ANCIENT PHILOSOPHY:

A TREATISE

OF

MORAL AND METAPHYSICAL PHILOSOPHY

Anterior to the Christian Era;

COMPRISING

HEBREW PHILOSOPHY. PERSIAN PHILOSOPHY.
EGYPTIAN PHILOSOPHY. GRECIAN PHILOSOPHY.
HINDOO PHILOSOPHY. ROMAN PHILOSOPHY.
CHINESE PHILOSOPHY. THE ALEXANDRIAN PHILOSOPHY.

BY THE

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TO

His Excellency the Chevalier Bunsen

THIS VOLUME IS DEDICATED,

AS A SMALL TOKEN OF GRATITUDE FOR HIS KINDNESS

AND OF RESPECT FOR HIS CHARACTER.

PREFACE

TO THE SECOND EDITION.

The article on Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy in the *Encyclopædia Metropolitana* was undertaken at the desire of the late Rev. Hugh James Rose, who became Editor of that work after the death of Mr. Smedley. Mr. Rose expressed his wish, that the form of the treatise should be historical, and not didactic. I thought that there were many histories of Philosophy already; that the space allotted to a single article in an Encyclopædia was hardly sufficient to contain one; and that I was very incompetent to write it. At the same time, the reasons which Mr. Rose gave for objecting to a dogmatical treatise seemed to me very weighty.

On consideration I believed that I should be acting in conformity with the wishes of the accomplished Editor, who had, I knew, a very hearty dislike to mere historical abridgments, if, leaving the student to seek for a formal and regular account of systems in the many French or German works which profess to furnish one, I contented myself with offering him a few hints which might help him in examining the purpose of the most conspicuous teachers; in reading their books, when they had left any; in connecting them with the country or the age wherein they flourished. If I confined myself to this object, I hoped that the article, however short and imperfect, would not necessarily be superficial. The remarks in it could not be a substitute for the reflections of the reader, or for an examination of the original sources: they might lead, I hoped, to both.

Nearly twelve years after the death of the kind-hearted and excellent man under whose auspices I began this essay, I have been requested to prepare it for separate publication. In looking over it after so long an interval, I have discovered that it accomplished very

inadequately even the humble object which I had originally proposed to myself. I failed, as it now seems to me, in a clear apprehension of the word Philosophy,—in seeing what part different nations had taken in the inquiries which it denotes,—in tracing the workings of the Wisdom which had guided these inquiries,—in noticing how one grew out of another. I found also I had indulged far too much in disquisition, and too little in biography. Some of these errors I have endeavoured to correct in the present volume, a great portion of which is entirely new. Some of them, I have no doubt, remain, and will be as offensive to the reader as they are to the writer. I wish him at least to understand what I have attempted, that he may be the more aware of my deficiencies, may suffer less from them, and may not judge me by the standard of learned and elaborate books, which I never pretended to imitate. I should have been glad to have expunged the disagreeable affectation of the plural pronoun; but I did not like to destroy altogether the connection between this volume and the Encyclopædia, seeing that I have many personal reasons for being thankful that I had the honour of contributing to its pages.

The present volume treats only of Ancient Philosophy; the second part of the original article will require to be entirely re-written.

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INTRODUCTION.

I.

Philosophy. Philosophy means literally the love of Wisdom. It is the love of a hidden treasure. Therefore it comes to mean a *search* after Wisdom.

II.

Physical Philosophy. That this hidden treasure is not something which can be seen or handled, weighed or measured, all have confessed. Yet it may be sought among the things that are seen and handled, weighed and measured, or, to use a more general expression still, among the things that are produced and grow—among *Physical* things.

III.

Metaphysical Philosophy. The philosopher asks whether Wisdom is in these things; whether it is of the same kind with them; or whether it is of a different kind, whether it is fixed, constant, unproduced? He who seeks for an object which is not of the same kind with the things around him is called a *Metaphysical* philosopher.

IV.

Moral Philosophy. But how has he learned to dream of an object different in kind from these things? Is *he* different from them? How comes he to desire this Wisdom, this hidden treasure? Must it not have more to do with him than with them? If he knew himself, the ways, habits, manners, which belong to his race, might he not be nearer to

the object which he seeks? These ways, habits, manners, occupy the *Moral* philosopher.

V.

Design of this Treatise. It is the purpose of the present sketch to indicate how men have been led into these inquiries, how in different countries and ages they have been pursued, what have been the issues of them.

VI.

Subjects— how connected in it. Moral inquiries are suggested by our daily acts, our ordinary speech, our necessary relations. Metaphysical inquiries are suggested by the discovery of powers in ourselves which we do not find in other creatures. The former therefore concern us most, and in a history will present themselves first to our notice. But we shall find that they cannot be separated. Of physical inquiries, so far as they have been entered upon merely for the sake of ascertaining the order and constitution of the world around us, nothing will be reported. So far as they have been suggested by the desire to find Wisdom, they are too much involved in moral inquiries, they are too evidently presumed in the word *metaphysical* to be passed over. The philosopher seeks for Wisdom everywhere that he may know where it is not.

VII.

Limitation of the subject. All nations have been engaged in this search for Wisdom, those most actively which have left most records of themselves in the History of the World. Buildings, poems, pictures, mechanical arts, above all polities, have indicated the direction which different periods, countries, individuals have taken in the pursuit. But the name "Philosopher" has been generally and rightly confined to one who has engaged deliberately in the search, and has traced out a

method in it. Such a man interprets the less conscious striving of his contemporaries.

VIII.

Not a history of opinions and systems, but of investigations. It would, however, be a fatal mistake to make even the most rapid and superficial sketch of philosophical investigations merely a record of the conclusions at which different Schools have arrived. These conclusions are in general premature efforts to terminate the search for Wisdom, to confine the results of it within a few meagre propositions. To trace the thoughts which were working in the minds of those who founded Schools, to discover how they were affected by their characters, teachers, disciples, opponents, personal and political conflicts, to watch the processes by which they were expanded, completed, narrowed, is a far more interesting work, and one which falls far more properly within the province of the historian of philosophy. Those who busy themselves with the speculations and contradictions of Schools are likely to begin with extravagant expectations and to end in despondency. Earnest sympathising meditations upon the actual efforts of men to discover the secret of their life, and the ends for which they live, contain equal encouragements to humility and to hope.

IX.

Division of the subject. This sketch will consist of two parts. It will treat of the Philosophy before and after the coming of Christ. The subjects considered in the first part will be—1st. The Hebrew Philosophy; 2nd. The Hindoo; 3rd. The Chinese; 4th. The Persian; 5th. The Greek; 6th. The Roman; 7th. The Græco-Hebraic or Alexandrian. In the second part the subjects will be—1. The Philosophy of the first six centuries; 2. The Philosophy of the Middle Ages; 3. The Philosophy of the centuries from the thirteenth to our own time.

CHAPTER I. THE HEBREWS.

SECTION I. GROUNDS OF HEBREW PHILOSOPHY.

1. **Whether the Hebrew Scriptures recognise the idea of philosophy.** The Hebrew Scriptures are commonly passed over by the historian of philosophy. Yet the book of Job describes philosophy in particularly exact language. "Where is wisdom found, and where is the place of understanding?" this is said to be *the* inquiry in which man is more interested than in finding the veins of silver or in bringing the gold out of the earth. The book of Proverbs sets forth the search for wisdom as its subject and purpose. Man is to dig for it as for hid treasure. Such language is scarcely consistent with an opinion which has been eagerly maintained by persons holding the most opposite views respecting these books; that they assume all knowledge to be communicated from above, and therefore not to be an object for the search or investigation of man. This opinion, however, could not have been entertained so generally if there had been no facts or reasons to justify it. The writers of the book of Job and of the book of Proverbs presume the existence of a revelation, nay, ground their feeling of the possibility and the duty of a search for wisdom upon it. Evidently, then, this revelation must have a different meaning in their minds from that which it bears in the minds of many moderns. To know what sense it does bear, we must refer to those books which profess to record how God made himself known to man. In these we shall find not Hebrew philosophy itself, but the grounds and elements of it.

2. **Genesis. First principles.** The book of Genesis opens with the creation of the World, or Order, in which we are dwelling. Modern geological discoveries and speculations have done much to remove a veil which had been thrown over the meaning of this record, and

to bring forth the all-important principle, that the sacred historian is speaking of the world in its relation to Man. The whole after history is incoherent and unintelligible if this principle is forgotten; **What they involve.** if the words "God made Man in his own likeness," are not taken as the key to it; if the course of the visible world is not contemplated as secondary and subordinate to the relation between God and our race.

3. **The elements of human history.** These data once assumed, it becomes not a strange exceptional fact that the unseen Being should reveal or unveil himself to Man, but the law and condition of man's being. That He after whose image the creature is made should not have given him the capacity for beholding his own archetype, that He should refuse him the power of being what he was made to be, this would be the contradiction. Accordingly it is taken throughout these Scriptures as a contradiction. God is everywhere said to be speaking to man; man is intended to hear. God places the first man in a garden, calls forth in him the power by which he names the creatures, provides him with a helpmate, creates the marriage bond. He submits to a lower creature, denies the authority of the invisible Lord, wishes to hide himself from His presence. He is awakened to own that presence, and to feel that he has transgressed. He is driven from the garden: he is to eat his bread by the sweat of his brow; but this labour is to teach him that he is not dependent upon the earth which he is to till and subdue; that he is dependent upon an invisible Ruler. The first murder is committed in the world: God asks Cain for his brother. His great punishment is that he goes out from the presence of God. His descendants are described as building cities and inventing mechanical arts. Another race, of which Seth is the head, is said to be called by the name of the Lord. The first is an irregular, disorderly condition. The second confesses itself to be under the Divine government. Though nothing is recorded of it but the succession of its families, it is treated as being in the state intended for man at this stage of his growth. General violence and confusion afterwards overspread the earth. A flood is

sent to punish the wickedness of those who dwell upon it: the race is preserved in one of the Seth family. A covenant of God with man is the foundation of the restored world. The sons of Noah are meant to people the earth according to their tongues, in their nations, in their families. A portion of them seeks to set at naught this purpose, and to build a tower on the plain of Shinar, that they may not be scattered abroad on the face of the earth. God, we are told, confounded the rebellious scheme. They left off to build that tower. But a mighty hunter established the kingdoms of Babel and of Nineveh. The Babel kingdom is throughout Scripture treated as the form of godless society.

4. **The ground of human knowledge and life.** A Divine education, then, is assumed as the regular basis of human life and human fellowship. God teaches man what he is. Man knows what he is; he fulfils his appointed task just so far as he receives this instruction. The instruction proceeds from an invisible Being, and is addressed to something else in man than that which connects him with the visible world. He is always ready to forget God, to bow down before visible things. So far as he does this, he becomes a slave and an animal. So far as he does this, the society in which he lives becomes corrupt and untenable.

5. **The education of Abraham.** Abram is called out by God from his father's house to go into a strange land. This calling is the foundation of his life. The Lord of all is speaking to him; he heeds the voice and obeys it. That Lord makes him know that He is one in whom he may trust. He believes in Him as a righteous Being. His faith is counted to him for righteousness; he acknowledges the Being in whose likeness he is made; he becomes like Him. His outward life is of the most commonplace kind. He is simply a shepherd, with many flocks and herds, dwelling in tents, surrounded by people who dwell in cities with whom he does not mix but with whom he has frequent dealings. Once he goes forth at the head of his servants to rescue a kinsman who had taken up his abode in the city of Sodom. As he returns, he finds a priest of the most high God in Salem, to whom he gives

a tenth of his spoil. He goes into Egypt: it is already an organized nation; a Pharaoh is reigning there. He loses his faith in God, and tells a lie to save himself: it almost costs him his wife. All his discipline is of the same practical kind. He finds that God overthrows cities which have become hateful and given up to beastly crimes: he is taught to intercede for the righteous in these cities. He is sure that the Judge of all the earth will not slay them with the wicked. He must do right. Abraham is living under the promise that in him and his seed all the families of the earth are to be blessed: but he has no seed. A child is born to him by a bondwoman living in his house. Thus he hopes the promise will be fulfilled: but he is told that the child of his own wife must be his heir. She is barren: yet he believes. He waits long. When the child has been born, and is growing up, he is called to sacrifice it. He gives himself to God; is ready to do what is commanded. Another offering is provided, and Abraham is blessed for his trust. Thus the whole history, so far as he individually is concerned, is the history of a man taught to know himself by knowing in whom he has to believe. He has nothing whatever to distinguish him from his kind: he learns that which he has in common with all human beings: he learns the relations in which human beings stand to the world about them and to their Creator.

6. **The education of the chosen family.** But such a history cannot be merely an individual one. That he may know what he is, Abraham is taught what it is to be a master, a husband, a father. The discipline which has most to do with himself has to do with him in these characters. It is in his position as the head of a family, the founder of a race, that God speaks to him. Thus he is educated to feel his connection with the past and the future. Hebrew history is grounded upon the belief that God made a covenant with the patriarchs and with their seed after them. They are circumcised: they are taught that they are separated and set apart by the Lord of all. The sign shows that what they are separated from is something in themselves. Their own flesh is cut off. The Hebrew has the same tendency to forget God as other

men. Other men, again, are treated as subjects of Divine teaching as well as the chosen race. God speaks to Abimelech and to Pharaoh. The sign of the covenant itself is shared with the descendants of Ishmael. The patriarchs are shown to have all the evils of their neighbours, to have some which belong peculiarly to them from their sense of having peculiar privileges. Jacob is more deceitful and treacherous than Esau; he who prizes his birthright than he who despises it. The one tries to get the rights of an heir of the covenant by trick; the other thinks nothing of that inheritance, but much of the loss of corn and wine which he believes are entailed upon it. Both are disappointed: the deceiver becomes a wanderer; but in his wandering learns that God is with him, though he knew it not, and that there is a ladder between earth and heaven. He has put himself under a Divine education; it does not leave him till it has punished him for his falsehood. The more frank and open-hearted hunter has his reward: he does not lose what he feared to lose; he misses only that which he never cared for.

7. **Joseph and his brethren** The rest of the book of Genesis is in harmony with these portions of it. The heads of the Jewish nation, the circumcised sons of Jacob, commit the crimes which might be looked for in a set of wild shepherds and settlers. Their sins are especially family sins. The one who feels what it is to be in covenant with a righteous being is taught to understand his privilege by being an exile and a prisoner. He learns that God is with him, keeping him from evil, giving him wisdom. He believes that He cares for Pharaoh and Egypt, and is their Ruler and Teacher as well as his! He becomes an instructor to a king. But it is still with his family relations that the historian is chiefly occupied; he cares more to tell how he behaved to his brethren, and was made known to them, than how he bought up the lands of the people of Egypt. The consciences and hearts of human beings have testified that he is right; that such records do concern us more, and are really more wonderful than the other: they belong to humanity, to morality: they set forth the family relations of human beings as the first

stage of their spiritual history; that out of which all the other stages must gradually develope themselves.

8. **The family becoming a nation.** The book of Exodus exhibits the Jewish people still as a collection of families: they have multiplied in Egypt, are regarded as a dangerous body of aliens, are reduced into slavery. The book gives the history of their deliverance from this condition. God sees the affliction of the people, and hears their cry; He remembers his covenant, and calls a man out of one of their tribes to be their deliverer. Egypt is presented to us as a nation abounding in wise men: they practise magic and soothsaying: they are the advisers of the king. Moses is brought up in the court of the king, and is learned in this wisdom. While he is still young, he feels for his countrymen, tries to deliver them, and smites an Egyptian. He becomes an exile in the land of Midian. There, as he is keeping his father-in-law's flock at the back of the desert, the Lord God speaks to him, and tells him that He is the God of Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob. But He makes known to Moses another name—"Say to the Israelites that the I Am hath sent thee to them." In this name he speaks to his countrymen; in this name he commands Pharaoh to let the people go. "The Lord God of the Hebrews" had sent him with that message. Pharaoh asks "Who is the Lord God?" and increases the people's burdens. The river is smitten; flies, lice, locusts attack the Egyptians; the magicians mimic the plagues. At last they and the people confess that a real hand is stretched out upon them. The first-born are destroyed. The slaves go out with a high hand. A memorial feast is appointed them, which they are to keep from generation to generation; a witness that the Lord was the protector of their households, and that He brought them out of the house of bondage.

9. **The new revelation: what it signified.** In this stage of the history, the principles are evidently the same as in the first. The invisible Lord is still the great speaker and actor in it. Men are recognised as in their right state when they hear His voice and confess His acting. It is still the rule and not the exception that he should reveal himself.

But the new revelation is evidently of a deeper kind than the former. The Egyptian priests and magicians had all kinds of thoughts and speculations about God; they had all plans of representing Him and propitiating Him. Hence superstitions, tricks, exaltation of men for their skill in these tricks, worship of the visible things in which they had discovered tokens of power, instruments of utility, causes of fear. The Lord of all comes forth declaring Himself as the true Being; Himself the teacher of wisdom to man, the ruler of the things to which he is doing homage. He makes the power felt which He is continually exercising. The plagues were signal startling specimens of judgments which He had exhibited before, and would exhibit again in that land. They are remarkable chiefly for this, that the reason of them is explained. Natural agents are shown to obey a moral law: a righteous Being sends them; they are to punish the oppressor, and deliver the oppressed.

10. **Hebrew polity.** On this foundation the polity of the Israelites stands. The name of God is the ground of it: He is the deliverer of the people; He calls out the leader who guides them through the wilderness; He gives them bread each morning, and causes the water to flow from the rock for them. He goes before them by night and by day; He casts the horse and the rider into the deep. He is the judge between man and man, the Teacher of their judges. He gives the law, He appoints the priest and the sacrifice; He orders the host, and goes with it to battle. He is the head of the tribes; He appoints the bounds of their habitation. The commonest arrangements have their sanction from His name. He inspires the artificer with his power of doing cunning works; He himself dwells in the tabernacle, and meets the worshipper at the mercy-seat.

11. **How distinguished from the Egyptian.** The covenant of God is at the root of the national as it was of the family society. There was for the most part no novelty in the mere Jewish institutions. A law, a priesthood, sacrifices, temples, existed in Egypt. The Jew did not bring these social forms with him, he found them established in the

land to which he and his countrymen went as a band of shepherds. They might have been cast aside as mere portions of an idolatrous system. In that case, the Israelites would have retained a set of family or pastoral institutions after they had grown into the dimensions of a people; in other words, they would have become an Arab horde. Had Moses stolen the tenet of the unity of God from the Egyptian sages, and published it to his countrymen as a witness that they were no longer a degraded caste, and that they might worship the one God of nature instead of the multitudinous gods of their oppressors, this would have been their fate. If, after taking this course, he had, in accommodation to their prejudices, pretended that he had a mission from an actual, living Being, who had authorized him to establish a system in all its essentials like the Egyptian, with a hard, lazy tenet of the Divine unity appended to it, he would have framed the most incongruous scheme of falsehood ever palmed upon the world; his name ought to be held accursed as that of the wickedest of all liars and blasphemers. Before we pronounce that sentence upon him, we should hear his own account of the matter. He does not boast that he proclaimed any tenet about the unity of God at all. He says that the I Am, the living God, sent him to be the guide and deliverer of his countrymen. The Egyptians believed in a hidden god. He said that hidden God had come forth to declare himself. The Egyptians thought that he had delegated to a set of priests the power to interpret His mind. He said God was ever living and acting. The priest was the witness of his presence, and of His relation to men. The Egyptian held that sacrifices were the means of converting the Divine will to man's will. He said they were confessions of man's revolt from God's will, and could never be bribes to the Divine Being, who had himself appointed their kind and their amount. The Egyptian spoke of laws which were either irreversible or to be changed at the will of the monarch. He spoke of laws as the utterance of an unseen and eternal King, which no man could set aside, which were ever proceeding from the mouth of God himself, enforced by thunders and lightnings, declaring to each

Israelite that he was in the presence of God, warning him of tendencies which were hateful in God's eyes, and would destroy him. The Egyptian had statutes provided for the particular emergencies of the land, which must be enforced by some religious machinery. The law of Moses assumes that the Lord of all, who does not think it beneath Him to care for the growth of trees and the fall of sparrows, directed the arrangements which were suitable to an agricultural people dwelling on the shores of the Mediterranean. The Egyptians had temples where they worshipped beings whom they conceived of from the different phenomena of Nature in the places where these temples stood. Moses affirmed that God does not float in the air, or dwell in the hills, or in the clouds; but that there, where it pleased him to dwell, might His glory be felt, there might the worshipper converse with him.

Whether this description of the polity be true or not, it is at least consistent. It does not set aside Egyptian institutions or Egyptian faith; it justifies them by inverting them. They were grounded upon man's conceptions of God; the Israelite's upon God's declaration of Himself to man. The one assumes the nation to be a society which must be upheld, which can only be upheld, by Divine sanction,—which must, therefore, forge these sanctions; the other assumes the nation to be established by the living and true God himself, to be the witness of His truth and permanence, to be bound to a perpetual protest and war against every attempt to confound Him with visible objects.

