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# COMPARATIVE RELIGION

BY

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"Those first affections,
Those shadowy recollections,
Which, be they what they may,
Are yet the fountain light of all our day,
Are yet a master light of all our seeing;
Uphold us, cherish, and have power to make
Our noisy years seem moments in the being
Of the eternal Silence."

WORDSWORTH.

"To the philosopher the existence of God may seem to rest on a syllogism; in the eyes of the historian it rests on the whole evolution of human thought."—MAX MÜLLER.

# COMPARATIVE RELIGION

## CHAPTER I

### INTRODUCTORY

OVER the chancel-arch of the church at South Leigh, a few miles west of Oxford, is a fresco of the Last Judgment and the Resurrection, of the type well known in mediæval art. On the adjoining south wall stands the stately figure of the archangel Michael. In his right hand he holds a pair of scales. In one scale is the figure of a soul in the attitude of prayer; beside it is Our Lady carrying a rosary. The other contains an ox-headed demon blowing a horn. This scale rises steadily, though another demon has climbed to the beam above to weigh it down, and a third from hell's mouth below endeavours to drag it towards the abyss. The same theme recurs in several other English churches; and it is carved over the portals of many French cathedrals, as at Notre Dame in Paris.

Unroll a papyrus from an Egyptian tomb of the Eighteenth Dynasty before the days of Moses, and you will see a somewhat similar

scene. The just and merciful judge Osiris, "lord of life and king of eternity," sits in the Hall of the two goddesses of Truth. Hither the soul is brought for the ordeal which will determine his future bliss or woe. Before forty-two assessors he declares his innocence of various offences: "I am not a doer of what is wrong; I am not a robber; I am not a slayer of men; I am not a niggard; I am not a teller of lies; I am not a monopoliser of food; I am no extortioner; I am not unchaste; I am not the causer of others' tears. . . ." Then he is led, sometimes supported by the two goddesses of Truth, to the actual trial. Resting on an upright post is the beam of a balance. It is guarded by a dog-headed ape, symbol of Thoth, "lord of the scales." Thoth has various functions in the ancient texts, and even rises into a kind of impersonation of the principle of intelligence in the whole universe. Here as the computer of time and the inventor of numbers he plays the part of secretary to Osiris. In one scale is placed the heart of the deceased, the organ of conscience. In the other is sometimes a square weight, sometimes an ostrich plume, symbol of truth or righteousness. Thoth stands beside the scales, tablet in hand, to record the issue as the soul passes to the great award.

The scenes and the persons differ; but the fundamental conception of judgment is the same, and it is carried out by the same method. Is this an accidental coincidence of metaphor?

The figure of the balance was naturally suggestive for the estimate of worth, and the Psalmist cried in bitterness of heart—

> "Surely men of low degree are vanity,
> And men of high degree are a lie,
> In the balances they will go up;
> They are altogether lighter than vanity."

The mysterious hand wrote upon the wall of Belshazzar's palace the strange word *Tekel*, which contained the dreadful sentence, "Thou art weighed in the balances and art found wanting." To early Indian imagination, before the days of the Buddha (500 B.C.), the ordeal of the balance was part of the outlook into the world beyond. In the ancient Persian teaching, Rashnu, the angel of justice, before the shining "Friend," the mediator Mithra, presided over the weighing of the spirits at the bridge of destiny, over which they would pass to heaven or hell.

Is Michael the heir of Thoth or Rashnu? He passed into the Christian Church from the Jewish Synagogue, where he was specially connected with the destinies of the dead. He guided the souls of the just to the heavenly world, where he led them into the mystic city, the counterpart of Jerusalem below; or he stood at the gate as the angel of righteousness to decide who should be admitted. So for the Greeks Hermes was the guardian of the spirits of the departed, whom he conducted

to the judgment in the under-world. In this respect, then, Hermes and Michael were akin. But Hermes also played many other parts, and the Greeks identified him with the Egyptian Thoth. When the destinies of Hector and Achilles were weighed against each other, ere the last mortal combat, the vase-painter could represent Hermes as holding the balance in the presence of Zeus, much as Thoth had presided over it before Osiris. The Etruscan artists depicted Mercury, the Italian equivalent of Hermes, fulfilling the same function. True, the purport of the test was different. But the symbol was the same; and when Hermes gave place to Michael, as Christianity was carried to the West, the scales passed from the Hellenic to the Jewish Christian figure, though they had in the one case been used to decide the allotment of fate, and in the other were employed for judgment. Why they remained so long unused in Christian symbolism is obscure. The revival of intercourse with the East through the Crusades may have given new force to the idea as part of the great judgment-process; and the figure to which it was most natural to assign it was that of Thoth-Hermes-Michael.

The religion of the ancient Hindus was founded, as every one knows, upon the venerable hymns collected into one sacred book under the name of the Rig Veda. These hymns, 1017 in number, containing over

10,000 verses, are now arranged in ten books, twice the number of the divisions of the Hebrew Psalter. Like most of the Psalms they are traditionally ascribed to different poets, in whose families they were sung; and their authors were regarded as Rishis, bards, or sages. Of their real origin nothing is definitely known; their composition probably extends over many generations, perhaps over several centuries; and dim suggestions of their super-earthly origin already appear in some of the latest poems. They became the peculiar treasure of the priestly order; the most laborious efforts were devised for the study and preservation of the sacred text; the methods of pronunciation, the rules of grammar, the principles of metre, the derivations of words, were all elaborated with the utmost minuteness into different branches of Vedic lore. Two other smaller Vedas, collections of sacrificial formulæ and hymns, were very early placed beside the main work, and a fourth collection gained similar rank much later. With the development of the great schools of Hindu philosophy, especially after the decline of Buddhism, the whole question of authority as the foundation of belief and reasoning was forced to the front, and this in due time was applied to the Veda. Brahmanical speculation had been long concerned with its divine origin. It sprang from one of the mysterious figures in which the ancient theologians expressed their sense of the real

unity of the heavenly powers, Prajāpati, the "lord of creatures," through the medium of Vāch, or sacred Speech. As such it was "the firstborn in the universe." But as proceeding from Prajāpati it issued from the world of the *an-anta*, the "un-ending" or "infinite," which was likewise the sphere of the *a-mrita*, the "im-mortal" or "deathless." So it belonged to the realm of the eternal, where it could be beheld, not indeed with the eye of sense, but with the higher discernment of the holy Seer. The philosophical schools occupied themselves accordingly with the defence of the eternity and consequent infallibility of the Veda. Elaborate arguments were devised to explain the relation of words to things, and of sound in the abstract to uttered speech or again to show how behind individuals which had their origin in time there existed species (even of the gods) which belonged to the timeless order transcending our experience. So the conclusion was reached, in the words of the great philosopher Çankara (A.D. 788–820), that "the authority of the Veda with regard to the matters stated by it is independent and direct; just as the light of the sun is the direct means of our knowledge of form and colour."

Just at this era, by a singular coincidence, a remarkable controversy was raging in the schools of Mohammedan theology. Mohammed died in A.D. 632. He had himself recorded nothing; the traditions about him are not even

agreed whether he could read or write. His oracles were taught to his disciples, who began to note down some of them during the prophet's life; soon after his death the formal collection of them was undertaken; and under Caliph Othman (651) four copies were deposited in the cities of Mecca, Cufa, Basra, and Damascus. We know the work under the name of the Koran (*Qurān* = reading), one of the numerous expressions which Mohammed was said to have coined for the revelation imparted to him from on high. Later generations attached the title exclusively to the utterances fixed in literary form, and discerned in them a unity designed by the prophet; but it seems more consonant with his view to regard each of the 114 discourses (*suras*) as a unit in itself, and the whole as only a fragment of his teaching. Many passages raise a claim to specific divine origin; others allude to the uncreated Scripture, *umm-al-kitab*, "the mother of the book."

On such hints was founded the remarkable doctrine that the Koran was eternal in its essence as the word of God, a necessary attribute of the Most High. First formulated in the middle of the eighth century (A.D. 747–748), it roused extraordinary interest outside the theological schools. It was fostered by the early Caliphs, for it supported their political authority, and the emphasis which it placed on the doctrine of predestination supplied them with a potent weapon. Opposition

arose on the ground of free will; the passages enforcing the principle of predestination were evaded by the handy method of allegorical interpretation, and the revolt of the moral consciousness led, as it has done elsewhere, to rationalism. Public debates were held amid general excitement, when the Caliph Ma'mun (813–833) unexpectedly espoused the rationalist cause, and issued a decree forbidding the discussion. The popular forces, however, were in the long run triumphant. In 847 a new Caliph came into power, inclined for political reasons to the higher doctrine. Lectures were instituted in the mosques on the attributes of God, and vast audiences—the historians report twenty and even thirty thousand hearers—listened eagerly while the theologians disputed whether God's word could be conceived distinct from his absolute being. Faith in the prophet triumphed; the exaltation of the product reacted on that of the person; and the Arabian shepherd could be regarded as the inerrant, sinless, uncreated light, sent forth from Deity himself, who for his sake spread out the earth and arched the heavens, and proclaimed the great confession "There is no God but Allah, and Mohammed is his prophet."

Every great historical religion passes through numerous phases, as it is brought into contact with different cultures, and evokes various forms of speculative thought and inward

experience. Buddhism has been no exception to this rule. It sprang up in a moral revolt against the claims of the Brahmanical teachers, and in the midst of the discussions of the sophists turned its back on metaphysics and sought to concentrate attention on the Noble Path of the good life. It offered a way of deliverance from the weary round of births and deaths by the victory over ignorance and sin, and sought to overcome selfishness by eliminating the idea that man has, or is, a Self. Accordingly it presented its founder Gotama (500 B.C.), as the man who had attained the Truth, who had by a long series of lives devoted to the higher righteousness acquired the insight into the causes and meaning of existence, and imparted it to his followers with instructions to carry it forth for the welfare of their fellow-men. For this end he founded a union or order; he instituted a discipline, and committed his teaching to a body of disciples whose successors gradually bore it into distant lands. He himself passed away, leaving no trace behind. His memory was cherished with dutiful devotion. Pilgrimages to the scenes of his birth and Buddhahood, commemorative festivals and pious rites, kept the image of the Teacher before the mind of the believer. But no prayer was offered to him; no worship created any bond of fellowship between the departed Gotama and the community which he had left on earth.

But in the course of several generations remarkable changes took place. Environed by philosophical speculations, Buddhism could not remain wholly unaffected by the great ideas of metaphysics. While one branch, now surviving in Ceylon, Burma and Siam, remained faithful to the Founder's exclusion of all such conceptions as being, substance, and the like, others began to interpret the person of the Buddha in terms of the Absolute, and identified him with the Eternal and the Self-Existent, who from time to time for the welfare of the world took on himself the semblance of humanity, and appeared to be born, to attain Enlightenment, and die. The great aim of the deliverance of all sentient beings from error, suffering, and guilt, expressed itself further in the association with him of numerous other holy forms sharing the same purpose of the world's salvation.

Among these was the Buddha Amitâbha, the Buddha of Boundless Light,[1] who had made a wondrous vow in virtue of which a blessed future of righteousness and joy in the Western Paradise was secured for all who put their trust in him. Carried into China, this devotion acquired great popularity, and centuries later it passed into Japan. There, while Europe was sending its warriors to win back from the Crescent the city of the Cross, while Bernard and Francis and Dominic were awakening new enthusiasm for the monastic

[1] Also called Amitâyus, the Buddha of Boundless Life.

life, two famous teachers, Honen (1133–1212) and Shin-ran (1173–1262), developed the doctrine of "salvation by faith." Honen was the only son of a military chief who died of a wound inflicted by an enemy. On his death-bed he enjoined the boy never to seek revenge, and bade him become a monk for the spiritual enlightenment both of his father and his father's foe. So the lad passed in due time into one of the great Buddhist monasteries on mount Hiei. Long years of laborious study followed, till in 1175 he reached the conviction that faith in Amida[1] was the true way of salvation. A deep sense of human sinfulness and the belief in an All-Merciful Deliverer were the essential elements of his religion. Three emperors became his pupils, and his life, compiled by imperial order after his death, resembles that of a mediæval Christian saint. Visions of Amida and of the holy teachers of the past were vouchsafed to him. He preached —like another St. Francis—to the serpents and the birds. His person was mysteriously transfigured, and a wondrous light filled his dwelling.

His disciple Shin-ran carried the doctrine of his master yet a little farther. Filled with adoring gratitude to the Buddha of Boundless Light, who, as the deliverer, was also the Buddha of Boundless Life, he argued that infinite mercy and infinite wisdom must belong to him; and these in their turn implied the

[1] The Japanese form of the Sanskrit Amitâbha.

power to give effect to his great purpose. He passed from village to village through the Eastern provinces, rousing enthusiasm by the hymns into which he wrought his new faith. They are still sung in the temples at the present day. But whereas Honen had recognised a value in good works, and had enjoined the duty of constant repetition of the sacred name of Amida, Shin-ran insisted that all element of "self-exertion" must be purged away, and faith in the merits of Amida—"the exertion of another"—should alone remain. Some of the conceptions of Western teaching thus present themselves in Japan in the midst of modes of life and thought of purely Indian origin. Christian theologians had debated whether faith was to be regarded as an *opus* or a *donum*, a "work" or a "gift," was it something to be attained by man or was it bestowed by God? The Japanese answer was unhesitating. Faith was not earned by effort, or achieved by merit, it was granted out of immeasurable love. "The Buddha," we read, "confers this heart. The heart which takes refuge in his heart is not produced by oneself. It is produced by the command of Buddha. Hence it is called the believing heart by the Power of Another." The natural corollary was that in due course this grace would be bestowed on all. The Buddha of Boundless Light and Life would overcome the darkness of ignorance and death; and this type of Buddhism, now the most active and

influential in Japan, preaches the doctrine of universal salvation. The student finds here a whole series of parallels to the Evangelical interpretation of Christianity. Both schemes are founded on the same essential ideas, man's need of a deliverer, and the attainment of salvation by no human conduct but by faith in a divine person.

The foregoing sketches raise many problems. What are the actual features in different religions which are susceptible of comparison? How can we distinguish between resemblances which are deep-seated and spring from the fundamental principles of two given faiths, and those which are only on the surface, and probably accidental? How far can such parallels be ascribed to suggestion through historical contact, and, if they lie too far apart for possibilities of any form of mutual dependence, out of what common types of experience are they derived, what forces of thought have shaped them, what feelings do they express?

The student of Comparative Religion seeks answers to these and similar questions. A vast field of inquiry is at once opened before him. It embraces practically every continent, people, and tribe on the face of the globe. It begins in the last period of the great ice age, when men lived in this country in the company of the elephant, the rhinoceros, and the mammoth, and hunted their game through

Germany, Belgium, and France. In dim recesses of the caves they painted the deer, the bison, the antelope and the wild boar, under conditions which imply some kind of mysterious or holy place. They buried their dead with care, and though we can ask them no questions we may infer with much probability that they celebrated some kind of funeral meal, and deposited implements and ornaments in the grave for the use of the departed in the world beyond. In one case hundreds of shells were found buried with the skull of a little child. Similar usages may be traced through the slow advances of culture to the present day. Death is an element of universal experience; and it is not unreasonable to suppose that if the negroid peoples of Western Europe had worked out some view of its meaning and consequences, there were other things to be done or avoided out of fear or reverence for the Unseen.

The first objects of comparison are thus found in the outward acts which fall more or less clearly within the sphere of religion, the places where these are performed, the persons who do them, the means required for them, the occasions to which they are attached. These all belong to the external world; they can be observed and recorded, even though we may not be sure what they mean. When they are brought together, a series of gradations of complexity can be established, while a common purpose may be traced through all.

From the negro who lays his offering of grain or fruit at the foot of a tree with the simple utterance, "Thank you, gods," to a great Eucharistic celebration at St. Peter's, a continuous line of ritual may be followed, in which the action becomes more elaborate, the functions and character of the officiating ministers more strictly defined, the accessories of worship more complicated. This corresponds to the enrichment and elevation of the ideas and emotions that animate the act, as that which is at first performed as part of tribal usage and ancestral custom acquires the force of divine institution and personal duty.

Behind the external act lies the internal world of thought and feeling. The social sanction may invest the ceremony itself with so much force that the worshipper's interest may lie rather in the due performance of the rite than in the deity to whom it is addressed. The element of belief may be relatively vague and indefinite. But in the more highly organised religions belief also may externalise itself through hymn and prayer, through myth and history and prophecy. When a religion is strong enough to create a literature, a fresh object of comparison is presented. The utterances of poet and sage, of lawgiver and seer, can be set side by side. Their conceptions of the Powers towards which worship is directed can be studied; the characters and functions of the several deities can be determined. This

is the intellectual element in religion. It has often been regarded as the element of most importance, because it seemed most readily to admit of the test of truth. It finds its most formal expression in the articles of a creed, and has sometimes been erected into the chief ground of the supreme arbitrament of heaven and hell.

There remains the element of feeling. This also may be so entangled in tradition, so enveloped in the pressure of surrounding influences, that it is at first obscure and indistinct. But its importance was early recognised when the origin of religion was ascribed to fear, in the oft-quoted line of the Roman Satirist Petronius Arbiter at the court of Nero (who committed suicide A.D. 66)—

"Primus in orbe deos fecit timor."

In the eighteenth century the genius of Lessing (1729–1781) fastened on the feeling of the heart as the essential foundation of religion. No written record, no historical event, could guarantee its truth; that lay in the constitution of the human spirit in its interpretation of its experience. In his famous drama of "Nathan the Sage" he applied this to the representatives of three great historical religions which were thus brought together for comparison: the Christian Templar, the Mohammedan Saladin, and the Jew Nathan. Herder (1744–1803) endeavoured with the

materials then at command to trace the origin and development of religion, starting from the primitive impressions made upon the mind by the world without, and sought to interpret mythology as the imaginative utterance of man's consciousness of the power, light, and life in Nature. In the next generation Schleiermacher (1767–1834) placed the essence of religion in the feeling of absolute dependence, without attempting to define the object towards which it was directed. The study of origins has passed out of the hands of the philosophers and the theologians. But it cannot dispense with psychology; and among the factors of early religious life will be found the beginnings of wonder, reverence and awe. And this element, often cruelly twisted into false and degraded forms, and sometimes refined in the higher types of mysticism into the loftiest spirituality, inheres in all practice and belief.

What, then, is the basis of comparison among different faiths? The student who is engaged in tracing the life-history of any one religion will naturally start from the field of investigation thus selected. As he widens his outlook he will find that a number of illustrative instances force themselves upon his view. The people whose institutions and ideas he is examining are members of a given ethnic group. The ancient Hebrews, for instance, belong on the one side to the life of the desert, and are kin with the nomad Arabs,

on the other they are related to the authors of Babylonian culture. Or in the course of events a new religion is brought by missionary impulse into a less-developed civilisation, as when Buddhism passed from China through Corea into Japan, and was planted in the midst of a cruder faith. Widely different modes of thought are thus brought into close juxtaposition, their relation and interaction can be examined, and the inner forces of each compared.

That such inquiries must be conducted without prejudice need not now be enforced. An eighteenth-century writer might lay it down that "the first general division of *Religion* is into *True* and *False*," and might draw the conclusion that "the chapter of *False Religions* is by much the longest in the History of the religious opinions and practices of mankind."[1] Dr. Johnson could sententiously declare that "there are two objects of curiosity, the Christian world and the Mohammedan world—all the rest may be considered as barbarous." A learned Oxford scholar of the last generation could speak of the "three chief false religions," Brahmanism, Buddhism, and Mohammedanism. Missionaries and travellers of an elder day, who took some form of Christianity as their foundation, sometimes found the savages among whom they laboured destitute of religion because they had no Father in heaven

[1] Broughton, *Dictionary of all Religions*, 1745.

and no everlasting hell. These attitudes, it is now freely recognised, are not scientific. For purposes of comparison no single religion can be selected as a standard for the whole human race. Particular products may be set side by side. The asceticism of India may be compared with that of early Christianity. The ritual of sacrifice may be studied in the book of Leviticus or the Hindu Brāhmanas. What are sometimes called "Ethnic Trinities" may be examined in the light of Alexandrian theology. The *suras* of the Koran may be read after the prophecies of Isaiah. The various phases of the Buddhist Order, with its missionary zeal, its power of adaptability to different cultures, its readiness to accept new teaching, may be contrasted with the wonderful cohesiveness and expansion of the Roman Catholic Church. The ideas of the Hellenic mystery-religions may be found to throw light on the language of St. Paul. Out of the multitudinous phases of human experience all the world over innumerable resemblances will be discovered. Each is a fact for the student, and must be treated on equal terms in the field of science. But they will have more or less intrinsic significance in the scale of values. Philosophy may attempt to range them in gradations of worth, in nobility of form, in dignity of expression, in moral purity, in social effectiveness. Beneath infinite diversity the mystic will affirm the unity of the whole, with the poet of the

*Masnavi*, Jalálu-'d-Din of Balkh (A.D. 1207–1273)—

> "Because He that is praised is, in fact, only One,
> In this respect all religions are only one religion."

The materials of comparison are, of course, of the most varied kind. The interest of the ancient Greeks was early roused in the diverse practices which they saw around them, and the observations of Herodotus concerning the Egyptians, the Persians, the Scythians, and many another tribe upon the fringe of barbarism, have earned for him the modern title of the "Father of Anthropology." Travellers, missionaries, government officers, men of trade and men of learning, have recorded the usages of the lower culture all over the world, naturally with varying accuracy and penetration, and a vast range of facts has been registered through successive stages of complexity in social and religious development. Many of these have their parallel in the folk-lore of countries where the uniformity of modern civilisation has not crushed out all traditional beliefs, while annual customs or even village games may contain survivals of what were once important ceremonial rites. The irruption of the Arab conquerors into Europe brought Christianity face to face with Mohammedanism and its sacred book. In the

seventeenth century the Jesuit Fathers in China first made known the teachings of Kong-fu-tse ("Philosopher Kong") 500 B.C. whose name they Latinised into Confucius. Towards the end of the eighteenth century a brilliant little band of English scholars in Calcutta began to reveal the astounding copiousness of the sacred literature of India. During the expedition of Napoleon to Egypt in 1799 the Rosetta Stone (now in the British Museum) yielded the clue to the hieroglyphics which cover the walls of temple and tomb. A generation later a young British officer, Lieutenant Henry Rawlinson, began in 1835 to copy a triple inscription on a cliff of Mount Behistun, near Kermanshah in Persia. The work was dangerous and difficult, but he was enabled to complete it ten years later. It contained an identical record in three languages, Persian, Median, and Babylonio-Assyrian, and provided the means for deciphering the cuneiform script of the tablets and cylinders soon recovered from the mounds of Mesopotamia.

Meanwhile the lovers of the past were at work in many other directions. The Swedish Lönrott collected the ancient songs of the Finnic people, under the name of the Kalevala. Other scholars brought to light the treasures of Scandinavian mythology in the Icelandic Edda with its two collections of poetry and prose. In Wales and Ireland the texts which enshrined the Celtic faith awoke new interest. The students of classical antiquity began to

collect inscriptions, and it was soon realised that the spade might be no less useful in Greece or Asia Minor than beside the Nile or the Euphrates.

The last century has thus accumulated an immense mass of material in literature and art. There are codes of law regulating in the name of deity the practice of family and social life. There are hymns of praise or of penitence, sometimes in strange association with the spells of magic. There are books of ritual and sacrifice, of ceremonial order, of philosophical speculation and moral precept. There are rules of discipline for religious communities; and there are pictures of judgment and delineations of the heavenly life. Sculpture and painting have been employed to give external form to the objects of pious reverence; and the architecture of the sanctuary has wrought into stone the fundamental conceptions of majesty, proportion, and grace.

All this, it is plain, rests upon history. When Confucius visited the seat of the imperial dynasty at the court of Chow, he studied with deep interest the arrangements for the great sacrifices to Heaven and Earth; he surveyed the ancestral temples in which the emperor offered his worship; he inspected the Hall of Light whose walls bore paintings of the sovereigns from the remotest times; and then he turned to his disciples with the remark: "As we use a glass to examine the forms of things, so must we study the past to

understand the present." Comparison that confines itself solely to counting up resemblances here and there will be of small value. We cannot comprehend the real meaning of a single religious rite, a single sentence of any scripture, apart from the context to which it belongs. Acts and words alike issue out of experiences that may be hundreds of years old, and sum up generations, it may be whole ages, of a continuous process. To trace the successive forms of these changes, to describe the steps through which they have passed, is like making a chart of a voyage, and laying down the lines of continent and ocean, island and cape. Or just as the races of man are sorted, and their characteristics are enumerated without reference to the various causes which have produced their modifications, so geography and ethnography might companion *hierography*, the delineation of "the Sacred" in its concrete manifestations.

But behind the external evolution of a given religion, its modes of worship, its ministers, its doctrines, lie more complicated questions. What causes shaped these acts and moulded these beliefs? What elements of race are to be discerned in them? How can we account for the diversities between the religions of peoples belonging to a common stock, like those of India and those of ancient Italy? What have been the effects of climate, of the struggle with alien peoples and new environment? How does the food-supply influence

the formation of religious ideas? What contacts have been felt with other races, and what positive loans or more impalpable influences have passed from one side to the other? We find here in *hierology*, the science of "the Sacred," an analogue to the reasoning which accounts for the distribution of land and water, the rise of mountain ranges and the sculpture of valleys and river-beds out of the stratification of the earth's crust, and builds up a science of geology; or which traces the results of migration upon peoples, the consequences of inter-marriage with other tribes, the disastrous issues of war, surveys the immense variety of causes which have contributed to new developments of racial energy, and arranges this knowledge in the science of ethnology.

And, lastly, the values of these facts must be estimated. How far can they be accepted as expressing the reality of the Unseen Power, and man's relation to it? Hierology may explain how men have developed certain practices or framed certain beliefs; to determine their reasonableness is the task of the philosophy of religion or *hierosophy*.[1]

The study of "Comparative Religion" assumes that religion is already in existence. It deals with actual usages, which it places side by side to see what light they can throw upon each other. It leaves the task of formu-

[1] These three terms have been suggested by Count Goblet d'Alviella, of Brussels.

lating definitions to philosophy. It is not concerned with origins, and does not project itself into the prehistoric past where conjecture takes the place of evidence. An old miracle-play directed Adam to pass across the stage "going to be created." Whether religion first appeared in the cultus of the dead, or only entered the field after the collapse of a reign of magic which had ceased to satisfy man's demands for help, or was born of dread and desired to keep its gods at a distance, only remotely affects the process of discovering and examining the resemblances of its forms, and interpreting the forces without and within which have produced them. The sphere of speculation has its own attractions, but in this little book an attempt will be made to keep to facts.

Three hundred years ago Edward Herbert,[1] an Oxford scholar who played many parts and played them well, in deep revolt against the ecclesiastical doctrine that all the world outside the pale of the Church was doomed to eternal damnation, devoted himself to the study of comparative religion. With the materials which the classics afforded him, he examined the recorded facts among the Greeks and Romans, the Carthaginians and Arabs, the Phrygians, the Persians, the Assyrians. The whole fabric of human experience was built up, he argued, on certain common knowledges or notions, which could be distinguished by

[1] 1583–1648, elder brother of "Holy George Herbert."

specific marks, such as priority, independence, universality, certainty, necessity for man's well-being, and immediacy. Here were the bases of law in relation to social order, and of religion in relation to the Powers above man. These principles in religion were five : (1) that there is one supreme God; (2) that he ought to be worshipped; (3) that virtue and piety are the chief parts of divine worship; (4) that we ought to be sorry for our sins and repent of them; (5) that divine goodness doth dispense rewards and punishments both in this life and after it. These truths had been implanted by the Creator in the mind of man, and their subsequent corruption produced the idolatries of antiquity.

The theory held its ground in various forms till its last echoes appeared in highly theologic guise in the writings of Mr. Gladstone. He pleaded that there must have been a true religion in the world before an untrue one began to gather and incrust upon it, and this religion included three great doctrines—the existence of the Triune Deity, the advent of a Redeemer, and the power of the Evil One and the defeat of the rebel angels. These had formed part of a primeval revelation. In the Homeric theology he traced the first in the three sons of Kronos—Zeus, Hades, and Poseidon. The second he found in Apollo, whose mother Leto represented the Woman from whom the Redeemer should descend. The rebel angels were equated with the Titans;

the power of temptation was personified in Atê; the rainbow of the covenant was identified with Iris. The student of to-day can hardly believe that this volume could have been published in the same year in which Darwin and Wallace formulated the new scientific principle of "natural selection" as the great agent in the formation of species, and thus laid the foundation of the modern conception of evolution (1858).

It is on this great idea that the whole study of the history of religion is now firmly established. At the foundation of all endeavours to classify the multitudinous facts which it embraces, lies the conviction that whatever may be the occasional instances of degeneration or decline, the general movement of human things advances from the cruder and less complex to the more refined and developed. In the range of knowledge, in the sphere of the arts, in the command over nature, in the stability and expansion of the social order, there are everywhere signs of growth, even if isolated groups, such as the Australians, the Todas of India, or the Veddas of Ceylon, seem to be in the last stages of stagnation or decay. Religion is one phase of human culture, it expresses man's attitude to the powers around him and the events of life. Its various forms repose upon the unity of the race. The anthropologist is convinced that if a new tribe is discovered in some forest in central Africa, whether its stature be large or small, its

persons will contain the same limbs as other men, and will live by the same physical processes. The sociologist expects that their social groups will approximate to other known types of human relations. The philologist anticipates that behind the obscurities of their speech he will find modes of thought which he can match elsewhere. The student of religions will in the same way be on the look-out for customs and usages akin to those which he already knows; he will assume that under similar conditions experience will be moulded on similar lines, and the streams of thought and feeling—though small causes may easily deflect their course—will tend to flow in parallel channels as they issue from minds of the same order, and traverse corresponding scenes.

And just as the general theory of evolution includes the unity of bodily structure and mental faculty, so it will vindicate what may be called the unity of the religious consciousness. The old classifications based on the idea that religions consisted of a body of doctrines which must be true or false, reached by natural reflection or imparted by supernatural revelation, disappear before a wider view. Theologies may be many, but religion is one. It was after this truth that the Vedic seers were groping when they cried, "Men call him Indra, Mitra, Varuna, Agni; sages name variously him who is but one"; or again, "the sages in their hymns give many forms to him

who is but one." When the Roman Empire had brought under one rule the multitudinous peoples of Western Asia, North Africa, and Southern and Middle Europe, and new worships were carried hither and thither by priest and missionary, soldier and merchant and slave, the titles and attributes of the gods were freely blended and exchanged. Thinkers of different schools invented various modes of harmonising rival cults. When "Jupiter best and greatest" was surrounded by a vast crowd of lesser deities, the philosophic mind discerned a common element running through all their worship. "There is one Supreme God," wrote Maximus of Madaura to Augustine, about A.D. 390, "without natural offspring, who is, as it were, the God and Mighty Father of all. The powers of this Deity, diffused through the universe which he has made, we worship under many names, as we are all ignorant of his true name. Thus it happens that while in diverse supplications we approach separated, as it were, certain parts of the Divine Being, we are seen in reality to be the worshippers of him in whom all these parts are one." Here is the prayer of a Blackfoot chief of our generation in the great ceremonial of the Sun-Dance, reported by Mr. McClintock,[1] which blends the implications of theology with the impulses and emotions of religion—

"Great Sun Power! I am praying for my people that they may be happy in the summer

[1] *The Old North Trail*, 1910, p. 297.

and that they may live through the cold of winter. Many are sick and in want. Pity them and let them survive. Grant that they may live long and have abundance. May we go through these ceremonies correctly, as you taught our forefathers to do in the days that are past. If we make mistakes, pity us!

"Help us, Mother Earth! for we depend upon your goodness. Let there be rain to water the prairies, that the grass may grow long and the berries be abundant.

"O Morning Star! when you look down upon us, give us peace and refreshing sleep.

"Great Spirit! bless our children, friends, and visitors through a happy life. May our trails lie straight and level before us. Let us live to be old. We are all your children, and ask these things with good hearts."

# CHAPTER II

## THE PANORAMA OF RELIGIONS

TWICE in the history of the world has it been possible to survey a wide panorama of religions, and twice has the interest of travellers, men of science, and students of philosophy, been attracted by the immense variety of worships and beliefs. In the second century of our era the Roman Empire embraced an extraordinary range of nationalities within its sway. In the twentieth the whole history of the human race has been thrown open to the explorer, and an overwhelming mass of materials from every land confronts him. It may be worth while to take a hasty glance at the chief groups of facts that are thus disclosed, and make a sort of map of their relations.

