THE FAILURE OF NERVE

them against earthquake and famine, but he who in some sense saves their souls. He reveals to them the Gnostis Theou, the Knowledge of God. The 'knowledge' in question is not a mere intellectual knowledge. It is a complete union, a merging of beings. And, as we have always to keep reminding our cold modern intelligence, he who has 'known' God is himself thereby deified. He is the Image of God, the Son of God, in a sense he is God.¹ The stratum of ideas described in the first of the studies will explain the ease with which transition took place. The worshipper of Bacchos became Bacchos simply enough, because in reality the God Bacchos was originally only the projection of the human Bacchoi. And in the Hellenistic age the notion of these secondary mediating gods was made easier by the analogy of the human interpreters. Of course, we have abundant instances of actual preachers and miracle-workers who on their own authority posed, and were accepted, as gods. The adventure of Paul and Barnabas at Lystra ² shows how easily such things could happen. But as a rule, I suspect, the most zealous priest or preacher preferred to have his God in the background. He preaches, he heals the sick and casts out devils, not in his own name but in the name of One who sent him. This actual present priest who initiates you or me is himself already an Image of God; but above him there are greater and

¹ Cf. Plotin. Enn. 1. ii. 6 ἀλλ' ἡ σοφία ὁὐκ ἔχει ἀμαρτίας εἶναι, ἀλλὰ θεὸν εἶναι.
² Acts xiv. 12. They called Barnabas Zeus and Paul Hermes, because he was ὁ ἤγουμενος τοῦ λόγου.—Paul also writes to the Galatians (iv. 14): 'Ye received me as a messenger of God, as Jesus Christ.'
wiser priests, above them others, and above all there is the one eternal Divine Mediator, who being in perfection both man and God can alone fully reveal God to man, and lead man’s soul up the heavenly path, beyond Change and Fate and the Houses of the Seven Rulers, to its ultimate peace. I have seen somewhere a Gnostic or early Christian emblem which indicates this doctrine. Some Shepherd or Saviour stands, his feet on the earth, his head towering above the planets, lifting his follower in his outstretched arms.

The Gnostics are still commonly thought of as a body of Christian heretics. In reality there were Gnostic sects scattered over the Hellenistic world before Christianity as well as after. They must have been established in Antioch and probably in Tarsus well before the days of Paul or Apollos. Their Saviour, like the Jewish Messiah, was established in men’s minds before the Saviour of the Christians. ‘If we look close’, says Professor Bousset, ‘the result emerges with great clearness, that the figure of the Redeemer as such did not wait for Christianity to force its way into the religion of Gnōsis, but was already present there under various forms.’¹ He occurs notably in two pre-Christian documents, discovered by the keen analysis and profound learning of Dr. Reitzenstein: the Poimandres revelation printed in the Corpus Hermeticum, and the sermon of the Naassenes in Hippolytus, Refutatio omnium haeresium, which is combined with Attis-worship.² The violent anti-Jewish bias of most of the sects—

¹ Bousset, p. 238.
² Hippolytus, 134, 90 ff., text in Reitzenstein’s Poimandres, pp. 83–98.
they speak of 'the accursed God of the Jews' and identify him with Saturn and the Devil—points on the whole to pre-Christian conditions; and a completely non-Christian standpoint is still visible in the Mandaean and Manichean systems.

Their Redeemer is descended by a fairly clear genealogy from the 'Tritos Sôtêr' of early Greece, contaminated with similar figures, like Attis and Adonis from Asia Minor, Osiris from Egypt, and the special Jewish conception of the Messiah of the Chosen people. He has various names, which the name of Jesus or 'Christos', 'the Anointed', tends gradually to supersede. Above all he is, in some sense, Man, or 'the Second Man' or 'the Son of Man'. The origin of this phrase needs a word of explanation. Since the ultimate unseen God, spirit though He is, made Man in His image, since holy men (and divine kings) are images of God, it follows that He is Himself Man. He is the real, the ultimate, the perfect and eternal Man, of whom all bodily men are feeble copies. He is also the Father; the Saviour is his Son, 'the Image of the Father', 'the Second Man', 'the Son of Man'. The method in which he performs his mystery of Redemption varies. It is haunted by the memory of the old Suffering and Dying God, of whom we spoke in the first of these studies. It is vividly affected by the ideal 'Righteous Man' of Plato, who 'shall be scourged, tortured, bound, his eyes burnt out, and at last, after suffering every evil, shall be impaled or crucified'.

1 Republic, 362 a. 'Αναξιωδολεύω is said to = ἀνασκολοπίζω, which is used both for 'impale' and 'crucify'. The two were alternative forms of the most slavish and cruel capital punishment, impalement being mainly Persian, crucifixion Roman.
the main he descends, of his free will or by the eternal purpose of the Father, from Heaven through the spheres of all the Archontes or Kosmokratores, the planets, to save mankind, or sometimes to save the fallen Virgin, the Soul, Wisdom, or 'the Pearl'.¹ The Archontes let him pass because he is disguised; they do not know him (cf. 1 Cor. ii. 7 ff.). When his work is done he ascends to Heaven to sit by the side of the Father in glory; he conquers the Archontes, leads them captive in his triumph, strips them of their armour (Col. ii. 15; cf. the previous verse), sometimes even crucifies them for ever in their places in the sky.² The epistles to the Colossians and the Ephesians are much influenced by these doctrines. Paul himself constantly uses the language of them, but in the main we find him discouraging the excesses of superstition, reforming, ignoring, rejecting. His Jewish blood was perhaps enough to keep him to strict monotheism. Though he admits Angels and Archontes, Principalities and Powers, he scorns the Elements and he seems deliberately to reverse the doctrine of the first and second Man.³ He says nothing about the Trinity of Divine Beings that was usual in Gnosticism, nothing about the Divine Mother. His mind, for all its vehement mysticism, has something of that clean antiseptic quality that makes such early Christian works as the Octavius of Minucius Felix and the Epistle to Diognetus so infinitely refreshing. He is certainly one of the great figures in Greek literature, but his system lies

¹ See The Hymn of the Soul, attributed to the Gnostic Bardesanes, edited by A. A. Bevan, Cambridge, 1897.
² Bousset cites Acta Archelai 8, and Epiphanius, Haeres. 66, 32.
³ Gal. iv. 9; 1 Cor. xv. 21 f., 47; Rom. v. 12-18.
outside the subject of this essay. We are concerned only with those last manifestations of Hellenistic religion which probably formed the background of his philosophy. It is a strange experience, and it shows what queer stuff we humans are made of, to study these obscure congregations, drawn from the proletariat of the Levant, superstitious, charlatan-ridden, and helplessly ignorant, who still believed in Gods begetting children of mortal mothers, who took the ‘Word’, the ‘Spirit’, and the ‘Divine Wisdom’, to be persons called by those names, and turned the Immortality of the Soul into ‘the standing up of the corpses’;¹ and to reflect that it was these who held the main road of advance towards the greatest religion of the western world.

I have tried to sketch in outline the main forms of belief to which Hellenistic philosophy moved or drifted. Let me dwell for a few pages more upon the characteristic method by which it reached them. It may be summed up in one word, Allegory. All Hellenistic philosophy from the first Stoics onward is permeated by allegory. It is applied to Homer, to the religious traditions, to the ancient rituals, to the whole world. To Sallustius after the end of our period the whole material world is only a great myth, a thing whose value lies not in itself but in the spiritual meaning which it hides and reveals. To Cleanthes at the beginning of it the Universe was a mystic pageant, in which the immortal stars were the dancers and the Sun the priestly torch-bearer.²

Chrysippus reduced the Homeric gods to physical or ethical principles; and Crates, the great critic, applied allegory in detail to his interpretation of the all-wise poet.\(^1\) We possess two small but complete treatises which illustrate well the results of this tendency, Cornutus περὶ θεῶν and the Homeric Allegories of Heraclitus, a brilliant little work of the first century B.C. I will not dwell upon details: they are abundantly accessible and individually often ridiculous. A by-product of the same activity is the mystic treatment of language: a certain Titan in Hesiod is named Koios. Why? Because the Titans are the elements and one of them is naturally the element of Κοιντής, the Ionic Greek for 'Quality'. The Egyptian Isis is derived from the root of the Greek εἰδέναι, Knowledge, and the Egyptian Osiris from the Greek ὅνως and λός ('holy' and sacred', or perhaps more exactly 'lawful' and 'tabu'). Is this totally absurd? I think not. If all human language is, as most of these thinkers believed, a divine institution, a cup filled to the brim with divine meaning, so that by reflecting deeply upon a word a pious philosopher can reach the secret that it holds, then there is no difficulty whatever in supposing that the special secret held by an Egyptian word may be found in Greek, or the secret of a Greek word in Babylonian. Language is One. The Gods who made all these languages equally could use them all, and wind them all intricately in and out, for the building up of their divine enigma.

We must make a certain effort of imagination to understand this method of allegory. It is not the

\(^1\) See especially the interpretation of Nestor's Cup, Athenaeus, pp. 489 c. ff.
frigid thing that it seems to us. In the first place, we should remember that, as applied to the ancient literature and religious ritual, allegory was at least a vera causa—it was a phenomenon which actually existed. Heraclitus of Ephesus is an obvious instance. He deliberately expressed himself in language which should not be understood of the vulgar, and which bore a hidden meaning to his disciples. Pythagoras did the same. The prophets and religious writers must have done so to an even greater extent. And we know enough of the history of ritual to be sure that a great deal of it is definitely allegorical. The Hellenistic Age did not wantonly invent the theory of allegory.

And secondly, we must remember what states of mind tend especially to produce this kind of belief. They are not contemptible states of mind. It needs only a strong idealism with which the facts of experience clash, and allegory follows almost of necessity. The facts cannot be accepted as they are. They must needs be explained as meaning something different.

