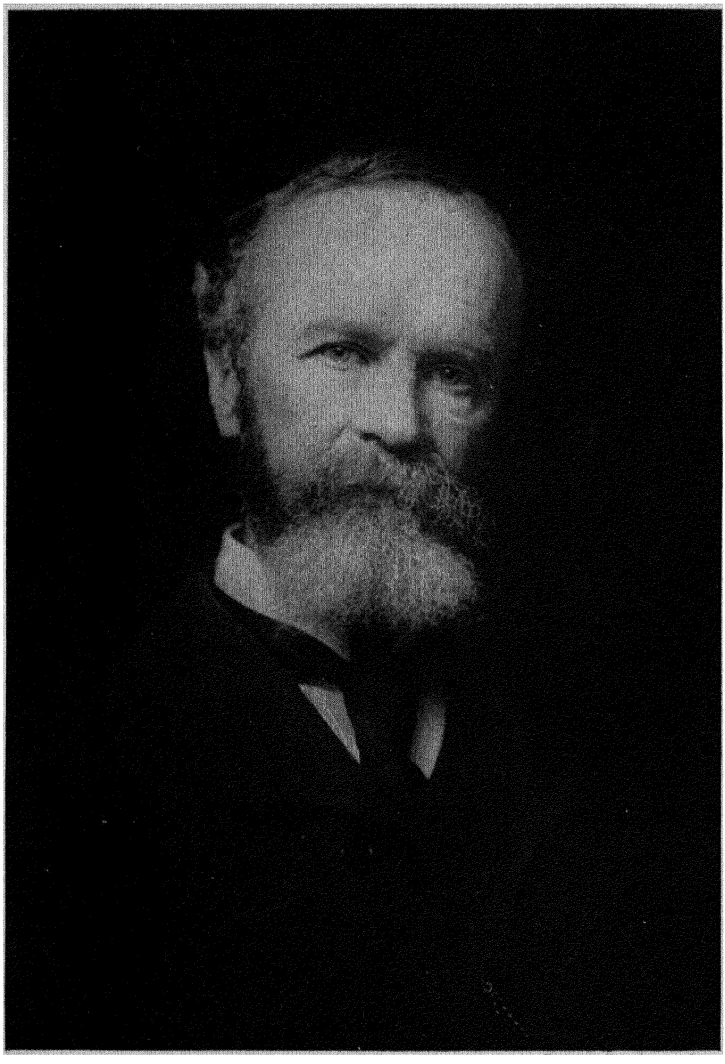
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WILLIAM JAMES

reports tell us that certain things happened which were in violation of regularities to which we ourselves have experienced no exceptions. For example, our observations have been uniform that when a man dies he stays dead. When his body is placed in a grave it does not come to life. We have heard reports, however, that Jesus was truly dead and buried, but that he came to life on the third day and walked out of the tomb. It is impossible to go back to that time in history and have a personal experience of the event. We must decide in the present whether or not to believe the testimony of others. On the one hand, we have the absolutely uniform experience that men who die remain dead. On the other hand, we have the statement by others that one man in history rose from the grave. How shall we weigh these, the one against the other? On the basis of our own experience it seems improbable, though not impossible, that such a violation of nature did take place. We must, however, put over against this feeling of improbability the report of others. Yet, when we reflect on the reliability of testimony, we remember that so often such testimony turns out to be mere idle gossip. Thus it is not reasonable always to accept as true the reports of others when these run counter to observed regularities. Still, there are times when testimony can be thought reliable, when, for example, a number of independent and competent witnesses agree in all important details. However, these conditions do not characterize the reports of miracles which are supposed to establish the truth of a particular religion. On the whole, then, Hume concludes "that no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish."[11] Hume's argument is not designed to demonstrate the impossibility of miracles. It shows rather that "a miracle can never be proved, so as to be the foundation of a system of religion."[12] Theologians who have understood Hume's argument have rarely appealed to reported miracles in their defense of religion.

In the second place, Hume examined the assumption of the

[11] *An Enquiry Concerning Human Understanding*, Section X.
[12] *Ibid.*

eighteenth-century philosophers that the existence of God could be demonstrated rationally. It is altogether incorrect to suppose that Hume was trying to prove that there is no God or immortality. He simply tried to show that the arguments which the eighteenth-century thinkers employed were not logically coercive. An argument for God which seemed irrefutable to all the rationalists was that which appeals to the necessity of a first cause of the world as a whole. Believing, as they did, that the universe is a scene of cause and effect relationships, they took it for granted that nothing exists merely by itself. Everything which is observed is the effect of some cause. But the universe as a whole exists, and must, therefore, be an effect. The first cause of the universe is God. This argument seemed so conclusive that no rationalistic thinker seriously questioned it. Voltaire, to be sure, admitted that in the opinion that there is a God, there are difficulties, but he hastily added that "in the contrary opinion there are absurdities."

Let us see what happens to this argument when we apply Hume's analysis of the meaning of causality. The terms "cause" and "effect," we have discovered, are completely relative. One is meaningless except in relation to the other. Together, they make sense only when we observe two events which are contiguous in time. If we have seen these two events occurring in conjunction a number of times we call the former the cause and the sequel the effect. An event which is observed singly can properly be called neither a cause nor an effect. Now, no one has had the experience of witnessing worlds being brought into existence. This is the one and only world any one of us has ever seen. To say, therefore, that this world as a whole is the effect of a cause is to utter a meaningless proposition.

Even if we were to make the guess that there is a cause of the universe, we could have no idea whatever as to the nature of that cause. There is nothing in the nature of the effect itself to give a clue as to the characteristics of that which produced it. Such knowledge is always based upon experience of both cause and effect and, in this case, such experience is not available. The rationalists supposed that an examination of the world suggests without doubt that

its author is an omnipotent, just, and intelligent being. But Hume counsels them to look again

> around this universe. What an immense profusion of beings, animated and organized, sensible and active! You admire this prodigious variety and fecundity. But inspect a little more narrowly these living existences, the only beings worth regarding. How hostile and destructive to each other! How insufficient all of them for their own happiness! How contemptible or odious to the spectator! The whole presents nothing but the idea of a blind Nature, impregnated by a great vivifying principle, and pouring forth from her lap, without discernment or parental care, her maimed and abortive children![13]

Finally, the purpose of natural religion was to promote virtue. Motivation for the good life is furnished by the belief that God demands righteousness and, in the future life, will reward the good and punish the wicked. But, of course, according to Hume's empiricism, there is no possible way of demonstrating the reality of a future life. All arguments for immortality are shot through with fallacious reasoning. If there is justice, that is, reward of virtue, observable in this world, then there is no need of looking to another life where justice may be found. But if we cannot find justice here, we have no reason to suppose that there is another world where it does exist. All the justice we can reasonably believe to exist is that which we can experience in our world.

Hume's attack on natural religion was forceful, but we should not make the error of supposing that he destroyed religion. One result, to be sure, was a period of skepticism but this was not the only result. Hume did not destroy religion any more than he destroyed science by undermining the notion of causal necessity. In both science and religion the method employed since Hume's time has become more empirical. That is, theologians began to study more carefully the psychological experiences which are distinctively religious in character. Instead of making religion a series of rational propositions, they talked about religious experience. We find that Schleiermacher (1768-1834), often called the father of modern theology, defined the essence of religion, not as belief in a God as

[13] *Dialogues Concerning Natural Religion*, Part XI.

final cause of the universe, but as "the feeling of absolute dependence."

Natural religion made a permanent contribution to liberal thought by clarifying the idea that human reason and experience, and not revelation, are the court of final appeal. On the other hand, it made the mistake of supposing that religion is merely an intellectual affair consisting of a system of rational propositions. Hume rendered a great service in his critical work, because once again men were forced to see that religion is to some extent an affair of the heart, and that religious ideas are based on religious experience.

## The Idea of Progress

The philosophy of the Enlightenment, we have discovered, was built around the three notions of reason, experience, and nature. The rational method as formulated by Descartes and the empirical method as suggested by Locke were the intellectual tools of the eighteenth century. These were instrumental in forming the great natural philosophy of Newton, the political philosophy of natural rights, and the philosophy of natural religion. Empiricism, developed to its logical conclusions by Hume, became in turn a useful criticism of some of the faiths which the Enlightenment had developed.

Before leaving this period, let us consider one more area in which the concepts of reason, experience, and nature were effective, namely, in the philosophy of history. Our last explicit reference to the philosophy of history was in connection with Augustine. This theory, we recall, was based upon two principles. In the first place, at the beginning of history, mankind was perfect and then suffered a fall from grace. There was in the past a perfect condition and the present is a degeneration. This principle had produced in man the habit of supposing that all good lay in some remote ancient history. In the second place, Augustine's theory was based upon the assumption that men, by their own wills and intellects, can do nothing to improve the present state of affairs. The only legitimate faith is in God and his providence. One day,

so men were told, God would see fit to bring an end to the world and separate the City of God from the City of Satan.

But the eighteenth-century philosophers, particularly in France, began to question both of these premises. Aware of the intellectual achievements in their own day, they compared these with the knowledge which the ancients possessed and came to the conclusion that there had been genuine intellectual progress. History was not a case of original perfection from which there had been degeneration. On the contrary, it was a case of the gradual and progressive development from ignorance to knowledge. As time moves on, we shall find that reason will be increasingly successful in conquering superstition and ignorance. This same progress can be discovered in social and political relations, so that we may confidently expect a better and more harmonious society in the future.

Again, we do not depend entirely upon God's providence. It is in human reason and human experience that we place our trust and it is these which will usher in a better world. And so a new philosophy of history, based on the idea of progress, replaced that of Augustine.

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## CHAPTER XVIII

## *MODERN IDEALISM*

We have seen that three of the chief concepts or ideas of the eighteenth century were reason, experience, and nature. Probably the dominant emphasis was on reason, as is indicated by the practice of calling this the "age of reason." Men had supreme confidence in the power of reason to think out the truth about the world of nature, to trace out the meaning of nature's laws and then to employ their knowledge of these laws for human gain. This confident attitude toward the possibilities of rational knowledge assumed not only the *power* of reason to find the truth about the world, but also the assumption that reality is in some sense rational—that nature contains within herself an order that exemplifies the principles of reason. Nature must be rational in some sense if reason is to get far in probing her secrets. Reason cannot trace out nature's secrets unless these secrets have a logical connection with the clues that we have.

In an earlier chapter we learned that modern science got its start through the work of Copernicus, Kepler, and others on the assumptions that the rational order of nature is mathematical and that mathematics is reason's key for unlocking nature's truth. Galileo held this mathematical view as strongly as anyone, but he combined it with a theory of atomic materialism. Descartes, we will remember, tried to give a complete speculative account of the universe by combining the mathematical method with the materialistic theory. "Give me matter and motion," he said, "and I will make a universe." It would, of course, be a rational universe, one in which reason could not only gain a footing but could climb to a comprehensive view through mathematical, i.e., rational, steps. The result was a mechanistic picture of the world, in which even animals were regarded as automata, actuated only by the laws of

matter in motion—a picture we have presented under our discussion of the Cartesian revolution.

### The Opposition of Naturalism and Idealism

Newton completed the union of mathematical rationalism with materialism when he showed that the mathematical laws of motion are found in astronomy as well as in physics; that (a) astronomy is a branch of physics, and (b) physics is as mathematical as astronomy. The works of Newton give the official picture of nature in the eighteenth century. It is material and it is rational. As such its existence is quite independent of man and his knowledge. This conception of nature has been most influential in the modern world. Materialistic naturalism has been the theoretical background of nineteenth-century science. Beside physics and astronomy, chemistry, with its molecular and atomic theories, has made the most extensive advances on the materialistic hypothesis. But also biology and physiology, in the form of biophysics and physiological chemistry, have sought to use the naturalistic metaphysics. Even the students of human nature itself have tended to regard man as a part of nature, materialistically conceived, and have held that man is to be best understood and his life ordered by the application of natural principles. This naturalistic approach to human nature ranges all the way from the eighteenth-century doctrine of natural rights to those contemporary psychologists who wish to banish all reference to consciousness in their theory and to interpret thought in terms of brain mechanics. Thus naturalism seeks to find general principles in man's external world and to interpret man as part of that world. We may call this the outside-in view of the world and of man, a view that starts with the outside world and its laws and seeks to include man and his mind as products of nature. It tends to interpret the inner life of man, his emotions and his knowledge, in terms of the outer world, as though the garment of his humanity were cut out of the cloth of nature, spun with matter as its woof and with mathematical law as its warp.

This naturalism was not, however, to be the only philosophy of the modern world, nor among professional philosophers the most

acceptable. The other great philosophy in the modern world is called *idealism.* Idealism is a philosophy that inverts the approach of naturalism. Whereas the latter is an outside-in philosophy, idealism is an inside-out philosophy. That is, idealism starts with the contents of the human mind and moves outward. Its basic conviction is that reality is ultimately made up of such stuff as mind is made of, that the ultimate substance of things is mental in nature. Perhaps "mentalism" would be a more descriptive term for this philosophy than "idealism." In the first place, the word idealism suggests an exclusive interest in ideals, whereas its interest is primarily in ideas. As Professor Hocking of Harvard has said, "the 'l' was added for the sake of euphony and not for sense."[1] It would make better sense to call it idea-ism. Moreover, the stem "idea" comes from the fact that early modern idealists regarded all mental facts as ideas. Hence, mental facts were for them idea-l facts. But we shall follow customary usage and employ the name "idealism" for the interpretation of reality as in some sense mental.

## Subjective Idealism

Idealism as an inside-out approach to truth may be regarded as a product of the Romantic rebellion against the rationalistic-materialistic view of the world which dominated the eighteenth century. This eighteenth-century outlook seemed to do less than justice to a large part of human experience. It denied significance to feeling and had little place for creative spontaneity and artistic impulse. Impatient with this hard and somewhat barren view of things, a great many men in the latter part of the eighteenth and the first part of the nineteenth centuries once more turned inward to the life of the mind for their inspiration, elevating feeling above reason and instinct above law. These men were known as Romantics. But this return to the inner world of the mind was already presaged in the eighteenth-century concern with experience. While engaged in rationalistic speculations, some of these early empiricists came to feel that before knowledge could advance, men had better ask some questions about how we know and about how much we

[1] W. E. Hocking, *Types of Philosophy* (New York: Scribner's, 1929), p. 248.

can know. In short, they turned from the study of nature to the study of the mind. Hence it is quite proper to say that modern idealism has its roots in eighteenth-century empiricism with its emphasis on experience as the source of knowledge. Let us see how this was the case.

John Locke, it will be remembered, had taught that all we know comes from experience. It is from experience that our ideas are derived and upon which they are founded. While Locke was primarily interested in refuting the doctrine of innate ideas, his own theory that we get ideas from experience alone has interesting implications. As he taught, knowledge consists of ideas of sensation and of reflection. Ideas of sensation provide the raw materials of knowledge, as it were, while reflection provides the orderly arrangement and combination of ideas of sensation. But in the last analysis sensations give the mind its sole contact with the material world. Sensations give us ideas of external things. The ideas themselves are, of course, not the things; they only *stand for* external things. The ideas of sensation are messengers between the outside world and the mind. Ideas thus have representative character only. Thus, when a blue thing is brought before the eye, a stimulus is transmitted to the brain. The resultant brain event produces in the mind the idea of blue. What the mind knows, then, is not the blue *thing*, but the *idea* of blue, which by reflection it joins to other representative ideas to make the world of experience. But the mind does not know the world of real things—it knows only ideas which copy and represent things.

Locke indeed did not doubt that there are external things which somehow generate in us ideas which copy their qualities. He found it necessary, however, to draw a distinction between secondary qualities like heat, color, taste, and smell, on the one hand, and primary qualities like extension in space, motion, solidity, and number, on the other hand. The secondary qualities, he held, do not belong to things in themselves. Do they not vary with circumstances and bodily condition of the perceiver? Without light there is no color; the same water will feel warm and cool depending on the temperature of our feeling hands. Food and drink lose their flavor when through illness our senses of taste and smell are

impaired. These considerations led Locke to declare that these secondary qualities were simply effects in us, mental or subjective, as we would now say. They are ideas without exact counterpart.

Primary qualities, on the other hand, are not so variable as secondary ones, so Locke believed that these really *do* belong to substantial things quite independently of our experience of them. Extension, solidity, motion—in short, the qualities which the physicists can measure—these Locke left standing as the properties of external things.

The distinction between primary and secondary qualities, employed by Locke to save the independent existence of external things, proved hard to defend. Bishop Berkeley, Locke's successor in studying the nature of knowledge, had a fairly easy time in showing that primary qualities are really in the same boat with secondary ones. If the mind knows only its own ideas, then the supposed external things with their primary qualities are themselves ideas. Berkeley showed, in brief, that primary qualities are just as subjective or mental as secondary ones, and that the independent substances of things could not be known. We can know only ideas, not things! This being so, there is no justification for postulating independent substances. Berkeley had a variety of arguments for rejecting Locke's primary qualities and his independent substance, arguments which deserve review. But for our purpose, it is enough to show that, accepting Locke's analysis of *how* we know, Berkeley drew the logical conclusion that we can never get outside our own ideas. We are confined to the world of our experience. This world, of course, is the same world we have always known, filled with things, from men and houses to trees and sunsets. These things all *exist*, they have *being*, but they exist as ideas, as images of our perception. What does it then mean to say that anything is? The answer, for Berkeley, is that *to be is to be perceived. Esse est percipi* is the famous Latin phrase that sums up Berkeley's doctrine.

Thus Berkeley destroyed materialism, the theory of the independent existence of material substances having primary qualities. Locke had begun the process of destruction. His inquiry into the limits of human knowledge left him with the resultant dualism between the world of ideas and the world of things. Locke was left

with two of everything, the one mental, the other of independent substance. Thus he had, for example, the perceived tree and the substantial tree. Berkeley, with a smooth argument that at once appears as sophistry and as unanswerable, shows that there is really only *one* of everything. The tree that we experience is the only tree there is. It is an object of our experience, an idea in our minds. If this seems artificial, it is worth noting that Berkeley's tree is much nearer the tree of common sense, the tree of the farmer and the woodsman, than is the materialist's duality of trees, the tree of experience and the "real" tree of atoms and electrons. Berkeley gives us back one tree. The real tree is the perceived tree. Of course, it is still made of wood but wood now is seen to be a *name* for some of the ideas of our experience. We have ideas of hardness, extension, roughness, etc. All together, we call this combination of ideas "wood." So when we speak of any thing, we mean that it is a combination of ideas. The reality of things consists just in their perception. "To be is to be perceived!" The world of the mind and the real world are one. This is Berkeley's contribution to modern idealism.

Idealism as left by Berkeley was not a finished system. It raised important questions, some of which we need neither name nor answer. One difficulty we must note, however, since its recognition and the attempt to answer it constitute an important phase of later idealism. That difficulty is: How can Berkeley escape subjectivism? If we know only our own ideas, the content of our own minds, how can we know other selves and the existence of a common world? Are we not caught in the "ego-centric predicament," unable to escape from the prison house of our own fantasies?

But whatever our difficulties with Berkeley, his belief in the unity of experience and nature, his teaching that the world of the mind is the real world, gave modern idealism one of its basic convictions. It is a philosophic outpost which other explorers in the things of the mind and its world have used as a base of operations, a point of departure in their attempts to penetrate and chart the unexplored realm lying beyond.

We began this chapter by recalling that eighteenth-century thought was dominated by three concepts, experience, reason, and

nature. We have now seen how the analysis of experience by Locke and Berkeley transformed the conception of nature from something material and external to the mind into something ideal and internal to the mind. This may be summed up by saying that eighteenth-century empiricism, in turning attention from nature to the mind, came out with a view that in its implications challenged the materialistic element in the Cartesian conception of the world. We shall now try to show how Hume, the third of the British empiricists, practically gave the coup de grâce to the Newtonian or Cartesian world view by challenging also the rational element in nature.

Our reference here to Hume will be brief. We shall attempt only to recall that Hume, accepting Locke's teaching that we get our knowledge of the external world by means of sensations (Hume called them impressions), went on to question the belief that *natural laws*, so central to scientific thought, really belong to an independent nature. If we know only what we experience, and if our experience comes to us by way of a lot of impressions, we can never *know* that one event *causes* another. We can never know that a law of science describes anything outside of our own experience. We never have an impression of a causal connection. We have merely a series of impressions. All we know is that one event *follows* another, not that it causes it. We get our ideas of causal connection through habit. If events follow one another often enough without exception, we get into the habit of expecting them to come in the same order. We *say* that the former causes the latter, but all we really *know* is that it is our habit to experience events in a certain order. What Hume does, in effect, is to reduce the "laws of nature" to the habitual association of ideas in our minds. As Berkeley showed the natural *thing* to be mental, so Hume showed the natural *law* to be mental also. What has happened is that the analysis of knowledge carried on by the empiricists Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, has challenged the eighteenth-century conception of nature and nature's laws. The mathematical rationalism plus the materialism of Descartes and Newton has given way to Berkeley's idealism and to Hume's skepticism. Berkeley challenged materialism and Hume challenged rationalism. Experience, reason, and

nature—these were three concepts, but now the analysis of the first has challenged the second and transformed the third. Hume indeed left us reason, but he left no independent laws in nature upon which reason could fasten in its attempts to determine the system of truth. The laws of nature, said Hume, are but our names for the habitual connections of experience; matter, space, and motion are but names for certain elements of our experience, said Berkeley.

Let us now pause to take our bearings, to see where we are in our story of the rise of modern idealism. It has, so far, been the story of the refutation of eighteenth-century naturalism, with its belief in a material world existing independently of our knowledge and containing within itself certain natural laws that can be given exact mathematical formulation and which can be traced out by mathematical deduction. Under the criticism of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, the objective character of this world has been progressively denied. First, Locke said that we know only our ideas but that these are caused by a substance having physical properties. Berkeley moved on from here, and argued that since we know only our own ideas, we cannot properly claim to have any knowledge of a material world outside our ideas. As Berkeley had denied the existence of an objective substance, so Hume denied the objective status of scientific law. The world *and* its laws were now held to be merely subjective, merely psychological in character. This is indeed idealism, but it is not a complete idealism. It is so subjective that on its assumptions it cannot explain how or why the experienced world does seem to come from outside ourselves, nor can it explain how or why science is possible. Before we can call the development of subjective idealism complete, we shall have to see the contribution by the great German thinker, Immanuel Kant (1724-1804).

Immanuel Kant, professor at Königsberg in East Prussia, conceived of his own work as a Copernican revolution in philosophy. Let us try to see first what he meant, in what sense he changed the point of reference in philosophy, and then turn to consider what contribution Kant's revolution made to the development of idealism. Since Kant must be placed beside Plato as one of the colossal

figures in the history of Western thought, it is impossible for us to achieve more than a fragmentary insight into his central problem, his solution of it, and its effect on later thought.

In his earlier years, Kant was deeply and learnedly interested in science. He himself wrote in astronomy and anticipated the nebular hypothesis of the earth's origin. We mark these facts because Kant's devotion to science gave him one of the factors in the central philosophical problem of his life. This interest in science fitted in well with the mathematical rationalism he had been taught in his own student days. But there came a time when he read Hume and was thereby "awakened from his dogmatic slumber." Hume's theory of causality shocked Kant out of his Cartesian assumption that the principles of reason inhere in reality, awaiting only the effort of human thought to unravel them and set them forth as the principles of science. But Hume said that our sole knowledge of the external world comes by way of unconnected sense impressions and that such order as we find in the experienced world is due to the psychological principle of the association of ideas. The so-called laws of physics, accordingly, are really only mental habits! That Hume was correct in ascribing the source of our knowledge to sense experience Kant did not doubt. That we know only our experience Kant accepted. This presented him with the second factor in his central problem: How is science possible? How is it possible to use mathematics in successfully predicting events in astronomy and in physics? If reality does not have a rational order, how is it possible to build a rational natural science? If natural law is merely the description of a uniform string of psychological events that have no necessary connection with one another, how is it possible to use mathematics, whose deductions follow the laws of strict necessity, to formulate the laws of motion and gravitation? In brief, how is it possible to make with certainty new statements of fact about the world before we have experienced the facts in question? How can we say in advance, as scientists do with confidence, that events *must* be thus and so?

Let us ask ourselves how we can say with confidence that the sun will rise tomorrow. What answer can we give? We can say that the earth obeys the mathematical laws governing its rotation upon

its axis as it moves along its elliptical orbit around the sun. But then we have to deal with Hume, who tells us to stick to what we know, that we know only what we experience, and that we certainly do not experience the mathematical law to which we have so lightly appealed. We can then fall into Hume's own way of answering and say that we have never seen the sun fail to rise, that we have a well-grooved habit of seeing day follow night, and that the habit will probably not get a shock tomorrow morning. But now we have to deal with Kant and all the rest who demand certainty and not mere probability which in this instance is nothing more than a high degree of expectancy. Is there not some way of stating our real convictions in the matter that the sun *must* rise, that there are principles of *necessity* that govern its apparent course? Can we state this conviction while holding to the empirical position —the position of Locke, Berkeley, and Hume—that our knowledge cannot reach beyond experience? How can we say that experience *must* follow certain laws?

Kant's answer to this question embodies his "Copernican revolution." It is a Copernican revolution because it changes the center of reference from nature to the mind. It admits with Hume that the laws of nature have their origin in the mind, but insists with the rationalists that these laws are necessary and absolute. How Kant worked this out is very complicated and we can merely suggest his conclusion. According to Kant, the mind has "forms" into which all sensations must fit if they are to become a part of experience. These forms, therefore, govern the order and arrangement of experience. We all know that if we put on blue glasses, everything will look blue. So, says Kant in effect, we have in our minds an arranging, ordering apparatus; instead of the blue of the glasses, this mental machinery consists of a sort of conceptual strainer, with meshes of space, of time, of causality, of number, etc. In other words, our minds are like cooky cutters which determine the shape and form of the cookies which can be cut out of the dough; our mental cooky cutters, the concepts of the mind, cut the dough of sensation into the shapes of experience. Sensations may come as disconnectedly as raindrops, but our minds do not admit them as *experience* until they have been formed, ordered,

and classified according to the forms of sense and the categories of the understanding. Like builders who take building materials and from these *construct* a house, so our minds take sensations, the matter of experience, and *construct* these into the world of nature. The *order* of nature, accordingly, is *imposed* by the mind, just as the builder imposes an architect's plan on wood and steel and brick.