12. **The office of the nation.** This, according to the Hebrew economy, is the one great characteristic function of the nation. It grows out of the family; it is grounded on the family covenant; it must preserve the family distinctions; its lands must be apportioned to the different tribes; its memorial feasts must be connected with the life of the household; in battle every man must encamp by the standard of the house of his fathers. But the nation is not a mere collection of families. It is a witness of a perpetual battle that is going on between order and disorder, right and wrong, the invisible God who is the Lord of man, and the visible things which are claiming lordship over him.

The Israelite, the covenant servant of God, is to take part in this fight; he is to go forth as God's instrument in putting down corruption and oppression. When he has a commission to destroy, he is to destroy. He is to hold the sacrifice of individual life a cheap thing for the sake of asserting the right and the truth, which men have violated. Idolatry he looks upon as the cause of all strife and degradation. He is to hate it with a perfect hatred.

13. **The signs of national life.** This new stage in the life of the Israelites is the commencement of Song and of Written Law. **Song.** The first is the expression of thanksgiving for deliverance from the visible oppressor. It proclaims the Lord as a deliverer and a man of war. It is poured forth by an individual man who feels that he is the member of a nation, and who becomes its spokesman. Though he speaks the praises of God, he feels that he is inspired by God. The flame of the song, like that of the sacrifice, has been first kindled by Him to whom it ascends.

The Code. The Code is precisely the opposite of the Song. It comes from the lips of the Lord; it is simply His utterance. It carries with it no inspiration. It takes each man apart, and makes him feel that he alone is spoken to, though a crowd surrounds him. Yet it too comes forth from a Deliverer; it is the sign of a new and greatly-advanced stage of education. The discipline of experience has not passed away, but distinct formal precepts have been added to it. The memorial stones or pillars have given place to the written letter. The finger of God has permanently set down the decrees which his people are to keep.

Its authority. They are *decrees*. The whole force of the code, as a code, consists in its coming forth from Him who has a right to command, who has given the sea its bounds, and has determined what man is to be. The right of the Lawgiver to say—So it shall be—is the foundation of every precept. But then it must be remembered that He who claims this right first revealed Himself to the Israelite as his Deliverer and Friend, as the enemy of oppression and wrong, as One who does not act from self-will. A law wanting in either of these

conditions the Hebrew Scriptures teach us to consider a contradiction. If law is the creature of self-will, its meaning and its sanction perish in the very attempt to enforce it. For law to proceed from those to whom it is addressed, is equally at variance with the idea of these books. They assume that there is a righteous Will in the universe, and that that Will can utter itself, and has uttered itself.

The Code national. But the code is addressed to the covenant people. It is strictly national. How, then, have the Ten Commandments been felt to be the moral institute of the tribes of modern Europe, differing as they do in all external respects from the Jewish? It is not too much anticipating a future part of this sketch, to say that this has only happened in so far as the inhabitants of modern Europe have felt themselves to belong to distinct nations, and have recognised the essential grounds of the Jewish polity, the covenant, calling, actual government of an unseen Lord, as applying to themselves in their national character. Not as members of a more extensive society, but precisely as united in particular local societies, have they felt the obligations and the virtue of this code. Anything which has weakened their national feeling, or absorbed it, has weakened the authority of the Ten Commandments. Hence the distinction between these Commandments and the mere statutes of the Jewish people has strongly commended itself to the conscience of these nations, not because they have denied the latter to have a Divine origin, but because they have felt that the same Wisdom which adapted a certain class of commands to the peculiarities of one locality and age, must intend a different one for another. The Ten Commandments they have recognised as possessing nothing of this limitation.

Distinction of moral and positive precepts. The distinction of positive and essentially moral commands, which some have sought to introduce into this subject, does not therefore seem to concern us here. We may have many occasions for noticing it hereafter, but into the question of a code it cannot enter. Every part of a Law must, *ex vi termini*, be positive; that is, it must be laid down. But what is laid

down may concern the inhabitants of a particular district as such, or may concern them as human beings. This is a distinction to the perception of which the subjects of the Jewish economy were especially awakened. To the Commandments which were spoken on Sinai there were added no more. All the subsequent legislation, though referred to the same Authority, is separated from these. All the subsequent history was a witness to the Jew that in the setting up of any god besides the Unseen Deliverer, in the fancy that there could be any likeness of Him in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth; in the loss of awe for His Name; in the loss of the distinction between Work and Rest as the ground of man's life, and as having its archetype in the Divine Being, and as worked by Him into the tissue of the existence of His own people; in the loss of reverence for parents, for life, for marriage, for property, for character, and in the covetous feeling which is at the root of these evils—lay the sources of political disunion and crime, the loss of all personal dignity and manliness.

Property. Property, it will be seen, was carefully guarded by this code. *One* of its provisions refers to this subject. It cannot be pretended that this law *exists* for the sake of protecting individual possession, though it may truly be affirmed that the reverence for property was a sign of this second stage of Jewish education. With the earlier tent life of the patriarchs it had comparatively little to do. We see the commencement of it in the disputes between the herdsmen of Lot and Abraham in the arrangements about wells, in the purchase of burying-grounds. It comes out clearly in the assignment of portions to the sons of Jacob. But as yet there are within the limits of the chosen people no distinct rules to protect it. It is connected with the distinct protesting character of the nation itself, with the distinct sense of individuality which was awakened in its members.

The universal element in the nation. But mixed with the family and national institutions, was the hint of something more large than either family or nation. The Levite tribe was exempt from the ordinary regulations of property. It represented the whole people, and repre-

sented each family; while it bore witness that the relation in which the Israelites stood to the I Am, could not be satisfactorily expressed without breaking through the forms and limitations of a local commonwealth. In fact, all these institutions, while they taught Israelites to prize boundaries and land-marks,—while they strengthened their attachment to place and their reverence for it, were perpetually reminding every one who devoutly submitted to them, and meditated on them, that he had that in him which did not belong to space or to time, to which only a Being above all such restraints could speak, which only the knowledge of such a Being could satisfy.

14. **The Jewish a moral and metaphysical history.** Whatever other characteristics this history may have, or may want, no one will deny that it is a moral and metaphysical history, according to the definition which has already been given of those terms. It is moral, in that, from the first to last, it refers directly to man, to the habits, ways, constitution of the human race, as distinct from every other race. It is metaphysical, inasmuch as it asserts that man himself is distinct from physical things; that though he has that in him which is under the law of growth and decay, he has that also which connects him with what is fixed, constant, permanent, with a living personal Being, who is above the laws of nature, and who Himself imposed them.

15. **Not the history of a philosophy or of a religion.** But though a moral and metaphysical history, we have admitted already that it is no history of a philosophy, of thoughts about wisdom, or of a search after it. Another remark must be made here. If this is no history of a Philosophy, it is also no history of a Religion, in the sense which we commonly give to that word. It is not the history of men's thoughts about God, or desires after God, or affections towards Him. It professes to be a history of God's unveiling of Himself to man. If it is not that it is nothing, it is false from beginning to end.

To make it the history of the speculations of a certain tribe about God, we must deny the very root of any speculations which that tribe ever had, for this root is the belief that they could not think of Him,

unless He had first thought of them; that they could not speak of Him, unless He were speaking to them. A class of modern teachers assume that God is made in the image of man, is formed after his conceptions; and then insist that a nation must have had this conviction, which acted and lived upon the opposite one. Let every people be allowed to speak its own word, to tell us what it means. We who think the Hebrews spoke a true word—meant the true thing, only claim for them what we would claim for all,—the right of interpreting themselves.

16. **The religious books of the Hebrews.** We have denied that the history of the Hebrews is the history of a religion or a philosophy. But we fully admit that there are Hebrew books which, in the ordinary sense of the word, are to be called religious, just as we contend that there are some which, in the ordinary sense of the word, are to be called philosophical. When the Jewish Rabbinical schools assigned the name of "holy writings" to one part of these books, and of "histories" to another, they expressed their feeling that there are some of them which especially embody the aspirations of the human spirit after a Divine person, just as there are those which set forth the acts of that Divine person towards men. **The Psalms.** The book of Psalms is the chief of the holy writings. The tendency in later times has been to give it this character too strictly and exclusively,—to overlook the historical and political features of the Psalms, which are so conspicuous to all plain readers, and to regard them simply as utterances of individual sorrow, or trust, or thankfulness, or rapture. By doing so, we destroy the meaning of the writer; we do not separate his religious feelings from their surrounding elements, but give them a new character altogether. The Psalmist is not a recluse brooding over his own feelings and experiences. He is a man learning, under the heavy pressure of life, in the battle field, on the judgment-seat, through the cruelty of persecutors, the fellowship of outlaws, the rebellion of sons, his personal transgressions, to know his own feebleness, the necessity of Divine succour, the mysterious relations in which he stands to the Lord and to his fellow-men. As a king, the Lord of all had revealed himself to the

Israelites,—a king reigning from generation to generation, in whose government lay the only freedom, safety, hope of his subjects. Great changes had taken place in the outward condition of the Israelite; he was no more *merely* under the invisible Lord who had spoken His laws upon Sinai. **The Unseen King and the visible king.** A king went forth in the sight of the Host as its leader; was confessed to be the chief of the people's strength. The difficulty was to connect these two truths together; to prevent the visible king from interfering with the homage which was due to the Invisible, to make him the witness of God, instead of a rival and a rebel. Saul had been made king, because the people disbelieved that God was an actual king. The whole of David's strange history, as a shepherd-boy, a hero, an exile, a king ruling, and a king deposed, reigning righteously, and falling into acts of rebellion and injustice, testified that the temporal sovereign was nothing but the representative, an imperfect type of One whose throne was for ever and ever. The twofold conviction that the unseen kingdom is the ground of every other, that it is the true substantial kingdom, and that man is intended to be the image of God in his royalty, is implied in all the utterances of the book of Psalms, gives them their strength, their unity, their variety, makes them as human as they are national.

The inward and outward battle. Trust in God is the life-spring of every prayer and song, trust in Him as the Lord God of Israel, who will do what He has promised, who will show the Jewish calling not to be a vain calling, who will fully manifest Himself to men as their Ruler, and will prove the falsehood of all the attempts of men to make Him in their likeness, and the truth of His assertion, that He has made men in His likeness. It is a long fight between the true God and the false gods, the true image, and the false image; the struggle is desperate in that land, in every land, in each man's heart. At times, all hopes of a successful issue seem over; "the faithful fail from among the children of men," false gods and false men have their own way. God seems to have left the world to lies, to misery, to atheism. But out of the depth of despair comes hope. The Lord shall arise, and man shall not always

have the upper hand; He will defend the cause of the poor and the fatherless, and see that those in necessity have right. Let the heathen rage, and the people imagine a vain thing as they will, He will set His king upon His holy hill of Zion, a king who shall reign as long as the sun and moon endureth, and who shall set peace and righteousness on the earth. Throughout these Psalms, all those elements of Hebrew life and revelation to which we have referred, the feast, the law, the tribe, the tabernacle, the priests, the sacrifices, above all, the battle-field against idolatry, present themselves to us in connection with all the inmost thoughts and longings of the writers. But the ingenuity of modern criticism has discovered that some of these Psalms must be the work of men who had attained a higher degree of cultivation than was compatible with the reverence for the Mosaic institutions, or with the religious system which surrounded them. **The Psalms in conformity with the Mosaic Law.** One who could introduce the Lord, saying, "Thinkest thou that I will eat bull's flesh, or drink the blood of goats;" or when lamenting his crime, could say, "Thou desirest no sacrifice, else would I give it Thee, but thou delightest not in burnt offering," must, we are told, have been impressed with convictions which the old and orthodox Hebrew would have regarded with horror. The conclusion of the 51st Psalm, "Build Thou the walls of Jerusalem, then shalt Thou be pleased with burnt offering, and whole burnt offering, then shall they offer young bullocks upon Thy altar," is consequently set down as a priestly interpolation wholly inconsistent with the tenor of the prayer. If our previous remarks are true, there is no greater proof of the earnestness with which the Psalmist had meditated on the Mosaic institution of sacrifice, and on the difference between his own country and all others, than these passages. The very lesson which one who devoutly obeyed the Mosaic directions about sacrifice would have learnt from them, was precisely this, that they were expressions of the surrender of the heart to Him, from whom it had gone astray; not gifts by which the heart might hope to bring the Divine Lord to tolerate its wrong doings. It was a lesson which every humble and contrite man

would have learnt, that sacrifices would be precious in God's eyes as witnesses of a reconciled spirit, of a restored nation. But we readily admit that there is a truth indicated in these rude attempts to destroy the unity of compositions in which the consciences and hearts of all ages have recognized a correspondence with their own deepest feelings and intuitions. If the Mosaic economy were really part of a Divine education, it should be able to show how it has done its work; it should be able to say, "the men who have been under this training are not what they would have been without it, those who have had the longest experience of it see the furthest, the children who keep this Law are wiser than their forefathers." The book of Psalms, we readily admit, has that in it which does not belong to the patriarchal or legal period of Jewish history. By claiming the privileges of the children of Abraham, by meditating on the Law night and day, by the divine discipline of toil, and strife, and sorrow, which the records of their fathers explained to them, an insight and apprehension were cultivated in them, which could not have belonged to the earlier time. **They draw out the sense and principle of it.** They saw more into the meaning and heart of institutions; they saw how the principle implied in them rose above the accident and the rule: they learnt to protest against those who sacrificed their spirit for the sake of preserving their letter, and in doing so, lost both; they saw how what was essentially and eternally human was drawn out by that which was formally and exclusively national; they found how an absolute, unchangeable morality lay beneath the relative morality of the patriarchal family, the positive morality of decrees and statutes.

SECTION II. HEBREW PHILOSOPHY.

1. **The characteristics of the book of Proverbs.** No one will say that the book of Proverbs is not characteristically different from the book of Psalms. All feel the distinction. The programmes of the books themselves recognize and express it. When we say that the Proverbs

is a philosophical book, we do but follow the definition which the writer gives of it. "To know wisdom and instruction, to perceive the words of understanding, to receive the instruction of wisdom, justice, judgment, and equity, to give subtlety to the simple, to give the young man knowledge and discretion."

This is not a preparation for a book of passionate devotion, for a book uttering the groans of a man in deep trouble, or the confidence with which he flies to a place of refuge. It leads us to expect just what we find, a book of observation, reflection, experiment. It has, however, much which is in common with the book, to which it is in form and purpose so unlike. Both, as distinguished from the histories, set forth the seekings and strivings of man's spirit; both assume that this seeking or striving has been awakened in the man, and that the direction of his search has been given him. The man seeks righteousness because the righteous Being has first sought him. He seeks wisdom, because the wise Being has first sought him. He is to know wisdom and equity, just as he is to be righteous and know righteousness, because God has made him in His image.

2. **Its connection with the history.** That the Divine revelation was designed to awaken, and would awaken, this kind of craving as much as the other, is implied in the first statement of it. The Jewish history is no mere exhibition of a gracious and benignant character, though it is that in the highest sense. The Lord, the Lord God, merciful and gracious, slow to anger, and plenteous in mercy, by revealing Himself as such, leads men to feel their own want of mercy, quickness to anger, unwillingness to forgive, is a wrong, the departure from a standard to which they are meant to be conformed. As these qualities are brought out practically, their nature becomes gradually more intelligible, the sense of rebellion against them more vivid. But such an exhibition of them presumes a certain method of government, a fitting of means to ends; what we call *judgment*. The unseen King must administer the world upon a plan. There must be in Him that which arranges, devises, orders. And that which is in Him is in His creature. He is able to

perceive it, to trace it out, because he has that which corresponds to it. There is an eye in him which meets the light, takes it in, sees objects by it.

3. **Solomon, the wise king.** The king, so Solomon felt, has that calling which demands this wisdom; he asked it, and it was granted. His life became the type of wisdom to the Hebrew, the great key to his words. Such it has been felt in all ages to be. Within him were the strongest tendencies to sensuality, the fullest sympathy with all outward things and feeling of their attraction, an assurance that the world is meant to be ruled and examined by man. All possible motives to that visible worship or idolatry which the law condemned were in him in their fullest, liveliest power. But within him, too, was the sense of a relation to Him of whom the law and the covenant testified, to the invisible Being, to the absolute and perfect King, to Him of whom every king, by his own personal authority, and by the permanence of his dynasty, gave testimony. Such a Being was the only Protector to whom he could look up against the powers that were conspiring to rob him of his strength, to make him a slave. Such a Being only could teach him how to judge and to govern, how to know the boundaries of order and disorder, of justice and iniquity; how to make the things about him his instruments, how to distinguish their uses and properties. The Temple which he built expressed his belief that the buildings and treasures of the world, which were the objects and instruments of idolatry, were to be consecrated to the unseen Being, and to be witnesses of Him. The book of Proverbs, which he wrote, expresses his feeling of the relation in which man stands to the world and to his Maker.

4. **Wisdom human, not physical.** Solomon, it is said, knew all plants, from the hyssop on the wall to the cedar of Lebanon. He was a student of natural things. But the Proverbs contain none of this lore. They assume that Wisdom is not to be found in them, earnestly as the wise man may contemplate them, greatly as he may delight in them. Wisdom has to do first of all with man; he is to seek it that he may be

able to rule others and rule himself. He is to seek it to deliver him from the strange woman, from the harlot Sense, which is always dragging him down into death. He is to seek it that he may know the path of life.

5. **The two voices.** And if he seeks he must find. For as sure as that tempting voice is ever beckoning him to follow it, and choose its ways, so surely is there another voice crying aloud in the places of concourse, speaking to the heart within, promising him riches and honour, durable riches and righteousness. Wisdom seeks to enter into the heart, to draw the soul after it. When it does enter in, when it is fully entertained, it becomes sweet and pleasant. But first it applies sharp corrections, bitter medicines. The man who will follow this guide must not be weary of discipline.

6. **Not a new discovery.** This distinction of two powers or principles, which are drawing men in two different directions, was evidently implied in the Divine covenant and the Divine law. Without it we could not interpret the calling of Abraham and his family; still less the national faith and the national protest against idolatry. Even some of the most apparently external arrangements of the Mosaic institutions, such as the permission of certain meats and the denunciation of certain others, the seemingly arbitrary division of clean and unclean beasts, had been cultivating in the mind of the Israelite the feeling that there was an upward and a downward path, to one of which he had a natural inclination, into the other of which a Divine hand was leading him. The author of the book of Proverbs does but draw out the sense and purpose of these ordinances, does but recognize an essential and eternal law as lying beneath them. The whole life of man he represents as being nothing else but an expression and exhibition of this conflict. Every act he commits is done in obedience to one or other of the influences which is every moment acting upon him. Every act confirms him in obedience to one or the other.

7. **The seducer personal.** But these words—influences, principles, powers, are they adequate for our purpose? We have spoken of the "harlot Sense." Solomon, with far more practical truth as well as

poetical power, speaks of her as "the strange woman." He can tolerate no abstraction. It is an actual enchantress which speaks to each unhappy youth. That which is the best individual language is also the best general language; there is no way of describing the temptations of the race but by describing the temptations of the particular heart. He does not arrive at a notion of what is human by heaping together a number of experiences; in each one he finds that which belongs to all.

8. **Wisdom personal.** If that which seduces a man away from his proper state must be described personally, how is it with Wisdom? Is *that* merely an abstraction? Is that not something to be embraced, possessed, loved? Is that not a reality, not a person? If not, how can its attractions be measured against those of the other? Can we follow a dream, a shadow, as we do that which we feel and know to be substantial? If Sense comes before us as a woman, Wisdom, so Solomon takes for granted, can be nothing *less* fair, *less* attractive. To use the feminine pronoun in one case, and not in the other, would make the meaning false in both. Wisdom must have an intense loveliness, an intense captivating power, to those who have once come within the circle of its influence; and, of course, it would be contradicting the whole doctrine of the book to fancy that this loveliness was in any sense the creature of him who beholds it, and is enamoured of it. It offers itself to him, overcomes his reluctance, draws him after it. Instead of exalting his understanding into a creator, he is bidden above all things not to lean on it, not to trust to it. If he does, Wisdom disowns him; he is a fool.

9. **Wisdom divine.** But what is this Wisdom? The question has become a more and more awful one at each step. Solomon had declared at the outset that he who does not begin with the fear of the Lord has no hope of attaining it. That fear must have been strongly in the mind of the writer, mixed with a strange boldness, when he proceeds gradually to see Wisdom, the counsellor of man as the counsellor of God, "by whom," here on earth, "kings reign and princes decree justice, but who was set up from everlasting, from the beginning, or ever the

earth was." "When there were no depths," thus Wisdom speaks, "I was brought forth, when there were no fountains, abounding with water, before the mountains were settled, before the hills was I brought forth; when as yet He had not made the earth, nor the fields, nor the highest part of the dust of the world. When He prepared the heavens I was there, when He set a compass upon the face of the deep, when He established the clouds above, when He strengthened the fountains of the deep, when He gave to the sea his decree that the waters should not pass His commandment, when he appointed the foundations of the earth, then was I by Him as one brought up with him, and I was daily his delight, rejoicing always before Him, rejoicing in the habitable parts of His earth, and my delights were with the sons of men." This is the very essence of Hebrew philosophy. It has been gradually unfolding itself out of the previous revelations; here it finds its full expression. In this grand assertion of one who is the sharer of God's mind, of one who was before the universe, in whom the whole order of creation originated, but of one who regards man as above all this creation, who has been from the first his guide and teacher, in whom he attains the satisfaction of his highest desires, by whom he is delivered from subjection to the world around him, lies the foundation of all the most minute practical teaching respecting the duties of the king and of the shopkeeper. The Divine order of the world is at the same time the true human order. The king is set upon his throne to exhibit it in acts of protection and acts of punishment; the just balances exhibit it as well. All confusion comes from men forgetting their places in this order, ceasing to acknowledge the power which is guiding them and keeping them in it, yielding to the power which is seeking to put out the inward eye that alone can discern it.