Take an earnest Stoic or Platonist, a man of fervid mind, who is possessed by the ideals of his philosophy and at the same time feels his heart thrilled by the beauty of the old poetry. What is he to do? On one side he can find Zoilus, or Plato himself, or the Cynic preachers, condemning Homer and the poets without remorse, as teachers of foolishness. He can treat poetry as the English Puritans treated the stage. But is that a satisfactory solution? Remember that these generations were trained habitually to give great weight to the voice of their inner con-

---

1 I may refer to the learned and interesting remarks on the Esoteric Style in Prof. Margoliouth’s edition of Aristotle’s Poetics. It is not, of course, the same as Allegory.
sciouness, and the inner consciousness of a sensitive man cries out that any such solution is false: that Homer is not a liar, but noble and great, as our fathers have always taught us. On the other side comes Heraclitus the allegorist. 'If Homer used no allegories he committed all impieties.' On this theory the words can be allowed to possess all their old beauty and magic, but an inner meaning is added quite different from that which they bear on the surface. It may, very likely, be a duller and less poetic meaning; but I am not sure that the verses will not gain by the mere process of brooding study fully as much as they lose by the ultimate badness of the interpretation. Anyhow, that was the road followed. The men of whom I speak were not likely to give up any experience that seemed to make the world more godlike or to feed their spiritual and emotional cravings. They left that to the barefooted cynics. They craved poetry and they craved philosophy; if the two spoke like enemies, their words must needs be explained away by one who loved both.

The same process was applied to the world itself. Something like it is habitually applied by the religious idealists of all ages. A fundamental doctrine of Stoicism and most of the idealist creeds was the perfection and utter blessedness of the world, and the absolute fulfilment of the purpose of God. Now obviously this belief was not based on experience. The poor world, to do it justice amid all its misdoings, has never lent itself to any such barefaced deception as that. No doubt it shrieked against the doctrine then, as loud as it has always shrieked, so that even a Posidonian or a Pythagorean, his ears straining for the music of the spheres, was some-
times forced to listen. And what was his answer? It is repeated in all the literature of these sects. 'Our human experience is so small: the things of the earth may be bad and more than bad, but, ah! if you only went beyond the Moon! That is where the true Kosmos begins.' And, of course, if we did ever go there, we all know they would say it began beyond the Sun. Idealism of a certain type will have its way; if hard life produces an ounce or a pound or a million tons of fact in the scale against it, it merely dreams of infinite millions in its own scale, and the enemy is outweighed and smothered. I do not wish to mock at these Posidonian Stoics and Hermetics and Gnostics and Neo-Pythagoreans. They loved goodness, and their faith is strong and even terrible. One feels rather inclined to bow down before their altars and cry: *Magna est Delusio et praevalebit.*

Yet on the whole one rises from these books with the impression that all this allegory and mysticism is bad for men. It may make the emotions sensitive, it certainly weakens the understanding. And, of course, in this paper I have left out of account many of the grosser forms of superstition. In any consideration of the balance, they should not be forgotten.

If a reader of Proclus and the *Corpus Hermeticum* wants relief, he will find it, perhaps, best in the writings of a gentle old Epicurean who lived at Oenanda in Cappadocia about A. D. 200. His name was Diogenes.\(^1\) His works are preserved, in a fragmentary state, not on papyrus or parchment, but on the wall of a large portico where he engraved them for passers-by to read. He lived in a world of super-

\(^1\) Published in the Teubner series by William, 1907.
stitution and foolish terror, and he wrote up the great doctrines of Epicurus for the saving of mankind.

'Being brought by age to the sunset of my life, and expecting at any moment to take my departure from the world with a glad song for the fullness of my happiness, I have resolved, lest I be taken too soon, to give help to those of good temperament. If one person or two or three or four, or any small number you choose, were in distress, and I were summoned out to help one after another, I would do all in my power to give the best counsel to each. But now, as I have said, the most of men lie sick, as it were of a pestilence, in their false beliefs about the world, and the tale of them increases; for by imitation they take the disease from one another, like sheep. And further it is only just to bring help to those who shall come after us—for they too are ours, though they be yet unborn; and love for man commands us also to help strangers who may pass by. Since therefore the good message of the Book has gone forth to many, I have resolved to make use of this wall and to set forth in public the medicine of the healing of mankind.'

The people of his time and neighbourhood seem to have fancied that the old man must have some bad motive. They understood mysteries and redemptions and revelations. They understood magic and curses. But they were puzzled, apparently, by this simple message, which only told them to use their reason, their courage, and their sympathy, and not to be afraid of death or of angry gods. The doctrine was condensed into four sentences of a concentrated eloquence that make a translator despair: ¹ 'Nothing

¹ Ἀφοβον ὁ θεὸς. Ἀναίσθητον ὁ θάνατος.
Τὸ ἄγαθον εὔκτητον. Τὸ δὲινὸν εὐεκκαρτέρητον.

I regret to say that I cannot track this Epicurean 'tetractys' to its source.
to fear in God: Nothing to feel in Death: Good can be attained: Evil can be endured.'

Of course, the doctrines of this good old man do not represent the whole truth. To be guided by one's aversions is always a sign of weakness or defeat; and it is as much a failure of nerve to reject blindly for fear of being a fool, as to believe blindly for fear of missing some emotional stimulus.

There is no royal road in these matters. I confess it seems strange to me as I write here, to reflect that at this moment many of my friends and most of my fellow creatures are, as far as one can judge, quite confident that they possess supernatural knowledge. As a rule, each individual belongs to somebody which has received in writing the results of a divine revelation. I cannot share in any such feeling. The Uncharted surrounds us on every side and we must needs have some relation towards it, a relation which will depend on the general discipline of a man's mind and the bias of his whole character. As far as knowledge and conscious reason will go, we should follow resolutely their austere guidance. When they cease, as cease they must, we must use as best we can those fainter powers of apprehension and surmise and sensitiveness by which, after all, most high truth has been reached as well as most high art and poetry: careful always really to seek for truth and not for our own emotional satisfaction, careful not to neglect the real needs of men and women through basing our life on dreams; and remembering above all to walk gently in a world where the lights are dim and the very stars wander.
Bibliographical Note

It is not my purpose to make anything like a systematic bibliography, but a few recommendations may be useful to some students who approach this subject, as I have done, from the side of classical Greek.


For Jewish thought before the Christian era Dr. Charles’s *Testaments of the Twelve Patriarchs*; also the same writer’s *Book of Enoch*, and the *Religionsgeschichtliche Erklärung des Neuen Testaments* by Carl Clemem, Giessen, 1909.

Of Christian writers apart from the New Testament those that come most into account are Hippolytus († A. D. 250), *Refutatio Omnim Nova* Epiphanius (367–403), *Panarion*, and Irenaeus († A. D. 202), *Contra Haereses*, i, ii. For a simple introduction to the problems presented by the New Testament literature I would venture to recommend Prof. Bacon’s *New Testament*, in the Home University Library, and Dr. Estlin Carpenter’s *First Three Gospels*. In such a vast literature I dare not make any further recommendations, but for a general introduction to the History of Religions with a good and brief bibliography I would refer the reader to Salomon Reinach’s *Orpheus* (Paris, 1909; English translation the same year), a book of wide learning and vigorous thought.
V

THE LAST PROTEST

In the last essay we have followed Greek popular religion to the very threshold of Christianity, till we found not only a soil ready for the seed of Christian metaphysic, but a large number of the plants already in full and exuberant growth. A complete history of Greek religion ought, without doubt, to include at least the rise of Christianity and the growth of the Orthodox Church, but, of course, the present series of studies does not aim at completeness. We will take the Christian theology for granted as we took the classical Greek philosophy, and will finish with a brief glance at the Pagan reaction of the fourth century, when the old religion, already full of allegory, mysticism, asceticism, and Oriental influences, raised itself for a last indignant stand against the all-prevailing deniers of the gods.

This period, however, admits a rather simpler treatment than the others. It so happens that for the last period of paganism we actually possess an authoritative statement of doctrine, something between a creed and a catechism. It seems to me a document so singularly important and, as far as I can make out, so little known, that I shall venture to print it entire.

A creed or catechism is, of course, not at all the same thing as the real religion of those who subscribe
to it. The rules of metre are not the same thing as poetry; the rules of cricket, if the analogy may be excused, are not the same thing as good play. Nay, more. A man states in his creed only the articles which he thinks it right to assert positively against those who think otherwise. His deepest and most practical beliefs are those on which he acts without question, which have never occurred to him as being open to doubt. If you take on the one hand a number of persons who have accepted the same creed but lived in markedly different ages and societies, with markedly different standards of thought and conduct, and on the other an equal number who profess different creeds but live in the same general environment, I think there will probably be more real identity of religion in the latter group. Take three orthodox Christians, enlightened according to the standards of their time, in the fourth, the sixteenth, and the twentieth centuries respectively, I think you will find more profound differences of religion between them than between a Methodist, a Catholic, a Freethinker, and even perhaps a well-educated Buddhist or Brahmin at the present day, provided you take the most generally enlightened representatives of each class. Still, when a student is trying to understand the inner religion of the ancients, he realizes how immensely valuable a creed or even a regular liturgy would be.

Literature enables us sometimes to approach pretty close, in various ways, to the minds of certain of the great men of antiquity, and understand how they thought and felt about a good many subjects. At times one of these subjects is the accepted religion of
their society; we can see how they criticized it or rejected it. But it is very hard to know from their reactions against it what that accepted religion really was. Who, for instance, knows Herodotus’s religion? He talks in his penetrating and garrulous way, ‘sometimes for children and sometimes for philosophers,’ as Gibbon puts it, about everything in the world; but at the end of his book you find that he has not opened his heart on this subject. No doubt his profession as a reciter and story-teller prevented him. We can see that Thucydides was sceptical; but can we fully see what his scepticism was directed against, or where, for instance, Nikias would have disagreed with him, and where he and Nikias both agreed against us?

We have, of course, the systems of the great philosophers—especially of Plato and Aristotle. Better than either, perhaps, we can make out the religion of M. Aurelius. Amid all the harshness and plainness of his literary style, Marcus possessed a gift which has been granted to few, the power of writing down what was in his heart just as it was, not obscured by any consciousness of the presence of witnesses or any striving after effect. He does not seem to have tried deliberately to reveal himself, yet he has revealed himself in that short personal note-book almost as much as the great inspired egotists, Rousseau and St. Augustine. True, there are some passages in the book which are unintelligible to us; that is natural in a work which was not meant to be read by the public; broken flames of the white passion that consumed him bursting through the armour of his habitual accuracy and self-restraint.
People fail to understand Marcus, not because of his lack of self-expression, but because it is hard for most men to breathe at that intense height of spiritual life, or, at least, to breathe soberly. They can do it if they are allowed to abandon themselves to floods of emotion, and to lose self-judgement and self-control. I am often rather surprised at good critics speaking of Marcus as ‘cold’. There is as much intensity of feeling in Τὰ ἐκ ἐκπτον as in most of the nobler modern books of religion, only there is a sterner power controlling it. The feeling never amounts to complete self-abandonment. ‘The Guiding Power’ never trembles upon its throne, and the emotion is severely purged of earthly dross. That being so, we children of earth respond to it less readily.