Here then is Kant's answer to the problem posed for him by Hume. That problem as we phrased it, is: How is it possible to make with certainty new statements of fact before we have experienced the facts in question? The answer is that, even as a baker can tell in advance that all his cookies *must* be shaped like the designs in his cooky cutters, so the mind can say in advance that all its experience *must* take the forms and relations imposed upon it by the concepts of the mind. To be a fact at all, an event must occur at some *time*, some*where*, and must be the effect of some *cause*. The mind itself sets up these conditions for experience. Hence we can say with *certainty* that the relationships of space, time, and causality must exist among all *experienced* events! Thus Kant harmonizes empiricism with rationalism. He reconciles idealism with the possibility of science.

We must now ask in what sense this is idealism. Remembering that idealism is a philosophy that interprets reality in terms of mind, we can see that in Kant's view we have an idealistic interpretation of natural law. Natural law has been transferred from its position as inherent in reality to its new place as inherent in mind. Thus nature and its necessary laws are now regarded as ideal. In other words, Kant gives us an idealistic interpretation of nature; for him nature is composed of perceptions illuminated by mental concepts. Both the content and the form of nature are mental, i.e., ideal. But this idealism is only partial. Kant continued to believe in a realm of nonmental things that stand outside of nature, independent realities that cause sensations, that give rise to the raw materials out of which the mind constructs nature. These independent realities Kant called things-in-themselves. Kant, like Locke, is thus left with two realms, with a dualism between the experienced world and the metaphysical world, between the phenomenal world known to

common sense and to science and the noumenal world of things-in-themselves about which we know nothing.

Before turning to a consideration of the next stage in the development of idealism, let us take stock of the situation as it was when Kant's contribution was complete. Berkeley invented an idealism, but it had defects. It was a subjective idealism that left the individual mind imprisoned in its own experience. In order to remedy this defect, Berkeley was forced to assume quite arbitrarily the existence of other minds and of God who gives all men similar sensations. Only thus could he provide an account of the common and public world. But he had no ground or basis in his own argument for either assumption. Hume went on to show that on Berkeley's premises we can know neither man nor God, and that the so-called laws of nature are merely psychological habits lacking necessity. Kant, starting where Hume left off, ended, like Berkeley, with a subjective idealism as far as nature is concerned, but he had added a careful theory of natural law. Kant had shown that reason and order are inherent in experience. Except for Kant's things-in-themselves, we are then left with a subjective idealism which grounds the order of experience in the constructive principles of the mind. But while Kant had given necessity back to the laws of nature, his subjective idealism gives no explanation of a common world because it cannot properly establish the existence of other minds or of a common experience in which minds may share. This is the state of affairs in philosophy with which post-Kantian idealists had to deal. Their work on the questions involved produced objective or absolute idealism. This we shall now consider.

## Absolute Idealism

Absolute idealism regards the universe as one all-inclusive rational experience. Reality, for the idealist, is the content of an infinite mind. Finite or limited minds like ours are conceived either as fragments of the absolute mind or as expressions of it as it comes to self-consciousness. But before the idealist can make any logical claims for this view of the world, he must deal with at least two problems: (1) Granted that we know only the content of our own minds, granted that the natural world is the experienced

world, plus some further ideas, like the hypotheses of science, to connect our experiences, may there not yet exist a reality quite independent of any mind? Perhaps there does exist a nonmental world which is not dependent on any mind for its existence, a world which may indeed be the basis of experience and the source of ideas, but which itself is never experienced as it is in itself and never adequately represented by an idea. (2) Granting the idealistic thesis that we know only ideas, how can we ever get beyond the private world of our *own* ideas? How can we get any truth beyond ourselves? In short, how can we escape subjectivism and establish the existence of a public world?

*The Refutation of Realism.*—The view that a reality or realities may exist quite independently of any mind is known as *realism.* If the idealist is to maintain his position, he must first of all refute realism; he must be able to show that we cannot meaningfully refer to independently existing entities, whether these be Kant's things-in-themselves or the atoms and electrons of modern physics. The idealist attempts to meet this difficulty by showing that the idea of an unknowable reality is meaningless, and useless to philosophy.

Things-in-themselves are meaningless fictions! The conviction that this statement is true led to the development of idealism after Kant. His critics found that a crucial logical difficulty centered around the notion of the things-in-themselves. For our purposes, consider Kant's teaching that things-in-themselves cause sensations. Kant's idealism consists precisely in the revolutionary notion that the principles of science, including the category of causality, are imposed by the mind, absolutely valid in the phenomenal world but meaningless beyond. But if causality is merely a constructive principle of experience, it manifestly does not apply except in the experienced world. Since things-in-themselves are supposed to lie in a separate existence beyond experience, it is impossible to say that they *cause* anything. To be a causal agent, a thing must belong to nature; the things-in-themselves, however, are said to exist beyond nature. Moreover, if things-in-themselves cannot be said to cause anything, they cannot be otherwise known either. What is true of causality is true of the idea of number; things-in-themselves

cannot be said to be many. As with causality and number, so even with existence. Even existence has no meaning beyond the world of the mind that employs this concept to construct its experience. The things-in-themselves cannot be *known*; they *do* nothing; they *are* nothing. They are mere fictions without function and without meaning! Hence, so reasoned Kant's critics, they may be dispensed with. There is no profit in spending further thought upon them. Let us abandon the idea of things-in-themselves and spend our energies on the world of experience which we can know.

So the supposed world of things-in-themselves, of independent substances standing outside experiences, was banished from consideration. With this stroke, Kant's dualism between the phenomenal and the noumenal worlds was destroyed. His theory of nature as consisting of rationally ordered experience was left standing. The modern idealist was then in a position to declare that the world of nature, though ideal, is yet the real world. There is no unknown world beyond.

*The Refutation of Subjectivism.*—As a matter of common sense we all are confident that there is an objective world which corresponds to our experience. But the philosopher wants to know whether this confidence is justified. To this the idealist gives a positive and affirmative answer. No doubt there is an external world. And as idealist, he declares that this reality, to which we believe our ideas correspond, is itself a system of ideas in an absolute mind.

The idealist's need to argue for the existence of a real world is of his own making. Has he not taken as the first leg of his argument the thesis that we know only ideas? To be known at all, says he, the world must become *my* world. But this at once raises a problem. If we know only ideas, how can we ever get beyond the private world of our own ideas? How can we establish the existence of an external world? In short, how can we escape subjectivism?

We shall illustrate the idealist's refutation of subjectivism by means of two arguments: (a) that the order of the experienced world does not depend on the constructive activity of *our* minds; (b) that the way of escape from subjectivism is not by trying to get

outside our ideas, but by exploring their meaning. Let us consider these arguments in the order named.

(a) The order of experience is not, as Kant taught, dependent upon the constructive activity of our minds. The reason Kant appealed to the constructive activity of the mind to explain the possibility of science was his acceptance of the empirical assumption that we directly experience only sensations of simple, unconnected qualities; that we do not directly experience these qualities *as related in things*, and that we do not experience the relations between things. The British empiricists, Locke, Berkeley, and Hume, held that the act of perception of a thing consists of two stages. First, the mind receives a number of isolated sensations or impressions, each one coming, like true individualists, quite independently of the others. Second, the mind, by its reflective activity or by the association of ideas, connects sensations to form the complex idea of a thing. For example, in our perception of a lump of sugar, we first of all have sensations which present us with the disconnected ideas of simple qualities, like whiteness, roughness, squareness, and sweetness. Then, secondly, comes an unconscious inference that these several qualities belong to the same object. Hence our ideas of objects—their causes and positions and all other relations in which they stand—are the synthetic products of the mind; or, as Hume held, the products of mere association. Assuming that our ideas of things and their relations rest on so casual a basis as the association of sensations or impressions of unconnected qualities, there can be no certainty that any given group of qualities, combined into the idea of a thing, will always be dependably associated. Moreover, there will be no necessity in the laws of science; these will possess merely probability. Thus it came about that Kant, seeking to defend his confidence in the necessary and inevitably dependable character of scientific laws, appealed to the constructive work of the mind. For Kant, the mind does not merely associate sensations but organizes them according to its own fixed categories. He thus put *necessity* back into the structural character of experience—into the order of nature—but he did so at the cost of continuing *subjectivity*. For him the laws of science have no significance beyond the world of *our* experience.

Objective idealists try to cure this subjectivity concerning the order of experience by denying the assumption on which it rests. They declare that the British empiricists had no logical justification for saying that primary experience consists of separate qualities, of sensations as separate and individual as the theoretical atom. Instead of experiencing qualities, we experience *things*. We experience things as *wholes*, not as synthetic combinations produced by the chemistry of our private minds out of the elemental qualities delivered to it by sensations. The idealist invites those who deny this to produce the experience of qualities which are not qualities of things; and appeals to the structural character of experience, as it presents to our consciousness a world of objects.[2] Moreover, things are experienced also in a context of relations to other things —in space and time, as alike and different, as singular and plural. And if this be so, the objective idealist concludes, there is no need to resort to a hypothetical private mental activity to give order to the world of experience. That world comes to us with an order of its own, waiting only for us to explore and understand it.

(b) The escape from subjectivism does not require that we get outside our experience, but that we understand what it means. The idealist's answer to the problem of subjectivism is that in one sense we neither can nor need to get beyond our own experience to establish the existence of an objective world. For the idealist, the whole world of ideas is essentially one world, one all-inclusive experience of an absolute mind. Each finite thing is accordingly regarded as a fragment of the absolute experience, and each finite mind as part of the absolute mind. The development of this point of view can be suggested by the analysis of what any given thing means.

Alfred Lord Tennyson's famous little poem,

> Flower in the crannied wall,
> I pluck you out of the crannies,
> I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,
> Little flower—but *if I could understand*
> *What you are, root and all, and all in all,*
> *I should know what God and man is.*[3]

[2] Cf. the section on gestalt psychology in Chapter XX.

[3] Italics ours.

illustrates the idealist's thesis that the full and complete exploration of the meaning of a finite thing, in this instance a flower, involves the whole universe. To understand the flower completely, we shall have to know botany. The complete science of botany involves plant chemistry, which in turn involves general chemistry. Nor may we rest here, since chemistry leads us to physics and physics involves first principles of a metaphysical character. In brief, the meaning of a little flower involves, in its fullest implications, the whole of reality.

Every finite thing, be it flower or stone, fish or ocean liner, is an experience bearing the label, "fragment." The moment we seek to understand it, we are driven to ask questions about the relations in which it stands—to other specimens of its kind, to chemical conditions, etc. Our questions do not cease until we have said what we can about its total context of relations, which is all reality. That we can actually climb this "dialectical ladder" from the part to the whole is guaranteed by the fact that our experience has a rational order, which in turn supports the idealist's assumption that reality is rational through and through. If reality is rational, we can reason from the experienced to the nonexperienced, from the known to the not-yet-known. We can give wings of speculation to our knowledge and rise from the realm of the actual, which is finite and partial, to the realm of the ideal which is infinite and complete. The task of science and of philosophy, accordingly, is to consider all areas of experience, to resolve apparent contradictions by showing that each part fits consistently into a larger context, and thus to rise finally to the inclusiveness of the rational whole. Idealists would remind us further that, since "to be is to be perceived," this absolute, all-inclusive context which gives meaning to our fragmentary experiences is itself one all-inclusive experience—the infinite experience of the Infinite Self.

*The Nature of the Absolute.*—In the conception of the Infinite Self or Absolute, the argument of the objective idealist has reached its goal. Of the three principal ideas of the age of reason, we find that the concept of nature has undergone a radical transformation. Instead of being regarded as material in character, nature is now conceived as ideal—as the content of experience in the absolute

mind. Experience has swallowed up the eighteenth-century concept of nature. But since the Absolute is regarded as being a *rational* system of ideas, the concept of reason has survived. It may perhaps be helpful to think of Absolute Idealism as a synthesis of empiricism and rationalism—a synthesis in which the ancient tradition of rationalism, stemming from Plato, has been vitalized with a content of experience. This is the case because Absolute Idealism takes up into itself at least two of the central convictions of its forerunners, namely: (a) that reality is experience, and (b) that experience is fundamentally rational. Let us note the significance of each of these principles in the conception of the Absolute.

(a) Berkeley's conclusion that "to be is to be perceived," is foundational to Absolute Idealism. It agrees that reality and experience are one and the same. But the experience with which reality is identified is that of the Absolute. It is the all-inclusive experience, independent of our finite minds and external to it. The experience of the Absolute is the standard against which we measure our own, to judge it true or false. As our experience deepens and our knowledge expands, we come to know more of the Absolute. As we know more of nature, we know more of the Absolute, for nature is the system of ideas of the Absolute.

(b) Kant's teaching that rational relations and laws are intrinsic to experience is also included in Absolute Idealism. But the experience in which scientific order inheres is not, as Kant taught, merely that of the individual. It is the absolute experience, whose rational character is reflected to us in the laws of nature. The rational principle in the all-inclusive experience is the universal reason, against which we measure our thought, to judge it logical or fallacious. Since the absolute experience is rational, its reason can be traced out by finite minds as these discover the threads of logical order that connect everything in nature. This is the task of science and of speculative philosophy.

### Implications of Idealism for Religion and Ethics

Having now completed our summary formulation of the idealistic argument, we turn to a statement of the implications of this

philosophy for religious thought, philosophy of history, ethics, and social philosophy.

*Idealism and Religious Thought.*—We have already suggested that the motives leading to idealism centered in the dissatisfaction felt by many with mechanical materialism, as we may call the Newtonian theory of nature. This world view, while rational in the sense that reason could grasp its laws, yet regarded these laws as the results of matter in motion. The natural order was held to be indifferent to human needs and hopes. In short, ours was regarded as a nonprovidential world. But more. It was not only nonprovidential by virtue of the mechanical character of its laws, it was also independent in its existence from God's creative work. Newton had indeed continued to believe that the world was created by God, although the latter did not interfere in the mechanical operation of his creation except to correct irregularities. But we may take the French astronomer, Laplace, as typical of those who, following Newton, saw that Newtonian principles were a sufficient philosophy of science without the added hypothesis of God.

Idealism opposes this whole point of view. It regards reality as mind, not as matter. For idealism the laws of nature are an expression of intelligence, not a mechanical resultant of matter in motion. As an expression of intelligence, the laws of nature have a rational meaning. They express a *purpose* which animates the whole cosmic order. From the idealistic standpoint, the order of nature is meaningful, concerned with rational values and goals, rather than blindly mechanical and indifferent to values. This is a living universe, the system of ideas of the world mind which idealists call the Absolute or God.

But the idealist's God is not an external creator, a *deus ex machina.* He is not outside but *within* the process of nature; not transcendent but *immanent.* He is the indwelling life principle, the soul of the world. Natural events are processes in the rational mind of the Absolute: the passage from cause to effect is the drawing of conclusions, the regularity of natural law is the consistency of thought and constancy of purpose. As Tennyson wrote,

> God is law, say the wise; O soul, and let us rejoice,
> For if He thunder by law the thunder is yet His voice.

The principle of immanence—the theory of an indwelling God —has made idealism receptive to the ideas of evolution and development. It has regarded evolution as the gradual realization or fulfillment of the higher inherent in the lower. Matter, life, and mind are regarded as progressively higher levels of the same reality, life expressing more fully the possibilities contained in matter, and mind being the fulfillment of the inherent tendencies of life. At the apex of the evolutionary process are our human minds in which, as Hegel[4] said, the Absolute comes to self-consciousness; or, as other idealists have said, the Absolute finds the highest form of individualized self-expression.

The God who operates in and through evolution is found expressing himself in history also. The passage of human events, the rise and fall of nations and cultures, each leaving some precipitate that is incorporated in the future, or exhibiting some tendency which excites its opposite in reaction so that in a third phase the truth in both extremes may be preserved—in these the cosmic mind is said to find social embodiment. Idealists have readily adopted the idea of progress. They have accordingly believed that their own theory of mind, inherent in everything but coming to progressively fuller expression in developing social organization, provides the best philosophy of history. Theologians writing under the influence of idealistic philosophy of history have been quick to identify social progress with the ever-coming Kingdom of God. In so far as the divine idea, the universal reason, finds embodiment in the institutions of mankind, the Kingdom of God is said to be now present. In so far as the embodiment of reason is incomplete, the Kingdom of God is yet to come. Thus idealism can accommodate Jesus' own teachings as to the Kingdom being at once "among you" and something yet to come.

If God is the indwelling spirit of nature, expressing himself in natural law, in organic evolution and in history, the old distinction between the natural and the supernatural is abolished. The eighteenth-century thinkers, setting God apart from nature as his creation, were driven to the unhappy position of restricting God's

[4] Georg Wilhelm Hegel (1770-1831), German philosopher, greatest of all absolute idealists.

continuing activity to the disorders and irregularities of nature. But the supposed irregularities of nature usually turned out to be merely gaps in our knowledge, so that the sphere of divine providence was diminished with every advance of science. This difficult position is quite unnecessary for the idealist. For him, all nature is infused with divinity and the natural and the supernatural are regarded as one realm. This involves as a corollary the interesting doctrine that *every* event is a miracle, for everything expresses some divine meaning. On the other hand, idealism has no room for miracle in the old sense of isolated events expressing the divine power.

A God immanent in nature is immanent in human nature to a higher degree. Man, therefore, does not need to look to some outside agent or event for divine revelation. He has only to search his own experience for the disclosures of divine truth. While Christian idealists continue to value the Bible highly, they regard it simply as the instructive record of the religious experiences of other men who have found God within themselves. The idealist is quite independent of any special revelation, for he finds cosmic meaning in everything. Mrs. Browning expresses this religious philosophy when she declares that

> Earth's crammed with heaven,
> And every common bush afire with God,
> But only he who sees takes off his shoes.

The doctrine that the divine is immanent in human nature destroys the orthodox view of man as a creature of original sin, depraved and corrupt. Though a limited being, man is himself an expression of divinity. Salvation is not, then, a problem of transforming a man's nature but rather a problem of helping him recognize that he is a child of God. This undercuts all need for sacramental grace and has important consequences for our idea of the person and work of Christ. For if man's salvation is a problem of coming to know his true nature, the only savior men need is a teacher. A redeemer who by his saving work transforms man's nature from the human to the divine is superfluous. Man is already inherently divine. Moreover, if the divine and the human are merely different

aspects of the same fundamental reality, the traditional problem of the union of the human and the divine in Christ's person no longer exists. On the other hand, Christ's divinity is not different in kind from that of other men, though it may have been of higher degree.

Besides the religious ideas so far mentioned in connection with idealism, we must consider also the idealistic teaching as to the ultimate destiny of the individual. Whether one regard the world as materialist or as idealist, death comes to every man. How does the idealist view the fate of the individual in the light of human mortality? What doctrine of immortality does idealism allow? In reply to these questions the idealist reminds us that ours is a mental and hence a meaningful world. Evolution, we have already seen, is a progressive self-expression of meaning through the stages of matter, life, and mind. Man, as the highest known instance of individual mind, is the apex of the evolutionary process. As such he takes his place not only as a meaningful part of the world; there is good ground to allow him a place of especial significance and importance. While the idealist must perforce recognize the fact of death, it comes for him at the hands not of a blind mechanical fate but of a significant world process. Moreover, should man's significance be sufficient to merit his survival, the possibility of survival is not, in the idealist's view of the world, dependent upon the body. His finite consciousness, his individual personality, may survive as permanent elements of meaning and value, though the particular clothing of this personality in that congeries of ideas we call our body may be dispensed with. Whether a given individual will survive may be conditional—depending on whether he is of permanent worth in the value scheme of the Absolute.

*Ethics and Social Philosophy.*—Idealism claims no monopoly on ethical ideals, but it does claim to give a sound metaphysical basis for moral values and obligation. In this, idealism is flatly opposed to all those who hold that right and wrong are merely matters of opinion and custom, and that the basis of moral obligation is merely social pressure and law. For the idealist, the right and the good are fixed in the eternal nature of things; the meaning of ethical

terms is not relative to opinion differing with time and place, but instead is subordinate to their meaning in the mind of the Absolute.

We shall follow the plan of first presenting some characteristic emphases of idealistic ethics, and then showing how these ethical principles are connected with the idealistic conception of reality. Perhaps there are no more central themes in ethical discussion than (a) the value of persons, and (b) the meaning of freedom. If we know what a writer on ethics has to say on these two themes, we shall have pretty good clues to his whole moral philosophy and with resourcefulness could probably give a systematic account of it. We shall, therefore, examine the idealist's treatment of these two subjects in the hope that we shall have thereby gone right to the heart of his teachings.

(a) *The value of persons* is an important subject in ethics because it is basic both to the rights we recognize other people as having and to the duties which we acknowledge ourselves as owing to them; it is basic, in short, to the respect which we grant them. Idealists for the most part adopt Kant's teaching on this subject, adding, however, a metaphysical justification which Kant did not give.

Kant's teaching as to the value of persons is most definite: "Man exists as an end in himself, not merely as a means." Herein lies the difference between things and persons. A *thing* we may use as we like and value it as long as it serves us as a means to the satisfaction of our desires. When it ceases to be useful to us, its value is gone. Its value, thus, is conditional. A *person*, on the other hand, may never be regarded merely as a means; he must always be regarded as an end in himself. As such his value is not conditioned by his usefulness to us; it is unconditioned, objective, and independent, based on what persons are, namely, free moral agents and members of a society of rational beings. On these considerations Kant based his famous moral maxim: "So act as to treat humanity, whether in thine own person or in any other, in every case as an end withal, never as a means only." The detailed illustration of this principle in its violation as well as in its exemplification we must leave to the reader's own imagination. We turn to present a further maxim of ethics that follows from the Kantian evaluation of persons as ends.

If we are to treat persons as ends we must accord a certain equality of treatment to all. We must not only treat others as we would have them treat us, but as rational beings we must be willing that our conduct should become general practice. As Kant himself summed it up, "Act only on that maxim of which thou canst at the same time will that it should become a universal law."

Small wonder that this maxim is congenial to idealistic thought. It introduces logic into ethics and appeals to a universal principle as the test of moral conduct. It bids us to cease making exceptions in our own favor and to admit only actions that would be harmonious if they became general. In short, it takes us out of the smug though confusing subjectivism of our own desires as the basis of right conduct, into the objectivism of a rational system.

While idealists accept the Kantian maxims about the value of persons, they declare that Kant left them standing as dogmas—statements without proof. Yet proof is needed, for these maxims are neither self-evident nor undisputed. It is certainly not self-evident that the worth of any person is independent of the relationships in which he stands, independent of his usefulness to the society in which he belongs. Common sense certainly evaluates some men as more useful than others. And if some men are worth *more* than others it follows that some may be practically worthless. Moreover, Kant's doctrine of man's intrinsic worth is disputed by materialistic philosophies of human nature. Supported by chemical and biological theories, the materialist is apt to regard man as merely a combination of chemical elements in a certain dynamic equilibrium or as a more or less absurd product of evolution, more pathetic than noble as he struggles to harmonize his instincts with his conscience. If man is merely a complex bundle of protoplasm, it is not convincing to say that he is a creature of unconditional value, to be treated only as an end and never as a means.

Recognizing that the Kantian maxims are open to attacks of this sort, the idealist is prepared to support them with his own metaphysical theory. As against the alleged social relativity of human value, the idealist admits that the worth of a man depends on a context, but denies that this context is merely social. For the idealist as for the prophet, the worth of a man comes from his *cosmic*

relationships. The prophet defends the lowly and the rejected because they are sons of God; the idealist finds worth in all men because they are significant parts of a meaningful cosmos. As against the materialist, the idealist urges that man is obviously more than the sum of his chemical parts and his intrinsic worth is greater than the few cents worth of chemicals that compose his body. Nor is man *just* a high animal. For the idealist man is the apex of a meaningful process of evolution, the highest embodiment of mind in nature. As such he is presumed to have a special place of significance in the cosmic order. Moreover, if man is conceived in this fashion, it stands to reason that not only man's rational thoughts but also his rational moral ideas mirror the mind of the Absolute. This gives us ground for confidence that our judgments of moral worth when these have been subjected to Kant's second maxim, or otherwise made rational, possess essential validity. When we evaluate a man as an end in himself and refuse to treat him merely as a means, the idealist claims that we are making moral judgments solidly based on the fundamental principles of reality.

(b) *Freedom* also is a central theme of ethics. The conception of its nature and the conditions under which it may be had determine our views on the relation of the individual to all forms of restraint. Our solution to such issues as individualism against socialism, the individual against the state, and liberty against law hinge on our concept of what true freedom is.

The idealist doctrine of freedom is usually informed by the teachings of Hegel. According to him, the meaning of freedom is something that one can learn only by experience, as we try first one and then another theory of freedom, only to find that each was an error. (i) At first we may identify freedom with *absence of restraint*. We seek to avoid entanglement with any and all institutions and organizations for fear they will restrain us. We seek liberty in detachment from all connections that may make demands on us. But this sort of freedom turns out to be a negative and empty thing. It is the freedom of the shirker which in its disillusionment turns out to be loneliness. So we try again, this time to interpret freedom in positive fashion as (ii) *self-assertion*. We would assert our rights and exercise our privileges, satisfying our desires where

and when we please, shunning, however, the restraining discipline of a coherent philosophy of life. But we find ourselves still unsatisfied, for in pursuing the goal of each desire we have garnered only a succession of isolated satisfactions, and freedom has escaped us. While we have expressed our capricious desires we have inflicted chaos upon our personality—our self. This self, being a unity and not just the sum of a lot of desires, requires organization and discipline of its desires before it can possess the freedom of self-realization. So we are at last ready for (iii) *the freedom of participation.* We now accept the bondage of institutional life as a condition for complete self-expression. Imperfect as the various forms of societal organization may be, they are yet necessary for the fulfillment of our possibilities as persons. We are dependent upon the family for birth and nurture; its responsibilities are the condition for the love and security it alone can afford. We are dependent upon law for our liberty, for without law there would be only anarchy. Without institutions embodying custom and tradition there would be no connection with the past. We would find ourselves not free, merely isolated in the present time. Without the discipline of tradition and custom we could not possess their instruction, and without this we would spend most of our time in the repetition of forgotten errors. Laws, customs, and institutions, instead of being hindrances to self-expression, are actually the necessary conditions for freedom. To this conception of freedom the idealist is prepared to give the support of his metaphysical theory.