### I

The scientific curiosity of the ancient Greeks was early awakened, and Thales of Miletus (624–546 B.C.), chief of the seven "wise men," and founder of Greek geometry and philosophy, was believed to have studied under the priests of Egypt, as well as to have

visited Asia and become acquainted with the Chaldean astronomy. Still more extensive travel was attributed to his younger contemporary Pythagoras, whose varied learning was explained in late traditions by his sojourn east and west, among the Persian Magi, the Indian Brahmans, and the Druids of Gaul. The first great record of observations is contained in the History of Herodotus of Halicarnassus on the coast of Asia Minor. Born in 484 B.C., six years after Marathon, and four years old when the Greeks put Xerxes to flight at Salamis, he devoted his maturity to the record of the great international struggle. Hither and thither he passed, collecting information, an eager student of human things. In Egypt he compared the gods with those of Greece, and attempted to distinguish two sets of elements in Hellenic religion, Egyptian and Pelasgic. He left notes on the Babylonians and the Persians, on the Scythians in the vast tracts east of northern Europe, on the Getæ south of the Danube.

When the conquests of Alexander the Great (356–323 B.C.) threw open the gates of Asia, a stream of travellers passed into Persia and India, whose reports were utilised by the geographers of later days. The religion of Zoroaster, whose name was already known to Plato, attracted great attention. At the court of Chandragupta on the Ganges, at the opening of the third century B.C., Megasthenes,

the ambassador of Seleucus (who had succeeded to the dominions of Alexander in Asia), set down brief memoranda on the usages and belief of the Hindus among whom he resided. Nearer home the representatives of Mesopotamian and Egyptian learning commended their national cultures to their conquerors. Berosus, priest of Bel in Babylon, translated into Greek a Babylonian work on astronomy and astrology, and compiled a history of his country from ancient documents; while his contemporary, Manetho, of Sebennytus in the Nile Delta, undertook a similar service for his native land.

Meanwhile the great library and schools at Alexandria had been founded. Hither came students from many lands; and the Christian fathers Eusebius and Epiphanius in the fourth century attributed to the librarian of the royal patron of literature, Ptolemy Philadelphus (285–247 B.C.), the design of collecting the sacred books of the Ethiopians, Indians, Persians, Elamites, Babylonians, Assyrians, Romans, Phœnicians, Syrians, and Greeks. The Jews had settled in Alexandria in considerable numbers; they began to translate their Hebrew Scriptures into Greek, and little by little they planted their synagogues all round the Eastern Mediterranean, and finally established their worship in Rome. The Egyptian deities in their turn went abroad. The worship of Serapis was introduced at Athens. Isis, the sister-wife of

Osiris and mother of Horus, goddess of many functions—among others of protecting sailors—was carried round the Levant to Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and as far north as the Hellespont and Thrace. Westwards she was borne to Sicily and South Italy. In due time she entered Rome, and in spite of senatorial orders five times repeated (in the first century B.C.), to tear down her altars and statues, she secured her place, and received homage all through the West from the outskirts of the Sahara to the Roman wall north of our own Tyne.

The introduction of Greek gods had begun centuries before. As early as 493 B.C., at a time of serious famine, a temple had been built to Demeter, Dionysus, and Persephonê; many others followed; resemblances among the native gods quickly led to identifications; and new forms of worship tended to displace the old. After another crisis (206 B.C.) the "Great Mother," Cybelê, the Phrygian goddess of Mount Ida, was imported. The black aerolite which was supposed to be her abode, was presented by King Attalus to the ambassadors of the Roman senate. The goddess was solemnly welcomed at the Port of Ostia, and was ultimately carried by noble Roman ladies on to the Palatine hill.

The history of later days was full of notes upon religion. Cæsar interspersed them among the narratives of his campaigns in Gaul; Tacitus drew on his recollections as

an officer in active service for his description of the Germans. There was as yet no literature in Wales or Ireland to embody the Celtic traditions; and the Scandinavian Saga was unborn. But the geographers, like Strabo (first century A.D.), collected a great deal of material that must have been gathered ultimately from travellers, soldiers, traders, and slaves. A wise and gentle philosophic Greek, Plutarch of Chæronea in Bœotia (A.D. 46–120), student at the university of Athens, lecturer on philosophy at Rome, and finally priest of Pythian Apollo in his native city, is at home in many religions. Beside altars to the Greek gods Dionysus, Herakles, and Artemis, in his own streets, were those of the Egyptian Isis and Anubis. The treatise on Isis and Osiris (commonly ascribed to him) is an early essay in comparative religion. In the latter half of the second century the traveller Pausanias passes through Greece, describing its sacred sites, noting its monuments, recording mythological traditions, and observing archaic rites In this fascinating guide-book to religious practice are survivals of ancient savagery, still lingering at country shrines, set down with curious unconsciousness of their significance. The historical method is as yet only in its infancy. But Pausanias rightly discerned that its first business is to know the facts.

In Rome, where ritual tradition held its ground with extraordinary tenacity amid the

decay of belief, Marcus Terentius Varro, renowned for his wide learning (116–28 B.C.), devoted sixteen books of his great treatise on Antiquities to "Divine Things." Like so many other precious works of ancient literature it has disappeared, but its contents are partly known through its use by St. Augustine in his famous work on "The City of God." Following a division of the gods by the chief pontiff Mucius Scævola, he treated religion under three heads. In the form presented by the poets' tales of the gods it was mythical. Founded by the philosophers upon nature (*physis*) it was physical. As administered by priests and practised in cities it was civil. It was an old notion that religion was a legal convention imposed by authority for purposes of popular control; and Varro does not disdain to declare it expedient that States should be deceived in such matters. This police-notion long regulated public custom, and tended to render the identification of deities presenting superficial resemblances all the more easy.

By this time the origin of the term "religion" had begun to excite interest, as its meaning began slowly to change. Varro's contemporaries, Cicero (106–43 B.C.) and Lucretius (about 97–53), discussed its derivation. Cicero connected it with the root *legere*, to "string together," to "arrange"; while Lucretius found its origin in *ligare*, to "bind." Philology gives little help when it

speaks with uncertain voice. More important is the primitive meaning which Mr. Warde Fowler defines as "the feeling of awe, anxiety, doubt, or fear, which is aroused in the mind by something that cannot be explained by a man's experience or by the natural course of cause and effect, and which is therefore referred to the supernatural." It has nothing to do at the outset with any special rites or doctrines. It is not concerned with state-usage or with priestly law. In its adjectival form "religious days" or "religious places" are not days or places consecrated by official practice; they are days and places which have gathered round them man's sentiments of awe and scruple. The word thus came to be applied to anything that was in some way a source or embodiment of mysterious forces. The naturalist Pliny can even say that no animal is "more full of religion than the mole," because strange medicinal powers were supposed to reside in its heart and teeth.

But, on the other hand, a new use of it passes into Roman literature in the writings of Cicero. The feeling of awe still lies in the background, but the word takes on a reference to the acts which it prompts, and thus comes to denote the whole group of rites performed in honour of some divine being. These make up a particular cult or worship, ordained and sanctioned by authority or tradition. "Religion" thus comes to mean a body of religious duties, the entire series of sacred acts in which

the primitive feeling is expressed. Roman antiquity conceived these as under the care of priesthoods, legitimated by the State. Around them lay a fringe of superstitions, which a hostile critic like Lucretius could also sum up under the same term. And thus in an age when philosophy was addressing itself to the whole question of man's relation to the world and its unseen Rulers, and a single word was wanted to describe his attitude to the varied spectacle, "religion" was at hand to fill the place. It covered the whole field of human experience, and as different nations presented it in different forms, it became possible to speak of "religions" in the sense of separate systems of worship and belief. The champion of Christianity naturally distinguished his religion as the true from the false; and over against the multiformity of polytheism he set the unity of the faith of the Church.

Of these "religions" history and philosophy sought to give some account. As will be seen hereafter (Chap. VI), Babylon and Egypt both claimed a divine origin for their rites, their arts, and laws. Plutarch expressly defends the idea of revelation in the cases of Minos of Crete, the Persian Zoroaster, Zaleucus the shepherd legislator of the Locrians, Numa of Rome, and others. Pan was in love with Pindar, and Æsculapius conversed with Sophocles: if such divine diversions were allowed, how much more should these greater

attempts for human welfare be prompted from heaven! Numa had been enabled through Camena Egeria to regulate the ceremonial law as priest-king, and pontiffs, augurs, flamens, virgins, received their duties from him with supernatural sanctions.

Philosophers, on the other hand, discussed the meaning of religion upon different lines. A wide-spread view already noted presented it as a mere instrument of policy, devised to overawe the intractable. The diversity of religions seemed to support this view. Plato's Athenian, in one of his latest works, the *Laws*, mentions the teaching of sophists who averred that the gods existed not by nature but by art, and by the laws of States which are different in different places, according to the agreement of those who make them. In a fragment of a drama on Sisyphus ascribed to Critias, the friend of Alcibiades, it was alleged that in the primeval age of disorder and violence laws might strike crimes committed in open day, but could not touch secret sins, hidden in the gloomy depths of conscience. A sage advised that to moralise men they must be made afraid. Let them invent gods who could see and hear all things, cognisant not only of all human actions but also of men's inmost thoughts and purposes. They were accordingly connected with the source of the most terrifying and the most beneficent phenomena, the sky, home alike of thunder and lightning, of the shining sun and fertilising

rain, seat of divine powers helpful and hurtful to mankind. In the discussion on "the Nature of the Gods" (by Cicero), Cotta, of the Academic school, inquires of his Epicurean opponent Velleius, "What think you of those who have asserted that the whole doctrine concerning the immortal gods was the invention of politicians, whose notion was to govern that part of the community which reason could not influence, by religion?"

From another point of view, however, the practical universality of religion was again and again cited in proof of its truth. Antiquity was not scientific in its method of treatment, and though it did not accept all religions as altogether equal, it had no difficulty in regarding them as substantially homogeneous. The Egyptian worship of animals might be lashed with satiric scorn, but the mysteries of its religion, venerable from an immemorial past, deserved the highest respect. The process of identification of the gods of different religions was always going on as they were carried from land to land. The Apologist, therefore, like the Cretan Cleinias in Plato's *Laws* when the Athenian stranger asked him to prove the existence of the gods, could always appeal to two main arguments—first, the fair order of the universe and the regularity of the seasons, and secondly, the common belief of all men, both Hellenes and barbarians. This common belief, however, itself required explanation. Its value

really depended on its origin. If that ranked no higher than the crouching impulses of fear, it had little worth. Even if it was sought in the sense of dependence, in quiet trust in a sheltering order, or in intelligent inference based on the demand for a cause, the question still pressed for an answer, "What made this possible?" The answer was given by the doctrine of the *Logos*.

The term *logos* has played a famous part in philosophical theology. It appears in our New Testament at the opening of the fourth Gospel, "In the beginning was the Logos." Our translators render the Greek term by the English "Word." It is derived from the verb *legein*, to "speak" or "say." *Logos* is primarily "what is said," utterance, or speech. Speech, however, must mean something. When we look out upon the objects of the world around us—rock, river, tree, horse, star—we learn to separate them into groups, because while some say quite different things to us, others speak to us, as it were, with nearly the same meaning. We recognise a common meaning in various sorts of dogs, or in still larger classes such as the whole family of birds. But in human intercourse what is said has first been thought. *Logos* thus takes on another meaning; it is what thinking says *to itself*, or what we call "reason." The processes of science consist in finding out these meanings or reasons, and getting them into intelligible relations with each other.

And when the early Greek thinkers had reached the conception of the unity of the world, here was a term which could be called in to express it. The world must have a meaning; it must express some thought. And did not thought imply thinking?

The philosophy of Heracleitus "the Obscure" (at Ephesus, 500 B.C.) has received in modern times widely different interpretations; but whether or not the Stoics were right in understanding his doctrine of the Logos to imply the existence of a cosmic reason universally diffused, present both in nature and man, it is certain that such ideas appear soon afterwards in Greek literature. Pindar affirms the derivation of the soul from the gods. Plato and Euripides declare the intelligence of man both in nature and origin to be divine; and Pseudo-Epicharmus lays it down (in the second half of the fifth century) that "there is in man understanding, and there is also a divine Logos; but the understanding of man is born from the divine Logos." On this basis the Stoics worked out the conception of a fellowship between man and God which explained the universality of religion. Its seat was in human nature. Every one shared in the Generative Reason, the Seminal Word (the *Logos spermatikos*). In the long course of ages, says Cicero, when the time arrived for the sowing of the human race, God quickened it with the gift of souls. So we possess a certain kinship with the heavenly

Powers; and while among all the kinds of animals Man alone retains any idea of Deity, among men themselves there is no nation so savage as not to admit the necessity of believing in a God, however ignorant they may be what sort of God they ought to believe in.

The part played by this doctrine in the early Church is well known. When the new faith began to attract the attention of the educated, it was impossible that the resemblances between Christian and Hellenic monotheism should be ignored. Philosophy had reached many of the same truths, and poets and sages bore the same witness to the unity and spirituality of God as the prophets and psalmists of Israel. It was easy to suggest that the Hebrew seers had been the teachers of the Greek; might not Plato, for instance, have learned of Jeremiah in Egypt? On the other hand, the pleas of chronological and literary dependence might be insufficient; there were radical differences as well as resemblances; the Apologist might deride the diversities of opinion and make merry over the contradictions of the schools. Nevertheless Christianity was often presented by its defenders as "our philosophy." The Latin writer Minucius Felix (in the second century) is so much struck by the parallels in the higher thought that he boldly declares, "One might think either that Christians are now philosophers, or that philosophers were then already Christian." The martyr Justin (about

A.D. 150) incorporates such teachings into the scheme of Providence by the aid of the Logos. For Justin, as for his co-believers, the popular religion was the work of demons. But philosophy had combated them in the past like the new faith. If Socrates had striven to deliver men from them, and they had compassed his death through evil men, it was because the Logos condemned their doings among the Greeks through him, just as among the barbarians they were condemned by the Logos in the person of Christ. The great truths of God and Providence, of the unity of the moral government of the world, of the nature and destiny of man, of freedom, virtue, and retribution, which were to be found in the writings of the wisest of the past, were the product of "the seed of the Logos implanted in every race of men." Those who had lived with the Logos were Christians before Christ, though men might have called them atheists, like Heracleitus and Socrates. All noble utterances in theology or legislation arose through partial discovery or contemplation of the Logos, and consequently Justin could boldly claim "whatever things have been rightly said among all men" as "the property of us Christians."

The cultivated and mystical Clement, who became head of the catechetical school of Alexandria towards the close of the second century, enforced the same theme. An enormous reader, he loved to compare the

truths enunciated by Greek poets and philosophers with the wisdom of the barbarians. Philosophy, indeed, was a special historical manifestation of thought along a peculiar line of development. It affected a particular race, it spread over a distinct area, and appeared in a definite time. In these respects it resembled the preparatory work of Israel itself. It was a discipline of Providence, so that beside the generalisation of St. Paul that the Law had been a tutor to bring the Jews to Christ, Clement could set another, that philosophy had played the same part for the Greeks. On the field of common speech Clement's contemporary, the fiery Tertullian of Carthage, appealed to the worshipper who bore the garland of Ceres on his brow, or walked in the purple cloak of Saturn, or wore the white robe of Egyptian Isis—what did he mean by exclaiming "May God repay!" or "God shall judge between us?" Here was a recognition of a supreme authority and power, the "testimony of a soul naturally Christian."

Such comparisons, however, had a very different side. Greece had long had its secret mysteries, with their sacred initiations, their rites of purity and enlightenment, their promises of welfare beyond the grave. When the new deities from Asia Minor, from Egypt, Syria, and the further East, were brought to Italy, the resemblances of their practice to that of the Christian Church excited the

believer's alarm, and roused at once the charge of plagiarism. There was a congregation of Mithra at Rome as early as 67 B.C., and towards the end of the first century of our era his mysteries began to be widely spread. Here was a baptism; here was a "sacrament" as the neophyte took the oath on entering the warfare with evil; here were grades of soldiership and service; here were oblations of bread and water mingled with wine which were naturally compared with the Lord's supper; here were doctrines of deliverance from sin, of judgment after death and ascent to heaven, which brought the theology and practice of Mithraism very close to that of the Church. So Mithra bore the august titles of the holy and righteous God; or he was the Mediator, author of order in nature and of victory in life between the ultimate powers of good and evil.

For a time the rivalry was acute, as his worship was carried through the West as far as York and Chester and the Tyne. But with the triumph of Christianity in the fourth century the sounds of conflict die away. The men of learning, Eusebius of Cæsarea (about A.D. 260–340), Augustine (A.D. 354–430) bishop of Hippo, surveyed the religions and philosophies of antiquity as conquerors. The faiths of Egypt, Phœnicia, Greece, and Rome, are passed in review. With a broad sweep of learning Eusebius comments on the ancient mythologies, the oracles, the theory of demons,

the practice of human sacrifice, the history of Mosaism. His treatise on the "Preparation for the Gospel" is the first great work on comparative religion which issued out of Christian theology. With generous recognition of what lay beyond the Church he taught (in the *Theophania*) that all higher culture was due to participation in the Logos. Idolatry might be the work of demons; the world might be filled with the babblings of philosophers and the follies of poets; but the Logos had been continuously present, sowing in the hearts of men the rudiments of the divine laws, of various orders of teaching, of doctrines of every kind. Thus ethics, art, science, and the fairest products of human thought, were genially brought within the scope of Revelation.

## II

The panorama of religions unrolled before the student of the present day is far vaster than that which offered itself to the thinkers of Greece and Rome, and its meaning is far better understood. When Pausanias describes the daily sacrifice to a hero at Tronis in Phocis, where the blood of the victim was poured down through a hole in the grave to the dead man within, while the flesh was eaten on the spot, he notes, like the careful author of a guide-book, a curious local usage, but he does not know that it belongs to a group of

savage practices that may be traced all round the globe. On Mount Lycæus in Arcadia, he tells us, was a spring which flowed with equal quantity in summer as in winter. In time of drought the priest of Lycæan Zeus, after due prayer and sacrifice, would dip an oak-branch into the surface of the spring, and a mist-like vapour would rise and become a cloud. In the midst of Hellenic culture it was still possible, as among the negroes of West Africa or the Indians of North America, to make rain.

From continent to continent a multitude of observers have gathered an immense range of facts, which show that amid numerous differences in detail the religions of the lower culture may all be ranked together on the basis of a common interpretation of the surrounding world. Philosophy suggests that man can only explain nature in terms of his own experience. He is encompassed by powers that are continually acting on him, as he to a much smaller extent can in his turn act on them. By various processes of observation and reflection (p. 85), he comes to the conclusion that within his body lives something which enables it to move and feel and think and will, until at death it goes away. To this mysterious something many names are given, and for purposes of modern study they are all ranked under the term "spirits." This explanation is then applied to the behaviour of all kinds of objects within

his view; though it does not at all follow that this was actually the first explanation. The animals that are stronger and more cunning than himself, the trees that move in the wind, the corn that grows so mysteriously, the bubbling spring, even the things that he himself has made, his weapons, tools, and jars, all have their "spirits," so that the entire scene of his existence is pervaded by them. To this doctrine, with its many branches of belief and practice, Sir E. B. Tylor, in his classical work on *Primitive Culture* (1871), gave the name of "Animism," and the religions founded upon it are called "animistic," or sometimes, from the multitude of unorganised spirits which they recognise, "polydæmonistic" religions.

Such religions belong to no specific ethnic group. They appear either in existing practice or in the shape of occasional survivals in all of the three great racial divisions of mankind—the white or Caucasic, the yellow or Mongolian, and the black or Negroid. They are to be found under the Equator and among the Arctic snows. They are sometimes associated with a peculiar form of social structure regulating inter-tribal relations known as *totemism*. It was at one time supposed that this designated a stage of evolution through which all peoples had passed. The totem or clan-sign, whether animal or plant, or more rarely an inanimate object like wind, sun, or star, was supposed to have

become an object of worship, and various theories were invented to explain the divisions and subdivisions of the clans, and the selection of their special signs. Hence, it was argued, came the cultus of beast and bird and tree; hence the altar and the idol; hence the animal sacrifice and the sacramental meal. In clever hands it supplied a universal key. The extraordinary intricacy of the subject, and the widely scattered character of the evidence, prevent any discussion here. But the most recent researches have not sustained these attempts. Among the Central Australian tribes the totems are not worshipped, they are in no sense deities, no prayers or sacrifices are offered to them. They may be brought into the sphere of religion in some tribes as part of a social order to which a superhuman origin is ascribed (p. 171). But totemism cannot be established as the typical form of "primitive religion" any more than any other complicated system. Its general diffusion is questionable. At the present day there are large areas over which no signs of totemic organisation are found; and many phenomena which were formerly assumed to be proofs of totemism in the higher religions of antiquity, in Egypt, Greece, and Italy, now receive other explanations.

The higher forms of animistic religion pass out into polytheisms of more or less dignity. They do not succeed in embodying themselves in permanent literary product, they create no

scriptures or sacred books. They have their rude chants, their songs for weddings and funerals, their genealogies and tales of ancient heroes. Strange cosmogonies float from island to island in Polynesia. The Finnic peoples enshrined their faith in the ballads collected under the name of the Kalevala. Among the Indians of North America speculation is sometimes highly elaborated in mythologic tradition; and out of the fusion of nationalities in Mexico rose a developed polytheism in which lofty religious sentiment seems strangely blended with a hideous and sanguinary ritual. Peru, no less, presented to the Spanish conquerors bewildering and incongruous aspects. In these two cultures native American civilisation reached its highest forms. In Mexico the apparatus of religion was very minutely organised. There were immense temples, which required large numbers of priests and servitors. The capital alone is said to have contained 2000 sacred buildings, and the great temple had a staff of 5000 priests. There were religious orders and temple-schools; rites of baptism and circumcision; feasts and sacrifices and sacraments, in which the monkish chroniclers found strange parallels to their own practice. The issues of victory were disastrous. With the death of the last Aztec emperor (1520) the doom of the old gods was assured, and the Inquisition (1571) completed what the sword of Cortes had begun.

In the old world Asia has been the mother of religions, but various fates have befallen her offspring. The ancient cults of Babylonia, after an existence longer than the period from Moses to the present day, vanished from the scene. The teachings of Zoroaster were planted in China in A.D. 621, and a temple was erected at the capital, Changan; but the Persian faith could not maintain itself in such a different culture. After the Mohammedan conquest in the eighth century it was finally carried by a little band of exiles into India, and is still cherished by their descendants who bear the name of Parsees. The Jew and the Christian have only a precarious toleration in the land which was once their home. In India and in China alone is the religion of to-day linked in unbroken continuity with the distant past. Islam may set itself in lineal succession to the teachers of old, and claim a place for Mohammed in the sequence of Abraham, Moses, and Christ. But it is the youngest, and in some respects the least original, of the world's great faiths.

India has its own panorama of religions, from the animistic practice of the tribes of the jungle and the hills, up to the refined pantheism of the philosophical school. Diversities of race have been strangely intermingled, and fifty languages make it impossible to secure any uniformity of culture. There are the descendants of the ancient inhabitants who occupied the country before

the Aryan ancestors of the Hindus settled themselves upon the fertile lands. They are represented to-day by the wild tribes of Central India such as the Bhils and Gonds. Some ten million probably profess a religion of a well-marked animistic type. But this also lies at the base of wide-spread popular belief and custom, where the propitiation of spirits, the cultus of Mother Earth, and the veneration of village deities, engage much more attention than the higher gods of Hinduism.

The literary foundation of the religions of India lies in the ancient hymns of the Rig Veda, sung by the immigrant Aryans as they entered from the North-west and gradually established themselves in the Ganges valley. These hymns were addressed to gods of earth and air and sky; they celebrated the glories of dawn and day; they told of the conflict between sunshine and storm; they praised Agni, the god of fire, messenger between heaven and earth, himself as agent of the sacrifice a kind of priest among the gods; they commemorated the dead who passed into the upper world and adorned the sky with stars. Already in some of the later hymns the poet's thought endeavoured to find some principle or power that should unite these different agencies as manifestations of one ultimate reality; and philosophic imagination at length fixed on the conception of Brahman, a term whose original meaning

seems to hover between that of sacred spell and prayer. Viewed in a personal aspect (Brahmā) as a god of popular worship, he could be described as "Lord of all, the Maker, the Creator, Father of all that are and are to be."[1] But behind this sovereign ruler metaphysical abstraction placed a neuter Brahma, all-embracing, the ground of all existence, summed up in three terms—Being, Thought, and Bliss. Here was the ultimate Self of the whole universe; and to know the identity of the human self with the Absolute, to be able to repeat the mysterious words *tat tvam asi*, "that art thou," was the aim of the forest-sages and the highest attainment of holy insight.

Meantime the social order was acquiring the first forms of caste. The priests and the fighting men, the people who settled on the lands for pasture and tillage, and the tribes of aborigines whom they dispossessed and subdued, formed the basis of divisions which were gradually multiplied with extraordinary complexity. A religious authority was found for the whole system in the teachings of the Veda, and to contest its claims was to defy the power which slowly spread with subtle hold through the whole peninsula. By its side arose the doctrine of the Deed (*karma*, p. 217), which explained the varied conditions of human life by the principle that

[1] So in the early Buddhist texts describing the popular religion. Many new forms appear in these documents.

"a man is born into the world that he has made." The lot of each individual had a moral meaning: it was the result of previous conduct, good or ill. This is the conception embodied in the word "transmigration." It pictures man as involved in a continuous series of births and deaths, and religion and philosophy undertook in their several ways to secure him a favourable destiny hereafter, or by various means of divine grace, or strenuous self-discipline, or pious contemplation, to extricate him altogether from the weary round of ignorance and pain.

Out of these elements, a crude and ever-varying animism at the bottom, a highly refined metaphysical pantheism at the top, figures of incarnation and deliverance, the cultus of the dead, caste, and transmigration, the complex strands of modern Hinduism have been woven. Many have been the growths upon the way. The early Buddhist texts, representing the society of the "Middle Country," show already in the fifth century B.C. a surprising activity of speculation, busily engaged in questioning every received doctrine of religion and morals. Some forms held their ground for a few centuries and then disappeared. One religious community of that date alone survives, viz. the Jains, who still number about a million and a third. Buddhism, after sending out its missionaries into Ceylon in the south and China in the north, was driven from its ancient seats, and

only some 300,000 hold its creed in India itself. In Burma, however, it numbers between ten and eleven million lay adherents, and in the adjacent kingdom of Siam it has 13,000 temples, and more than 93,000 mendicants have taken its vows.

But Hinduism still lives on with a marvellous and self-renewing power. Two great divine figures have been set beside the original creative Brahmā, representatives of the forces that preserve and destroy, Vishnu and Çiva (p. 128). Vishnu succeeded to the place of the Buddha; and Hindu religion gave prominence in him to the conception of a Divine Person who out of love for man assumed human shape to conquer evil and establish truth. The worship of Çiva has been carried everywhere by the Brahmans; if he destroys, he also reproduces; he, too, appears to bless and help, and the Tamil poets of South India in the early Middle Ages sang his praises in hymns that still feed the piety of the people. Again and again reforming teachers have initiated movements on behalf of spiritual religion. Their followers have multiplied and broken up into sects, but still remain within the general area of the ancestral faith, which now embraces considerably more than 200 million souls. The disciples of Nānak (1469–1538), however, known as Sīkhs, formed into a semi-military organisation by the Guru Gobind "the Lion" (1675–1708), retain their religious indepen-

dence, touching Hinduism on one side and Mohammedanism on the other. They number at the present day more than two millions, and are found almost exclusively in the Punjab.

China, like India, illustrates the principle of religious continuity. Its earliest historic date is fixed by an eclipse in 776 B.C.; and the traditions of its dynasties stretch more than a thousand years beyond. The ancient religion depicted in the books known as the *Shu* and the *Shî Kings*, which Confucius (550–478 B.C.) was supposed to have edited out of much older documents, rested upon the solemn order of the living Heaven and Earth, with multitudinous ranks of associated spirits, and the generations of the dead. This has remained the formal basis of the national religion (p. 97). Meanwhile the ethical sayings of Confucius acquired extraordinary ascendency. They formed the chief element in the national education, and supplied the ideals of popular culture. Carried into Japan in the sixth century of our era, they filled a gap in the old Japanese teaching, which we know by the name of Shin-To or "Spirits' way." Confucius himself became the object of general commemorative homage; and annual ceremonies are still celebrated in his honour with great splendour in the Confucian temples which adorn every city within the empire above a certain rank.[1]

[1] These are at present in danger, like other public forms of Chinese State Religion, of being rudely abolished.

In the popular religion demonology and magic play a constant part, and numerous growths out of the worship of ancestors provide ever fresh additions to the higher ranks of spirits. These are regulated by decrees of the Board of Rites, one of the most ancient religious institutions in China. The spirit of a departed governor, perhaps two centuries ago, is believed to have appeared in time of flood, and by his beneficent influence dangers have been averted. Memorials are sent up to Peking by the local authorities, and after repeated manifestations divine honours are awarded. Beneath these august personages are the spirits which preside over the trades and professions, over the parts of a house—the door, the bed, or the kitchen range—over the breeding of domestic animals, and a large variety of occupations, to say nothing of medicine and disease, the limbs of the body, and the stars. They are analogous to the *Kami*, the equivalent powers in Japan (p. 91); and they are not without parallel in religions further west.

Half a century before Confucius, in 604, was born another sage, known in history as Lao Tsze. Fragments of his teaching are embodied in a small book of aphorisms, concerned with the doctrine of the Tao, the way, the path, or course. In nature this corresponded to the ordered round of the seasons, and the regularities which we call laws. In man it might be seen in the line of right

conduct, and the inner principles which pointed to it. On this conception, which was much older than Lao Tsze himself, a kind of metaphysical mysticism was reared by later disciples, not without affinities with some aspects of the Brahmanical philosophy. They have been explained by suggestions of travel and contact which more careful study cannot justify. The religion of the Tao (whence the name Taoism) could never have been popular had it not become strangely entangled with alchemy and transformed under the influence of its later rival, Buddhism, from which it derived much both in ritual, in ethics, and in doctrine.

The statements about the appearance of Buddhist teachers and Buddhist books in China before our era have been much disputed: the first trustworthy record relates that in the year A.D. 65, a deputation of eighteen persons was sent to Khotan to make inquiries, and they returned two years later with books and images and a teacher. A second teacher arrived shortly after, a temple was built at the imperial capital, Lo-Yang, and the laborious work of translation was begun. A stream of missionaries, Hindus, Parthians, Huns, slowly flowed into the Flowery Land, "moved," says the chronicler, "by the desire to convert the world." After a while the Chinese students sought the holy places in India, and learned Sanskrit at the great Buddhist university at Nālanda, near Buddha

Gāyā. Vast collections of sacred literature were gathered. The first Chinese catalogue, dated A.D. 520, enumerates 2,213 distinct works. Twelve successive revisions were made under imperial order, and to the last, in 1737, the Emperor himself, following the example of some of his predecessors, contributed a preface.

Opposed again and again by the Confucian *literati*, its temples destroyed, its religious houses suppressed, its monks and nuns driven back into the world, Buddhism has still lived on. It has created impressive devotions, and generated numerous sects. It has spread through Corea, Mongolia, and Japan; on the west it is planted in Tibet. It has exercised immense influence on Chinese culture; architecture, art and letters being all deeply indebted to it. In numerical estimates of different religions common in the last century Buddhism always headed the list, for the whole population of China—vaguely reckoned at 400,000,000—was included in its fold. Such estimates are no longer trustworthy.[1] The ancestral cultus of the dead under the shelter of Confucianism, the rites of Taoist and of Buddhist priests, are strangely blended. The incidents of life from birth to death are never completed without help from one or other of the two faiths once rivals, and now

[1] The latest official estimate, February 1911, based on a reckoning of families, gives 312,400,590 for the total Chinese people.

so curiously intertwined. As early as the sixth century a famous Buddhist scholar Fu Hhi was asked by the Emperor Wu-ti if he was a Buddhist, and he pointed to his Taoist cap. "Are you a Taoist?" he showed his Confucian shoes. "Are you a Confucian?" he wore a Buddhist scarf. When the Abbé Huc made his famous journey two generations ago, he observed that when strangers met, politeness required that each should ask his neighbour, "To what sublime religion do you belong?" The first might be a Confucian, the second a Taoist, the third a disciple of the Buddha. Each would then begin to commend the religion not his own, and they would conclude by saying, "Religions are many, reason is one, we are all brothers." It was the maxim of Lu Shun Yang (a distinguished Buddhist) centuries ago that "the teaching of the sects is not different. The large-hearted man regards them as embodying the same truths. The narrow-minded man observes only their differences."