Still, whether or no we can share Marcus’s religion, we can at any rate understand most of it. But even then we reach only the personal religion of a very extraordinary man; we are not much nearer to the religion of the average educated person—the background against which Marcus, like Plato, ought to stand out. I believe that our conceptions of it are really very vague and various. Our great-grandfathers who read ‘Tully’s Offices and Ends’ were better informed than we. But there are many large and apparently simple questions about which, even after reading Cicero’s philosophical translations, scholars probably feel quite uncertain. Were the morals of Epictetus or the morals of Part V of the Anthology most near to those of real life among respectable persons? Are there not subjects on which Plato himself sometimes makes our flesh creep? What are we to feel about slavery, about the exposing
THE LAST PROTEST

of children? True, slavery was not peculiar to antiquity; it flourished in a civilized and peculiarly humane people of English blood till a generation ago. And the history of infanticide among the finest modern nations is such as to make one reluctant to throw stones, and even doubtful in which direction to throw them. Still, these great facts and others like them have to be understood, and are rather hard to understand, in their bearing on the religious life of the ancients.

Points of minor morals again are apt to surprise a reader of ancient literature. We must remember, of course, that they always do surprise one, in every age of history, as soon as its manners are studied in detail. One need not go beyond Salimbene’s Chronicle, one need hardly go beyond Macaulay’s History, or any of the famous French memoirs, to realize that. Was it really an ordinary thing in the first century, as Philo seems to say, for gentlemen at dinner-parties to black one another’s eyes or bite one another’s ears off? Or were such practices confined to some Smart Set? Or was Philo, for his own purposes, using some particular scandalous occurrence as if it was typical?

St. Augustine mentions among the virtues of his mother her unusual meekness and tact. Although her husband had a fiery temper, she never had bruises on her face, which made her a rara avis among the matrons of her circle. Her circle, presumably, included Christians as well as Pagans and Manicheans. And Philo’s circle can scarcely be considered Pagan. Indeed, as for the difference of

1 *De Vit. Contempl.*, p. 477 M.  
2 *Conf.* ix. 9.
religion, we should bear in mind that, just at the time we are about to consider, the middle of the fourth century, the conduct of the Christians, either to the rest of the world or to one another, was very far from evangelical. Ammianus says that no savage beasts could equal its cruelty; Ammianus was a pagan; but St. Gregory himself says it was like Hell.¹

I have expressed elsewhere my own general answer to this puzzle.² Not only in early Greek times, but throughout the whole of antiquity the possibility of all sorts of absurd and atrocious things lay much nearer, the protective forces of society were much weaker, the strain on personal character, the need for real ‘wisdom and virtue’, was much greater than it is at the present day. That is one of the causes that make antiquity so interesting. Of course, different periods of antiquity varied greatly, both in the conventional standard demanded and in the spiritual force which answered or surpassed the demand. But, in general, the strong governments and orderly societies of modern Europe have made it infinitely easier for men of no particular virtue to live a decent life, infinitely easier also for men of no particular reasoning power or scientific knowledge to have a more or less scientific or sane view of the world.

That, however, does not carry us far towards solving the main problem: it brings us no nearer to knowledge of anything that we may call typically a religious creed or an authorized code of morals, in any age from Hesiod to M. Aurelius.

¹ Gibbon, chap. xxi, notes 161, 162.
² Rise of the Greek Epic, chap. i.
THE LAST PROTEST

The book which I have ventured to call a Creed or Catechism is the work of Sallustius About the Gods and the World, a book, I should say, about the length of the Scottish Shorter Catechism. It is printed in the third volume of Mullach's Fragmenta Philosophorum; apart from that, the only edition generally accessible—and that is rare—is a duodecimo published by Allatius in 1539. Orelli's brochure of 1821 seems to be unprocurable.

The author was in all probability that Sallustius who is known to us as a close friend of Julian before his accession, and a backer or inspirer of the emperor’s efforts to restore the old religion. He was concerned in an educational edition of Sophocles—the seven selected plays now extant with a commentary. He was given the rank of prefect in 362, that of consul in 363. One must remember, of course, that in that rigorous and ascetic court high rank connoted no pomp or luxury. Julian had dismissed the thousand hairdressers, the innumerable cooks and eunuchs of his Christian predecessor. It probably brought with it only an increased obligation to live on pulse and to do without such pamperings of the body as fine clothes or warmth or washing.

Julian's fourth oration, a prose hymn To King Sun, πρὸς Ὡλιον βασιλέα, is dedicated to Sallustius; his eighth is a 'Consolation to Himself upon the Departure of Sallustius'. (He had been with Julian in the wars in Gaul, and was recalled by the jealousy of the emperor Constantius.) It is a touching and even a noble treatise. The nervous self-distrust which was habitual in Julian makes him write always with a certain affectation, but no one could mistake
the real feeling of loss and loneliness that runs through the consolation. He has lost his ‘comrade in the ranks’, and now is ‘Odysseus left alone’. So he writes, quoting the Iliad; Sallustius has been carried by God outside the spears and arrows: ‘which malignant men were always aiming at you, or rather at me, trying to wound me through you, and believing that the only way to beat me down was by depriving me of the fellowship of my true friend and fellow-soldier, the comrade who never flinched from sharing my dangers.’

One note recurs four times; he has lost the one man to whom he could talk as a brother; the man of ‘guileless and clean free-speech’, 1 who was honest and unafraid and able to contradict the emperor freely because of their mutual trust. If one thinks of it, Julian, for all his gentleness, must have been an alarming emperor to converse with. His standard of conduct was not only uncomfortably high, it was also a little unaccountable. The most correct and blameless court officials must often have suspected that their master looked upon them as simply wallowing in sin. And that feeling does not promote ease or truthfulness. Julian compares his friendship with Sallustius to that of Scipio and Laelius. People said of Scipio that he only carried out what Laelius told him. ‘Is that true of me?’ Julian asks himself. ‘Have I only done what Sallustius told me?’ His answer is sincere and beautiful: κωνά τα ϕιλων. It little matters who suggested, and who agreed to the suggestion; his thoughts, and any credit that came from the thoughts, are his friend’s as much as his

1 ἄθλος καὶ καθαρὰ παρηγορία.
own. We happen to hear from the Christian Theodosret (Hist. iii. 11) that on one occasion when Julian was nearly goaded into persecution of the Christians, it was Sallustius who recalled him to their fixed policy of toleration.

Sallustius then may be taken to represent in the most authoritative way the Pagan reaction of Julian's time, in its final struggle against Christianity.

He was, roughly speaking, a Neo-Platonist. But it is not as a professed philosopher that he writes. It is only that Neo-Platonism had permeated the whole atmosphere of the age. The strife of the philosophical sects had almost ceased. Just as Julian's mysticism made all gods and almost all forms of worship into one, so his enthusiasm for Hellenism revered, nay, idolized, almost all the great philosophers of the past. They were all trying to say the same ineffable thing; all lifting mankind towards the knowledge of God. I say 'almost' in both cases; for the Christians are outside the pale in one domain and the Epicureans and a few Cynics in the other. Both had committed the cardinal sin; they had denied the gods. They are sometimes lumped together as Atheoi. L'athéisme, voilà l'ennemi.

This may surprise us at first sight, but the explanation is easy. To Julian the one great truth that matters is the presence and glory of the gods. No

---

1 'Many of his sections come straight from Plotinus: xiv and xv perhaps from Porphyry's Letter to Marcella, an invaluable document for the religious side of Neo-Platonism. A few things (prayer to the souls of the dead in iv, to the Cosmos in xvii, the doctrine of τὸ χρῆ in ix) are definitely un-Plotinian: probably concessions to popular religion.'—E. R. D.
doubt, they are all ultimately one; they are δύναμις, 'forces,' not persons, but for reasons above our comprehension they are manifest only under conditions of form, time, and personality, and have so been revealed and worshipped and partly known by the great minds of the past. In Julian's mind the religious emotion itself becomes the thing to live for. Every object that has been touched by that emotion is thereby glorified and made sacred. Every shrine where men have worshipped in truth of heart is thereby a house of God. The worship may be mixed up with all sorts of folly, all sorts of unedifying practice. Such things must be purged away, or, still better, must be properly understood. For to the pure all things are pure; and the myths that shock the vulgar are noble allegories to the wise and reverent. Purge religion from dross, if you like; but remember that you do so at your peril. One false step, one self-confident rejection of a thing which is merely too high for you to grasp, and you are darkening the Sun, casting God out of the world. And that was just what the Christians deliberately did. In many of the early Christian writings denial is a much greater element than assertion. The beautiful Octavius of Minucius Felix (about A.D. 130-60) is an example. Such denial was, of course, to our judgement, eminently needed, and rendered a great service to the world. But to Julian it seemed impiety. In other Christian writings the misrepresentation of pagan rites and beliefs is decidedly foulmouthed and malicious. Quite apart from his personal wrongs and his contempt for the character of Constantius, Julian could have no sympathy for
men who overturned altars and heaped blasphemy on old deserted shrines, defilers of every sacred object that was not protected by popularity. The most that such people could expect from him was that they should not be proscribed by law.

But meantime what were the multitudes of the god-fearing to believe? The arm of the state was not very strong or effective. Labour as he might to supply good teaching to all provincial towns, Julian could not hope to educate the poor and ignorant to understand Plato and M. Aurelius. For them, he seems to say, all that is necessary is that they should be pious and god-fearing in their own way. But for more or less educated people, not blankly ignorant, and yet not professed students of philosophy, there might be some simple and authoritative treatise issued—a sort of reasoned creed, to lay down in a convincing manner the outlines of the old Hellenic religion, before the Christians and Atheists should have swept all fear of the gods from off the earth.

The treatise is this work of Sallustius.

The Christian fathers from Minucius Felix onward have shown us what was the most vulnerable point of Paganism: the traditional mythology. Sallustius deals with it at once. The Akroátès, or pupil, he says in Section 1, needs some preliminary training. He should have been well brought up, should not be incurably stupid, and should not have been familiarized with foolish fables. Evidently the mythology was not to be taught to children. He enunciates certain postulates of religious thought, viz. that God is always good and not subject to passion or to
change, and then proceeds straight to the traditional myths. In the first place, he insists that they are what he calls 'divine'. That is, they are inspired or have some touch of divine truth in them. This is proved by the fact that they have been uttered, and sometimes invented, by the most inspired poets and philosophers and by the gods themselves in oracles—a very characteristic argument.