Hegel himself regarded the world as a living process. The history of civilization is for him the history of a developing idea. It is the cosmic reason finding progressive embodiment in human institutions and coming to self-consciousness in human individuals. All the forms of our common life, our traditions and our laws, our organizations and institutions may be regarded as more or less perfect expressions of the world mind. As such they are held to embody a core of reason. Since the free life is certainly the rational life, it must also be a life lived in obedience to law and social restraint inasmuch as these embody the world reason. In other words, once we see that the highest self can best be realized by obedience to law, we shall *choose* to obey. The resultant participation in the

institutions of mankind provides us with the means of sharing in the life of the universal reason. Only by such participation can we realize our true natures; only thus can we be really free.

This conception of freedom has obvious bearings on social philosophy. To regard existing institutions as embodying the universal reason is to favor the social as against the individual, the established order against innovation. The emphasis will be on law, not liberty; on obedience, not self-assertion. The spirit of reform is likely to be condemned as a rebellious challenge to the philosophically justified *status quo*. As Hegel himself once said, the business of philosophy is to teach us that the world is as it ought to be. But not all idealists agree with Hegel on this point. Thus, Royce[5] desired to soften the conservative implications of idealism. He sought to harmonize idealistic ethics and the American tradition of revolution and reform by finding universal reason in "causes" which from time to time arise, rather than in established institutions. These causes, said he, are likely to appear because reason is not adequately embodied in the existing order of things. Instead of obedience to the *status quo*, reason requires our loyalty to causes of reform that seek to embody reason more perfectly. For Royce, then, *loyalty* to causes replaces obedience as the highest ethical principle.

Another approach to social philosophy characteristic of idealism is by an analysis of the nature of the individual. Taking seriously the idealistic doctrine that reality is the system of ideas of one all-inclusive mind, individuals are regarded as just so many different expressions of the Absolute. But if each individual is an expression of the Absolute, all individuals are at bottom one. This essential unity of all selves may indeed be obscured through ignorance, but as men become rational this ignorance can be cured. In the first place, we come to see that the very meaning of personality has to be defined in terms of the relationships in which an individual stands. To be a person means to be a father, son, and brother; a citizen; a merchant or lawyer. Personality cannot exist *in vacuo*. We may be something within the confines of our own skins, but that something does not constitute our personality. In

[5] Josiah Royce, greatest of American idealists, teacher of philosophy at Harvard from 1882 until his death in 1916.

the second place, as men become rational they express more fully the universal reason. As rational, men are alike; the principles of reason are the same in all men. The ways in which men differ are regarded as only incidental to their essential unity. From this point of view, there can be no real clash of interests between the individual and society, for in so far as the interests of each are rational they are the same. If, then, society is regarded as the more perfect embodiment of reason than any given individual, the interests of society (or of the state as the highest form of social organization) are the *real* interests of the individual. This is made the ethical basis of political obligation. It is as if the state said to the individual, What I demand of you is what you would really want if you realized what you *really* are and want. Just as idealists seek to cure subjectivism by showing that the meaning of experienced things requires an objective world for its fulfillment, so they resolve the opposition of individual and society by showing that the full meaning of the individual is not realized except as he transcends his separate individuality in the social whole.

## Conclusion

Idealism obviously fails to solve some philosophical problems; if it did not fail at some points it would be more widely accepted. But its defects should not blind us to the validity and suggestiveness of many of its insights. Though most of the speculative conclusions of the idealistic approach may be rejected, the philosophy of the present-day intellectual will probably include certain idealistic convictions—at least for use as starting points. Let us conclude this study by listing four of the idealistic teachings that warrant the careful consideration of the thinker seeking to make a contemporary reconstruction of philosophy:

1. The insight that the experienced world is the real world. There is no gulf between experience and nature, nor is nature merely an appearance of some underlying but unknowable substance.

2. The contextual theory of meaning. The meaning of the things of our experience is to be sought in the context of their relations. A thing derives its properties and its very existence from a larger setting of experience of which it is a part.

3. The conviction that man is not alien to nature. Man is not some accidental product of nature whose ideas are separated from reality by a gulf of difference and whose values and ideals are fundamentally opposed by things. Man and nature belong together. Human knowledge and ideals are themselves products of nature. Man has but to explore his own experience to understand his world and ultimately to make it subject to his purposes.

4. The conception of freedom in positive terms. Freedom is not merely absence of restraint, not opposition to law or the opportunity to indulge desires. Instead, it consists of self-realization. This is an achievement that requires self-knowledge, self-discipline and obedient participation in social responsibilities.

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## CHAPTER XIX

# *INFLUENCE OF EVOLUTION ON PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION*

The advent of Darwin's theory of evolution was probably more revolutionary than the upheaval caused by Copernicus. The impact of the concept of evolution has made profound changes in the intellectual and religious temper of the modern world. We shall try to sketch here an account of some of those changes.

We have already discussed in this book the work of some of the great scientists and philosophers. Science and philosophy had made many advances through these men, but to the average man these were somewhat remote from his interest. Theology within official Christianity had not been greatly affected. To be sure, there had been a Reformation, which in a measure had emancipated men's minds from the grip of an authoritative Church. But while science contributed to the spirit of the age that produced the Reformation, there were many other factors also which enlarged men's horizons. Unfortunately, Protestantism itself became crystallized into divisions, each of which provided an institutional interpretation of the Bible which was a new burden of authority.

The scientific progress of the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, of course, made some change in the religious outlook of intellectual men. In fact, the Deistic movement was an attempt to make theological ideas compatible with the Cartesian and Newtonian conceptions of the universe. For the average man, however, and for the average minister and priest, there was a conventional pattern of belief which each followed according to his respective denomination. These respective patterns of belief were not greatly affected either by the philosophy or by the science that had been developing in the modern world. The mode of creation by divine fiat, the crowning presence of man in the Garden of Eden, his "fall" and subsequent suffering and depravity, the plan of salvation by the

atoning blood of Christ, the composition of the Bible itself; all these were left essentially untouched by the pre-Darwinian science and philosophy. After Darwin, however, none of these things could ever be the same again. The resulting changes are by no means complete, nor has the theory of evolution been universally accepted by all religious people. Nevertheless, the process of transformation will run its course, and many ideas that were religiously acceptable before Darwin will, in time, join those ideas about the universe which have been discarded since Copernicus.

## The Darwinian Theory

What was it Darwin did which is fraught with such consequences? We shall not be able to present in detail the whole story of Darwin's achievement. There are so many splendid books available today on this subject for the layman that it should be possible to assume that the average person has read or will read one or more of them. Darwin's contribution has to do with the world of organic forms. To be sure, the evolutionary idea was applied widely to other fields also, as we shall see, but this followed after Darwin's monumental achievement in biology.

By the term "organic evolution" we shall agree to mean,

> that the present day animals (including man) and plants and all the subtle interrelations between them have arisen in a natural knowable way from a preceding state of affairs on the whole somewhat simpler, and that again from forms and interrelations simpler still, and so on backwards and backwards for millions of years until we lose all clues in the thick mist that hangs over life's beginnings.[1]

The evidence for this theory is so overwhelming that no competent student of biology doubts the fact of evolution. It was Darwin who first presented the evidence which made the likelihood of an evolutionary process very probable indeed.

The idea of evolution, however, was not at all new. Philosophers among the early Greeks entertained the general possibility of some sort of origin of species from simpler and more homogeneous stuff. Anaximander as early as the sixth century B.C. proposed a theory

[1] J. Arthur Thomson, *The Gospel of Evolution* (New York: Putnam, 1926), p. 32.

of organic evolution. In connection with his famous theory of reality as an "indefinite," "boundless" stuff, which by motion "separated itself out" into the things we perceive, he speculated on a possible development of organic life. He actually taught that there was a progressive adaptation of organisms to the environment by means of a survival of the fittest. He argued, with marvelous astuteness, that the ancestors of man must have been simpler organic beings with different physiological habits and different environment. He thought so because it appeared to him that the human species could not have survived if the long period of infancy had originally been as protracted as it is now. From his observations of marine life, he concluded that originally our ancestors came from the sea, and by a process of variation and survival of the fittest, some forms adapted themselves to the land. Other philosophers besides Anaximander suggested theories of evolution also, but after Plato and Aristotle, except for the notable exception of Lucretius, the Latin poet and philosopher (99-55 B.C.), the notion of evolution fell into discard until modern times. We shall presently see what Plato, but especially Aristotle, had to do with shelving this idea.

The scientific development of the modern period created a new interest in developmental theories on the part of philosophers and scientists. The renewed interest came first, not from biology, but from efforts to understand some of the implications of physical theory. The philosopher Kant in 1755 was the first to propose a nebular hypothesis for the formation or evolution of the solar system. In 1796, Laplace, a mathematician, or, as we would call him today, an astrophysicist, suggested a better theory which was named the nebular hypothesis. He surmised that the solar system had evolved, by a process which he outlined, from hot gaseous nebulae to its present form. By the time the nineteenth century was well under way, a great deal of accumulating data on animals and plants, and on the geological structure of the earth, which could not be fully explained on any known basis, aroused much speculation about the possibility of an organic evolution in addition to a physical evolution. Here is where Darwin's contribution was made.

Darwin not only showed how variations within species occurred,

but he accounted for the origin of species by natural processes. Observe that a species of anything is a class name or form—oaks are a species of tree. Particular oak trees vary, but the species or form called "oak" seems to remain as a permanent feature of the environment. (Recall the Platonic and Aristotelian uses of "Form" or "Idea.") Darwin's theory was that in any given environment there is "a struggle for existence." That is an observed fact. Each plant and animal struggles to maintain itself. Those "forms" unable to do so fail to survive. Therefore, only "the fittest" survive and propagate in the competitive conflict. The "fittest" are those which are best adapted to the environment in which they live. In the process there is a considerable degree of variation among the individual members of any species. It is these variations within the species which provide the clue for the origin of species. It is an observed fact that variations occur. It may be that the process is nature's way of testing out the best degree of adaptation to discover which variations will do best in the environment. But it is not good science to personalize nature in this way and say that nature planned for such and such adaptations to succeed. Keeping to the observed facts, we can at this point say simply that variations occur, and that those forms best adapted to the environment survive. If there is anything which the natural process seems to be interested in, it would appear to be success in survival. The better qualified to survive do survive and propagate their kind. A continuation of this process in the course of great stretches of time accumulates such changes that a distant descendant may have become something so different from its ancestor as to constitute a new species.

Darwin's descriptive explanation remains fundamentally sound in its major outlines, although we know now that it is oversimplified. The origin of species may in many instances have to be accounted for quite differently. Since Darwin's time, and especially since 1900, a great amount of scientific experimentation and observation has thrown new light on the process of evolution.[2] The mutation

[2] See T. H. Morgan, *The Scientific Basis of Evolution* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1932) and H. S. Jennings, *The Biological Basis of Human Nature* (W. W. Norton & Co., 1930).

theory of De Vries, the Mendelian data on heredity, the research on chromosomes and genes are indications of intensive effort to know how heredity and evolution really work. There remains much that we do not yet know about the causes or mechanism of evolution.

It is difficult for the modern student, accustomed to the idea of evolution, to gain any clear conception of the reaction occasioned by Darwin's discovery. Very few there were who welcomed it at first, apart from a few philosophers and scientists. For the most part the furor was one of alarm. Again man's world and the system of nature were turned upside down. They were turned upside down because there is not a single field of scientific and academic study which has not been greatly modified by the concept of evolution. It provided a new approach to astronomy, geology, philosophy, ethics, religion, and the history of social institutions. Now, with one clarifying word, the whole course of nature and man was illuminated. It made possible a clear view of what had taken place—one continuous evolving history to be traced back from modern civilization to primitive man, and from early man on through an evolution of species, and before that to the formation of the solar system. It was a staggering panorama, a promised land more vast than the mind of man could encompass. It gave new momentum to scientific research. Eager men set forth like prospectors to stake out the limitless terrain.

## Influence of Evolution on Philosophy

For ages nothing seemed to be more certain than the fixity of nature's forms. Even among the early Greek philosophers there was a controversy over the problem of permanence and change. Heraclitus insisted that everything was in process of change. Sense observation testifies to the fact that all observable things undergo change. Therefore, he argued, nothing is permanent. Nothing is fixed, except the fact of change itself. On the other hand, Parmenides stressed the need for permanence. How can we have knowledge without some kind of permanence? If there are no fixed properties, how can we have knowledge of anything? The possibility of knowledge requires permanence in that which is to be

known. So Parmenides and his followers said that the changing world of sense experience is illusory, but that the mind by means of reason alone can know the real world. One solution of the problem was provided by the materialistic atomism of Democritus. He declared that the invisible atoms are the permanent elements of the world, while their combinations make the various things of the experienced world. These latter combinations change, but the atoms do not. It will be remembered that some philosophers were not satisfied with this solution. They thought materialism left out some very important aspects of experience, especially the non-quantitative phases of experience such as ideas, mathematical relations, feelings, personality, and human relations. Plato in particular was mentioned as the chief exemplar of this view. We learned of his emphasis on immaterial reality which he called "ideas" or "forms," and which only the mind could discern. Aristotle also made great use of the concept of "form" in his process philosophy. As we followed the course of this book, we saw much use made of the notion of "form" by early Christian thinkers, by Neo-Platonists, Augustine, and St. Thomas. The philosophy and political structure of the medieval world grew out of the mode of thought which held "forms" to be the permanent and the real.

Oddly enough, Aristotle, who among other things was the founder of biological science, just missed the idea of organic evolution. Instead, he fastened the notion of fixed "forms" more permanently upon Western thought. Aristotle collected biological specimens and classified them according to types. Those organisms which were simplest in structure he classified as lower forms. Increasing complexity of organization determined the status of a given organic object as a higher form. Degree of complexity of organization is still a basic criterion in modern classification. Furthermore, Aristotle was well aware of the many stages of development or evolution from a seed or an egg through many intermediate stages to full maturity. But it never occurred to Aristotle that the "forms" or species themselves were also evolving. He grasped the basic distinction between lower and higher forms, but he understood actual organic development as limited to birth, growth, and death within the species itself.

Why did Aristotle miss organic evolution? It was not wholly because of his preoccupation and commitment to the notion of "form." He missed it because he was a good scientist as well as a philosopher. Aristotle did not have any basis of observable fact which could have warranted a generalization like that of evolution. One does not see directly the origin of species as one sees particular plants and animals develop. We know Aristotle was acquainted with philosophical points of view which emphasized change as a metaphysical principle. There was Anaximander's evolutionary theory, his doctrine of a "boundless" primary stuff which is differentiated by "separating out" into the endless variety of visible objects. Also, there was the atomic materialism of Democritus which allowed for innumerable variations. Aristotle knew all this and he knew they were mere speculations. He himself deliberately studied organisms to discover what he could learn from them. What he thought he observed was a permanent order of species. He had no scientific ground for asserting anything else.

The failure to discover an organic evolution, however, had far-reaching consequences because of the philosophical conclusions which were drawn from it. Whether we have in mind Aristotle or Plato, the philosophical influence of these men merges here in the notion that behind the world of sense appearance there is a realm or rational order of forms or universals that are permanent and real. All observed changes are subject to order and form. In other words, the philosophical generalization is made on the basis of Aristotle's science, that form is imbedded in the processes of nature and all changes are subservient to a fixed and established order. The mind can grasp the pattern of the created world. As this concept was absorbed and applied down the years, men created a religious and a political structure based on the philosophy that the natural order is the counterpart of a fixed and immutable "heavenly" order, existing as Idea or Form in the mind of God. Even if there were such an order, men unhappily were too confident that they knew what the order was. Both politics and religion divided people into classes, like the order of Ideas, and fixity of place became a virtue. The *status quo* in the Church and in society became an end to be

maintained. Therefore, scientific or philosophic ideas which threatened the established order had to be stifled.

The influence of Darwin, or rather the extension of the idea of evolution, broke down the reliance on fixity. Nature is not as we had thought it to be. Even the "forms" undergo modification. They are not immutable.

We shall see in just a moment how the disclosure of an evolutionary process, in due time, affected philosophical theory about the nature of reality, the nature of knowledge or truth, and the nature of morals. At first, however, there were many hasty conclusions drawn regarding the philosophical significance of the theory. Herbert Spencer, in the latter half of the nineteenth century, attempted to work out a "synthetic philosophy" which would include within one system everything from "first principles" of biology and psychology to sociology and ethics. The materialists, too, had a field day with Ernst Haeckel (1834-1919) as the leading figure. But it was too early to lay down so confidently, as Haeckel did, a twelve-point program for nature's unfolding. There were many other philosophical efforts, some of which adapted older systems of philosophy to newer ways of thinking. There are a number of philosophies of evolution that are more modern still, bearing such names as C. Lloyd Morgan, S. Alexander, and H. Bergson. So it is apparent that the influence of evolution on philosophy has been and still is great, and the results are not all in, even at the present time.

Most of the systems of philosophy have assumed that there is some key by which the mind can grasp the structure of reality, its direction and innermost meaning. But there came other philosophers, who were not satisfied with system-building. They were men who thought we do not know enough to make these comprehensive philosophies, as though we were cosmic giants of the intellect. Rather, they held that the mind is a tool or instrument whose function is to assist the human organism in adapting itself to the world in which it lives. Let us consider the meaning of the conception of *the mind as an instrument*. In a sense the mind was always viewed as an instrument, but it was never before looked upon as a product of organic evolution, and as an instrument developed in that process. It was not heretofore thought of merely as a tool to

aid man in survival and development. The total organism, of which the mind is one part, is in an environment in which it must learn to live. We saw how this was the case with primitive man. He used his mind as an instrument to get along in the natural surroundings where he found himself, and thus developed skills and customs which he passed on as a heritage. From an evolutionary standpoint the mind is not primarily a window through which we have access to ultimate reality. Perhaps, then, men overestimated the function of mind when they thought a succession of logical ideas was a disclosure of the pattern of nature. The raising of this question opened up a new line of philosophical inquiry. It was bound to affect philosophy in the direction of practical interests, and turn it somewhat away from the speculations and system-building which until now had dominated philosophy. William James, one of our own American philosophers, may be taken as representative of the new spirit. It was sufficiently distinctive that a new label was required, and the name "pragmatism" was coined, suggesting the practical phase of this philosophy. Following James, a further development was carried forward by John Dewey, another American, who called his position "instrumentalism," to emphasize the main point of the philosophy, that the mind is an instrument. From the point of view of instrumentalism, all theoretical problems, if they are really problems, must be statable in practical terms, that is, in relation to some life situation, whether scientific, political, social, or ethical. This evolutionary philosophy contends that we shall actually learn more about the universe we live in if we will learn about particular processes and particular "truths," and forgo all efforts to affirm what is the Absolute Reality, the Absolute Truth, and the Absolute Goodness. Let us see what turn philosophy has taken with reference to these three Absolutes—Reality, Truth, and Goodness.

*Reality.*—Whereas, under the concept of fixed "forms," the nature of reality was believed to be disclosed by a knowledge of these "forms," we now feel less certain about the nature of reality since we have learned that the "forms" are not absolutely fixed. Movement and change introduce a doubt as to what nature or reality really is. This doubt arises out of the same considerations that produced the problem faced by the early Greeks regarding perma

nence and change. Heraclitus said that all is change, and the opposition replied that we cannot have any real or permanent knowledge about something which does not maintain fixed characteristics. If its nature is to change, then you can never know it as it really is. It has no being. The Greek skeptics believed that we are doomed to this conclusion and, therefore, considered all knowledge as relative.

According to modern evolutionary theory, we are presented with the fact that new and unpredictable forms appear. We do not know how they appear, much less why they appear. There is inorganic stuff, and "life" emerges. But life proceeds to run its course, and all evolutionary theory tries to account for its manner of operation, although why the process is what it is, or why it runs its course at all, is not revealed in the process. From "life" there emerges "mind," as a new form out of the womb of nature. Nature manifests itself in unpredictable ways.

There are two things which have to do with the problem of Reality which follow from the emergence of new levels in the organic process. *First,* the new level seems so much more than what went before. We classify it as a higher form. The lower did not come from the higher, but just the reverse. It appears then that traditional philosophy may have been mistaken in its contention that a cause must be greater than its effect. Formerly all natural phenomena were regarded as effects of causes assumed to be greater than or at least as great as the effects. If one carried the causal analysis back far enough, one reached the ultimate cause or Reality, God. Modern philosophy has had little confidence in this cause-effect argument since Hume. But it is additionally untenable in the light of an evolutionary process that is at every new stage producing effects greater than their "causes." *Second,* it needs to be brought out that, despite the fact that there are new forms or change, we are not left without some degree of permanence. We find some stability, some order, else how could we classify the various forms into genera and species? That degree of order, even if not permanently fixed, has sufficient permanence for all practical purposes. It is relatively permanent, like the "everlasting" hills which are not everlasting, but which last long enough to be called permanent. So that reality discloses itself to us in many ways—in the

inorganic forms of atoms, rocks and galaxies; in the organic forms of amoebas, trees, and babies; in the psychic forms of animal intelligence, morons, and geniuses. What is reality? It is all these things, and a good deal else besides. We have reason to suppose it is still full of possibilities, still laden with potentialities. To ask then what is the *absolute nature of reality*, is to ask an unanswerable question. That is one effect of evolutionary thinking on philosophy.

*Truth or Knowledge.*—Turning to a second effect of evolution, namely, on the conception of Absolute Knowledge or Truth, we can see at once that the older mode of thinking must be modified. What takes place in this instance is but a corollary of what we have just been saying. Our knowledge of reality is never absolutely fixed, but only relatively so. There is little point in talking about Absolute Knowledge and Absolute Truth in capital letters. There is, however, a great need to talk about knowledge and truth without the capitals. If we cannot lay hold on Absolute Truth, we can lay hold on particular facts which are very useful and more immediately important for daily living than some vague Absolute, which we could never feel sure we absolutely knew anyway.

So then, there is a tendency in modern philosophy to redefine knowledge and truth, divorcing them from the word, "absolute." Instead, we agree to call knowledge whatever can be in some way tested or verified. We live and learn by discovering and using facts. Facts always involve some particular object, process, condition, or state of this or that aspect of nature. Observation may cause us to speculate about some condition of nature, but the speculation is not knowledge. We cannot reasonably assert that the speculation is true. We must test or verify the speculation, and it may turn out that what we guessed to be the case is the case. Knowledge is not *a priori* (prior to), but *a posteriori* (after) experience.

For example, a number of people speculated or guessed that mosquitoes were carriers of the yellow fever germ. That was not yet knowledge. But experiments or tests were undertaken to determine whether mosquitoes did infect people, and what kind of mosquitoes, and under what conditions. And it came to be known by verification that mosquitoes did do what it was guessed they did. This particular fact is now known. It is a particular truth or

item of knowledge. But if we guess that there is a vast cosmic plan or purpose working itself out through nature, we still have the task of verification before we can say whether it is true or not. However, so far as our present ability to carry out tests is concerned, we can neither affirm nor deny the existence of a cosmic plan. We may believe or have faith that there is a purpose, but belief is not knowledge. Knowledge is hemmed in by restrictions. We may let our speculations roam whither they will, but knowledge must humbly plod a painstaking course of fact-finding and testing.

Note, however, that we may take the particular facts or knowledge in our possession and theorize beyond them. This is exactly what happened in the case of the theory of evolution. Many scientific men believed or had faith in evolution before they had verified it. At first, theorizing went beyond the facts. In other words, a tentative proposal was offered in explanation of known facts. Observe that it was not a fantastic theory. On the contrary, Darwin's theory had a *high degree of probability*. So today in our philosophy, as well as in science, we have occasion to use such phrases as, "degree of probability," "degree of truth." These terms suggest tentative standpoints, experimental attitudes, and the implication that we will seek more verification and thus obtain either a higher degree of probability or possibly a lesser degree. Modern reflective thinking, however, makes a clear distinction between faith and knowledge. Faith may go beyond knowledge in the acceptance of some theory about the nature of the universe or in the acceptance of some theological ideas. However valuable it may be to hold some things on faith, that faith should have some reasonable grounds, that is, there should be some basis of probability. If the accepted faith has a very low degree of probability, then its foundation is weak. But, in any case, faith must be distinguished from knowledge. Even in the case of knowledge, there should be an open end for possible revision. Knowledge has a tentative aspect, only a relative permanence. A new fact may require a revision even of accepted knowledge all along the line.

If an illustration were needed, it would only be necessary to point to the fact that by 1895 many scientists believed that all the fundamental principles of physical science had been discovered, and

that only practical application of these principles remained. But that very year the X-ray was discovered, and that was the beginning of a far-reaching revision of the body of "knowledge" which had been accepted up to 1895. Is not this precisely a duplication of what happened when Darwin announced the results of his work? It caused a revision of the "knowledge" of that day in biology, geology, and many other fields.

One of the philosophical effects of evolution, then, has been the redefinition of the words "knowledge" and "truth." Neither word carries the idea of absolute certainty along with it. Certainty must now be regarded as merely practical and tentative. Knowledge is restricted to that accumulation of data which have been or can be tested or verified. Experience has also taught us it is well to keep a door open for modification. In other words, in claiming knowledge, we "keep our fingers crossed," at least a little. This is the best we can do in regard to knowledge, but why should we need more? Many ideas and theories are still candidates for election to the academy of knowledge. That election is nonetheless a genuine distinction even though permanent tenure is not guaranteed.

*The Good, or Ethics.*—The third effect of the evolutionary theory on philosophy which we have selected for discussion is its influence on ethics. This could be a very long story indeed, but it will suffice to indicate a few aspects of thinking in this area.

Darwinian theory was almost as startling to moral philosophers as to theologians. The recognition that man had an organic descent, or ascent, if we prefer, from lower animal forms, was a very unpalatable pill for the human ego to swallow. There were many people who opposed the theory, lock, stock, and barrel. There were numerous other thinkers who jumped to the opposite extreme and concluded that the same factors which operated in the course of organic evolution should be rigorously applied to the sphere of moral relations. Such terms as "survival of the fittest," "adaptation or adjustment to the environment," were the catchwords for a new ethics.

The outstanding representative of this latter approach to morals was the German philosopher, Friedrich W. Nietzsche (1844-1900). He assumed that the Darwinian factors in evolution were sufficiently

complete and sufficiently basic to be relied upon for application to moral and social evolution as well. He believed that the idea of "survival of the fittest," if applied to human relations, will develop a "superman." The only reason we are not developing a "superman" is the thwarting influence of Christian ethics. He repudiated Christian moral ideas on the ground that they make for survival of the weak and not the strong. It has often been pointed out that the term "fittest," when used in the strictly biological sense of organic fitness to the environment, may not be applicable on the higher level of human relations. Furthermore, the word "fittest" is ambiguous, and so is the word "environment." Note the difficulty which the words create. Whatever is "fittest" is regarded as the good or the best. What then is fittest? Is it brute strength which certainly is sometimes a factor in survival? Is it fleetness of foot, which is no doubt sometimes a factor in survival? Is it thickness of skin or cunning? Clams and oysters are remarkably well fitted to their environment. In fact, some forms of marine life have survived without much change through ages of time. Are they fittest? What is fittest for a clam is not fittest for a man. In the terrestrial environment groups of men have survived by overcoming other groups. By force of strength and numbers they may have succeeded. Does it necessarily follow that by reason of brute superiority the stronger is the better? We demur somewhat at this point, for we hesitate to endow all instances of survival with the quality of good.