10. **The form of the Proverbs.** The antithetical form in which the book of Proverbs is conceived evidently belongs to its essence. The main idea which goes through every part of it could not have been brought out in any other way. It is also a very important circumstance that the book is addressed by a father to his child. It is didactic and

affectionate; it gives the results of experience, not the processes of it. In both these respects it is distinguished from the other great book of Hebrew Philosophy, *Ecclesiastes, or the Preacher*.

11. **Ecclesiastes Wisdom sought through disappointments.** This book is the record of personal experiences, of struggles, disappointments, partial conclusions. It is the story of a man walking in a labyrinth, trying one passage after another, and always baffled, always forced into some new path which ends as hopelessly. The labyrinth, however, is not one of speculation merely or chiefly. It is the actual maze and puzzle of human life which he is seeking to penetrate; the actual contradictions which a man must meet with who does not shut his eyes to them. And though each conclusion seems to be one in which nothing is concluded, it is not so in fact. Something is ascertained by each experiment. Riches, all earthly enjoyments, all works, toils, vocations, are found out to have a positive good in them. The wise man whose eyes are in his head is found to be better than all others. Though there is an excuse for thinking that the old days were better than our own, it turns out not to be wise to inquire about this. There is a comfort under the oppressions which take place in cities and provinces. And yet vanity and vexation of spirit is written upon all things. It is a fact, and must not be disguised. Wisdom itself seems to be under the same curse with other things; all the mere experiences of the seeker after it, of the wise man, are sadder, more oppressive, than those of other men. But his sadness and his oppression, his disappointments, his falls, are themselves chief parts of his schooling. He is learning to acquiesce in the fact, the discovery of which is at first so painful, that that which is crooked cannot be made straight, and that that which is wanting cannot be numbered. He has been trying to *make* an order, and has gradually learnt to perceive one. He has looked upon himself as the centre of the universe, and, in spite of all the skill and wisdom and piety which he combined with that false conception, it did cause him to find weariness everywhere. He confesses God to be the centre; and then, "though the silver cord be loosed, and the golden bowl be

broken, though the pitcher be broken at the fountain, and the wheel broken at the cistern," the spirit can find rest; it returns after all its speculations and trials to Him who made it, it learns to behold itself in Him, and Him in all things.

12. **The book of Job.** It is a very difficult question whether the book of Job should be reckoned among these philosophical books, and if it should, to what time it belongs. On this last question critics have been always very fluctuating, and it seems to be not much nearer a settlement now than in former days. The weight of modern opinion is perhaps in favour of assigning it to a comparatively late period. But the arguments in support of its extreme antiquity still seem decisive to a great many. In a treatise like the present, it would be absurd to enter into the reasons for either opinion, though the result is by no means uninteresting to the student of philosophy. **Age in which it was written.** If it does belong to the age of Abraham or Moses, it would prove that the deepest and most conscious agonies of the human spirit were experienced, and might be set forth, at a time in which, judging from the book of Genesis, more than from any other document, we are wont to think that faith would be exhibited chiefly in practical life, and that the divinest utterances would take the form of simple history. Assuredly it is not impossible that there should have been such thoughts working in men's minds in the first ages. If we could be assured that there were, it would be like the revelation of a new and wonderful country where we least expect to find it, a discovery which reasonable persons would gladly obtain at the sacrifice of any theory. On the other hand, if it must be referred to the age of Solomon, or even to the Chaldaic period, it cannot lose that profound reality which belongs to it as the history of an actual human struggle, or be tortured by any devices of criticism into a mere book of speculation. Let it have been written where, and when, and by whom it will, it must remain for all human beings what the peasants of our land and of every land feel it to be, the divine record of what one felt who was of the same flesh and blood with themselves, who was plunged in the

deepest sorrows which they can suffer, and had to work his way, not unhelped or unguided, though with all human friends and counsellors striving against him, into health and peace. When we attribute this kind of interest to the book, and suppose that such minds are sharers in it, we may seem to have settled the question whether it belongs to the strictly religious or the strictly philosophical portion of the Hebrew writings. But this would be a rash conclusion. **Its personal reality.** We have tried to show that the Proverbs and Ecclesiastes are in the truest sense human books, that they are essentially practical, and concern the life of every one. The intense suffering of Job makes it no doubt his first concern to find out whether there is a gracious and loving Being ruling over the world or no, whether his misery is to be traced to such a source, or must come from somewhere else. In his agony he pours out words like the east wind; he seems at times to deny the goodness of his Maker, he continually contradicts himself. His pious, well-instructed friends have a set of authorized, beautiful, eloquent phrases to confute him with; they can appeal to the judgment of their elders, to whom they are mere children; they are shocked at his irreverent expressions; they wonder that he is not afraid of affronting the Being who has laid him low and might raise him again. Job tells them that he has heard a thousand such things, he has them all by heart. But God is actually smiting him. At such a time fine speeches are of no avail. He must know what his anguish means. It is everything to him to believe in a righteous God, he has nothing to hope in, if that hope be taken from him; therefore he cannot be content till he sees how He is righteous, how He can be so while he is afflicting him,—a man who feels and knows inwardly that he has tried to be right and to do right, and has clung and clings still to Him whose rod is laid so heavily upon him.

Its philosophy. So far this wonderful history would seem more fit to be classed with the Psalms than with the Proverbs. But when God answers Job out of the whirlwind, it is especially with a view of His *wisdom* that He lays him prostrate. He had asserted in his inmost heart, and generally with his lips, the *righteousness* of God, he had justified

Him as his three friends had not done, however they seemed to do it; but he had taken no measure of the wisdom of Him who had made Orion and the Pleiades in the heavens, and the horse to paw the valley, and the ostrich to lay her eggs and forget her young ones, and the leviathan to take his pastime in the great waters. He had thought he could judge of the means by which the All-wise would accomplish His righteous ends, why he appointed suffering for man, how He maintains the conflict with evil, how He will bring it to an issue. **End of the book.** A revelation not of the power or sovereignty, but of the infinite wisdom of God, was his humiliation; this was his cure. In dust and ashes he sees the Being of whom he has heard by the hearing of the ear, actually exercising His gracious and mysterious dominion. He abhors himself; then he is raised to a new and nobler life. At this point surely the book of Job asserts its right to a place with the books of Proverbs and Ecclesiastes, among these which set forth the search after wisdom; the methods by which it pleases God to guide a man in that search, and the reward of it.

SECTION III. THE PROPHETS.

1. **The nation and the individual.** The book of Job has sometimes been considered a history of the Jewish nation rather than of an individual. One cannot wonder that such an hypothesis should have been entertained by intelligent readers; or that it should have encountered a vehement resistance. The prosperity, misery, restoration of a nation, are surely to be read in that book. Yet one who has suffered will never be persuaded that he is not reading of his own struggles,—of struggles which have passed in the heart of an actual person.

The Jewish prophets teach us to reconcile the two opinions. They feel in their own hearts the miseries of their nation, and of every nation. They enable us to feel that the experiences of the particular man and of the body politic are not different, but essentially the same. The Jew has to fight the battles of his country in his soul; his study of its

present condition, its past history, its coming fortunes, is not something distinct from the experiences of his own life. He understands what he sees without, by what is passing within. He does not know himself except as he is an Israelite.

2. **The prophet and the philosopher.** The writings of the prophets cannot be reckoned strictly among the philosophical writings of the Hebrews. The prophet is not primarily and characteristically a seeker, but a preacher. He comes to denounce existing evils, and foretell evils which are approaching, as one who has received light and can impart it. Nevertheless, any view of Hebrew philosophy must be imperfect which does not include him. Mixed with his announcements and denunciations, there are continual exhibitions of the speaker's own difficulties and confusions. If he has been brought into the sunshine, he has had a long preparation of darkness and twilight. His public teaching can never be separated from the school in which he has been brought up, or from the Temple in which he has seen his most glorious visions.

3. **The prophetical order.** Every Hebrew teacher was a prophet. Moses, the guide and lawgiver, claims that character. A Jew would scarcely have been justified in refusing it to Abraham. For it was far from necessary that the prophet should leave written records of his thoughts. He might even bear his testimony as the father of the nation did, by acts rather than words. Still there was evidently a time when the prophet became a more distinct, substantial element of Hebrew society,—when the name began to be the designation of a class or Order. This time is fixed in the Sacred Record at the point of transition between the age of the Judges and the age of the Kings. It is connected with a general shaking in the most sacred of the Mosaic institutions. It is never hinted in the Scripture Books that the priest, because he had "holiness to the Lord" inscribed on his forehead, was less prone to evil than other men. The very first High-priest, the brother of Moses, was the leader and tool of the people in setting up an Egyptian idol. But now certain members of the priestly family became utter reprobates,

and the High-priest did not restrain them. The people abhorred the offerings of the Lord. Then a boy, who was dedicated to the service of the Temple, as he slept in a chamber near it, heard a voice calling him. He thought it was the priest's voice; he found it was the Lord's. He was appointed to tell the priest of his sins, and of the approaching fall of his house. THE WORD OF GOD had spoken to Samuel; he let none of his words fall. It was known that there was a prophet in Israel.

Samuel: his office. The elders of the people believed that there was a charm in the tabernacle to save them from their enemies; they took it with them to battle; it fell into the hands of the Philistines. Samuel became a judge and a deliverer. He restored law and order to the people, defined boundaries, executed justice between man and man. His sons did not walk in his ways. The people craved a leader of their hosts: Samuel told them of the Invisible King who was in the midst of them. He anointed the visible king; he testified to him of his self-will, and foretold his ruin.

He anointed the man after God's own heart.

4. **The prophetical school.** Here we have clearly pointed out to us the essential qualities of the prophetical office. Hence we may understand what a school of the prophets was. The ground of their mission lay where Samuel's lay; they were taught that the WORD of GOD was speaking to them; to heed this voice, to follow it in whatever it enjoined. In the school they were trained to study the law of God, to meditate upon it, to consider the past history of their people, how God had dealt with their fathers, what the meaning of their calling as Israelites was. But this was just that they might know how He was dealing with them *then*. They were not less under His government and guidance than their fathers. They were not reading of the acts of One who had been, but of One who was then and would be evermore. The LIVING GOD was the only name by which they could speak of Him or think of Him. Their countrymen forgot Him; they thought that He lived only in the past, not in the present. The whole economy of priesthood, sacrifices, tabernacle, had become a dead machinery,

instead of the assurance of His permanent and continual presence. The prophet was to be trained in the belief of that presence, to act upon it, to live upon it, to tell priests and kings and people that their acts were lies, their whole lives lies, except while they recognised this as the ground of them.

5. **Jews generally partakers of this divine teaching.** This was the true Jewish education. We have no reason to suppose that prophets only were trained in these schools; they might train their countrymen in them. And they could only train them in the same lore. They could but tell them, as they do tell them in all their written discourses, that though they may have no special call to be teachers or prophets, yet that the Word of God was speaking to them, was warning them against their evil tendencies, was guiding them to be right and true, and that they could only lead safe and honest lives by following this guidance.

6. **The false prophet.** Oftentimes those who claimed the special office of prophet were those who heeded this teaching least. And for this very reason: they did not look upon it as the teaching of a righteous, wise Being, to the *whole* nation. They valued themselves upon their special gifts; they thought it was a wonderful thing to be able to speak words in God's name. They did not submit to be schooled before they poured forth their utterances; they never learnt to distinguish between the whispers and suggestions of the harlot Sense—of the vain, self-exalting spirit—and the lesson of Him who came to humble, and sift, and purify. Therefore these men became a set of traders in prophecy. They spoke a lie out of their own hearts, and said "The Lord hath said;" now making the heart of the righteous sad, now speaking peace when there was no peace; the base, selfish flatterers of kings, inventors of tricks, patrons of idolatry; the cunning or impudent deceivers of a people which loved to be deceived. These men converted prophecy into divination: they made guesses as to coming events from what they saw, or caught up at second-hand the utterances of departed seers. It was nothing terrible with them to speak of the judgments of God, because they really did not believe in them or in Him. They

were words which might be sported with to frighten their enemies or please their disciples,—words which came out of hollow, hypocritical, atheistical hearts, and which tended more than all others to make the people hollow, hypocritical, and atheistical.

7. **The true prophet.** Against these false brethren of their own order, more than even against the heartless priest, the godless king, did the true prophet testify by his words and his acts. It was no part of his vocation to pass himself off for something else than he was,—to hide from himself, or even from others, the conflicts which he had with the evil in him, the difficulty which he had to separate the precious from the vile, the reluctance with which he often obeyed the Divine voice. It was not in pride of spirit that he claimed Divine inspiration. His temptation was to deny it; to boast that he had something of his own; to pretend that he could be anything, or do anything, except as he was submitting to the government of One higher than himself. He is not a person who seeks credit for himself by declaring what is to come. It is with the present he is mainly busy. It is God as a present God that he is bringing in all ways—by signs, by discourses, by songs—before the consciences of the presumptuous or cowardly king or prophet. It is God as a present God of whom he witnesses to the heart of the crushed and oppressed Israelite. The future is all contained in the past and the present. God is, and therefore He will manifest Himself. He reigns; and the unrighteous rulers, Jews or heathens, shall know that he reigns. Their want of faith shall not hinder the accomplishment of His purposes. Tyranny and disorder shall not always prevent men from knowing what His gracious dominion is. Kings who were set up to testify of His rule may utterly misunderstand their vocation, priests may forget Him and become idolaters, prophets may utter lies in His name, the whole people may misunderstand why it has been called out; but a perfect King shall reign in righteousness, the true Priest and Prophet of the World shall appear. There shall be mysterious sufferings mixed with mysterious exaltation. At last God will confound all the false images of Him, and manifest His true image to man. Israel may

go into captivity—may become the lowest of the nations, heathens may be God's ministers for punishing it; but the promise will still prove itself true,—in Abraham and in his seed shall all the families of the earth be blessed.

8. **Relation of the Wisdom in the book of Proverbs to the Word in the Prophets.** It would be the duty of an historian of Hebrew philosophy to notice these remarkable records, if it were only to show how entirely the popular teaching of the Hebrew corresponds with that which appears in the specially philosophical books; how entirely *esoterical* that teaching is in the highest and best sense of the word, when by esoterical we mean that which concerns the inner man,—his highest, most mysterious relations; how entirely *exoterical*, if by exoterical we mean that which is proclaimed to all men,—that which concerns states and governments, and the most outward circumstances of man's life. But it is especially necessary to point out how this popular teaching, connected as it was with the deepest personal meditation and experience, fills up a gap in the merely philosophical teaching, and removes a difficulty which might otherwise cause us great confusion. We have seen that Wisdom, in the book of Proverbs, is spoken of as a person, but as a female. Everybody must feel that the passages which were quoted from that book would have been artistically less beautiful, less perfect, if this form of language had not been adopted. But artistical beauty in all cases rests upon some substantial ground of truth. We could not feel the propriety of such expressions if they did not correspond to something in our hearts which required them, and would suffer if others were substituted for them. Wisdom, when regarded *primarily* as an object of our search and love, even though it is intimated to us that we have been first sought for and loved, does come before us in this feminine shape. But the prophet who speaks in God's name says at once "The Word of God came to me, saying." We feel sure that he is under the same teaching with Solomon; that he means the same antagonist to the harlot Sense, the same Divine Counsellor, the same person who was with the Lord as one brought up with Him before the

earth was formed, or the heavens brought forth, and whose delights were with the sons of men. Yet we are sure that this is no female voice; it is He who speaks, who commands men and judges men, the Ruler and King of their inmost hearts and spirits. Of such an One the prophets are testifying in every speech of theirs. They could not believe in a human king, or priest, or prophet; they could not believe that man was made in the image of God, if they did not acknowledge such an One. Because they do believe in Him they are confident that God will be completely declared to men, that His image will be seen in a man. That prospect carries us beyond the region of the Hebrew philosophy as we find it in the Proverbs; but it furnishes the complement to that philosophy. By reflecting upon it we shall perhaps understand better what that philosophy is, and what all philosophy is; wherein consists its deep, essential truth, and its necessary limitation.

9. **Transition from the Hebrew to Gentile philosophy.** From the last remark our readers may gather that it is not only for the sake of Hebrew philosophy that we have noticed these prophets, especially this leading characteristic of them. It is impossible to read them simply and not to feel that they looked upon that Being who was speaking to them in their hearts as the real Lord of all men. In their comments upon the state of the world at the time in which they were living, they go far beyond the limits of Palestine. In proportion as they discover all heathen evils in their own countrymen, they discover, and rejoice in the discovery, that there is a bond of spiritual connection between them and all people. It was impossible for them to believe that there could be any government, or order, or desire of light or wisdom, in any human creatures, which did not proceed from the Source of order, and government, and light, and wisdom. Resistance to the Divine teaching they looked upon as the sin of their own land, and of all lands. Their hopes of future blessings to their own people, and to all people, rested upon the assurance that He who was then speaking secretly would be proclaimed openly.

10. **Different ways of considering their relation to each other.** In entering upon the philosophy of the other nations of the earth, we have the choice of four methods. It is more honest to state at the outset which we shall adopt, that our readers may be upon their guard against any effort we may make to strain facts into accordance with it.

i. Either, first, we may assume that the Hebrews, like all other people, were merely following their own instincts and impulses in the search after wisdom, and were not guided to it, as they pretended to be, by a Divine Teacher;

ii. Or, secondly, we may determine that we will make out a connection between the Scriptures, or the writers of them, and the different philosophers of Hindostan, of Persia, or of Greece, believing it to be impossible that they could have obtained light in any other way;

iii. Or, thirdly, we may determine that these philosophers never had any light,—that they were merely following delusions, and propagating them;

iv. Or, fourthly, we may assume that doctrine which seems to us to be asserted throughout every part of the Scriptures, and to be especially elucidated and enforced by the prophets,—that all men really have had a Divine Teacher, whether they have followed His guiding or not.

This doctrine we believe to be true. It adds unspeakably to the interest and wonder of those records which we have been considering. It makes us deeply anxious that we may not misrepresent those of which we are about to give an account.

CHAPTER II. EGYPTIANS, PHŒNICIANS, ASSYRIANS.

1. **How far the historian of philosophical inquiries is concerned with these countries.** THREE countries are especially connected with Jewish history—Egypt, Phœnicia, Chaldæa. Each of these countries has left memorials of itself: those of the first are becoming even more interesting to this time than to any former time; the last is only beginning to discover its treasures to European enterprise. None of the three can be said in strictness to have produced any philosophers; but they have indirectly influenced the philosophy of other nations, in a manner too important to be overlooked. A few words on this subject seem a necessary sequel to the chapter on the Hebrews.

2. **Egyptian wise men.** The wise men, magicians, or soothsayers, of whom we read in the book of Exodus, were no doubt students of nature. They had observed something of its powers and mysteries, some of the influences which it exercises over man, some of the means which he possesses of directing its influences to advantage or to mischief. There can be no doubt that they believed such knowledge to have been communicated by some Divine power. We are not disposed to question their opinion. **Their physical science not borrowed from the Hebrews.** If they referred any observations which they might make respecting the course of the year, or the cultivation of the earth, to a celestial Teacher, they spoke, it seems to us, far more humbly, more truly, more in accordance with the spirit of the Hebrew books, than the Romanised Jew Josephus, who, in his foolish patriotism, or his desire to make his countrymen respectable in the eyes of their masters, pretends that Abraham, or Joseph, or Moses, instructed the Egyptians in astronomy. It is almost needless to say that no hint is given by the Hebrew legislator that his ancestors imparted any such

wisdom, or possessed it; what he had himself must, if we believe the New Testament commentator upon his words, have been received first from the Egyptians, though his Divine Teacher, purging his mind from the idolatries and confusions with which their physical doctrines were surrounded, enabled him to give *man* his true place in creation. The Hebrew history does assert that Joseph, instructed by the Invisible King, communicated skill and foresight to Pharaoh. Acquaintance with the mechanical arts, and with all the powers of nature which are necessary to the invention of them, it never claims for Jews—it implicitly concedes to their tyrants.

3. **Great memorials of Egyptian wisdom; small results of it.** Here we discover the main characteristic difference between the development of the two people. Modern science may be allowed to claim for Egypt a long series of dynasties, clear indications of an organised hierarchy, of a civil order, with very great and probably very early achievements in stone and masonry. But the moral philosopher must ask, why all these great powers bore so little fruit for the world? How was their growth stunted and deformed? Why is it that unbounded skill and research have to be expended after all these generations, only to prove that the oldest nation in the world had a substantive existence in it?