The myths are all expressions of God and of the goodness of God; but they follow the usual method of divine revelation, to wit, mystery and allegory. The myths state clearly the one tremendous fact that the Gods are; that is what Julian cared about and the Christians denied: what they are the myths reveal only to those who have understanding. 'The world itself is a great myth, in which bodies and inanimate things are visible, souls and minds invisible.'

'But, admitting all this, how comes it that the myths are so often absurd and even immoral?' For the usual purpose of mystery and allegory; in order to make people think. The soul that wishes to know God must make its own effort; it cannot expect simply to lie still and be told. The myths by their obvious falsity and absurdity on the surface stimulate the mind capable of religion to probe deeper.

He proceeds to give instances, and chooses at once myths that had been for generations the mock of the sceptic, and in his own day furnished abundant ammunition for the artillery of Christian polemic. He takes first Hesiod's story of Kronos swallowing his children; then the Judgement of Paris; then comes
a long and earnest explanation of the myth of Attis and the Mother of the Gods. It is on the face of it a story highly discreditable both to the heart and the head of those august beings, and though the rites themselves do not seem to have been in any way improper, the Christians naturally attacked the Pagans and Julian personally for countenancing the worship. Sallustius’s explanation is taken directly from Julian’s fifth oration in praise of the Great Mother, and reduces the myth and the ritual to an expression of the adventures of the Soul seeking God.

So much for the whole traditional mythology. It has been explained completely away and made servient to philosophy and edification, while it can still be used as a great well-spring of religious emotion. For the explanations given by Sallustius and Julian are never rationalistic. They never stimulate a spirit of scepticism, always a spirit of mysticism and reverence. And, lest by chance even this reverent theorizing should have been somehow lacking in insight or true piety, Sallustius ends with the prayer: ‘When I say these things concerning the myths, may the gods themselves and the spirits of those who wrote the myths be gracious to me.’

He now leaves mythology and turns to the First Cause. It must be one, and it must be present in all things. Thus, it cannot be Life, for, if it were, all things would be alive. By a Platonic argument in which he will still find some philosophers to follow him, he proves that everything which exists, exists because of some goodness in it; and thus arrives at the conclusion that the First Cause is τὸ ἀγαθόν, the Good.
The gods are emanations or forces issuing from the Good; the makers of this world are secondary gods; above them are the makers of the makers, above all the One.

Next comes a proof that the world is eternal—a very important point of doctrine; next that the soul is immortal; next a definition of the workings of Divine Providence, Fate, and Fortune—a fairly skilful piece of dialectic dealing with a hopeless difficulty. Next come Virtue and Vice, and, in a dead and perfunctory echo of Plato's *Republic*, an enumeration of the good and bad forms of human society. The questions which vibrated with life in free Athens had become meaningless to a despot-governed world. Then follows more adventurous matter.

First a chapter headed: 'Whence Evil things come, and that there is no *Physis Kakou*—Evil is not a real thing.' 'It is perhaps best', he says, 'to observe at once that, since the gods are good and make everything, there is no positive evil; there is only absence of good; just as there is no positive darkness, only absence of light.'

What we call 'evils' arise only in the activities of men, and even here no one ever does evil for the sake of evil. 'One who indulges in some pleasant vice thinks the vice bad but his pleasure good; a murderer thinks the murder bad, but the money he will get by it, good; one who injures an enemy thinks the injury bad, but the being quits with his enemy, good'; and so on. The evil acts are all done for the sake of some good, but human souls, being very far removed from the original flawless divine nature,
make mistakes or sins. One of the great objects of the world, he goes on to explain, of gods, men, and spirits, of religious institutions and human laws alike, is to keep the souls from these errors and to purge them again when they have fallen.

Next comes a speculative difficulty. Sallustius has called the world 'eternal in the fullest sense'—that is, it always has been and always will be. And yet it is 'made' by the gods. How are these statements compatible? If it was made, there must have been a time before it was made. The answer is ingenious. It is not made by handicraft as a table is; it is not begotten as a son by a father. It is the result of a quality of God just as light is the result of a quality of the sun. The sun causes light, but the light is there as soon as the sun is there. The world is simply the other side, as it were, of the goodness of God, and has existed as long as that goodness has existed.

Next come some simpler questions about man's relation to the gods. In what sense can we say that the gods are angry with the wicked or are appeased by repentance? Sallustius is quite firm. The gods cannot ever be glad—for that which is glad is also sorry; cannot be angry—for anger is a passion; and obviously they cannot be appeased by gifts or prayers. Even men, if they are honest, require higher motives than that. God is unchangeable, always good, always doing good. If we are good, we are nearer to the gods, and we feel it; if we are evil, we are separated further from them. It is not they that are angry, it is our sins that hide them from us and prevent the goodness of God from shining into us.
If we repent, again, we do not make any change in God; we only, by the conversion of our soul towards the divine, heal our own badness and enjoy again the goodness of the gods. To say that the gods turn away from the wicked, would be like saying that the sun turns away from a blind man.

Why then do we make offerings and sacrifices to the gods, when the gods need nothing and can have nothing added to them? We do so in order to have more communion with the gods. The whole temple service, in fact, is an elaborate allegory, a representation of the divine government of the world.

The custom of sacrificing animals had died out some time before this. The Jews of the Dispersion had given it up long since because the Law forbade any such sacrifice outside the Temple. When Jerusalem was destroyed Jewish sacrifice ceased altogether. The Christians seem from the beginning to have generally followed the Jewish practice. But sacrifice was in itself not likely to continue in a society of large towns. It meant turning your temples into very ill-conducted slaughter-houses, and was also associated with a great deal of muddled and indiscriminate charity. One might have hoped that men so high-minded and spiritual as Julian and Sallustius would have considered this practice unnecessary or even have reformed it away. But no. It was part of the genuine Hellenic tradition; and

1 S. Reinach, Orpheus, p. 273 (Engl. trans., p. 185).
2 See Ammianus, xxii. 12, on the bad effect of Julian’s sacrifices. Sacrifice was finally forbidden by the emperor Theodosius in 391. It was condemned by Theophrastus, and is said by Porphyry (De Abstinentia, ii. 11) simply λαβείν τὴν ἄρχην ἐς ἄδικιας.
no jot or tittle of that tradition should, if they could help it, be allowed to die. Sacrifice is desirable, argues Sallustius, because it is a gift of life. God has given us life, as He has given us all else. We must therefore pay to Him some emblematic tithe of life. Again, prayers in themselves are merely words; but with sacrifice they are words plus life, Living Words. Lastly, we are Life of a sort, and God is Life of an infinitely higher sort. To approach Him we need always a medium or a mediator; the medium between life and life must needs be life. We find that life in the sacrificed animal.  

The argument shows what ingenuity these religious men had at their command, and what trouble they would take to avoid having to face a fact and reform a bad system.

There follows a long and rather difficult argument to show that the world is, in itself, eternal. The former discussion on this point had only shown that the gods would not destroy it. This shows that its own nature is indestructible. The arguments are very inconclusive, though clever, and one wonders why the author is at so much pains. Indeed, he is so earnest that at the end of the chapter he finds it necessary to apologize to the Kosmos in case his language should have been indiscreet. The reason, I think, is that the Christians were still, as in apostolic times, pinning their faith to the approaching end of

1 Sallustius's view of sacrifice is curiously like the illuminating theory of MM. Hubert and Mauss, in which they define primitive sacrifice as a medium, a bridge or lightning-conductor, between the profane and the sacred. 'Essai sur la Nature et la Fonction du Sacrifice' (Annales Sociologiques, ii. 1897–8), since republished in the Mélanges d'Histoire des Religions, 1909.
the world by fire.¹ They announced the end of the world as near, and they rejoiced in the prospect of its destruction. History has shown more than once what terrible results can be produced by such beliefs as these in the minds of excitable and suffering populations, especially those of eastern blood. It was widely believed that Christian fanatics had from time to time actually tried to light fires which should consume the accursed world and thus hasten the coming of the kingdom which should bring such incalculable rewards to their own organization and plunge the rest of mankind in everlasting torment. To any respectable Pagan such action was an insane crime made worse by a diabolical motive. The destruction of the world, therefore, seems to have become a subject of profound irritation, if not actually of terror. At any rate the doctrine lay at the very heart of the perniciosa superstition, and Sallustius uses his best dialectic against it.

The title of Chapter XVIII has a somewhat pathetic ring: ‘Why are Athetai’—Atheisms or rejections of God—‘permitted, and that God is not injured thereby?’ Ὁδὲ νῦν βλάπτεται. ‘If over certain parts of the world there have occurred (and will occur more hereafter) rejections of the gods, a wise man need not be disturbed at that.’ We have always known that the human soul was prone to error. God’s providence is there; but we cannot expect all men at all times

¹ Cf. Minucius Felix, Octavius, p. 96, Ouzel (chap. 11, Boenig). ‘Quid quod toti orbi et ipsi mundo cum sideribus suis minantur incendium, ruinam moliuntur?’ The doctrine in their mouths became a very different thing from the Stoic theory of the periodic re-absorption of the universe in the Divine Element.’ Ibid., pp. 322 ff. (34 Boenig).
and places to enjoy it equally. In the human body it is only the eye that sees the light, the rest of the body is ignorant of the light. So are many parts of the earth ignorant of God.

Very likely, also, this rejection of God is a punishment. Persons who in a previous life have known the gods but disregarded them, are perhaps now born, as it were, blind, unable to see God; persons who have committed the blasphemy of worshipping their own kings as gods may perhaps now be cast out from the knowledge of God.

Philosophy had always rejected the Man-God, especially in the form of King-worship; but opposition to Christianity no doubt intensifies the protest.

The last chapter is very short. ‘Souls that have lived in virtue, being otherwise blessed and especially separated from their irrational part and purged of all body, are joined with the gods and sway the whole world together with them.’ So far triumphant faith: then the after-thought of the brave man who means to live his best life even if faith fail him. ‘But even if none of these rewards came to them, still Virtue itself and the Joy and Glory of Virtue, and the Life that is subject to no grief and no master, would be enough to make blessed those who have set themselves to live in Virtue and have succeeded.’