The reader perhaps shares the feeling that the words "fitness," "survival," and "the good" are not exactly synonymous. We have the impression that some falsification occurs by such identity. The good is a human term and must be studied in relation to human affairs. It must not become equated indiscriminately with factors operative on the biological level. Moral experience appears in the course of evolution as one of the phenomena characteristic of human beings. It is a new or emergent "form." Therefore, what it is and does must be learned from the level where we find it, for obviously it cannot be known in terms derived from an entirely different level. If we have occasion in ethics to use such words as "survival" and "fittest," we use them in a moral context, not a biological one. This realization is important for it was the recogni-

tion of this point which turned philosophers away from the expectation of explaining ethics solely in biological terms. Instead, they began to look at the actual nature of moral evolution which is in many respects different from organic evolution.

Ethics, as we know, is concerned with such questions as the nature of the good life, the best life to live, and what is good. Morality in Western culture has been essentially "Christian." By that we mean that the culture of the Western world has been molded by that heritage of ideas which has been derived from Hebrew, Greek, and Roman sources through the medium of the Christian Church. The dominant morality, at least the moral ideal, was so derived. The Ten Commandments; Christian virtues such as altruism in the form of alms to the poor, care for the sick; occupation or work; thrift; marital fidelity; all these were emphasized as meritorious. In general, we may say that morality was primarily the concern of all branches of the Christian Church. There was always a common ground of morality which underlay the differences in religion. That common morality was made part of each theological position. The moral demands on mankind were laid down and were almost as "fixed" as the form or species *man* was "fixed" by the Creator in the Garden of Eden. The Ten Commandments, for example, were not known to have been the compact result of long years of experience in social living, upon which Moses had been able to draw by reason of his education and training in Egypt. It was thought that they were literally revealed by God to Moses in the form given and as something altogether new. There was nothing debatable about the Commandments because they were of divine ordination.

As the evolutionary concept sank in, however, it came to be recognized that there was a history or evolution of morals in the course of long ages of human living. This long history needed to be studied in order to understand the growth and development of moral ideas among different peoples widely separated by time and location. What was judged to be good in one place was judged to be bad elsewhere. This was disturbing because some men had expected to find a fundamental moral sense, analogous almost to the senses of sight or smell. It soon became evident that there was nothing quite like that. Then extremists concluded that "moral" is

just a name used by modern civilized man for whatever people agree to call good, that it is just another word for custom and convention. This started a debate on ethics over the very same issue that was at stake between Socrates and the Sophists, as described in Chapter VIII. Is there something permanent about ethics in the way of discoverable principles which ought to be binding on all men, or is ethics entirely relative, that is, entirely a matter of custom which may come and go and which is not binding outside the given society which happens to approve this way of doing things? The reader should be able to observe at once that he is confronted by a familiar actor in this unfolding drama of philosophy and religion. Is not this member of the cast the issue of permanence and change again, but now with different dress? That is exactly the case. This time the problem of permanence and change is in the realm of morals, but it is the old problem just the same. Perhaps, as before, we shall not have to choose between absolute permanence and absolute change.

A few moments ago we referred to the early impression made on scholars investigating moral history, that the variation in moral habits was so great that at first no common basis of morality disclosed itself. The situation was exactly like that which confronted students investigating primitive religions referred to in Chapter I. At first the varieties of religion seemed too diverse for classification, but we learned that common patterns underlie the differences. So it has been with morals. A distinguished writer in this field refers to the bewildering variety of customs which at first confront the historical student, but the study "ends rather by impressing him with a more fundamental and far-reaching uniformity." "Through the greatest extent of time and space over which we have records, we find a recurrence of the common features of ordinary morality, which, to my mind at least, is not less impressive than the variations which also appear."[3]

The foregoing quotation, based on a wide acquaintance with the actual findings, shows us that the course of morals has not been one either of absolute change or of absolute permanence. Change

[3] L. T. Hobhouse, *Morals in Evolution* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1915), Vol. I, Chap. I, p. 31.

does seem at first to be the most constant feature of morals when we take a long look across the years. Yet, we do also find that there are certain moral features which repeat themselves over and over again, indicating some aspects of human nature which remain more or less constant. Virtues like courage, sincerity, and kindliness within the group life are regularly found. We can easily see how both relative permanence and change work together in moral evolution in the following way.

We know that man is a moral being, that is, he judges some actions to be valuable or good, and others to be bad or evil. This is just a bare statement of fact and applies to primitive man as well as to ourselves. As we examine the life of early man and his judgments of what is good and what is not good, we make an interesting discovery. Whatever makes for the preservation and survival of the group life of which he is a part is judged to be good or valuable. This is the basic assumption which lies behind all moral judgments. To live life and live it fully and successfully, as we understand it, we declare to be good. We do not prove it, we act upon it. Primitive man assumed, without conscious reflection, that whatever prospered the group was good. This is still the permanent element in morals. But change comes in as follows: Men differ as to what it is that will preserve or prosper the group. We make mistakes of judgment about some particular act as to its consequences in the same way that we make mistakes about what is physically good or bad for us. For example, it used to be said that it was "bad" for a girl to ride a bicycle because it somehow incapacitated her for childbearing. Now if that really were the case, it would be "bad" for girls to ride bicycles because we would be harming the group life. Remember, the well-being of the group life is the primary judgment of the good. We now know that the assertion about the bicycles was not based on fact at all, so we no longer say it is "bad" for girls to ride.

As in health, so in morals we determine the "goodness" or "badness" of an act on the consequences to human well-being, though in some quarters moral decisions are often based on theological presuppositions. For example, the Roman Catholic Church and some orthodox Protestants declare that birth control is a "bad"

thing. It is held to be "intrinsically evil" because, so it is asserted, it is "unnatural." Any interference with conception is held to be sin. The presupposition is that sexual union has one and only one divine function, namely, procreation. Other evils are alleged to follow contraception; that it causes people to evade responsibility for having large families; that it removes sex restraint which is good for moral discipline. But the primary ground of opposition is theological. Over against this view, there are large numbers of very high-minded people who do not accept the theological premises and deny that the actual facts support the argument. They contend that the presupposition about the sole purpose of sex union is open to criticism; that the sexual act is a normal or natural phase of marriage even in the absence of conception; and that such normal relations contribute more to the physical and psychological health and therefore morals of men and women than the artificial restraints imposed by a dogmatic morality. Obviously this is not the place to go into a full discussion of the whole case, but we have made reference to birth control because it is a current issue of modern morality. We see how it is possible to take sides on moral questions when the consequences to human welfare are the final test. Morality which has freed itself from ecclesiastical dictation insists that this problem and all other problems of human conduct must be decided finally on whether or not they make for or detract from the welfare of the group. That is the permanent point of reference.

Obviously, the theory of evolution has influenced men to study morals as a natural phenomenon regardless of existing religious-moral patterns. The theory of evolution has encouraged men to approach morals naturalistically, and if that study suggests divergence with accepted moral customs or religious ideas, then the modern tendency is to move in the direction of the new insight and away from the older practice.

Evolution has influenced morals by loosening the hold of ecclesiastical authority on morals. That is, the evolutionary idea applied to the development of morals has caused men to question the finality or absolute permanence of moral requirements laid down by churches of whatever denomination. The sanction of a church or any other body is not sufficient to establish permanently any code

of moral doctrine. Moral teaching must stand before the court of critical analysis in terms of consequences for human welfare. In that court many long-established moral ideas will no doubt stand unshakeable, but their unshakeability must rest finally, not on ecclesiastical authority, but on their intrinsic worth in human relations.

This approach sets the moral needs of mankind in judgment even on religion. Religion may be an aid to morals or it may be a hindrance. Thus the great Hebrew prophets condemned with stern moral judgments the organized ecclesiastical religion of their times because it was blind to the needs of men. Organized religion, they felt, was a hindrance and not an aid to man's welfare. They wanted to transform religion into a moral instrument. In like manner, we cannot forget that Jesus was engaged in the same task.

Finally, in regard to ethics, we have been able to discern that evolutionary theory has influenced moral philosophy in the direction of flexibility. No moral patterns are absolutely fixed, yet neither do we have an absolute relativity. We move forward in social and moral evolution with a relative stability. There is both change and stability in a moving equilibrium. We have sufficient stability for the practical needs of organized social living in communities and nations. Yet all the while we have an open end, so that we may move from present goods to better goods that lie ahead. There is imbedded in this approach the idea of progress as a possibility for mankind.

## Influence of Evolution on Religion

We are well aware by this time that the recurring issue raised by evolution all along the line concerns permanence and change. It is not less so when the influence on religion is considered. If we approach the effect of evolution on religion from the point of view of the problem of permanence and change, we can appreciate the larger significance of that effect, instead of giving much space to the more immediate alarm which the theory occasioned. That is the reason why, in this chapter, it is better to consider the religious effect after the philosophic. We already know how evolutionary theory has modified our earlier assurance of possessing permanent formulations in regard to philosophic systems, the nature of knowl-

edge, and the general character of ethics. Religious formulations are not exempt either, and they likewise have required modification and restatement. Some suggestions toward restatement will appear in the last chapter, but here we will show some far-reaching changes brought about by the evolutionary theory which have made and are making it necessary to reconstruct older theological patterns.

In order to understand how great an effect evolutionary theory had in the religious field, it is well to have some awareness of the state of mind of a well-educated religious man in 1859. In a volume of essays[4] on evolution, one contributor, a clergyman of the Church of England, writes,

> I was already the science master at Rugby School in November, 1859, when Darwin's *Origin of Species* was first published, and have therefore, experienced the first difficulty in assimilating the implications of its teaching which a younger generation has escaped . . .

This contributor states also that he and a number of his contemporaries had already come to believe, prior to Darwin, that an evolutionary process had taken place, that this world not only *is*, but had *become* what it is by some process of change.

> We were, as I have said, evolutionists at heart. We had begun to realize the immense extent of the Sidereal Universe. It was incomparably more to us than it was to the writer of the first chapter of Genesis, who added incidentally that God "made the stars also." Lyell and others had also familiarized us with the age of the earth, its slow and gradual formation, and the long succession of forms of life on it. We were becoming reconciled even to the thought of pre-Adamite man, and an undefined but possibly very great antiquity of man. And the effect of such extension of time as well as of space was, with the generation brought up as I had been, finally to dissolve the traditional theology we had inherited of Creation and the Creator, and we could form no conception to replace them. But simultaneously the fact that there should be this amazing Cosmos, and not only that, but also beings like ourselves, to whom the details and processes were at least partly intelligible, convinced us more than ever that there was some Purpose and Mind, in some way akin to us, who had created and was creating all things, but whose nature and method

[4] *Evolution in the Light of Modern Knowledge*—A Symposium by a Group of British Scientists, Philosophers and Clergymen (London: Blackie & Son, 1925), 477 ff.

were hopelessly beyond our power to understand. Upon us, when in this state of mind, burst Darwin's *Origin of Species*.[5]

The writer of the above passage goes on to describe how he read and reread Darwin and became convinced that the idea of evolution was not only confirmed as a reality, but that the process of evolution was explained with partial accuracy at least. This left him with the recognition that he could see no direct action of God in this process, and a state of religious perplexity followed.

I did without the thought of God for a time, and strange to say, I did not think my life deteriorated in any way, nor did I miss it much. I hoped, though scarcely expected, that the eclipse was only for a time, and retained all the old habits of religion, even prayer in the darkness.

Then followed a period of further reflection. Perhaps our idea of God is immature, and we should enlarge our conception.

The primitive conception of God as a Being, with faculties resembling but surpassing human faculties, was, it appeared to me, inevitable as the "first thought," when man's spiritual and speculative powers first developed, because man was the chief and highest visible agent possessing creative faculties. Hence anthropomorphism and mythologies were the inevitable mould in which primitive theology was formed; they provided the framework and symbols and language of early theology. These mythologies and symbols and words, when venerable and established by age, became hardened into solid facts, and were regarded as supernatural revelations; as facts from which equally solid inferences could be drawn. To use another metaphor, I came to regard our orthodox theology as a superstructure logically built up in the past on what were thought to be known facts, but were really metaphors, analogies, symbols, men's "first thoughts." These were naturally expressed in forms drawn from material nature, and had thus got far away from the spiritual facts, unexpressed and often inexpressible in words, which had been and are the real and permanent suggestion and ground for belief in God. I began to think that a time was at hand when men's first thoughts of God, however logically worked out into a system, would share the fate of first thoughts in every other science, and be superseded by "second thoughts" of a wholly different nature.[6]

How well the above passages indicate a condition of intellectual

[5] *Ibid.*, p. 488.
[6] *Ibid.*, p. 490.

and emotional upheaval taking place! It gives us some idea of what was going on in the minds of many men and women. They were suffering under the impact of these new ideas, and they were endeavoring to adjust themselves to a new conception of the creative process, and a new conception of the Creator. One more passage will suffice to show how the mind could courageously move forward.

Think of the orthodoxy of creation a century ago. There is in the Worcester Cathedral Library, among our early printed books, a copy of the Nuremberg Chronicle, a History of the world from the creation downwards. The primaeval void is represented by concentric blank circles, with a Hand stretched over them. In the next page the Creator is shown as an old man modelling Adam out of clay, with animals standing round. Adam is finished down to his waist, and alive; the rest of his body is a formless lump of clay. I show this book sometimes to visitors, as Boswell tells us it was shown to Dr. Johnson, and they smile. But let us remember that this represented both the orthodoxy of the whole Church and the science of naturalists until the lifetime of some of us. Can we in the same breath admit that the orthodoxy of seventy or eighty years ago was temporary and mistaken on so great a matter, and still hold that the orthodoxy of today is final and correct? The retrospect of the past in which I am indulging is valuable if it forces this question on us, and demands an answer. *The orthodoxy of the past was based on the science of the past; and if the science alters and expands, so also must the orthodoxy.*[7]

There is a degree of dramatic effect and impressiveness which strikes us in reading autobiographical passages from one who felt at first hand the impact of evolution on religious thinking. How well there is brought out the advisability of accepting the fact of change as a permanent feature of our environment, paradoxical as that sounds. We should not regard change as an enemy to our best interests, but as a friend, though we may be startled by the form in which it first appears.

Accepting the fact of change is perhaps the hardest thing for organized religion to do. Why? Because in the case of long-established ecclesiastical organizations especially, there is usually some theory of revelation to support their orthodoxy. Revelation is always in essence a claim that divine truth has been directly re-

[7] *Ibid.*, p. 486.

vealed in some way, and is in the possession of the organization. All major religions have such "revelations," and all believers are expected to accept them on authority. Organized religion, being primarily conservative, "freezes" these revelations into theological forms and religious practices. This body of accepted belief constitutes orthodoxy. The forms are presumed to be a permanent aspect of Truth. Change, however, will not be denied. Prophets appear and introduce changes. They may be stoned for their efforts, but in due time, if their ideas commend themselves to more and more people, the radical ideas are regarded as revelations, and in turn become the new forms of accepted religious thought. Every student of religion knows that there is a prophetic element and a priestly element in religion which may at any time get out of balance. The prophetic tendency gives rise to new insights or revelations and seeks to bring about changes in the established order. The established or priestly order is conservative and resists change. The whole story of the Hebrew prophets versus priestly ecclesiastical organization is a perfect historical example of this process. The Protestant Reformation is another equally good illustration of the same thing.

The knowledge of this fact of the process of evolution in religion is an important effect of evolutionary theory on religion. It was the research generated by evolutionary theory which confirmed the idea. The material on primitive religion at the beginning of this volume is itself the result of reflection and research dominated by the concept of evolution.

What now are some of the further effects of the idea of change as applied to specific features of the Christian tradition? We select for consideration the changed conception of the Bible, the idea of God, the nature of man, and the new approach to the study of non-Christian religions.

Some time ago the writer of this chapter had a clergyman in his class on Problems of Philosophy. Data concerning the theory of evolution were discussed, and the young man said he did not want to accept the theory. He almost believed it but he was fighting it off because, as he said, "If I accept it, I shall have to change my idea of the Bible, my idea of creation and the Fall, and even my idea of Christ's atoning work for man's salvation. I simply cannot

do it." The instructor tried to assure him that even if modifications of his views were necessary, other men had made the same adjustments and were thankful for the enlargement of view which had come. Here was a modern student brought up in a religious environment which had not been affected by evolutionary theory, and he was in himself experiencing over again what innumerable men and women have experienced since 1859.

*The Bible.*—In regard to the Bible, we need to bring back to our minds the fact that the Protestant Reformers set aside the authority of the Roman Church and substituted the authority of the Bible. The Bible was understood to be the account of God's revelation to man. It was written by men in the glow of divine inspiration. It contained infallible Truth and was an infallible guide.

In the year 1860, just one year after Darwin's *Origin of Species*, there was published in England a book entitled, *Essays and Reviews*. This volume of essays set forth some of the results already obtained by the new science of historical criticism as applied to the Bible. The research had been going on for years, but the reading of this book was the first awareness that many clergymen and laymen received regarding the results of historical analysis of the Scriptures. Coming as it did, so soon after Darwin's theory, it dealt a hard blow to religious thinking, for it tended to confirm evolutionary theory as applied to the development of religious ideas. What is historical analysis? It is a process of careful study which makes evident the fact that the Bible is a collection of books written at different times and places by many authors. It shows the Bible to be composed of many types of literature, history, poetry, short story, drama, proverbs, and prophecy. The Bible is, among other things, a record of enlarging insights about God and his relation to men, but it must be studied in the light of the contemporary conditions, and it should be subjected to critical analysis as much as any other ancient document. Historical analysis and its related field of archaeology have made possible the vast knowledge available today of the Hebrew past. Without this knowledge to draw upon, we could not have written even the brief history of the Hebrew development of religion which the present volume con-

tains. The material on the composition of the Gospels at the end of Chapter V was given as an illustration of the historical method.

When once we appreciate the value of this work, it seems strange that such honest and sincere scholarship should have been subject to the bitter attack which was made upon it. The explanation is, of course, that the new conception of the Bible was upsetting, and that it left men without that ground of authority which the Bible had been. Or to change the figure, it seemed necessary to oppose those who were cutting the anchor which held orthodoxy firmly in place. This struggle lasted many years. It is more noticeable in Protestant history than in the Roman Church, but the Roman Church has been just as opposed to historical analysis as has orthodox Protestantism.[8] Fortunately, the loosely knit organization or lack of central authority in Protestantism made it impossible for a hierarchy entirely to stifle the new studies. At the present time Protestantism is, on the surface, divided along denominational lines. The actual situation is, however, that one major line of cleavage cuts across sectarian divisions. The liberals of all the denominations tend toward one side of the line, and the fundamentalists (those who have not accepted fully the results of historical criticism and its effect on traditional Christian doctrine) toward the other side.

The overwhelming testimony of those who understand this modern view is that it has saved the Bible for them.[9] The liberal student reveres the Scriptures because he can appreciate their real value, but this is not a blind reverence which conceals the actual significance of the Bible. The older view is beset by many difficulties and is out of line with so much of the accredited knowledge of our day that one can adhere to it only by shutting one's eyes to the difficulties or by ingenious apologetics. It is perhaps only a matter of time before the older view will give way entirely before the changed view of the Bible.

[8] See Alfred Loisy, *My Duel with the Vatican* (New York: Dutton, 1924) for an account of a very distinguished Roman Catholic scholar, who was finally excommunicated because of his research and publications in historical criticism.

[9] Harry Emerson Fosdick, *The Modern Use of the Bible* (New York: Macmillan, 1924).

*Idea of God and Man.*—We may refer briefly to the remaining effects of evolutionary theory on traditional Christian thought. We do not yet know the total effect of the changed outlook on the idea of God and man. Ideas about God have had a long history and development. It has been one of the important tasks of the present volume to convey that fact. We have now entered a period of reconsideration of the idea of God. We have to adapt our idea to our present knowledge about the universe. The theory of evolution required theologians to modify their conception of God. Early antagonism to evolution soon gave way to ready acceptance by the more progressive minds. They began to think of evolution as the method of creation. Here was a process so much more subtle and wonderful than the naïve view of creation which had hitherto been accepted. How much greater, then, must be the Creator! How much greater the intelligence which could generate such vast unfolding! The old argument from special design which evolution had destroyed was replaced by a newer teleological argument. One could still argue that God has a purpose which is working itself out, and that evolution is the method by which God achieves his purpose. Those who were able to make these modifications in their belief about God became quite happy about it. They became optimistic about the future. Here was a divine purpose moving toward ever higher levels. God had created man by an evolutionary process, and man himself had been undergoing moral, religious, and social evolution. The new religious attitude was that men should work along with this evolution, and thus become co-workers with God. The fact of the matter is that evolutionary theory not only modified the conception of God, but it gave to many men a new religious enthusiasm.

We are not at the moment evaluating this optimism, but we can readily see that this modernization of religious belief would affect the traditional doctrine about man and his salvation. To be sure, orthodoxy, Protestant and Catholic, has not admitted any change in this respect, but for those who allowed the influence to run its course, thinking proceeded somewhat as follows: Man has come up out of a tremendously long organic past. Somewhere along that line the human species appeared. Since then man has lived

and learned through pain and pleasure, joy and sorrow. There was no original garden in which he was quite perfect, and then by disobedience fell. In the evolutionary view, man is not totally depraved. He is a mixture of many elements and impulses. He needs to develop discipline and to follow ideals. His waywardness is regarded with greater sympathy and tolerance, while behavior harmful to himself or to his fellows is not condoned. The work of Christ is to provide precept and example, inspiring reverence and imitation. Thus Christ still meets man's need for salvation from all that is lower to all that is higher. Man can thank God for his greatest gift, the life and person of Jesus Christ, without regard for the elaborate theological constructions which Christian tradition has erected.

Furthermore, the modernist then lays stress on the humanitarian side of Jesus' life and tends to express religious sincerity and devotion in terms of social good will and practice. He aligns himself with all those forces which promote the educational, moral, and economic well-being of man. The Church becomes for him a fellowship of all those committed to the liberalized point of view here indicated.

*Attitude Toward Non-Christian Religions.*—Finally, in regard to religious effects of the theory of evolution, we refer to the changed attitude toward non-Christian religions. Protestantism enthusiastically engaged in missionary activity during the early part of the nineteenth century. In the New Testament is the saying, "Go and make disciples of all nations, baptize them in the name of the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Spirit" (Matt. 28:19). This commission was believed to have come directly from Jesus and therefore was understood to be authoritative. There came to be a feeling of responsibility for the salvation of the "heathen." In that day those who were not Christians were "heathen," and the effort had to be made to save them. This meant that they must receive and accept the Christian message. The Protestant missionary movement got under way in all parts of the world. All the major religious denominations, and many of the small ones, sent out missionaries. The Roman Catholic Church also took on fresh missionary motivation. The assumption behind all Christian effort was that the Christian representatives had all the light and

truth, while the "heathen" were in more or less total spiritual darkness.

Long experience showed the fallacy of that assumption. In many parts of the world, non-Christians had excellent moral virtues and cultural attainments. Often the missionary was unable to reach the intellectual level of the more cultured oriental minds. Better-trained missionaries were called for. It was discovered that Christianity was better served by doing services than by preaching. More and more the missionary movement lessened the emphasis on Christian doctrinal teaching, and stressed humanitarian services—medical aid, agriculture, and the education of children and young people. The word "heathen" dropped out of use as we gained a more genuinely Christian respect for peoples of other faiths.

Long before evolutionary theory had extended its influence, the better-educated missionaries were well aware of much that was valuable in the non-Christian religions. When evolutionary theory had become widespread, all religions came to be looked upon as evolutionary products, themselves having developed from primitive beginnings. The religions of the world are "forms" or "species" that have come to be what they are independent often of the origin of other "forms" as regards time and place. They represent man's religious adjustment to the environment. We do not regard them either as necessarily or as absolutely false. We do evaluate them in terms of ethical standards which we believe are enlightened, but we do this also with Christian teachings. We judge them also in the light of verifiable knowledge, and in many respects we may judge them very favorably. The modern student of comparative religions, as a result of the evolutionary concept, does not judge these religions from the standpoint of the "absolute truth" of his own religion, as was formerly done. He does not assume the perfection of his own revelation, thus prejudging other religions as inferior. He considers each religion in the light of its historical antecedents, its evolution and present ideas, and weighs the relative merits of these in terms of the ethical consequences on the adherents. With this approach it is possible that Christians and non-Christians may learn from each other.

## Conclusion

The theory of evolution is still making its influence felt. It is the most revolutionary concept of the modern age. From the biological achievement of Darwin, the idea spread in ever widening circles until there is no field of human interest unaffected by it. We have sketched its effect on philosophy and religion. That has been tremendous. The old problem of permanence and change ran like a thread throughout. In philosophy it turned attention from elaborate system-building to new definitions of truth and knowledge, and provided new approaches to ethics. In religion it makes untenable absolute fixity of belief, modifies the idea of God, the nature of man, and creates a new attitude toward non-Christian religions.

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## CHAPTER XX

# *THE INFLUENCE OF TWENTIETH-CENTURY SCIENCE ON PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION*

The influence of biological science in the form of evolutionary theory continued into the twentieth century, as we have just seen. The twentieth century, however, has already produced important contributions from other sciences which have made, and are making, further profound changes in our philosophical and religious outlook. The sciences which are particularly pertinent in this respect are physics and psychology.

### The Influence of Modern Physics

Twentieth-century science has nowhere been more radical in its reconstruction than in the field of physics. Ideas which were accepted with calm certainty less than half a century ago have been called into question, and the world view which was based upon these earlier ideas no longer seems adequate.

Throughout this survey we have seen how first one and then another science has influenced religious and philosophical speculation. With Plato, mathematics was the dominant science, and Platonic philosophy bore eloquent testimony to its influence. With Aristotle, biology provided the fundamental concepts for understanding nature. During the Middle Ages, and culminating in the Scholastic movement, theological considerations were of paramount importance, and philosophy was preoccupied with religious problems. This attitude gave way very slowly to the world view which was dictated by the development of modern science, and which issued in a naturalistic philosophy based upon Newtonian physics. Now new notions have arisen in physics which seem destined to play a major role in forging future philosophies. Before examining some of these new concepts, let us refresh our minds on

the characteristic philosophical outlook which had arisen under the stimulus of the older physics.