4. **Cause of the difference.** The answer to this question seems to us to be this—if it be the wrong one, our inquiries respecting other nations will contradict it:—The Egyptian knowledge of the phenomena of the universe, and of its powers, was not balanced and sustained by any knowledge of the powers and destinies of man. Those who became acquainted with the things about them, could not but feel that they, the observers, were in some way superior to that which they observed. It is clear that they had that conviction, that they were even oppressed by it. But the objects which they saw, the facts which were revealed to them, soon became all in all. **Effect of premature acquaintance with physics on the wise man,** They nearly lost themselves in the things; their higher culture only helped to make the people the helpless

servants of them. What he could tell of his discoveries, made his countrymen idolaters; what he reserved, made him feel his difference from them, and led him to affect new airs of superiority, to devise new arts for the purpose of keeping up the difference and the sense of it. Thus the sagacious man from being a true observer, passed into a diviner; thus he became the enslaver of those whom he should have emancipated, each new invention being, as it were, the creation of a new god. Such magicians are the great corrupters of kings, teaching them to rule by craft and not by righteousness, giving them animals for subjects, not human beings. **and on his countrymen** The healthy, patriarchal faith of the Hebrew boy infused a new life into the mind of a Pharaoh, taught him the difference between true judgment of the future, and cunning conjectures respecting it, introduced another element into Egyptian society, or rather made the elements that were already in it sound and coherent. But the government and the faith of the people ran again into their old rut; the soothsayers and magicians turned their physical knowledge to the service of falsehood and tyranny; the Pharaohs built their treasure-cities to their own glory, by the help of Jews. Then came the vindication of moral order, and the assertion of man as cared for by God, from the lips and the rod of Moses.

5. These indications respecting the Egyptian mind, from whatever period of its history we suppose them to have been taken, are a clue to interpret the later as well as the earlier stages of it. **The contradictions of Egyptian life.** Why its forms of idolatry should have been so various, so dependent upon local position; why its priests should seem to have possessed such stores of secret information, and why its people should have been so degraded; why Greeks should have listened to the teachers at Memphis with so much wonder, and yet should have felt so little sympathy with them; why the forms of their sculpture should be so gross and animal, and yet should imply so much reflection, and should suggest so many thoughts—may not be difficult to understand, if we patiently consider what must have been

the effect of men being crushed and overwhelmed by natural images and impressions before they had any inner life with which to sustain them. **Struggles for emancipation from idolatry.** And hence we may understand what form the moral and metaphysical philosophy of the Egyptian must have taken, when he was stirred up to ask questions concerning himself, as well as concerning the things around him. To grope for a meaning in these things; to discover what relation there is between animal forms and man, what there is in their acts which shows forth and typifies his acts; this was the slow, painful, upward process by which the Egyptian must have sought to disengage himself from the degrading objects to which he had submitted, and to emerge into clearness and freedom. In all such efforts, if we could have any clear record of them, we should be bound to take the greatest interest, and to recognize the guidance of a Divine hand. Facts which are notorious give us a full right to believe that the intellect of the Egyptian was especially exercised in discovering the symbols of Nature, in detecting the higher and human meanings which lay beneath them. **Influence of Egypt upon Greeks, Jews, and Christians.** In this way the atmosphere exercised an influence over both Jews and Greeks, which we shall have to consider hereafter; still more strikingly over some of the teachers of the Christian church. But these moral inquiries had no power to leaven the polity of Egypt or to reach the heart of its people. They can only have been the struggles of a set of sages to escape from the webs which sages had first spun for themselves and their land. The history of Hindoo Philosophy will furnish us with more clearly-ascertained evidences of this kind of conflict. However certain we may be that it must have taken place in Egypt, we should have to resort to mere idle conjecture if we endeavoured to trace the course of it there.

6. **Phœnicia. Commerce not in itself favourable to philosophy.** We are so much in the habit of connecting the idea of commerce with human progress, that it may seem strange we have so little to report of the nation which had Tyre for its capital. The Phœnicians must no doubt have gathered many observations together in the course of

their long voyages; but they were observations for others to reflect upon rather than themselves. Their own genius seems to have been exclusively active. However important an element in human life the love of variety, the eagerness for new objects, may be, there must something of silence and repose mingle with it before men can steadily ask themselves "What is wisdom?" or can care for an answer. A Phœnician colony in Africa could produce a Hannibal; a contemplative sage could hardly be looked for either in the mother or daughter city. The temper of the Phœnician, however, joined with other more stable qualities to form the mind of the Greek. *He* was to prove that the sea, which is the symbol and witness to man of his freedom, does not merely tempt him to seek for the outward and visible treasures which so commonly enslave it. But before Phœnicia had added anything to the traditions or the studies of the West, it had been brought into contact with the Hebrew kingdom. It was not a Joseph—a fugitive shepherd-boy—who represented the Jewish life to Hiram and his successors. Solomon showed them that the divine polity which he administered, though it had its beginning in the tent life of the patriarchs, and seemed in its legal stage devised for tillers of the ground, could expand to meet and sustain the conditions and temptations of a mercantile people; because a deeper wisdom than that which earth or ocean supplies had laid the foundation of it, and was still upholding it.

7. **Difference between the wisdom of Egypt and Chaldæa.** In Chaldæa, as the Hebrew Scriptures present it to us, we meet again with wise men such as we heard of in Egypt; but here they are especially spoken of as astrologers. The study of the heavenly bodies prevailed no doubt among the priests of Thebes and Memphis: the first systematic observations respecting the course of the year may be rightly ascribed to them. On this knowledge their claims to superior intellect respecting human events will in part have rested. Because they knew more of nature than others, they will have been able to divine what would probably happen to the fields or the crops. It is another

step indicating a different order of thought and feeling to connect the stars *directly* with human life, and to believe that the course of the one is influenced or regulated by that of the other.

8. **Astrology.** Wide plains, still and beautiful nights, are favourable to the development of such a faith: perhaps only in such circumstances has it ever taken deep root. **The hunting stage of society.** For in such circumstances we meet with a hunting rather than an agricultural people, with men whose speculations turn more upon the success of their efforts to procure food for themselves, than upon the chances that the earth will produce it for them. Physical knowledge in this condition of society is not to be looked for. Tyranny, the rule of a man claiming dominion over the beasts of the field and over the creatures of his own race by the same right, will have here an earlier commencement. The Babel polity, spoken of in Scripture, is of this character; its founder is said to have been a mighty hunter before the Lord. In such a polity the human form will be more reverenced, the forms and symbols of nature far less; a difference which every one will be conscious of who compares the sculptures recently brought from Nineveh with the Egyptian remains. **Assyrian art.** In these very early and remarkable efforts of art, we perceive a reverence for animals, not in proportion to their usefulness to man, but to the strength of their talons or the quickness of their flight. The forms of such creatures combine with the human countenance to express the notion of that which is Divine. Not that they will have sufficed for this purpose; the earlier Sabaean worship will have continued side by side with these images of man's power and dominion. But this worship will itself have been moulded by the character of the people who adopted it. **Its relation to the Sabæan worship.** The stars among this race of conquerors will have become dynasts or rulers over man's life. Subjects feeling themselves at a hopeless difference from their sovereigns, regarding them as beings of another kind, will have had no difficulty in looking upon these cold and distant, and brilliant orbs, as the Kings of kings and Lords of lords. The wise men who hoped for something better from

the world than that which they saw, will have asked these witnesses of calmness and order when a brighter day should come, when the world should be ruled with less of fantasy and caprice. The passion for knowing the future will have become indissolubly connected with the contemplation of the stars. A scheme of relations between them and the dwellers upon earth will have been wrought out. Guilty monarchs will have been perplexed with signs in the heavens; they will eagerly have fled to the science of the astrologers for relief. In general they will have converted them into the ministers of their purposes, the props of their authority.

9. **The Jewish prophets in Babylon.** These hints will not be useless with a view to the subsequent history. They are closely connected with that which has gone before. For the Hebrew books represent the prophets in Babylon as bearing witness especially against astrological divination, by declaring that the unseen King and Lord of their land did reveal the future through the present and the past, that all events are connected by a moral law, that the hopes for a more righteous government of the earth were not vain and deceitful hopes, that the crises and revolutions of empires are pre-ordained, and that they are all tending to the satisfaction of the questions, What is wisdom? Where is it to be found?

CHAPTER III. HINDOO PHILOSOPHY.

SECTION I. THE PHILOSOPHY LATENT IN THE RELIGION.

1. **Hindostan a land of books.** Pyramids, tombs, statues with inscriptions, deciphered or to be deciphered, contain all that we know from internal evidence of Egyptian and Chaldaic wisdom. In Hindostan we come again into the world of books; we find ourselves among a literary people, literary by profession. It is not a literature which explains a history, but one which is the substitute for a history. We know almost nothing of what the Hindoo has done, very much of what he has thought.

2. **The Vedas.** For an accurate knowledge of the Hindoo Vedas, the English scholar must still wait. Till of late years, even the most accomplished Sanscrit scholars have shrunk from the task of translating them. The great beauty of their style and language we must take for granted, on the authority of those who are competent to speak of it, and whose judgment cannot be wholly distorted by the love of a favourite pursuit. **Invocations.** But the specimens which we possess are sufficient to acquaint us with their general design and character. They are invocations. Different powers of air, or earth, or fire, are implored for aid in different emergencies. It is assumed that these powers are related to man and can attend to his cries. It is even hoped that they may have fellowship with him, that they may come and share his food and his wine. The worshipper has no doubt that they will be pleased with his offerings, that they may be influenced by his sacrifices.

3. **Signs of a sacerdotal society.** Here then we find ourselves at once in a sacerdotal region. The priest who prescribes the method

of the invocation, the nature of the sacrifice, who presents the one or the other, is the leading man of the community. The orders and ranks of priests will evidently be defined first. By the offices which they perform all others will be measured. It is evident also that at this stage of Hindoo life, the objects of worship must have been various, determined by the influences which different powers in nature exert over man, the influences of these powers being defined and arranged by the priest.

4. **Characteristics of Hindoo worship.** But there is a feeling of communion between the worshipper and the beings whom he is addressing, which distinguishes this Hindoo adoration from the mere physical idolatry of the Egyptians. **Fellowship with the gods.** The Hindoo from the first seems to seek friendship with his divinities, not merely help from them. And presently we discover that the help which he seeks is not only in feeding his cattle, or subduing his enemies; that the friendship of the wine-cup will not satisfy his notions of intercourse with the Divinity. **Search for purification.** He invokes a Purifier, he desires purification for himself. His ceremonies and sacrifices, though they may have other subordinate ends, seem gradually to point more and more to this end.

5. **The purifier.** As they do so, *one* Being gradually seems to dawn upon him, through the different objects which have been distracting his attention. The name Agni comes out more and more conspicuously amidst the forms which the Vedas seek to propitiate. You feel that he is becoming the special object of Brahminical service, that very soon he may supplant all the other objects, and may be confessed as *that* Being which all the rest were bringing into light. *Such* a unity we believe is latent in these early books, strictly polytheistic as they are; a unity, it will be perceived, which seems to be the result of the worshipper's experiments and discoveries; at all events, which reveals itself to him in the course of his thoughts and devotion, in strange contrast to all that variety which yet he is obliged to acknowledge as real, and which he had taught others as well as himself to look upon as divine.

6. **The esoterical belief. Grounds of it.** Here begins that distinction between the sacerdotal and the popular faith of the Hindoos, which has often been attributed to wilful imposture, which has no doubt been upheld by imposture, but which may have had a less culpable origin. The wish for purification implies the sense of something in ourselves which does not belong to this earth, which may be separated from it. As the man asks himself what this is, he discovers with wonder that the very effort of putting the question suggests the answer. **The wonder of thinking.** He thinks; thinks of all the things that are about him. Surely his thought makes him superior to them. If he can become a purely thinking being he is not any longer one of them. He has gained that which he wants. But who can make him such a thinking being? The God whom he calls upon must be himself a being of this kind. He must be *the* thinker. He must be close to the thinking man, his patron, his friend, his fellow-worker. Where can the union with him stop? Not till they become identical; not till the man actually sinks into the God, and is lost.

7. **Brahm the thinker.** Accordingly, in the next stage of Hindooism, Agni has become Brahm. A priest-god has come out clearly before us. It is impossible to give him any other name. He is emphatically the God of the priest, as distinguished from other men. He is the priest himself, raised and transfigured. It is the great effort and privilege of the priest to be absorbed in him.

8. **The priest a philosopher.** But has not the priest himself become changed during the process? Is he any longer the director of invocations and orderer of sacrifices? Has he not become the thinker, the intellectual man, whose business it is to use all those powers which the vulgar man has not, or has never cultivated? The priest is the philosopher, the seeker after wisdom which is hidden from other men. More than ever he must keep himself aloof from them, must distinguish himself from those who pursue the ordinary crafts and occupations of the world. He who merely acts, if he be the greatest of heroes or warriors, must be far beneath the thinker. The thinker must preserve

sacred the privileges with which he has been endued; he must transmit them to an order of successors.

9. **How he justifies his priestly office.** In such a scheme, what place is there for his old occupation? What is to be the end of sacrifices and offerings, if thinking is to be the all in all? There may be several answers to the question besides the vulgarest and wickedest of all (to which the Brahmin had a continual tendency), that such a religion is needful for the fool, but not for the wise man. 1st. By concentrating divinity in Brahm, the universe was not deprived of its sacredness. **All things thoughts or parts of Brahm.** Every part of nature was a thought of Brahm's. The cow, the elephant, the flower, were all some portions of him. There was no wrong then in paying homage to these; it might be considered a part of the service of Brahm. 2nd. There is something inexpressibly awful to a mind at all devout in that nearness in which it felt itself to Brahm, in the confusion between the worshipper and the object of his worship. **Attempt to distinguish the worshipper from the god.** Solemn invocations, habitual pronouncing of the name Om or Light, services of purification, might surely not be undesirable to keep the priest-student in mind that he was calling upon some being, and was not merely adoring himself, or an image thrown from himself. 3rd. **Propitiation** If the storms and convulsions of nature showed that there were dark thoughts in Brahm, there might be need of sacrifice or propitiation to remove these, even though the direct worship of dark beings might not yet have become a part of the mythology, or might be denounced by those who adhered to the purer conception of it. Still there were contradictions latent in the attempt to reconcile the philosophical and the sacerdotal position of the Brahmin, which were certain to make themselves evident in his subsequent history, and which were quite as likely to produce conflicts of opinion in his own schools as any popular resistance.

SECTION II. THE PHILOSOPHY DEVELOPED—THE BHAGAVAD GITA.

1. **The Brahminical caste and the other castes.** Another great problem, or series of problems, also of the highest interest, occupied the Brahmin. Contemplation was the business of his tribe. Still something was to be done. He was himself obliged to act; the other castes existed for the sake of action. **Contemplation and action.** How were action and contemplation related to each other? In what way was the relation between the Brahmin and the other tribes to be kept up if they had a different worship from him, if they were aiming at a wholly distinct object? What circumstances forced this question upon the mind of the Hindoo, we have no means of ascertaining. **The Bhagavad Gita.** That it did, at some time or other, become a very substantive and practical part of his reflections, and gave a colour and shape to all his philosophy, we know from that remarkable poem (its unity and completeness entitle it to the name, though it is, in fact, only the episode of a much longer poem), the Bhagavad Gita. **Its probable date.** The date of this production is still a subject of debate among scholars. The late accomplished Latin translator of it, A. W. Schlegel, unfortunately never completed his promised essay on the subject; but he has very clearly intimated his opinion, which seems to have been formed after much reflection on its poetical structure and spirit, as well as upon its language, that it has a right to take precedence of all the efforts of Greek speculation. A much earlier origin than this remark would imply has been claimed for it by Hindoos. We cannot deny that a much later one, which would make it subsequent to the Christian era, and within a moderate distance of the numerous commentaries which were written upon it in the twelfth or thirteenth centuries after Christ, has been imagined by some authorities. **Contains the essence of Brahminism.** However strong our inclination, on general and abstract ground, in favour of Schlegel's opinion, it must, of course, yield at once to any strong external evidence. But even if the question should be ultimately settled in that way which would exclude the Bhagavad Gita from the records of the old world, we should still feel that a document which is admitted to contain the very essence of Brahminical philosophy, and

which sets forth, in a most lively manner, questions which must have agitated the Hindoo mind at all periods, cannot be an unfit subject for this sketch. We shall endeavour, therefore, to give an abstract of it, believing that it will lead our readers into the heart of the subject, and may save them from many pages of wearisome and unprofitable discourse.

2. **Arjoon and Kreeshna.** The scene opens on a field of battle. The Kooroos and the Pandoos, kindred tribes, are about to engage in a deadly war. Arjoon is one of the heroes of the Pandoos; he is standing in a chariot drawn by white horses. Near him is the divine Kreeshna, of whom at present we must only say that he is the mysterious counsellor of the prince. What his offices and nature are, he himself will tell us by and by.

Arjoon perplexed. Arjoon is looking on with dismay and horror upon a battle, in which there were uncles, tutors, cousins, sons, brothers, and bosom friends on both sides. He thinks there can be no happiness for him hereafter if he should be the murderer of people of his own race. Such a crime is likely to destroy the virtue of the whole family or tribe; hell is threatened by the Sankar both to those who fall and those who survive. The chief sits down in the chariot between the two armies, and casts away his bow and arrows.

3. **Kreeshna's lesson on the soul.** This divine adviser reproves him for his weakness. It is his duty to fight. "Tell me what I shall do," cries the young man. "I am confounded between *two* duties. I am overcome with the dread of sin. I see nothing to appease my grief, though I were to rule the earth or the hosts of heaven." Then Kreeshna instructs him in the nature of the soul. Arjoon may go to the fight, for the soul neither killeth nor is killed. **Its eternity.** You cannot say of it, it hath been, it is about to be, or is to be hereafter. It is a thing without birth; it is ancient, constant, and eternal. As a man throweth away old garments and putteth on new, so the soul, having quitted its old mortal frames, entereth into others which are new. **Its migrations.** The weapon divideth it not, the fire burneth it not, the water corrupteth it

not, the wind drieth it not away. It is indivisible, inconsumable, incorruptible; it is universal, permanent, immoveable. The former state of being is unknown; the middle state is evident; the future state is not to be discovered. The duty of thy tribe is to fight; a soldier of the Kshatree tribe has no higher.

4. **Reward and punishment.** The belief of the soul's immortality is thus connected with the practice of life. But is not that dread which Arjoon had of the future consequences of his action a reasonable one? Kreeshna intimates to him that it is not. The people who held out that kind of notion of reward and punishment looked for transient enjoyment in heaven, not for eternal absorption. The Veds, which seem to encourage it, are adapted to men in a threefold condition. **Indifference to consequences.** Turn to spiritual things, be firm in the higher path, and you will be free from care and trouble about the future as well as the present. Consider the deed, and not the event: let not the motive for action be the hope of reward. Yet let not thy life be spent in inaction. Perform thy duty, abandon all thought of the consequence; seek an asylum in wisdom alone. Men who are endued with true wisdom are unmindful of good or evil in this world. They who have abandoned all thought of the fruit which is produced from their actions are freed from the chains of birth, and go to the regions of eternal happiness.

5. **The wise man.** Arjoon wishes to know something more of the Moonee, or thoroughly wise man. Kreeshna answers, "The wisdom of that man is established, who, like the tortoise, can draw in all his members, and restrain them from their wonted purposes. **His character.** The tumultuous senses hurry away by force the heart even of him who striveth to restrain them. The inspired man, trusting in me, may quell them and be happy. Such a one walketh in the night when all things go to rest; he sleepeth in the day, the time when all things wake. **His blessedness.** A man trusting in the Supreme, goeth not astray; at the hour of death he shall mix with the incorporeal nature of Brahm."

6. **How man is led into evil.** The subject of the relation of action to thought still disturbs Arjoon's mind, and gives occasion for another lecture from Kreeshna. In the course of it, Arjoon asks how man is led to commit offences; it seems as if, contrary to his wishes, he was compelled by some secret force. **Inclination.** "It is the enemy, lust or passion," replies the teacher, "insatiable and full of sin, by which this world is covered as the flame by the smoke, as the sword by rust, or as the fœtus by its membrane. This inveterate foe, in the shape of desire, raging like fire, and hard to be appeased, obscures the understanding of the wise man. This destroyer of wisdom and knowledge must be subdued. **Resolution.** It is possible; for though the organs are great, the mind is greater; the Resolution is greater than the mind, and there is One greater than that. When thou hast resolved what is superior to the resolution, and fixed thyself by thyself, then determine to abandon inclination or desire, thy great enemy."