There the book ends. It ends upon that well-worn paradox which, from the second book of the Republic onwards, seems to have brought so much comfort to the nobler spirits of the ancient world. Strange how we‘moderns cannot rise to it! We seem simply to lack the intensity of moral enthusiasm. When we
speak of martyrs being happy on the rack; in the first place we rarely believe it, and in the second we are usually supposing that the rack will soon be over and that harps and golden crowns will presently follow. The ancient moralist believed that the good man was happy then and there, because the joy, being in his soul, was not affected by the torture of his body.\(^1\)

Not being able fully to feel this conviction, we naturally incline to think it affected or unreal. But, taking the conditions of the ancient world into account, we must admit that the men who uttered this belief at least understood better than most of us what suffering was. Many of them were slaves, many had been captives of war. They knew what they were talking about. I think, on a careful study of M. Aurelius, Epictetus, and some of these Neo-Platonic philosophers, that we shall be forced to realize that these men could rise to much the same heights of religious heroism as the Catholic saints of the Middle Age, and that they often did so—if I may use such a phrase—on a purer and thinner diet of sensuous emotion, with less wallowing in the dust and less delirium.

Be that as it may, we have now seen in outline the kind of religion which ancient Paganism had become at the time of its final reaction against Christianity. It is a more or less intelligible whole, and succeeds better than most religions in combining two great appeals. It appeals to the philosopher and the thoughtful man as a fairly complete and rational

\(^1\) Even Epicurus himself held καὶ οὕτω καὶ οὐφόρος, ἐναὶ αὐτῶν ἐκθαλομον. Diog. La. x. 118. See above, end of chap. iii.
system of thought, which speculative and enlightened minds in any age might believe without disgrace. I do not mean that it is probably true; to me all these overpowering optimisms which, by means of a few untested _a priori_ postulates, affect triumphantly to disprove the most obvious facts of life, seem very soon to become meaningless. I conceive it to be no comfort at all, to a man suffering agonies of frost-bite, to be told by science that cold is merely negative and does not exist. So far as the statement is true it is irrelevant; so far as it pretends to be relevant it is false. I only mean that a system like that of Sallustius is, judged by any standard, high, civilized, and enlightened.

At the same time this religion appeals to the ignorant and the humble-minded. It takes from the pious villager no single object of worship that has turned his thoughts heavenwards. It may explain and purge; it never condemns or ridicules. In its own eyes that was its great glory, in the eyes of history perhaps its most fatal weakness. Christianity, apart from its positive doctrines, had inherited from Judaism the noble courage of its disbeliefs.

To compare this Paganism in detail with its great rival would be, even if I possessed the necessary learning, a laborious and unsatisfactory task. But if a student with very imperfect knowledge may venture a personal opinion on this obscure subject, it seems to me that we often look at such problems from a wrong angle. Harnack somewhere, in discussing the comparative success or failure of various early Christian sects, makes the illuminating remark that the main determining cause in each case was not their
comparative reasonableness of doctrine or skill in controversy—for they practically never converted one another—but simply the comparative increase or decrease of the birth-rate in the respective populations. On somewhat similar lines it always appears to me that, historically speaking, the character of Christianity in these early centuries is to be sought not so much in the doctrines which it professed, nearly all of which had their roots and their close parallels in older Hellenistic or Hebrew thought, but in the organization on which it rested. For my own part, when I try to understand Christianity as a mass of doctrines, Gnostic, Trinitarian, Monophysite, Arian and the rest, I get no further. When I try to realize it as a sort of semi-secret society for mutual help with a mystical religious basis, resting first on the proletariates of Antioch and the great commercial and manufacturing towns of the Levant, then spreading by instinctive sympathy to similar classes in Rome and the West, and rising in influence, like certain other mystical cults, by the special appeal it made to women, the various historical puzzles begin to fall into place. Among other things this explains the strange subterranean power by which the emperor Diocletian was baffled, and to which the pretender Constantine had to capitulate; it explains its humanity, its intense feeling of brotherhood within its own bounds, its incessant care for the poor, and also its comparative indifference to the virtues which are specially incumbent on a governing class, such as statesmanship, moderation, truthfulness, active courage, learning, culture, and public spirit. Of course, such indifference was only com-
parative. After the time of Constantine the governing classes come into the fold, bringing with them their normal qualities, and thereafter it is Paganism, not Christianity, that must uphold the flag of a desperate fidelity in the face of a hostile world—a task to which, naturally enough, Paganism was not equal. But I never wished to pit the two systems against one another. The battle is over, and it is poor work to jeer at the wounded and the dead. If we read the literature of the time, especially some records of the martyrs under Diocletian, we shall at first perhaps imagine that, apart from some startling exceptions, the conquered party were all vicious and hateful, the conquerors, all wise and saintly. Then, looking a little deeper, we shall see that this great controversy does not stand altogether by itself. As in other wars, each side had its wise men and its foolish, its good men and its evil. Like other conquerors these conquerors were often treacherous and brutal; like other vanquished these vanquished have been tried at the bar of history without benefit of counsel, have been condemned in their absence and died with their lips sealed. The polemic literature of Christianity is loud and triumphant, the books of the Pagans have been destroyed.

Only an ignorant man will pronounce a violent or bitter judgement here. The minds that are now tender, timid, and reverent in their orthodoxy would probably in the third or fourth century have sided with the old gods; those of more daring and puritan temper with the Christians. The historian will only try to have sympathy and understanding for both. They are all dead now, Diocletian and Ignatius,
Cyril and Hypatia, Julian and Basil, Athanasius and Arius: every party has yielded up its persecutors and its martyrs, its hates and slanders and aspirations and heroisms, to the arms of that great Silence whose secrets they all claimed so loudly to have read. Even the dogmas for which they fought might seem to be dead too. For if Julian and Sallustius, Gregory and John Chrysostom, were to rise again and see the world as it now is, they would probably feel their personal differences melt away in comparison with the vast difference between their world and this. They fought to the death about this credo and that, but the same spirit was in all of them. In the words of one who speaks with greater knowledge than mine, 'the most inward man in these four contemporaries is the same. It is the Spirit of the Fourth Century.'

'Dieselbe Seelenstimmung, derselbe Spiritualismus'; also the same passionate asceticism. All through antiquity the fight against luxury was a fiercer and stronger fight than comes into our modern experience. There was not more objective luxury in any period of ancient history than there is now; there was never anything like so much. But there does seem to have been more subjective abandonment to physical pleasure and concomitantly a stronger protest against it. From some time before the Christian era it seems as if the subconscious instinct of humanity was slowly rousing itself for a great revolt against the long intolerable tyranny of the senses over the soul, and by the fourth century

1 Gellcken in the Neue Jahrbücher, xxi. 162 ff.
the revolt threatened to become all-absorbing. The Emperor Julian was probably as proud of his fireless cell and the crowding lice in his beard and cassock as an average Egyptian monk. The ascetic movement grew, as we all know, to be measureless and insane. It seemed to be almost another form of lust, and to have the same affinities with cruelty. But it has probably rendered priceless help to us who come afterwards. The insane ages have often done service for the sane, the harsh and suffering ages for the gentle and well-to-do.

_Sophrosynê_, however we try to translate it, temperance, gentleness, the spirit that in any trouble thinks and is patient, that saves and not destroys, is the right spirit. And it is to be feared that none of these fourth-century leaders, neither the fierce bishops with their homilies on Charity, nor Julian and Sallustius with their worship of Hellenism, came very near to that classic ideal. To bring back that note of Sophrosynê I will venture, before proceeding to the fourth-century Pagan creed, to give some sentences from an earlier Pagan prayer. It is cited by Stobaeus from a certain Eusebius, a late Ionic Platonist of whom almost nothing is known, not even the date at which he lived. But the voice sounds like that of a stronger and more sober age.

'May I be no man's enemy,' it begins, 'and may I be the friend of that which is eternal and abides. May I never quarrel with those nearest to me; and if I do, may I be reconciled quickly. May I never devise evil against any man; if any devise evil

1 Mullach, _Fragmenta Philosophorum_, iii 7, from Stob. _Flor._ i. 85.
against me, may I escape uninjured and without the
need of hurting him. May I love, seek, and attain
only that which is good. May I wish for all men's
happiness and envy none. May I never rejoice in
the ill-fortune of one who has wronged me. . . .
When I have done or said what is wrong, may I
never wait for the rebuke of others, but always
rebuke myself until I make amends. . . . May I win
no victory that harms either me or my opponent.
. . . May I reconcile friends who are wroth with one
another. May I, to the extent of my power, give all
needful help to my friends and to all who are in
want. May I never fail a friend in danger. When
visiting those in grief may I be able by gentle and
healing words to soften their pain. . . . May I re-
spect myself. . . . May I always keep tame that
which rages within me. . . . May I accustom myself
to be gentle, and never be angry with people because
of circumstances. May I never discuss who is wicked
and what wicked things he has done, but know good
men and follow in their footsteps.'

There is more of it. How unpretending it is and
yet how searching! And in the whole there is no
petition for any material blessing, and—most striking
of all—it is addressed to no personal god. It is pure
prayer. Of course, to some it will feel thin and cold.
Most men demand of their religion more outward and
personal help, more physical ecstasy, a more heady
atmosphere of illusion. No one man's attitude
towards the Uncharted can be quite the same as his
neighbour's. In part instinctively, in part super-
ficially and self-consciously, each generation of man-
kind reacts against the last. The grown man turns
from the lights that were thrust upon his eyes in
childhood. The son shrugs his shoulders at the watchwords that thrilled his father, and with varying degrees of sensitiveness or dullness, of fuller or more fragmentary experience, writes out for himself the manuscript of his creed. Yet, even for the wildest or bravest rebel, that manuscript is only a palimpsest. On the surface all is new writing, clean and self-assertive. Underneath, dim but indelible in the very fibres of the parchment, lie the characters of many ancient aspirations and raptures and battles which his conscious mind has rejected or utterly forgotten. And forgotten things, if there be real life in them, will sometimes return out of the dust, vivid to help still in the forward groping of humanity. A religious system like that of Eusebius or Marcus, or even Salustius, was not built up without much noble life and strenuous thought and a steady passion for the knowledge of God. Things of that make do not, as a rule, die for ever.
SALLUSTIUS

‘ON THE GODS AND THE WORLD’

I. What the Disciple should be; and concerning Common Conceptions.

Those who wish to hear about the Gods should have been well guided from childhood, and not habituated to foolish beliefs. They should also be in disposition good and sensible, that they may properly attend to the teaching.