Newton, and those who came after, had come to think of nature as a gigantic machine, run according to certain immutable laws, such as the law of universal gravitation which Newton had discovered. The fundamental concepts with which men sought to understand their world were mass, space, and time. Masses moving through absolute space, in an absolute time, were thought to be reality *par excellence*. All else was merely phenomenal, to be ultimately explained in terms of the redistribution of mass particles. Man was a spectator whose job it was to discover the laws according to which matter redistributed itself. Because physics had made remarkable strides and seemed such a thoroughly complete science, although it operated with very few fundamental concepts, it became the model of what science ought to be. Men dreamed of the time when all sciences might conceivably be nothing more than branches of physics. Some hoped that biology, chemistry, and even psychology would be reconstructed along purely mechanical lines. The doctrine of organic evolution seemed to suggest that mechanical laws operated no less in the realm of biology than in physics, and behaviorism came as a belated expression of the quest for purely physical and mechanical explanations in psychology.

All of these scientific tendencies affected philosophy and provided the framework for a modern materialism not unlike the view which was held by Democritus in the classical period of the Greeks. The modern materialism seemed far more convincing than the older variety, primarily because it had the backing of modern scientific notions. Certain materialistic tenets seemed indubitable. Three of these deserve especial attention.

In the first place, only material things were real, and by matter was meant a fundamentally inert, space-occupying substance. In the second place, everything happened according to strict necessity: "The first Morning of Creation wrote what the Last Dawn of Reckoning shall read." If a man only knew enough of physics he might predict every item of behavior in the universe. In the third place, matter moved in absolute space and time.

For every one of these notions philosophy could find good scien-

tific support, and the chief criticism of materialism came from non-scientific sources. There were those who wished that it were not true because it ran counter to a spiritual interpretation of things; and because they wished it to be untrue they believed it to be so. There were others who were quite willing to concede that nineteenth-century physics was perfectly correct so far as it went, but who believed that it was improper to expand its findings into a complete metaphysics. To such people it did not follow that because the world could be described in terms of physical laws, it could not be described in any other terms. Science might be correct and still incomplete. The materialist philosophers themselves probably looked on both these types of criticism as being essentially the same. Both groups were considered merely wishful thinkers who were unwilling to follow the best knowledge available. Then something happened. Nearly all the basic assumptions of nineteenth-century materialism were called into question by the physicists themselves. Criticism from this quarter could hardly be neglected. Let us examine each of the three main dogmas which we said were characteristic of that natural philosophy which drew its inspiration from Newtonian physics, and see what has happened to them in the light of recent research. The first of these had to do with the notion of matter.

*Revision of the Concept of Matter.*—Prior to the middle of the nineteenth century an atom was supposed to be a "particle of matter," a sort of tiny billiard ball, of irreducible size and permanent structure. The reality of our outer world consisted solely of these particles with simple forces acting between them, and depending only on the distances involved. Then it came to be realized that the particle was surrounded by a field which was something more than a mere void. In electromagnetics the old mechanical view proved inadequate and men were made to realize that "not the behavior of bodies but the behavior of something between them, that is, the field, may be essential for ordering and understanding events."[1] Soon the "billiard ball" theory had to be abandoned altogether. Atoms were found to be divisible into much smaller units

[1] A. Einstein and L. Infeld, *The Evolution of Physics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1938), p. 312.

—protons and electrons, which are positive and negative charges of electricity. Additional divisions of the atoms have been suggested. Such points of force are very different from the old-style, inert atom.

Different men have drawn up various models of what an atom may be like. Some of these have pictured it as a sort of miniature solar system, having a nucleus around which electrons, like planets, revolve. So great is the distance between the electrons and the nucleus in relation to their size that a solar system is not a bad analogy. But styles have changed rapidly in modern physics, and a number of newer models are available. All agree, however, in breaking with traditional conceptions. The break consists chiefly in the discovery that "substance" must be reinterpreted in terms of electrical impulses, and that it is not the charge of the particles, but the field in the space between them, which is essential in describing physical phenomena. However, these fundamental changes involved still further ones which we must examine briefly.

The behavior of electrons does not seem to fit the time-honored concept of determinism in the way nineteenth-century physics had come to think of it. Thus the second one of the dogmas to which we made reference has been called into question. Inability to measure accurately the position and velocity of an electron at the same time led one contemporary physicist, Heisenberg, to announce his celebrated *principle of uncertainty*. Microscopic particles, he seems to say, have broken the stranglehold of fate, and even if we knew their habits on the "Morning of Creation" we should still be unable to reckon up their behavior at the "Last Dawn." Their behavior cannot be described in terms of necessary laws, but only in terms of probability. Perhaps the meaning of this can be made clear by use of a commonplace analogy.

An insurance company predicts with great accuracy the number of people per thousand, of any given classification, who will die within a given period of time. It cannot tell which individuals in the group will die and which will not, but by dealing in large numbers it can provide a statistical treatment which describes the behavior of the whole group. The behavior of the individuals eludes exact prediction. In like manner, the physicist can deal with electrons

only in a statistical fashion. He can know for certain how a group of them will behave, but he can predict their individual behavior only within the limits of such probability as can be inferred from the group. This involves quite a breach with traditional notions and has removed contemporary physics still further from the mechanistic model of the last century. This new development is an aspect of quantum physics, so called because it deals with electricity and light as constituted of discrete particles, or quanta, rather than as thoroughly continuous things which might be infinitely divisible. Research in the subatomic field is still in its infancy, but it is significant that already it has found the old categories inadequate.

*Einstein's Theory of Relativity.*—To add insult to the injury inflicted upon Newtonian physics, Einstein has indicated that space and time must not be thought of as absolute and separate things. The older notion has given way to the idea that space and time, when taken individually, are, for all purposes of science, relative to the point of reference from which they are measured. Perhaps the meaning of this can be made clear if we first try experimentally to determine the meaning of simultaneity. We are all conscious of the fact that some things happen at the same time, or simultaneously. Moreover, intuition tells us that there is a meaning to absolute simultaneity, or, that while I am writing this sentence there are things going on in various other parts of the universe of which all observers might say: "All of these things are happening at the same time." While this seems indubitable to intuition and common sense, yet it happens that if we set up experiments to determine which things are exactly simultaneous, we shall discover that different observers will disagree about the simultaneity of some spatially separated events. What will appear simultaneous to observers moving at a certain velocity relative to the event will not appear so to others moving at a different velocity. As d'Abro has put it: "There is no meaning in speaking of the same instant of time in different places until we have objectivized time, as it were, by specifying our frame of reference."[2] Since science operates with measured times and distances, rather than with intuited ones, it

[2] A. d'Abro, *The Evolution of Scientific Thought* (New York: Boni & Liveright, 1927), p. 171.

follows that the relativity of time is a cardinal principle of the new physics. In just a moment we shall try to clarify further the meaning involved in this principle by recourse to a commonplace example.

Before doing so it is necessary to have in mind two modern principles of science, both of which rest on good experimental evidence, and which taken together really imply the special principle of relativity which we want to illustrate. In their popularly written book, *The Evolution of Physics*, Einstein and Infeld have stated these principles as follows:[3]

1. The velocity of light in empty space always has its standard value, independent of the motion of the source or receiver of light.
2. In two coordinate systems moving uniformly, relative to each other, all laws of nature are exactly identical and there is no way of distinguishing absolute uniform motion.

Just a word in explanation of each of these and we will be ready for our illustration. Principle number one means merely that anyone wishing to determine the velocity of light will find it to be approximately 186,000 miles per second, regardless of whether that person, or the source of the light, is moving or at rest (in case there were any meaning to being "at rest"). Principle number two means that two bodies which are moving relative to each other (as, for example, a train moves relative to the station which it passes) are equally good points from which to describe the goings-on of nature, and that a description which holds for one of these places will be valid for the other—provided their relative motions are uniform, i.e., provided that neither body is undergoing an accelerated motion. Now in the light of these two principles we might perform the following experiment.

Imagine two towns five miles apart. Imagine that you want to determine whether or not two things happened at the "same time" in these two places. You might station an observer (let's call him A) halfway between the two points and have him equipped either with eyes in the back of his head or with a set of mirrors. Next you might arrange to have two cannon discharged, one in each town. If our

[3] A. Einstein and L. Infeld, *The Evolution of Physics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1938), p. 185.

observer sees the flashes from each at the same instant he will declare the events to have happened simultaneously. That is to say, he knows that the light has traveled with equal velocity in both directions, and that consequently if the flashes meet him simultaneously they must have been emitted at the same time.

Now, let us imagine a railroad connecting these two towns. Further, let us imagine that a second observer (let's call him B) is riding on a train and has come to the point along the track where the first observer stood to make his observations. He gets there just at the time that observer A has declared the two cannon were fired, but since he is traveling toward one of the light flashes, and away from the other, and since light travels with a finite velocity, his judgment about simultaneity will differ slightly from that of observer A. Trusting his own observations, B will declare that the events were not simultaneous—one occurring a fraction of a second before the other.

No doubt you feel like saying that B should correct his observations to fit A's description, since A wasn't so foolish as to move while making his calculations. Unfortunately, in a universe where light travels with an absolute velocity (and we have already discovered that there is good experimental evidence for believing that this is such a universe) there is no reason for preferring A's measuring system to that of B. The reason for this is obvious: since A and B (who is moving uniformly in relation to A) both get the same measured velocity for light, either one has a right to consider his frame of reference as the "proper" one, for there is no possible way to distinguish which, if either, body is at rest relative to the other.

There remains one further question which will probably spring to mind. If light is such a strangely behaving phenomenon as to maintain a constant velocity, regardless of the speed with which it is approached, why use it for determining the meaning of simultaneity? If I travel sixty miles an hour in an automobile and pass (around) another going at the rate of forty miles an hour, my speed relative to the second automobile is twenty miles an hour, for I must subtract his speed from mine to find our relative velocities. Why not subtract velocities in the case of light rays? The only

answer to this is that it doesn't work! Experimentally, the *absolute* velocity of light has been amply verified. Why not use some other criterion than light for determining simultaneity? The answer to this is exactly the same. Intuitionally one can get a different meaning to simultaneity of spatially separated events, but practically such a meaning is less useful than the definition which is experimentally arrived at. To put this abstractly, the relativity of simultaneity is a principle which is pragmatically justified, which is merely another way of saying that it is a concept that works well. By assuming that simultaneity has an experimental meaning only in reference to some particularized frame of reference, physicists are able to dispense with a large number of other notions which are indispensable under Newtonian assumptions. This is a way of saying that relativistic explanations are simpler (scientists would call it "more parsimonious") than non-relativistic ones.

The implications of the relativity of simultaneity go far beyond the mere fact that "same-timeness" has a different meaning for people in different reference frames. If light has an absolute velocity for all observers, that must mean that if there were an observer who could move with a velocity approaching that of light, he and all his measuring apparatus would shrink in the direction of his motion. This can be inferred from the principle of the absolute velocity of light. If an observer traveling with the approximate speed of light gets the same results for the speed of a light ray approaching him as one who is not moving at all in reference to the first observer, surely the former must be using measuring devices which have shrunk in relation to those employed by the latter. This notion has the merit not only of making the absolute velocity meaningful; it has proved highly successful in making physical predictions. The upshot of all this is that the old laws of mechanics are invalid when applied to velocities approaching that of light, although for more mundane matters they are still applicable. This means that the relativity theory can do all that classical theory could do, and more, for it encompasses all the features of the classical theory as a limiting instance of its own principles. It does all this with fewer basic assumptions (although the ones it does make seem more "radical"), and is therefore prefer-

able for its theoretical symmetry as well as for its practical efficacy. If continued experimentation should force physicists to abandon the principle of the absolute velocity of light physics would, of course, be headed for a post-Einsteinian revolution, but until then the relativity principle will continue to be justified by its fruits.

What we have discussed so far under the head of relativity is what is known as the special theory of relativity, since it is applicable only to inertial frames of reference, that is, to systems in which the law of inertia, as formulated by Newton, is valid. A further consequence of the special theory is that mass is found to be energy, and energy is found to have mass. Hence the old laws of the conservation of mass and the conservation of energy are transformed into one law of the conservation of mass-energy. This constitutes a further step in simplification which must be credited to the theory.

Further generalization of the principles implied in the special theory of relativity led Einstein to the formulation of what is called the general theory. This theory deals with problems of gravitation and has led to the formulation of new structure laws for a gravitational field. As with the special theory, the general one entails some spectacular readjustments of some familiar notions. Among the consequences of the new theory is the idea that non-Euclidean geometries work better than Euclidean ones in dealing with the problems of cosmic space. This means that space must be interpreted as being curved. Moreover, it has become more evident than ever that space and time as absolute and separable entities must be discarded. In their stead there has arisen the notion of a four-dimensional space-time continuum, having non-Euclidean properties. In his *History of Science,* Dampier-Whetham has summarized this as follows:

> Physical space and time, considered individually, are relative quantities depending on the position of the observers. The space of which we are accustomed to think has three dimensions—length, breadth and thickness, and . . . we must look on time as a fourth dimension in this combination of space and time, one second corresponding to the 186,000 miles which light travels in that time. Just as the distance between two points in the continuous space of Euclidean geometry is the same however measured, so in the new continuum of space-time,

two events may be said to be separated by an interval, involving both space and time, which has a true value whoever measures it.[4]

In other words, events in nature must be described in terms of combined spatial and temporal dimensions, such dimensions being interpreted as internally rather than merely externally related. The old notion of a particular body moving through an absolute space in an absolute time has been supplanted by a view which finds that the whole field, rather than abstract elements within the field, is the proper object of physical study. The concept of space-time gives us a more objective picture of reality than the dualistic space *and* time of the older view. Hence in one sense the theory of relativity may be termed a quest for the Absolute. Paradoxical as it sounds, relativity is an instrument for introducing us to the non-relative aspects of nature. The third dogma of traditional theory has been uprooted as thoroughly as the first two which we have discussed.[5]

In the light of all the changes which we have mentioned as having taken place in modern physics, what is left of the scientific foundation on which nineteenth-century materialism was based? The obvious answer is that scarcely anything is left by way of support from physics. What are the implications of the new views which have supplanted the older ones? It is far too early to risk very positive opinions on such a subject, but several things seem fairly evident.

In the first place, dogmatic materialism is no longer in style. The universe has proved itself to be complex beyond the wildest imagination of the nineteenth-century philosophers. If a new "materialism" is to arise it must certainly be vastly different from its philosophic forerunner. The new analysis of matter has led some of the more speculative minds of the present century to shift clear over to a "mentalistic" conception of things. Because materialism in the old sense has been found inadequate, the highly speculative conclusion has once more been drawn that the ultimate explanation of things must be in terms of mental categories. Recent research

[4] W. C. Dampier-Whetham, *A History of Science* (New York: Macmillan, 1930), p. 422.

[5] See p. 576 ff.

in mental telepathy and clairvoyance has lent apparent support to the notion that mind and matter are not so very different after all, and that a mentalistic interpretation of matter is as justified as the old materialistic interpretation of mind. Needless to say, such theories are far from being necessary interpretations of the facts of modern physics.

Heisenberg's principle of indeterminacy, or uncertainty, has been employed by a number of modern philosophers to support the doctrine of "freedom of the will" in man. Since that aspect of physics which provided the chief basis for a rigorous determinism in philosophy has been opened to question, the adherents of indeterminism have been provided with a new argument for their position. Another use has been made of the principle of indeterminacy by some contemporary pragmatists in philosophy. Professor John Dewey has used the idea to defend his position that knowledge is never a mere mental picture of reality, but is rather an end product which involves experimental rearrangement of antecedently existing things. Just as any conceivable experiment with electrons is destined to change their behavior by virtue of their interaction in the experiment itself, so all knowledge entails rearrangement of antecedent material which is employed in the process of getting knowledge. This provides the basis for a radical, "non-spectator" theory of knowledge which has been widely influential in contemporary philosophy.

Perhaps the most important feature of the new scientific outlook lies in its theory of method. Following Einstein's doctrine that really useful concepts are experimentally determined rather than intuited, modern philosophy has leaned heavily on what are called pragmatic, or operational, ways of thinking. This is a further application of the method of instrumentalism already referred to in the chapter on evolution.[6] If we want to know what a thing means we will go to experience and find out how it is used, rather than impose some a priori meaning upon it. Just as this method gave Einstein a new conception of space and time, so it may revolutionize ways of thinking in social problems, politics, and religion. Pragmatism stresses the importance of judging things by

[6] Chapter XIX, pp. 552-553.

their consequences. To illustrate this briefly let us see how it is made applicable in ethics. To determine the goodness of an act one must ask what its consequences are and whether or not they are instrumental to socially valued ends, instead of trying to measure the goodness of the deed in the light of some preestablished and absolute standard. What is called operationalism stresses the limitations of knowledge to particular processes of experimentation, and advocates a frank skepticism in regard to those areas of experience which are not amenable to experimental techniques. In general import pragmatism and operationalism are much the same. How fruitful this new philosophy of method can be will be indicated somewhat in the final chapter of this book and some of its limitations will be pointed out.

### Modern Psychologies and Their Effects

Whoever has read the preceding chapters of this survey of our intellectual and spiritual heritage knows that psychology has frequently been very influential upon the related topics of philosophy and religion. Consider some examples. Plato's psychological theory of the three faculties of the soul (reason, spirit, and appetite) governed his definition of virtue. Aristotle's doctrine of man and his good rested upon his psychological theory that reason is unique in man. The Neo-Platonists used their view of the human mind as a model for the conception of the universe, and Augustine explained the doctrine of the Trinity by psychological analogy. Modern psychology, beginning with Locke and Berkeley, has infected all our ideas with the suspicion of subjectivism. Influenced by the psychological analysis of our knowledge process and the usual conclusion, based on such analysis, that we know only our own ideas, many have been inclined to skepticism about the possibility of knowledge of anything beyond those ideas. This has led them toward agnosticism in both religion and philosophy. How can we be sure—if we know only our own ideas—that God is not merely an idea, and independent reality a fiction? The absolute idealists, indeed, have sought to cure the agnosticism derived from subjectivism by seeking to picture reality in mental terms; but this too is an instance of the influence of psychology, for we have actually found idealists

endowing the Absolute with the mental properties of feeling, reason, and will. Since it is abundantly clear from these examples that psychology does affect theology and metaphysics, it follows that different types of psychology will have somewhat different effects.

In recent times, religious and philosophic thought have been much exercised by certain new psychologies. We mention especially behaviorism, gestalt psychology, and the psychology of the unconscious. We shall give a very brief statement of the significance of the first two and a longer exposition of the psychology of the unconscious, because it promises to have the most far-reaching effect on our understanding of human nature, with which both philosophy and religion are concerned.

*Behaviorism.*—This type of psychology is connected with the name of John B. Watson, its chief exponent. As the name implies, behaviorism seeks to define psychology in terms of activity. From this standpoint the mind *is* what it *does*. Strictly speaking, behaviorism is merely a method for the study of the subject matter of psychology. Seeking to make psychology just as scientific as physics, behaviorists manifestly could not consider introspective material. Our private feelings and thoughts—the things that go on within consciousness—do not lend themselves to the public manipulation and control that exact science demands. So the behaviorists attempted to study only behavior and to write psychology entirely in terms of stimulus and response, without even using the term, "consciousness." But behaviorism became more than a method, since its exponents could not be satisfied merely with describing how living organisms behave; they also made a theory as to the causes, the why and the how, of behavior. Having ruled out all psychic causes as beyond the reach of scientific method, they were obliged to interpret mental activity in physical terms. Psychology thus became a branch of physiology, and ultimately of chemistry and physics! Thus, for the behaviorists, memory consists merely of habits, explained in terms of traces and tracks in the nervous system, much like the grooves on a phonograph record. Thinking, they describe as "incipient verbalization," i.e., the word-making behavior that does not get beyond twitches and contractions in the larynx. Behaviorists steadfastly refuse to speak of purposeful ideas;

what laymen ignorantly call planned activity they describe as behavior dominated by "prepotent stimuli," or by the discharge of energy along a "predisposed neural arrangement," or by a "series of dated anticipatory responses." But whatever the language employed in the desperate attempts to avoid the use of terms associated with consciousness, the central idea of theoretical behaviorism is that all mental activity can be explained ultimately in terms of chemistry and physics. For this psychology, all mental activity is at bottom the result of neural and cerebral mechanics; the mind is like an infinitely complicated automatic telephone switchboard.

The implications of behaviorism for religion and philosophy are fairly obvious. Explaining mind in terms of physical forces, it reverses the idealistic approach. The metaphysics of behaviorism is materialism. As far back as our study of Democritus, we learned the implications of atomic materialism for religious belief. Materialism requires no God in its theory; the ultimate reality consists of material stuff, not God. Likewise, there is no room for personal immortality; the mind or soul is itself a combination of physical elements. The soul will disintegrate when death brings physical dissolution to the body.

Behaviorism was the center of debate among intellectuals from 1915 to about 1930. But it has lost its influence. Two reasons for this decline suggest themselves. One is that the science of physics has itself undergone a revolution. The new physics, as we have seen, is no longer strictly mechanistic. Consequently, a behaviorism which climbed upon the bandwagon of mechanism as employed by classical physics is now in the unhappy position of finding this wagon outmoded and discarded. Another reason is that behaviorism left out too much important subject matter. Keenly bent upon making psychology "scientific," it was forced to ignore a great deal of mental material. Psychology did become more scientific under behavioristic auspices but it did so at the cost of irrelevance to many human problems that require knowledge of the mind for their solution.

*Gestalt Psychology.*—The "Gestalt Psychology," recently developed under the leadership of Professor Wolfgang Köhler, has also aroused much interest. The term *gestalt* is the German equiva-

lent for the English conception of form, structure, or organization —a concept which Köhler and his associates assign a central place in psychology. The emphasis upon *gestalt* and organization sets this psychology in flat opposition to behaviorism. Behaviorism assumes that all behavior of living organisms can be described in terms of stimulus and response, without reference to the perception of "wholes." This the gestalt psychologist denies. For example, the behaviorist's reference to a "female" as a "stimulus" for a male bird seems to miss entirely the problem of gestalt and organization. Köhler insists that the male bird does not react to a simple stimulus but to the whole *constellation* of stimuli which proceed from the female. The male reacts to a gestalt, not to a mere unorganized aggregate of stimuli. He reacts to the stimuli *as organized.* Another experiment cited by gestalt psychologists consists of training a chick to eat from the darker of a pair of gray dishes, A and B; when the darker one, B, becomes one of another pair, B and C, in which C is still darker, the chick will turn to C. The chick reacts *not* to the specific color, but to the *relation* between colors, i.e., to the total situation.

Moreover, from the gestalt standpoint, the mind is not a passive recipient of experience. It is constructively active in the process of perception. It not only unifies an aggregate of sensory elements into a whole, but isolates this from a larger context. Perhaps the best simple illustration of this phase of gestalt theory is found in those old-fashioned picture puzzles in which we are shown a simple scene. The problem is to "find" a given number of "faces" in the picture. That we are able to select out and organize some of the dots and lines of the picture into representations of faces implies a dynamic, selective, and constructive function in mental process. In the light of these illustrations we may be prepared for Köhler's observation that the facts of psychology are best described by such terms as "Constellation of stimuli," "Organization," and "Reaction to results of organization."[7] The organism is in his opinion not to be conceived as a collection of separate lines of transmission for

[7] Wolfgang Köhler, *Gestalt Psychology* (New York: Horace Liveright, 1929), pp. 178-180.

independent stimuli and responses. A better analogy is that of a *system* which responds as a whole to a situation as a whole.

The implications of this psychology for philosophy and religion are uncertain. But to begin with, we are impressed by the importance of the selective and constructive activity of the mind in our knowledge of nature. The "organization in a sensory field," i.e., the perception of a *thing*, is said to originate as a characteristic achievement of the nervous system. While there is an admitted similarity between sensory experience and the physiological processes that accompany it, Köhler himself declares that there is nothing in gestalt psychology to justify the conclusion that "sensory wholes" exist outside the organism and simply project themselves into it.[8] This sounds like a rejection of the naïve realism of common sense which attributes independent existence to the objects of our experience just as we experience them. Instead, the emphasis on the selective and constructive activity of the mind suggests a Kantian view of the place of the mind in nature, and possibly an idealistic interpretation of reality.

But in his recent work, *The Place of Value in a World of Facts*,[9] Professor Köhler draws a distinction between the phenomenal world and nature, attributing to nature or the physical world an independent existence. While he admits that we cannot know the physical world directly, we can know it by inference. Moreover, when we come to describe the physical world, we do so by means of concepts shaped after phenomenal models. As he says, "we cannot escape the conclusion that the building of physics consists of such concepts as have, without exception, relatives among the phenomena."[10]

Köhler does not appear to doubt the independent existence of a physical world, i.e., the world described by physicists (not our experienced world). What is more, he holds that there is a similarity of form between the structures of experience and the structures of nature. In other words, the facts of experience have a counterpart in nature. The way in which the organism selects and con-

[8] Köhler, *op. cit.*, p. 174.
[9] Liveright Pub. Corp., New York, 1938.
[10] Köhler, *op. cit.*, p. 144; see the whole of chap. V.

structs "wholes" seems to have a necessity about it that reflects a structural character in nature. This leads him to make a conclusion of considerable interest to philosophy, especially to religion and ethics.

Since the facts of experience thus have a counterpart in the objective world, the *values* of experience also are not alien to nature. Like the dynamic "belonging-together" of parts in the experienced fact, so our experienced values, too, are regarded as integral to the state of affairs independent of us. The dynamic necessity which governs the organization of sensory fields into wholes of fact and value is held to issue from a "requiredness" in nature itself. In short, values have as much a place in nature as facts have. Stated in theological terms, this looks as if the gestalt doctrine may yield a psychological warrant for repudiating mechanical interpretations of the world in favor of a teleological view.[11]

*Psychology of the Unconscious.*—A third new psychology is connected with the name of Freud. Regardless of what we may come to believe about the final truth contained in his theories, or of the value of psychoanalysis as a method of treatment, we shall have to recognize in Freud one of the makers of the modern mind. Should we list the men who have profoundly influenced contemporary thought, we should include Freud along with Darwin and Einstein. The psychology of the unconscious takes its place beside the theory of evolution and the theory of relativity as influences that have simply revolutionized thought in the last seventy-five years.