7. **Who is above man's resolution.** There is a deep mystery in the last sentence. Who is this that is superior to the resolution in man? All the discipline seems to depend on this question. Kreeshna says that he taught it to one and another in former days, that it was handed down to the Rajarshees, and lost. But how is this, asks Arjoon, when thou, Kreeshna, hast come later into life than some of those to whom thou hast imparted this secret? **His past and present existence.** "Both I and thou," answers Kreeshna, "have passed many births; mine are known to me, but thou knowest not of thine. Although I am not in my nature subject to birth or decay, yet as I have command over my own nature, I am made evident by my power. When there is a decline of virtue in the world, I make myself manifest; I appear from age to age for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the re-establishment of virtue." **His worshippers.** Two kinds of worship are pointed out: those who acknowledge Kreeshna, do not when they quit their mortal frames enter into another, but enter into him. On the other hand, there are those who seek success for their works in this life; they worship the Devatas (demons or angels). The true Kreeshna

worshipper sees rest in action, and action in rest; he performs all duties, yet he, as it were, does nothing; he seeks no reward—he is pleased with whatever he may by chance obtain; he is freed from the bonds of action,—the same in prosperity and adversity. God is attained by him who maketh God only the object of his works. There are various modes of worship, all purifying; but the worship of spiritual wisdom is far better than the worshipping with offerings of things. **Methods of purification.** In wisdom is to be found every work. Seek this wisdom with prostrations, with questions, and with attention; then thou wilt not again fall into folly, thou wilt behold all nature in me. **The service of wisdom.** Although thou wert the greatest of offenders, thou shalt be able to cross the gulf of sin with the bark of wisdom. There is not anything to be compared in this world with wisdom and purity. He who is perfected by practice, in due time findeth it in his own soul. He who has faith finds wisdom. The ignorant, and the man whose spirit is full of doubt, is lost. **Faith.** Those, continues the teacher, whose understandings are in the Deity, whose souls are in him, whose asylum is in him, are by wisdom purified from their offences, and go whence they shall never return. **The Deity in visible things.** The learned behold him alike in the reverent Brahmin perfected in knowledge, in the ox, in the elephant, in the dog, and in him who eateth of the flesh of dogs. Those whose minds are fixed on this equality, gain eternity even in this world.

8. **The Yogi or perfect man.** The next lecture on the subject of the exercises of the soul works out the same idea in a number of forms. To the Yogi, or devout man, it is said gold, iron, and stones are the same; he is the same with those who love and those who hate, in the company of saints or sinners. He delighteth in his own soul; he is in God, and free from sin; he believes in unity, and worships me present in all things, and dwelleth in me altogether, even on this earth. **What becomes of the imperfect man.** In the course of this conversation, Arjoon asks, "Whither, O Kreeshna, doth the man go after death, who, although he be endued with faith, hath not obtained perfection in his devotion:

because his unsubdued mind wandered from the discipline, does he come to nothing?" Kreeshna answers, "No man who hath done good goeth unto an evil place: a man whose devotions have been broken off by death, having enjoyed for many years the reward of his virtues in the region above, is at length born again in some holy family; he is endued with the same degree of application that he held in his former body, and he begins again to labour for perfection."

9. **Kreeshna the life and essence of all things, and the principle of their destruction.** But after all, who is Kreeshna? The question has already been awakened in Arjoon's mind: he has arrived at the stage of discipline when it may be answered. I, says the teacher, am the creation and the dissolution of the whole universe. There is not anything greater than I; all things hang on me, even as precious gems upon a string; I am moisture in the water, light in the sun and moon, invocation in the Veds, sound in the firmament, sweet-smelling savour in the earth, glory in the source of light. I am life in all things, and zeal in the zealous. I am the eternal seed of nature; I am the understanding of the wise, the glory of the proud, the strength of the strong; free from lust and anger. There is a supernatural influence which bewilders the wicked, the foolish, and the low-minded, and hinders them from coming to me. I am not in these, though they proceed from me. Many seek me, but the wise man is constantly engaged in my service; I esteem the wise man as myself, for his spirit dependeth upon me alone. Those who worship the Devatas go to them; those who worship me alone, go to me. **The Divine unity.** The ignorant who are unacquainted with my supreme nature, which is superior to all things, believe me, who am invisible, to exist in the visible forms in which they see me. I know all the beings that have been, that are, that shall be; but there is not one amongst them that knoweth me. Those who trust in me know Brahm, the supreme and incorruptible; they know the emanations from which natural things are generated; they know the destroying nature. In this body I am the teacher of worship. He who thinks constantly of me will find me. He who finds me returns not again to mortal birth.

The universe exists, dissolves, is reproduced; there is an incorruptible abode which is my mansion. The supreme Being is obtained by him who worshippeth no other gods; in him is included all nature. By him all things are spread abroad. **Kreeshna in relation to human beings.** I, continues Kreeshna, am the sacrifice; I am the worship, I am the spices, I am the fire, I am the victim, I am the father and mother of this world; I am the road of the good, the comforter, the creator, the witness, the asylum, and the friend. They who serve other gods with a firm belief, in doing so involuntarily worship me. I am the same to all mankind. They who serve me in adoration are in me. If one whose ways are ever so evil serve me alone, he becometh of a virtuous spirit, and obtaineth eternal happiness. Even women, and the tribes of Visya and Soodra, shall go the supreme journey if they take sanctuary with me; how much more my holy servants the Brahmins and the Rajarshees! Consider this world as a finite and joyless place, and serve me.

10. **Ardour of the disciple.** Arjoon begins to regard his teacher with wonder and adoration. He is taught that reason, knowledge, clear judgment, patience, truth, humility, meekness, birth, death, fear, courage, zeal, renown, and infamy, all come from him. **The outward forms of Kreeshna.** He is the soul which standeth in the bodies of all beings; he is the chief of all warriors, floods, animals; the Himmalaya among mountains, the Ganges among rivers; the science in science, the spring among seasons, gaming amongst frauds, the rod and policy among rulers. "Amongst the secret I am silence, amongst the wise I am wisdom."

11. **Kreeshna's divine nature.** All these are the forms of Kreeshna. Arjoon aspires to see his never-failing spirit. A mysterious revelation is granted. The pupil is overwhelmed with rapture and terror. He sees all creation proceeding from Kreeshna—swallowed up in him. With this vision is mingled one of the army by which he is surrounded. As troops of insects, with increasing speed, seek their own destruction in the flaming fire; as the rapid streams of flowing rivers roll on to

meet the ocean's bed,—so these heroes of the human race are rushing on towards the flaming mouth of the Divine Being. The whole world is filled with His grandeur. Kreeshna is the destroyer as well as the creator! Not one of these warriors save Arjoon is to live. They are already destroyed by the Divine power. Let him put forth his hand and be the immediate agent of their death. On to the battle!

12. **Reverence and fellowship.** But Arjoon's terror increases. He bows down before him whom he had called Kreeshna and friend. I was ignorant, he says, of thy greatness; I was blinded by my affection and presumption; I have trifled with thee; I crave thy forgiveness. Thou art the Father of all things, animate and inanimate; the sage instructor of the whole, worthy to be adored. Bear with me as a father with his son, a friend with a friend, a lover with his beloved. I am pleased to behold things never before seen, but my mind is in awful fear. **Kreeshna in his human form.** He is bidden not to be disturbed, nor to let his faculties be confounded. The god assumes his benignant human shape: Arjoon is at peace.

13. After this wonderful discovery of himself, and some discourse upon the method in which he is to be served in his visible and invisible nature, Kreeshna proceeds to answer some of his pupil's more difficult questions. **The nature of body.** First, what is Kshetra, or body? It consists of the five elements (earth, water, fire, air, and æther), consciousness, understanding, spirit, the eleven organs, the powers of the five senses, love and hatred, pleasure and pain, sensibility and firmness. **Wisdom.** Secondly, what is Wisdom? It is freedom from self-esteem, hypocrisy, and injustice; patience, rectitude, respect for masters and teachers, exemption from attachment and affection to children, wife, and home; evenness of temper upon the arrival of every event, whether longed for or not; freedom from pride, worship paid to Kreeshna alone, love of solitude, constant study of the superior spirit. **The object of wisdom.** Thirdly, what is Gnea, or the object of Wisdom? It is that which hath no beginning and is supreme, which can neither be called being nor not being; it is all hands and feet;

it is all faces, heads, and eyes; it is all ear; it sitteth in the midst of the world; without organs, it is the reflected light of every faculty of the organs; connected with nothing, it containeth all things; without quality, it partaketh of every quality. It is the inside and outside, the moveable and immoveable of all nature. It standeth at a distance, yet it is present; it is undivided, yet in all things it standeth divided. It is the ruler of all things; it is the light in light, and it is declared to be free from darkness.

14. **The instrumental and directing faculties.** There are two other principles which Kreeshna declares to be without beginning: Prakreetee and Pooroosh. The former would seem to be the mere instrument or agent in man; the other, the directing power in him. All things, animate and inanimate, are declared to be produced from the union of *Kshetra* and *Kshetra-gna*. I, says Kreeshna, am the Kshetra-gna in every mortal frame,—the living power which directs it.

15. **The three qualities.** From Prakreetee, or nature, three Goon, or qualities, proceed: the truth quality, the passionate quality, the dark quality. The Satwa-goon, or truth quality, leads to wisdom; the Raja-goon, or passionate quality, to ambition and covetousness; the Tama-goon, or dark quality, to madness, distraction, and ignorance. Those who are ruled by the first mount on high; the second stay in the middle; the last sink below. But the soul must rise above all these qualities into a Being who is superior to them, before he can drink of the water of immortality. How this ascent is to be obtained,—how a man is to rise above the particular Pooroosh, or soul, into the Poorooshottama, or supreme soul,—is the next subject of Kreeshna's teaching; of which we need not speak, as it has been anticipated in several of the previous lectures.

16. An important subject still remains to be discussed. The belief of the three different qualities evidently presumes the existence of a different destiny for the creatures which are endued with them. This principle is now distinctly affirmed. **Destiny.** The Divine destiny is for absorption into the Divine nature; the evil destiny confines the soul

to mortal birth. Those who are born under the influence of the evil destiny know not what it is to proceed in virtue, or recede in vice. They say the world is without beginning and without end,—without an Eeswar, or Divine light; that all things are conceived by the junction of the sexes. **The sensual man.** These men say that the gratification of their sensual appetites is the supreme good; **His course and end.** they say, "This to-day hath been acquired by me, and this I shall have also; I am powerful, I am happy, I am rich; I am endued with precedence among men. Where is there another like me? I will make presents at the feast, and be merry." Such men are self-conceited, stubborn, and ever in pursuit of wealth and pride. They worship nominally and hypocritically. They place their trust in pride and power; they hate me in themselves and others; wherefore I cast them down into the wombs of evil spirits and unclean beasts. They go from birth to birth; at length, not finding me, they go into the most infernal regions. There are three ways to these: lust, anger, and avarice. Avoiding these gates of sin, thou wilt go the journey of the Most High.

17. **The true orderly worship. The irregular worship.** Distinction of qualities leads to a distinction in the kinds of faith or worship. All worship; but the nature and object of the worship are determined by their different qualities. The worship which is directed by Divine precept, without the desire of reward, and with an attentive mind, is of the Satwa-goon. That which is performed irregularly, without regard to the precepts of the law, without the distribution of bread, without the usual invocations, without gifts to the Brahmins at the conclusion, and without faith, is of the Raja-goon. That which is performed with a view to the fruit, and with hypocrisy, is of the Tama-goon. **The formal or false worship.** Whatever is performed without faith—whether it be sacrifices, deeds of charity, or mortification of the flesh—is called Asat, and is not for this world nor that which is above. **The three kinds of action.** These same qualities exhibit themselves in works. He who has the Satwa-goon forsakes the fruit of action, but not action itself. He who has the Raja-goon forsakes the work because it is

painful; he who has the Tama-goon neglects action through folly and distraction of mind. So of Wisdom: the wisdom of the Satwa-goon sees one infinite principle in nature; the wisdom of the Raja-goon sees manifold principles prevailing in nature; the wisdom of the Tama-goon sees only self-interest in all things. So of Pleasure: the pleasure which a man enjoys from his labour, and wherein he finds the ends of his pains, that which in the beginning is as poison, and in the end is as the water of life, is of the Satwa-goon: this arises from the consent of the understanding. The pleasure which arises from the mere meeting of the organs with their objects, which in the beginning is as sweet as the water of life, and in the end is a poison, is of the Raja-goon. The pleasure, which in the beginning and end, tends to stupify the soul, is of the Tama-goon. There is not anything, Kreeshna declares, in heaven or earth which is free from the influence of these three qualities.

18. **The tribes.** Upon these qualities depend the respective duties of the four tribes of Brahmin, Kshatree, Visya, and Soodra. The natural duties of the Brahmin are peace, self-restraint, zeal, purity, patience, rectitude, learning, theology. **Their distinct vocations.** The natural duties of the Kshatree are bravery, glory, rectitude, not to fly from the field, generosity, princely conduct. The natural duty of the Visya is to cultivate the lands, tend the cattle, and buy and sell. The natural duty of the Soodra is servitude. **Duty of following them.** A man who is contented with his own particular lot and duty obtaineth perfection; for he offers his own works to that Being from whom the principles of all beings proceed. The duty of a man's own calling is far preferable to the duty of another, let it be ever so well pursued. A man's own calling, with all its faults, ought not to be forsaken. With thy heart place all thy works in me; by so doing thou shalt surmount every difficulty. But if through pride, thou wilt not listen to my words, thou wilt undoubtedly be lost. From a confidence in thyself, thou mayest think thou wilt not fight. This is a fallacious determination, for the principles of thy nature will impel thee; thou wilt do that through necessity, which thou seekest through ignorance to avoid.

19. This conclusion, though perfectly in accordance with the commencement of the story, and giving it a unity, may seem inconsistent with what has been said of the special glory of the Brahmin. **Eeswar, the indweller.** But Kreeshna adds, "Eeswar resideth in the bosom of every mortal being, revolving with his supernatural power the universal wheel of time. Take sanctuary with him upon all occasions, oh! offspring of Bahrat; by his divine pleasure thou shalt obtain supreme happiness, and an eternal abode."

20. **The leading thought of the poem.** It would have been easy to select sentences from this poem, and from a number of other Hindoo books, and out of them to construct a scheme of Hindoo philosophy. But such a scheme would not at all have represented the actual thoughts and conflicts in the minds of those to whom it would be attributed. We might form a high or a low notion of this remarkable people, or of their teachers; but we should know nothing of one or the other. The occasion of the poem, its scenery, the method in which the thoughts work themselves out, are at least as important for this purpose as the results to which Arjoon or Kreeshna, or the narrator of the story, arrives. The final moral, in which the Kshatree tribe is shown to have its own work and dignity, which are not incompatible with the superior glory of the Brahmin, evidently goes through the poem. To it all the dramatic interest, and all the speculations are linked. The darkness in Arjoon's mind arises from his fancying that the work which belongs to the priest also belongs to the warrior; or that there is no escape from this conclusion but in supposing that there is a different standard for each to recognise, a different object for each to pursue, a different God for each to adore. Such an opinion had, no doubt, been taught in the Brahminical schools, and seemed a natural inference from the idea of Brahminism. The author of the poem evidently felt how opposed it was to that which he regarded as pure Brahminism; how it must force the Brahmin himself to acknowledge a number of different objects, while his business was to search for unity; how it must lead to a hopeless division of the castes, which should be bound together in obedience

to that which was most refined and spiritual. Evidently, then, the book is the work of a reformer who wished to make the Brahminical tribe conscious of its own vocation, as the guide, and not the tyrant, of the rest. In the effort for this object, he brings out the highest form of Hindooism,—a form of it which never had been nor could be realised, but by which we may understand its lower and vulgarer manifestations far better than by contemplating them alone.

21. **Unbelief in the Veds not implied in the poem.** The difference of this form from that which we find in the Veds, has led many to conclude that the poem is throughout a protest, though a hidden one, against the scheme of belief which is embodied in them. But there seems no sufficient reason to doubt that the author is sincere in the respect which he professes for them, and that he believed that he was drawing out the sense which was latent in them. Nor, perhaps, was he wholly wrong in that opinion. Though the writers of the Veds would have been absolutely unable to follow him in a single step of his philosophical speculations; though there is no reason to doubt that they did mean to ask Indra, and the other gods whom they invoked, to come and drink with them,—yet their cries for communion and friendship with the gods, and for purification, grounded as they are upon religious aspirations of the creature, not upon a revelation of the Creator, do contain implicitly those ideas which are developed in the Bhagavad Gita. In one respect the writer of the poem seems to return from the more exclusive Brahminism to the earlier teaching of the Vedas. **Kreeshna and Brahm.** Kreeshna, not Brahm, is his hero. Now it is true that Kreeshna *is* Brahm, and claims the name for himself: but he presents himself first to us in a human shape; he comes forth as the warrior, not merely as the thinker. This difference is involved in the whole conception of the poem. The sudden manifestation of his spiritual and divine glory which overwhelms Arjoon, does not swallow up his human form, or hinder him from appearing in it again. However great the difficulty, the Hindoo philosopher perceives that, in some way or other, this union must be realised,—that there can be

no sufficient teacher of man's spirit in whom both these conditions do not meet.

22. **The soul the ultimate object of this philosophy.** But, deep and sincere as the acknowledgment of such a teacher is, the soul of man is still the ultimate object in this poem, as much as in the more narrow, merely meditative religion. In one and the other it is equally true that the soul or spiritual part of man is always unawares becoming the God, even while there is the strongest effort to escape from this identification,—a really earnest struggle of the man to sink in awe, to confess One mightier than himself, to become nothing in his presence. What is his presence? Where is it? **Consequences.** Here the Hindoo becomes lost; he sees images of himself everywhere—he is sure that there is something which is not the image of himself. To discover what it is, is worth the toil and sorrow of a life; to know it must be the great reward hereafter. But while that difficult problem is solving itself,—while he is devising the means which are best for attaining the complete fruition,—Earth is going on with her processes of growth, decay, and destruction; the man himself is born, has to live, fight, and die. There is nothing to connect himself or Nature with God, unless he worships himself or Nature, and makes the God comprehend both. This, consequently, is the result—the downward result—to which everything in Hindoo life and society always has been tending.

23. **The Hebrew and the Hindoo.** The Hebrew was prohibited from connecting God with anything in heaven above, or in the earth beneath, or in the waters under the earth. He was taught to look up to the Lord as his God, the God of his fathers, the King of his land, the Creator of things, the Lawgiver of himself. He was taught to wage war with all the tendencies to worship natural gods, which he found in himself, which he saw in others. He was taught to acknowledge the Lord as the ever-present guide, and ruler, and teacher of his whole nation; every Jew being in the covenant; priests, lawgivers, prophets, being God's ministers to them. **The relation between them.** This is what is called their narrow, exclusive faith. But out of it, as we have

seen, there grew a philosophy, the recognition of a Divine teacher of man, of a wisdom which is to be the object of his search and love. The Hindoo starts from the discovery to which the Hebrew had been led by such a long and painful discipline. **The contrast between them.** He is conscious of a mysterious Teacher near him, of one working upon his spirit, of one who is at the same time ruler over nature. But his search begins from himself, and, in spite of his conviction that it ought not to be so, it ends in himself. The purification of his individual soul becomes practically the highest end he can pursue or conceive of; he must make it his aim; he must separate from society, to which nevertheless he feels bound, that he may pursue it. The more he learns about himself, the more he discovers that he must get rid of himself; yet he is always pursued by that demon. To sink and be lost is his only hope,—to sink in Brahm. But is Brahm anything save a projection from himself? To sink in him, does it mean the same as to be nothing?

24. **Worth and interest of the Hindoo philosophy to a believer in the Hebrew records.** Reflections such as these, upon which the whole condition of Hindoo society for thousands of years is the commentary, might suggest some doubts to those who think that the acknowledgment of wisdom received is unfavourable to the search after it; that the soul of man is most likely to be free when it is working out its freedom for itself, or under the guidance of a set of wise men. But we who do acknowledge the Hebrew principle, who have that vantage-ground for contemplating the history of the universe, are not obliged to rest in this merely negative conclusion. We are bound to look upon the whole course of human thought as directed by a wisdom above man's—by One who, as the Apostle speaks, "orders the times before appointed and the bounds of men's habitations, that they may seek Him, if haply they may feel after Him and find Him." To one holding this faith, the seekings of the Bhagavad Gita, and of the whole Hindoo world, must be of profoundest interest. **Spirit in which it should be studied.** He must perceive, indeed, that they were baffled continually; but he makes the discovery with sympathy, not exultation,—with the certainty that

they were struggling with questions which belong to him and to the whole universe; to which he too has to seek an answer, and cannot rest till he finds one. And far from seeing only contradictions either in the method of the search or the result of it, he will have continually to be humbled by perceiving how much has been made known to these inquirers; what glimpses of light they have caught, what visions of good have cheered their dreary path, what strength has been given them for thought, for suffering, even at times for manly action. If he feels even a wish to deny or to explain away this fact, he will suspect himself of a secret atheism—of having studied the Hebrew books to no profit.

25. **Its relation to the after history.** These remarks belong especially, but not exclusively, to the subject we are now considering. For modern inquiries have made it clear that the Sanscrit is the source of most of the European languages. We have, therefore, a right to expect that the habit of thought and feeling in the Sanscrit books may be traced, under different modifications, in the nations of which we shall have hereafter to speak. We may find, in fact, that these Hindoo books are the commencement of a course of inquiry which we shall have to trace in many windings through Greek and through modern philosophy. The spirit of man, which in the Hebrew books has been presented to us under a Divine discipline and education, will henceforth be seen asking a multitude of questions respecting itself, its destiny, its relations to the visible and invisible world, feeling after some object near it which might be its guide or helper in the search, losing that object again and again, questioning earth and heaven to tell whither it is gone, how it may be recovered. Whether this Indo-Germanic course of inquiries ever meets at any point that Semitic teaching of which we have been hearing; whether the unity which is revealed to the Hebrew is to explain or contradict the unity which is sought for by the Brahmin, our future history may show. But in the meantime we may remark, that the problems which we shall meet with among Ionian, Eleatic,

Platonic philosophers, will be far less perplexing to us if we have listened attentively to the dialogue between Arjoon and Kreeshna.