Yet another great religion, the latest born among the higher faiths of the world, has established itself in both India and China. The first Mohammedan invasion of India took place in A.D. 664. The followers of the prophet are now reckoned at more than 66 millions. In 628 Mohammed himself sent his uncle to China with presents to the Emperor. He travelled by sea to Canton, where the first mosque was afterwards built.

Good observers number the Mohammedans in China to-day at 30 millions, mostly in the north and west; and it is supposed that there are about as many more in the Malay Archipelago. In Africa, especially among the negroes of the west, their numbers have increased enormously in the last century, and some two-fifths of the multitudinous peoples of the Dark Continent, 80 millions out of 200, are believed to live in the obedience of Islam.

Islam, resignation or submission to the will of God, was the name given to his religion by the prophet himself, who died in A.D. 632. But in the hands of his first followers submission was no passive virtue. Tradition ascribed to him the idea of addressing all known sovereigns, and promising them safety if they accepted the faith. His successors, therefore, conceived that the fulfilment of Allah's will demanded a resolute effort to make known the new revelation. A fierce burst of missionary effort carried the Moslem armies far and wide. In the year of Mohammed's death they attacked Persia and Syria; a few years later they invaded Egypt. Within the first century they had entered India, and had swept through north Africa into Spain. But they had twice been obliged to retreat from Constantinople, and in 732 they were defeated on the Loire by Charles Martel near Tours, and forced to retire behind the Pyrenees.

With the same astonishing energy they

created centres of culture from Baghdad to Cordova. Through Syriac versions of Aristotle's works Arabian teachers carried Greek philosophy into Western Europe when the light of ancient learning had grown dim. The contact with new thought stimulated theological discussion, and the Moslem had to justify himself against the Christian, the Zoroastrian, the Manichæan and the Buddhist. Above the simple ritual demands of the prophet, the recital of the creed—"There is no god but God (Allah), Mohammed is the apostle of God"—the observance of prayer five times daily, the annual fast in the month of Ramadhān, the bestowal of alms, and the pilgrimage to Mecca, arose the debates of the schools and the divisions of sects. The nature of the divine attributes, and their relation to the being or essence of the Deity, the problems of predestination and free will, of reason and revelation, excited eager interest. Beside the Koran vast numbers of traditions concerning religious life and practice were gradually put in circulation, and in the third century after Mohammed's death they were reduced to writing in six great collections. To these sources of truth and rules of conduct the jurists and theologians added two others: agreement or universal consent, where beliefs and practices are generally received though not specially sanctioned by the Koran or tradition; and analogy, by which a doctrine or usage may be accepted as valid because

of its resemblance to something legitimated by revelation.

Like the higher religions of India, like Judaism in its long and chequered career whether in Palestine or in the Dispersion, like the "universal religions" of Buddhism and Christianity, Mohammedanism has known how to accommodate itself to very different levels of culture. In the Arabian deserts much of the earlier animism still remains. It is not rudely expelled either at the present day as Islam advances through Africa. Other impulses have worked in different directions. There are religious orders and mendicant ascetics. There are mystical schools of refined spirituality, to which the influences of Neo-platonism, of Christianity, and Buddhism, have all contributed. Sūfīism (as this type of thought is called) was fed from various sources, and has assumed different forms in different countries, but its best-known literary products came from the great poets of Persia.

From that subtle race issues the most remarkable movement which modern Mohammedanism has produced. In 1844 a young man not twenty-five years of age, named Ali Mohammed, of Shiraz, appeared under the title of the "Bab" or Gate. Disciples gathered round him, and the movement was not checked by his arrest, his imprisonment for nearly six years, and his final execution in 1850. Thirteen years later one of his disciples named Bahá-ullah, "Splendour of God," announced

himself as "He whom God shall manifest," whose advent the Bab had foretold. Exiled to Acre, he died in 1892, and was succeeded in the leadership by his son Abbas Efendi. The new faith declared that there was no finality in revelation, and while recognising the Koran as a product of past revelation, claimed to embody a new manifestation of the divine Unity. Carried to Chicago in 1893 by a Bâbî merchant, it succeeded in establishing itself in the United States; and its missionaries are winning new adherents in India. It, too, claims to be a universal teaching; it has already its noble army of martyrs and its holy books; has Persia, in the midst of her miseries, given birth to a religion which will go round the world?

# CHAPTER III

## RELIGION IN THE LOWER CULTURE

RELIGION presents itself in its most obvious form as a mode of activity. It is seen in some kind of behaviour; it prompts a particular sort of conduct. Behind the customs and rites which are its visible sign lie certain thoughts and feelings, often dim, indistinct, obscure. In the totality of its beliefs, emotions, and institutions, it is as much the product of the human spirit as poetry, or art, science, morals, and law. It will therefore always bear some kind of relation to the general circumstances of the social development to which it belongs. The interpretation of the surrounding scene which is implied in its intellectual outlook will vary with the elements of the scene itself. But the limits of variation are much smaller than might be expected. The questions "why" and "how" may be answered very differently under the Equator and within the Arctic zone, but they are the same questions, and spring from common impulses of thought. Moreover, while race, climate, and economic conditions may all vary, it happens to all men to be born

and to die. The family must be maintained, children must be reared, food must be procured, the tribal group must preserve its stability and, if possible, increase. There are universal elements in human life all over the globe; and the manifestations of religion founded upon them exhibit in consequence marked resemblances from land to land.

Religion always implies some kind of want. The young husband wants male children, the hunter game, the warrior victory, the diviner the knowledge of secrets, the saint holiness. The wants may be crude or refined, the satisfaction of a physical appetite, protection against some anticipated danger, the realisation of an exalted spiritual fellowship. But religion suggests that there is some Power capable of satisfying these wants, and undertakes to provide the means for setting man in proper relations with it. All round him are the objects and forces of the visible world. He learns by degrees that some help him to gratify his desires, and others hinder them. There are many things that he cannot understand, and some of which he dimly feels that he must not presume to try: he is only conscious towards them of a strange wonder and awe; they are uncanny; he cannot bring them into his experience; he must not meddle with them, he must keep away. But other things are more kindly, and fulfil his hopes.

Out of such vague consciousness he gradually frames a working method. Some sort

of theory is at length established after many trials, concerning what must be done to obtain what he seeks. The line of his action is determined in part by the ideas and expectations which have slowly emerged out of his endeavours to get into fruitful connection with the powers by which he is encompassed. This is the element of belief, which lies behind religion proper, and supplies the soil in which religious feeling and action germinate and grow. What, then, is the kind of belief which, in the sphere of the lower culture, makes religion possible?

It is plain at once that no records remain of what is still sometimes called "primitive religion." Even tribes that seem to be living in the Stone Age have as long a past behind them as any European of light and leading. Whatever the beliefs may be that belong to any given stage of social culture, they are not new inventions, they depend on immemorial tradition. And they are not, as now cherished, the results of individual research or reflection. They are held in common by all the members of the tribe, so that they have a kind of collective force. No doubt in the long process of their formation and transmission modifications may have been introduced, as some elder, shrewder than his fellows, gave new emphasis to some leading idea, or suggested the adoption of some fresh action. Trace them back into the dim realm of conjecture, and some mind

a little more observant or ready than his comrades must have started the first explanation, some will a little more adventurous must have made the first experiments in conduct. Thoughts do not issue from a "collective consciousness"; they bear the stamp of personality, they are not begotten by abstractions, and every fresh development starts from a single brain. But the uniformity of experience within the group gives enormous weight to the wisdom of the past; and constitutes a sanction which only some grave shock can change or overthrow.

With religion is constantly associated, both in historical record and in the lower forms of present-day practice, another kind of activity known as Magic. The relation between them has been variously interpreted. The modern anthropologist, Dr. Frazer, finds himself in unexpected agreement with the philosopher Hegel in supposing that magic was the first to appear upon the scene. It is represented as a kind of primitive science, founded on certain elementary axioms, such as that "like produces like," or that things once in contact with each other will continue to act upon each other when the contact is broken. The Central Australian performs elaborate ceremonies to stimulate the multiplication of the totem which provides the supply of food for his tribe. Suppose it is the witchetty grub. A kind of pantomime is performed representing the emergence of the fully-

developed insect out of the chrysalis, typified by a long, narrow structure made of boughs. The totem men sit inside and chant rude songs, and then crawl out singing of the insect coming forth.

One of the commonest illustrations is the attempt to compass the death of an enemy by injuring or destroying an image or figure supposed to correspond to him. Such images were made in ancient Babylonia, Egypt, Greece, and Rome. One North American Indian will draw a figure of his adversary in the sand, or in ashes, and prick it with a sharp stick. Another will make a wooden image, and insert a needle into the head or the heart. Clay is used for the purpose by the African Matabele, wax in Arabia, the guelder rose in Japan, materials of all kinds in India. In Scotland the *corp chre*, as it was called, was a clay body, which was stuck full of pins, nails, and broken bits of glass, and set in a running stream with its head to the current; a modern specimen from Inverness-shire may be seen in the Pitt Rivers Museum in Oxford. Is all this really as Dr. Frazer supposes, prior to the birth of religion, and does man only turn to the propitiation of superior powers when he cannot get what he wants through magic? Of that process no evidence can be offered.

The essence of magic lies in some kind of compulsion or constraint. Through the proper spell, or through the will of the magician,

a control is exerted which produces the desired result. The power which is thus claimed implies an attitude wholly unlike that of religion. Into that attitude there enter elements of wonder and submission in the presence of energies which man cannot master, though he desires to get them on his side. But no observer was at hand to watch the first processes of feeling and thought which the interaction of man and his environment produced. The crudest forms of religion which we actually know, meet us in tribes which have possessed them from an unknown past. Here religion has a social character binding the members of a group together, and tending to maintain certain uniformities of conduct and character. Over against it stands the antisocial character of magic, at any rate when directed against individuals. Along this line it is urged that magic and religion have both issued out of common conditions. In the world around all sorts of events are continually happening. Man, in the midst of them, moves to and fro impulsively among various objects and agencies. Out of these arise various reactions for self-maintenance, for protection and defence. Certain acts tend to establish themselves as successful; they make for security and welfare. At first man's efforts have no definite direction; but some are found effective, others are futile, and attention is concentrated on those that produce satisfactory results. After

many trials certain beliefs, certain processes, certain persons, gradually stand out above the rest, and through them relations of advantage are established with the environing powers.

In such experiences lie the roots of both religion and magic. In their earliest forms they may be as difficult to discriminate as the simplest types of animal and vegetable life. If it be asked what distinguishes them outwardly, when both are transmitted by tradition, both rest upon custom, it may be answered that religion is concerned with what tends to the stability of the community. Its interests are those of the group. It supplies the bond of united action for clan or tribe or people. It is pre-eminently social; it expresses itself in ceremonies, feasts, and rites in which all can join, or in commands which all can obey. Even the Australians, so poor in elements of worship, have tribal laws which have been imparted to them from on high (Chap. VII).

Over against the community stands the individual, object of all kinds of jealousies and enmities. All sorts of antisocial arts may be practised for his destruction. The pointing-stick of Australia provides a common magical weapon. It is carried away into a lonely spot in the bush, and the intending user plants it in the ground, crouches down over it, and mutters a curse against the object of his hatred: "May your heart be rent asunder, may your backbone be split open!" Then

one evening, as the men sit round the camp-fire in the dark, he creeps up stealthily behind his enemy, stoops down with his back to the camp, points the stick over his shoulder, and mutters the curse again. A little while after, unless saved by a more powerful magic, the victim sickens and dies.

Of course magic may also be used for the benefit of the individual, and the practice of exorcism for the cure of diseases caused through possession by evil spirits long found shelter in some branches of the Christian Church. The kinship between Magic and Religion is clearly marked when the priest takes the place of the devil-dancer or the medicine man. Yet they are on different planes; religion is prescribed and official, and demands specific services; magic falls into the background, it becomes a secret, perhaps a forbidden, art. Nevertheless, between religion and antisocial magic lies a large group of rites, essentially magical in character, like the North American Indian rain-dances or the totem-ceremonies of the Arunta in Central Australia, designed for the general welfare. Even in much higher cultures the spell frequently mingles with the prayer, and ceremonies of sacrifice carry with them elements of compulsion or constraint.

What traces, then, do the phases of religion in the lower culture exhibit of a view of the world and its powers out of which these diverging lines of practice might emerge?

In widely different regions of the globe the forces that operate in unexpected ways, or play through things beyond man's reach, or appear in natural objects of striking character —an animal, a tree—are summed up in some general term of mystery and awe. Such is the Melanesian term *mana*, first noted by Bishop Codrington, common to a large group of languages. It implies some supersensual power or influence; it is not itself personal, though it may dwell in persons as in things. It is known by the results which reveal its working. You find a stone of an unusual shape; it may resemble some familiar object like a fruit; you lay it at the root of the corresponding tree, or you bury it in a yam-patch; an abundant crop follows; clearly, the stone has *mana*. It lives in the song-words of a spell; it secures success in fighting, perhaps through the tooth of some fierce and powerful animal; it imparts speed to the canoe, brings fish into the net, enables the arrow to inflict a mortal wound. But the word has a yet wider range, in the sense of power, might, influence. By it a parent can bring a curse on a disobedient child, a man who possesses it can work miracles; it even denotes the divinity of the gods. And so mysterious is the whole range of the inner life, that *mana* covers thought, desire, feeling, and affection; and in Hawaian it reaches out to spirit, energy of character, majesty. Here is an immense reserve of potency pervading

the world, on which man may draw for good or ill.

Among the North American Indians similar conceptions may be traced. The Algonquin *manitou* represents a subtle property believed to exist everywhere in nature, though some persons and objects possess more of it than others. Among the Sioux the sun, the moon, the stars, thunder, wind, are all *wakanda*. So are certain trees and animals, the cedar, the snake, the grey elephant; and mystery-places like a particular lake in North Dakota, or some peculiar rocks on the Yellowstone River. The term carries with it power and sacredness; it belongs to what is ancient, grand, and animate. The Iroquoian tribes designate this mysterious force *orenda*. It expresses an incalculable energy, manifested in rocks and streams and tides; in plants and trees, in animals and man; it belongs to the earth and its mountains; it breathes in the winds and is heard in the thunder; the clouds move by it, day and night follow each other through it; it dwells in sun, moon, and stars. The shy bird or quadruped which it is difficult to snare or kill, possesses it; so does the skilful hunter; it gives victory in intertribal games of skill, and is the secret force of endurance or speed of foot. The prophet or the soothsayer discloses the future by its aid; and whatever is believed to have been instrumental in accomplishing some purpose or obtaining some good, finds in *orenda* the source of its effectiveness.



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Not dissimilar is the conception of *mulungu* among the Yaos, east of Lake Nyassa. The term is wide-spread through the eastern group of Bantu tongues, and is said to have the meaning of "Old One" or "Great One"; and in this sense it has been employed as equivalent to God. But we are expressly told that in its native use and form it does not imply personality. Etymologically it ranks with the leg, arm, heart, head, of the human frame. Yet it denotes rather a state or property inhering in something, like life or health in the body, than any single object. It indicates a kind of supernormal energy, displayed in actual experience, but not to be detected by any physical sense. It is the agent of wonder and mystery; the rainbow is *mulungu;* and it sums up at once the creative energy which made the earth and animals and man, and the powers which operate in human life. At the foot of a tree in the village courtyard, where men sit and talk, a small offering of flour or beer is placed on any distinctive occasion in the communal life; at a meal, or on a journey at cross roads, a little flour is set aside. It is "for Mulungu"; sometimes dimly conceived as a spirit within; sometimes regarded as a universal agency in nature and affairs, impalpable, impersonal; sometimes rising into distinctness as God.

Such terms are, of course, generalisations from many separate experiences. Out of this sense of mystery grow more definite ideas.

The dark and solemn forest, the rushing river, the precipitous rock, the lofty cloud-crowned mountain, the winds and storms, all manifest a common power;[1] it lives in the snake or the bull, in the tiger or the bear. This may be conceived in a highly complex and abstract form. Thus the Zuñis of Mexico, we are told, suppose the sun and moon, the stars, the sky, the earth and sea, with all their various changes, and all inanimate objects, as well as plants, animals, and men, to belong to one great system of all-conscious and interrelated life. One term includes them all: *hâi*, "being" or "life." With the prefix *â*, "all," the whole field of nature is summed up as *âhâi*, "life" or "the Beings." This comprehensive term includes the objects of sensible experience regarded as personal existences, and supersensual beings who are known as "Finishers or Makers of the paths of life," the most exalted of all being designated "the Holder of the paths of our lives." So in Annam life is regarded as a universal phenomenon. It belongs not only to men and animals and plants, but to stones and stars, to earth, fire, and wind. But it is seen in groups and kinds rather than individuals, and the limits of its forms are not sharply drawn; it can pass through many transformations, and possesses indefinite possibilities of change.

[1] M. Durkheim has recently applied conceptions of the *mana* order to the explanation of totemism.

Such conceptions have a long history behind them.

The poets of the ancient Vedic hymns beheld everything around them full of energy. The names by which they designated what they saw all denoted action or agency. The swift flow of the stream gained it the title of the "runner"; as it cut away the banks or furrowed its course deep between the rocks, it was the "plougher"; when it nourished the fields it was the "mother"; when it marked off one territory from another it was the "defender" or "protector." So the seers addressed their invocations to the dawn or the sun, to the winds and the fire, to the river or the mountain, to the earth-mother or the sky-father, as living powers, capable of responding to the prayers of their worshippers. Similar energy dwelt in the horse or the cow, the bird of omen and the guardian dog. It was even shared by ritual implements such as the stones by which the sacred soma-juice was squeezed out, or by the products of human handiwork, the war-car, the weapon, the drum, and the peaceful plough.

At the present day the Batak in the north-west of Sumatra interpret the world about them in terms of a soul-stuff or life-power called *tondi*. A vast reservoir of this exists in the world above, and flows down upon men and animals and plants. The biggest animal, like the tiger, the most important of plants, like rice (chief source of food), have most

*tondi*, but it is not confined to living things; the smith attributes it to his iron, the fisherman to his boat, the tiller of the ground to his hoe, the householder to his hearth and home. But a further analysis is beginning. What is the relation of a man's *tondi* to himself? When he dies, it passes into some fresh organism. But the rest of him, his shadow, his double, or his self, becomes a *begu*. In life, it is the body that thinks and feels, that fears and hopes and wills, though the presence of the *tondi* supplies the needful energy. But the *tondi* also has the functions of consciousness, for it can go away in dreams and meet the *begus* of parents and ancestors. And the apprehension that it may depart begets reverence and even offerings to the *tondi*, rather than to distant gods for whom man can feel neither fear nor love.

We touch here another root of religious belief, which produces growths so widespreading that some interpreters bring the whole range of objects of worship within their shade. How, after all, does man explain himself to himself? At first he does not think about thinking. Such words as he uses are vague and elastic, like the Polynesian *mana*, which covers a multitude of facts without and within. Only through long dim processes does any idea corresponding to our conception of personality come into his consciousness. He is as confused about the objects round him as he is about himself.

Yet he has some sort of initiative. Whence comes it? Little by little a variety of experiences force on him the belief that beside the body and its limbs he possesses something which he cannot ordinarily see, but which is essential to his activity. He falls asleep, and lies still upon the ground; he wakes, full of remembrance of adventure, the localities which he has visited, the animals that he has hunted, the dead kinsmen whom he has met. The Australians explain their dreams by the supposition that the *yambo*, the *mūrup*, or the *boolabong*, can quit the body and return. "I asked one of the Kurnai" (of Gippsland), relates Mr. Howitt, "whether he really thought his *yambo* could go out during sleep." "It must be so," was the answer, "for when I sleep, I go to distant places, I see distant people, I even see and speak with those that are dead." The great apostle of the East in the sixteenth century, the devoted Francis Xavier, wrote home from India to the Society of Jesus in Europe—

"I find that the arguments which are to convince these ignorant people must be by no means subtle, such as those which are found in the books of learned schoolmen, but such as their minds can understand. They asked me again and again how the soul of a dying person goes out of the body, how it was, whether it was as happens to us in dreams, when we seem to be conversing with our

friends and acquaintances. Ah, how often this happens to me, dearest brethren, when I dream of you! Was this because the soul then leaves the body?"

This explanation is found all round the globe.

Many other experiences confirm the impression of some kind of dual existence. The shadow or shade which follows a man repeats his movements, and appears as a sort of double. It is even widely believed in the face of the simplest evidence that a dead body casts no shadow (of course, as it lies upon the ground the shadow may almost disappear). Your reflection in river, pool, or lake, actually reproduces your colour as well as your form: beware lest a crocodile seizes it and drags you in. From ancient times down to Shelley and Walt Whitman, poetry has designated Sleep and Death as "brothers"; in death that which was temporarily absent in sleep has gone away for good. It may have rushed out with the blood from a gaping wound; it may have quietly departed with the last faint breath. So it may be summoned back, as in Chinese custom, on the housetop, in the garden or the field. Ghostly sounds may be heard in the forest, among the rocks, borne along the wind; the clairvoyant may discern dimly strange faces, vanished forms; the dead can sometimes make themselves seen in their old haunts;

the world is full of unexpected indications of presences beyond our sense.

Such presences are grouped, for the modern student, under the general title "spirits." But the explanations which lead to these beliefs are not concerned with human beings only. Animals share in the incidents of life and death; plants, even, grow and blossom and decay; and animals, plants, and inanimate objects of all sorts may be seen in dreams. Hence the analysis which is applied to man can be readily extended; and another world is called into existence, strangely blended with this, a realm of immaterial counterparts and impalpable forces. A Fiji native, placed before a mirror, recognising himself and object after object, whispered softly, "Now I can see into the world of spirits."

With the help of this elementary philosophy a vast machinery of causation is always at hand for explaining untoward events. The Tshi-speaking negro on the West Coast of Africa has inside him a kind of life-power named *kra*. It existed long before his birth, for it served in the same capacity a whole series of predecessors; and it will continue its career after his death, when the man himself becomes a *srahman* or ghost. The adjoining Ga-speaking tribes modify the *kra* into two *kla*, one male and one female, the first of a bad disposition, the second good, who give advice and prompt to actions according

to their respective characters. Yet a third inmate dwells in the neighbouring Yoruba-speaking folk, one in the head, one in the stomach, and one in the great toe. Offerings are made to the first by rubbing fowl's blood and palm oil on the forehead. The second needs none, for it shares whatever the stomach receives. The third is propitiated as an agent of locomotion before starting on a journey. But the curious theme of the plurality of souls must not beguile us.

Meantime the original *kra* is set behind all the activities of nature, and extended to the whole sphere of material objects. Each town or village or district has its own local spirits, rulers of river and valley, rock and forest and hill. Sometimes they take human shape, and colour, white or black, for transformations of all kinds are always possible. They are not all of equal rank; the broad lake, the mountain, the sea where the surf breaks heavily and the frail craft are upset—the lightning, the storm, and the earthquake—the leopard, the crocodile, the shark, and the devastating smallpox—such are among the dreaded manifestations of these dangerous and mysterious powers. But the actual dead must not be forgotten; they must be provided with ghostly counterparts of food and weapons and utensils, with cloth and gold-dust, just as a departed chief must be accompanied into the next life by the wives and slaves who adorned his household state in this.

The ritual of the dead belongs, as we have seen (p. 20), to the earliest-known activities of European man. It is found in some form or other in every country under the sun. Sometimes it is prompted by fear, and has for its object to keep the dead imprisoned in the grave, or to prevent their spirits from returning to their old haunts (p. 228). Sometimes it is warmed by affection, as the departed are recalled to the homes where they were loved. In ancient Egypt it was developed with the utmost elaboration, and created a literature describing a kind of "pilgrim's progress" through the scenes of the next world (p. 237); while in Greece and Rome the cultus of the dead acquired, as in India and China, immense social significance. The question that arises in the study of religion in the lower culture is concerned with the probable connection between the two groups of spirits, which may be broadly distinguished as spirits of nature and spirits of the dead. That the latter are constantly propitiated in various forms is well known. They are to be found everywhere, lurking in the trees, flying through the air, sojourning in caves, haunting the promontories on the rivers or hidden in the forest-depths. With them lie the causes of disease and madness; they are malevolent and hurtful, as well as kindly and good. What differences are to be discerned between them and the powers of nature? Are we to suppose, with some

students, that all the higher forms of religion have been developed out of the worship of the dead, and that for gods we must everywhere read originally ghosts?

Consider, for example, the ancient religion of Japan, which we know by an adaptation of two Chinese words as Shin-To, the "spirits' way," or in its native form *kami-no-michi*.[1] Who are the *kami*, or "spirits"? The title of "religion" has sometimes been denied to their cultus on the ground that it contains "no set of dogmas, no sacred book, and no moral code." Greece and Rome might, on the same plea, be described as having no religion. The term *kami* has for its root-idea the significance of "that which is above." It may be applied in the widest range of relations from the hair which is on the top of the head to the government which rules the people. The *kami* are, as it were, the "highnesses"; the word is used of big things by land and sea, great rivers, mighty mountains, roaring winds and rolling thunder; then of rocks and trees, of animals like the tiger and the wolf, of metals, and so of innumerable objects in earth and sky. It is not always clear whether these were originally conceived as themselves living, or whether they had been resolved into material body and controlling spirit. The

[1] Chinese culture has probably exerted considerable influence on the exponents of the Shinto revival in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries. Very different aspects are reflected in the ancient chronicles.

functions of the *kami*, however, are extended and distributed by a kind of fission; the *kami* of food split into the produce of trees and the parent of grasses; they preside over guilds and crafts, the weavers, the potters, the carpenters, the swordsmen, the boatbuilders; they guide the operations of agriculture; they superintend the household, and watch over the kitchen range, the saucepan, the ricepot, the well, the pond, the garden, and the scarecrow.

But in this vast assembly are included also the spirits of the dead. They likewise become *kami* of varying rank and power. Some dwell in temples built in their honour; some hover near their tombs; some are kindly, and some malevolent. They mingle in the immense multiplicity of agencies which makes every event in the universe, in the language of the Shinto writer Motowori (1730–1801), "the act of the Kami." They direct the changing seasons, the wind and the rain; and the good and bad fortunes of individuals, families, and States, are due to them. From birth to death the entire life of man is encompassed and guided by the Kami.

Hence came the duty of worship on which Hirata (1776–1843) lays great stress. The heaven-descended Ninigi, progenitor of the imperial line, was taught by his divine forefathers that "everything in the world depends on the spirits of the *kami* of heaven and earth, and therefore the worship of the *kami* is a

matter of primary importance. The *kami* who do harm are to be appeased, so that they may not punish those who have offended them; and all the *kami* are to be worshipped so that they may be induced to increase their favours." Accordingly Hirata's morning prayer before the *kami-dana*, the wooden shelf fixed against the wall in a Shinto home about six feet from the floor, bearing a small model of a temple or "august spirit-house," ran thus—

"Reverently adoring the great God of the two palaces of Isé (the Sun-goddess) in the first place, the 800 myriads of celestial *kami*, the 800 myriads of ancestral *kami*, all the 1500 myriads to whom are consecrated the great and small temples in all provinces, all islands and all places in the great land of 8 islands, the 1500 myriads of *kami* whom they cause to serve them. . . . I pray with awe that they will deign to correct the unwitting faults which, heard and seen by them, I have committed, and, blessing and favouring me according to the powers which they severally wield, cause me to follow the divine example, and to perform good works in the way."

Here, the spirits of the dead are blended with those of nature, without any definite attempt to assign them to different ranks or functions. Among the dead themselves there are such distinctions, which do not, however, concern us here; there are "spirits of crookedness,"

and there are spirits of the clans and of the imperial line. But above the multitudinous groups of nameless *kami*, whether once human or attached to the physical scene, rise certain great powers which it seems very difficult to identify with departed ghosts. The earliest traditions of the divine evolution in the ancient chronicles contain no hint pointing in that direction; and the comparison of the Japanese deities of earth, fire, wind, sea, and similar great elemental forces elsewhere, is not favourable to their derivation from the hosts of the dead.

The student of the hymns to Fire in the Rig-Veda (*Agni* = Latin *ignis*) cannot fail to notice the emphasis laid upon the birth of the god out of the wood, as the fire-drill kindles the first sparks, and the flame leaps forth. Here is something quick-moving, vital; the fire is the god; he may rise into cosmic significance as a pervading energy sustaining the whole world; but he never loses his physical character, any more than the solid earth or the encompassing sky. These are again and again the chief co-ordinating powers of the higher animism. Their separation out of the primeval mass of obscure and indiscriminate chaos has been the theme of myth from Egypt to New Zealand; just as their "bridal" has served to express the union and co-operation of the forces of nature all around the world.

Of this the ancient Chinese religion, still the

formal basis of the national worship as performed by the Emperor, supplies perhaps the best example. The cultus of the dead is practised in every home, and around the incidents of life and death have gathered various Buddhist and Taoist rites. Moreover, a rampant demonology environs the entire field of existence; but this disordered multitude of noxious spirits has no recognition in the imperial homage. From immemorial generations the Chinese practice made religion a department of the State, and the venerable book of the Rites of the great dynasty of Chow requires the Grand Superior of Sacrifices to superintend the worship due to three orders of *Shin* or spirits, celestial, terrestrial, and human. Under the sovereignty of the sky the first includes the spirits of the sun, moon, stars, clouds, wind, rain, thunder, and the changes of the atmosphere. In the sphere of earth are reckoned the spirits of the mountains, rivers, plains, seas, lakes, woods, fields, and grains.

Taken together Heaven and Earth thus include all the energies of the universe. The world, as we see it, is, indeed, full of opposing powers, one group (*yang*) representing light and warmth and life, the contrary (*yin*) manifesting themselves in cold and darkness and death.[1] But these are both encompassed by

[1] The sky is the home of the *yang*; the *yin* are referred to the earth, in curious contrast to its powers of production and nourishment.

the "Path" or *Tao*, the daily course of the universe, the abiding guarantee of justice in the distribution of good and evil in the human lot. Heaven and earth are thus regarded as themselves active or living; they constantly maintain the order of nature for the welfare of man. In the ancient Odes (which Confucius was supposed to have edited) "heaven" is called great and wide and blue. This is plainly the visible firmament; it is addressed as parent, and sky and earth together are father and mother of the world. They are not spirits, but are themselves animate. "Why," laments Dr. Edkins of his Chinese hearers, "they have been often asked, should you speak of these things which are dead matter, fashioned from nothing by the hand of God, as living beings?" "And why not?" they have replied. "The sky pours down rain and sunshine, the earth produces corn and grass, we see them in perpetual movement, and we therefore say they are living."

The Chinese genius was ethical rather than metaphysical. It was not concerned with the Infinite, the Eternal, and the Absolute. But it was deeply impressed with the moral aspects of the sky, its universality, its comprehensive embrace of all objects and powers beneath its far-stretching dome, its all-seeing view, its inflexible impartiality. Its decrees are steadfast, and proceeded from its sovereign sway; and in this capacity it bore the

august title of Shang Tî, "Supreme Ruler." The scholastic philosophers of a later day analysed "Heaven" in this capacity into the actual sky and its controlling personality, and Shang Tî became the Moral Governor of the Universe, the equivalent of the western God.

Beneath the sky lay the earth, receptive of the energies descending upon it from on high; "Heaven and Earth, Father and Mother," are conjoined in common speech. Together they guided the changes of the year, in steadfast tread along the annual round. Folded in their wide compass were the Shin, charged with the regulation of the elemental powers. Under Heaven's control were the Shin of sun and moon, planets, stars, meteors, comets; of clouds and winds, thunder and rain; of the seasons, months, and days. Those of the earth were organised in territorial divisions, representing the dominions of the vassal princes down to the district areas. The higher were graded according to the political rank of the several provinces; beneath them were reckoned the spirits of the mountains, forests, seas, rivers, and grains. The privileges of worship granted to the various officials were part of the State order, and helped to maintain political and civic stability.