They ought also to know the Common Conceptions. Common Conceptions are those to which all men agree as soon as they are asked; for instance, that all God is good, free from passion, free from change. For whatever suffers change does so for the worse or the better: if for the worse, it is made bad; if for the better, it must have been bad at first.

II. That God is unchanging, unbegotten, eternal, incorporeal, and not in space.

Let the disciple be thus. Let the teachings be of the following sort. The essences of the Gods never came into existence (for that which always is never comes into existence; and that exists for ever which possesses primary force and by nature suffers nothing):

1 I translate κόσμος generally as ‘World’, sometimes as ‘Cosmos’. It always has the connotation of ‘divine order’; ψυχή always ‘Soul’, to keep it distinct from ζωή, ‘physical life’, though often ‘Life’ would be a more natural English equivalent; ἐμφυτεύω to animate; σώλην sometimes ‘essence’, sometimes ‘being’ (never ‘substance’ or ‘nature’); φύσις ‘nature’; σῶμα sometimes ‘body’, sometimes ‘matter’.

200
neither do they consist of bodies; for even in bodies the powers are incorporeal. Neither are they contained by space; for that is a property of bodies. Neither are they separate from the First Cause nor from one another, just as thoughts are not separate from mind nor acts of knowledge from the soul.

III. Concerning myths; that they are divine, and why.

We may well inquire, then, why the ancients forsook these doctrines and made use of myths. There is this first benefit from myths, that we have to search and do not have our minds idle.

That the myths are divine can be seen from those who have used them. Myths have been used by inspired poets, by the best of philosophers, by those who established the mysteries, and by the Gods themselves in oracles. But why the myths are divine it is the duty of Philosophy to inquire. Since all existing things rejoice in that which is like them and reject that which is unlike, the stories about the Gods ought to be like the Gods, so that they may both be worthy of the divine essence and make the Gods well disposed to those who speak of them: which could only be done by means of myths.

Now the myths represent the Gods themselves and the goodness of the Gods—subject always to the distinction of the speakable and the unspeakable, the revealed and the unrevealed, that which is clear and that which is hidden: since, just as the Gods have made the goods of sense common to all, but those of intellect only to the wise, so the myths state the existence of Gods to all, but who and what they are only to those who can understand.
They also represent the activities of the Gods. For one may call the World a Myth, in which bodies and things are visible, but souls and minds hidden. Besides, to wish to teach the whole truth about the Gods to all produces contempt in the foolish, because they cannot understand, and lack of zeal in the good; whereas to conceal the truth by myths prevents the contempt of the foolish, and compels the good to practise philosophy.

But why have they put in the myths stories of adultery, robbery, father-binding, and all the other absurdity? Is not that perhaps a thing worthy of admiration, done so that by means of the visible absurdity the Soul may immediately feel that the words are veils and believe the truth to be a mystery?

IV. That the species of Myth are five, with examples of each.

Of myths some are theological, some physical, some psychic, and again some material, and some mixed from these last two. The theological are those myths which use no bodily form but contemplate the very essences of the Gods: e.g. Kronos swallowing his children. Since God is intellectual, and all intellect returns into itself, this myth expresses in allegory the essence of God.

Myths may be regarded physically when they express the activities of the Gods in the world: e.g. people before now have regarded Kronos as Time, and calling the divisions of Time his sons say that the sons are swallowed by the father.

The psychic way is to regard the activities of the Soul itself: the Soul's acts of thought, though they
pass on to other objects, nevertheless remain inside their begetters.

The material and last is that which the Egyptians have mostly used, owing to their ignorance, believing material objects actually to be Gods, and so calling them: e.g. they call the Earth Isis, moisture Osiris, heat Typhon, or again, water Kronos, the fruits of the earth Adonis, and wine Dionysus.

To say that these objects are sacred to the Gods, like various herbs and stones and animals, is possible to sensible men, but to say that they are gods is the notion of madmen—except, perhaps, in the sense in which both the orb of the sun and the ray which comes from the orb are colloquially called ‘the Sun’.¹

The mixed kind of myth may be seen in many instances: for example they say that in a banquet of the Gods Discord threw down a golden apple; the goddesses contended for it, and were sent by Zeus to Paris to be judged; Paris saw Aphrodite to be beautiful and gave her the apple. Here the banquet signifies the hyper-cosmic powers of the Gods; that is why they are all together. The golden apple is the world, which, being formed out of opposites, is naturally said to be ‘thrown by Discord’. The different Gods bestow different gifts upon the world and are thus said to ‘contend for the apple’. And the soul which lives

¹ e.g. when we say ‘The sun is coming in through the window’, or in Greek ἐξαλείψῃ ἡμῶν ἐκ τοῦ ἄλον, Plat. Rep. 516 Ε. This appears to mean that you can loosely apply the term ‘Osiris’ both to (i) the real Osiris and (ii) the corn which comes from him, as you can apply the name ‘Sun’ both to (i) the real orb and (ii) the ray that comes from the orb. However, Julian, Or. v, on the Sun suggests a different view—that both the orb and the ray are mere effects and symbols of the true spiritual Sun, as corn is of Osiris.
according to sense—for that is what Paris is—not seeing the other powers in the world but only beauty, declares that the apple belongs to Aphrodite.

Theological myths suit philosophers, physical and psychic suit poets, mixed suit religious initiations, since every initiation aims at uniting us with the World and the Gods.

To take another myth, they say that the Mother of the Gods seeing Attis lying by the river Gallus fell in love with him, took him, crowned him with her cap of stars, and thereafter kept him with her. He fell in love with a nymph and left the Mother to live with her. For this the Mother of the Gods made Attis go mad and cut off his genital organs and leave them with the Nymph, and then return and dwell with her.

Now the Mother of the Gods is the principle that generates life; that is why she is called Mother. Attis is the creator of all things which are born and die; that is why he is said to have been found by the river Gallus. For Gallus signifies the Galaxy, or Milky Way, the point at which body subject to passion begins.¹ Now as the primary gods make perfect the secondary, the Mother loves Attis and gives him celestial powers. That is what the cap means. Attis loves a nymph: the nymphs preside over generation, since all that is generated is fluid. But since the process of generation must be stopped somewhere, and not allowed to generate something worse than the worst, the Creator who makes these things casts away

¹ ἀργυρός Mr. L. W. Hunter, ἐρυγγός MS. Above the Milky Way there is no such body, only σῶμα ἀπαθές. Cf. Macrobi. in Somn. Scip. i. 12.
his generative powers into the creation and is joined to the gods again. Now these things never happened, but always are. And Mind sees all things at once, but Reason (or Speech) expresses some first and others after. Thus, as the myth is in accord with the Cosmos, we for that reason keep a festival imitating the Cosmos, for how could we attain higher order?

And at first we ourselves, having fallen from heaven and living with the Nymph, are in despondency, and abstain from corn and all rich and unclean food, for both are hostile to the soul. Then comes the cutting of the tree and the fast, as though we also were cutting off the further process of generation. After that the feeding on milk, as though we were being born again; after which come rejoicings and garlands, as it were, a return up to the Gods.

The season of the ritual is evidence to the truth of these explanations. The rites are performed about the Vernal Equinox, when the fruits of the earth are ceasing to be produced, and day is becoming longer than night, which applies well to Spirits rising higher. (At least, the other equinox is in mythology the time of the Rape of Korē, which is the descent of the souls.)

May these explanations of the myths find favour in the eyes of the Gods themselves and the souls of those who wrote the myths.

V. On the First Cause.

Next in order comes knowledge of the First Cause and the subsequent orders of the gods, then the nature of the world, the essence of intellect and of soul, then Providence, Fate, and Fortune, then to
see Virtue and Vice and the various forms of social constitution good and bad that are formed from them, and from what possible source Evil came into the world.

Each of these subjects needs many long discussions; but there is perhaps no harm in stating them briefly, so that a disciple may not be completely ignorant about them.

It is proper to the First Cause to be One—for unity precedes multitude—and to surpass all things in power and goodness. Consequently all things must partake of it. For owing to its power nothing else can hinder it, and owing to its goodness it will not hold itself apart.

If the First Cause were Soul, all things would possess Soul. If it were Mind, all things would possess Mind. If it were Being, all things would partake of Being. And seeing this quality (i.e. Being) in all things, some men have thought that it was Being. Now if things simply were, without being good, this argument would be true, but if things that are are because of their goodness, and partake in the good, the First thing must needs be both beyond-Being and good. It is strong evidence of this that noble souls despise Being for the sake of the good, when they face death for their country or friends or for the sake of virtue.—After this inexpressible power come the orders of the Gods.

VI. On Gods Cosmic and Hypercosmic.

Of the Gods some are of the world, Cosmic, and some above the world, Hypercosmic. By the Cosmic I mean those who make the Cosmos. Of the Hypercosmic Gods some create Essence, some Mind, and
some Soul. Thus they have three orders; all of which may be found in treatises on the subject.

Of the Cosmic Gods some make the World be, others animate it, others harmonize it, consisting as it does of different elements; the fourth class keep it when harmonized.

These are four actions, each of which has a beginning, middle, and end, consequently there must be twelve gods governing the world.

Those who make the world are Zeus, Poseidon, and Hephaistos; those who animate it are Demeter, Hera, and Artemis; those who harmonize it are Apollo, Aphrodite, and Hermes; those who watch over it are Hestia, Athena, and Ares.

One can see secret suggestions of this in their images. Apollo tunes a lyre; Athena is armed; Aphrodite is naked (because harmony creates beauty, and beauty in things seen is not covered).

While these twelve in the primary sense possess the world, we should consider that the other gods are contained in these. Dionysus in Zeus, for instance, Asklepios in Apollo, the Charites in Aphrodite.

We can also discern their various spheres: to Hestia belongs the Earth, to Poseidon water, to Hera air, to Hephaistos fire. And the six superior spheres to the gods to whom they are usually attributed. For Apollo and Artemis are to be taken for the Sun and Moon, the sphere of Kronos should be attributed to Demeter, the ether to Athena, while the heaven is common to all. Thus the orders, powers, and spheres of the Twelve Gods have been explained and celebrated in hymns.
VII. On the Nature of the World and its Eternity.