SECTION III. THE PHILOSOPHER SEPARATING HIMSELF FROM THE PRIEST.

1. Any allusion to the formal schools of Hindoo philosophy will belong more properly to the second part of this sketch. But there is one great Eastern revolution, assigned by most authorities to the fifth or sixth century B.C., which stands in the closest connection with the history of philosophy. Indeed, the few glimpses which we possess concerning the external facts of a conflict that has led to the most surprising results, would be absolutely unintelligible to us if we were not helped by some previous knowledge of Hindoo speculations.

2. **The Buddhist school.** The Buddhist is constantly spoken of in Hindoo books as if he were the member of a philosophical sect. *We* know him as the professor of a religion which is received by nearly a third of the inhabitants of the globe. To reconcile two such opposite descriptions, we must recollect the remarks which have been made upon the apparently unsociable characters which are united in the Brahmin, and upon the nature of Brahm himself. The priest is the man who uses his soul or intellect, in distinction from the mass of men, who use only their senses. Brahm is *the* Intellect or Buddha. That there should be a sect of Brahmins who dwelt upon the idea of an intelligence in man, till they began to suspect that their own pretension to an exclusive monopoly of it was, in fact, a denial of Brahm's presence, might easily have been conjectured; that these same persons should exalt the meditative part of religion above the sacrificial would be most likely from the specimen of the same feeling we have discovered in the Bhagavad Gita. **The Buddhist revolution.** But there was a period very memorable and critical, it would seem, in the history of mankind generally, connected with the appearance of reformers and legislators in various countries, perhaps marking the commencement

of European society and civilization, when Brahminism was shaken to its centre in Hindostan, and when the worship of the One Intelligence was proclaimed aloud as incompatible with the pretensions of an hereditary caste.

3. Not the original Hindoo *doctrine*, as some have affirmed, in plain contradiction both to the letter and spirit of the Veds, but certainly the idea which lay hid in that doctrine, and ever and anon had threatened to break loose from it, did now become the inspiring idea of whole countries. The philosophy, disentangling itself from the old faith, became itself a faith. **The inward meaning of Buddhism.** Buddhism is the most surprising effort of the human intellect to assert its own supremacy of which there ever has been, or perhaps ever will be, any record. European sages in the last century, and in the present, have cried out, "When will philosophy break loose from the fetters which priests have imposed upon it?" Philosophy in Asia performed that task two thousand years ago. It threw off a yoke which was become quite intolerable; it affirmed that man's soul is capable of unlimited expansion; it claimed for that soul the homage due to a divinity: it made no mere idle boast of power; it actually won the allegiance of multitudes.

4. **Its different aspects.** Is the result one on which the lover of wisdom, or of his kind, can delight to dwell? All possible forms in which the intellect can express its belief in itself and in its own powers have been discovered and tried. The Buddhist worships sometimes the pure, absolute unity; sometimes he sees a soul above his own soul, *himself* transfigured; sometimes he adores men who have done great works on earth, the one Buddha distributed in numerous Buddhas. **Its outward clothing.** Now he denies all symbols, now every thing is symbolical. He is the purest of theists, he is the most complete of atheists. He can conceive nothing too vast for human wisdom, he sees it all gathered up in an infant. He is always flying from himself, he can find nothing but images of himself. **Its final results.** The philosophy which began by emancipating itself from religion has created for itself a religion,

—one especially narrow, artificial, material. Those who would not be priests or have priests practise all priestly impostures, are slavishly priestridden. The adored intellect makes no progress, the seeker after wisdom finds no resource but in identifying the search with the object, and confessing that he finds nothing. Can this be the process destined for the emancipation of mankind?

CHAPTER IV. CHINESE PHILOSOPHY.

1. **Sympathy of the European philosophers of the eighteenth century with Khoung-fou-tseu.** THOUGH we have said that the Buddhist revolution was an effort of philosophers to free themselves from the shackles of an hereditary faith, we are quite aware that it is not to an experiment of this kind that the teachers of the last century would have turned as an encouragement and an example to themselves. Mysticism, which belonged as much to the revolters from the Brahminical system as to that system itself, inspired them with nothing but contempt. But the Eastern world supplied them with another object, on which they could bestow the most fervent and unbounded admiration. They found in Khoung-fou-tseu all that they missed in these sages of India, with an entire absence of that which was offensive in them. **Reasons which justified it.** They heard of a man who, six centuries B.C., considered the outward economy of an empire a worthier object of study than all hidden and abstracted lore, who prized maxims of life and conduct more than all doctrines respecting the Divinity, who had actually anticipated some of the most modern propositions respecting the governor and the governed. This man they found was not a mere name for a set of opinions: he had a distinct, marked personality; and his words and acts had not been limited to a narrow circle, or to one or two centuries. He had left an impression of himself upon the most populous empire in the world. After two thousand years his authority is still sacred among the people, the mandarins, the emperors of China; his influence is felt in every portion of that vast and complicated society.

2. **Chinese history, past and present, expounded by him.** Such a fact as this is worthy of all attention. Great as is the contrast between

China and Hindostan—though that contrast can hardly be expressed more accurately than by saying that in India all history is a philosophy, and that in China all philosophy is a history—yet it is equally true of each people that its search after wisdom is the only satisfactory key to the events which have befallen it. The difficulty of understanding the long line of dynasties which preceded the birth of Khoung-fou-tseu, though his words and acts compel us to believe in them, is a sufficient proof of this fact. We confess the antiquity of the empire, because it is needful as an explanation of the reform which he worked in it.

3. **The old Chinese faith must be learnt in a great measure from him.** This being the case, we are excused from dwelling as much upon the old faith of China as we were forced to do on that of India. This faith we are obliged to examine in a great measure with the eyes of Khoung-fou-tseu: he collected and remodelled the books which contain it. He may have omitted much which seemed to him immaterial for the education of his country, and yet which, to a modern critic, might be of great use. At the same time we are not disposed to question the general accuracy of the conception which this teacher formed of the old institutions and the old creed of his country. There are abundant proofs of the fidelity with which he studied them, of the earnest desire which he had to preserve them. **His dislike of innovation.** No one aspired less to the reputation of an innovator; his main object was to remove innovations: yet this desire was balanced by a profound reverence for that which was established. Nothing was to be brought back for the mere purpose of bringing it back. Order was not to be sacrificed even for the hope of redressing an evil.

4. **The Chinese utterly unmystical.** Khoung-fou-tseu could not have produced the effect which he has produced upon the empire of China,—could not be recognised in the character in which he has been recognised for so many ages,—if his mind had not been the very highest type of the Chinese mind; that in which we may read what it was aiming at both before and after he appeared to enlighten it. **The ancient takes the place of the eternal.** We may therefore acquiesce

without difficulty in the opinion, that the Chinese religion was from the first of a much less high and mysterious quality than that of almost any people upon the earth; that the belief of the eternal as distinct from, and opposed to, the temporal, which we have found so characteristic of the Hindoo, existed very dimly and imperfectly in it, and was supplied only by a reverence for the past; that the sense of connexion or communion with any invisible powers, though not absent, must have been weak and slightly developed; **The emperor** that the emperor must have been regarded always as the highest utterer of the divine mind; that the priest must have been chiefly valued as a minister of the ceremonial of the court; that rites and ceremonies must have had a substantive value in this land independent of all significance, which they have scarcely ever possessed elsewhere; that there was united with this tendency one which to some may seem incompatible with it—an attachment to whatever is useful and practical; that the Chinese must have entertained a profound respect for family relationships; **The father** that the relationship of father and son, however, will have so overshadowed all the rest, that they will have been regarded merely as different forms of it, or as to be sacrificed for the sake of it; **Obedience the sum of virtues.** that implicit obedience to authority will have been *the* virtue which every institution existed to enforce, which was to be their only preserver. **The worship** If we suppose the reverence for the shades of ancestors, for the person of the emperor, for the dignity of the father, to have been joined with something of a Sabean worship, with some astrology and speculation about the future, we shall perhaps arrive at a tolerably near conception of China as it may have existed under the old emperors, to whom the sage continually refers with admiration and regret.

5. **A society built upon customs.** These were habits of mind which may have been represented more or less perfectly in the characters of particular sovereigns, and which had embodied themselves in the forms of Chinese society. A tyrant might, of course, derange the whole economy of such a world. A state of things which rested merely on

custom, and was upheld by observances, might quickly pass into utter confusion. "The dynasty of Yu," says the Book of Verses, "might be compared to the Most High while it retained the affection of the people: we learn by its decline how hard it is to preserve the command of heaven." These words must be illustrated hereafter: we quote them now merely to show where is the starting-point of the Confucian philosophy. **Khoung-fou-tseu the reformer.** The wisdom at which it aims is that which shall be effectual for the removal of a decayed condition of society, and the restoration of the principles that are implied in it. **His wise man essentially political.** We hear almost as much of the studious or meditative man in the Chinese books as in the Brahminical. Quite as earnestly as the Brahmins, and perhaps much more honestly than they, Khoung-fou-tseu speaks of the superiority of thought and study to all animal pleasures, to the pursuit of wealth, to the possession of offices. Yet no one is less of a Moonee. He began as a man of affairs —a Chinese official. The affairs of the empire were his study all his life through: he trained his disciples to take part in them. Education he looked upon as the one necessary means to good government; but all education was to be for the sake of government. To ascertain the ends of government, and the means of accomplishing those ends, was the one function of the sage.

6. **The Lun-yu: discourses of Khoung-fou-tseu.** Before we come to the doctrines of Khoung-fou-tseu on this subject, and show how morals and metaphysics were combined in his political science, we must try to give our readers some conception of the man himself. The third of the Chinese classical books, called the Lun-yu, or Philosophical Dialogues, is that which will be most helpful for this purpose. We have there the recorded sayings of the man, which bear far more internal evidence of genuineness than those which are commonly attributed to the founders of the Greek schools. We have also the testimonies of affectionate disciples respecting him, which, if they are not wholly to be trusted, at least give us different impressions of his character, out of which we may form one for ourselves.

7. **Fancied resemblance between Khoung fou tseu and Socrates.** M. Pauthier, the recent French translator of the classical books of China, to whom we are under the greatest obligations for bringing the treasures of the past within the reach of our ignorance, and whose enthusiasm for his subject is a warrant, in addition to his general European reputation, that he has really vanquished the difficulties of it, has somewhat rashly suggested a comparison between the dialogues in the Lun-yu and those in which Socrates is the hero. He is candid enough to add, that the resemblance is chiefly to the sayings which Xenophon has attributed to his master, and that it is not easy to detect the artistical beauty and form of the Platonic dialogues in their Chinese counterpart. He even admits that there is a certain monotony in the utterances of Khoung-fou-tseu, though he adds, "even this monotony has something of the serenity and the majesty of a moral instruction, which is bringing successively under our eyes the different sides of human nature contemplated from a higher ground." **The contrast between them exhibits the opposition of the east and west.** Though, for ourselves, we might be glad to exchange a little of this serenity and majesty for the hearty and humorous sympathy of the Greek with all that is passing around him, we are quite willing to accept it as a characteristic of another order of genius belonging to the east rather than the west, and entitled to its own meed of respect. **Modesty of Khoung-fou-tseu.** And it is scarcely just to Khoung-fou-tseu to speak of him simply as looking down upon his fellow-men: there are indications in his deeds and words of fellow-feeling and real humbleness of mind. The dogma which attributes such qualities in all cases to men who have exercised a great influence over their kind, whether true or not, is certainly not contradicted in this instance.

8. That our readers may not be unacquainted with the form, such as it is, of this Chinese book, through our desire to cull choice sentences that fell from the lips of Khoung-fou-tseu, we will give the substance of one or two of the chapters which seem best to explain his character and manner of thinking:—

Love for the past. "The philosopher said, I illustrate and comment upon the old books, but I do not compose new ones. I have faith in the Ancients, I love them; I have the highest honour for our Lao-pang" [a sage of the Chang dynasty].

Ideal of a great man. "The philosopher said, To meditate in silence and to recall to one's memory the objects of one's meditations; to devote oneself to study, and not to be discouraged; to instruct men, and not to suffer oneself to be cast down: how shall I attain to the possession of these virtues?"

Lamentations over the age. "The philosopher said, Virtue is not cultivated; study is not pursued manfully; if the principles of justice and equity are professed they are not followed; the wicked and the perverse will not be corrected: that is the cause of my sorrow."

Necessity of self-education. "The philosopher said, If a man does not make any effort to develope his own mind, I shall not develope it for him; if a man does not choose to make use of his faculty of speech (for the purpose of making himself intelligible), I shall not penetrate the sense of his expressions; if, after having enabled him to know one angle of a square, he does not discover the measure of the other three, I do not volunteer the demonstration."

The philosopher an official when it is possible. "The philosopher, interrupting Yeu-youan, said to him, If we are employed in public functions, then we fulfil our duty; if we are dismissed, we have the repose of a private life. You and I are the only persons who act thus."

Mere courage no virtue. "T'seu-leu said, 'If you were leading three bodies of troops of 12,500 men each, which of us would you take for a lieutenant?' The philosopher answered, 'The man who with his own hands would engage us in a combat with a tiger,—who, without any motive, would wish to ford a river,—who would throw away his life without reason and without remorse,—I certainly would *not* take for my lieutenant. I should want a man who would maintain a steady vigilance in the direction of affairs, who is capable of forming plans and of executing them.'"

Riches better than mere respectability. "The philosopher said, To get riches in a fair way, I would certainly engage in a low occupation if it was necessary; if the means were not fair, I would rather apply myself to that which I delight in."

Love of music. "The philosopher being in the kingdom of Tshi, heard the music which is called Tchao: he was so affected by it, that, for three months, he did not know the taste of his food. He said, 'I do not fancy that, since the composition of that music, that point of perfection has been once attained.'"

How his disciples found out the mind of their master. "Yeo-yeou said, 'Will our master help the Prince of Wei?' Tseu-koung said, 'I will question him upon that point.' He went into the apartment of the master, and said, 'What think you of Pe-i and of Chou-tsi?' The philosopher said, 'These men were true sages of the old world.' He added, 'Did not they experience any regrets?' 'No; they sought to acquire the virtue of humanity, and they obtained that virtue; why should they have had any regret?' Tseu-koung went back and said, 'Our master will not assist the Prince of Wei.'"

The wise man independent of externals. "The philosopher said, To feed upon a little rice, to drink water, to have nothing but one's bent arm to lean upon, is a state which has its own satisfaction. To get riches and honour by unfair means seems to me like a cloud driven along by the wind."

Study of Books. "The philosopher said, If it was granted to me to add a number of years to my life, I would ask fifty to study the Y-king, that I might render myself free from great faults."

Khoung's account of himself. Ye-hong questioned Tseu-leu about Khoung-fou-tseu. Tseu-leu did not answer him. "The philosopher said, Why have not you answered him? Khoung is a man who in his eagerness to acquire knowledge often forgets to take nourishment; who in the joy which he feels at having acquired it, forgets the pains which it has cost him; and who does not disturb himself at the approach of old age. Now you know about him."

"The philosopher said, I was not born endowed with knowledge; I am a man who loved the ancients, and made all exertions to acquire their information."

What subjects he avoided. "The philosopher never spoke in his conversation either of extraordinary things, or of civil troubles, or about spirits."

The two teachers. "The philosopher said, If three of us were travelling together, I should necessarily find two instructors; I should choose the good man for imitation, and the bad man for correction."

"The philosopher said, Heaven has planted virtue in me, what then can Hoan-teu do to me?"

No esoterical doctrine. "Do you fancy, my disciples, that I have any doctrines that I conceal from you? I have none. I have done nothing that I have not communicated to you, O my disciples!"

"The philosopher said, I cannot hope to see a holy man; all I can do is to see a wise one." [The exact difference of the two will be explained hereafter.]

"The philosopher said, I cannot hope to see a man truly virtuous; all I can do is to hope to see a man constant and settled in his views."

"To want everything, and to act as if one had abundance of possessions; to be empty, and to show oneself full; to be little, and to show oneself great—is a part very difficult to support steadily."

Action must be the fruit of reflection. "The philosopher said, How is it that there are men who act without knowing what they do? I should not wish to behave myself so."

"We must hear the advice of many people, choose what is good in their counsels, and follow it: see much, and reflect maturely on what one has seen; that is the second step in knowledge."

The exclusives of his school reproved. "The inhabitants of Heou-hing were hard to teach; one of their young men had come to visit the disciples of the philosopher. They doubted whether they should receive him among them. The philosopher said, I have admitted him to come among us, I have not admitted him to go away. Whence

comes this opposition on your parts? This man has purified himself, has renewed himself in order to enter my school. Praise him for having gone so far; I am not responsible for his past or future actions."

Humanity near to us. "The philosopher said, Is humanity so far off from us? I wish to possess humanity, and humanity comes to me."

Observation of the rites: Khoung's ignorance "The judge of the kingdom of Tchin asked, if Tchou-king understood the rites. Khoung-fou-tseu answered, He does understand the rites. Khoung-fou-tseu having withdrawn, the judge said to On-maki, I have been told that a great man never yielded assent to the faults of others; however, a great man has done it now. The prince has married with a woman of the family On, of the same name as his own, and he has called her On-mengtsew. A prince ought to know rites and customs. He, why does not he know them? On-maki told the philosopher; who cried, What a happy man Khoung-fou-tseu is! if he commits a fault, men are sure to know it."

What a sage may boast of. "The philosopher said, In literature I am not equal to other men. If I think of a man who unites holiness to the virtue of humanity, how could I dare to compare myself to him? All that I know is, that I force myself to practise these virtues, and to teach them to others, without being disheartened."

Khoung-fou-tseu's devotion. "The philosopher being very sick, Tseu-leu besought him to permit his disciples to address prayers for him to the spirits and the genii. The philosopher said, Is that the proper thing to do? Tseu-leu answered respectfully, It is the proper thing. It is said in the book called Leni, Address your prayers to the spirits and the genii above and below. The philosopher said, The prayer of Khoung-fou-tseu is constant."

Disobedience the greatest of crimes. "The philosopher said, If a man is given to luxury he is not submissive. If he is too parsimonious, he is vile and abject. However, baseness is better than disobedience."

The highest example of virtue. "The philosopher said, Tai-pe might be called sovereignly virtuous. I know not how anything could

be added to his virtue; thrice he refused the empire, and the people saw nothing admirable in his conduct."

How virtues became mischievous. "The philosopher said, If deference and respect towards others are not regulated by rules or by education, they are mere gratifications of our own fancy. If circumspection or vigilance are not regulated by education, they are only other names for extravagant cowardice. If manly courage is not regulated by education, it means only insubordination. If rectitude is not regulated by education, it brings the greatest confusion after it."

What a ruler can or cannot do. "The philosopher said, We may force the people to *follow* the precepts of justice and reason; we cannot force it to *comprehend* them."

How a man is kept in the right course. "He said, He who has an unshaken faith in truth, and who loves study passionately, preserves the principles of virtue, which are the consequences of this faith and love, to his death."

The good and evil state. "If a state is governed by the principles of reason, poverty and misery are a cause of shame. If a state is not governed by the principles of reason, riches and honour are the subjects of shame."

The qualities of a great man. "The philosopher said, I see no defect in Yu; he was sober in eating and drinking, and devoutly pious towards the spirits and the genii. His ordinary clothing was poor and mean; but how beautiful and glorious his robes were at the ceremonies! He inhabited a humble dwelling; but he directed all his energies to the making of trenches and cutting canals for the conveyance of waters."

9. Some of these sentences, which follow each other nearly in the order we have given them, require illustration from other passages.

In the last sentence Yu is commended for his devotion to the spirits and genii, yet Khoung-fou-tseu seems on his sick-bed scarcely to have acknowledged their existence, or at least to have shown no faith in their power of helping him. **Apparent contradiction in Khoung-fou-tseu's faith explained.** This apparent contradiction is perfectly intelligible,

if we consider the third chapter of this book. **His feeling about the unknown.** "Some one having asked, what was the sense of the grand royal sacrifice, the philosopher said, I do not know. He who did know this sense would find everything under Heaven clear and manifest for him. He would find no more difficulty in knowing everything than in putting his finger in the palm of his hand." Again, "when the philosopher entered into the great temple, he informed himself minutely about everything there. **His reverence for the prescribed order.** One who observed him cried out, Who will say now that the son of the man of Tsien knows the rites and ceremonies? see how carefully he has looked at each thing. The philosopher hearing these words, answered, I do so in conformity with the rites." Again, "Tseu-kang wished to abolish the sacrifice of the sheep which was offered on the first day of the twelfth moon. The philosopher said, Tse, you are only engaged about the sacrifice of the sheep, I am only concerned about the ceremony."