The imperial sacrifices to Heaven and Earth were performed at the winter and the summer solstices. The great altar to Heaven

stands in a large park in the southern division of Peking, a vast marble structure in three stages, the lowest being 210 feet across. It is the largest altar in the world. Its white colour symbolises the light principle of the Yang. The upper stage, ninety feet in diameter, has for its centre a round blue jade stone, the symbol of the vault above. Here is placed the tablet to Heaven, inscribed "Throne of Sovereign Heaven," and associated with it are tablets to deceased emperors as well as to the Sun and Moon, the seven stars of the Great Bear, the five Planets, the twenty-eight Constellations, and the Stars. On the second stage, beneath the richly carved balustrade above, are the tablets to the Clouds and Rain, to Wind and Thunder. At the corresponding altar to the Earth on the north side of the city, square in shape, and dark-yellow in hue, the imperial worship at the summer solstice embraces also the five lofty Mountains, the three Hills of Perpetual Peace, the four Seas, the five celebrated Mountains, and the four great Rivers.[1]

Splendid processions of princes and dignitaries, musicians and singers, accompany the Emperor to the great ceremonial. The recent Manchu sovereigns employed the prayers of the Ming dynasty which preceded them : here

[1] It is stated by the *North China Herald* for July 13, that the present Chinese Government proposes to convert the Temple of Heaven into a model farm, and the Temple of Earth into a horse-breeding establishment.

are one or two stanzas of a psalm in which the Emperor Kia-tsing in the sixteenth century announced to Shang Tî that he would be addressed as "dwelling in the sovereign heavens":—

"O Tî, when thou hadst separated the Yin and the Yang (*i. e.* the earth and the sky), thy creative work proceeded.

"Thou didst produce the sun and moon and the five planets, and pure and beautiful was their light.

"The vault of heaven was spread out like a curtain, and the square earth supported all upon it, and all things were happy.

"I thy servant venture reverently to thank thee, and while I worship, present the notice to thee, calling thee Sovereign.

. . . . .

"All the numerous tribes of animated beings are indebted to thy favour for their beginning.

"Men and things are all emparadised in thy love, O Tî.

"All living things are indebted to thy goodness, but who knows from whom his blessings come to him.

"It is thou alone, O Lord, who art the true parent of all things."

Here the ancient view of the living sky has given place under the influences of

philosophy to a creative monotheism. No image is made of Shang Tî. As he stands at the head of the manifold ranks of the *Shin*, he represents the last word of animism in providing an intellectual form for religion.

# CHAPTER IV

## SPIRITS AND GODS

RELIGION in the lower culture takes many forms, but, speaking broadly, they rest upon a common interpretation of the world. Man sees around him all kinds of motion and change. He finds in everything that happens some energy or power; and the only kind of power which he knows is that which he himself exerts. As long as he is alive he can run and fight, he can throw the spear or guide the canoe; death comes to the comrade by his side, and all is still. So in wind and stream, in beast and tree, in the stones that fall upon the mountain side, in the stars that march across the nightly sky, he sees a like power; they, too, have some sort of life.

Life as an abstract idea, a potency or principle, is but rarely grasped. But its manifestations early attract notice, and can be roughly explained. They are due to something inside the living body, which can pass in and out, and can finally leave it altogether. Here is an immense store of causality provided, to account for all the incidents of each day's experience. Modern language calls

such agents spirits, and recognises in their multitude two mingled groups, both active: the spirits of the dead on the one hand, and those of natural objects, the bubbling well, the gloomy forest, the raging storm, upon the other.

Sometimes these are merged under a common term, like the Japanese *kami*, sometimes they are separately named. They bear different characters of good and evil, as they are ready to help or hurt; and the same spirit may be now kindly and now hostile, without fixity of disposition or purpose. To such spirits the ancient Babylonians gave the name of *zi*. Literally, we are told, the word signified "life"; it was indicated in their picture-writing by a flowering plant; the great gods, and even heaven and earth themselves, all had their *zi*. The Egyptians, in like manner, ascribed to every object, to human beings, and to gods, a double or *ka*. The word seems to be identical with that for "food"; it was another way of indicating that all visible things, the peoples of the earth, the dwellers in the realms above and below, shared a common life.

The history of religion is concerned with the process by which the great gods rise into clear view above the host of spirits filling the common scene; with the modes in which the forces of the world may be grouped under their control; with the manifold combinations which finally enable one supreme power to

absorb all the rest, so that a god of the sky, like the Greek Zeus, may become a god of rain and sunshine and atmospheric change, of earth and sea, and of the nether world; and may thus be presented as the sole and universal energy, not only of all outward things but also of the inner world of thought. Of this immense development language, archæology, literature, the dedications of worship, the testimonies of the ancient students of their still more ancient past in ritual and belief, contain the scattered witness, which the student of to-day laboriously gathers and interprets. It is the humbler object of a little manual of Comparative Religion to set some of the principal issues of such historic evolution side by side, and show how similar reactions of the mind of man upon the field of his experience have wrought like results.

As the inquirer casts his eye over the manifold varieties of the world's faiths, he sees that they are always conditioned by the stage of social culture out of which they emerge. The hunter who lives by the chase, and must range over large areas for means of support; the pastoral herdsman who has acquired the art of breeding cattle and sheep, and slowly moves from one set of feeding-grounds to another; the agriculturist who has learned to rely on the co-operation of earth and sky in the annual round,—have each their own way of expressing their view of the Powers on which they depend.

Little by little they are arranged in groups. The Celts, for instance, coming to river after river in their onward march, employed the same name again and again, "Deuona," divine (still surviving in this country in different forms, Devon, Dee, etc.), as though all rivers belonged to one power. They were the givers of life and health and plenty, to whom costly sacrifices must be made. So they might bear the title "Mother," and were akin to the powers of fertility living in the soil, the "Mothers" (*Matres* or *Matronæ*), cognate with the "Mothers" who fulfil similar functions in modern India. The adjacent Teutonic peoples filled forest and field with wood-sprites and elves, dwellers in the air and the sunlight. The springs, the streams, and the lakes, were the home of the water-sprites or nixes; in the fall of the mighty torrent, among the rocks on the mountain heights, in the fury of the storm or the severity of the frost, was the strength of the giants.

Yet further east and north the Finnic races looked out on a land of forest and waters, of mists and winds. The spirits were ranged beneath rulers who were figured in human form. The huntsman prayed with vow and sacrifice to the aged Tapio, god of the woods and the wild animals. Kekri watched over the increase of the herd, while Hillervo protected them on the summer pastures. The grains and herbs—of less importance to tribes

only imperfectly agricultural—were ascribed to the care of Pellervoinen, who falls into the background and receives but little veneration. Water, once worshipped as a living element (*vesi*), is gradually supplanted by a water-god (Ahto) who rules over the spirits of lakes and rivers, wells and springs. "Mother-earth" still designates in the oldest poetry the living energy of the ground, though she afterwards becomes the "lady of the earth" and consort of the lord of the sky. The sky, Jumala, was first of all conceived as itself living; "Jumala's weather" was like "Zeus's shower" to an ancient Greek. And then, under the name Ukko, the sky becomes a personal ruler, with clouds and rain, thunder and hail, beneath his sway; who can be addressed as—

> "Ukko, thou of gods the highest,
> Ukko, thou our Heavenly Father."

Many causes contribute to the enlargement and stability of such conceptions. Tribes of imited local range and a meagre past without traditions may conceive the world around them on a feeble scale. But migration helps to enlarge the outlook. Local powers cannot accompany tribes upon the march. Either they must be left behind and drop out of remembrance, or they must be identified with new scenes and adapted to fresh environments. When the horizon moves ever further forwards with each advance, earth and sky loom vaster

before the imagination, and sun and moon, the companion of each day or the protector of each night, gain a more stately predominance. The ancestors of the Hindus, the Greeks, the Romans, the Teutons, carried with them the worship of the sky-god under a common name, derived from the root *div*, to "shine" (Dyaus = Zeus = Jovis = old High German Tiu, as in Tuesday). Other names gathered around the person in the actual firmament, such as the Sanskrit Varuna (still recognised by some scholars as identical with the Greek Ouranos, heaven), loftiest of all the Vedic gods. The Aryan immigrants are already organised under kings, and Varuna sits enthroned in sovereignty. His palace is supported by a thousand pillars, and a thousand doors provide open access for his worshippers. But he is in some sense omnipresent, and one of the ancient poets sang—

"If a man stands or walks or hides, if he goes to lie down or to get up, what two people sitting together whisper, King Varuna knows it, he is there as the third.

"This earth, too, belongs to Varuna, the king, and this wide sky with its ends far apart. The two seas (sky and ocean) are Varuna's loins; he is also contained in this small drop of water.

"He who should flee far beyond the sky, even he would not be rid of Varuna, the king."

The supreme power of the universe is here conceived under a political image. Conceptions of government and social order supply another line of advance, parallel with the forces of nature. On the African Gold Coast, after eighteen years' observation, Cruickshank ranged the objects of worship in three ranks: (1) the stone, the tree, the river, the snake, the alligator, the bundle of rags, which constituted the private fetish of the individual; (2) the greater family deity whose aid was sought by all alike, sometimes in a singular act of communion which involved the swallowing of the god (p. 144); and (3) the deity of the whole town, to whom the entire people had recourse in times of calamity and suffering.

The conception of the deity of a tribe or nation may be greatly developed under the influence of victory. War becomes a struggle between rival gods. Jephthah the Gileadite, after recounting the triumphs of Israel to the hostile Ammonite king, states the case with the most naked simplicity: "Yahweh, Israel's god, hath dispossessed the Amorites from before his people Israel, and shouldest thou possess them? Wilt thou not possess that which Chemosh thy god giveth thee to possess? So whomsoever Yahweh our god hath dispossessed from before us, them will we possess" (Judges xi. 23, 24). The land of Canaan was the gift of Israel's God, but at first his power was limited by its boundaries: to be driven from the country was to be

alienated from the right to offer him worship or receive from him protection. In the famous battle with the Hittites, celebrated by the court-poet of Rameses the Great (1300–1234 B.C.), the king, endangered by the flight of his troops, appeals to the great god Amen, a form of the solar deity Rê, with confidence of help, "Amen shall bring to nought the ignorers of God": and the answer comes, "I am with thee, I am thy father, my hand is with thee, I am more excellent for thee than hundreds of thousands united in one." Success thus enhanced the glory of the victor's gods. Like the Incas of Peru in later days, the Assyrian sovereigns confirmed their power by bringing the deities of tributary peoples in a captive train to their own capital: and the Hebrew prophet opens his description of the fall of Babylon by depicting the images of the great gods Bel and Nebo as packed for deportation on the transport-animals of the conqueror.

Other causes further tended to give distinction to the personality of deities, and define their spheres. A promiscuous horde of spirits has no family relationships. A god may have a pedigree; a consort is at his side; and the mysterious divine power reappears in a son. Instead of the political analogy of a sovereign and his attendants, the family conception expresses itself in a divine father, mother and child. Thus the Ibani of Southern Nigeria recognised Adum as the father of all

gods except Tamuno the creator, espoused to Okoba the principal goddess, and mother of Eberebo, represented as a boy, to whom children were dedicated. The Egyptian triad, Osiris, Isis and Horus, is well known; and the divine mother with the babe upon her lap passed into the Christian Church in the form of the Virgin Mary and her infant son.

The divisions of the universe suggested another grouping. The Vedic poets arranged their deities in three zones: the sky above, the intervening atmosphere, and the earth beneath. Babylonian cosmology placed Anu in the heaven, Bel on the earth, and Ea in the great deep, and these three became the symbols of the order of nature, and the divine embodiments of physical law. Homer already divides the world between the sky-god Zeus, Poseidon of earth and sea, and Hades of the nether realm: and Rome has its triads, like Jupiter, Mars, and Quirinus, or again Jupiter, Juno, and Minerva. Whatever be the origin of the number three in this connection, it reproduces itself with strange reiteration in both hemispheres. Other groups are suggested by the sun and moon and the five planets, and appear in sets of seven. Egyptian summaries recognised gods in the sky, on earth, and in the water; and the theologians of different sanctuaries loved to arrange them in systems of nine, or three times three.

Out of this vast and motley multitude emerge certain leading types in correspondence

with certain modes of human thought, with certain hopes and fears arising out of the changes of the human lot. Curiosity begins to ask questions about the scene around. The child, when it has grasped some simple view of the world, will inquire who made it; and to the usual answer will by and by rejoin "And who made God?" Elementary speculation does not advance so far: it is content to rest if necessary in darkness and the void, provided there is a power which can light the sun, and set man on his feet. But the intellectual range of thought even in the lower culture is much wider than might have been anticipated; while the higher religions contain abundant survivals of the cruder imagination which simply loves a tale.

Sometimes the creative power (especially on the American continent) is figured as a marvellous animal, a wondrous raven, a bird-serpent, a great hare, a mighty beaver. Or the dome of sky suggests an original world-egg, which has been divided to make heaven and earth. Even the Australians, whose characteristics are variously interpreted as indications of extreme backwardness or of long decline, show figures which belong to what Mr. Andrew Lang designated the "High Gods of Low Races." Among the Narrinyeri in the west Nurrundere was said to have made all things on the earth; the Wiimbaio told how Nurelli had made the whole country with the rivers, trees, and animals. Among the

Western Bantu on the African continent Nzambi (a name with many variants over a large area) is described as "Maker and Father." "Our forefathers told us that name. Njambi is the One-who-made-us. He is our Father, he made these trees, that mountain, this river, these goats and chickens, and us people." That is the simple African version of the "ever-and-beyond." But as with so many of the chief gods, not only on the dark continent, but elsewhere, he is regarded as a non-interfering and therefore negligible deity.

Sometimes speculation takes a higher flight. The Zuñis of Mexico have remained in possession of ancient traditions, uninfluenced by any imported Christianity. After many years' residence among them Mr. Cushing was able to gather their ideas of the origin of the world. Awona-wilona was the Maker and Container of all, the All-Father-Father. Through the great space of the ages there was nothing else whatever, only black darkness everywhere. Then "in the beginning of the new-made" Awona-wilona conceived within himself, and "thought outward in space," whereby mists of increase, steams potent of growth, were evolved and uplifted. Thus by means of his innate knowledge the All-Container made himself in the person and form of the sun. With his appearance came the brightening of the spaces with light, and with the brightening of the spaces the great

mist-clouds were thickened together and fell. Thereby was evolved water in water, yea and the world-holding sea. And then came the production of the Fourfold-Containing Mother-Earth and the All-Covering Father-Sky.

With a yet bolder leap of imagination did a Polynesian poet picture the great process. From island to island between Hawaii and New Zealand is a "high god" known as Taaroa, Tangaloa, Tangaroa, and Kanaroa. The Samoans said that he existed in space and wished for some place to dwell in, so he made the heavens; and then wished to have a place under the heavens, so he made the earth. Tahitian mythology declared (the versions of priests and wise men differed) that he was born of night or darkness. Then he embraced a rock, the imagined foundation of all things, which brought forth earth and sea; the heavens were created with sun, moon, and stars, clouds, wind, and rain, and the dry land appeared below. The whole process was summed up in a hymn—

"He was: Taaroa was his name.
He abode in the void; no earth, no sea, no sky.
Taaroa calls, but nought answers,
Then, alone existing, he became the universe."

The relations of these creative Powers to man are conceived very differently. The

Maker of the world may be continually interested in it, and may continue to administer the processes which he has begun. The Akkra negro looks up to the living sky, Nyongmo, as the author of all things, who is benevolently active day by day: "We see every day," said a fetish-man, "how the grass, the corn, and the trees, spring forth through the rain and sunshine sent by Nyongmo [*Nyongmo ne* = 'Nyongmo rains'], how should he not be the creator?" So he is invoked with prayer and rite. The great Babylonian god, Marduk, son of Ea (god of wisdom and spells), alone succeeds in overcoming the might of Tiâmat (the Hebrew *tehôm* or "deep"), the primeval chaos with her hideous brood of monsters, and out of her carcass makes the firmament of heaven. He arranges the stations of the stars, he founds the earth, and places man upon it. "His word is established," cries the poet, "his command is unchangeable: wide is his heart, broad is his compassion." A conqueror so splendid could not relinquish his energy, or rest on his achievements: he must remain on the throne of the world to direct and support its ways. Here is a prayer of Nebuchadrezzar to this lofty deity—

"O eternal ruler, lord of all being, grant that the name of the king thou lovest, whose name thou hast proclaimed, may flourish as seems pleasing to thee. Lead him in the right

way. I am the prince that obeys thee, the creature of thy hand. Thou hast created me, and hast entrusted to me dominion over mankind. According to thy mercy, O lord, which thou bestowest upon all, may thy supreme rule be merciful! The worship of thy divinity implant within my heart. Grant me what seems good to thee, for thou art he that hast fashioned my life."

On the other hand, the "High Gods of Low Races" often seem to fade away and become inactive, or at least are out of relations to man. Olorun, lord of the sky among the African Egbas, also bore the title of Eleda, "the Creator." But he was too remote and exalted to be the object of human worship, and no prayer was offered to him. Among the southern Arunta of central Australia, reports Mr. Strehlow, Altjira is believed to live in the sky. He is like a strong man save that he has emu feet. He created the heavenly bodies, sun, moon, and stars. When rain-clouds come up, it is Altjira walking through the sky. Altjira shows himself to man in the lightning, the thunder is his voice. But though thus animate, he is no object of worship. "Altjira is a good god; he never punishes man; therefore the blacks do not fear him, and render him neither prayer nor sacrifice." In Indian theology the reason for the discontinuance of homage was thus frankly stated by one of the poets

of the great epic, the Mahābhārata; "Men worship Çiva the destroyer because they fear him; Vishnu the preserver, because they hope from him; but who worships Brahman the creator? *His work is done.*"[1]

If the deity who has provided the scene of existence thus recedes into the background, it is otherwise with the powers which maintain and foster life. Among the impulses which drive man to action is the need of food; and the sources of its supply are among the earliest objects of his regard. A large group of agencies thus gradually wins recognition, out of which emerge lofty forms endowed with functions far transcending the simple energies at first ascribed to them. Even the rude tribes of Australia, possessing no definite worship, perform pantomimic ceremonies of a magical kind, designed to stimulate the food supply. The men of the plum-tree totem will pretend to knock down plums and eat them; in the initiation ceremony of the eagle-hawks two representatives will imitate the flapping of wings and the movements of attack, and one will finally wrench a piece of meat out of the other's mouth. At a higher stage of animism the Indians of British North America pray to the spirit of the wild raspberry. When the young shoots are six or eight inches high above the ground, a small bundle is

[1] Hopkins, *India, Old and New*, p. 113. Prof. Hopkins adds that in India to-day there are thousands of temples to Çiva and Vishnu, but only two to Brahman.

picked by the wife or daughters of the chief and cooked in a new pot. The settlement assembles in a great circle, with the presiding chief and the medicine-man in the midst. All close their eyes, except certain assisting elders, while the chief offers a silent prayer that the spirit of the plants will be propitious to them, and grant them a good supply of suckers.

Here the whole class of plants is already conceived as under the control of a single power. In ruder stages the hunter will address his petitions to the individual bear, before whose massive stature he feels a certain awe, entreating him not to be angry or fight, but to take pity on him. Pastoral peoples will employ domesticated animals in sacrifice, while the products of the field occupy a second place; the cow may become sacred, and the daily work of the dairy may rise, as among the Todas, to the rank of religious ritual. Some element of mysterious energy will even lie in the weapons of the chase, in the net or the canoe, and may be found still lingering in the implements of agriculture, such as the plough.

Among settled communities which live by tillage the succession of the crops from year to year acquires immense importance. Earth and sky, the sun, the rain, and time itself in the background, are all contributory powers, but attention is fastened upon the spirit of the grains. The Iroquois look on the spirits of corn, of squashes, and of beans, as three

sisters, who are known collectively as "Our Life" or "Our Supporters." In central America each class of food-plants had its corresponding spirit, which presided over its germination, nourishment, and growth. This was called the *mama* or "mother" of the plant: in Peru there was a cocoa-mother, a potato-mother, a maize-mother; just as in India the cotton-spirit is worshipped as "cotton-mother." A "maize-mother," made of the finest stalks, was renewed at each harvest, that the seed might preserve its vitality The figure, richly clothed, was ceremoniously installed, and watched for three nights. Sacrifice was solemnly offered, and the interpreter inquired, "Maize-mother, canst thou live till next year?" If the spirit answered affirmatively, the figure remained for a twelvemonth; if no reply was vouchsafed, it was taken away and burnt, and a fresh one was consecrated. In Mexico maize was a much more important food than in Peru, and the maize-deity acquired in consequence a much higher rank. She became a great harvest goddess. Temple and altar were dedicated to her; spring and summer festivals were celebrated in her honour; and a youthful victim was slain, whose vitality might enter the soil, and recruit her exhausted energies.

The ceremonies connected with the cultus of the rice-spirit in the East Indies still perpetuate in living faith beliefs once vital

in the peasantry of Europe, and surviving to this day (as Mannhardt and Frazer have shown) in many a usage of the harvest-field. Out of this group of ideas arise divine forms which express mysteries of life and time. What is it that guides the circle of the year? What power brings forth the blade out of the ground, and clothes the woods with verdure? As the months follow their constant course, are not the seasons the organs of some sacred force, lovely figures as Greek poets taught, born of Zeus and Themis (holy law); or angels of the Most High, ruling over heat and cold, summer and winter, spring and autumn, as the later Israel conceived the continuance of God's creative work? And when the fields are bare and the leaves fall, have not the energies of vegetation suffered an arrest, to come to life again when the great quickening of the spring returns? So while here and there dim speculations (as in India or Persia or the Orphic hymns of Greece) hover round Time, the generator of all things, and the recurring periodicity of the Year, more concrete imagination conceives the processes of the growth, decay, and revival of vegetation under the symbols of the life, the death, and resurrection of the deities of corn and tree.

To such a group belong different forms in Egypt, Syria and Greece, whose precise origin cannot always be traced amid the bewildering variety of functions which they came to fulfil. But they all illustrate the same general theme.

In the ritual of their worship similar motives and symbols may be traced; and the incidents of their life-course were presented in a sort of sacred drama which reproduced the central mystery. Such were Osiris in Egypt, Adonis (as the Greeks called the Syrian form of the ancient Babylonian Tammuz), Attis of Phrygia in Asia Minor, and in Greece the Thracian Dionysus, and the divine pair Demeter and her daughter Persephonê blended with the figure of Korê "the Maid."

The worship of Osiris early spread throughout Egypt, and its various phases have given rise to many interpretations of his origin and nature. Recent studies have converged upon the view that he was primarily a vegetation deity. In the festival of sowing, small images of the god formed out of sand or vegetable earth and corn, with yellow faces and green cheek-bones, were solemnly buried, those of the preceding year being removed. On the temple wall of his chamber at Philæ stalks of corn were depicted springing from his dead body, while a priest poured water on them from a pitcher. This was the mystery of him "who springs from the returning waters." The annual inundation brought quickening to the seed, and in the silence and darkness of the earth it died to live.

Of this process Osiris became the type for thousands of years. Already in the earliest days of the Egyptian monarchy he is presented as the divine-human king, benevolent, wise,

just. To him in later times the arts and laws of civilised life could be traced back; he was the founder of the social order and the worship of the gods. But the jealousy of his brother Set brought about his death. The ancient texts do not explicitly state what followed. But his body was cut to pieces and his limbs were scattered, until his son Horus effected their reunion. Restored to life, he ascended to the skies, and became "Chief of the Powers," so that he could be addressed as the "Great God." There by his resurrection he became the pledge of immortality. Each man who died looked to him for the gift of life. Mystically identified with him, the deceased bore the god's name and was thus admitted into fellowship with him. Over his body the ceremonies once performed upon Osiris were repeated, the same formulæ were recited, with the conviction that "as surely as Osiris lives, so shall he live also." But magic was early checked by morals, and by the sixth dynasty Osiris had also become the august and impartial judge (p. 8).

Such might be the splendid evolution of a deity of the grains. But food was not, of course, the only need. The family as well as each individual must be maintained. Mysterious powers wrought through sex. Strange energies pulsed in processes of quickening, and these, too, were interpreted in terms of divine agency. They found their parallels in the operations of nature (like the Yang and

Yin of ancient China), and begot new series of heavenly forms. The greater gods all had their consorts. Birth must be placed under divine protection, just as the organ of generation might itself be sacred. The Babylonian looked to the spouse of Marduk, "creator of all things," to whom as Zēr-panîtum, "seed-creatress," the processes of generation were especially referred. Or with ceremony and incantation the child was set beneath the care of Ishtar, queen of Nineveh, and goddess of the planet Venus. The Greek prayed to Hera, Artemis, or Eileithyia; and all round the world superhuman powers, for good or ill, gathered round the infant life, whose aid must be sought, or whose hurt averted. Dread agencies of disease, like fever, small-pox, or cholera, were in like manner personalised. Demonic forces cut short the tale of years. From the equator to the arctic zone Death is ascribed in the lowest culture to witchcraft. Strange stories were told of his intrusion into the world, commonly through man's transgression of some divine command. And gradually the other world must be ruled like this; the multitudes of the dead need a sovereign like the living; and after the fashion of Osiris the Indian Yama, "first to spy out the path" to the unseen realm, becomes the "King of Righteousness" before whom all must in due time give their account (p. 244).

Such deities, however, represent much more than the physical life. They have a social

character, and have become the expression of organised morality. On this field another group of divine powers comes into view, symbols of order in the home or the city, charged with the maintenance of the family or the State. Round the hearth-fire gathers a peculiar sanctity. There is the common centre of domestic interests; there, too, the agent by which gifts are conveyed to the spirits of the dead. There, then, was a sacred force, dwelling in the hearth itself, and animating the fire that burned upon it. The Greek Hestia seems originally to have been not the goddess who made the hearth holy, nor the sacrificial fire which it sustained, but the mysterious energy in the actual stones upholding the consecrated flame. All kinds of associations were attached to it; and though her personality remained somewhat dim and indistinct, and carven forms of her were rare, and her worship was never sacerdotalised like that of the Latin Vesta, she nevertheless had the first place in sacrifice and prayer. She was worshipped in the city council-hall. Athenian colonists carried her sacred fire across the seas. The poets provided her with a pedigree, and made her "sister of God most high, and of Hera the partner of his throne." The sculptor placed her statue at Athens beside that of Peace. The family deity expanded into an emblem of the unity of government and race. But the primitive character of the ancient hearth-power still clung to her.

She never rose into the lofty functions of guide and protector of moral order like the great city-gods Zeus, Athena, or Apollo.

In Rome numerous powers were recognised in early days as guardians of the home and the farm-lands. Vesta had her seat upon the hearth, which was the centre of the family worship, and afterwards became the object of an important city-cult. The store-chamber behind was the dwelling-place of the Penates, and with its contents no impure person might meddle. Where farm met farm stood the chapel of the local Lares, and there whole households assembled, masters and slaves together, in annual rejoicings and good fellowship. Brought into the home, the Lar became the symbol of the family life, and the ancestral pieties gathered round him. More vague and elastic was the conception of the Genius, a kind of spiritual double who watched over the fortunes of the head of the home, and through the marriage-bed provided for the continuity of descent. This protecting power could take many forms with continually expanding jurisdiction. The city, the colony, the province, the "land of Britain," Rome, the Emperor himself, were thus placed under divine care, or rather were viewed as in some way the organs of superhuman power. In the energy which built up states and brought peoples into order lived something that was creative and divine.

From distant times in many forms of society

it was felt that there was something mysterious in sovereignty. The king (once connected with the priest) was hedged round with some sort of divinity which expressed itself in language amazing to the modern mind. In the ancient monarchies of Egypt and Babylon the royal deity was the fundamental assumption of government, and it was represented upon the monuments beside the Nile with startling realism. In later days the Greek title *Theos* (god) was boldly assumed by the sovereigns of Egypt and Syria. It was conferred, with the associated epithet *Sotér* (Saviour or Preserver), as early as 307 B.C., on Demetrius and his father Antigonus, who liberated Athens from the tyranny of Cassander. On the Rosetta stone (in the British Museum) Ptolemy V, 205 B.C., claims the same dignity, and is described as "eternal-lived," and "the living image of Zeus." Ephesus designated Julius Cæsar as "God manifest and the common Saviour of human life."

This is something more than the extravagance of court-scribes, or the fawning adulation of oriental dependents. In the worship paid to the Roman Emperor many feelings and associations were involved. The power which had brought peace, law, order, into the midst of a multitude of nations and languages, and subdued to itself the jarring wills of men, seemed something more than human. When Tertullian of Carthage coined the strange word "Romanity," he summed up the infinite

variety of energies which spread one culture from the Persian Gulf to the Atlantic, from the cataracts of the Nile to the sources of the Tyne. Of this mysterious force the Emperor was the symbol. So Augustus was saluted throughout the East as "Son of God," and in inscriptions recently discovered in Asia Minor, and referred by the historian Mommsen to the year 11 or 9 B.C., we read the startling words: "the birthday of the God is become the beginning of glad tidings (*evangelia*[1]) through him to the world." He is described as "the Saviour of the whole human race"; he is the beginning of life and the end of sorrow that ever man was born. An inscription at Philæ on the Nile equated him with the greatest of Greek deities, for he is "star of all Greece who has arisen as great Saviour Zeus."

This is the most highly developed form of the doctrine of the divine king, which the Far East has retained for the sovereigns of China and Japan to our own day. The language and practice of Roman imperialism called forth the impassioned resistance of the early Christians, and the clash of opposing religions is nowhere portrayed with more desperate intensity than in the Book of Revelation at the close of our New Testament, where Rome and her false worship are identified with the power of the "Opposer" or Sâtân, and are hurled with all their trappings of wealth and luxury into the abyss.

[1] The word which designates our "Gospels."

The conception of a god as "saviour" or deliverer is founded on incidents in personal or national experience, when some unexpected event opens a way of escape from pressing danger. When the Gauls were advancing against Rome in 388 B.C., a strange voice of warning was heard in the street. It was neglected, but when they had been repelled, Camillus erected an altar and temple to the mysterious "Speaker," Aius Locutius, whose prophetic energy was thus manifested. In the second Punic war, when the Carthaginian general, Hannibal, was marching against the city in 211, he suddenly changed his course near the Capena gate. Again the might of an unknown deity was displayed, and the grateful Romans raised a shrine to him under the name of Tutanus Rediculus, the god who "protects and turns back." It might be the attack of an enemy, it might be the imminence of shipwreck, it might be a desolating plague, or any one of the vicissitudes of fortune, the distresses and anxieties of the soul or of the State, in the power which brought rescue or health or peace to body or mind, or life hereafter in a better world, the grateful believer recognised the energy of some superhuman being. Just as the making of the world required a creative hand, just as the arts and laws of social life were the product of some divine initiative (p. 171), just as the higher virtues belonged to a band of spiritual forces which had a kind of individuality of their own,

so the shaping of affairs bore witness to the interest and intervention of wills above those of man. All through the countries of the Eastern Mediterranean the greater deities, such as Apollo, Artemis, Athena, Æsculapius, Dionysus, Isis, Zeus, bore the title of "Deliverer." And in the mysteries which drew so many worshippers to their rites in the first centuries of our era, this deliverance took the form of salvation from sin, and carried with it the promise of re-birth into eternal life.

Similar conceptions are seen in India. The founder of Buddhism, Gotama of the Sākyan clan, was believed to have attained the Enlightenment which enabled him to discern the whole secret of existence. After a long series of preparatory labours in previous lives he had appeared as a man in his last birth, to "lift off from the world the veils of ignorance and sin." He had himself repudiated all ontological conceptions; he had explained the human being without the hypothesis of a soul or self, and the world without the ideas of substance or God. But in due time the rejected metaphysics insisted on recognition; and some three hundred years or more after his death a new interpretation of his person arose. Under the stress of pious affection, the influence of philosophical Brahmanism, and the need of permanent spiritual help, he was conceived as a manifestation of the Infinite and Eternal, who for the sake of suffering humanity from time to time conde-

scended to seem to be born and die, that in the likeness of a man he might impart the saving truth. So he was presented as the Self-Existent, the Father of the world, the Protector of all creatures, the Healer of men's sicknesses and sins.

Over against this great figure Brahmanism placed another, that of Vishnu, with his series of "descents," in which the Buddha was formally incorporated as the ninth. The most famous of these were the heroes Rama and Krishna; and Krishna became the subject of the best-known book of Indian devotion, the Bhagavad-Gītā or the "Divine Lay," which has been sometimes supposed to show traces of the influence of the Gospel of St. John. Here was a religion founded on the idea of divine grace or favour on the one part, and adoring love and devotion on the other. Krishna, also, taught a way of deliverance from the evils of human passion and attachment to the world; and Vishnu came to be the embodiment of divine beneficence, at once the power which maintained the universe and revealed himself from time to time to man.