Discovered as a method of treating nervous diseases, psychoanalysis has outgrown its purely medical significance. It has become a revolutionary influence extending to every area of human thought. Its effects appear in literature, art, religion, sociology, ethics, and education. Even our everyday language, employing words like "complex," "inhibition," "repression," and "Freudian," bears witness to Freud's influence on the modern mind. It therefore seems important to include in this survey a short account of the psychology of the unconscious and its implications for philosophy and religion.

Sigmund Freud, born in 1856, became in 1881 a medical doctor whose interest was primarily in nervous diseases. The character

[11] Köhler, *op. cit.*, chap. VIII.

and causes of nervous afflictions were not well understood, consequently treatment was nothing but a groping in the darkness—a sad commentary on the ignorance that hung like a black shroud around all forms of mental derangement.

A great deal of experimentation with hypnosis had been taking place. Freud had worked with Charcot in France, where the latter demonstrated that the symptoms of certain nervous ailments could be artificially induced (and removed) by means of suggestion under hypnosis. When Freud returned to his practice in Vienna, he not only employed hypnosis in treating the symptoms of his patients, but discovered from a colleague that under hypnosis patients could be induced to talk about their symptoms and thus to trace them back to certain unhappy past experiences. Moreover, the symptoms were cured when the situations out of which they had arisen were recalled and the emotion attached to them freely expressed. It was thus established that some mental disturbances have their seat in an area of the mind of which we are not ordinarily aware—an area below the level of consciousness.

*Repression.*—In the course of time, Freud, dissatisfied with hypnosis as a method of treatment, discovered a new way by means of which he could probe into the unconscious. Simply by means of assurances and encouragements on the part of the physician, without hypnosis, forgotten facts and their connection with present symptoms could be drawn out of their place of burial in the unconscious. This raised the question as to how and why patients had forgotten so many facts which could be recalled only by means of a particular technique. The *kind* of material that was thus uncovered supplied the answer.

> Everything that had been forgotten had in some way or other been painful; it had either been alarming or disagreeable or shameful by the standards of the subject's personality . . . that is precisely why it had been forgotten, i.e., why it had not remained conscious.[12]

Normally, the struggle between our impulses and our ideals is resolved in the full light of consciousness, and the accompanying emotion is dissipated. But in neurosis the offensive thoughts and

[12] Freud, *Autobiography* (New York: W. W. Norton & Co., 1935), pp. 52-53.

impulses are merely silenced and the conflict they set up is pressed down into the unconscious. In short, the objectionable thoughts, experiences, and impulses are *repressed* without having discharged their load of emotion.

According to psychoanalytic theory, these repressed impulses, maintaining their dynamic character, seek for some means of expression, some substitute outlet. This usually comes in the form of a disguise that satisfies the standards of the personality. In the case of some of the neuroses,[13] the repressed impulses break through and produce symptoms. Such symptoms, then, are regarded as substitute expressions for repressed impulses. By way of example we may take the victim of "shell-shock" who cannot walk and must creep like a baby, as an expression of his unconscious wish to be a child who does not have to face the enemy's fire. Or consider the case of the destitute young man who arrived by boat in Toronto, where it was discovered that he had largely lost his memory. He had even forgotten who he was, except that his name was something like "Bert Wilson." It turned out that the patient's name was Richard Albert Williams, and that he had failed in his attempt to support his young wife. Bert Wilson was an unmarried acquaintance who had gone to sea. Williams had *forgotten* the painful circumstances of his life and had unconsciously identified himself with another person whose name was somewhat like his own—a sailor who had no domestic responsibilities and hence could not fail in his duty toward them.[14]

The psychoanalytical search for experiences that led to repressions and thence to symptoms produced an important discovery, namely: Many of these damaging experiences occur in the early years of childhood. A fact formerly observed by poets and educators now found psychological verification. The impressions of that early and forgotten period of life leave deep traces in the individual's character and lay the foundation for any nervous disorder which may later appear. The needs and fears, wishes and

[13] Neuroses are functional nervous diseases, some of which, without demonstrable physical causes, seem to be mental in origin. Neurotic symptoms include paralysis of the limbs, nausea, obsessions, fears, etc.

[14] Reported by Ernest Jones, *Papers on Psycho-analysis*, Third Edition (Baltimore: William Wood and Company, 1928), pp. 458-472.

resentments, of our childhood are thus held to be potent forces that shape our characters; they determine our biases and prejudices, our convictions and our beliefs.

*The Interpretation of Dreams.*—In the course of his growing experience, Freud again modified his method of treatment. He gave up the practice of urging and encouraging the patient to say something upon the particular subject of his symptoms. Instead, he now asked the patient to practice *free association,* to repeat whatever thoughts and memories passed through his mind, without conscious direction or censorship. It happened that patients, while practicing free association, frequently reported dreams. Taking the various parts and items of a dream as starting points for further association, Freud discovered that dreams, too, have meanings which can be interpreted.[15] The meaning is not, however, to be found in the manifest dream. The dream that we remember turns out to be merely an abbreviated and somewhat distorted structure of mental activity. The manifest dream is, however, useful as a starting point for free association, which leads to related ideas or latent dream-thoughts. These latter contain the meaning of the dream. But what do dreams mean?

Freud's answer to this question is that the dream is the disguised fulfillment of a repressed wish. In the state of sleep the "censor"[16] is relaxed and off guard. The repressed impulse or unconscious wish takes advantage of this condition of relaxed vigilance to push its way into consciousness in the form of a dream. The impulse or wish "is the actual constructor of the dream: it provides the energy for its production and makes use of the day's residues as material; the dream which thus originates represents a situation in which the impulse is satisfied; it is the fulfillment of the wish which the impulse contains."[17] But the dream is not a perfect fulfillment. The "censor" is merely off guard, not off duty. Even dreams are partly censored; some of the latent dream-thoughts are altered so that the forbidden meaning of the dream is acceptably disguised! For

[15] See Freud's *Interpretation of Dreams* (1900). This work is included in *The Basic Writings of Sigmund Freud,* published by The Modern Library, New York.

[16] Freud's term for the mind's sense of propriety which causes objectionable and disreputable impulses and wishes to be repressed.

[17] Freud, *Autobiography,* pp. 86-87.

example, we may cite the instance of the man who dreamed that he was seated in the front row of the balcony of his college chapel. While there he accidentally shoved off some books that were lying on the railing. These books fell down upon two unidentified persons who were below. Using the technique of free association, he discovered that the persons struck by the books were his two older brothers, with whom he enjoys good relations. But the dream was a thinly disguised expression of his childhood resentment against his brothers and the repressed wish that they might be removed from their favorable position as his rivals for parental affection and favors. Thus the dream takes its place alongside the neurotic symptom as a compromise between the demands of the repressed impulse and the censoring demands of the personality. Both have a meaning which analysis can disclose and turn to account in treatment.

We have now seen two ways in which repressed material in the unconscious intrudes itself into consciousness. The neurotic symptom is a substitute for a forbidden impulse, and the dream is a wish-fulfillment in disguise. The first of these means of compromise expression is, of course, found only in people who are mentally ill. If the only evidence of subconscious activity consisted of neurotic symptoms, we might conclude that psychoanalytic theory belonged only to abnormal psychology—that it had nothing to say about the mental activity of normal people. The dream, however, bridges the gap between the abnormal and the normal. Almost everybody has dreams.

*The Unconscious in Normal Life.*—Moreover, the dream is not the only way in which unconscious impulses and thoughts press through to consciousness in normal people. The many little slips and mistakes that we all make are "symptomatic" too. They are not strictly accidental, but have a meaning which can be interpreted in the same way that dreams are made to yield their secrets.[18] The meaning of mistakes is well illustrated by the classical story of the printer's error which caused a news item to refer to a certain general as "that bottle-scarred veteran." The next day the at-

[18] See Freud's *Psychopathology of Everyday Life.* Also included in the *Basic Writings.*

tempted correction read, "that battle-scared veteran." It is of course obvious what the printer thought of the general's sobriety and courage. He subconsciously found a way to express it. But such an illustration is really not needed. It is well known to common sense that errors of forgetting often have a meaning. We need no psychoanalyst to tell us what it means when a young lady forgets an engagement with a certain man, or when a man forgets to meet the train bringing his mother-in-law who is coming for an extended visit.

If dreams are constructed like symptoms, and the common errors of everyday life are witness to unconscious mental activity, then psychoanalysis has flown the nest of the physician's office and becomes the basis of a new psychology of the normal mind. Its evidence and its theories are then applicable to other spheres of mental life. It certainly seems a safe extension to view "daydreams" as fantasies in which impulses and desires, frustrated in real life, find substitute fulfillment. If this is the case, then it is at least suggestive to apply psychoanalytic theory in the interpretation of artistic creations, such as painting and literature. Thus regarded, the products of the poet's imagination seem "symptomatic" too; they are, like dreams, substitute experiences for desires and wishes otherwise frustrated. The important difference between the artist and the neurotic, however, is that the artist produces something of social value and can find his way back from the imaginative "flight from reality."

With this reference to artistic creations, we end our sketch of psychoanalysis, and turn to a consideration of its application to other fields of human interest. The opinion has already been expressed that psychoanalysis will, in due time, have as profound an influence on thought as evolution had half a century earlier. In fact, we do not have to wait for the future to see what implications it has for the related fields of religion and philosophy. These applications have already been attempted. Let us present some of them.

*Psychoanalysis and Religion.*—Religion is a very complex affair that includes codes of conduct, rituals, and ceremony, as well as beliefs. Writers who have approached the study of religion from the standpoint of psychoanalytic theory have been quick to note

analogies between the mental products of neurotics and of primitive peoples. Thus the phenomena of magic, totem, and tabu seem to have parallels in certain symptomatic expressions of the mentally ill. Similarly, religious symbolism seems to have a counterpart in the symbols appearing in dreams. However interesting it might be to explore these fields, we shall here confine ourselves to the application of psychoanalytic theory to the subject of religious belief.

(a) It has long been known that our wishes play a very prominent part in determining our beliefs. We tend to believe that account of things which we desire. This is true in every field. The laboring man lends a more willing ear to the apostle of a socialist Utopia than does the capitalist. The citizens of a war-weary land believe with pathetic eagerness the false report of peace. It is a commonplace in religious thought that faith is a product of the heart, and the beliefs of the religious man the fulfillment of the deepest desires of the soul. If we examine any good book on the psychology of religion we shall find the recognition of the part that the *will* plays in the determining of belief. A whole philosophy of religion rests upon "moral faith." The theory that we should believe those things about God and human destiny which give most significance to morality has been given classic statement by the American philosopher, William James, in his essay, "The Will to Believe." The place of need and want, of wish and desire, of hope and will —all the non-rational factors of human nature—in the molding of belief, is well established and widely accepted.

It is to this aspect of religious belief that the psychology of the unconscious has made its most widely known contribution. It has given a detailed psychological account of the part that wishes play in our religious belief and has offered an explanation of the peculiar emotional satisfaction which such beliefs afford.

According to this new psychology, our religious beliefs are the ideal satisfaction of unconscious wishes. It advances the theory that the psychological basis of the belief in God is the childhood sense of dependence upon the father. According to Freud, the first love-object of the child is the mother. She satisfies hunger and affords protection against anxiety. But the father soon replaces the

mother as provider and protector. The father is also a danger, a threat to some of the child's instinctive satisfactions. He is the disciplinarian—sometimes filled with anger. In short, he is to be feared as well as loved. This situation lasts through childhood. When the child grows up he finds that as far as nature is concerned he must remain a child forever, helpless against, though dependent upon, nature. He thus interprets nature in terms of agency, as we saw in the first chapter of this work. More, he invests these agents with the traits of the father-figure. He projects upon the universe the fulfillment of his wishes, places at its heart a God whom he both fears and loves, whose requirements he must satisfy and upon whose care he must depend.

(b) While most psychoanalysts agree that religious beliefs have their roots in deep-seated wishes of the personality, they do not agree as to their value. Freud has expressed himself rather negatively on the subject. On the other hand, Dr. C. G. Jung of Zurich believes that religious beliefs have continued worth as symbolic expression of religious experience. Defining this as "that kind of experience which is characterized by the highest appreciation," Jung holds that the idea of God is a symbol for this "highest" in ourselves, "a sort of creative background, a life-producing sun in the depths of the unconscious mind."[19]

As for the truth of religious beliefs, it should go without saying that psychology is incompetent to pass a final judgment. Many people have falsely drawn the conclusion that, if religious beliefs are the fulfillment of wishes, they are nothing but that. But the psychological origin of our beliefs does not determine their truth. The truth of beliefs is a question of evidence, not of genesis. If religious beliefs *are* a projection of our wishes upon the cosmos, the philosophical question whether these projections find an object is still as open as ever. Perhaps most of our new theories can be psychologically explained as arising out of the unconscious, but this certainly does not relieve us of the trouble of experimental examination and rational test.

On the other hand, the psychology of the unconscious urges us

[19] C. G. Jung, *Psychology and Religion* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1938), pp. 72, 75.

to recognize that religion is not altogether a matter of the intellect. The beliefs of religion spring out of the unconscious, the seat of the instinctive and the emotional. From this standpoint, religion did not have its origin as a primitive attempt to explain the world. Instead, it grew out of the primitive's attempt to adjust himself to his world. The origin was primarily practical, not intellectual. So with the religion of modern man. It springs out of his vital needs, his deep concern with life. Its roots are much deeper than the intellect. The problem of the value of religion is surely quite as important as the problem of the truth of its beliefs, and to a large extent independent of it. Beliefs we doubtless must have, but psychology teaches us that our theologies derive significance from their relation to human needs, unconscious as well as conscious.

*Psychoanalysis and Philosophy.*—The implications of psychoanalytic theory for philosophy have not as yet received very much attention. Certainly there has not been done as much systematic work here as in the field of religion. We shall, however, try to present two fairly obvious applications that the discovery of the unconscious and its activity has to philosophy. The first is that philosophic systems, like religious beliefs, are the product of unconscious as well as rational factors. Metaphysical beliefs may be wish-fulfillment too. The second is that the mental can no longer be equated with the conscious. Philosophers who conceive reality in terms of mind will have to revise their pictures of the universe.

(a) We have seen how Freud has interpreted religious beliefs as wish-fulfillments. Our survey of philosophy and religion has already shown that certain important speculative theories of reality were religious in character. Certainly this is true of Platonism and Stoicism in the ancient world and of idealism in the modern world. This would seem to suggest that the religious beliefs of simple people, their myths and theogonies, are not alone in being fathered by need and want. The more pretentious systems, too, despite their elaborate trappings of evidence and logic, are also the fulfillment of the deepest wishes of the soul. Our will, much more than our reason, determines *which type* of metaphysical theory will win our acceptance. As the English philosopher, F. H. Bradley, said, "Meta-

physics is the finding of bad reasons for what we believe upon instinct."

While psychoanalysis did not then discover that non-rational factors are at work in man's rational constructions, it has made us take this truth seriously. It has provided us with a psychology of philosophy. It has shown us the connections that may exist between unconscious wishes and the particular intellectual systems with which we fulfill them. Thus, one philosopher describes himself as a skeptic. He can find no certain order in nature, no fixed arrangement of things that reason can fasten to in its search for truth. When he regards the stars, whose order has figured so largely in theology, philosophy, and science, he finds there no *particular* order at all. He declares that the order you and I find there, we have put there—that we read it in, not off. Upon being questioned, he admits that as a small boy he felt very keenly the oppressive order that his parents imposed upon his life. Is it too much to say that his childhood rebellion against unbending order and discipline is now reflected in his philosophical doubt that the universe is orderly? On the other hand, consider the thinker who simply "cannot conceive" the universe except in terms of perfect rationality and order, for whom every event "must have some meaning" even though he cannot say what this meaning is. He passionately opposes any suggestion of chaos in the metaphysical picture. The proposal to regard the universe as being made up of many elements which do not always conspire to harmony makes him think of a mass of "crawling maggots." What shall we say of such a one? Well, we shall expect him to be hard on his wife's housekeeping, demanding from her a domestic order that few women can achieve. We shall perhaps be on the right track if we seek to explain his insistence upon both cosmic and domestic order in the same way. Perhaps both are motivated by the persistence of his childhood suffering of economic or social insecurity, or some other poignant uncertainty that pressed upon his childhood mind. Of course, we shall not be popular or necessarily always correct if we seek to psychoanalyze our teachers' and colleagues' philosophic biases. We usually do not know enough about them for that. But the point of these illustrations, not wholly fictitious, is that phi-

losophical beliefs are often, if not always, determined by unconscious needs and wishes, stemming back in most instances to childhood experience.

This thesis, that philosophies are, like dream-structures, the fulfillment of wishes, finds apt illustration in Professor Ralph Barton Perry's recent book, *In the Spirit of William James*.[20] In the first chapter, entitled "Two American Philosophers," he compares James and Royce, their boyhood lives, cultural backgrounds, and philosophies. Brilliant contemporaries at Harvard a generation ago, these two men were utterly different in their personal histories and temperaments. James was the son of wealthy and cultured parents, "the product of Europe and the Atlantic seaboard, and enjoyed the advantages of ripe civilization and hereditary affluence."[21] Royce, on the other hand, was the son of California pioneers who had crossed the continent in a covered wagon, and somewhat precariously maintained a home under frontier conditions. The temperaments of the two accentuated these contrasts in background. James was socially at ease and universally liked, while Royce found social life difficult and even painful.

The philosophies of these men differed as sharply as did their backgrounds and temperaments—but inversely. Each idealized what the other possessed and himself lacked—idealized and projected these ideals in their philosophies.

> While Royce wrote volumes to show that the lonely man needs society, James wrote whole articles to stress the fact that society needs loneliness. For Royce society ennobled the fragmentary individual, while for James the social waste was redeemed by its individual cases, in their rich and varied flowering. Royce idealized a community of love, in which tragic conflicts are triumphantly resolved. James idealized the irreducible differences, the obscure heroisms, the oddities of creative originality. . . . Royce spoke of the "fecundity of aggregation" while James stressed the power of the erratic genius and of the thoughts which germinate in solitude. While James eulogized a primitive inwardness of life which he grasped by an act of imaginative intuition, and disparaged the urbanity which he possessed by inheritance and breeding, Royce, the rustic, dreamed of a City of God.[22]

[20] Yale University Press, 1938.

[21] *Ibid.*, p. 6.

[22] *Ibid.*, pp. 13-14.

Here again, we must be careful not to become victims of the fallacy that, since the type of one's philosophy is psychologically determined, all philosophies can be dismissed as *mere* wishful thinking. Psychology and biography can tell us something as to the personal history of beliefs; they are not competent to judge their truth. This, in philosophy as in theology, is a question of proof, to be decided by evidence and logic.

(b) Perhaps the most obvious philosophical consequence of psychoanalysis is the new meaning it gives to the term "mental." It has been almost a commonplace assumption of traditional philosophy that by "mind" one meant "consciousness." Mental life was equated with the processes of feeling, willing, and thinking of which we are aware. The new psychology manifestly invalidates this assumption. There are processes of which we are quite unconscious going on in our minds. Moreover, the mind can no longer be regarded as the fundamentally moral and rational entity that we supposed it to be. It is also the seat of confusion, of repressed impulses, of conflicts and complexes which our sense of propriety causes to be censored and excluded from awareness. But, though excluded in this almost desperate fashion, these facts yet exist and exercise their power.

The philosophical implications of this new conception of the mind are several. We shall, however, confine ourselves to presenting, by way of illustration, its implications for idealistic philosophy. Idealism, as we know, regards reality as at bottom mental. Idealists believe that by this device they have put reason and moral concerns right at the basis of things and have secured a spiritual interpretation of the universe. But with the new conception of the mental, idealism will probably have to revise its picture of reality. Having committed itself to the use of the mind as a model for the conception of the universe, idealism now finds this model taking on rather disagreeable features. The mind has a skeleton in the closet. Professor Fuller described this situation for us superbly when he wrote,

> The "classic" idealism came into being when mind apparently was all it should be. In the good old Victorian times it was a kind of metaphysical Prince Consort—an impeccably serious, earnest, high-

minded, severely logical, rational and ethical principle bristling with every moral and intellectual virtue. It was such stuff as Gods and Absolutes might well be made of, and it had a right to look down its nose at the common clay of which naturalists and materialists wished to construct their worlds.

But today to say that all things are mind is to tell a different and not so edifying a tale of them. . . . In constructing their future idealisms [idealist metaphysicians] can scarcely avoid making their reality of mind as the psychologist has analyzed it. . . . Such rationality and moral purpose as they may manage to preserve in mind will have to be in the Absolute as in the finite center, in God as well as in man, not profound and essential, but the outcome of a censorship, inhibition, and sublimation of the thoughts and the desires of a spirit in its depths as brutal as matter is brute. Indeed, if the psycho-analytic psychology has come to stay, as the heliocentric astronomy and the Darwinian theory apparently have, it has administered a blow to human self-importance and pretensions far more severe than that dealt them by man's loss of his central position in the sidereal universe and his discovery of his animal ancestry.[23]

*Psychoanalysis and Ethics.*—Turning finally to the application of psychoanalysis to ethics, we find that here, as in religion, a good beginning has already been made. Professor E. B. Holt's *The Freudian Wish and Its Place in Ethics*,[24] is an excellent pioneer work, and J. A. Hadfield's *Psychology and Morals*,[25] provides a systematic discussion of the relation of psychoanalytic insights to moral questions. While recognizing the value of these works, we shall attempt an independent discussion of the subject. We shall confine ourselves to an estimate of the support that psychoanalysis gives to an ethical theory based on human experience.[26]

(a) In the early days of psychoanalysis, when people first heard of the dangers of repressed impulses and frustrated instincts, some hastened to the conclusion that the best way to avoid the disagreeable results of repression was to give free reign to our impulses. The best way to avoid unconscious conflicts, it was thought, is to

[23] B. A. G. Fuller, *History of Philosophy* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1938), Vol. II, pp. 626-627.

[24] New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1915.

[25] New York: Robert M. McBride & Co., 1928.

[26] A theory already suggested in the preceding chapter and referred to again in the following final chapter.

give unrestrained expression to our instincts. Psychoanalysis was thus made into a justification for unconventional behavior and moral irresponsibility. But such a use of the new psychology was never justified. Psychoanalysis is not a charter for license. On the contrary, it shows very clearly that moral ideals are essential in the dynamic growth of character and personality. To do violence to one's ideals is as dangerous to the integrity of one's personality and mental health as is the too rigid suppression of instinctive wishes. The happy and efficient personality, capable of living a good life, is not a creature of instinct alone, seeking to fulfill itself in a succession of instinctive satisfactions. It is rather a personality in which instinct and ideal have been properly integrated into a harmonious whole.

As psychoanalysis teaches that we must respect our ideals, it teaches with equal force that ethics must respect our instincts. These passions and tendencies are among the raw materials of life. If we repress them, they rule (and perhaps ruin) our lives in hidden ways. In religious terms, the repressed instinct and impulse makes one an unconscious sinner. While religion and the law attach a great deal of importance to conscious intention, nature is not lenient with unconscious sinners. She punishes them just as severely as if they had committed a conscious offense. It was no psychoanalyst but a clergyman who once observed that highly "moral" people, unaware of their other side, develop peculiar irritability and hellish moods from which they themselves as well as their relatives and associates suffer.[27] On the other hand, if we indulge these instincts, this "other side," at the cost of our ideals, we set up feelings of guilt that exact their price. But in themselves, instincts are neither good nor bad; while their energy, forever seeking discharge, makes them pregnant with the possibility of either good or bad. Hence the danger of repression on the one hand and the danger of undisciplined expression on the other.

Psychoanalysis did not discover the truth of these remarks. This was certainly known by Aristotle who, because of his insight, sought to correct the repressive implications of Plato's ethical doctrine. Our new psychology sets forth the truth about the importance

[27] As reported by C. G. Jung, *op. cit.*, p. 92.

of proper handling of the instincts with new clearness. What is even more important, it suggests the way in which instinctive energy may be redirected into channels in which it may safely run. Psychoanalysis teaches that the instincts' tendency to anarchy can be disciplined without repression. This is the way of integration.

(b) By integration we mean the blending of different elements into a harmonious whole. Of course, our instincts are naturally discordant. Each is a desire toward its own satisfaction without regard for other consequences. According to the psychology of the unconscious, the ideal of an organized personality is not achieved by repression of these discordant instincts and impulses. "Repression," as Dr. Jung has described it, "is a sort of half-conscious and half-hearted letting go of things, a dropping of hot cakes or a reviling of grapes which hang too high, or a looking the other way in order not to be conscious of one's desire."[28] The integrated personality is not built by this method. The integrated harmony which psychoanalysis reveals as the "moral" ideal is built by the conscious process of deliberate selection, with one's eyes open. Some impulses have to be suppressed (not *re*pressed) or renounced, others sublimated. Sublimation is of particular importance, since this means that instinctive energies are directed into substitute ways of satisfaction—ways of harmony with the dominant theme of the personality. When this process of organization, consisting of *conscious* selection, suppression, and sublimation, is completed, so that the personality can operate as a harmonious whole, we may say that integration has been achieved.

We have just spoken of the "dominant theme" of the personality. Indeed, the whole process of integration presupposes some focal interest, some supreme value or ideal around which all other interests can be organized. Psychoanalysis recognizes this clearly, and in so doing gives a modern echo to Jesus' instructions, "Let your eye be single" and "Seek ye first the Kingdom of God." The focal ideal of psychology is the supreme good in ethics. It must, however, be noted that our new psychology gives no warrant for *grafting on* an ideal. The central ideal of a personality must be found among the many purposes and interests already internal to

[28] C. G. Jung, *op. cit.*, p. 91.

it. It must also be an ideal of sufficient scope to build a life around.[29] Once such an ideal appears, psychoanalysis declares, its supreme demands must be recognized. All other wants and desires must be judged with reference to it, and subordinated to it. This may mean painful renunciation. Thus psychological ethics demands discipline. The psychological ideal does not just happen. Like other and lesser good things, it has to be achieved. But even as religious renunciation may bring joy in the possession of something more important, so psychology can offer the hope that the pain of disciplinary suppression and renunciation may be superseded by the joy of self-fulfillment. When this harmonious fulfillment is realized, it no longer matters whether we describe it as psychological integration or as moral achievement. Psychology and morals have here become identical.