By reflecting on these passages, we may arrive at some judgment of the religious feelings of Khoung-fou-tseu generally. There appeared to him a mystery in the sacrifice which he could not penetrate; he was far from wishing to deny it, he would not for the world abolish the expression of it; but what it meant, he did not know, or probably seek to know. **General conclusion.** He valued the sacrifice not for its own sake, not for any benefit which he expected from it, but as part of an august and awful ceremonial. He worshipped the spirits and the genii because it was the ancient law, the established custom: therein consisted their sacredness in his eyes; but he did not speak of them, he had nothing to tell respecting them. It must not be concluded from this statement that he pretended to a faith, for the sake of the vulgar, which he secretly disowned, or that he looked upon the worship as a mere invention to maintain the government. **His sincerity** There are evidences of sincerity in his own conduct which negative the first supposition; his demand for sincerity in ministers and emperors disproves the second. The following passage might seem even to set at naught all

that we have said respecting the ritualism of Khoung-fou-tseu, and to prove that he *did* recognize a hidden ground for those ancient customs which he so diligently preserved. "Tseu-hia asked him the meaning of these words in the Book of Verses: '*What an agreeable smile there is upon his fine and delicate mouth! how sweet and ravishing his look! The ground of the picture must be prepared if you would paint*.' The philosopher answered, 'You cannot lay on the colours till you have made preparation for them.' **Not a mere ritualist.** 'You hint,' said Tseu-hia, 'that mere ritual laws are secondary things.' 'You have caught my meaning,' answered the philosopher; 'you are beginning to understand my discourses on poetry.'" So, again, he speaks in terms of a hidden sense in the rites and ceremonies of the dynasty of Hai, which laws and the opinions of wise men did not suffice to make known. Such language leads us at once to the main principle of this eminent teacher. Ceremonies, formalities, etiquette, in one word social customs, embody the principle of reason,—the very secret of order among men. **Forms, the most perfect expression of the principle of reason.** This principle of reason is the divinest thing he knows of; traditional habits and forms are the most accurate expression of it. These are the great restraints upon mere self-will; adherence to them is the sign of the ruler who desires to be in sympathy with his people. The perception of what they signify is the great privilege and endowment of the wise man; that which he is to communicate, so far as he can at least without any intentional reserve, to his disciples; that which it is the great business of education to impress upon the minds both of rulers and subjects. **End of education.** But, after all, this wisdom cannot be expressed very much better than in the forms themselves: it must be attained by observation, practice, habitual discipline; it must come out in conduct, in gestures, in looks, as much as in words; it must be uttered, so far as it is capable of utterance, in short maxims and somewhat enigmatical poetry; which will interpret themselves slowly to the person who combines an honest purpose, diligence, and political experience.

In the same manner we must understand a phrase of very frequent occurrence in the discourses of Khoung-fou-tseu, and yet which we are told, somewhat strangely, by one of his disciples, that he did not often care to introduce. It is the word which our French guide renders, and we have every reason to suppose renders accurately, *humanity*. There are one or two passages in the Dialogues which show that this word had a sort of profound, almost cabalistical significance in Khoung-fou-tseu's mind, which may account for the remark that he spoke rarely of it, though, in their reports, his disciples could not avoid frequently attributing it to him. **Humanity what it means in Khoung-fou-tseu's discourses.** "Ming-wow-pe asked, 'if T'seu-lou was humane?' The philosopher said, 'I do not know.' When the same question was repeated, the philosopher answered, 'If it was a question about commanding the military forces of a great kingdom, Tseu-lou would be capable of it; but I do not know what is his humanity.' 'And Kieou, what think you of him?' 'Well, he might be the governor of a city with a thousand houses, or of a family with a hundred chariots: I do not know what is his humanity.' 'And Tchi, what of him?' **A sacred word.** The sage said, 'Tchi, in an official sash, and occupying a post at the court, might be capable, with his good elocution, of introducing and handing out the guests: I do not know what is his humanity.'" We have already quoted passages from Khoung-fou-tseu which indicate his great love for music. The importance which he attached to it as an instrument of education and government is, perhaps, the one point in which it is possible to discover a resemblance between him and Plato. New music he evidently connected very closely with the sublime virtue, or complex of virtues, which he calls humanity. **Music: the expression by it.** Humanity imports therefore, we conceive, that order and harmony of relations in the body politic, and the corresponding order and harmony of feelings and faculties in the individual man, of which music may be considered the natural expression. **A man is to love his neighbour as himself.** There is a passage in which one of the disciples of Khoung-fou-tseu declares, that the doctrine of his

master consists simply in having rectitude of heart, and in loving our neighbour as ourselves. M. Pauthier apologizes for giving this form to his translation, but says he could find no other so accurate. Till some greater scholar contradicts him, we are bound to accept his statement. If he supposes that those who believe that these words proceeded from higher lips will be scandalized by it, we think he mistakes the matter altogether. **Can such a maxim be found in a Chinese book?** Those who attach the most awful significance to the utterances of these lips, and to the Person from whom they fell, will be the least disposed to look upon him as the propounder of great maxims, and not rather as the giver of a new life; will be the least likely to grudge a Chinese teacher any glimpses which may have been vouchsafed to him of that which the true regenerator of humanity should effect for it.

The command of heaven. Connected with this phrase is another to which we have alluded already, and which is also one of the key phrases of the Confucian system; one also of those which its propounder seems always to have uttered with hesitation and diffidence. The philosopher, it is said, spoke rarely of destiny or of the *command of heaven*. Perhaps the philosopher did not know precisely what he meant by heaven; but he did know that he meant something which was real, and not imaginary. It is consistent with the character which we have attributed to the original Chinese worship, and with the character of his own mind, that he should have been profoundly impressed with the order of the heavenly bodies—with the evenness, calmness, steadfastness, which the succession of day and night reveals to us. **The order of nature and of human society.** Such an order he desired and sought for in the transactions of human society. Such an order he believed that the imperial dignity was intended to represent and uphold. It was executing the mandate of heaven when it actually presented the image of this order; disobeying the mandate of heaven when it forgot this principle, and promoted or permitted derangement or confusion. **Responsibility of the emperor,** A direct responsibility then in the emperor is presumed by Khoung-fou-tseu; but to whom? A number of

expressions which recognize the misery that ensues in the government when the sovereign forgets his relations and duties to the governed, lead his modern interpreters continually to hope that he may have a dream of responsibility to the popular voice. **Not to the people,** Such a notion, however plausibly supported by certain sentences, we believe outrages the whole principle and history of the Confucian doctrine. The emperor could not have transgressed the commandment of heaven more in the mind of the philosopher than by forgetting that he was an emperor and confessing he was a subject. **Not to any divine person,** But responsibility to an actual living Being, who could call the emperor to account for his conduct, is equally out of the question. Homage to a principle, a law, to the idea of duty, is what remains, and this it was which Khoung-fou-tseu, by all his education and discipline, was labouring to realize in his own heart and in the hearts of others. **But to the law, or the sense of duty.** He had a wise consciousness of its vagueness; he felt the necessity of connecting it with some superior order, even if it was but a natural order: he did not like to say what the emperor obeyed, yet he must feel, and even declare, that he, like all other men, nay because he was the first of men, lived by obedience. Here is the point in which the personal convictions of the teacher became identical with his political philosophy, of which it behoves us now to render a more exact account.

10. **Extracts from the Tchoung Young. Idea of good government.** "Ngrâi-Koung questioned Khoung-fou-tseu on the constitutive principles of a good government. The philosopher said, The laws of the kings Wen and Wou were consigned to bamboo tablets; if their ministers were living now their laws would be in vigour: their ministers have ceased to be, and their principles of good government are no longer followed. The combined virtues and qualities of the ministers of a prince make the administration of a state good, as the virtue of the earth, uniting the moist and the dry, gives forth and causes to grow the plants which cover its surface. **Depends mainly upon administration.** This good administration resembles the reeds which are on the

borders of rivers: it springs up naturally on a soil that is suitable to it….

Who can choose good ministers. A prince who wishes to imitate the old administration of the kings must choose his ministers according to his own sentiments, which must be always inspired by the public good. That his sentiments may always have the public good for their moving principle, he must conform himself to the great law of duty, and this great law of duty must be searched for in humanity, which is the principle of love for all men. This humanity *is man himself*: regard for relations is the first duty of it.

What is necessary in a prince. "The prince can never cease to correct himself and bring himself to perfection. Having the purpose of correcting and perfecting himself, he cannot dispense with the rendering to his relations that which is due to them. Having the purpose of rendering to his relations that which is due to them, he cannot dispense with the acquaintance of wise men, that he may honour them, and that they may instruct him in his duties. Having the purpose of obtaining the acquaintance of wise men, he cannot dispense with the knowledge of heaven, nor with the law which directs in the practice of prescribed duties.

The five human duties. "The most universal duties for the human race are five, and the man possesses three natural faculties for practising them. The five duties are: the relations which subsist between the prince and his ministers, the father and his children, the husband and his wife, the elder and younger brother, and those of friends among themselves. Conscience, which is the light of intelligence to distinguish good and evil; humanity, which is the equity of the heart; moral courage, which is the force of the soul,—these are the three grand and universal moral faculties of the man.

Results more important than the method of arriving at them. "Whether nature is sufficient for the knowledge of these universal duties, whether study is necessary to apprehend them, whether the knowledge is arrived at with great difficulty or not—when one has got the knowledge, the result is the same. Whether we practise these duties

naturally and without effort, whether we practise them for the sake of getting profit and personal advantage from them—when we have succeeded in accomplishing useful works, the result is the same.

Practice leads to knowledge. "He who loves study, or the application of his intelligence to the search of the law of duty, is very near to acquire moral science. He who devotes all his efforts to practise his moral duties is near that devotion to the happiness of man which is called humanity. He who knows how to blush for his weakness in the practice of his duties is very near to acquire the force of mind necessary to their accomplishment.

How to make the condition of an empire blessed and enviable. "So soon as the prince shall have well regulated and improved himself, straightway the universal duties will be accomplished towards him. So soon as he shall have learnt to revere wise men, straightway he will have no longer any doubt about the principles of truth and falsehood, of good and evil; so soon as his parents shall be the objects of the affection which is due to them, straightway there will be no more discussions between his uncles, his elder brothers and his younger brothers; so soon as he shall treat, as it becomes him, secondary functionaries and magistrates, the doctors and literary men will zealously acquit themselves of their duties in the seminaries; so soon as he shall love and treat the people as his son, the people will be drawn to imitate its superior; so soon as he shall have drawn about him all the savans and the artists, his wealth will be advantageously spent; so soon as he shall entertain agreeably the men who come from a distance, straightway will men from the four ends of the empire flock in crowds into his state, to receive part in his benefits; so soon as he shall treat with kindness his great vassals, straightway he will be respected throughout the whole empire."

We must not separate these political axioms from the following, which are more purely moral:—

Resolution the greatest element of action. "All virtuous actions, all duties which have been resolved beforehand, are thereby accom-

plished; if they are not resolved upon, they are thereby in a state of infraction. If we have determined beforehand the words which we must speak, we shall not hesitate. If we have determined beforehand our affairs and occupations in the world, they will thereby be easily accomplished.

Perfection. "The perfect, the true, disengaged from all mixture, is the law of heaven. The process of perfection, which consists in using all one's efforts to discover the celestial law, the true principle of the mandate of heaven,—this is the law of man. **The saint and the sage.** The perfect man attains this law without help from without; he has no need of meditation, or long reflection to obtain it; he arrives at it with calmness and tranquillity. This is the holy man. He who is continually tending towards perfection, who attaches himself strongly to the good, and fears to lose it, is the sage."

11. **The leading principle of this philosophy.** These extracts are taken from the second of the classical books which bear the general title of "The Invariable in the Mean." In the opinion of the Chinese, it contains the very essence of all philosophy—that which belongs to the great school, for which the first school—what may be called the school of custom or etiquette—is the vestibule. As we shall so often have to deal with the doctrine of the mean or middle in the schools of the West, it is as well that we should ascertain, as nearly as we can, what anticipation there is of it in the passages we have quoted from the Tchoung-Young.

Form of its proportions. Our readers will not have failed to have been struck with the *form* in which the Confucian maxims evolve themselves. **The sorites.** The sorites, says M. Pauthier, is clearly a Chinese invention. To be a good emperor, you must be a good friend; to be a good friend, you must be a good son; to be a good son, you must know the law of right, &c. This is the mode in which the sage seems naturally and habitually to deliver himself.

The straight line. Each duty involves another. What is the first duty from which all derive their sanction—the performance of which

makes the performance of the others possible? It is difficult to find: often we seem to be moving in a circle. But evidently all duties involve a rule. To be right is to be regular. Irregularity must be the common expression for the violation of all relations. But irregularity is clearly the effect of some bias determining us to one side or another. **The mean.** The law of rectitude, then, must be the law of the *mean*. All study and discipline must be for the preservation of this. "Before joy, satisfaction, anger, sorrow, have been produced in the soul [says our book], the state in which we are found is called the mean. When once they have been produced in the soul, and they have not transgressed certain limits, the state in which we are is called harmonic. This Mean is the grand foundation of the world. **The harmonic state.** Harmony is the universal and permanent law of it. When the Mean and the harmony have been carried to the point of perfection, heaven and earth are in a state of perfect tranquillity, and all beings receive their full development. Khoung-fou-tseu said, the man of superior virtue perseveres invariably in the mean; the vulgar or unprincipled man is constantly in opposition to this invariable mean. **The less and the more.** Few men are there, he cried at another time, who know how to keep long in the right way. I know the reason: cultivated men pass beyond it,—ignorant men do not attain it; men of strong virtue go too far—men of feeble virtue stop short."

The Chinese ceremonial belongs to its most inward philosophy. Here we have the very marrow of Chinese life, Chinese morals, Chinese politics. Hence we may explain that passion for minute ceremony which seems to Western people so ridiculous and intolerable. **Reports of disciples respecting Khoung-fou-tseu's behaviour.** Hence it arises that the most affectionate disciples of a man really so honest and simple as Khoung-fou-tseu was, should spend whole pages in informing us that if he had to salute persons who presented themselves to him either on the right or the left, his robe, behind and before, always fell straight and well-arranged; that his step was quickened when he introduced guests, and that he held his arms extended like the wings of

a bird; that when he entered under the gate of the palace he bent his body as if the gate had not been sufficiently high to let him pass; that in passing before the throne his countenance changed all at once, his step being grave and measured, as if he had fetters on, and his words being as embarrassed as his feet; that, taking his robe with his two hands, he ascended into the hall of the palace, his body bent, and holding his breath as if he had not dared to breathe; that his nightdress was always half as long again as his body; that he never ate meat which was not cut in straight lines; that if a meat had not the sauce which belonged to it, he never touched it;—with a thousand other particulars, of which these are fair specimens, and which we willingly omit lest we should diminish our readers' respect for a really remarkable man, when our intention is only to throw light upon the national character, and to show how entirely the philosophy of Khoung-fou-tseu grew out of it, and was determined by it. **Worth of this philosophy. Idea of duty.** That philosophy is not a mere collection of dry formalities; it is based upon a large experience; brings out the idea of duty as it was never brought out in the West, till Greek philosophy was remoulded by the Latin mind. **Individual and social life.** It suggests very deep thoughts respecting the connection of social and individual life; it may help us as much by that which it fails to recognize, as by that which it actually proclaims. But the blanks which are so significant to us have been filled up in China, as they could only be filled up, by new maxims, a more rigid ceremonial, an intense self-conceit and self-satisfaction. **Attempts to supply its deficiencies.** There have, indeed, been other experiments to supply Khoung-fou-tseu's deficiencies. A mystical rationalism and the Buddhist divinity have been both called in to help out the cold atheism of the authorized creed. But the true Confucian feels, and feels rightly, that these plants are not indigenous to the Chinese soil, and have no rightful affinity with it. He still clings to his classical books, learns them by heart, dwells on the rules of equity, the contempt of money, the reverence for antiquity which they enforce; shows by the contradictions of his acts and life what truth there is in these maxims,

and what powerlessness; **Its great effects.** how faithfully they foretell the decline of a country in which they are not obeyed; how utterly unable they are to produce obedience. **Its variableness.** The philosophers of the last century had a right to point to the existence of China through so many centuries, with all its mechanical appliances, its early maturity, its political experience, and to say "See what can be effected by mere intelligence, content to dwell upon the earth, aspiring to no acquaintance with things divine." We accept their words and their example. Such intelligence could do this; so God has willed. Alas for human beings, if there is nothing which can do more!

12. **The fourth classical book.** We should do great injustice to China if we said nothing of the fourth of the classical books, which bears another name than that of the great teacher and reformer; of a man, however, who was a teacher and reformer, who considered Khoung-fou-tseu the great legislator of the world, and laboured in a society which had become again degenerated to restore his precepts and his practice. **Meng-tseu.** Meng-tseu belongs to the fourth century B.C. He is immeasurably more interesting to us than his predecessor, and therefore we should suppose must seem far inferior to him in Chinese eyes. Inferior he probably was, inferior in quietness and self-control, and in perfect adaptation to the habits of the people with whom he conversed. We can quite imagine that he never would have been a great legislator, or have left any great impression upon the mind of his country, if Khoung-fou-tseu had not led the way. **Not so typical a Chinese as Khoung-fou-tseu,** But in place of the solemnity and general dryness of his master, there appears to have been in Meng-tseu real humour, a very earnest dislike of oppression, a courage in telling disagreeable truths to the highest personages, and a power of perceiving the practical application of sound maxims to the details of government, which cannot be contemplated without admiration and profit after a lapse of 2,000 years. **But much more interesting to us.** We have tempted our readers to imitate the worst habits of the Chinese, if we have led them to think scornfully of eastern wisdom, or to suppose

that it has no lessons for England in the nineteenth century. Let us repair our error, by asking them to listen to a conversation of Meng-tseu with Siouan-Wang the king of Tshi.

When the people complain of royal parks for being too small. The king interrogated Meng-tseu in these terms: "I have been told that the park of the king Wen-Wang was seven leagues in circumference; was that the case?" Meng-tseu answered respectfully, "History tells us so." The king said, "If so, was not its extent excessive?" Meng-tseu answered, "The people considered it too small." **When for being too large.** The king said, "My insignificance has a park only four leagues in circumference, and the people consider it too large; whence this difference?" Meng-tseu answered, "The park of Wen-Wang contained all these leagues, but thither resorted all persons who wanted to cut grass or wood. Thither went all who wanted to take pheasants and hares. As the king had his park in common with the people, the people thought it small, though it was seven leagues round. Was that wonderful? I, your servant, when I was about to cross the frontier, took care to inform myself of what was especially forbidden in your kingdom, before I dared to venture further. Your servant learnt that there was within your line of customs a park four leagues round, and that the man who killed a stag there, was punished with death, as if he had killed a man. So that there is an actual pit of death of four leagues in circumference, opened in the heart of your kingdom. The people think that park too great. Is it wonderful?"

From a very long conversation with the same prince, all of which well deserves to be extracted, we take a passage which is not so illustrative of the talent of Meng-tseu as many others; but it will at least prove that his philosophy is not obsolete. **Crimes of the poor: how connected with their poverty.** "To want things necessary for life, and yet to preserve an equal and virtuous mind, is only possible for men whose intelligence raises them above the multitude. The mass of the people, when it wants the necessaries of life, wants also an equal and virtuous mind. Then follow violation of law, licence, and debauchery;

there is nothing which it is not capable of doing. Then you bring them before judgment-seats, then you punish them. So you catch the people in a net. If there was a man truly endowed with the virtue of humanity occupying the throne, could he commit this criminal action of catching the people in such a snare?

Condition of China in the days of Meng-tseu. "At present, the constitution of the private property of the people is such, that the children have not wherewith to minister to their fathers and mothers; the fathers have not wherewith to support their wives and their children. In years of abundance, the people suffer to the end of life pain and misery; in years of calamity they are not preserved from famine and death. In such extremities, the people think only of escaping from death. What time can they have to occupy themselves with the moral doctrines which may teach them how to conduct themselves according to the laws of justice and equity?" Meng-tseu proceeds to suggest remedies: improved cultivation of the land, plantation of trees, rearing of animals, the manufacture of silk—above all, education.

Sympathy of monarch and people. One of his great maxims is, that the monarch should always share his pleasures with his people. "If a prince rejoices in the joy of his people, the people rejoice also in his joy. If a prince sorrows in the sorrows of his people, the people also sorrow in his sorrow. Let a prince rejoice with everybody, let him sorrow with everybody; in so doing it is impossible he can find any difficulty in reigning."

How to gratify a taste for riches The same monarch, in another conversation with Meng-tseu, expressed great admiration for two lines in the Book of Verses: "We may be rich and powerful, but we should have compassion on the widows and orphans." Meng-tseu answered, rather abruptly, "Oh, king! if you find them so good, why do you not practise them?" The king answered, "My insignificance has a defect; my insignificance loves riches." Meng-tseu answered respectfully, "Kong-lieon loved riches also, so he shared them with his people that he might gratify his love. If you love them, try the same plan." The

king said, "My insignificance has another weakness; **and for pleasure.** my insignificance loves pleasure." Meng-tseu answered, with respect, "Tai-wang loved pleasure; he loved his wife dearly, so he contrived that in all his kingdom there should be no celibates."