Vishnu was an ancient Vedic deity connected with the sun; and by his side Hindu theology set another god of venerable antiquity, once fierce and destructive, but now known under the name of Çiva, the "auspicious." The great epic entitled the Mahābhārata does not conceal their rivalry; but with the facility of identification charac-

teristic of Indian thought, either deity could be interpreted as a form of the other. Çiva became the representative of the energies of dissolution and reproduction; and his worship begot in the hearts of the mediæval poets an ardent piety, while in other aspects it degenerated into physical passion on the one side and extreme asceticism on the other. But in association with Brahmā, Vishnu and Çiva constituted the Trimurti, or "triple form," embracing the principles of the creation, preservation, destruction, and renewal of the world. Symbolised, like the Christian Trinity, by three heads growing on one stem,[1] these lofty figures were the personal manifestations of the Universal Spirit, the Sole Existence, the ultimate Being, Intelligence, and Bliss.

By various paths was the goal of monotheism approached, but popular practice perpetually clung to lower worships, and philosophy could often accommodate them with ingenious justifications. A bold and decisive judgment like that of the Egyptian Akhnaton might fix on one of the great powers of nature—the sun—as the most suitable emblem of Deity to be adored, and forbid all other cults. Or the various groups and ranks of divine beings might be addressed in a kind of collective totality, like the "all-gods" of the Vedic hymns. At Olympia

[1] Some of the Celtic deities are three-faced, or three-headed.

there was a common altar for all the gods; and a frequent dedication of Roman altars in later days consecrated them "to Jupiter Greatest and Best, and the Other Immortal Gods." If reflection was sufficiently advanced to coin abstract terms for deity, like the Babylonian *'ilûth*, or the Vedic *asuratva* or *devatva*, some poet might apprehend the ultimate unity, and lay it down that "the great *asuratva* of the *devas* is one." Both India and Greece reached the conception of a unity of energy in diversity of operation; "the One with many names" was the theme of the ancient Hindu seers long before Æschylus in almost identical words proclaimed "One form with many names." The great sky-god Zeus, whose personality could be almost completely detached from the visible firmament, brought the whole world under his sway, and from the fifth century before Christ Greek poetry abounded in lofty monotheistic language which the early Christian apologists freely quoted in their own defence.

A philosophic sovereign like Nezahuatl, lord of Tezcuco, might build a temple to "the Unknown God, the Cause of Causes," where no idol should be reared for worship, nor any sacrifice of blood be offered. But other motives were more often at work. Conquest led to the identification of the deities of the victor and the vanquished; and the importance of military triumph enhanced the majesty of the successful god. In his great inscription

on Mount Behistun Darius celebrated the grandeur of Ahura Mazda, "Lord All-Wise," in language resembling that of a Hebrew psalm, "A great God is Ahura Mazda, the greatest of the gods." Under the Roman Empire the principle of delegated authority could be invoked to explain the unity of the Godhead above inferior agencies; in the heavenly order there was but one sovereign, though there were many functionaries. Even Israel had its hierarchy of ministering spirits, and the Synagogue found it necessary to forbid pious Jews to pray to Michael or to Gabriel.

When the unity of the moral order was combined with the unity of creative might, the transition to monotheism was even more complete. It could, indeed, be deferred. In the ancient poems of the great religious reformer whom the Greeks called Zoroaster, Ahura Mazda is the supremely Good. Beside him are the Immortal Holy Ones, Holy Spirit, Good Mind, Righteous Order, and the rest. True, in the oppositions of light and darkness, heat and cold, health and sickness, plenty and want, life and death, he is for a time hampered by the enmity of "the Lie"; but the power of evil would be finally destroyed, and the sovereignty of Ahura established for ever (p. 247).

From another point of view the divine purpose of deliverance must be conceived upon an equally world-wide scale. One type of Indian Buddhism looked to Avalokiteçvara

(Chinese Kwanyin, Japanese Kwannon), who made the famous vow not to enter into final peace until all beings—even the worst of demons in the lowest hell—should know the saving truth and be converted. And in the Far East rises the figure of the Buddha of Infinite Light, who is also the Buddha of Infinite Life, whose grace will avail for universal redemption (p. 18). The motive of creation falls away. The world is the scene of the moral forces set in motion under the mysterious power of the Deed. No praise rises to Amida for the wonders of the universe or the blessings of life. But to no other may worship be offered. Here is a monotheism where love reigns supreme, and it is content to trust that Infinite Mercy will achieve its end.

# CHAPTER V

## SACRED ACTS

ONE morning, Plato tells us, as Socrates was in the Porch of the King Archon, he met Euthyphro, a learned Athenian soothsayer, on his way to accuse his father of impiety for having caused the death of a slave. Socrates, who was also expecting an accusation against himself, engaged him in a conversation, as his manner was, on the nature of impiety, and its opposite, piety. The talk leads Euthyphro to maintain that piety or holiness consists in learning how to please the gods in word and deed, by prayers and sacrifices. "Then," inquires Socrates, "sacrifice is giving to the gods, and prayer is asking of the gods?" and Euthyphro is driven to assent to the conclusion that piety is an art which gods and men have of doing business with one another. It was a satirical description of the popular Greek view.

But the argument of Socrates really corresponds to world-wide practice. However dim and confused the elements of belief may be, every tribe has some rites and ceremonies which express the desire to get the Powers

which encompass it upon its side. And when this desire, after many ineffectual trials, has succeeded in establishing suitable methods of approach, the endeavours which produce the result tend to become fixed; they are cherished from generation to generation; they form solemn customs which must be maintained with strict inviolate order, even though their original meaning may have been long forgotten. Belief may fluctuate in a kind of fluid medium of imagination, but action cannot have this indeterminate and elastic character. Action is the mode through which feeling obtains expression, while it helps at the same time to intensify the emotion which calls it forth. The rite must be done or omitted; it cannot trail off into shadow and vagueness. And it gathers the whole weight of tribal sanction around it; so that even the simplest elements of common usage are moulded under the powerful pressure of the "weight of ages."

The active side of religion may be considered under two aspects. There is, on the one hand, the effort to enter into helpful relations with the energies which pervade nature and operate on man. Such efforts spring from manifold emotions of hope and fear, of affection and reverence. They seek to inaugurate such relations; to maintain them through the vicissitudes of experience, the phases of life, the sequences of time; and to renew them when they have suffered sudden

shock or gradual decay. By such action the original emotion is reawakened when it has declined, and is raised to greater vividness and higher tension. It may be summed up in the term worship, including sacrifice and prayer, often associated with a wide range of acts cognate in purpose, as well as with manifold varieties of sacred persons and sacred products (Chap. VI).

And, secondly, apart from public or private acts of homage, thanksgiving, submission, propitiation, addressed specifically to the higher Powers, there are modes of behaviour which are believed to be pleasing or displeasing to them. Some things may be done, and others may not. Certain acts, or words, or even thoughts, are forbidden; others are enjoined. The sphere of daily conduct is thus brought into connection with what is "above." "Act," said the Japanese teacher of Shinto, Hirata, in the last century, "so that you shall not be ashamed before the Kami" (p. 93). It was a universal rule. Morality is thus placed under the guardianship of religion (Chap. VII).

At the funeral of Lord Palmerston (1865), the chief mourner was observed to drop several diamond and gold rings upon the coffin as it was lowered into the grave. A little child, seeing a steam-tram advance with irresistible might along the road, offered it her bun. It may be surprising to meet with a piece

of the primitive ritual of the dead in the midst of a sophisticated and conventional society; but when strong feeling is excited something must be done to give it relief, and in parting with his rings the donor found the outlet for his emotion as irrationally as the child before the monster which excited at once her wonder and her impulse of goodwill. Out of such impulses of self-expression, it may be suggested, arises the largest class of sacrifices, when gifts are made in doing various kinds of "business with the gods."

In its widest use the word covers an extensive range of purposes, and begets a large variety of questions. On whose behalf is the offering made, a single individual, or some social group, his family or clan, a secret society, a tribe, a nation? What persons are required for the due performance of the rite, the head of the family, the village magistrate, the fetish man, the priest? A complicated Vedic sacrifice needed the co-operation of various orders of priests. What objects are effected by it, a house or city-gate to be protected, a river to be crossed, a battle to be won, a covenant or contract to be sealed? To what powers does the worshipper address himself, in gratitude, homage, or submission, seeking renewal of favour, or purging himself of some sin, or desiring actual fellowship with his god? Behind these external features lie more difficult problems in connection especially with animal sacrifices, concerned

with the victim's qualities, and the appropriation of them by the deity or the worshipper; with the peculiar sanctity of blood, and the mysterious properties which it can impart; with the notion of the transmission of the life of which it was the vehicle; and the whole set of indefinite influences capable of propagation by contact, like the clean and the unclean, the common and the holy. And why, when the victim was offered, was the god supposed to be satisfied with bones and entrails and a modest piece of meat, all wrapped in fat? Greek wonder at so strange a practice could find no better answer than the tale of how Prometheus once cheated the gods of their share, and men had ever since followed his example. These questions belong to the obscure realm of beginnings, in which various answers are possible. All that can be attempted here is to offer a few illustrations of the different motives that seem to lie behind different forms of rite.

Offerings to the dead pass through a long series of stages, from the simple provision for the wants of the dead man in the grave up to his proper equipment with all that is due to his rank and state in the next life, or the maintenance of the ties of guardianship and protection over unborn generations. The earliest human remains imply some dim belief that the grave was the dead man's dwelling (p. 20), and there he must be supplied with the requisites for some kind of continued

existence. All over the world, food, weapons, ornaments, utensils, are found deposited in barrow and tomb; and this practice culminates in the complicated arrangements of an Egyptian sepulchre, where the wealthy landowner constructed an enduring home for his double, and filled it with representations and objects which could be magically converted to his entertainment after death.

When the dead man passes into another world, and enters a land resembling that which he has left (Chap. VIII), he may need wives and slaves appropriate to his rank. From ancient Japan and still more ancient China all round the globe to Mexico are traces of such ritual murder. The widow's self-devotion was exalted in India to religious duty, and cases still occasionally occur when (in spite of the British Government) she seeks to mount the pyre and immolate herself beside her husband's corpse. In West Africa the ghastly tale of the Grand Customs of Dahomey in the last century is well known; and it is supposed that thousands of lives are still annually sacrificed in the Dark Continent to this belief. Other personal needs must be supplied, and on the Gold Coast in the last century an observer saw fine clothes and gold buried with the chief; and a flask of rum, his pipe and tobacco, were laid ready to his hand. Moreover, goods of all kinds can be made over by fire; and in the funeral rites of a Chinese family a paper house with paper

furniture and large quantities of paper money may be burned for the endowment of a departed member in his next life.

Or the offering may be made for the cherishing of the dead in their former home. The simplest and the most common sacrificial act in Melanesia, Bishop Codrington tells us, is that of throwing a small portion of food to the dead. It may be nothing more than a bit of yam or a morsel of betel-nut; it is not for food, but for remembrance and affection. But sometimes it is for actual nourishment. The dead in ancient India who had none to render to them the needful sustenance, wandered as dismal ghosts round their former dwellings, or haunted the cross roads, compelled to feed themselves on the garbage of the streets. The funeral meals, continued at intervals, were celebrated for the purpose of providing the departed with new forms, and converting them into the higher rank of "Fathers." In many lands, from Europe to Japan and Central America, an annual feast for the dead has been maintained in various modes both in classic antiquity and in modern usage; and the ancient practice still survives in strangely altered fashion in the cakes and confectionery carried on All Souls' Day to the graves in the great Parisian cemetery of Père Lachaise.

Such acts of recognition and fellowship pass through very different stages. They begin with a desire for self-identification with the

mysterious power which helps or hurts; as the power is conceived on a greater and more personal scale they turn into tribute and homage. The West African negro passing a big rock or an unusually large tree will add a stone or bit of wood or tuft of grass to the little heap of such trifles at its foot; it is for the Ombwiri, or spirit of the place. After the harvest on the plateau of Lake Tanganyika, pilgrimages are made to the mountain of Fwambo-Liamba; at the top is a sort of altar of small stones, and there scraps of calico, bits of wood, flowers, beads, are laid in honour of a vague "High God" called Lesa. The nature of such gifts may be traced through all gradations of economic advance, just as the mode of conveying it passes through various phases from the coarse to the refined. The pastoral nomad brings the firstling of his flocks; the more advanced agriculturist adds the produce of the ground. The immigrant Hebrew under Canaanite tuition adopted the festivals of harvest and vintage, and with firstlings and tithes wrought his husbandry into his religion when he went to the sanctuary "to see Yahweh's face." The daily sacrifice in the great temple of Marduk at Babylon under Nebuchadrezzar was an epitome of the whole tillage of the land; the choicest fruits, the finest produce of the meadow, honey, cream, oil, wine of different vintages, must be served. In the early ritual of an Egyptian temple, when the daily toilet of the god had

been performed and he had been duly robed, painted, and oiled, his table was spread with bread, goose, beef, wine, and water, and decorated with the flowers needed to adorn a meal.

In many cases such offerings carried with them the additional purpose of actually increasing the vigour of the god. Dim notions of promoting the divine vitality hovered in the background. The physical effect might be reached by divers modes. Food was at first conveyed by actual contact; it might be smeared upon the idol's mouth. Offerings to earth spirits were buried in the ground. Water deities received them when they were thrown into the well, the river, or the lake. Even in Greece Poseidon's horses were driven into the sea, just as the horses of the defeated Mallius were offered by the Gallic victors to the Rhine. Indian realism provided the Fathers who assembled for the rice-ball sacrifice with water and tufts of wool to cleanse themselves after the meal. In more refined usage fire conveyed the essence of the food to the upper airs. At Noah's sacrifice on the subsidence of the flood Yahweh smelt the sweet savour, and in the corresponding Babylonian narrative the gods, drawn by the scent, gathered together around the offerer "like flies." The American Osages invited the Great Spirit, Fire, and Earth, to smoke with them at the beginning of a new enterprise. The Sioux lighted the pipe of peace and offered it

to the sun, with the invocation, "Smoke, O Sun."

Many and various are the ideals which have gathered round the offering, as magic and religion have strangely blended. The sacred tree, whether among the Celts of the West or the Syrians of the East, is hung with rags of clothing, sometimes doubtless with the same motive which prompts similar gifts at the tomb of a Mohammedan saint, for the transference of diseases from the sick. The highest value was reached among the ancient Irish, as among the Semites, in the sacrifice of the first-born; and the long tale of human victims indicates man's passionate desire to secure in divers forms supernatural aid. They have been slain in crises of national danger by plague or war, in atonement for sin,[1] or in thanksgiving for victory. They have been immured in the foundations of houses or cities that their spirits might remain as guardians of the gates. They have been done to death in the seasons of the agricultural year that their lives might fertilise the soil and quicken the grain. They have been forced to yield their entrails to the diviner that the secrets of the future might be unveiled.

Brahmanical speculation carried the ideas of sympathetic magic in association with sacrifice to their highest pitch. The Vedic hymns early formulated the idea of reciprocal

[1] The sacrifices of purification and atonement are briefly considered in Chapter VII.

obligation in the crudest terms: *Dehi me, dadāmi te*—"Give to me, I give to thee." But this simple relation was superseded in the priestly ceremonial by elaborate parallels between the daily order of the ritual and the daily order of the skies. The earthly sacrifices were the counterparts of those offered by celestial priests. The "Fathers" accomplished the rising of the sun; and when the heavenly process was imitated in the world below, the kindling of the sacred fire came to be regarded as the actual instrument for stimulating and maintaining the activities above. From a yet higher point of view the whole world had issued from the mysterious sacrifice of a cosmic Man (described in one of the latest hymns of the Rig-Veda), out of whose person the visible universe, the Veda, and the human race in four castes, had been created. In the Brahmanical theology his place was taken by Prajāpati, the "Lord of Creatures," who underwent repeated offering in every sacrifice. And just as the primeval sacrifice effected the generation of the world, so every fresh oblation was a miniature reproduction of the cosmic event. The Lord who had been dismembered must be reconstituted that he might offer himself anew; and thus sacrifice was blended with the course of Time and the period of the Year, and the perpetual dissolution and renewal of the life that animated the mighty frame of earth and heaven. In that upper world, moreover, the sacrificer,

through mystical identification with Prajāpati, was enabled to prepare a new body for the celestial abode, and out of the altar-ground below to generate his future divine self in the world above.

Along other lines the conception of fellowship with Deity may be realised through a common act. Above the personal fetish of a Gold Coast negro to which he made offerings of rum and palm-wine, oil, corn, sheep, goats, stood the patron god of the family. Before a separation which would prevent them from ever again worshipping together, they engaged in a strange kind of communion. The fetish-priest pounded up some sacred substance and mixed it with water, which was then drunk by the whole family in turn. During the rite the priest enjoined all present in the name of the deity to abstain from some particular kind of food, fish, beef, fowl, milk, or other article of diet. None of the company tasted it again. They were united by the deity within them; and obedience to his command bound them, however far apart, in common worship.

Sometimes the worshipper sat at the table of the god, who was in some sense present at the meal celebrated in his honour. In the usage of ancient Israel the householder shared with his family, kinsmen, neighbours, and guests, in the sacred feast "before Yahweh." How far the belief in Yahweh's presence was actually cherished by the participants cannot

be definitely affirmed; it does not appear, for instance, in the Babylonian ritual. But a corresponding idea may certainly be traced in Greece and Rome. From the early cult of the sacred stone or pillar as the abode of deity, some kind of divine power inhered in the altar and the image; and when the members of the clan feasted together on solemn occasions, the clan-god was present with his worshippers. The Greek ritual sometimes provided a place for the table-companions or "parasites," at sacred banquets, such as were held in the temples of Apollo at Acharnæ or Delos.

An inscription at Magnesia describes a festival of twelve gods, whose images, adorned with festal array, were carried into the market-place, and arranged on three cushions under a canopy. When sacrifices had been offered, the priests and people partook of a common meal with the gods. The old Latins and other Italians believed the deities of the house to be present at their meals. The Penates, Mr. Warde Fowler tells us, were the spirits of the foods. Rome celebrated its solemn feast of Jove in the Capitoline temple every September on full-moon day, when Jupiter, with his face painted red, Juno, and Minerva, were present in their statues to share the meal with the magistrates and Senate of the city. To "lay a couch for the god" (as we might say "to lay a table") was a common phrase. Recently discovered papyri, illustrating so

many aspects of daily life in the Eastern Mediterranean, show that such hospitalities were of frequent occurrence, alike in temples and in private houses. Among the precious remains from Oxyrhynchus are such notes as this: "Antonius son of Ptolemæus invites you to dine with him at the table of our Lord Sarapis in the house of Claudius Sarapion on the 16th at 9 o'clock."

But the worshipper might not only eat with the god, he might more rarely, and under special circumstances, even eat *him*. A more intimate union was thus effected. When the altar imparted its sanctity to the victim laid upon it, the holy food distributed to the worshipper had some kind of divine presence in it, and virtue passed through the meat into the eater. The late Prof. Robertson Smith, in his famous lectures on "the Religion of the Semites," endeavoured to show that sacrifice originally consisted in slaying the animal of the totem-group, of which members of the totem-kin partook so that they received into their own persons the divine power incarnated in the totem animal. Further research has failed to confirm this view; but a similar conception has been illustrated from another side. The agricultural usages of which Dr. Frazer has collected so many examples, show how out of the last sheaf, which had become the home of the corn-spirit, the grain was baked in human form as its embodiment, and solemnly eaten. In the East Indian archipelago, on

the island of Buro, the approaching rice-harvest was welcomed by a tribal meeting when each man brought some first-fruits from the fields, and the meal of inauguration was known as "eating the soul of the rice."

Twice a year was the great Mexican deity Huitzilopochtli presented in the form of dough images to his worshippers, and with elaborate ceremonies was consumed. Tezcatlipoca, in like manner, chief god of the Aztecs, represented by a handsome and noble captive wearing the divine emblems, was slain on the great altar; the body of the victim was respectfully carried down into the court below, divided into small pieces, and distributed among priests and nobles as blessed food. It is strange to find such savagery associated with prayers of exalted fervour and devotion. But ecstasy is roused by various means, and is not affronted at the most brutal rites. There were incidents in the Orphic cult of the Thracian Dionysus grouped under the name of the "Omophagy" (literally "raw-eating") of like character. In frenzied excitement the devotees flung themselves on bull or goat, rent it asunder, and devoured the bleeding flesh. Such was the condition of securing the actual entry of the god into the believer's person, so that he became *entheos*, "with the god inside him." Words have strange histories, and few now remember, when they describe the welcome of a monarch by acclaiming crowds, or the excitement roused by a

great orator, what was the earlier meaning of "enthusiasm."

In the "art which gods and men have of doing business with each other," Socrates associated sacrifice with prayer (p. 133). The association is world-wide, and here religion reaches its utmost inwardness. The feeling which expresses itself in action will also prompt gesture and speech; rude rhythms mould words into chant and song; and even without a definite object of address some utterance breathes a desire. "May it be well with the buffaloes, may they not suffer from disease and die . . . may there be water and grass in plenty." So runs the dairy-ritual of the Indian Todas, without the direct invocation of any gods. But there is no element here of compulsion or constraint. The distinction between prayer and spell is clear; the attitude is religious, not magical. On the other hand, sacrifices are sometimes offered to a "High God," as by the Dinkas of the Bahr-el-Ghazal in. Central Africa to Deng-deet, who is described as "Ruler of the universe, Creator of mankind, the actual Father of human beings"; but, adds Captain Cummins, "I imagine it does not occur to them to pray." Others, by contrast, make morning and evening prayer part of their daily practice; the Nandi of East Africa concludes his devotions (addressed to Asista, the ordinary word for the sun): "I have prayed to thee, thou

sleepest and thou goest, I have prayed to thee, do not say 'I am tired.'" Sometimes prayer is offered only to the powers of mischief. The Lepchas of the Himalayas told Dr. Hooker that they did not pray to the good spirits. "Why should we? They do us no harm; the evil spirits that dwell in every grove and rock and mountain, to them we must pray, for they hurt us." To the Australian it may seem foolishness to address Baiame from day to day: he knows, why weary him by repetitions, disturbing his rest after his earthly labours? But the impulse of prayer does not always take articulate form, any more than it always seeks a personal object; and after long residence among the Euahlayi in South East Australia Mrs. Langloh Parker pleaded that the man who invoked aid in his hour of danger, or the woman who crooned over her babe an incantation to keep him honest and true, shared, however dimly, the same spirit of devotion which elsewhere prompts elaborate litanies. It is with a pious reserve that the Khonds of Orissa pray: "We are ignorant of what it is good for us to ask for. You know what is good for us; give it to us."

Prayer in the lower culture is rarely individualised. It is almost always a social act. Common prayers for food or rain, for protection against danger, the removal of pestilence, victory over enemies, represent the wants of all. The group may be the family, as in the evening worship of the

Samoan householder, who pours a little of his cup of ava on the ground, and prays for health, productive plantations, and plenty of fruit. On the Lower Niger Major Leonard found worship offered daily before an image or emblem believed to contain the spirits of more immediate ancestors: "Preserve our lives, O Spirit Father, who hast gone before, and make thy house fruitful, so that we thy children shall increase and multiply and so grow rich and powerful."

Such prayers may be traced through many expanding phases up to the higher petitions which seek to place the civic and moral life under the guidance of the heroic dead. The element of bargain or contract which Socrates so sarcastically emphasised, here drops away. "To what god or what hero shall we pray," inquired the people of Corcyra, weary of internal strife, at the oracle of Dodona, "in order to obtain concord, and to govern our city fairly and well?" Chinese statecraft well understood the significance of such worship as a social bond. The ancient author of the *Lî Chî*, or "Book of Rites," laid it down that "the prayers of the principal in the sacrifice to the spirits, and the benedictions of the representatives of the departed, are carefully framed. The object of all ceremonies is to bring down the spirits from above, even their ancestors; serving also to rectify the relations between ruler and minister, to maintain the generous feeling between father

and son, and the harmony between elder and younger brother, to adjust the relations between high and low, and to give their proper places to husband and wife. The whole may be said to secure the blessing of Heaven."

Attention is thus concentrated upon common sentiments and universal relationships, and prayer acquires a deeper ethical meaning. It then comes to rest upon devout experience, which seeks to interpret life in relation to the permanent forces of justice which are believed to rule the world. The hymns of Egypt celebrate in lofty terms the majesty and beneficence of the gods, and the psalmists of the Nile sang of the divine love encompassing all lands, setting every man in his place, and amid diversities of colour and speech supplying all human needs. The Babylonian poets addressed Shamash or Sin, sun or moon, as the symbols of the universal order of nature, the witnesses of thought and deed over the wide earth, the rulers on whom man could place unchanging reliance. The Vedic singer found a similar figure of moral sovereignty in Varuna (p. 106). Out of the depths of her distress Hecuba (in the "Trojan Women") appeals to the mysterious Power whom she can still glorify in her anguish: "Thou deep base of the world, and thou high throne above the world, whoe'er thou art, unknown and hard of surmise, chain of things to be, or reason of our reason, God, to thee I lift my praise, seeing the silent road

that bringeth justice ere the end be trod to all that breathes and dies." With a yet firmer confidence could the Peruvian in the sixteenth century record this prayer to the "World-animating Spirit": "O Pāchacāmac, thou who hast existed from the beginning, and shalt exist unto the end, who createst man by saying "Let man be," who defendest us from evil, and preservest our life and health, art thou in the sky or in the earth, in the clouds or in the depths? Hear the voice of him who implores thee, and grant him his petitions. Give us life everlasting; preserve us, and accept this our sacrifice."

Two or three thousand years before, the pious Egyptian had been bidden to enter quietly into the sanctuary of God, to whom clamour is abhorrent. "Pray to him with a longing heart in which all thy words are hidden, so will he grant thy request, and hear that which thou sayest and accept thy offering." Dear was this silent worship to the higher teachers. A hymn to Thoth (p. 8) addresses him as "Thou sweet spring for the thirsty in the desert," adding, "It is closed for those who speak there, it is open for those who keep silence there. When the silent man cometh, he findeth the spring."

Petitions such as these, rooted in ethical sentiment, demand as their moral condition purity of heart and concentration of thought. The prophets of all ages have protested against formalism and insincerity. The Japanese

god of learning, Temmangu, was once a distinguished statesman. But he fell into unmerited disgrace (A.D. 901), and was banished. Posthumously vindicated, he was promoted to the rank of deity, and declared through his oracle, "All ye who come before me hoping to attain the accomplishment of your desires, pray with hearts pure from falsehood, clean within and without, reflecting the truth like a mirror." The disposition of prayer must be that of life also. It was with reference to similar slander to that from which Temmangu had suffered, that Pindar cried, "Never be this mind in me, O Father Zeus, but to the paths of simplicity let me cleave throughout my life, that when dead I may set upon my children a name that shall be of no ill repute." And Socrates prays, as he and Phædrus rise from the shade of the plane-tree where they have been talking, "Beloved Pan, and all ye other gods that haunt this place, give me beauty in the inward soul, and may the outward and the inward man be at one": to which Phædrus adds, "Ask the same for me, for friends should have all things in common."

The need of righteousness begets penitence and confession. A Buddhist liturgy issued in China in 1412 with a preface by the Emperor Yung Loh of the Ming dynasty, after the opening invocations, proceeded thus: "We and all men from the very first, by reason of the grievous sins we have committed in

thought, word, and deed, have lived in ignorance of all the Buddhas, and of any way of escape from the consequences of our conduct. We have followed only the course of this evil world, nor have we known aught of Supreme Wisdom, and even now, though enlightened as to our duty, yet with others we still commit heavy sins, which prevent us from advancing in true knowledge. Therefore in the presence of Kwan Yin [the Chinese form of Avalokiteçvara, p. 131], and the Buddhas of the ten regions, we would humble ourselves, and repent of our sins. . . . For the sake of all sentient creatures in whatever capacity they be, would that all obstacles may be removed, we confess our sins and repent."

A higher note is sounded here than in the famous penitential psalms of ancient Babylon, where the poet, smitten with various distresses, laments the unknown sins which have roused the anger of his god, and passes into fierce incantations against the demonic powers which are the instruments of the divine wrath. Here prayer makes a close alliance with magic: and its formulæ are always in danger of this degeneration. In the old Italian ritual of a guild at Iguvium the exact titles of the deity must be rehearsed, and the proper words recited. The slightest slip invalidated the entire rite, and the officiating priest was required to repeat the whole over again. To this rigid adhesion to consecrated

forms we owe the preservation of antique liturgical expressions left stranded in priestly usage. Such phrases acquired a semi-magical power. The Honover (*Ahuna Vairya*), or most sacred verse of the ancient Persian scriptures, became a charm against evil in the fight with Ahriman and his hosts. Passages from the Koran are used by Mohammedans as amulets against danger. The Buddhist formula *Om mani padme hum* is a protection from mischievous influences, like the Lord's Prayer in the Middle Ages; and the prayer-wheels and prayer-mills of Mongolia, in endeavouring to enlist the aid of Nature, and harness wind and water in the service of religion, have only turned devotion into a mechanical device.

In the long story of Indian religion many notes are struck in the wide range of human want, of divine grace, and adoring faith. The Vedic poets speak with full hearts of the simple joys of earth; the happiness of home with its passionate desires for children and long life; the pleasures of wealth in horses and chariots and cows. Rescue from poverty or danger, victory over the godless enemy, influence in the assembly and superiority in debate, these are the gifts which are sought with the utmost directness of speech: "If I, O Indra, were like thee, the single sovereign of all wealth, my worshipper should be rich in kine." But other tones are not wanting: "Aditi, Mitra, Varuna, forgive us, however

we have sinned against you": "Before this Varuna (p. 106) may we be sinless, him who shows mercy even to the sinner."

With the development of Brahmanical speculation prayer rises to more abstract ideas: "Lead me from darkness to light, from falsehood to truth, from death to the deathless." The association of prayer and magic is seen in the fact that the very term *brahma* has the double meaning of prayer and spell, something like the Greek *euchê* or the Hebrew "bless," which could imply a curse as well as a prayer. But in its higher sense it gave birth to the "Lord of Prayer," Brahmanaspati, a kind of house-priest of the gods, a heavenly personification of the priesthood on earth, in whom resided the power of influencing events by prayer and incantation. Nay, just as the hymns came to be regarded as originally existing in the realm of the infinite and the undying (p. 12), so prayer was said to have been born of yore in heaven. And thus the Lord of Prayer acquires a more lofty character as its generator and inspirer; he is even called the "Father of the gods"; and the very universe depends upon him, for he holds asunder the ends of the earth. In the shining company of deities, moreover, stand Sacred Speech, and Devotion, and Lovely Praise, and Holy Thought, with others of the goodly fellowship of Prayer, to attest its power, and approve its worth.

The subsequent devotion of India aspires

by different paths to reach communion with the Infinite Spirit or Universal Self. The supreme reality is presented in the triple aspects of Being, Thought, and Bliss (*saccidānanda*). To know him alone as the Self of all selves, is the goal rather of meditation than of prayer. Existence, understanding, and joy, these are the ultimates of all experience, and he who has attained them prays no more: "Seeking for emancipation I go for refuge to that God who is the guiding light to the understanding of all souls." This is the note of much of the later mystical piety of Hinduism. It speaks in the language both of religion and of philosophy.

In the first, the believer looks to his heavenly Lord with adoring faith (p. 128) and lowly love (*bhakti*), and feels the inflowing of divine favour or grace (*prasāda*). The long line of mediæval poets transmitted from generation to generation passionate impulses of devotion which expressed themselves again and again in legend and song. "Search in thy heart," pleaded the weaver Kabir in the fifteenth century, "search in thy heart of hearts, there is God's place of abode." Not, however, without conditions: "Unless you have a forgiving spirit, you will not see God." He might describe himself in his humility as "the worst of men"; that only made the marvel of divine grace more wonderful: "I am thy son; Thou art my Father; we both live in the same place."

On the philosophical side a modern manual of Hindu practice endeavours to combine religion and metaphysics. Ere the believer rises from bed in the morning he should confess his unworthiness: "O Lord of the universe, O All-Consciousness, presiding Deity of all, Vishnu, at thy bidding, and to please thee alone, I rise this morning, and enter on the discharge of my daily duties. I know what is righteous, yet I feel no attraction for it; I know what is not righteous, yet I have no repulsion from it. O Lord of the senses, O Thou seated in the heart, may I do thy commands as ordered by thee in my conscience." But in order to remind him of his divine origin, in this age of sordid interests and low ideals, he is enjoined also to look upon himself as the reflected image of God, the Eternal, the All-Knowing, the All-Glad, and to recite the ancient verse, "I am divine and not anything else, I am indeed Brahmā above all sorrows, my form is Being, Intelligence, and Bliss, and eternally free is my nature."