The Cosmos itself must of necessity be indestructible and uncreated. Indestructible because, suppose it destroyed: the only possibility is to make one better than this or worse, or the same or a chaos. If worse, the power which out of the better makes the worse must be bad. If better, the maker who did not make the better at first must be imperfect in power. If the same, there will be no use in making it; if a chaos... it is impious even to hear such a thing suggested. These reasons would suffice to show that the World is also uncreated: for if not destroyed, neither is it created. Everything that is created is subject to destruction. And further, since the Cosmos exists by the goodness of God it follows that God must always be good and the world exist. Just as light coexists with the Sun and with fire, and shadow coexists with a body.

Of the bodies in the Cosmos, some imitate Mind and move in orbits; some imitate Soul and move in a straight line, fire and air upward, earth and water downward. Of those that move in orbits the fixed sphere goes from the east, the Seven from the west. (This is so for various causes, especially lest the creation should be imperfect owing to the rapid circuit of the spheres. 1)

The movement being different, the nature of the bodies must also be different; hence the celestial

1 i.e. if the Firmament or Fixed Sphere moved in the same direction as the seven Planets, the speed would become too great. On the circular movement cf. Plot. Enn. ii. 2.
APPENDIX

body does not burn or freeze what it touches, or do anything else that pertains to the four elements.¹

And since the Cosmos is a sphere—the zodiac proves that—and in every sphere 'down' means 'towards the centre', for the centre is farthest distant from every point, and heavy things fall 'down' and fall to the earth (it follows that the Earth is in the centre of the Cosmos).

All these things are made by the Gods, ordered by Mind, moved by Soul. About the Gods we have spoken already.

VIII. On Mind and Soul, and that the latter is immortal.

There is a certain force,² less primary than Being but more primary than the Soul, which draws its existence from Being and completes the Soul as the Sun completes the eyes. Of Souls some are rational and immortal, some irrational and mortal; The former are derived from the first Gods, the latter from the secondary.

First, we must consider what soul is. It is, then, that by which the animate differs from the inanimate. The difference lies in motion, sensation, imagination, intelligence. Soul, therefore, when irrational, is the life of sense and imagination; when rational, it is the life which controls sense and imagination and uses reason.

The irrational soul depends on the affections of

¹ The fire of which the heavenly bodies are made is the ἔφαρμος, matter, but different from earthly matter. See P. 137.
² Proclus, Elem. Theol. xx, calls it ἡ νοερά φύσις, Natura Intellectualis. There are four degrees of existence: lowest of all, Bodies; above that, Soul; above all Souls, this 'Intellectual Nature'; above that, The One.
the body; it feels desire and anger irrationally. The rational soul both, with the help of reason, despises the body, and, fighting against the irrational soul, produces either virtue or vice, according as it is victorious or defeated.

It must be immortal, both because it knows the gods (and nothing mortal knows what is immortal), it looks down upon human affairs as though it stood outside them, and, like an unbodied thing, it is affected in the opposite way to the body. For while the body is young and fine, the soul blunders, but as the body grows old it attains its highest power. Again, every good soul uses mind; but no body can produce mind: for how should that which is without mind produce mind? Again, while Soul uses the body as an instrument, it is not in it; just as the engineer is not in his engines (although many engines move without being touched by any one). And if the Soul is often made to err by the body, that is not surprising. For the arts cannot perform their work when their instruments are spoilt.

IX. On Providence, Fate, and Fortune.

This is enough to show the Providence of the Gods. For whence comes the ordering of the world, if there is no ordering power? And whence comes the fact that all things are for a purpose: e.g. irrational soul that there may be sensation, and rational that the earth may be set in order?

But one can deduce the same result from the evidences of Providence in nature: e.g. the eyes have been made transparent with a view to seeing; the

\(^1\) i.e. in the full sense of Gnôsis.
APPENDIX

nostrils are above the mouth to distinguish bad-smelling foods; the front teeth are sharp to cut food, the back teeth broad to grind it. And we find every part of every object arranged on a similar principle. It is impossible that there should be so much providence in the last details, and none in the first principles. Then the arts of prophecy and of healing, which are part of the Cosmos, come of the good providence of the Gods.

All this care for the world, we must believe, is taken by the Gods without any act of will or labour. As bodies which possess some power produce their effects by merely existing: e.g. the sun gives light and heat by merely existing; so, and far more so, the Providence of the Gods acts without effort to itself and for the good of the objects of its forethought. This solves the problems of the Epicureans, who argue that what is Divine neither has trouble itself nor gives trouble to others.

The incorporeal providence of the Gods, both for bodies and for souls, is of this sort; but that which is of bodies and in bodies is different from this, and is called Fate, Heimarmenê, because the chain of causes (Heirmos) is more visible in the case of bodies; and it is for dealing with this Fate that the science of 'Mathematic' has been discovered.¹

Therefore, to believe that human things, especially their material constitution, are ordered not only by celestial beings but by the Celestial Bodies, is a reasonable and true belief. Reason shows that health and sickness, good fortune and bad fortune, arise according to our deserts from that source. But to attribute men's acts of injustice and lust to Fate, is

¹ i.e. Astrology, dealing with the 'Celestial Bodies'.
to make ourselves good and the Gods bad. Unless by chance a man meant by such a statement that in general all things are for the good of the world and for those who are in a natural state, but that bad education or weakness of nature changes the goods of Fate for the worse. Just as it happens that the Sun, which is good for all, may be injurious to persons with ophthalmia or fever. Else why do the Massagetae eat their fathers, the Hebrews practise circumcision, and the Persians preserve rules of rank? ¹ Why do astrologers, while calling Saturn and Mars 'malignant', proceed to make them good, attributing to them philosophy and royalty, generalships and treasures? And if they are going to talk of triangles and squares, it is absurd that gods should change their natures according to their position in space, while human virtue remains the same everywhere. Also the fact that the stars predict high or low rank for the father of the person whose horoscope is taken, teaches that they do not always make things happen but sometimes only indicate things. For how could things which preceded the birth depend upon the birth?

Further, as there is Providence and Fate concerned with nations and cities, and also concerned with each individual, so there is also Fortune, which should next be treated. That power of the gods which orders for the good things which are not uniform, and which happen contrary to expectation, is commonly called Fortune, and it is for this reason that the goddess is especially worshipped in public by cities; for every city consists of elements which are not uniform. For-

¹ Cf. Hdt. i. 134.
tune has power beneath the moon, since above the moon no single thing can happen by fortune.

If Fortune makes a wicked man prosperous and a good man poor, there is no need to wonder. For the wicked regard wealth as everything, the good as nothing. And the good fortune of the bad cannot take away their badness, while virtue alone will be enough for the good.

X. Concerning Virtue and Vice.

The doctrine of Virtue and Vice depends on that of the Soul. When the irrational soul enters into the body and immediately produces Fight and Desire, the rational soul, put in authority over all these, makes the soul tripartite, composed of Reason, Fight, and Desire. Virtue in the region of Reason is Wisdom, in the region of Fight is Courage, in the region of Desire it is Temperance; the virtue of the whole Soul is Righteousness. It is for Reason to judge what is right, for Fight in obedience to Reason to despise things that appear terrible, for Desire to pursue not the apparently desirable, but, that which is with Reason desirable. When these things are so, we have a righteous life; for righteousness in matters of property is but a small part of virtue. And thus we shall find all four virtues in properly trained men, but among the untrained one may be brave and unjust, another temperate and stupid, another prudent and unprincipled. Indeed these qualities should not be called Virtues when they are devoid of Reason and imperfect and found in irrational beings. Vice should be regarded as consisting of the opposite elements. In
Reason it is Folly, in Fight, Cowardice, in Desire, Intemperance, in the whole soul, Unrighteousness.

The virtues are produced by the right social organization and by good rearing and education, the vices by the opposite.

XI. Concerning right and wrong Social Organization.¹

Constitutions also depend on the tripartite nature of the Soul. The rulers are analogous to Reason, the soldiers to Fight, the common folk to Desires.

Where all things are done according to Reason and the best man in the nation rules, it is a Kingdom; where more than one rule according to Reason and Fight, it is an Aristocracy; where the government is according to Desire and offices depend on money, that constitution is called a Timocracy. The contraries are: to Kingdom tyranny, for Kingdom does all things with the guidance of reason and tyranny nothing; to Aristocracy oligarchy, when not the best people but a few of the worst are rulers; to Timocracy democracy, when not the rich but the common folk possess the whole power.

XII. The origin of evil things; and that there is no positive evil.

The Gods being good and making all things, how do evils exist in the world? Or perhaps it is better first to state the fact that, the Gods being good and making all things, there is no positive evil, it only comes by

¹ [This section is a meagre reminiscence of Plato’s discussion in Repub. viii. The interest in politics and government had died out with the loss of political freedom.]
absence of good; just as darkness itself does not exist, but only comes about by absence of light.

If Evil exists it must exist either in Gods or minds or souls or bodies. It does not exist in any god, for all god is good. If any one speaks of a 'bad mind' he means a mind without mind. If of a bad soul, he will make soul inferior to body, for no body in itself is evil. If he says that Evil is made up of soul and body together, it is absurd that separately they should not be evil, but joined should create evil.

Suppose it is said that there are evil spirits:—if they have their power from the gods, they cannot be evil; if from elsewhere, the gods do not make all things. If they do not make all things, then either they wish to and cannot, or they can and do not wish; neither of which is consistent with the idea of God. We may see, therefore, from these arguments, that there is no positive evil in the world.

It is in the activities of men that the evils appear, and that not of all men nor always. And as to these, if men sinned for the sake of evil, Nature itself would be evil. But if the adulterer thinks his adultery bad but his pleasure good, and the murderer thinks the murder bad but the money he gets by it good, and the man who does evil to an enemy thinks that to do evil is bad but to punish his enemy good, and if the soul commits all its sins in that way, then the evils are done for the sake of goodness. (In the same way, because in a given place light does not exist, there comes darkness, which has no positive existence.) The soul sins therefore because, while aiming at good, it makes mistakes about the good, because it is not Primary Essence. And we see many things done by the Gods to prevent
it from making mistakes and to heal it when it has made them. Arts and sciences, curses and prayers, sacrifices and initiations, laws and constitutions, judgements and punishments, all came into existence for the sake of preventing souls from sinning; and when they are gone forth from the body gods and spirits of purification cleanse them of their sins.

XIII. How things eternal are said to ‘be made’

(γι γνεσθαι).

Concerning the Gods and the World and human things this account will suffice for those who are not able to go through the whole course of philosophy but yet have not souls beyond help.