(c) We have said that the focal wish, the dominant ideal around which integration may take place, must be personal and autobiographical. It cannot be grafted on from outside or adopted at will. It must be derived from components integral to the individual's own character. This being the case, it follows that these focal ideals will differ as people differ. If we then call integration around an autobiographically derived ideal a moral achievement, we must acknowledge a measure of individualism as to the pattern of moral life. Psychological ethics thus agrees with Aristotle that morality is an art, and its creations filled with variety. Morality, from this standpoint, is alien to the spirit of regimentation. While this suggests an element of relativity in psychological ethics, it by no means implies moral anarchy.

Our characters do not mature in a vacuum; instead, they have a social matrix. Hence, the ideal for personal development requires justice not only for instinctive and "selfish" needs, but for social demands as well. Let us see how this places a degree of limitation upon and provides a certain direction to individual moral achievement, thus breaking down opposition between the individual and the social good.

[29] Psychoanalysis thus calls attention to *facts* which modern ethical *theory* must take into account when it seeks to describe the general nature of the ethical ideal.

We have long been familiar with the notion that character is a product of heredity *and* environment. A very important part of our environment is social. The traditions, customs, and ideals of the society in which we grow up are strong influences upon our lives. And these influences work not only from without. Psychoanalysis has discovered abundant evidence to support the view that these social demands become internalized. The standards of society find a subjective counterpart in the individual conscience. In short, the codes and ideals of society become also *our* codes and ideals. They become a part of our private mental equipment, along with the instincts. This complex of social demands, subjectively effective in the form of conscience or the "standards of the personality," is just as much a part of our personal make-up as is our biological inheritance. In fact, the problem of personal moral development is just the problem of lifting both our social and our biological demands to the level of consciousness. Here the various elements can, ideally, be integrated around a dominant purpose, as was explained above. Thus the individual's integrated character must *include* social demands and ideals. Psychoanalysis then leads us to a conclusion like Plato's, that the individual cannot achieve virtue in himself except as a harmonious unit in society.

Finally, analytic psychology is prepared to deal with the question, Why be moral? Its answer is that the dynamic interests of our own nature, our instincts and our social heritage, demand it. He who really knows himself will not possibly want to be other than integrated—the psychological equivalent for moral. Our new psychology thus illuminates the Socratic dictum that knowledge is virtue, and provides significant support for empirical ethics.

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## CHAPTER XXI

# *RECONSTRUCTION IN PHILOSOPHY AND RELIGION*

It is not unusual for a student who has been introduced to philosophy by way of history to raise the question as to whether there are any philosophers in the present day. This student appears to have little doubt that the Greeks were concerned with philosophical issues and he may have a high regard for the systems of thought created by Plato or Aristotle. He may be aware also of such names as Descartes and Locke, Kant and Hegel, but he has the suspicion that philosophy must have died before his own generation appeared on the scene. He knows of living scientists, politicians, poets, artists, and novelists, but he has not heard of philosophers. He is acquainted only with teachers of philosophy.

It is impossible to give a definite answer to the query as to whether our age is producing philosophers to whom future writers of history will devote as many pages as they now give to Plato or Kant. It is difficult to pick from the contemporary scene those features which may have lasting significance. Nevertheless, we can assert definitely that there are creative philosophers today, and that there are philosophical movements which are influencing our own age, even though we cannot predict what the judgment of posterity will be. In a previous chapter some attention was given to the rise of idealism as an alternative to the materialism which seemed to form the basis of nineteenth-century science. This idealism is still an influential school of thought. It is one of our modern philosophies. But there are others. Particularly important in American life and thought is the philosophy of *pragmatism* or *instrumentalism.* This was given popular expression by William James and has been developed more thoroughly and consistently by John Dewey. Again, the *philosophy of organism,* whose outstanding exponent is A. N. Whitehead, is judged by some contemporary think-

ers worthy of being called "the new philosophy."[1] The German *phenomenologists*—Husserl, Scheler, *et al.*—constitute still another modern school of thought.

These are among the leading philosophies in the Western world today, but it is not the purpose of the present chapter to give a complete and technical exposition of each of them. We have described some of the dominant intellectual currents in the modern world which are bound to influence anyone who tries to think seriously about his universe and about man's place in nature. This concluding chapter will take account of these influences and we shall stress the factors which are to be included in a contemporary philosophy rather than the points of disagreement among the several schools of thought. We are fully aware of the dangers involved in trying to draw a picture of *the* modern mind. Therefore, we are more inclined to look upon what follows as *an* approach to philosophical and religious problems than to view it as the all-inclusive philosophy. Furthermore, our aim is not merely to attempt a synthesis by covering up significant differences among the various philosophical schools. It is impossible to maintain successfully a completely unbiased attitude. The philosophically trained reader will have no difficulty in recognizing the point of view from which we approach the problems of philosophy and religion.

Not only does the beginning student wonder whether there is "living" philosophy today, he also tends to make the value judgment that enlightened men ought to give up such a futile enterprise as philosophy appears to be, and devote their attention to science. Science, as contrasted with philosophy, is able to prove its statements; it deals with facts; it is a field in which definite progress is made. Philosophy appears to ask questions to which no verifiable answers can be given. It is understandable that it should have interested men in the childhood of the race, but that was before we had developed the sure methods of science. This attitude reflects a particular conception of what philosophy is. It assumes that philosophy is a speculation about the ultimate nature of things and that it has no relation to the historical or cultural situation in which

[1] Cf. Charles Hartshorne, *Beyond Humanism* (Chicago: Willett, Clark & Co., 1937), p. ix.

it is formulated. From this point of view it is conceivable that every philosophy has been a miserable failure, inasmuch as it has not given us a verifiable answer to ultimate questions. It also is conceivable that the entire history of philosophy reveals only futility, since there is no recognizable progress in finding the truth.

## The Task of Philosophy

This conception of philosophy is different from the one to which the writers of this book are committed. We call attention to the unexamined assumptions which are implicit in the contrast just made between philosophy and science. In the first place, the idea of progress is taken for granted. We have seen, however, that this notion is itself a philosophical conception which was not made articulate until the eighteenth century. Again, it is assumed that science has replaced, or can replace, philosophy. It is true that the modern period is called "the age of science," but it is also true that philosophical issues are involved both in the so-called scientific picture of the world and in the meaning and import of scientific method. Our view is that philosophy and religion are parts of culture, just as science, art, politics, and economic organization are parts of culture. They develop and change because they are to some extent the products of cultural changes, and, in turn, they influence the course of history. Our view of philosophy and religion in relation to this or any other period of history is in essential agreement with John Dewey's statement

> that philosophy . . . is itself a phenomenon of human culture. Its connection with social history, with civilization, is intrinsic. There is current among those who philosophize the conviction that, while past thinkers have reflected in their systems the conditions and perplexities of their own day, present-day philosophy in general, and one's own philosophy in particular, is emancipated from the influence of that complex of institutions which forms culture. Bacon, Descartes, Kant each thought with fervor that he was founding philosophy anew because he was placing it securely upon an exclusive intellectual basis, exclusive, that is, of everything but intellect. The movement of time has revealed the illusion; it exhibits as the work of philosophy the old and ever new undertaking of adjusting that body of traditions which constitute the actual mind of man to scientific tendencies and

political aspirations which are novel and incompatible with received authorities. Philosophers are parts of history, caught in its movement; creators perhaps in some measure of its future, but also assuredly creatures of its past.[2]

From this point of view philosophy and religion are going concerns. They are integral parts of human civilization and will continue to be such so long as men have aspirations and engage in the distinctively human business of thinking. What is sometimes looked upon as the rejection of philosophy or religion in general is in reality the rejection only of certain traditional expressions of philosophy or religion. Let us examine a little more closely Dewey's statement as to the nature of the philosophic task. It is, he says, "the undertaking of adjusting that body of traditions which constitute the actual mind of man to scientific tendencies and political aspirations which are novel and which are incompatible with received authorities." This implies that our philosophy will be determined to a large extent by the fact that we live in the twentieth century and that we belong to Western civilization. We may assume that there is a widely shared human experience which partially transcends time and place, and that certain general problems are repeatedly presenting themselves. And yet the way in which these problems appear to us is due to the fact that we are the heirs of certain traditions and that these traditions have to be adjusted to developments which are taking place in our twentieth-century world. When we begin to philosophize we do not begin with Locke's *tabula rasa*. Rather, we bring to our task a mind already pretty well furnished with ideas and attitudes which we have absorbed as naturally as we have digested our food. When we begin to think about moral problems we already have ideas about right and wrong. It is likely that at least some of the Ten Commandments have a special claim to our obedience and that the quality of life exemplified by Jesus is peculiarly appealing. When we think about the relation of man to the state we probably shall assume that the individual has certain inalienable rights, and that the state exists to serve men and protect their individual rights.

[2] John Dewey, *Philosophy and Civilization* (New York: G. P. Putnam's Sons, 1931), pp. 3-4.

When we look out upon nature we shall not see the same things that greeted the eyes of men in other ages. We cannot help looking at nature through glasses which are colored by contemporary physical and biological science.

In the light of this conception of philosophy, the story which has been told in the preceding chapters is seen to be an integral part of our present philosophical task, because it is the attempt to make articulate the very traditions which have produced us. Quite apart from the question as to whether Christianity is "true," we recognize Christianity as the dominant religious tradition of the Western world. One's religious outlook necessarily will have some relation to this particular religion which is part of his heritage, and thus it would seem imperative that he have a reasonably clear conception of the meaning of the Christian tradition. The same situation obtains as regards our philosophical heritage. We have discovered that the most important origins of our Western philosophy and religion are to be found among the Hebrews, the Greeks, and in the Hellenistic and Graeco-Roman worlds. Many religious and philosophical conceptions from these older civilizations were instrumental in shaping the medieval culture of Europe. As medieval civilization became unified, so also the philosophical and religious tradition was crystallized in the Scholasticism of the thirteenth century. But this system was soon challenged by new developments in the modern world. Each generation has had the task of adjusting its inherited tradition to the developing scientific, social, and political ideas, and our generation is called upon to do the same thing. Attention has been called to the problems created by the Copernican and Cartesian revolutions, by the rise of nationalism and the Protestant Reformation, and by the emergence of democratic ideals. Perhaps the most serious problems of the nineteenth century were created by the evolutionary theory, and in our own day we find the need of making adjustments to the new psychology and the new physics.

To say that the philosophic task is that of adjusting traditional beliefs to new ideas may lead to misunderstanding. At first sight there would appear to be but three alternatives open to us. In the first place, we may be conservative and feel compelled to assert

dogmatically that the older belief is true and refuse to give any credence to the new. We have seen this happen many times. There were those who refused to entertain the hypothesis that the earth moves about the sun and who sought to punish Galileo for his teaching on this matter. There are some people in the modern world who feel that they must hold to the truth of the account of creation as told in the first chapter of Genesis and thus reject the evolutionary theory. This attitude in the field of religious thought results in what is called "fundamentalism." At the opposite extreme would be that approach which is motivated by the desire to "keep up" with everything modern. Here there is the easy rejection of ideas of the past and the hasty acceptance of whatever may be the fashion of the day. Between these two extremes would be the method of compromise. A modern idea which appears to force itself upon one is accepted, at least tentatively, and at the same time there is the conserving of as much of tradition as possible. In fact, philosophies frequently appear to fall into one of these categories. And yet the true philosopher does not go at his problem in just this way. He tries to examine the real meaning of traditional beliefs and he tries to test their validity. He does the same thing with the new ideas. Instead of blindly hanging on to the old or hastily accepting whatever is new, he attempts to find what is valid in both and on this basis to develop his philosophy. Thus Whitehead approached his philosophic task from a background of training in mathematics and physics. His system of thought has emerged from his study of the meaning of modern physical science, and yet the resultant philosophy is markedly different from the materialism which, half a century ago, was assumed to be implied by science. On the contrary, Whitehead's philosophy is similar, according to his own statement, to the cosmology which Plato formulated in his dialogue called the *Timaeus*. Here is an example, then, of a philosophy based on physical science which penetrates beneath the surface to find the meaning of some modern ideas, and which turns out to have something in common with the thought of a Greek philosopher who has contributed much to our intellectual heritage.

We have been talking about the meaning of beliefs and about

the validity of ideas. But how do we go about finding meanings, and what are the tests of validity? How can we distinguish between truth and error, between knowledge and opinion? These are philosophical questions and they take us to the heart of a controversy which has occupied a central place in modern thought. What is to be our philosophy of knowledge?

## Knowledge

Let us review a few of the situations which involve the problem of knowledge. We will remember that Catholic philosophy received a definitive formulation in the work of Thomas Aquinas. This consisted not only of conclusions, that is, a system of beliefs, but also of a method to be employed in reaching beliefs. When modern science began its development under the leadership of such men as Copernicus and Galileo, it came to conclusions different from those which were a part of Scholastic philosophy. It also used a different method. The question naturally arose as to what beliefs are true and which is the more reliable method of gaining knowledge. This may account for the fact that Descartes introduced his philosophy with "A Discourse on Method." The problems raised by modern science did not result in a simple conflict between science and religion; rather, they resulted in the conflict among various methods of arriving at beliefs and of testing their truth. It is no easy task to determine what we mean by scientific method, and there is no one method of getting religious knowledge. Scholastic philosophy had one method but orthodox Protestantism found another. The former appealed to the authority of the Church, while the latter appealed to the Bible—literally and in all its details—as the source and test of truth. While there was a difference between these two, they both looked to authority as the final arbiter of truth. Liberal Protestantism, on the other hand, has been willing to admit that not all the contents of the Bible are true merely because they are found in the Bible. There is another criterion of truth to which we must subject the Bible just as we test the truth of any document. The validity even of authority must be examined.

But what is the true criterion? What is the right method? Because of the success of science in reaching reliable conclusions, many

of us are inclined to think that scientific method is the proper one to use in all areas of knowledge. We have discovered, however, that there have been two fundamental emphases within modern science itself, the mathematical and the empirical. Mathematics proved to be such a valuable part of science that many thinkers were convinced that all knowledge had to be of the mathematical sort. Proceeding on the faith that the universe itself was a mathematical order, these men believed that if they could only find the right axioms with which to start, and if they then made no errors in the process of drawing deductions, they would arrive at an absolutely true conception of reality. A person derives axioms neither from authority nor from experience. He looks inside his own mind and finds there those ideas which are undeniably clear and irrefutable—ideas such as "parallel lines can never meet," or "a cause must be at least as great as its effect." This method has all the appearance of certainty and finality, because it tells us in advance of experience what kind of experience we can have or cannot have.

In spite of the admitted value of mathematics, this method has shown itself vulnerable at a number of points. In the first place, it is doubtful whether we can find any axiomatic truths at all. Within one type of geometry (Euclidean) it is true that parallel lines can never meet. But there are other geometries, based on different assumptions (the assumption, for example, that space is curved), in which parallel lines *can* meet. There is no way of determining which geometry is true because we have come to see that the formal character of mathematics does not depend upon physical facts. No geometry is more "true" than any other, although one may turn out to be more "convenient" than others. Therefore, it is not undeniably the case that parallel lines can never meet. In like manner, it is possible to doubt the validity of the principle that a cause must be at least as great as its effect. Apparently Descartes thought that this principle could not be questioned and that its opposite could not be conceived. Yet, if we think of the implications of the evolutionary theory, it seems that effects may be greater than their causes. The meaning of organic evolution is that there has been a development from simple to complex forms

of life. We need not multiply examples in order to make clear the main point, namely, that it is dubious whether there are to be found any axioms whose truth cannot be questioned. Again and again it has happened that an idea which people at one time thought was self-evident was nevertheless effectively doubted at some later period. Because of repeated experiences of this sort we now believe that what were formerly looked upon as axiomatic truths are in reality only postulates or assumptions.

In the second place, the development of modern science presents us with many instances where perceived facts occurred which contradicted previous theory. In spite of carefully stated principles and meticulous deductions which were designed to tell us exactly what sort of experience men could expect, men nevertheless did have experiences which were not anticipated and which previous theory had said could not take place. For example, the mechanical theory had been so impressive that Helmholtz, in the middle of the nineteenth century, said:

> Finally, therefore, we discover the problem of physical material science to be to refer natural phenomena back to unchangeable attractive and repulsive forces whose intensity depends upon distance. The solubility of this problem is the condition of the complete comprehensibility of nature.[3]

Note the confidence implicit in this statement, the assurance that the central problem of mechanics was the clue to the *complete* understanding of nature. And yet it was a comparatively short time after this pronouncement was made that observed facts in connection with magnetism, electric currents, and other phenomena contradicted the older mechanical theory. It seems that no matter how successful our theories may be in interpreting the experiences we have had in the past, they are never completely competent in predicting experiences of the future. In his *Logic of Modern Physics*, P. W. Bridgman writes:

> The first lesson of our recent experience with relativity is merely an intensification and emphasis of the lesson which all past experience has also taught, namely, that when experiment is pushed into

[3] Quoted by Einstein and Infeld, *Evolution of Physics* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1938), p. 58.

new domains, we must be prepared for new facts, of an entirely different character from those of our former experience.[4]

Thus we are brought to the empirical method. In brief, this means that all our beliefs and theories are intimately related to experience and that they attempt to interpret the experiences we have had up to the present time. We use these beliefs not only as generalizations of the past but also as guides to future inquiry. Frequently, however, we run into new facts which compel us to alter the older theories. There are no fixed principles. What appears to be fixed and eternal is in reality a habit of thought which has become firmly intrenched in our thinking because of its repeated success in helping us to make reliable predictions and successful adjustments to our environment. But even ideas of this sort are subject to revision. Most of us who live in the modern world tend to appeal to experience as the source of beliefs and as the test of their truth. Let us see what is involved in an empirical philosophy of knowledge.

Our basic assumption is closely related to the evolutionary theory. We believe that there was a world here many years before men appeared on the scene. Every organism has had the problem of making a successful adjustment to its environment, and in the course of the development of different species there have evolved many tools enabling the species to survive. These tools vary from the quill of the porcupine to the antler of the stag. The tool which has made man the master of the earth has been his intelligence. Ideas are primarily instruments which man fashions and employs in the task of getting along successfully in his environment. Thinking, first and foremost, is related to practical activity. Beliefs are developed in the process of dealing with life's problems. The acquisition of beliefs is both social and historical. Many people cooperate in the task of formulating workable ideas, and there is also the process in which the beliefs of one generation are passed on to the succeeding one. In this way traditions and cultures are formed.

Whenever we reflect on those beliefs of which we are conscious, we realize that the great majority of them are borrowed or in-

[4] New York: The Macmillan Co., 1932, p. 2.

herited. There are comparatively few of our ideas at which we have arrived independently. We also find on closer inspection that we have been acting according to principles or assumptions of which we have not been fully aware. It is only when our beliefs and assumptions are challenged by new problems or alternative ideas that we try to make explicit to ourselves what we do believe and try to reach a decision as to whether or not our beliefs are true. A great virtue of the empirical theory of knowledge is that it provides a method of making clear the meaning of our ideas and a means of testing them.

Thinking arises out of problematic situations or occasions on which the thinker is in doubt. When one arrives at a belief in a given situation he is aware of the cessation of the feeling of doubt as regards the particular train of thought in which he has been engaged. But the belief at which he has arrived may also be a rule or principle according to which he acts, and therefore is likely to give rise to new doubts and consequently to a new process of thought. Thus the student may be in doubt as to how much time he needs for the preparation of a lesson. This problem comes to a temporary resting place when he reaches the conclusion that he should set aside one hour for the task. At this point the belief may become a rule of action.

The meaning of a belief is always associated with the behavior in which it issues. What we mean by a belief is, in the last analysis, what we do when we act upon it. That the earth is round means, among other things, that if I start traveling west and keep on going, I shall return to the point from which I started. That the room is twenty feet long means that if I take a yardstick and measure the length of the room from one wall to the other I will measure twenty feet. When Einstein wanted to define the meaning of two events happening simultaneously, he went about his task by suggesting that if we place an observer halfway between the two events, and if this observer sees them at the same time, then they are simultaneous. This way of defining the meaning of our ideas carries with it the technique of verification as well. If the meaning of an idea is the sum total of the anticipated consequences

when we act upon it, then the idea is true if we have the experiences which are anticipated.

The empirical view of knowledge and truth implies that many of our ideas are neither positively true nor definitely false, since they are incapable of complete verification. It is difficult to define some beliefs in such a way that they permit verification. An example of this is the belief in immortality. We can attain some clarity in our statement of this belief by defining it as that situation in which a person, after his own death, is conscious of a continuity of experience between his life on this earth and his life after he has left his earthly body. Obviously there is no way of verifying that belief during this life because the anticipated consequences refer to that which lies beyond this life. The empirical method also implies that we cannot find the complete truth. Since truth is a property of ideas which become verified in experience, it follows that complete truth would require complete experience, a manifest impossibility. It would also require an assurance, which we do not possess, that no future experience can occur which will invalidate our present prediction. Thus our knowledge possesses at best a high degree of probability. Much that goes under the name of science is not verified knowledge, and much that we consider certain is in reality only highly probable. It is imperative that we make as clear as possible the meaning of our ideas and that we do the best we can to verify them. In some cases, however, we find it necessary to act on beliefs whose truth cannot be firmly established. Many of our most important beliefs are matters of faith rather than of knowledge, but we can at least clarify our thinking by distinguishing between faith and knowledge. When philosophy is concerned with those ideas which do not lend themselves to verification, it becomes speculative. Speculative philosophy makes a valuable contribution to our thinking since it tries to fit these ideas into a consistent system. Its results are not mere guesses; they are reasoned conclusions although they are not open to complete verification. Absolute idealism is an example of this type of philosophy.

Because of its insistence upon tentativeness, the empirical theory does not satisfy some people. There is a trait in human nature which leads men to look for absolutely certain knowledge. This

accounts for the success of authoritarian religions, and for the perennial attractiveness of astrology and all forms of fortune telling. People want to have the sense of security and certainty in their beliefs. Empiricism is unable to offer this. On the other hand, Dewey is probably right when he says that

> there are a steadily increasing number of persons who find security in *methods* of inquiry, of observation, experiment, of forming and following working hypotheses. Such persons are not unsettled by the upsetting of any special belief, because they retain security of procedure.[5]

In a day of accelerated change it is undoubtedly wise to place our trust in a reliable procedure rather than in a specific set of beliefs.

The empirical method has been successful in physical science and in the practical art of medicine, but it has not been used consistently in such areas as politics and religion. This is understandable because those ideas which are concerned with social relations and religious devotion are frequently linked with intense emotional fervor. It is difficult to employ the experimental technique in the midst of patriotic enthusiasm or religious worship. And indeed it is true that the ideals and traditions of the past do give vitality to a culture as well as to our individual existence. We may feel, for example, an unconditional loyalty to the religious ideal that human personality is more valuable than property, or to the social ideal that the liberty of individuals is so precious that it must be preserved. There is a philosophical problem of determining just what we mean by the value of personality or by liberty. There is the practical and experimental problem of making these ideals effective in the world. And yet the fact of loyalty to such values as these appears to escape the empirical method. We seem to find meaning in life by attaching ourselves to those great traditions which are a part of our social and religious heritage. We may be committed not only to empiricism but to what Santayana calls "piety," an attitude which "honours the past, appropriates and continues its mission."[6] The empirical method has no quarrel with

[5] "Fundamentals," *New Republic*, February 6, 1924.

[6] *Reason in Religion*, p. 276. Vol. III in *The Life of Reason* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1905).

this attitude, provided that we test the actual working of those ideals which we think are worthy of our devotion, and provided that we do not confuse our attachment to tradition with attachment to specific beliefs which the empirical method has shown to be erroneous.

## Reality

We have suggested that the main business of philosophy is that of adjusting our inherited beliefs to new facts and new aspirations which may be incompatible with older ideas and theories. To be philosophical is to examine beliefs, both old and new, with thorough criticism. The aim of this critical approach is to state with clarity the meaning of our ideas and, if possible, to state the meaning in such a way that the truth of the ideas may be tested. In the modern world it seems that these two needs can be satisfied best by the empirical method.

Let us now see how we can apply this method to philosophical and religious beliefs. More specifically, what bearing does empiricism have on our beliefs about the nature of reality, about ethical ideals, about religion in general and Christianity in particular?

We shall begin with that enterprise known as metaphysics which has always occupied a central place in philosophical inquiry. The question raised by metaphysics is, What is the nature of ultimate reality? At first sight it seems that this question does not make much sense in the light of the empirical method. That method works only with reference to particular beliefs, or to beliefs about specific items of experience. It is doubtful whether we can make any clear or meaningful statement about "ultimate reality." Indeed, there are many factors in modern thought which lead us to have sincere doubts as to whether metaphysics is possible or even as to whether there is any need of having a metaphysics or general world view.

First, what about the possibility of metaphysical knowledge? In the course of our study we have found a number of theories about the nature of the real. Among the Greeks there were the views of Democritus, Plato, and Aristotle. Within Christianity we have found fairly complete systems of thought in the work of Augustine and Aquinas. In the modern world we have encountered the mate-

rialists who define the real as matter and the idealists who define the real as mind. Has anyone stated his beliefs with clarity so that they may be verified? Apparently not. Why, then, do we keep on raising a question if no verifiable answer can be given? If the insight of modern psychology is correct, it would seem that no metaphysical theory is an assured statement of truth. Every world view reflects the bias of the age in which it is formulated and it reflects the personal temperament of the individual philosopher. The psychological analysis of philosophy suggests that the way to understand a theory of reality is to study the biography of its author, the disappointments in his life which find compensation in his picture of the universe, the wishes which were frustrated in his actual experience but which are fulfilled in the imaginative flight called metaphysics. Philosophy, in this light, might be interesting much as poetry is interesting, but it could make no claim to telling the unqualified truth about the real. Thus, if we were to work out a metaphysics today, would not we also be guilty of rationalization?

Furthermore, we have found that our beliefs concerning even specific things are subject to change. How then can we say anything meaningful about the whole of reality which includes all time? Whenever we say anything about the nature of reality we must use words to describe it. But a word has meaning only in a given context and its meaning is different if the context is different. If someone is reading a book and asks us the meaning of a word he has encountered in the course of his reading, it is likely that we shall ask: "How is the word used?" That is, we feel that we cannot give a helpful answer until we know the context in which the word is found. We have said that our ideas are instruments which we have fashioned in order successfully to meet problematic situations and to get on satisfactorily in our world. But instruments are made out of materials and are designed to serve definite purposes. Whenever we use a tool for some task to which it does not apply, we discover that the tool is useless. The table fork is useful for eating meat but it is useless for eating soup. So it is with ideas. These too are formulated in particular contexts and they are valuable if used in those areas of experience to which they are applicable. They may become useless and meaningless, however,

if we try to extend their application to the whole of things. Is not this what happens whenever we make a judgment about ultimate reality? Accordingly, there are those who insist that philosophy ought to abandon metaphysics and confine its task to careful and critical examination of the meaning of beliefs, to the study of those contexts in which ideas have originated and of their effectiveness in doing the things for which they were designed.