The duties of offering and prayer may be performed from day to day, or they may be reserved for special occasions of enterprise, danger, and thanksgiving. They mark the incidents of the week, the month, the year; there are sabbaths, new moons, seed-time and harvest, and new year festivals. This periodicity affects the whole community together. But there are also personal events, marking

successive stages in each individual career, which must be placed under the shelter of religion, and do not all occur at the same time. From his entry into the world to his departure from it each person passes at certain crises out of one condition into another, and the transition requires the protection of the powers above. Birth, the attainment of adolescence, marriage, death, are the chief occasions marked by what M. van Gennep has called "rites of passage." They are all connected with mysteries of life.

For life, in the lower culture, is exposed perpetually to dangers of all kinds. Demonic influences continually threaten it; strange pollutions beset it; the blood in which it is often located has about it something weird, uncanny, sometimes unclean. So there are preliminary rites for bringing in the soul of the child as yet unborn from its home in the ground, among the flowers and trees, or in wells and lakes and running streams. Among tribes which regard the mother as unclean before birth, the uncleanness is transmitted to the child, and ceremonies of purification must be performed for both. The child must be guarded against the evil eye, perils of infection of various kinds, or the attacks of hostile demons. The ritual of cleansing must be scrupulously performed. When Apollo and the future Buddha were born, divine beings received them; Apollo was washed in fair water, and wondrous

streams, warm and cold, descended from the sky for the Indian babe. Sometimes there is such haste to place the infant under divine care that it is borne away at once to the temple, as Turner noticed among the Nanumangans of Hudson's island, that its first breathings, when only a few seconds old, may take place in the presence of the god, and his blessing be invoked on the essentials of its life.

Around the cradle friendly influences must be secured, the child must be duly incorporated into the circle of the cosmic powers and of human life. He is laid upon the ground for contact with the supporting earth, and presented to the great vivifier, the sun, or held over the fire. Out of the bath grew a rite of immersion designed to solemnise his admission into the guild of mankind, and wash away the strange element of evil which seemed to inhere in human nature. In Peru this was exorcised by the priest, who bade it enter the water, which was then buried in the ground. The Aztec ritual of baptism, according to the native writer Sahagun, began: "O child, receive the water of the lord of the world which is our life. It is to wash and purify. May these drops remove the sin which was given to thee before the creation of the world, since all of us are under its power." This was a real act of regeneration, for the priest concluded: "Now he liveth anew, and is born anew, now he is

purified and cleansed, now our Mother the water again bringeth him into the world."

After purification comes the ceremony of giving the name, fittingly performed in the temple, as in Greece, Rome, or Mexico. Elements of personality inhere so strangely in names, that this rite also acquires great significance. Perhaps the name of some ancestor is chosen, who may thus endow the child with some of his qualities, or at least be invoked for protection and aid. Divine powers have watched over his birth (p. 121); others may decide his destiny, like the three Greek fateful goddesses Klotho, Lachesis, and Atropos, or the venerable Scandinavian Norns. Or the aid of the stars must be invoked, and a horoscope must be prepared by the astrologer. Sometimes a special guardian power may be chosen for the infant, sometimes the choice is reserved for him at a later stage. Or he may be dedicated from the outset to some hallowed service, as the child Samuel was given to Yahweh.

More important even than the rites of birth and infancy are those of the attainment of adolescence, when the youth is admitted to the privileges of manhood and instructed in the secrets of the tribe. All round the world the lower culture has its ceremonies of initiation, which have sometimes survived in more refined forms in more highly organised societies. They involve seclusion from the common life, for no woman must be cognisant

of what takes place, severe bodily trials to test the youth's power of endurance—fasts, scourging, loss of front teeth, tattooing (so that his status may be recognisable at once) and other forms of personal scarification and pain, under which the feeble sink, and the happiest are those who die, escaping the humiliations of the weakling's lot. Long abstinence in lonely places begets strange dreams and visions, and raises nervous excitability to its highest pitch. Strange forms appear with hideous faces and mysterious trappings; appalling sounds are heard; and it is only when the hours of terror are past that the initiated learns that the awful figures were his own kinsmen in masks and disguises, and the Australian is told that what he took to be the signal of Daramulun's advent was produced by the whirling of the bull-roarer.

In the midst of these pantomimic incidents the novice dies to rise again. Perhaps he is buried in the fetish-house; or he passes through the bath into his new condition; or he is vivified by the sprinkling of blood. But he awakes to a fresh life. He must be utterly forgetful of the old; he must even sometimes feign ignorance of his parents' home and names. The elders then impart to him the customs and traditions of the tribe. He learns the rules of conduct, and duties of reverence and obedience to the aged, who are thus, in tribes without formal government, placed under the protection of religion. The

strain of prolonged excitement and attention fixes precept and counsel indelibly upon his memory, and he knows that the penalty of betrayal will be death.

The ancient Indian ritual was more refined. The three upper castes, the Brahman, the noble, and the cultivator of the land, belonged to the "twice-born." Only to these was the study of the Veda permitted. When the youth was led to his teacher to be invested with the sacred thread, the symbol of his dignity, blessings were uttered and holy water was sprinkled on him. Then for the first time was he permitted to repeat the sacred verse (known as the Gāyatrī, Rig Veda, iii. 62, 10), "Let us meditate on that excellent glory of the divine Vivifier, may he enlighten our understandings," which is still recited daily by millions of devout Hindus. One of the later books of the Zoroastrian faith lays down that "it is necessary for all those of the good religion to celebrate the ritual and become *navazûd*, newly born," or born again. The ceremony began with a purification which lasted nine nights, and included sprinkling with water; the candidate for the priesthood must be of the age of fifteen; he must confess his sins, endure the scourge; and might then be regarded as regenerate.

Within the whole group of initiates secret societies were often formed, bound together by special vows, and using the instrumentality of religion. Observers in West Africa and

elsewhere (they are also common in Polynesia and Melanesia) have differed widely as to their value, some denouncing them for their intolerable tyranny, others finding them useful agents of police. They are the forerunners of more purely religious associations such as may be seen in the mysteries of Greece. Here, too, were ceremonies of initiation, here were pantomimic representations of divine events, secrets of communion with deity, and promises of life beyond the grave.

Most famous, of course, were the mysteries of Eleusis, in charge of the great family of the Eumolpids. Already in the Homeric hymn to Demeter, before the days of Jeremiah and Ezekiel, all Greece had been bidden to come to Eleusis, and receive initiation into the rites of the Lady Mother and the Maid. There were preliminaries of purification, which a Christian apologist like Clement of Alexandria could compare with the baptism of the Church. Cleansed from the stain of sin, the candidate was required to be devout and holy. What was the precise nature of the revelation which he was permitted to see is uncertain. The passion-drama of the mother's loss of her daughter, her search and recovery, may have grown out of some seasonal vegetation ceremonies. But they had taken on higher meanings. The secret might not be divulged in detail; there is, however, a large amount of testimony that ideas of death and re-birth or resurrection

played a great part in this, as in other mystery-religions; the Homeric hymn to Demeter holds out intimations of immortality; and by some kind of communion with the deity the salvation of the believer was assured.

The rites of the Phrygian Sabazius touch the processes of the lower culture at more than one point. In his great oration "on the Crown" (315 B.C.) Demosthenes twits his opponent Æschines in such terms as these: "You assisted your mother in the initiations, you read aloud the books (the ritual prayers), and took part in the rest of the plot. You put on (or, you robed the candidates in) fawn-skins; you sprinkled them with water from the bowl; you purified and rubbed them with clay and bran, then you raised them from their purification, and bade them say, 'I have fled the bad, and found the better.'" On the gold Orphic tablets discovered in South Italy and Crete occur strange phrases: "I, a kid, fell into the milk," "O blessed and happy one, thou hast put off thy mortality and hast become divine," which are interpreted with great probability as references to a ritual of milk-baptism in which the initiate was born again.

That idea was certain expressed in the mysteries of Isis, which were widely spread in the Eastern Mediterranean (p. 40). Here, too, was a solemn kind of death and re-birth; here, too, lustrations of the purest water, the priestly declaration of the pardon of the

gods, the mystic revelation of the Goddess, herself identified with all deities in turn; and here, after the vision, the assurance of a blessed life to come. The candidate for initiation into the rites of Mithra must mount slowly through seven stages. The details of the ritual of the successive grades are unknown; but in accordance with ancient Iranian practice repeated ablutions were imposed till the cleansing waters had washed away all stains of guilt. The Mithraic sacraments so closely resembled Christian usage that they were vehemently denounced by Church writers as a Satanic parody. They were certainly supposed to secure happiness in the world to come. The believer who had passed through the blood-bath of the slaughtered bull was said to be "re-born for ever."

Associated with sacrifice and prayer, and partaking at once of the characters of magic and mystery, is the sacred dance. Rhythmic movement of body and limbs readily becomes the expression of strong feeling; and the feeling in its turn may be reawakened by the solemn renewal of the action. When it imitates the motions of the warrior or the huntsman it comes to possess a magical value, and the women who remain at home will dance all day while their husbands are engaged in battle or the chase. Does it not quicken their courage or enhance their skill? The child in an elementary school now learns

his action-songs, and sows the grain and reaps the harvest. He does not, however, suppose that he is promoting nature's work. But the women whose social progress has advanced to agriculture, instead of imitating the gambols of the wolf or bear, will celebrate the operations of the fields to stimulate their effectiveness, and at a later stage still will go forth into the vineyards with timbrel and song. There are dances for courtship and marriage, dances in initiations and mysteries, dances even for the funeral. There are solemn preparations, as in the snake-dance of the secret order of the Snakes among the Moquis of Arizona, when the members must not only wash the snakes, but themselves as well and everything about them (in the same water), and fast for one day. Then any one who has been bitten will be healed, and when the pipe is lit, the clouds from it will rise and form rain-clouds, and the rain will fall upon the altar and the sacred things. Or the dance will serve for the reunion of the tribe, and becomes a great social as well as a religious institution. The Sun-dance of the Blackfoot Indians (p. 35) is the supreme expression of their religion, and their great annual religious gathering. It must originate in a woman's vow for the recovery of the sick, and the ceremonies are spread over a considerable time. Some come for enjoyment, some to fast and pray. Some must discharge their vows for the healing of sick kinsfolk; others pay the price of deliverance

from peril by the infliction of self-torture in the sun-lodge.

The vow, the fast, and all the varied forms of asceticism which Eastern religions have so abundantly produced, all involve common elements of sacrifice and self-subjection. The vow, indeed, has in part the nature of a contract. It is not magic, it is a bargain. There is no constraint, the deity may avail himself of what is offered, or may not. If Yahweh will go with me, says Jacob, and provide me food to eat and clothes to wear, he shall be my god and get his tithe. But the vow involves the surrender of something otherwise desirable. It is the same with the ascetic, who gives up food, or clothing, or sleep, or the bath, or speech, or a fixed home; who sits between four fires under a blazing sun; who lacerates his back with the scourge or his flesh with knives; who holds a flower-pot in his hand till the fingers grow round it immovably; who hangs himself up by hooks in his bare back, or loads himself from neck to feet with chains. Men may fast religiously to overcome bodily desire; or to prepare the higher insight for strange openings of vision. "The continually stuffed body," say the Amazulu, "cannot see secret things." Lacordaire bade the brethren of his Order scourge him that he might humble himself, and taste the pain of his Redeemer. But the extremer forms of asceticism (especially as a life-long practice) are always based on the idea that they are in

themselves meritorious; they produce desert and desert leads to reward. They are a mode of establishing a claim on the future bounty of heaven; they are, after all, only another form of "doing business with the gods."

# CHAPTER VI

## SACRED PRODUCTS

In the intimate connection of religion with life all primitive interests are placed under its sanction. A large portion of time is occupied with its ceremonials. The fortunes of the tribe are bound up with it. To the bounty of its powers they owe abundant food and safety or success in war. Beneath its protection the newly born enter the world, and to its care the elders are committed when they die. Its holy persons rule in their midst; its holy places are all round about them; its sacred objects are in their homes. It is not surprising, therefore, that all the higher possessions of the tribe, its arts and crafts, its traditions, its customs and laws, its stories of the gods and their dealings with each other or with man, should be ascribed to the same origin. Where individuality is hampered at every turn by time-honoured conventions, and personal initiative is imperfectly developed and timidly confined within the narrowest limits, all higher intellectual products, command over nature, inventions, poetry and song, the usages of

the social order, and the rituals for serving the gods, carry with them a secret force, a mysterious authority, which passes the bounds of human wisdom, and has been imparted from some higher source. Each man is dimly conscious that his single wit could not have compassed these things; he does not observe the long processes and imperceptible stages of advance; he accepts the theory offered to him by those who should know best, and looks back to the days when kindly powers took in hand the instruction of men.

Thus at the present day many of the Australian tribes whose condition has probably changed little since the date of the oldest civilisations of antiquity, regard their scanty institutions as ordained by beings above. Ask the Narrinyeri why they adhere to any custom, the answer is that Nurrundere commanded it. Baiame and Bunjil laid down the marriage laws for their respective tribes; Bunjil, moreover, taught the Kulin the arts of life; and Daramulun gave the Yuin laws which the old people handed down from generation to generation.

The elaborate cultures of Babylonia and Egypt claimed similar origins. In the vast prehistoric period before the Flood the people round the lower Euphrates had lived without rule or order, like the beasts of the field, till a wondrous Fish-Man, whom the Greek historian called Oannes, appeared out of the Persian Gulf with wisdom from the sea. He

taught them arts and laws, and wrote concerning the generation of mankind, their different ways of life, and their civil polity. It was no other than Ea, god of the encircling Deep, the source of all. Historic inscriptions told of his "books," which may have included ancient oracles, and which certainly laid down the duties of a king. So the famous code of Hammurabi (about 1950 B.C.), recently discovered at Susa (1901), was handed to him, as the tablet shows, by the great Sun-god, Shamash.

The Egyptian priests, perhaps as late as the great Nineteenth Dynasty, before the days of Moses, threw into definite shape the vague traditions of immemorial antiquity, when men had lived devouring one another, ignorant how to till the ground. Osiris (p. 119) taught the art of tillage, the use of the plough and hoe, how to grow wheat and barley, and the culture of the vine; and Isis added the domestic arts of making bread and weaving linen. Osiris, moreover, appointed the offerings to the gods, regulated the ceremonies, composed the texts and melodies of the hymns. And among his successors was Thoth of Hermopolis (p. 8), who introduced astronomy and divination, medicine, arithmetic, and geometry, and whose "books," embracing a kind of religious encyclopædia, were known to the Christian teacher, Clement of Alexandria, in the second century of our era.

So Zeus gave laws to Minos in Crete, and Apollo revealed the Spartan constitution to Lycurgus; Numa, the traditional founder of the Roman ceremonial law, received instruction from the nymph Egeria. The shepherd slave, Zaleucus (whom Eusebius placed about 660 B.C.), taught the Locrians what Athena had first taught him, and prefaced his laws by enjoining them to revere the gods as the real causes of all things fair and good in life, and keep their hearts pure from all evil, inasmuch as the gods do not take pleasure in the sacrifices of the wicked, but in the righteous and fair conduct of the good.

From the New World come a series of similar figures. Mr. Curtin claims to show that the vast area of the American continent is pervaded by one system of thought incalculably old. In the central group of the most sacred personages is the Earth with Sky and Sun conceived sometimes as identical sometimes as distinct. The Earth-maiden on whom the Sun has gazed, becomes a mother, and gives birth to a great hero. He bestows on men all gifts that support existence, and it is through him that the race lives and prospers. To the Algonkins he was Michabo or Manibozho, the "Great Light," who imparted vision, author of wisdom, arts, and institutions. Among the Toltecs at Tulla he was Quetzalcoatl, virgin-born, founder of civilisation, who organised worship without human or animal sacrifices, and endured no

war. The Miztecs called him Votan, prince and legislator of his people, representative of a higher wisdom, so that he rose to be the mediator between earth and heaven. In the plains of Begota the white-bearded Bohica appeared to the Mozca Indians, taught them how to sow and build, formed them into communities, contrived an outlet for the waters of their great lake, and, having settled the government and the ritual, retired into ascetic penance for two thousand years. Out of the depths of Lake Titicaca in Peru there rose one day the son and daughter of the sun and moon, Manco Capac and Mama Ogllo, sent by their father in compassion for men's wretched plight. They taught the ignorant folk agriculture, the chief trades, the art of building cities, aqueducts, and roads, and Mama Ogllo showed the women how to spin and weave. Then when all was in order, and overseers were appointed to see that each one did his duty, they went back to the skies.

These stories all belong to the class known as myths. They are not accounts of what actually happened, they are the work of religious imagination operating on a particular group of facts, and endeavouring to explain them. The scope of mythology, whatever may be its particular origins, is of the widest compass. It embraces the whole field of nature and life. It first came into modern view through the study of classical antiquity

in Greece and Rome. The discovery of Sanskrit and the investigation of its literature, especially of the Vedic hymns, concentrated the attention of scholars for a time, pre-eminently under the genius of Max Müller, on the relations of myth to language, and the resolution of various deities of India and Greece into the phenomena of dawn and sunshine, of the thunderstorm or the moon.

But it was gradually found necessary to abandon one after another of the philological identifications which had at one time been proposed with confidence. New aspects of mythology demanded consideration. It was not only concerned with the incidents and powers of nature, or with the various relations of the gods. It appeared also in the field of ritual. It often contained antique secrets of the meaning of religious performance. It was the key to the dramatised representations of the sacred dance, the ceremonials on which depended the welfare of the tribe. And in proportion as action acquired a larger psychological recognition in shaping the character of religion, and belief receded into the background, the significance of the development of myths was changed.

As religion, however, became more self-conscious, the intellectual element in it gained more force and energy, and the thinkers of the priestly schools endeavoured to bring the claims of different deities into some sort of order, and regulate the hierarchy of heaven.

But they were often confronted with ancient elements of savagery which could be imperfectly harmonised with the more refined ideas of a progressive culture. Thus already in Homer, Zeus, as supreme God, bears one significant epithet; he is *mêtieta*, full of *mêtis* or counsel. The word is of doubtful derivation, but with the strong tendency of Greek imagination to turn abstract ideas into persons, Mêtis is presented by Hesiod (next in literary succession to Homer) as the daughter of Ocean, the Hellenic equivalent of the Babylonian Deep, source of all being even for the gods. Greek thought was not yet ripe for the ontological conception of wisdom or intelligence as inherent in the divine nature, so the union of Thought with Zeus is represented mythologically as a marriage, and Mêtis becomes the bride of the great "king of gods and men." The result is conceived in truly savage fashion. In order to possess her in the most intimate manner, and embody her in his own person, Zeus suddenly swallows her. Mythology, of course, has to provide a reason; she would bear a son who would overthrow him. The poet (or perhaps his editor), desirous of correcting this brutal selfishness, suggests a further plea; the goddess should be his perpetual monitor, and warn him inwardly of good and evil. The myth is being directly moralised.

Whatever, therefore, may be the origins of myth, whether in connection with tribal

tradition, in the interpretation of the incidents of nature—as when a Siberian described to Baron von Wrangell the occultation of one of Jupiter's moons by saying that the blue star had swallowed another very small star and soon after vomited it up again—or in endeavours to picture the characters and relations of the gods, the beginnings of the world, the birth of man, the entry of evil, sin, and death, or the condition of those who have already passed away, the myth becomes the reflex of the culture in the midst of which it rises. It is the depository of human experience, of man's criticism of his own life. And in its representations of a distant age when gods visibly consorted with men, and deigned to instruct them in the conditions of social welfare, mythology is the direct product of religion.

When the gods have withdrawn from human fellowship, and no longer choose their brides from the dwellers upon earth, or even vouchsafe to appear among them in various forms for temporary help or promise of blessing, the communications from heaven do not cease altogether. The Vedic poet might challenge the existence of Indra, the fool might say in his heart, "There is no God"; but the Powers above never left themselves without a witness. The negro going out of his hut one morning strikes his foot against a peculiarly shaped stone. "Art thou there?" he inquires, and recognises the presence of a guardian and

helper. The Samoan watches the behaviour of a spinning cocoa-nut, or the flight of a bird to right or left. The Central Asiatic notes the cracks on a tortoise's shell, much as a modern palmist traces the lines in a human hand. The liver is selected as the special seat of the prophetic faculty, and Babylonian and Etruscan developed a common diagnosis of its marks. The Celt divined by the water of wells, or the smoke and flames of ascending fires, and slew his prisoners that the secrets of destiny might be discovered in their entrails. China and Rome made divination the basis of elaborate state systems. Rome produced a literature of Augury, with books of regulations and minutes of procedure, while Plato commended it as "the art of fellowship between gods and men," and the philosophy of the Stoics justified it on the ground of a providential harmony between nature and man, so that divine guidance was vouchsafed to human need. Did not clouds and stars move by Heaven's great ordinance?

The lot took the responsibility of decision out of the hands of man, and vested it in the presiding deity. There is always a mystery in chance, which could be interpreted as the will of God. The oath implied that the heavenly Powers could be at any moment summoned to attest man's veracity; and the vow must be fulfilled, though it might cost Jephthah the sacrifice of his daughter. Perjury and broken vows were early recognised

among the gravest of crimes. The ordeal was in like manner the inquisition of a divine judge. When the Adum draught was administered to an accused Ashanti upon the Gold Coast, the god condescended to enter with it; he looked around for the signs of guilt, and if he found none he returned with the nauseous mixture to the light of day. It was a procedure analogous to the ancient rite embedded in the Levitical Law as the test of a wife's faithlessness (*cp.* Num. v. 11 *sqq.*).

Another mystery lay in dreams, which have been connected with supersensual powers all the world over. To the savage who cannot analyse his experience the dream-world is as real as that of his waking hours. The dreams that follow fasts, whether compulsory through deficient food, or voluntary through preparation for some solemn event, possess peculiar vividness; and, when attention has been fixed upon some expected crisis, readily acquire a prophetic significance. Divine forms are seen, and strange intimations are conveyed from another world. The dream verses of the Icelander brought tidings from those who had been lost at sea. To sleep upon the grave of a dead kinsman, still more of a hero or a seer, was the means of receiving communications from the wisdom of the dead. Did not philosophy teach that in sleep the mind is less hampered by its physical environment, and attains truth more nearly;

and what condition was so suitable, therefore, for the beneficent revelation of a god ?

In Greece, accordingly, the practice of sleeping at the tombs of heroes or in the temples of gods was regularly organised. The sanctuaries of Æsculapius, of which more than two hundred can be traced round the Eastern Mediterranean and in Italy, were specially frequented by patients who resorted thither for medical treatment and the advice of the god. The sufferer must pass through the preliminary discipline of the bath, and to his purifications must add the due offering of a sheep. The victim's fleece was carried into the holy precincts, and on it the sick man lay down for the night. In the visions of the dark hours the god appeared, and prescribed the mode of cure, or even condescended to operate himself. An inscription at Epidaurus records that the stiffened fingers of a patient were straightened out and restored for use by the god's own grasp. Was it surprising that Æsculapius should become the object of increasing reverence, and in the second century of our era should be enthroned in the highest as "Saviour (or Preserver) of the universe" ?

Under other conditions the visitation of the god expresses itself in poetic form. Among the ruder peoples whose songs are of the simplest—perhaps the most childish—kind, the faculty of rhythmic utterance seems superhuman. Words, lines, stanzas, follow

each other with a spontaneity which seems out of the reach of ordinary effort. The chants of worship have been again and again carried back to divine authorship in a distant past. The marriage of speech with music is no art of man. So the Finnic hero, Wäinamöinen, conceived by the wind, and born (after seven hundred years in the womb) by the maiden Ilmatar, added to his gifts of fertility and fire the invention of the harp, and the teaching of wisdom, poetry, and music to man. Odin was the god of wisdom and poetry for Scandinavia, god also of the holy draught, which, like the Indian Soma, gave inspiration. The poet brewed Odin's mead, bore Odin's cup; and in old Teutonic speech was *godh-mālugr*, "god-inspired." Hermes passed in Greece as the inventor of the lyre, which he gave to Apollo, chief among the deities who declared to man the unerring counsel of Zeus; and Homer already counts singer and song as alike divine.

The lovely forms of the Muses, daughters of Zeus and Memory, or with an alternative mother in Harmony, were endowed with functions of song and prophecy, and between them and the historic poets stood a group, half mythical, half human, whose names were attached to actual hymns and poems. Such were Orpheus, Musæus, Eumolpus, Thamyris, and Linos. The verses ascribed to them tended to acquire an authoritative character; they were cited as a rule or norm for conduct;

they were on the way to become a Scripture. Homer and Hesiod were employed in the same way; and Plato denounces the mendicant prophets who went to rich men's doors offering to make atonements, and quoting Homer and Hesiod as religious guides. Nevertheless, though he proposed to banish from his ideal State the poets who said unworthy things of the gods, he elsewhere formulates the highest claim for poetry as a supernatural product. The poets are only the interpreters of the gods by whom they are severally possessed; "God takes away the minds of the poets;" "God himself is the speaker, through them he is conversing with us." It is the lament of the Bantus of South Africa that since the white man came the springs of music and song have ceased to flow: "The spirits are angry with their children, and do not teach them any more."

Another mode of converse between deity and man was found in the oracle. Widespread was the belief that through certain chosen persons or in certain peculiar spots the gods deigned to communicate with those who sought their aid. Such agencies were peculiarly numerous in the Hellenic world, and the oracle at Delphi acquired supreme importance. As early as the eighth century B.C., in the days of Amos and Isaiah, it is rising into prominence as an authority that may take the leading place in Greek religion. At one time it almost seemed as if it might succeed

in co-ordinating the separate and often opposing forces of the City States, and blend them into national unity. If that hope was ever cherished by its guardians, they failed to realise it. The higher minds discerned in it capacities which were never fulfilled. They saw it give counsel to rival powers, promote enterprise, and support plans of colonisation. They knew that it exercised a far-reaching moral authority; it compelled reverence for oaths, and secured respect for the lives of women, suppliants, and slaves; and again and again in true prophetic spirit it subordinated ritual to ethical demands. With the widest outlook over human affairs, Plato proposes to establish the midpoint of religious legislation in Delphi at Apollo's shrine: "He is the god who sits in the centre, on the navel of the earth, and he is the interpreter of religion to all mankind." It is the note of universalism: had not Jeremiah proclaimed two centuries before on behalf of Yahweh at Jerusalem: "My house shall be called a house of prayer for all nations"?

When the Israelites had renewed their temple in the days of Darius, and the scribes were beginning to busy themselves with the remains of their national literature, Greek writers also interested themselves in the collection of the utterances of the past. About 500 B.C. Onomacritus gathered together the oracles of Musæus. It was the first instance of what became a frequent practice

in later days; one of Plato's disciples, Heracleides of Pontus, undertook a similar task; so did Chrysippus the Stoic. A special literature was thus begotten. The circumstances which called for the successive oracles were duly narrated; and had Delphi maintained its early position, here would have lain the nucleus of a Scripture, which might have developed into a permanent record of revelation.

Italy, in like manner, had its *libri fatales*, its sacred books of destiny. There were Etruscan oracles under the name of the nymph Begoe or Vegone; there were the Marcian Songs, said to have been adopted as genuine by the Roman Senate in 213 B.C. The ancient city of Veii had its books; Tibur (Tivoli) the "lots" of the nymph Albunea. Most famous of all were the Sibylline books, brought (according to later tradition) from Cumæ to Rome, perhaps in the last days of the monarchy, or a little later (about 500 B.C.), and placed in the Temple of Jupiter on the Capitol under the charge of two special guardians. These were afterwards increased to ten, and in the year 51 B.C. to fifteen. The office remained till the books were destroyed in A.D. 400, when Christianity had been finally established as the imperial religion. What they contained is doubtful; how they were consulted is not known. Their aid was sought after prodigies, pestilence, or disaster had awakened general alarm; but their actual

words were not made public. Nevertheless they supplied the basis for important religious innovations. The introduction of Greek deities by their sanction profoundly affected Roman religious ideas, and left deep marks on literature and art.

In the year 83 B.C. the temple which contained the books was burned. The greatest anxiety was displayed for their restoration. Envoys were sent to Sicily, Greece, and Asia Minor to collect fresh verses; they were deposited in a new temple, and prophecies were founded on them in the last days of the Republic. But it was believed that spurious verses had got into circulation, and Augustus ordered a rigid examination. Some two thousand volumes, it is alleged, were destroyed; those which were admitted as genuine were removed to a temple of Apollo which Augustus had himself dedicated on the Palatine hill. Here are the characteristics of a Canon. The books are kept under special charge in a temple. Their authority suffices to modify old cults and introduce new. When they perish, they must be restored. The false must be separated from the true, the genuine eliminated from the spurious. The moral element in them seems to have been entirely subordinated to the ritual; but they were believed to express in seasons of difficulty and danger the demands of the gods.

The transition to what are formally called "Sacred Books" leaves a considerable litera-

ture upon the boundary. The collection of the ancient national Finnic songs, made with so much patience by the Swedish Lönrott, under the name of the Kalevala, presents no claim to inspiration, but it is the poetical expression of the national religion. In the literature of the Eddas, the Volospá (p. 248) is a product of the prophetic spirit. After Herodotus remarked that Homer and Hesiod made the gods of the Greeks, the Homeric poems acquired more and more authority, until by the usage of centuries they gained a semi-canonical position. Lectures were given upon their sacred text, and the most extravagant methods of interpretation were employed to reconcile them with the world-view of philosophy. The ancient Egyptian accepted the "Book of the Dead" as his guide to the next world. Chapters of it were inscribed on the walls of his tomb, engraved on his coffin, or laid inside it with his mummy. It contained the charms needful for the preservation of his soul on its journey to the land of the West. Its authors were unknown, but it contained the secrets of the life to come.

The "Bibles of Humanity," as the foundation-books of the great religions have been called, belong to one continent. Asia has been the mother of them all. The oldest takes shape in India in the Vedic hymns; and the immense literatures of Brahmanism, early and later Buddhism, and the Hinduism which

finally drove Buddhism off the field, follow in due course. Cognate in language with the immigrant Aryans, the ancient Persians preserved, amid many losses, some of the compositions of their prophet Zarathustra, mingled with religious documents of later date, known to modern students by the name Zend Avesta. Palestine produces Judaism, with its collection of national literature embracing law, history, prophecy, poetry, and wisdom. Judaism gives birth to Christianity, which sets its New Testament beside the Old; and Judaism and Christianity lie behind Mohammed and the Koran, where the person and the book blend in the closest union.

In the Far East Chinese culture reposes on the so-called Classics, the five King and the four Shu, which had a chequered history till they finally acquired their position as fountains of knowledge and models of composition. The ancient odes of the Shi King, the traditions of rulers and the counsels of statesmen in the Shu King, the collections of the teaching of Confucius and Mencius, and the remaining works which need not be mentioned here, raise none of the claims which have been preferred for the Indian Veda, or the Christian Bible. Nor does the singular little book of aphorisms ascribed to Lao-Tsze, which serves as the starting-point for Taoism (p. 67). The Shintoist of Japan finds the earliest records of his religion in the national chronicles known as the Kojiki and the Nihongi; and the

modern believer, who has been offered an infallible Bible, responds with a profession of faith in the practical inerrancy of his own traditional books.

Some smaller communities claim a passing word. The Jains (p. 61), once the rivals of the Buddhists, possess a sacred literature only less copious. Group after group appears in mediæval India singing the hymns of its founder, such as the Kabir-panthis, till the poet Tulsi-Das (born 1532) embodies in his version of the ancient Rāmāyana the essence of Hindu religion for some ninety millions from Bengal to the Punjab. The Sikhs (p. 62) stay themselves upon the words of their holy teachers in the *Ādi-Granth*. The followers of Mani in the third century of our era, who threatened the progress of the Christian Church, and spread all the way from Carthage to Middle Asia, possessed a gospel and epistles of their Prophet, portions of which were brought to Berlin a few years ago from Chinese Turkestan. The Druzes of the Lebanon, whose origin goes back to the Caliph Hakim at Cairo in the eleventh century A.D., treasure the documents of the faith in 111 treatises and epistles, starting from Hakim's vizier, Hamza. And the hapless prophet of Persia, who designated himself the Bab (p. 70), composed in the *Beyyan* (among numerous other works) an exposition of the Truth for his disciples. For such small communities a sacred literature is in fact a necessity.

Without it they have no adequate cohesion. It is at least one of the conditions of permanent resistance to the forces of decay.