It remains to explain how these objects were never made and are never separated one from another, since we ourselves have said above that the secondary substances were ‘made’ by the first.

Everything made is made either by art or by a physical process or according to some power.¹ Now in art or nature the maker must needs be prior to the made: but the maker, according to power, constitutes the made absolutely together with itself, since its power is inseparable from it; as the sun makes light, fire makes heat, snow makes cold.

Now if the Gods make the world by art, they do not make it be, they make it be such as it is. For all art makes the form of the object. What therefore makes it to be?

If by a physical process, how in that case can the maker help giving part of himself to the made? As

¹ κατά διάνοιαν secundum potentiam quandam; i.e. in accordance with some indwelling ‘virtue’ or quality.
the Gods are incorporeal, the World ought to be incorporeal too. If it were argued that the Gods were bodies, then where would the power of incorporeal things come from? And if we were to admit it, it would follow that when the world decays, its maker must be decaying too, if he is a maker by physical process.

If the Gods make the world neither by art nor by physical process, it only remains that they make it by power. Everything so made subsists together with that which possesses the power. Neither can things so made be destroyed, except the power of the maker be taken away: so that those who believe in the destruction of the world, either deny the existence of the gods, or, while admitting it, deny God's power.

Therefore he who makes all things by his own power makes all things subsist together with himself. And since his power is the greatest power he must needs be the maker not only of men and animals, but of Gods, men, and spirits. And the further removed the First God is from our nature, the more powers there must be between us and him. For all things that are very far apart have many intermediate points between them.

XIV. In what sense, though the Gods never change, they are said to be made angry and appeased.

If any one thinks the doctrine of the unchangeableness of the Gods is reasonable and true, and then wonders how it is that they rejoice in the good and reject the bad, are angry with sinners and become propitious when appeased, the answer is as follows:

1 The repetition of ἀπόφασις in this sentence seems to be a mistake.
God does not rejoice—for that which rejoices also grieves; nor is he angered—for to be angered is a passion; nor is he appeased by gifts—if he were, he would be conquered by pleasure.

It is impious to suppose that the Divine is affected for good or ill by human things. The Gods are always good and always do good and never harm, being always in the same state and like themselves. The truth simply is that, when we are good, we are joined to the Gods by our likeness to them; when bad, we are separated from them by our unlikeness. And when we live according to virtue we cling to the gods, and when we become evil we make the gods our enemies—not because they are angered against us, but because our sins prevent the light of the gods from shining upon us, and put us in communion with spirits of punishment. And if by prayers and sacrifices we find forgiveness of sins, we do not appease or change the gods, but by what we do and by our turning towards the Divine we heal our own badness and so enjoy again the goodness of the gods. To say that God turns away from the evil is like saying that the sun hides himself from the blind.

XV. Why we give worship to the Gods when they need nothing.

This solves the question about sacrifices and other rites performed to the Gods. The Divine itself is without needs, and the worship is paid for our own benefit. The providence of the Gods reaches everywhere and needs only some congruity\(^1\) for its reception. All congruity comes about by representation

\(^1\) επιτηδείωτης.
and likeness; for which reason the temples are made in representation of heaven, the altar of earth, the images of life (that is why they are made like living things), the prayers of the element of thought, the mystic letters \(^1\) of the unspeakable celestial forces, the herbs and stones of matter, and the sacrificial animals of the irrational life in us.

From all these things the Gods gain nothing; what gain could there be to God? It is we who gain some communion with them.

XVI. **Concerning sacrifices and other worships, that we benefit man by them, but not the gods.**

I think it well to add some remarks about sacrifices. In the first place, since we have received everything from the gods, and it is right to pay the giver some tithe of his gifts, we pay such a tithe of possessions in votive offerings, of bodies in gifts of \(\text{hair and}^2\) adornment, and of life in sacrifices. Then secondly, prayers without sacrifices are only words, with sacrifices they are live words; the word gives meaning to the life, while the life animates the word. Thirdly, the happiness of every object is its own perfection; and perfection for each is communion with its own cause. For this reason we pray for communion with the Gods. Since, therefore, the first life is the life of the gods, but human life is also life of a kind, and human life wishes for communion with divine life, a mean term is needed. For things very far apart cannot have communion without a mean term, and the mean term must be like the things joined; therefore

\(^1\) On the mystic letters see above, p. 142.
the mean term between life and life must be life. That is why men sacrifice animals; only the rich do so now, but in old days everybody did, and that not indiscriminately, but giving the suitable offerings to each god together with a great deal of other worship. Enough of this subject.

XVII. *That the World is by nature Eternal.*

We have shown above that the gods will not destroy the world. It remains to show that its nature is indestructible.

Everything that is destroyed is either destroyed by itself or by something else. If the world is destroyed by itself, fire must needs burn itself and water dry itself. If by something else, it must be either by a body or by something incorporeal. By something incorporeal is impossible; for incorporeal things preserve bodies—nature, for instance, and soul—and nothing is destroyed by a cause whose nature is to preserve it. If it is destroyed by some body, it must be either by those which exist or by others.

If by those which exist: then either those moving in a straight line must be destroyed by those that revolve, or vice versa. But those that revolve have no destructive nature; else, why do we never see anything destroyed from that cause? Nor yet can those which are moving straight touch the others; else, why have they never been able to do so yet?

But neither can those moving straight be destroyed by one another: for the destruction of one is the creation of another; and that is not to be destroyed but to change.

But if the World is to be destroyed by other bodies
than these it is impossible to say where such bodies are or whence they are to arise.

Again, everything destroyed is destroyed either in form or matter. (Form is the shape of a thing, matter the body.) Now if the form is destroyed and the matter remains, we see other things come into being. If matter is destroyed, how is it that the supply has not failed in all these years?

If when matter is destroyed other matter takes its place, the new matter must come either from something that is or from something that is not. If from that-which-is, as long as that-which-is always remains, matter always remains. But if that-which-is is destroyed, such a theory means that not the World only but everything in the universe is destroyed.

If again matter comes from that-which-is-not: in the first place, it is impossible for anything to come from that which is not; but suppose it to happen, and that matter did arise from that which is not; then, as long as there are things which are not, matter will exist. For I presume there can never be an end of things which are not.

If they say that matter <will become> formless: in the first place, why does this happen to the world as a whole when it does not happen to any part? Secondly, by this hypothesis they do not destroy the being of bodies, but only their beauty.

Further, everything destroyed is either resolved into the elements from which it came, or else vanishes into not-being. If things are resolved into the elements from which they came, then there will be others: else how did they come into being at all? If that-which-is is to depart into not-being, what prevents that happen-
ing to God himself? (Which is absurd.) Or if God’s power prevents that, it is not a mark of power to be able to save nothing but oneself. And it is equally impossible for that which is to come out of nothing and to depart into nothing.

Again, if the World is destroyed, it must needs either be destroyed according to Nature or against Nature. Against Nature is impossible, for that which is against Nature is not stronger than Nature.¹ If according to Nature, there must be another Nature which changes the Nature of the World: which does not appear.

Again, anything that is naturally destructible we can ourselves destroy. But no one has ever destroyed or altered the round body of the World. And the elements, though they can be changed, cannot be destroyed. Again, everything destructible is changed by time and grows old. But the world through all these years has remained utterly unchanged.

Having said so much for the help of those who feel the need of very strong demonstrations, I pray the World himself to be gracious to me.

XVIII. Why there are rejections of God, and that God is not injured.

Nor need the fact that rejections of God have taken place in certain parts of the earth and will often take place hereafter, disturb the mind of the wise: both because these things do not affect the gods, just as we saw that worship did not benefit them; and because the soul, being of middle essence, cannot be

¹ The text here is imperfect: I have followed Mullach’s correction.
always right; and because the whole world cannot enjoy the providence of the gods equally, but some parts may partake of it eternally, some at certain times, some in the primal manner, some in the secondary. Just as the head enjoys all the senses, but the rest of the body only one.

For this reason, it seems, those who ordained Festivals ordained also Forbidden Days, in which some temples lay idle, some were shut, some had their adornment removed, in expiation of the weakness of our nature.

It is not unlikely, too, that the rejection of God is a kind of punishment: we may well believe that those who knew the gods and neglected them in one life may in another life be deprived of the knowledge of them altogether. Also those who have worshipped their own kings as gods have deserved as their punishment to lose all knowledge of God.

XIX. Why sinners are not punished at once.

There is no need to be surprised if neither these sins nor yet others bring immediate punishment upon sinners. For it is not only Spirits 1 who punish the soul, the Soul brings itself to judgement: and also it is not right for those who endure for ever to attain everything in a short time: and also, there is need of human virtue. If punishment followed instantly upon sin, men would act justly from fear and have no virtue.

Souls are punished when they have gone forth from the body, some wandering among us, some going to hot or cold places of the earth, some harassed by Spirits. Under all circumstances they suffer with the

1 δαιμόνες.
irrational part of their nature, with which they also sinned. For its sake \(^1\) there subsists that shadowy body which is seen about graves, especially the graves of evil livers.

**XX. On Transmigration of Souls, and how Souls are said to migrate into brute beasts.**

If the transmigration of a soul takes place into a rational being, it simply becomes the soul of that body. But if the soul migrates into a brute beast, it follows the body outside, as a guardian spirit follows a man. For there could never be a rational soul in an irrational being.

The transmigration of souls can be proved from the congenital afflictions of persons. For why are some born blind, others paralytic, others with some sickness in the soul itself? Again, it is the natural duty of Souls to do their work in the body; are we to suppose that when once they leave the body they spend all eternity in idleness?

Again, if the souls did not again enter into bodies, they must either be infinite in number or God must constantly be making new ones. But there is nothing infinite in the world; for in a finite whole there cannot be an infinite part. Neither can others be made; for everything in which something new goes on being created, must be imperfect. And the World, being made by a perfect author, ought naturally to be perfect.

**XXI. That the Good are happy, both living and dead.**

Souls that have lived in virtue are in general happy,\(^2\)

\(^1\) i.e. that it may continue to exist and satisfy justice.

\(^2\) εὐδαιμονοθεί.
and when separated from the irrational part of their nature, and made clean from all matter, have communion with the gods and join them in the governing of the whole world. Yet even if none of this happiness fell to their lot, virtue itself, and the joy and glory of virtue, and the life that is subject to no grief and no master are enough to make happy those who have set themselves to live according to virtue and have achieved it.