The implication of all this can be seen if we think for a moment about a materialistic or an idealistic metaphysics. Materialism asserts that matter is the ultimate reality. Here the word "matter" is used to describe the nature of the whole. But what is the precise meaning of this word? A dictionary will give a variety of meanings and specificity can be assigned only when we know the context in which we are using the word. R. B. Perry says,

> Common sense has a comparatively clear image connected with the term. It invariably suggests spatial discreteness and juxtaposition, a tri-dimensional aggregate of units of volume bounded by hard surfaces. And if this be matter, then evidently matter is not everything. So characteristic an arrangement suggests contrasts as well as analogies; if it provides for some things, like the planetary system or the molecular structure of gases, it leaves out other things, such as color, thought or the ether.[7]

If the term "matter" has any meaning at all, it is confined to certain areas of experience, and the meaning is lost when we try to make it play the part of ultimate reality. The materialist is particularly embarrassed today because he cannot persuade the contemporary physicist to give a clear statement as to what matter means even in physical science. It seems that "measurable processes," "quanta of action," and "fields of force" are more fundamental concepts than is matter. No one knows what a particle of matter is in and of itself. Thus the statement, "All is matter," is without definable meaning.

But the idealist is no better off when he defines reality as "mind." Those special studies which are supposed to investigate what are called mental facts reveal the difficulty of assigning a

[7] *Present Philosophical Tendencies* (New York: Longmans, Green & Co., 1912), p. 70.

meaning to mind as a substantial thing. Whatever success we have in thinking clearly about this subject depends upon finding that which is not mind as well as that which is. Thus again we lose all possibility of clarity when we say that "All is mind."

These are some of the considerations which cast doubt upon the possibility of metaphysical knowledge. The second question we raised was whether we cannot dismiss this whole difficulty because we do not need a general theory of reality in any case. Whenever we work on a problematic situation we reach a satisfactory conclusion by considering only those factors which are relevant to the specific situation. There are those—the absolute idealists, for example—who insist that we can never make a true judgment about anything without taking all things into consideration. That is, every situation is so related to everything else in the universe as to make up a systematic whole. To have a true belief about any specific thing means to have a true belief about the ultimate nature of all things considered as a unity. But, from the empirical point of view, it seems that this is not the procedure we actually follow. When faced with a problem, it is not necessary to go back to a fundamental set of principles concerning reality in general, and then to make deductions which are applicable to the difficulty with which we are dealing at the moment. On the contrary, we try to define as carefully as we can the precise nature of our problem, we call upon that past experience which may be relevant, and we enter upon an experimental inquiry. Indeed, we may even formulate new principles in the course of our inquiry. Metaphysics, then, may be not only impossible but also unnecessary.

On the other hand, there is a good deal of plausibility in the point of view of those who, although modest in their claims to metaphysical knowledge, nevertheless believe that one's manner of living, one's way of going about the solution of problems, one's ideals, reflect a basic attitude of some sort toward things in general. No matter how hard one tries to escape metaphysics, he never is entirely successful. Therefore, since a metaphysics is always presupposed anyway, it may be the better part of wisdom to make that metaphysics explicit. As a matter of fact, does not the empirical theory of knowledge itself presuppose a world view?

Empiricism, as we have just indicated, believes that we can find satisfactory solutions to our problems without taking into account the nature of the whole. But this point of view, paradoxical as it may sound, actually presupposes something about the character of the real. We may remember that one of the ultimate problems with which the Greeks were concerned had to do with the question of whether the real is a unity or whether it is plural in character. Now the idealist's method of getting knowledge, which proceeds on the assumption that in order to understand one thing we must also understand the nature of the whole, has metaphysical implications. It is asserting that the real is ultimately one. All individual items of experience are to be understood as parts of a single and all-inclusive system. Empiricism is in full agreement with idealism in its insistence that we can understand a thing only in its context. On the other hand, empiricism finds that the context is never so large as to be identical with the whole. In other words, there may be many contexts. Is it not the case that to this extent empiricism presupposes a pluralistic view of reality?

Another philosophical problem which was important for the Greeks was the problem of change and permanence. The Greeks, as we have seen, were inclined to identify the real with the permanent or the eternal, but the implications of the empirical theory lie in the opposite direction. We have said that there are good reasons for doubting the existence of fixed principles. We have said that we can make no final pronouncements about reality. But these denials are at the same time assertions about the general character of reality. The reason that we cannot make final statements is that the world is a growing and developing affair. We take the fact of time seriously, and this means that the future can, and probably will, make a difference. It follows that such words as "process," "growth," "development," "change," are more accurate characterizations of the real than are the words "timeless," "final," "fixity." We have seen that in modern physics the temporal dimension is thought to be as significant as spatial dimensions. Any phenomenon, whether in the field studied by physical science or in that covered by social science, is best understood as a process rather than as an entity having fixed properties.

In our study of philosophy and religion in the Graeco-Roman world we discovered that metaphysics was influenced by a particular religious interest and theory of salvation. Religious Platonism, the mystery religions, Gnosticism, early Christianity, all believed that the natural world was evil and something from which to escape. This meant that there was also a supernatural world which was the true home of the soul. There was a dualism of God and the world, the spirit and the flesh, the supernatural and the natural. There was also a dualism as regards knowledge. One type of method could give men knowledge of this world, but there was also a higher order of knowledge which pertained to the realm of supernature. Hence, the need for something more than mere human reason and experience. This additional something was special divine revelation. On this problem, too, the empirical method has something to say. If we believe that empiricism is the best method of achieving knowledge in all areas, then we also believe that whatever is knowable, whatever reality can be talked about meaningfully, is that which lends itself to empirical investigation. We may believe in a plurality of contexts, but we also believe in applying the same principles of investigation to all situations. In this sense all contexts are similar. There is one order of knowledge, not two. The implication of this is to deny the reality of a supernature, and to deny the metaphysical dualism which separates flesh and spirit, natural desires and pure reason, God and nature. Our instincts are not necessarily bad; instead, they constitute the conditions we have to use and control in the achievement of good. This attitude can be called naturalistic, although this term sometimes has connotations which we do not intend to include. For one thing, naturalism is sometimes identified with materialism, but this is an identification which we do not make. We have shown the fallacy of saying that matter is everything. By naturalism we mean essentially the denial of the supernatural. But when we have denied the supernatural we find, as E. S. Ames has pointed out, that strictly speaking the word "natural" loses its meaning. The word

may be dismissed, for it came to have significance at the point where an order of nature was distinguished as the experienced opposite of the supernatural. Neither term can properly be used without the other,

for each implies the other. Only if natural be made synonymous with the real, can it be adequate to express all that is experienced; but when the natural is given this meaning it includes the ideal, the mental and the spiritual, as well as the so-called physical and material.[8]

It is only with these qualifications that we can safely pin the label of naturalism to our philosophy.

The above remarks fall far short of constituting a complete metaphysical system, but they may serve the purpose of illustrating how method necessarily dictates a world view. Some of the classical problems of metaphysics may be dismissed as meaningless, but there are reasons to believe that the implications of the empirical approach to problems lead to a metaphysics in which such words as "pluralism," "process," and "naturalism" have some meaning.

## Ethics

Man is so constituted that he is interested not only in the truth of ideas about the existence of things but also in the validity of his ideas about the value of things. He has developed intelligence as a useful tool for getting on in the world, and he has also developed moral sensibility. He raises such questions as, Is this right, or wrong? What ought I to do? What is the proper goal of life? Is this thing really valuable? The problem of human conduct has always been an important one for philosophy and religion.

In order to make a judgment concerning the moral worth of any action there must be some standard with which to compare it. But whence come the standards, and how do we know that they are the right ones? Authoritarian religions assert that valid standards have been revealed to men in the past by God, that they are to be revered because they have a divine origin. The Ten Commandments contain valid principles of human conduct because they were given to Moses by Jahweh himself on Mt. Sinai. There is ample evidence, however, that the so-called divine commands reported in the Old Testament reflect the social conditions and particular problems faced by the Hebrews in the various periods of their development. There is conflict and variety among those very standards which are

[8] *Religion* (New York: Henry Holt & Co., 1929), p. 174.

supposed to have been divinely revealed. Even if we believe in standards which are sanctioned by God, we have to look for some further criterion in order to know what is the true revelation.

The empirical method, on the other hand, would indicate that just as our beliefs are formulated in the course of making adjustments to our world, so also our ethical ideals probably emerge in much the same fashion. We need not be surprised that our standards of conduct go through some alteration from one generation to another. But this would imply that there are no universally valid standards and that we can make no moral judgments which could claim universal validity. What is considered good at any one time is merely that which is in accord with the standards of the moment, and these standards are nothing more than social customs. A man is good when he lives in accordance with the conventions of the society of which he is a part. However, the reflective and sensitive person cannot stop at this point because he finds himself wondering about the rightness of social conventions. In trying to answer this further question, he discovers that the problem of morality becomes a philosophical problem.

Ethical philosophies of the kind worked out by Plato and Aristotle were not based on religious authority. Nor were they intended merely to describe the conventional behavior of Athenians in the fifth and fourth centuries before Christ. They attempted to demonstrate the validity of certain goals of life and to show the necessary means of attaining those goals. Traditional philosophical ethics has assumed that human intelligence can discover the highest good for man. In order to make this discovery it is necessary to have some notion as to the nature of man and as to the nature of the environment in which he must achieve his ideals. Any ethical philosophy, including the one we adopt for ourselves, must take account of these factors.

Much that has been said in connection with our philosophy of knowledge and our view of reality has a bearing upon the ethical problem. We get some insights about the nature of man, for example, from seeing the implications of naturalism. Man is not a being who possesses a body which is evil and a soul or mind which is temporarily imprisoned in the body. If this were our view of

human nature, then the ethical problem would be that of discovering the means by which the soul could escape from its prison. There may be experiences which suggest this type of dualism, but when we try to state clearly what we mean by mind, we find that there is no empirical justification for supposing that the mind is a separate entity which exists independently of the body. A human being is an organism acting in an environment and, at times, acting intelligently. When he does act intelligently there are present in the situation those characteristics which we call mind. That is, we do not look down our nose at the body as being the necessarily inferior part of our nature, nor do we behold the mind with awe as something which belongs to a superior realm. Thinking itself, so far as we can see, is intimately associated with bodily activity. From this point of view, natural desires and impulses are not in themselves bad. Nor is reason a separate faculty of the soul whose business it is to suppress the emotions. Appetites, emotions, desires, habits, intelligence, are all natural expressions of what it is to be human. The ethical problem is not that of purifying an independently existing mind and freeing it from the contamination of evil nature. Rather, the ethical problem is concerned with intelligent behavior in the natural environment.

Not only is there no empirical justification for making a sharp dualism of soul and body within the self, there is also no justification for making a rigid distinction between the self and its physical environment or its social environment. In the course of organic evolution the human species emerged as a natural fact. Whatever meaning is attached to such words as "personality," "self," "mind," is directly dependent upon the physical and social environments. It is these which have produced us and which form the arena in which our activities take place. One source of misunderstanding in the use of the word "naturalism" is found in this connection. There is the old assumption that there is something higher than nature in human personality and that if we interpret personality as being continuous with nature we are guilty of "leveling down," of destroying the meaning of ethical ideals, of explaining the superior in terms of the inferior. Our point is that personality and thinking and ideals are themselves part of nature. We are not only natural-

izing ideals, we are also "idealizing" nature. Another difficulty here is that when we explain man as being produced by his physical and social environment, some people may draw the conclusion that man is completely determined, that he has no freedom to change his environment, and thus has no moral responsibility. But the self is not merely the effect of its environment; it also acts upon its environment. Personality is the result of the interaction between the organism and the world in which it lives. It is simply a fact that men do use and alter the physical world, that they do change their social institutions.

This is the view of man and his relation to his environment which is relevant to ethical theory. We must start with the recognition of the close association of morals and social customs. All of us get our standards of good, in the first instance, from the customs of the society in which we have been reared. It is only when there is conflict among standards, or when new material conditions render doubtful the validity of traditional notions of good, that reflective morality emerges. In any conflict among ideals, one of the problems is that of discovering by experimental inquiry the conditions which must be used and controlled in order to make an ideal effective in actual practice. When we see the consequences of the process through which we must go to reach a goal, we have some very useful data upon which to judge the worth of that goal. This cannot give us the final answer to the query as to which one among competing ideals is the best, but it is a necessary part of the procedure through which we arrive at such a decision. The worth of an ideal is to be measured partly in terms of those factors which are involved in bringing the ideal into being. Without knowledge of those factors there can be no virtue. Thus we find something in common with the famous saying of Socrates that knowledge is virtue. The Greeks, however, emphasized the importance of knowledge to such an extent that they finally came to look upon knowing merely for the sake of knowing as the highest good, as superior to practical activity. Now this attitude of the Greeks had foundations which were quite different from the ones on which our philosophy is constructed. We agree that intelligence is a good, but do not make contemplation a good intrinsically higher than practical endeavor.

For one thing, both Plato and Aristotle believed in eternal forms which could be grasped only by the intellect. Man best fulfilled his human function when he became pure "knower" and contemplated the eternal. But many of us have come to believe that there are no eternal principles and that the intellect is not a faculty of the soul which operates independently of physical processes. In the second place, Greek civilization was based upon a slave economy. The slaves did all the work and were not citizens. Moral ideals were formulated with reference to the citizens who were supposed to engage only in leisure activities. Thus leisure was looked upon as intrinsically better than work. But in a democratic society there is no leisure class as such. All of us are expected to work, and moral principles apply to work as well as to leisure. On these assumptions we are inclined to interpret the Socratic identification of virtue and knowledge in a way different from the Greeks. They said that knowledge is better than activity. We say that intelligent activity is better than unintelligent activity.

Intelligence is an integral part of the good life because we cannot judge a goal to be good or bad apart from knowledge of the means we must employ in reaching the goal. Indeed, it is doubtful whether a goal has any meaning for us until we actually engage in the process of getting there. The notion that happiness is the proper end to pursue is devoid of content until we specify what we must do in order to be happy. The end and the means are parts of a single process. In order to test the goodness of the whole process we must analyze the way in which it affects other things. If its effects are beneficial, it is good. If its effects are harmful, it is evil.

It is in some such fashion as this that empiricism approaches the ethical problem. When facing the question, "Is this action right?" we do not ask whether it conforms to a divine command. Nor do we say that it is merely a matter of personal opinion. We ask what the consequences of the action are. Are the consequences good, or bad? In this way we can carry on intelligent investigation in the field of morals. "Ought I to do this?" can be answered if I have in mind the consequences to which the action leads. I ought to do certain things if they are the necessary means to good ends. If we then wonder whether these ends are really good, all we can do is antici-

pate further consequences. This implies that we never can demonstrate with certainty what the final goal of life ought to be. The empirical approach can deal conclusively only with specific moral problems in definite contexts. It has no way of testing the validity of an idea concerning the highest good in general.

Let us remember, however, that there are many ethical ideals in our social and religious heritage whose validity there is no pressing reason for doubting. Most of us believe in the virtues of courage and honesty. Most of us feel that the welfare of humanity as a whole is a higher ethical principle than the cruel persecution of one group for the benefit of another. We do not question the worth of such goods as human cooperation, love, knowledge, artistic creation. Doubtless these will serve as guiding principles or as ideal ends by which to test the goodness of specific acts. We must remember also that the consequences of what we do always affect other people. It is impossible to make any rigid distinction between personal welfare and social welfare. The goods that we as individuals desire are themselves dependent upon a social situation, and the moral quality of our individual behavior is determined largely by its relation to society. Even though we admit the impossibility of demonstrating with absolute certainty any idea regarding the highest good, it is legitimate to put forth a hypothesis which has to do with this ultimate problem of ethics. The method we have been following would suggest that what we are striving for is a situation in which there may be the harmonizing and enhancing of as many goods as possible. The best life is one in which the greatest number of man's possibilities finds intelligent and harmonious fulfillment. The good society is one in which persons and groups cooperate intelligently in the creation and conservation of as many values as possible.

## Religion

There is some justification for supposing that the empirical method is helpless when confronted with the ultimate questions raised by religion. The origin of the world, the ultimate purpose of the universe, the final destiny of human life, are questions to which no verifiable answers can be given. If we mean by religion

the possession of specific beliefs about these things, and if at the same time we adopt an empirical philosophy of knowledge, then religion cannot occupy an important place in our lives. Often, when religion is thought to consist of a body of beliefs, there is further conflict because among those beliefs may be items which have been invalidated by experimental inquiry. If one cannot be religious without believing in special creation or without believing that heaven is a place above the earth, then one has to make a choice between holding to his religion and adopting the outlook of the modern world which includes the theory of evolution and the theory that there is no absolute up and down.

But what evidence is there that religion is primarily a set of fixed beliefs? We have seen that Christianity has had a development as regards both its practice and its doctrines. Even in the earliest period of its history a variety of beliefs emerged. In religion, as in science and social phenomena, process is more fundamental than fixity. It is necessary to stress this point because we so glibly speak of people "losing their religion." In one's individual life there is the common assumption that it is quite all right to subject his scientific beliefs to empirical tests, but that he must either hold to the religious convictions he has acquired in childhood or else give up religion.

There was a time when science, too, was thought to consist primarily of a system of beliefs—beliefs about the physical world; now we believe that science is primarily a method of inquiry and of controlling physical phenomena. There was a time when we thought philosophy was primarily a body of beliefs about ultimate reality; we now believe that philosophy is essentially a critical examination of the meaning and truth of ideas. There was a time when we supposed that in ethics we had to look to eternal standards by which to judge the goodness of our acts; we now find that we can measure the goodness of our behavior in terms of consequences. May it not be the case that religion is primarily devotion to the highest conceivable ideals, rather than the intellectual acceptance of fixed creeds?

If we choose to think of religion in this way, our problem is not so much that of defining religious beliefs as that of defining the

religious attitude. It was Schleiermacher who started modern religious philosophy on this path. He thought of religion as the "feeling of absolute dependence." This, to be sure, is part of the religious attitude, and one which may profitably be cultivated in the modern world. Modern man has had a faith in himself and in his achievements without always realizing his connection with and his dependence upon that which lies beyond the human realm. The sense of humility and of reverence for that in nature upon which our welfare depends is a necessary ingredient of the religious outlook. Nature is not merely something to be used and controlled for our purposes; it is also something to be enjoyed for its own sake. There is a place in modern life for "natural piety." The religious attitude is related not only to nature but also to ideals and values. One is religious when he senses the claim which worthy ideals make upon his allegiance. Dewey defines this element in religious faith as

> the unification of the self through allegiance to ideal ends, which imagination presents to us and to which the human will responds as worthy of controlling our desires and choices.[9]

This view means that religion of some sort is an important part of any culture. It may change, it may receive expressions of which we approve or disapprove, but it is something which cannot be avoided indefinitely. If, as W. P. Montague puts it,

> religion is taken to mean the faith, theoretical, practical, and emotional, in something in nature that is making for the values that we cherish, then religion in that sense is at least important. It may be as false and as bad as the militant atheists of the Soviet Union believe. Or it may be as true and essential to human good as the Christian Fundamentalists, Catholic and Protestant, hold it to be. It is at any rate a thing to discuss.[10]

Such an approach to religion may throw some light on the one belief which most of us feel is central in religious faith, namely, the belief in God. Our view makes it evident, however, that theologians have wasted a great deal of effort in trying to prove that God exists. They have tried to demonstrate, for example, that

[9] *A Common Faith* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1934), p. 33.
[10] *Belief Unbound* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1930), p. 26.

there must have been a first cause of the universe, and presumably they meant to imply that this cause was God. Quite apart from the fact that none of the traditional arguments for God's existence is free from fallacies, there is the further question as to whether the being whose existence is supposed to be demonstrated is really the God whom the religious man worships. What difference does it make in our religious lives whether a being of some sort created the world or whether the universe is eternal and thus had no creator? If we assume that there was a creator, how can we surely know whether the creator was good or evil? If we say that God created the world it is likely that we shall point to the good in the world in support of our argument. Or if we say an evil being was the creator, we may point to the evil. In either case, the world is seen to be a place in which there is some good and some evil. The consequences of creation are identical whether we call the creator good or evil, or whether we say there was no creator. If the consequences are the same, then it makes no difference whether we believe the world to have been created or uncreated; to have been created by a being called God or by an evil power. They all mean the same thing.

Belief in God as creator is not the important thing in religion. The important thing is faith in a being who is now a force for good and who can be relied upon to bring things to their proper fulfillment in the future. In actual religious living it is the attitude of trust in this being or God, or love of God, or obedience to God's will, which is significant. Our problem becomes that of discovering what it is in actual experience which has the characteristics of the divine.

A religious man says, "I trust in God." This means that there is something in nature which is believed to be dependable. We discover by empirical methods that nature is a scene of predictable order and law. There are natural regularities which render it possible for us to make reliable predictions. If God is that in nature which is trustworthy, then a part of what we mean by God is the experienced orderliness and dependability of nature. But this does not describe completely the divine nature. We also find that our ideals are rooted in natural conditions and that their fulfillment depends not

only on our own efforts but upon favorable factors in the natural world. When we trust God we trust that in nature which makes for good. God may be further defined as that experienced reality which produces the highest good when lives are properly adjusted to him. If we follow this approach to faith in God, we see that the religious problem is not that of believing that God exists, but that of living in such a way that we may have God's help in realizing the highest values.

A religious man says, "I will obey God rather than man." This can mean only that the religious man will be steadfast in his loyalty to the highest ideals. He will speak the truth even though men command him to propagate lies. He will have compassion toward all of God's creatures even though his nation's government should try to force him to hate the enemy. A further meaning of God, then, is the highest and most inclusive set of values. When we obey God's will we are devoted to the most worthy ideals.

Religion as well as science may be experimental. It is the constant searching for that in nature which is trustworthy, lovable, and the condition of the greatest good. It is the adjusting of human life to the divine reality in such a way that the most desirable consequences may be achieved. It is loyalty to the highest known values and the search for what is really highest. If we define religion in this way it means that our knowledge of God may grow.

A person who lives in the Western world cannot escape the influence of the Christian tradition. We have suggested what some of the ingredients of the religious attitude in general are, but most of us will find expression of this through the particular religion of Christianity.

Religion is a social as well as an individual affair. It is normal for the Christian to find membership in the Christian community, that is, the Church. We may assume that the purpose of the Church is to guard, exemplify, preach, and make effective in the world the values and ideals which are associated with the spirit of Christ. Christian loyalty to the Church should not be confused with loyalty to a human organization as such. It is possible that groups having no ecclesiastical connection may be closer to the spirit of Christ than many associations which are called churches. A Christian's first

loyalty is to those values which the Church is supposed to conserve and enhance. For the most part it has been through the historic Church that the continuity of Christian tradition has been preserved.

To be a Christian is to see in Christ the highest revelation of the character of God. The ethic of love which he preached and which he followed is the best indication of what type of life is in accord with God's will. This does not mean that every specific teaching of Jesus as recorded in the New Testament is to be looked upon as a divine command. Values must be tested in experience just as beliefs are tested. Jesus' specific teachings were historically conditioned and we can discover their value most accurately by seeing them in their historical context. It is the general quality of life which he exemplified that we consider the most adequate symbol of those ideal ends to which we give the name God.

There has been no final statement of the Christian faith. Fundamentalists of one sort or another have made the error of looking to the past as authoritative rather than as inspirational. In taking the Bible literally and in detail as the final authority, Protestant orthodoxy included in the so-called divine truth barbaric ideas of moral practice and crude cosmological speculation. Even those parts of the Bible whose value has survived were made less effective by seeing them only in the particular context of the biblical world. In this way the relevance of religion to the problems of the modern world was lessened. The Bible is a human product even though it may be used as a means to faith. It is not a body of clearly stated principles which enables us to distinguish what is Christian from what is not Christian.

Catholicism made the Church the final authority in the interpretation of faith. The Church lives in history and is a part of the various social situations to which it attempts to apply the principles of Christianity. It therefore can meet the needs of the changing world with authority. Yet it is human beings who occupy positions of ecclesiastical leadership, and no matter how learned or conscientious they may be, they are still capable of making mistakes. Their errors as well as their true insights may become equated with the final statement of the meaning of the Christian faith.

The formulation of Christian beliefs, like the formulation of any

of our beliefs, is both social and continuous. Christian doctrine may be partially comprehended by one who is outside the Christian community because it necessarily has something in common with that widely shared experience to which philosophy in general refers. The more complete understanding of Christian teaching is limited to the group which looks at the world from the point of view of Christian experience. If this group is truly the Church it has a common basis in its devotion to the quality of life exemplified by Christ as the best guide to divine values. It is this fundamental experience which gives point to the intellectual task of putting the faith into conceptual form. The task is social since it has to do with the shared experience of the Christian community. It is also continuous even though there are high points in the development of the Christian faith. Since the center of this faith is the revelation of the character of God in Christ, the Gospels occupy a particularly important place. The brilliant formulation of doctrine during those vital years at the beginning of the Christian era is also a high point. The Church rightly has assigned to the teaching of the Church Fathers, as well as to the Bible, a position of special significance in Christian tradition. But there is no more finality here than in the admittedly illuminating work of Thomas Aquinas or of Calvin and Luther. Such peaks must not blind us to the fact of continuity, to the fact that we today are not only the bearers but the makers of tradition. We are the heirs of a historic development and we are the creators of history. When loyalty to the Christian faith is seen in this light of continuous development there is no conflict between our religion and our empirical theory of knowledge.

## Conclusion

The contents of this chapter do not constitute the modern philosophical system which it is one's duty to learn. They merely outline some of the applications of a point of view which may help one in the task of formulating his own philosophy. If he does appropriate this point of view he will soon discover that there are many details which he will have to fill in for himself. Perhaps it is better thus, because, as C. I. Lewis wisely says,

It is . . . a distinguishing character of philosophy that it is everybody's business. The man who is his own lawyer or physician, will be poorly served; but everyone both can and must be his own philosopher. He must be, because philosophy deals with ends, not means. It includes the questions, What is good? What is right? What is valid? Since finally the responsibility for his own life must rest squarely upon the shoulders of each, no one can delegate the business of answering such questions to another.[11]

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