Around the Scriptures of the greater religions devout reverence has gathered with ardent faith. The Hindu term Veda (meaning literally "knowledge") has a narrower and a wider sense. In its limited application it denotes the four collections of hymns, of ritual formulæ, and sacrificial songs, of which the Rig-Veda is the most important (p. 10). Their history must be inferred from their contents; of the circumstances of their formation there is no external evidence, save that the early Buddhist texts show that the fourth or Atharva-Veda had not acquired canonical value in the days of the Teacher Gotama. But the term Veda is also extended to include a mass of ceremonial compositions known as Brāhmanas, attached to one or other of the ancient collections, and handed down in different religious schools. These are all included more or less definitely in what a Western theologian might term "Revelation." They are technically designated as *çruti* or "hearing"; they form the matter of the sacred teaching transmitted orally, which must be reserved for a special order and not imparted to the world outside.

The books of household law, on the other hand, prescribing the domestic ceremonies for birth, marriage, and death, regulating caste-privileges, and laying down rules for

the conduct of life, were open to all. But just as the Rig-Veda was exalted into a reproduction on earth of what existed eternally in heaven, so endeavours were made to convert the legal works current in particular schools into sacred codes of divine origin. One was boldly ascribed to Vishnu, who communicated it to the goddess of the earth. Another, most famous of all, was attached to Manu, the eponymous hero of the human race. "Father Manu" he is called in the Rig-Veda, and as the sire of mankind he was the founder of social and moral order. First king, and Rishi (or seer) privileged to behold the sacred texts, he was the inventor of rites and author of the maxims of law. And yet higher dignity belonged to him, for he sprang from the Self-Existent and could thus be identified with Brahmā himself; and as Prajāpati (p. 143) he took part in the creation of the world. In due course poetry and philosophy had their turn. The immense epic known as the Mahābhārata, where tradition and myth and imaginative speculation are blended in rich confusion, was put in the scales by the gods against the four Vedas, and its sanctity outweighed them all.

The Buddhist Scriptures were early grouped in three divisions under the title of the Three Baskets. The teachings of the Supremely Enlightened were of course absolutely true, and his rules for the members of his Order were of compelling authority. It was assumed

that they were recited correctly at an assembly held immediately after his decease. The "Buddha-Word" thus became the infallible standard of faith and practice. There are traces of provision to meet difficulties in case different elders should believe themselves to possess varying traditions of the Buddha's commands: but not even the enormous expansion of the Scriptures of the Great Vehicle, as preserved in China and Japan, shook the faith of the disciple in the authentic character of their doctrine. The higher teaching belonged to the later years of the Buddha's life, and was transmitted by special channels. It is much as if Gnosticism had established itself in the Christian Church of the second century, and had formed its literature into a Canon beside our New Testament. Nepal, according to the testimony of Bryan Hodgson, raised its sacred books into objects of worship. Chinese respect was satisfied when they were issued from time to time (p. 66) with a preface by the imperial Son of Heaven.

The oldest portion of the sacred literature collected under the name of the Zend Avesta consists of five hymns (called Gāthās), ascribed to Zarathustra himself. They bear many marks of high antiquity, and they acquired a peculiar sanctity, so that the later sacrificial hymns already regard them as objects of homage to which worship should be offered. Above the actual Scriptures rose a radiant figure, in which the conception of revelation

was impersonated. Iranian thought was markedly idealist; each earthly object had its spiritual type, its antecedent or counterpart in the heavenly realm. The religion and law of Zarathustra had their representative in Daena, who is already celebrated with pious praise in the Avesta. Sacrifice is offered to her as she dwells in the Heavenly House, the Abode of Song. Thence Zarathustra summons her, beseeching her fellowship—she is associated with Cista, "religious knowledge"—and he asks of her mystic powers and righteousness in thought and speech and deed. Later teaching declared her to be produced by Vohu Mano, the "Good Mind" of Ahura Mazda himself (p. 131). As the actual utterance of the Lord Omniscient, the sacred Law might also be called his *mãthra çpenta* or "Holy Word."

Jewish theology was not altogether deficient in similar conceptions. Corresponding to the Torah or Law imparted to Moses, was a heavenly Torah, infinitely richer in content. It formed one of a mysterious group of seven Realities which existed, like the Throne of Glory, Eden, and Gehenna, before the making of the earth and sky. It was a kind of epitome of all possible cosmic relations, so that as an architect frames his plan for a city, God looked into the Torah when he would create the world. Christian theology has never employed this imagery to express its conception of Revelation. But it lies at the back of the curious language of the Koran concerning the "Mother

of the Book" (p. 13). Mohammedan theologians reckoned no less than ten ways in which the Prophet received his revelations. Sometimes the divine inspiration came in a dream, sometimes like the noise of a bell through which he recognised the words which Gabriel wished him to understand. Other books had been given previously to Moses, to David, to Jesus, and each nation would be summoned to its own book at the judgment. The believer in Islam recognised in the "Mother of the Book" the pre-existent or Eternal Word, which God from time to time "sent down" to his Prophet. It had definite size and aspect for Arab imagination. The commentator Jalâlain described it as existing in the air above the seventh heaven. There angel guardians defended it from theft by Satan or the change of any of its contents. It was as long as from heaven to earth, and as broad as from east to west; and its consistency was of one white pearl. Was it surprising that Mohammedan faith should support the utterance of the pious Câdi Iyâd (who died in Morocco, A.D. 1149): "The Koran, as it lies between the two covers is God's own word, which he imparted by way of inspiration to the Prophet. Therefore is it in every way inimitable, and no man can produce anything like it"?

Christian theology has refrained from these physical emblems. But it was possible for a scholar of unquestioned learning to declare

in the pulpit of the University of Oxford barely half a century ago (1861) that "the Bible is none other than the voice of him that sitteth upon the throne. Every book of it, every chapter of it, every verse of it, every word of it, every syllable of it (where are we to stop ?), every letter of it, is the direct utterance of the Most High . . . faultless. unerring, supreme."

# CHAPTER VII

## RELIGION AND MORALITY

THE expression of religion in action produces the offering and the prayer: by sacrifice and devotion, with thanksgiving and requests, do men approach their gods. But there is another way of entering into fruitful obedience to them. Certain kinds of conduct may be acceptable to them, and others not. Are these concerned only with ceremonial acts, or do they include the behaviour of men to each other? How far does religion promote or regulate what we call morality? What are their relations, and how do they affect one another? This question has been discussed in innumerable treatises; attention can only be invited to it here from the point of view of the historical comparison of religions, without reference to philosophical definitions. Every one admits a connection of some sort, for good or for evil, at some period in their respective development. They may not have started hand in hand. Their alliance may be disbanded, and morality may claim total independence. But at some time on the journey they have marched together.

The difficulty of the inquiry arises in part from the variety of views as to the scope and essence of both morality and religion. Where do they begin, and in what do they consist? The philosopher may demand a complete recognition of the freedom of the will, and the independent activity of the conscience, and savages who have no such words are set down as destitute of morality, just as those who have no Heavenly Father and no devil, no heaven and no hell, are described as without religion. It is obviously impossible to expect to find everywhere our categories of right and wrong; yet even Lord Avebury lent his high authority to the statement that there are many savages almost entirely without moral feeling largely on the ground of the absence of ideas of sin, remorse, and repentance. Mr. Huxley in the same way declared it obvious that the lower religions are entirely unethical.

On the other hand, the idealist strenuously affirms the intimacy of the connection. We are assured that the historical beginning of all morality is to be found in religion; or that in the earliest period of human history, religion and morality were necessary correlates of each other; or that all moral commandments have originally the character of religious commandments. And the student of comparative religion like the late Prof. Robertson Smith cautiously affirms that "in ancient society all morality, *as morality was then understood*, was consecrated and enforced by religious

motives and sanctions." The words which we have italicised contain exactly the limitation which is ignored by the philosopher who requires that the gods shall be patterns of conduct, and administrators of an ethical world-order. Plainly the question is settled in different ways according to different standards of what religion and morality mean. If we are content to begin low enough down, we may see reason to believe that in that stage of thought in which religion, magic, and custom are so strangely intertwined, morality is also not wanting. Even the Fijian, who called some of his gods by hideous names, such as "the Rioter," "the Brain-eater," "the Murderer," regarded theft, adultery, and such offences, as serious.

The difficulty of broad general statements lies in the imperfection of our knowledge. Again and again closer observation has revealed quite unexpected secrets. Whole ranges of belief, feeling, action, formerly concealed from observation, have been brought to light. Thus about twenty years ago Major Ellis, writing of the Ewe, Tshi, and Yoruba peoples on the Gold Coast, laid it down that "religion at the stage of growth at which we find it among these three groups of tribes, has no connection with morals, or the relations of men to one another." But the German missionary, Jakob Spieth, now tells us (1911) that among the Ewe-speaking folk not only does Mother Earth punish with death those who have sworn

falsely, but Mawu, God, who knows the thoughts and hearts of men, who is the giver of everything good upon the earth — very patient and never angry—will not allow one brother to deceive another, or suffer the king to judge unrighteously, or permit one to burn another's house down. Morality here is more than rudimentary; the justice of man is put under the guardianship of God, who requires "truth in the inward parts." Another West African observer, Major Leonard, on the Lower Niger, describes religion as intermingled with the whole social system of the tribes under his view. It supplies the principle on which their law is dispensed and morality adjudicated. The entire organisation of their common life is so interwoven with it that they cannot get away from it. Like the Hindus, "they eat religiously, drink religiously, bathe religiously, dress religiously, and sin religiously."

The beginnings of morality can no more be discovered historically than the beginnings of religion. Language, in various nations, implies that it springs out of custom. The foundation of practical ethics, whatever may be the ultimate interpretation of such terms as duty and conscience in more advanced cultures, lies in social usage. When any custom is established with sufficient strength to serve as a rule demanding observance, so that its breach evokes some feeling, the seed of morals is already germinating. No group however small, no society however crude, can cohere

without some such customs. They may be formed in various ways; they are strengthened by habitual repetition; they acquire the sanction of the past, they are usually referred, when men have begun to ask how they came into being—just as they ask about their own origin—to some great First Man, or some superhuman personality in the realm above (p. 171). But always there are some things allowable, and others forbidden: some things may (or even must) be done, others may not.

When custom has gained this power, it carries with it an element of control. Impulse must not be inconsiderately indulged, it must be governed. Private interests must be subordinated to a rule, and conduct conformed to a standard of behaviour. In the ruder culture, where the supply of food is of urgent importance, such rules gather around the produce of the chase or of the ground. Among the Australian Kurnai, for example, all game caught by the men, all roots or fruits collected by the women, must be shared with others according to definite arrangements. Methodic distribution is obligatory, and self-denial in sharing and eating is thus impressed upon the young. Moreover certain varieties of food are strictly forbidden to women, children, and boys before initiation.

Prohibitions of this kind, extending over many branches of conduct, are found all over the world. They are often designated by a

term in use in Polynesia, taboo (*tabu* or *tapu*). Their origin has been much disputed, owing to the extraordinary complexity of the circumstances with which they are concerned. Taboo contains emphatically an element of mystery. It comes out of a vague dim background, and implies that some strange power will be set in perilous operation if a certain thing is done. Such a power, obscure, indefinite, not personalised, but mightier than men, has been recognised at the base of religion under another term, the Melanesian *mana* (p. 80). Taboo has been accordingly described as a negative *mana*. It is a prohibition against calling the weird uncanny force into the open, where it may do unexpected hurt.

The objects and actions placed under such taboos are various; and it is for the anthropologist and the psychologist, if they can, to discover their origin and application in each particular case. They involve ideas of purity and defilement, the holy and the common, the clean and the unclean. They gather in particular round blood, which rouses in some animals as in many human beings an instinctive aversion and disgust, and yet is at the same time sacred as a seat of life. They enter at the great crises of existence, birth and death; the mother, and perhaps also the new-born child, are unclean, and must be purified; the corpse defiles whoever touches it. They attend the sexual processes, which are the occasion of releasing dangerous

energies. So they affect people as well as things. The king is charged with this mysterious force, and is hedged round with taboos lest it should suddenly burst forth against the intruder on his sanctity. The chief, the priest, possess it in less degree. And it is transmitted to what belongs to them. Their weapons, their food and, above all, their persons, are sacred. The oft-quoted story of the Maori may still be repeated here: it is not the only case of the kind. Strong and stalwart, he found some food beside the path, and ate it. He learned shortly afterwards that it was the remains of the king's meal. He had violated a royal taboo. The secret power had him in its grasp: he was speedily seized with cramp in the stomach, and in a few hours died.

Ritual religions are full of survivals of such taboos. "O Maker of the material world," inquires Zarathustra of Ahura Mazda, "can he be clean again who has eaten of the carcass of a dog, or the corpse of a man?" In ancient Israel various foods were forbidden by religious law; the priest might not touch a dead body; when a murder had been committed and the murderer could not be found, the elders of the city must solemnly purify the ground which unpunished bloodshed had defiled. Early Roman religion contained many such prohibitions; from certain sacrifices women and strangers and fettered criminals must withdraw; there are traces of taboo on

iron and shoe-leather, on burial grounds and spots where thunder-bolts were supposed to have fallen, and on certain days, especially those connected with the cult of the dead. Such taboos still play a great part in savage society, and exert no little moral force in preserving honesty and order. In Samoa, observed Turner, objects placed under taboo are perfectly safe; they are in no danger of theft. Primitive morality is thus brought under the sanction of religion.

All over the world, as we have seen (p. 161), the young receive a very severe training in preparation for their entry into the full privileges and duties of the tribe. They are then instructed in the traditional rules of conduct, the proper abstinences, the right behaviour of the sexes. Such ceremonies are recognised as of great importance in communities of the simplest form without political control, for it is through them that the social ties of tribal kinship gain coherence and strength. Various observers have testified to the consideration displayed in Australia, for instance, towards the aged, the sick, and the infirm. The blind are often carefully tended, and the best fed. "As a matter of fact," says Mr. Marett, "the earlier and more democratic types of primitive society, uncontaminated by our civilisation, do not present many features to which the modern conscience can take exception; but display rather the edifying spectacle of religious

brotherhoods encouraging themselves by mystical communion to common effort."

In West Africa Miss Kingsley noted the close connection in negro communities between religion and life. To get through day or night a man must be right in the religious point of view; he must be on working terms with the great world of spirits round him. In spite of much make-believe the secret societies in which the men are enlisted under solemn oaths, are recognised as important moral agencies. The Ukuku, recently described by Dr. Nassau, could settle tribal quarrels, and proclaim or enforce peace, when no individual chief or king could end the strife. Such organisations regulate marriage laws, the duties of parents and children, the privileges of eldership, the recognition of age and worth. The entry into them lies through the rites of religion.

"I have studied these societies," wrote Miss Kingsley; "I am in possession of fairly complete knowledge of three of them. I know men acquainted with ten other societies, and their information is practically the same as my own, viz. that those rites consist in a series of oath-takings as you pass from grade to grade . . . Each grade gives him a certain amount of instruction in the native law. Each grade gives him a certain function in carrying out the law. And finally, when he has passed through all the grades, which few men do, when he has sworn the greatest oath

of all, when he knows all the society's heart's secret, that secret is 'I am I,' the one Word. The teaching of that Word is law, order, justice, morality. Why the one Word teaches it, the man does not know. But he knows two things: one that there is a law-god, and the other that, so says the wisdom of our ancestors, his will must be worked or evil will come. So in his generation he works to keep the young people straight."

Taboos may be violated unconsciously, and tribal laws may be transgressed sometimes intentionally, sometimes by accident. The resulting guilt must be removed, if the offender or the community is not to incur the wrath of the affronted Powers. Sin, like holiness, has this peculiar property that it can be communicated by contact. Savage morality does not always rise above the confusion between the physical and the mental. Evil qualities such as uncleanness can be transferred from persons to things, just as from things to persons. Pains and diseases can be extracted from the sufferer, and magically sent into animals or objects which can be driven away or destroyed; and moral evil can be similarly removed. When an Atkhan of the Aleutian Islands had committed a serious offence and desired to unburden himself, he chose a time when the sun was clear, picked up certain weeds, and carried them about his person. After they were thus sufficiently impregnated by contact

with him, he laid them down, called the sun to witness, cast his sins upon them, and threw them into the fire. The consuming flame burned away his guilt.

The Peruvian made his confession to the sun, and then bathed in an adjoining river. There he rid himself of his iniquity, saying "O thou river, receive the sins I have this day confessed to the sun, carry them down to the sea, and let them never more appear." The oldest and the most recent rituals repeat the same idea in various forms. In one of the Vedic ceremonials of sacrifice, the sacrificer and his wife towards the close bathed and washed each other's backs. Then having wrapped themselves in fresh garments, they stepped forth, and we read: "Even as a snake casts its skin, so does he cast away all his sin. There is in him not so much sin as there is in a toothless child." Water was likewise employed in Babylonia, where the incantation ran, "I have washed my hands, I have cleansed my body with pure spring water which is in the town of Eridu. All evil, all that is not good, in my body, my flesh, my limbs, begone!" Or, "By the wisdom of thy holy name let the sin and the ban which were created for man's misery be removed, destroyed, and driven away."

Like physical evil such as disease, so moral evil might be attributed to the action of spirits, and periodic ceremonies might be performed for purging the community by driving them

out. Sometimes the sins were buried in the ground; sometimes they were thrown into the river; sometimes they were concentrated on a person or an animal; or were magically expelled under the sanction of religion into some object which could be destroyed. In the annual celebration of the Thargelia at Athens, in the month of May, under the solemn sanction of Apollo, two "purifying men" were led through the streets to be whipped with rods, and then driven over the border of the state, bearing the people's sins. The Levitical ritual (Lev. xvi) incorporated at a late date a solemn ceremony on the tenth day of the first month of the ancient religious year (in September), when an act of atonement was performed for the whole nation. Two goats were brought into the sanctuary, and lots were cast upon them. One was dedicated to Yahweh, over the other the high priest confessed the iniquities of the children of Israel; and by the laying on of hands he transferred them to the head of the doomed animal, which was then led forth into the wilderness for a mysterious power of evil, Azazel. As the temporary adjuncts of so much guilt, the high priest and the goat-leader were required to purify themselves afterwards by bathing; the high priest must change his robes, and the goat-leader wash his clothes.

So in modern times in Nigeria the town sins are annually laid on some unhappy slave-girl, perhaps selected some time before. As she

is led through the street the householders come forth and discharge the year's accumulated evil on her; then she is dragged to the river, bound, and left to drown. Japan is satisfied without a life. The ancient ritual of purification shows that in the early centuries of the national history a public ceremony was occasionally performed. In the revival of Shinto usage which marked the late reign, it was re-enacted by imperial decree in 1872 for half-yearly celebration on June 30 and December 31, at all Shinto shrines. Four or five days before these dates the believer was enjoined to procure from his priest a piece of white paper cut in the shape of a garment. On this he was to write his name and sex, with the year and month of his birth; then he must rub it over his body, and finally breathe on it. His sins would thus be transferred to the paper robe, which was to be taken back to the priest. Offerings of food and purifying ceremonies would complete the believer's release. The paper garments with their load of guilt were then to be packed in cases which were to be put in boats, rowed out to sea, and committed to the deep. There they would be carried to the great Sea Plain by the Maiden of Descent-into-the-Current, who would convey them to the Maiden of the Swift Opening, dwelling in the Eight Hundred Meetings of the Brine of the Eight Brine Currents. She would swallow them down with a gurgling sound, and the

Lord of the Breath-blowing Place would finally blow them away into the Root-Country, the bottom apparently of the under-world!

The relation of morality to religion tends to become more definite along different lines of thought, which are constantly intertwined, and of which three are only isolated here for the purpose of the briefest possible illustration of the forms in which they have appeared historically. In the first place, the world may be regarded as a scene in which rival powers of help and hurt are engaged in constant conflict; and the physical dualism thus exhibited may be reproduced in the sphere of morals as a contest between powers of good and evil. Secondly, the course of nature may be viewed as a world-order, where seasonal uniformities are the manifestation of a permanent principle of harmony which is the guide of human conduct, and the vicissitudes of daily or annual experience are interpreted as the judgments of heaven on man's doings, national or personal. And thirdly, the development of the individual conscience may surmount the confusion which ranks ritual offences along with moral transgressions, and the ethical life may be set wholly free from ceremonial bondage, and carried up into the realm of spirit.

The lower culture all over the world ascribes disease or accident, madness, calamity, and death, to the agency of hostile powers lying

in wait for man, and breaking in on his security. The violences of the elements, the hurricane, the flood, the earthquake, the volcanic eruption, are in the same way the work of giants towering in might above the common herd of the demons of air, water, or earth. The spirits of the evil dead, especially of powerful magic-men, Shamans, and the like, of malicious character, are potent for sickness and disaster. But in their unorganised ranks there is no controlling or directing force. Here and there some figure or group emerges into prominence. At the head of the demonic hosts of Babylonian mythology is a band of seven ruling spirits, perhaps the windy counterparts of the sun and moon and the five planets. In Egyptian story Set (or by his Greek name Typhon) is the evil opposite of the good Osiris whom he does to death; or it is the sun himself who is attacked in his nightly journey by the serpent Apap with his monstrous crew.

Scandinavian mythology was full of these conflicts. The oppositions of light and darkness, storm and calm, warmth and cold, were felt with unusual vehemence. Over the motley multitude of powers infesting forest and field, the wind and the water, rose the giants of mountain and cataract, the furious blast, the curdling frost. The giants of the frost were evil powers, like the wolf Fenris, and the serpent Nidhogg, who lay beneath one of the roots of the mighty cosmic tree (in Niflheim,

a second being among the frost-giants, and a third among the gods), for ever gnawing till the great world's end. Above them rose the dread goddess Hel, the "hollow," once, apparently, the name of the grave, and then of the power that ruled the gloomy underworld, the abode of those who had not fallen upon the battle-field. She, in her turn, was subordinated to Loki, once reckoned among the gods, capricious and tricky, who becomes the father of Hel, the wolf Fenris, and the Midgard snake, and leads the forces of evil for the destruction of the world. He compasses the death of Balder the fair, Odin perishes by the wolf, and Thor by the serpent; though god and wolf and serpent in their turn sink in common ruin. But the powers engaged in the strife are all superhuman; man has no share in the warfare, save when the warriors pass at death into the abode of the gods, and take their place beside them in the final conflict. Loki is no Devil, he does not tempt, or interfere with the children of earth; he does not affect their present conduct or future destiny.

The oppositions of light and darkness belong to every zone all round the world, and were perhaps most strongly felt among the Indo-Iranian branches of the great Aryan family. The name *deva* in ancient Indian mythology denotes the shining powers of the upper world, the radiant dwellers in the sky. In contrast with it stands another, the

*asura*, once a title of high honour, for it clung even to Varuna, but later degraded to the designation of demonic beings, who appear again and again in contest with the devas for the precious drink of immortality. So the realm of darkness is the realm of evil. Into the pit of darkness are the wicked thrust: and when right and wrong are presented under the forms of truth and falsehood, and untruth is identified with gloom, the poet reached the natural symbolism—"Light is heaven, they say, and darkness hell."

It was, however, among the cognate Iranian people that this antithesis acquired the greatest force, under the influence of the prophet Zarathustra. By a curious historic-religious process which cannot here be traced, the terms of the opposing forces were reversed. *Ahura* (= *asura*) remained the name of the Supreme Power, with the addition of the term *Mazda*, "all-knowing," and the *daevas* (=*devas*) became the evil multitude. In the oldest part of the Zend Avesta Ahura appears as the sole Creator, the God of light and purity and truth, who dwells on high in the Abode of Song. Beside him is his Good Mind, and the Holy (or beneficent, gracious) Spirit. But opposed to him in the realm of darkness beneath is "the Lie" (*drug*), with its correlates the Bad Mind and the Evil Spirit (*Añra Mainyu*, not yet a proper name). The world between is the scene of continuous struggle, and in this conflict man is called to take his

part. Ritual purity, appropriate sacrifice, and personal righteousness in thought, word, and deed, are his weapons in the fight. By these he helps to establish the sovereignty of Ahura, and to curtail the power of "the Lie." The earliest representations offer no account of the origin of the Drug any more than of Ahura himself. But later speculation, impressed with the contrasting elements of human life, began to ascribe to him, too, under the name of Ahriman (Añra Mainyu), creative power; all noxious animals and plants were due to him; plague and disease came from his hands; all agencies of cold, darkness, and destruction were his work; he was the *daeva* of *daevas*, Lord of death, and author of temptation. And finally, in the long process of thought the two powers of good and evil had both issued from a still higher unity, Zervan Akarana, Time without bound. But long ere this the Persian character had responded to Zarathustra's teaching of warfare against "the Lie"; and Herodotus bears testimony to their repute for loyalty to truth. For from the earliest days the dualism of Zarathustra bound together morality and religion in the closest alliance. How the great demand for the ultimate victory of good was to be justified will be seen hereafter (p. 247).

A second group of figures embodying the same idea of the connection of morality with religion is found in the various impersonations

of the Order of Nature and its correlate in Law in the world without and the heart within. The speculations of the early Greek philosophers in their attempts to reach an ultimate Unity behind all the diversities of appearance familiarised the higher minds with the idea of the harmony of the cosmos. "Law," sang Pindar, "is king of all, both mortals and immortals." And this sovereign order is represented mythologically by Themis, whom Hesiod exalts to be the daughter of Heaven and Earth, and bride of Zeus. Pindar pictured her as borne in a golden car from the primeval Ocean, the source of all, up to the sacred height of Olympus, to be the consort of Zeus the Preserver. But though she is thus the spouse of the sovereign of the sky, she is in another aspect identified with Earth, scene of fixed rules both in nature and social life, for with the cultus of the earth were associated not only the operations of agriculture, but the rites and duties of marriage, and the maintenance of the family. So Themis is the mother of the seasons in the annual round, and the sequences of blossom and fruit are her work; but among her daughters are also Fair Order, Justice, and Peace, and the world and the State thus reflect obedience to a universal Law.

Behind Greece lay Egypt, where tradition said that Thales, first of Greeks to philosophise, had studied. When the soul of the dead man was brought to the test of the balance (p. 8),

he was supported by the goddesses of Maāt or Truth. Derived from the root *mā*, "to stretch out," this name covered the ideas of rectitude or right, and Maāt was the splendid impersonation of order, law, justice, truth, in both the physical and moral spheres. She is the daughter—or even the eye—of the Sun-god Rê. But she is conceived in still more exalted fashion as the sovereign of all realms, and is elevated above all relationships. She is Lady of heaven, and Queen of earth, and even Lady of the Land of the West, the mysterious dwellings of the dead. In one aspect she serves each of the great gods as her lord and master; in another she knows no lord or master. So it is by her that the gods live; she is, as it were, the law of their being; alike for sun and moon, for days and hours, in the visible world, and for the divine king at the head of his people. She is solemnly offered by the sovereign to his god, and the deity responds by laying her in the heart of his worshipper, to manifest her everlastingly before the gods. Through the court-phrases gleams the solemn idea that sovereignty on earth is no law to itself; it must follow the ordinances of heaven.

Chinese insight early reached a similar thought. Before the days of Confucius or his elder contemporary Lao-Tsze, the wiser observers had noted the uniformity of Nature's ways. Were not Heaven and Earth the nourishers of all things? Did not Heaven pour

down all kinds of influences upon the docile and receptive Earth? Heaven was all-observing, steadfast, impartial; and its "sincerity," seen in the regular movements of the sun and moon, or the succession of the seasons, becomes for the moralist the groundwork of the social order. This daily course is called Heaven's way or path, the *Tao* (the highway as distinguished from by-tracks), which with unvarying energy maintains the scene of our existence, and provides the norm or pattern for our conduct. In the hands of Lao-Tsze this became the symbol of a great philosophical conception. Behind the visible path which all could see lay the hidden Tao, untrodden and enduring. Here was the eternal source of all things, for ever streaming forth in orderly succession, but never vaunting itself or inviting attention by outbursts of display. It was the type for man to follow; the sage, like Heaven, must have no personal ends; he must act, like the great exemplar, without meddling interference, leaving his nature to fulfil itself; let him renounce ambition and cultivate humility; only one who has "forgotten himself" can become identified with Heaven. "Can you"—so Lao-Tsze was said to have asked an inquirer six hundred years before Jesus taught in Galilee—"Can you become a little child?"

The Vedic seers were hardly less impressed with the sense of an orderly control in contemplating the energies around them. Four

words are used to denote the institutes or ordinances, the fixed norms or standards, the solemn laws, and the steadfast path, according to which the rivers flow, the dawn comes forth after the night, the sun traverses the sky, and even the storm winds begin to blow. Of these the last named, the *Rita* (with its Zend equivalent *Asha*), the ordered course along which all things move, presents the least abstract, the most mythical form. For here is that which exists before heaven and earth; they are born of it, or even in it, and its domain is the wide space. From it, likewise, the gods proceed, and the lofty pair, Mitra and Varuna, with Aditi and her train, are its protectors. But through the mystical identity of the order of nature and the order of sacrifice (p. 143), the cultus—whether on earth or in heaven—is also its sphere. Agni, the sacrificial fire, the dear house-priest, is Rita-born, and by its aid carries the offerings to heaven. Such, also, is the sacred drink, the Soma, which is borne in the Rita's car, and follows its ways. And the heavenly sacrificers, the Fathers in the radiant world above, have grown according to the Rita, for they know and faithfully obey the law. Thus it becomes the supreme expression of morality, and is practically equivalent with *satya*, true (literally, that which is), or good. Heaven and Earth are *satya*, veracious, they can be trusted; they are *ritāvan*, faithful to the Path, steadfast in the Order. Not less so is the

godly man; he, too, is *ritāvan* (Zend *ashavan*), the same word being used to denote divine holiness and human piety. And thus the life of gods and men, the order of nature, the ritual of worship, and daily duty, were all bound together in one principle.

Rita, however, did not establish itself as a permanent conception in Indian theology. Its place was taken by another idea, which still sways the thought and rules the lives of hundreds of millions of believers in India and the Far East, *Karma*, or the doctrine of the Deed. It is well known that this doctrine does not appear in the Vedic hymns. It is first discussed as a great mystery in the forest-sessions where teachers and students met together, where kings could still instruct Brahmans, and women might speak in debate. In the Brāhmana of a Hundred Paths it is summed up in a maxim which was first formulated in connection with ceremonial obligation, but came to have a much wider application: "A man is born into the world that he has made"; to which the Law-books added the warning: "The Deed does not perish."

Man is for ever making his own world. Each act, each word, even each thought, adds something to the spiritual fabric which he is perpetually producing. He cannot escape the results of his own conduct. The values for good or evil mount up from hour to hour, and their issues must be fulfilled. When this

conception was carried through the universe, the whole sphere of animated existence was placed under its sway. The life of any single person upon earth was only an incident in a chain of lives, stretching into the distant past as well as into the immeasurable future. His condition hereafter would be determined by what he had done before he entered the state that would match his deed. Then his condition here was also determined by what he had wrought in a previous lot. His personal qualities, his health and sickness, his caste and rank, his wealth or poverty, all precisely matched some elements in the moral product of his past. These were, of course, never all precisely of one kind. They were of mingled good and evil, and each of these would in course of time have its appropriate consequence of joy and pain. For every shade of guilt there was a fitting punishment, exactly adjusted in severity and duration, either in degradation and suffering upon earth, or in some one of numerous hells below. And similarly all good was sure of its reward, as happiness and prosperity awaited it here, or were allotted in still richer measure for their due periods in the heavens that rose tier above tier beyond the sky.

The doctrine of Transmigration has appeared in various forms, in very different cultures. But nowhere has it swayed whole civilisations as it has done in the East. It has expressed for innumerable multitudes the

essential bond of morals and religion. There were not wanting, indeed, teachers who criticised and rejected it when Gotama the Buddha passed to and fro five hundred years before our era. But while he repudiated the authority of the Vedas, the ceremonies of sacrifice, the claims of the Brahmans, and the immortality of the gods, he retained the doctrine of Karma at the very core of the system of ethical culture which he offered as the way out of the weary circle of re-birth. The whole meaning of the universe, its cosmic periods of dissolution and evolution, was still moral; and the scene of our existence came once more into being that the unexhausted potencies of countless products of the Deed from the lowest hell to the topmost heaven might realise their suspended energy. And when Buddhism became a religion through the interpretation of the person of its founder in terms of the Absolute and Eternal, this law of the phenomenal world of space and time remained beyond even his power to set aside or change.

The ethical element necessarily varies in richness of content and intensity of feeling in different religions. In the classifications which have been from time to time proposed, attention has often been fixed upon its presence as the marked characteristic of a group. Thus Prof. Tiele, of Leiden, proposed to treat the higher religions of Revelation under two heads: (1) religions embodying a sacred

law, and forming national communities, including Taoism, Confucianism, Brahmanism, Jainism, Mazdaism, Mosaism, Judaism, and (2) universalistic communions, Buddhism, Christianity, and to some extent Islâm. Another writer forms a class of Morality-Religions above the savage Nature-Religions, and reckons in it the religions of Mexico and Peru, the earliest Babylonian (often called Akkadian), Egyptian, Chinese, Hindu, Persian, German, Roman, Greek. All such classifications are exposed to many difficulties, but they at least bear witness to the significance of the place which is occupied by morality in modern estimates of the worth of great historic faiths. The aspects of any particular development are so manifold, that any attempt to establish a scale of rank at once lays itself open to criticism. Where, for example, is Greece in Prof. Tiele's scheme? It is thrown back into the group of "half-ethical anthropomorphic polytheisms." But in the hands of poets and philosophers, the really shaping powers of Hellenic culture, polytheism was left far behind, and on the third of the questions suggested above in considering the relations of morality and religion (p. 208)—their attitude to ritual obligation—Greek official teaching sometimes reached the loftiest heights.

For not only did philosophical and religious communities like the Pythagoreans enunciate such maxims as these: "Purity of soul is the

only divine service," or "God has no place on earth more akin to his nature than the pure soul,"[1] but the oracle of Delphi itself was supposed to have affirmed the worthlessness of ceremonial cleansing without corresponding holiness of heart. Dr. Farnell translates two utterances ascribed to the Pythia as follows: "O stranger, if holy of soul, enter the shrine of the holy God, having but touched the lustral water: lustration is an easy matter for the good; but all ocean with its streams cannot cleanse the evil man"; and again: "The temples of the gods are open to all good men, nor is there any need of purification; no stain can ever cleave to virtue. But depart, whosoever is baneful at heart; for thy soul will never be washed by the cleansing of the body." Over the sanctuary of Æsculapius at Epidaurus, where so many sufferers thronged for cure (p. 180), ran the inscription quoted by Porphyry—

> "Into an odorous temple he who goes
> Should pure and holy be; but to be wise
> In what makes holiness is to be pure."

The religion of Zarathustra, on the other hand, did not maintain its primitive elevation. The prophet's Gāthās (p. 191) summoned the believer to live in the fellowship of the Good Mind and in obedience to the Most Excellent Order (*Asha vahista*), and the later Avesta seems sometimes to repeat their high demand:

"Purity is for man, next to life, the greatest good; that purity that is procured by the law of Mazda to him who cleanses his own self with good thoughts, words, and deeds." It is the utterance of Ahura himself. But purity may be interpreted in very different ways: the lad who walks about over fifteen years of age without the sacred girdle and sacred shirt, has no forgiveness, for he has "power to destroy the world of the holy spirit"; while, on the other hand, to pull down the scaffold on which corpses had been deposited (the Persians employed neither burial nor cremation) was to destroy a centre of impure contagion, and secure pardon for all sins.

When Moses established the administration of justice at the sanctuary of Yahweh, he planted a powerful ethical influence in the heart of the religion of Israel. No reader of the Old Testament needs to be reminded of the prophetic rebukes of a monarch's crimes. Nathan and David, Elijah and Ahab, have become universal types. The history of Hebrew ethics shows how the conception of morality gradually passed from the regulation of external conduct into the inner sphere of thought; and the offender was no longer regarded merely as a member of a tribe or nation on which punishment might alight collectively; he stood in an immediate relation to his God. Primitive imagination could rest content with supposing that sin had first entered the world through the

subtlety of a talking snake. Later thought found such a solution inadequate to enlarged moral experience. In the figure of the Adversary or the Opposer, the Sâtân, first traceable in Israel's literature after the Captivity, Judaism admitted a moral dualism analogous to the opposition between Ahura Mazda and Añra Mainyu. The Sâtân had, indeed, no creative power, though hordes of demons were under his sway in the abyss, and were sent forth to do the desolating work of madness and disease. But he was the head of a realm of evil over against the sovereignty of God; and the intensity of the moral consciousness of sin was reflected in the mythologic form of his warfare against the hosts of heaven.

Along a quite different line of thought, which may possibly have been stimulated from the Greek side, the humanists of later Israel endeavoured to bring nature and social life under one common conception of divine Wisdom. The earlier prophecy had regarded the physical world as plastic in Yahweh's hands, so that its events—such as drought or flood, the locust and the blight, could be made the immediate instruments of Israel's discipline. A wider culture brought new ideas. There were statutes and ordinances for the cosmic powers just as there were for communities of man. The universe was the product of the divine thought, and the same agency was seen in the structure and organisa-

tion of human societies. The order of the visible scene was due to the presence and control of Wisdom, which from the first had sat as a kind of assessor by Yahweh's side. The moral order was no less her work; she gave the sanction to all authority and rule; "By me kings reign," cries the poet in her name, "and princes decree justice"; and the men of humble heart know that their piety, "the fear of the Lord," is her gift, and links them in joyous fellowship with the stars on high.

That Mosaism started with a vigorous moral conception of the divine demands, however limited might be its early scope, is generally recognised. The gradual settlement of the immigrant tribes in the land of Canaan, the appropriation of Canaanite sanctuaries, and the adoption of their festivals and ritual, brought new influences which threatened the ancient simplicity. The voices of Hebrew prophecy rang out at Jerusalem ere Greek thought had begun to move. It was a singular result in Israel's history that the great truths of the unity and spirituality and holiness of God, which prophecy had won out of impassioned experience, were confided for their preservation to a code of Priestly Law which raised the elements of ritual and sacerdotal caste to their highest significance in the nation's life. But the law which declared sacrifice to be legitimate only on one altar, made room for a new development of Israel's religion. If

the ancient faith was to be maintained by a race that spread from Babylon to Rome, it must adapt its worship to new conditions. There could be but one temple; but a meeting-house could be built anywhere; and the Synagogue thus became the birthplace of the congregations of the Christian Church.

# CHAPTER VIII

## PROBLEMS OF LIFE AND DESTINY

"IF a man die, shall he live again?" The question is as old as the Book of Job, but the affirmative answer is much older. The earliest human remains in Europe imply some provision for the dead, and it did not occur to the peoples of the lower culture all over the world to doubt the reality of some kind of continued existence. Did not the living still see them in their dreams (p. 86)?

But this life might be conceived in an infinite variety of forms. Where was it passed? under what conditions? what would be its privileges and its requirements? how long would it last? To these and a hundred other questions no uniform answers have been returned; and numerous as are the stories of visits to the other world, there is little agreement as to its place, its scenery, its occupations, its society, its government, its duties, its punishments, or its rewards. Yet no field of human imagination reflects more clearly the stage of social and moral development which creates it. Into his pictures of the future man has persistently woven his criti-

cism of the present. But the tenacity of usage and convention in everything affecting the dead has sometimes detained belief at a much lower level than the general progress of ethical feeling might otherwise have suggested. Religious thought does not always move forwards with equal speed over all the relations and possibilities of life.

The logic of the treatment of the dead is full of gaps and inconsistencies. The same people will perform rites which rest upon quite different theories; customs have run together in strange incoherence. This may be sometimes due to the necessity for making provision for different elements in the person which were united while on earth. The wealthy Egyptian required an elaborate home in the tomb for his double or *ka*, while his *ba* started on its perilous journey through the mysterious regions of the world of the dead. From the ethical point of view, however, which chiefly concerns the student of comparative religion, the doctrine of the next life falls into two main divisions, as Burton and Tylor pointed out more than a generation ago—theories of continuance, and theories of retribution. They are connected by many intermediate stages of transition, and they range all the way from the crudest conceptions of prolonged existence in the grave, up to exalted solemnities of judgment, of doom, and of the fellowship of heaven.

When a man dies, where will his spirit dwell?

Perhaps it will pass into some animal, a bear, a walrus, or a beautiful bird. Perhaps it will haunt his old home. In that case it were well that he should not die where he has lived; let him be carried into the open air as death approaches, or laid in the loneliness of the woods. The Eskimo of Greenland build a small snow hut, the entrance of which is closed as death approaches that the inmate may pass away alone. Dr. Franz Boas relates that a young girl once sent for him from such a lodging a few hours before her end, to ask for some tobacco and bread, that she might take them to her mother who had died only a few weeks before. Or the connection between the dead man and his former dwelling may be severed by burning down the hut and forsaking the locality, even though (as among the Sakais of the Malay peninsula) the coming crop of tapioca or sugar-cane should be lost by departure. Or strong measures may be taken with the corpse by thrashing it to hasten the ejection of the soul; the walls of the death-chamber may be beaten with sticks to drive it away; or a professional functionary may be invoked with his broom to sweep it out.

And when the body has been carried forth, precautions must be taken to prevent the spirit from finding its way back, and barriers erected against its return. Only occasionally, as in ancient Athens, was burial permitted in the house, where the venerated dead could still protect and bless those whom they loved.

The tomb was sometimes constructed to resemble the home and admit the members of the family together. Under the cliffs of Orvieto is an Etruscan city of the dead, where the stone houses (usually with two rooms) stand side by side in streets. The prehistoric gravemounds of Scandinavia have disclosed sepulchral burial chambers, entered by a gallery or passage, divided by large slabs of granite into alcoves or stalls, round which the dead were seated. Just so does the Eskimo of the present day arrange his dwelling. Those who had lived in caves and left their dead there, retained the usage long after they had learned to construct tents or build houses for themselves. The chief was carried to the hills, as the barrows on our own moors show, or to the mountain top, where his spirit blended perhaps with the spirit of the place and lent an additional awe to the heights; or to secure him from disturbance, as the Spanish observers noted in Columbia (S. America), a river was diverted from its course, his grave was made in its bed, and the waters, restored to their former channel, kept the secret safe.

The dream experience only provides the world of the dead with scenery and occupations resembling those of common life, with more rapidity of change and mysterious ease of transformation. But when tribes have migrated from one locality to another,—and in the vast reaches of prehistoric time such movements were incessant though slow

—the various forces of association in memory, dreaming, and tradition, would connect the dead with the places of the past. Sometimes the course of travel might have lain through mountain passes, or across a river, or from beyond the sea. A journey, or a voyage was thus suggested—Samoans said of a chief that he had "sailed"; to reach the abode of the dead might need days of travel; so shoes as well as food (p. 138) must be provided, and the fires, first kindled for the warmth of the dweller in the grave below, were continued to light him on his way. On solar analogies, such as may be found in both hemispheres, the homes of the departed were often assigned to the East or West.

The brotherhood of sleep and death has always been recognised, and we still call our graveyards "cemeteries," or sleeping-places. The ancient Israelite said of his dead that he "slept with his fathers." Earth burial suggested a locality beneath the ground, vast and gloomy like some huge cave. The Mesopotamian thought of it as a city, ringed with seven walls; and even the Hebrew who pictured the underworld, Sheôl, as a gigantic pit, sometimes imagined it to be approached through gates. There lay the nerveless feeble forms of the mighty ones of earth. The separate nations had their several stations allotted to them, where ghostly warriors lay dark and silent with their ghostly swords around the ghostly thrones of ghostly kings.

The entry of a new comer from Babylon awoke a ghostly wonder, and ghostly voices greeted him from the dead. It is a strange contrast with the pageantry of the skies, where various races, from the Australians to the Hindus and the Greeks have seen their forefathers looking down on them as stars. So inveterate is this belief that it was found necessary to obtain a certificate from the Astronomer Royal to refute the rumour that on the night on which Browning died a new star appeared in the constellation of Orion. The Milky Way could thus be interpreted as the path of Souls, and the Aurora Borealis resolved into the Dance of the Dead.

The transfer of souls through death from one kind of life to another does not necessarily involve any moral change. The relations of earth are resumed in the new scene. The ancients Celts who placed letters to their friends on the pyre of a dead relative, or even expected to receive in the next world the repayment of loans in this, conceived existence hereafter on the same plane as the present, like the modern Chinaman who celebrates the wedding of his spirit-son with the spirit-daughter of a suitable friend, and thus brings peace to a tormented house. The spirit-land of Ibo on the lower Niger had its rivers and forests, its hills, and towns, and roads, below the ground like those above, only more gloomy. In Tuonela, the land of the dead, Finnic imagination pictured rivers of black water,

with boisterous waterfalls and dangerous whirlpools, forests full of wild beasts, and fields of grain which provided the death-worm with his teeth; but it is still homely enough for Wäinamöinen to find the daughter of its ruler, Tuoni, god of death, busy with her washing. The dead of the Mordvinians, a group of Ural-Altaic origin in the heart of Russia, are believed to marry and beget children as on earth. Such conceptions naturally resulted in a continuity of occupation, rank, and service. The Spanish historian, Herrera, relates that in Mexico "every great man had a priest or chaplain to perform the ceremonies of his house, and when he died the chaplain was called to serve him in the same manner, and so were his master of the household, his cup-bearer, his dwarf, the deformed people he kept, and the brothers that had served him, for they looked upon it as a piece of grandeur to be served by them, and said they were going to keep house in the other world." Yet in Mexico, as will be seen immediately, the differentiation of the future lot had already begun.

The chief is usually sure of admission into high society in the next world. The Maori paradise was a paradise of the aristocracy; heroes and men of lofty lineage went to the skies. But common souls, in passing from one division to another of the New Zealand Hades, lost a little of their vitality each time, until at last they died outright. Polynesian fancy

sometimes mingled the seen and the unseen in strange juxtaposition. The Fijian route to the world beyond, Mbulu, lay through a real town with ordinary inhabitants. But it had also an invisible portion, where dwelt the family of Samuyalo who held inquest on departed spirits. If this trial was surmounted, a second judgment awaited them at the hands of Ndengei, by which they were assigned to one or other of the divisions of the underworld. A great chief who had destroyed many towns and slain many in war, passed to Mburotu, where amid pleasant glades the occupants lived in families and planted and fought. But bachelors, those who had killed no enemy, or would not have their ears bored, women who refused to be tatooed, and generally those who had not lived so as to please the gods, were doomed to various forms of penal suffering and degradation.

Courage and daring are of immense social importance, and are among the most important elements in primitive virtue. Strength, valour, skill in war and hunting, lift men into leadership, and the pre-eminence won here is retained hereafter. But these qualities are not limited to chiefs. The happy land of the Greenlanders, Torngarsuk, received the valiant workers, men who had taken many whales and seals, borne much hardship, and been drowned at sea, and women who had died in childbirth. A mild and unwarlike tribe in Guatemala might be persuaded that to die by any

other than a natural death was to forfeit all hope of life hereafter, the bodies of the slain being left to the vultures and wild beasts. On the other hand, the Nicaraguan Aztecs declared that the shades of those who died in their beds went downwards till they came to nought; while those who fell in battle for their country passed to the East, to the rising of the sun.

Such was the destiny, also, of the Mexican warriors, who daily climbed to the zenith by the sun's side with shouts of joy, and there resigned their charge to the celestial women, who had given their lives in childbed. Merchants, too, were in the procession, who had faced risk and peril and died upon their journeys. But this privilege lasted only four years, when they became birds of beautiful plumage in the celestial gardens. In the far East, in the abode of Tlaloc, god of waters, were those who had died by lightning or at sea, sufferers from various diseases, and children who had been sacrificed to the water-deities. These last, after a happy time, were born again; the rest passed in due course to the underworld of Mictlan in the far north, "a most obscure land, where light cometh not, and whence none can ever return." There the rich were still rich, and the slaves still slaves. But their term was short. Mictlan had nine divisions, and at the end of the fourth year the spirit reached the ninth and ceased to be.

This curious distribution has little moral significance, save for its recognition of valour, as in the Teutonic welcome of the warrior into Valhalla, or of social service, as in the case of those who give their lives for the community, the merchant like the Greenland whaler, or the mothers who did not survive their labour. But the beginnings of ethical discrimination sometimes present themselves in very much more simply organised communities. A rude social justice expresses itself in the belief of the Kaupuis of Assam that a murdered man shall have his murderer for his slave in the next life. The Chippeways predict that the souls of the wicked will be pursued by phantoms of the persons they have injured; and horses and dogs which have been ill-treated will torment their tormentors. Murder, theft, lying, adultery, draw down a singular chastisement in the Banks Islands. The spirits of the dead assemble on the road to Panoi, when each fresh comer is torn to pieces and put together again. Then the injured man has his chance. He seizes a part of the dismembered soul, so that it cannot be reconstructed, or at least suffers permanent mutilation. No judge presides over the process, no law regulates it; punishment is still a private affair. But the entry into the new life is not unconditional. The American Choctaws conceived their dead to journey to the east, till they reached the summit of a hill. There a long pine-trunk,

smooth and slippery, stretched over the river of death below to the next hill-top. The just passed over safely and entered paradise, the wicked fell off into the stream beneath. It was a self-acting test, which needed not the prior ordeal of the Avestan balance under Mithra and Rashnu at the Chinvat bridge (p. 9).

Sometimes a new religious motive is more or less plainly apparent. Even the rude Fijian award depended in some way on the satisfaction of the gods. The Tonga Islanders were more explicit; neglect of the gods and failure to present due offerings would involve penalties hereafter. The sun-worshipping people of Achalaque in Florida placed men of good life and pious service and charity to the poor in the sky as stars, while the wicked languished in misery among mountain precipices and wild beasts. Two centuries ago Bosman heard some of the negroes on the Guinea coast tell of a river in the heart of the land where they would be asked by the divine judge if they had duly kept the holy days, abstained from forbidden meats, and maintained their oaths inviolate, and those who could not answer rightly would be drowned. Such anticipations really introduce a fresh principle. Above the tribal morality, the custom of the clan, rises an obligation of no obvious and immediate usè; even ritual practice, the observance of special seasons, or of proper taboos, the offering of prescribed

sacrifice, may create new standards of order in conformity with a higher will. They supply the groundwork on which the prophet may build the temple of the ideal.

The ancient Semitic cultures formulated no general doctrine of immortality in the higher sense of the word. Faint traces of a hope of resurrection appear here and there in Babylonian texts; but there is no judgment beyond the grave; the chastisements of the gods arrive in this life; and it is only occasionally that the fellowship of heaven becomes the privilege of the great. In Israel the higher prophecy from Amos onward interprets "Yahweh's day" as a day of doom instead of victory; but the divine judgment would alight on the whole people, and would be realised in no future life but in some overwhelming national catastrophe. In Egypt the destiny of the dead was already individualised. Around it gathered the solemnities of the Osirian judgment-seat (p. 8); the ritual and the ethical demands of the forty-two assessors show the moral tests advancing through the ceremonial. The believer who passed safely through the ordeal of the balance and was duly fortified with the proper spells, was mystically identified with Osiris as the "justified," and different texts present different types of future bliss. He might find a home in the fields of Ialu, where numerous servants answered to his call, and he feasted on the magic corn. Or a fresh form might be

provided for him, when he was washed with pure water at the *meshken* or place of new birth. Mysterious transformations assimilated him with various gods; or he was admitted on to the sun-bark among the worshippers of Rê, and fed on his words. But the guilty souls were subjected to unspeakable torments; there were magistrates to measure the duration of those appointed for extinction, and at the allotted time they were destroyed.

Egypt, thought Herodotus, had been the teacher of immortality to Greece. The statement is at least interesting as a sign that in the traveller's view the Hellenic faith of his day possessed some analogies with the Egyptian. The ethical element in it, at any rate, was gaining more and more force. In Homer Hades, who is after all another form of Zeus in the underworld, is sovereign, but not judge, of the nether realm. The Erinnyes, who are originally ghosts of the dead, inflict their punishments mostly in the life of earth; only for broken oaths is penalty imposed below; and Tartarus, in the lowest deep, is reserved for the giant Titans who had challenged the majesty of heaven. In the stony asphodel meadow Achilles is but a shade among the rest; if Menelaus is admitted to the Elysian plain, it is no superior valour but aristocratic connection which wins him his place. Rare is the allusion to a judgment; the tribunal of Minos, son of

Zeus, may be the moralising addition of some later bard.

But in the fifth century fresh influences are at work. Pythagoras has founded his communities, half philosophical, half religious. The higher thought has become markedly monotheistic, and Orphism with its rude sacrament (p. 147) has helped to develop conceptions of fellowship with deity which made new hopes for the future possible. So Pindar, nearest of kin among Greek poets to the prophetio voices of Israel, emphasises the retributive government of God. Man may be nothing more than "a dream of a shadow," nevertheless he is not too insignificant to escape the dooms of heaven upon his guilt, and if there is requital for evil there are also happy islands for the blest. The ethical leaven is already powerfully at work. The language of Cebes and Simmias in Plato's dialogue of the *Phædo* shows, however, that the belief was by no means universal; and the beautiful sepulchral reliefs at Athens give no hint of that august tribunal of Minos, Rhadamanthus and Æacus, which Plato pictures as engaged in judging souls.

But the great mysteries of Eleusis certainly fostered the hope of immortality. The conviction grew stronger that the initiated would have a happier lot in the life to come, so that Diogenes sarcastically inquired whether an initiated robber would be better off than an uninitiated honest man. The inscriptions of

the last centuries before our era show nothing like the consensus of feeling in an Egyptian cemetery or a modern English graveyard. The soul is piously committed to the ether, or, if there be rewards in the realm below, is confided to Persephonê; or it is reverently placed among the stars, in the councils of the immortals, or in the home of the gods. Such were the popular conventions. Philosophical speculation gathered round the idea of transmigration, or pleaded for at least a continuance of consciousness till the great conflagration which should end the world; while Orphic religion held out the hope that the soul, entangled in this earthly scene, might after long discipline rise once more to its home with God.

The theories of continuance all assume that the world will go upon its usual way. Generation will follow generation in this life, but the lower culture does not ask what will happen in the next. It cannot take big time-surveys, like the Egyptian "millions of years" or the Hebrew "ages of ages." The future will be like the present, as the present has been like the past. Imagination can conceive a beginning, it does not at first advance to an end. But the development of astronomy in Babylonia, with the discovery of regular periodicities in Nature, seems to have suggested the idea of a great World-Year, an immense period beginning with creation, which would be brought to an end by some

great catastrophe such as flood or fire. The flood had already taken place. Traditions of it floated to India and Greece; they were incorporated in ancient Hebrew story. After another immense revolution of time would there be a similar close? There is some evidence that this was part of Babylonian teaching in the days of Berosus, in the middle of the third century B.C. (p. 39), but it has not yet been discovered in the ancient cuneiform texts. The next agency of dissolution would be heat. It was part of early Buddhist speculation, and lodged itself in Indian thought; and from the days of Pythagoras, in the sixth century B.C., it formed part of the Greek philosophical outlook in different schools towards the "last things." When the next periodic destruction took place, what would happen? According to one answer the restoration of all things would set in, and the entire cycle would be repeated over again. Eudemus, a pupil of Aristotle, is said to have observed in one of his lectures that if the Pythagoreans were to be trusted, his audience would have the privilege of hearing him again: "You will be sitting there in the same way, and I shall be telling you my story, holding my little stick, and everything else will go on the same."

This mechanical reproduction of a whole previous age down to its minutest details did not, however, really engage the higher Greek thought. That was chiefly occupied with the

abiding contrast between that which *is* and that which *appears*; how could the ultimate Unity present itself in such infinite diversity? what was the relation of the world of change and succession to the enduring substance that lay behind? In such questions man and his destiny had but a small share. Pindar might sing how "God accomplisheth all ends according to his wish; God who overtaketh the winged eagle and outstrippeth the dolphin of the sea, and layeth low many a mortal in his haughtiness, while to others he giveth glory unspeakable: if any man expect that in doing ought he shall be unseen of God, he erreth." The tragedians might wrestle with dark problems of crime and fate; and poetry and philosophy might agree in presenting the world as the scene of a divine thought, the manifestation of a divine energy. Regularities, fixities, invariable successions, pointed to a definite order, divinely maintained. But to what did it lead? What place was there in it for man? His future might be moralised; the unethical Hades of Homer might be replaced by the judgment-scenes of Plato; but no world-process is suggested for the elimination of evil or the fulfilment of any divine end. Plato might throw out the hint that Delphi should become the interpreter of religion to all mankind; the mysteries might be opened to slave as well as freeman, and might even admit those who were not of Hellenic race; but there were no prophet's

glimpses of a purpose leading to some all-embracing goal. Zeus orders all as he wills. Individuals are punished, but the misdeeds, like the sufferings or sorrows of man, are lost in the harmonious majesty of the Whole.

Indian thought, as has been already indicated, worked out a complete identification of life with the moral order by means of the doctrine of the Deed (p. 217). The scheme of transmigration took up the earlier ideas of the elder thinkers. The Vedic poets had told of the land of Yama, who was sometimes presented as the first man to die and enter the heavenly world. In one hymn he is associated with Varuna in the highest heaven, where the pious live from age to age, and are sometimes identified with the sun's rays or the stars. There kindred were gathered, and warriors and poets received their reward, and the devout realised the object of their prayers; and Yama sat under a tree of goodly leaves, drinking with the gods the life-giving soma-juice, father and master of the house, tending the heavenly sires. Deep below was the dark pit for those who would not sacrifice to Indra, or persecuted his worshippers. There were fiends of various kinds to torment the wicked, the untruthful, or the seducer. But there are no traces of any specific judgment, with definite awards of heaven and hell. In the later scheme of life founded on the conception of Karma such a tribunal might seem unnecessary: the product of the past works

out its own result. But as Buddhist folk-lore shows, popular theology required the pronouncement of a judge, and Yama took his place as Lord of hell and King of Righteousness.

By what channels the doctrine of successive world-ages entered Hindu religion cannot be definitely determined. Early Buddhist teaching assumes it as familiar, though it is not included in the prior Brahmanical literature; and minutely describes the great conflagration which will consume the universe through the heat engendered by the appearance of seven suns. Karma, however, could not be destroyed. No fire could burn it, nor could the other agencies of dissolution, like water or wind, drown or disperse it. It must proceed unerringly to its results. These might be for a time suspended, they could not be frustrated for ever. Their energies lay latent, waiting their opportunity. So a new world would arise to provide the means and the field for their operation, and from age to age, through seasons of dissolution and restoration, with intervals of incalculable time, the endless process would fulfil its round. This would be no literal repetition. The history of a new world-age would be quite fresh, for the potencies of Karma were of infinite variety, and were for ever being re-shaped, cancelled, or extended by the action of the new personalities—divine, human, demonic—(reincarnation might also take place in animal or plant)

—in which they were embodied. But the immense series led to nothing. Buddhist imagination filled the universe with worlds, each with its own systems of heaven and hell, and projected æons upon æons into immeasurable time, but the sequence pointed to no goal, for what could arrest the inexorable succession? Was there any escape from its law?

To that question different answers were returned by different teachers. The forest-sages had already pleaded for the recognition of the identity of the self within the heart with the Universal Self (p. 60). There was the path by which the phenomenal scene could be transcended, and the soul brought into its true fellowship with the Infinite Being, Intelligence, and Joy. But inasmuch as this deliverance was only realised by a few, and could not be self-wrought, it must be the result of a divine election; they only could attain it whom the Self chose as his own. With its repudiation of all ontological ideas of soul, or substance, or universal Self, early Buddhism threw the whole task of achieving emancipation on the individual, who must himself win the higher insight and discipline his character with no aid but that of the Teacher and his example. The passion for the salvation of the world might generate an unexampled missionary activity, transcending all bounds of caste and race. It might express itself in singularly compre-

hensive vows such as these, which were carried from China to Japan in the seventh century A.D., and are still part of Buddhist devotion: "There are beings without limit, let me take the vow to take them all unto the further shore: there are depravities without number, let me take the vow to extinguish them all: there are truths without end, let me take the vow to know them all: there is the way of Buddha without comparison, let me make the vow to accomplish it." But only the wisdom of Amida, All-Merciful and All-Potent (p. 17), could avail to harmonise the issues of Karma with the operations of grace, and carry the world-process to the goal of universal salvation.

The theologians and philosophers of India might devise various methods for the believer's escape from the round of re-births; but on the ecclesiastical side they never surmounted the practical limitation of nationality, or sought to address themselves to the world at large; while the mystics who more easily passed the bounds of race usually lacked the aggressive energy which demanded the conquest and suppression of evil and the assurance of the victory of good. It was reserved for the Persian thinkers, led by Zarathustra, to work out a scheme for the ultimate overthrow of the power of "the Lie" (p. 211). Egyptian theology had impersonated the forces of evil in Set. There were the constant oppositions of darkness

and light, of sickness and health, of the desert against fertility, of drought against the Nile, of foreign lands against Egypt. Mythically, the antagonism between Set and his brother Osiris was continued by Isis' son Horus. It was renewed again and again, and Set was for ever defeated, yet always returned afresh to the strife. But no demand was raised for his elimination. Osiris had passed into the land of Amenti, where Set could trouble him no more. And apparently the later identification of the deceased with Osiris meant that for him, too, the powers of death and evil were overcome. But this did not affect Set's activity in the existing scene, where the strife continued over the survivors day by day. The insight of the Iranian prophet could not admit this division of spheres, and demanded not only new heavens, but also a new earth, where evil should have no more power, and the Righteous Order, the Good Mind, the Bounteous Spirit, and the rest of the Immortals, should be the unchallenged ministers of Ahura's rule.

The history of the world, accordingly, was ultimately arranged in four periods of three thousand years each. The life of Zarathustra closed the third. At the end of the fourth the great era of the *Frasho-kereti*, the entry into a new age and a new scene, would arrive. It would be preceded at the close of each millennial series by the advent of a deliverer, wondrously born of Zarathustra's seed. During

the third of these, the last of the whole twelve, the ancient serpent would be loosed to ravage Ahura Mazda's good creation. But the *Saoshyant* or "Saviour," the greatest of the three successors of the prophet, would bring about the general resurrection. From the Home of Song and from the hells of evil thought and word and deed the spirits of the dead would resume their bodies. Families would be reunited in preparation for the last purifying pain. For a mighty conflagration would take place; the mountains would be dissolved with fervent heat, and the whole multitude of the human race would be overflowed by the molten metal for three days. The righteous would pass through it like a bath of milk; the evil would be purged of the last impulses to sin. Saoshyant and his helpers would dispense the drink of immortality, and the final conflict with the powers of evil would begin. Añra Mainyu, the great Serpent, with all their satellites and the multitude of the demonic hosts, should be finally driven into hell and consumed in the cleansing flame; and hell itself should be "brought back for the enlargement of the world."

The Iranian Apocalypse is not the only presentation of conflict and victory in the widespread Indo-Germanic group. The Old Teutonic religion produced its Volospá, the seer's high song of creation and the overthrow of evil. Here is in brief the story of the

great world-drama, the degeneracy of man, the conflicts of the gods. The universe slowly surges to its end; there are portents in the sky, disorders on the earth, till the whole frame of things dissolves and all goes up in flame. But a new vision dawns: "I behold earth rise again with its evergreen forests out of the deep; the fields shall yield unsown; all evil shall be amended; Balder shall come back. I see a hall, brighter than the sun, shingled with gold, standing on Gem-lea. The righteous shall dwell therein and live in bliss for ever. The Powerful One comes to hold high judgment, the Mighty One from above who rules over all, and the dark dragon who flies over the earth with corpses on his wings is driven from the scene and slinks away." There are possibly Christian touches here and there, but the substantial independence of the poet seems assured.

Above the theories of world-continuance and world-cycles must be ranked those of a world-goal, which imply more or less clearly the conception of a world-purpose. The supreme expression of this in religious literature is found in the Christian Bible. The prophecy of Zarathustra belonged to the same high ethical order as that of Israel. How much the Apocalyptic hopes of the later Judaism were stimulated by contact with Persian thought cannot be precisely defined: the estimates of careful scholars differ. But there is no doubt whatever of the dependence

of Christianity upon Jewish Messianic expectation. The title of its founder, Christ, is the Greek equivalent of the Jewish term Messiah, or "Anointed." Its pictures of human destiny, of resurrection, of judgment, of one world where the righteous shine like the sun, and another full of fire that is not quenched, are pictures drawn by Jewish hands. Its promises of the Advent of the Son of Man in clouds of glory from the sky, who shall summon the nations to his great assize, are couched in the language of earlier Jewish books. For one religion builds upon another, and must use the speech of its country and its time. Its forms must, therefore, necessarily change from age to age, as the advance of knowledge and the widening of experience suggest new problems and call for fresh solutions. But it will always embody man's highest thought concerning the mysteries that surround him, and will express his finest attitude to life. Its beliefs may be gradually modified; its specific institutions may lose their power; but history shows it to be among the most permanent of social forces, and the most effective agent for the slow elevation of the race.

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