What an emperor is to do who cannot govern his provinces. The following is still more pointed: it is a conversation with the same patient prince. "Suppose a servant of the king trusts a friend with his wife and children, just as he is about to set out for a journey: if, on his return, he finds that his wife and children have suffered cold and hunger, what must he do?" The king: "He must break with his friend." Meng-tseu went on: "If the chief judge cannot govern the magistrates who are under him, what must be done with him?" The king: "He must be deposed." Meng-tseu: "If the provinces situated at the extreme limits of the kingdom are not well governed, what must be done?" The king looked to the right and left, and turned the conversation. **The ambition of the wise man.** Meng-tseu said, "The great man has three satisfactions: to have his father and mother still living, without any cause of dissatisfaction or dissension between the elder and the younger brother, is the first; to have nothing to blush for in the face of heaven or of man, is the second; to meet wise and virtuous men among those of his generation, is the third. These are the three causes of satisfaction to a wise man. To rule an empire is not included among them."

Hearty love of good a compensation for the want of gifts in a minister. "When the prince of Lou desired that Lo-tching-tseu, a disciple of Meng-tseu, should undertake the whole administration of the kingdom, Meng-tseu said, 'Since I have heard that news, I cannot sleep for joy.' Some one asked, 'What, has he a great deal of energy?' Meng-tseu said 'Not at all.' 'Has he prudence, and a mind that is apt to form great designs?' 'Not at all.' 'Has he studied much, and has he very extensive knowledge?' 'Not at all.' 'If so, why do you lie awake for joy at his promotion?' 'Because he is a man who loves what is good.' 'Is that enough?' 'Yes; to love what is good is more than enough to govern

the empire: how much more to govern the kingdom of Lou! If one who is proposed for the administration of a state loves what is good, the good men who inhabit within the four seas will think nothing of travelling one hundred leagues to come and give him good counsel. But if he loves not what is good, these men will say within themselves, He is a self-satisfied man, who always answers, "I knew that a long while ago." That tone and air will drive good counsellors one hundred leagues from him. If they go, then the slanderers, the flatterers, the people whose countenances say "Yes" to every word he speaks, will arrive in crowds. In such company, if he wishes to govern well, how can he?'"

Suffering the school in which great men are trained by Heaven. The following is in a yet higher strain. "Chun came to the empire from the midst of the fields; Fou-youé was raised to the rank of minister from a mason; Kiao-he was raised from a seller of fish and of salt; Kouan-i-ou became a minister from a gaoler. Thus it is when heaven wishes to confer a great office upon its chosen men, it begins always by proving their souls and their intellects by days of sorrow; their nerves and their bones are worn out by hard toil, their flesh is tormented with hunger. The results of their actions are always contrary to those which they hope to obtain. Thus their souls are stimulated, their natures hardened, their force augmented by an energy, without which they would have been unable to accomplish their high destiny. Men begin by committing faults, before they can correct themselves. They experience anguish of heart, are hindered in their projects, till at last they come forth. It is universally true that life comes through pains and trials, death through pleasures and repose."

The respectable people of a village: We cannot help thinking that Khoung-fou-tseu himself comes forth in a somewhat braver and finer spirit in the reports and commentaries of Meng-tseu. For instance, he quotes him as saying "that the most honest men of a neighbourhood are the pests of virtue." "Who are these men?" asked Wen-tchang. **what they are.** "Those," said Meng-tseu, "who take pains never to

speak or act otherwise than all around them. If you wish to find them in a fault, you never know where to take them. Whatever side you attack them, you never get at them. That which dwells in their heart has a certain resemblance to rectitude and sincerity; what they practise seem like acts of temperance and of integrity. As all their neighbourhood boasts of them incessantly, they fancy themselves perfect people. Therefore Khoung-fou-tseu calls them the pests of virtue. **Why Khoung-fou-tseu hated them.** 'I detest,' says Khoung-fou-tseu, 'that which has appearance without reality; I detest clever men, for fear that they shall confound justice; I detest an eloquent mouth, fearing lest it should confuse truth; I detest the sounds of the music Tching, because they corrupt music; I detest the colour of violet because it mimics the colour of purple; I detest the most respectable people of a neighbourhood because they mimic virtue.'"

13. **Meng-tseu's democratical tendencies.** Meng-tseu, it will be perceived, in spite of this last extract, has a much more democratic tendency than his master. He is even reported to have said, "The people is the most noble thing in the world. The spirits of the earth and the fruits of the earth are second to them. The prince is of the least importance of all." Such a sentiment as this, found in a book which all Chinese men of education learn by heart, found side by side with precepts which seem to represent the emperor as the source of all light and wisdom to his people, must needs give rise to great perplexities in the more thoughtful members of the Celestial Empire, especially in those who are necessarily brought into contact with the notions and history of barbarians. The effects of such teaching may be much greater than we can foresee. Certainly one cannot expect that they will be favourable to the real freedom and moral culture of this singular people. The deepest wisdom both of Khoung-fou-tseu and Meng-tseu seems to have consisted in awaking monarchs to a consciousness of their position and their duties; their greatest failures to have arisen from their inability to show what higher and more righteous power sustains them in that position, and can give them energy for the

discharge of these duties. Whatever teaching can supply that defect may be the instrument of making China what God intends it to be. A subversion of its political order must be also the subversion of its ancient wisdom, without giving it any capacity for the acquisition of fresh light.

CHAPTER V. PERSIAN PHILOSOPHY.

1. The biography of Khoung-fou-tseu is as clear, accurate, and formal as that of a man who lived a century ago. **Zerduscht, his biography.** The biography of Zerduscht, who occupies the corresponding place in the annals of Persian philosophy, is altogether confused and mythical. It is hardly possible to compose any orderly history out of the wild legends of his birth, his adventures, and his reformation. The most intelligent modern critics have given up the task. They doubt whether such a man ever existed; they think that he represents an epoch, or a great struggle of opposing principles,—that different persons who illustrated that epoch, or engaged in that struggle, may have been blended under one name, and that the traditionary history may have as much or as little to do with one as with another of them.

2. **His age.** If we were forced to acquiesce in this conclusion, to what period will this imaginary hero belong? It is difficult not to connect him with that general movement of the Asiatic mind to which we have already alluded in this sketch. The Buddhist convulsion in Hindostan, the great Chinese reformation, and the movement in Iran or Persia, of which we are now to speak, if not strictly contemporaneous events, may not have been separated by the distance of more than a century. **What was common in the different Oriental reformations.** That there was something common in them all will easily be admitted. The Indian, the Chinese, the Persian reformers, alike believed that they were bringing back some old order or principle, which had been forgotten or violated, or for which some modern practices and notions had been substituted. Neither the Buddhist nor the disciple of Zerduscht would have allowed, any more than Khoung-fou-tseu, that they were introducing innovations into the worship or polity of their country: all

professed to sweep innovations away. **Their great differences.** But their differences are only made the more remarkable by this coincidence, and by the power which all were able to put forth. They did leave an impress upon vast regions of the earth,—they proved that there were certain great ideas of which these nations were, and perhaps had always been, the appointed depositaries. We have tried to discover in the practical records of Chinese thought and legislation what their characteristic is; is it possible to penetrate through the vagueness of the Zendavesta, and to detect what was latent in the minds of those who composed it, or believed in it?

3. **The Zendavesta.** To give any account of this strange collection of litanies seems impossible. How it came together is a question still unsolved. The debates about the language in which it is composed are receiving so much illustration from recent inquiries, that it would be unwise to enter upon them, even if our subject required it. If we gave specimens of the style of the book, as it comes to us through the French compiler, M. Anquetil, we should perhaps rather confuse our readers respecting its object than help them to arrive at it. We shall, therefore, content ourselves with some general hints respecting the meaning and purpose of the change which has been for so many centuries connected with the name of Zoroaster,—hints not in the least novel, in accordance for the most part with the conclusions at which all students of the subject have arrived, but which may throw some light upon the question, what place Persia occupies in the history of philosophical inquiries, and how it is connected in the way, either of resemblance or opposition, with Egypt, with India, with China, with Greece.

4. **The Persian reformer a real person.** The difficulty of attributing a personal existence to Zoroaster is very much that which meets us again in the cases of Lycurgus, Odin, and many more; a difficulty, we may be permitted to remark, belonging chiefly to our own time, connected with a true feeling of the wonderful manner in which institutions, beliefs, habits, have diffused themselves through particular

races, and characterised them from the very first; connected also with a vague and false feeling, that acts can somehow accomplish themselves without living agents,—that great conflicts may be transacted in the clouds and the air, without human combatants or personal leaders. In each instance we have named, it is probable that we shall ultimately return to the belief of our forefathers in an actual legislator or champion, however we may confess our inability to arrive at that very definite notion of his position and acts, which they attained by supplying the chasms of fact out of the stores of their imagination, or by the opposite process of stripping legends of their poetry,—of all that gives them their worth and significance, and so reducing them into facts. Of Zerduscht we must speak as an actual person; he may have had some other name,—he may have done acts of which we know nothing, and have not done any of those his biographers record; but that there was some one who maintained the conflict which produced results so striking and so lasting we may at once assume, and speak upon the assumption.

5. **His enemies The Magians.** The conflict of Zerduscht was with the Magians. This we take to be the facts of his history, whatever fictions may surround it. He found a set of men doing homage, as he believed, to powers, or a power of evil. Probably they made no secret of this homage. They taught that such a power was to be worshipped; they could teach the method of the worship. They knew the secrets of the evil being; they could explain how his wrath was to be averted. Upon the belief that they possessed this knowledge their influence stood.

6. **Ahriman the object of Magian worship.** This was practically the case whatever worship they might also pay to a beneficent Divinity. There is no reason to suppose that the reverence for Ormuzd had ceased among them. Most likely there were services which they rendered habitually and punctually to him, and called upon the people to render. But what is the worship of a good Being, when the Evil dwells professedly side by side with him? The latter becomes inevitably *the*

God. The character of the whole service is leavened and moulded by his character. Let the theories respecting the relation of the two beings towards each other be what they may, Ormuzd becomes really the servant of Ahriman. The Magians were in truth his priests, even when they were nominally bowing to his rival.

7. **Effects of this worship on tillage.** The effects of such a religion manifest themselves in all directions. Zerduscht felt them in one direction especially. The earth in Iran was overgrown with weeds; nothing was done to till it or make it fruitful. How much is gathered up in these words! What a history of the effects of a priesthood, which looks upon its chief Divinity as the author of curses instead of blessings! Slavish dependence upon seasons, without any study of the laws which govern them,—a fear of meddling with the thorns and thistles as if they grew by Divine ordinance, and had a sacred right which could not be disturbed,—the arms growing feeble every day from want of manly exercise in their appointed work,—the heart growing feeble through the decay of hope: **Practice and theory acting and reacting on each other.** here was a state of things to which a Magian might triumphantly point and say, "See the proof of our doctrine! Does not the evil prevail; is it not becoming mightier? What can we do but bribe it to be less severe and all-exacting? Where shall we direct our prayers and sacrifices if not to this terrible conqueror?" It was an opinion which was always establishing itself by new evidence,—always producing the facts which demonstrated it.

8. **The Ormuzd worshipper.** What line must a reformer take to encounter them? He could admit no compromise. He must declare at once "Your whole scheme of worship is a lie; the ground on which it is based is a lie. The earth is meant to bring forth and bud; the thistles are meant to be destroyed. Man is meant to put the seeds into it, and call the strength out of it. These evil spirits are not his masters; he owes them no service. They create nothing, produce nothing, keep nothing alive. The powers of creation, production, nourishment, are all good. Whatever begets, brings forth, makes life more plentiful,—this is to be

sought for as a counteraction to the powers of death. Let them be as strong as they will, there must be that which is stronger."

9. **Polytheism of Zerduscht** To these Powers of life and production, then, Zerduscht raises his prayer. It is idle to pretend that he invokes only one Power. The litanies of the Zendavesta are addressed to a multitude of Powers. And yet the opinion is not so wrong as it may seem. Zerduscht would have affirmed himself that he worshipped only Ormuzd. **The Monotheistic element latent in it.** He felt assuredly that as all which is destructive and evil tends to division, so everything which is good tends to unity. This was not a theory in his mind, as it would have been in a Hindoo's; it was a strong practical conviction which he did not so much utter in words as exhibit in his acts. He worshipped goodness. Whatever seemed to be doing good, to be acting beneficially for man whether in nature or out of nature, this seemed to him to have proceeded from Ormuzd, and to have a tendency to return to him.

10. **Ormuzd light.** The Magians were of course astrologers. Their tendency was to contemplate the stars as evil agencies,—prophets of mischief to man. Zerduscht does not depart from the line of thought which he finds in his country. Light is the object of his reverence. Light is evidently the great source of fruitfulness to the earth. Light is man's benefactor. It becomes identical in Zerduscht's mind with Ormuzd. It is Good, or such a witness and symbol of Good as he cannot distinguish from it. Hymns and invocations to Light are surely means of resisting the dark being and his agents,—means of bringing good to the land, and to those who cultivate it.

11. Zerduscht was, therefore, as practical a man as Khoung-fou-tseu, as much aiming at the increase of the wealth of his country in the simplest sense of the word. But he was directly opposed to the Chinese, in that devotion was his great instrument. The word "instrument" is hardly adequate to express this difference. **Prayer the great weapon of the Persian against the evil powers.** Zerduscht did not look upon prayer in any sense as a mere means to a result; it was in his mind an actual

looking up to a Power who was capable of helping men against their enemies. The petitioner is driven to it by the might and the multitude of the evil powers which are striving against him. His litanies, if they seek for material blessings and deliverance from material evils, yet are undoubtedly addressed to some invisible Power, some Power of Light, against a tyrant partly visible, partly invisible, who would make all his acts and his thoughts confused and dark. **Prayer mainly to invisible powers.** It is not easy to say how much of visible idolatry he would himself have tolerated; but the testimony of Herodotus as to the character of Persian worship is certainly entitled to very great weight, and is not, we conceive, overborne by any clear evidence on the other side. He felt the absence of visible symbols to be the characteristic difference between the Persian service and his own. Though he did not see the empire in the time of its strength, when we may suppose the Zerduscht reform to have been most strongly felt, yet we may be sure that its influence had not passed away; and we may fairly conclude that it was not only a protest against the worship of Ahriman, but against the homage to visible things, which his servants the Magi will doubtless have encouraged. All the petitions of the Zendavesta seem to point, primarily at least, to powers and influences,—powers and influences, as we have said already, which dwelt in natural things, but still which were not cognizable by the senses. **The later philosophy gives up the visible world to Ahriman.** This distinction we may believe would come out more and more prominently in the two opposing worships, till at last some eclectical philosophy, seeking to establish a kind of reconciliation between them, and to make a fair distribution of their respective provinces, will have assigned the whole outward framework of things to Ahriman as his proper and original territory, maintaining the invisible as the creation of Ormuzd, and that through which he was carrying on repeated assaults and incursions upon the possessions of his rival.

12. But there was no such eclecticism as this in Zerduscht himself, or in any of his true followers. His faith was in a perpetual uncom-

promising war between the powers of good and evil. The earth was no permitted or tolerated habitation of Ahriman or his subjects; on the contrary, it was for the sake of the earth and for its restoration that all prayers and sacrifices were to be addressed to Ormuzd. **Opposition between Zerduscht and the Brahmins.** And herein certainly is the interest of the Zerduscht doctrine and reformation for the moral philosopher. It was a search after light, an inquiry after the Being who gives light and order to the universe. Only this source of light and order did not present itself mainly to the Persian as an intelligence, but mainly as one who is right and true. Good and evil, right and wrong, became in his mind much more primitive, fundamental distinctions, than they ever did in the mind of any heathen people of the east or of the west. The Persians were much more distinctly a moral people than the Hindoos, or than any tribe of the Greeks. **The Persian morality. Xenophon.** Xenophon's romance is a distinct acknowledgment of this fact by a Greek. Though he must have had plentiful experience of the gross dishonesty into which they fell when they were engaged in transactions with his countrymen, yet he still recognised and admired this as the typical form of that character which he had seen in some measure in the younger Cyrus, and which he fancied, or tried to fancy, had been exhibited almost perfectly in the founder of the nation.

13. In one way it has been supposed that Zerduscht did recognise a kind of reconciliation between the divinity whom he abjured and the divinity whom he worshipped. **Time without bounds.** A Time without bounds, it has been thought, lay in the mind of the Reformer, beneath all his conceptions either of a good or evil being; both alike must have proceeded from it. **How this idea entered into the faith of Zerduscht.** That there are litanies in the Zendavesta which suggest such a notion, and which may be as early as the time of Zerduscht, it is impossible to deny; that the doctrine which is deduced from them very greatly influenced the later Persian philosophy we shall see when we come, in the second part of this sketch, to consider how it affected, and was affected by, the faith of the Christian church. But that this abstraction

really interfered in any practical sense with the homage—the exclusive homage—which Zerduscht paid to Ormuzd, and to the different benignant powers which he supposed to proceed from him, there is, we conceive, not the slightest proof. The use of prayers to a Time without bounds did, it seems to us, express the teacher's consciousness that there must be a deeper Unity, a more absolute Being, than he had apprehended. He was not satisfied—how could he be?—with a Being whom he must contemplate as one and almighty, and yet who was identical with every gracious influence, every productive power. For the sake and honour of Ormuzd himself he needed some other more distinct mode of declaring him, of invoking him. This was the mode—awkward and incoherent, leading to the very consequence which he sought to avoid, pregnant with future abstractions and confusions, but one which a man so thoroughly practical as Zerduscht could resort to without any care about its speculative difficulties, as an escape for his spirit from a real and oppressive contradiction, as a way of bringing his worship into closer sympathy with his human and political faith.

14. **The Persian king.** The Cyropædia, and the testimonies of Herodotus respecting the feelings of the Persians towards their king, and his inseparable connection with their worship, fully confirm another most important inference which we should deduce from the legends respecting Zerduscht. The Magian, officially, was his antagonist; some *monarch* was always the ally in his reforms. To exalt the royal above the sacerdotal function, to prevent the kings from being the servants of the priests, was unquestionably a great part of his work. **An antagonist of the priests.** Herein he was probably acting out a faith which was far older in Persia than himself. It is difficult not to trace—most modern historians have traced—an opposition between the Persian and Median tribes (an opposition not preventing but necessitating an attempt at union between them), which points to more than the strife of mere personal feelings and interests. **Medians and Persians.** The Median predominance seems always to indicate the triumph of a priestly order and of priestly habits; the Persian

prevalence shows that a king is ruling who knows that he is a king, and is determined to maintain his authority against all opposers, by whatever visible or invisible instruments they may work. The nobler kings, such as were Cyrus and Darius Hystaspes, do not merely proclaim their own tyranny. They assert that Ormuzd is King; they are as entirely religious as those who are leagued against them; their faith is the ground of all their acts; in the strength of it they decree justice, organize satrapies, improve the tillage of the land, constitute one of those mighty monarchies in which we recognised the characteristic strength and spirit of Asia. In those monarchies everything depends upon the central power, or rather upon the earnestness with which the central power confesses its subjection to a gracious and beneficent Power in whose name it rules and fights. **Darius Hystaspes.** The inscriptions which Major Rawlinson has recently interpreted show how remarkably this was the case with Darius Hystaspes: they embody the very spirit of the Zerduscht reformation, and might almost tempt us to the notion, a favourite with some German critics, (not, however, it seems to us, compatible with any of the popular traditions,) that he was identical with the Prophet. He no doubt realised the conception of the teacher much more than any mere teacher could have realised it. **The king the source of light.** His order was that attempt to imitate the order of the heavenly bodies, the calmness and regularity of Nature, which one who looked upon light as the centre of the outward universe, and the king as the centre of the human society, would especially have admired and rejoiced in.

15. **Weakness of the Persian order and mind.** But in the heart of this order, wonderful as it was, lay seeds of weakness and decay. The king confessed a King mightier than himself; a King in whom dwelt supreme right and justice. But he was the one utterer of the will of this higher Sovereign; his own absolute dominion represented the divine absoluteness. The light which comes forth from the heavenly bodies *may* symbolize a goodness and wisdom that penetrates into the remotest corners, that quickens and enlivens the least thing as well as

the greatest, calling forth its own distinct nature and properties. But this light *may* be looked upon as gathered into one luminous orb, an object of distant reverence, altogether unlike the materials on which it shines. Such was more and more the tendency of the Persian mind; the Zerduscht reform did not resist it for more than a short time, nay, in one sense promoted it. There was probably in him more of tribe feeling, more of patriotism in the western sense of the word, than we commonly meet with among Asiatics. But the strength which his faith gave to the monarchy soon made it, like the great monarchies that had preceded it, impatient of boundaries, eager to swallow up all tribes within itself, careless of their distinctions. Zerduscht's zeal in breaking the chains of priestly domination, which had prevented the free activity of the sovereign, might give a large scope to beneficent government, and be the instrument of putting down a multitude of abuses and abominations that were fostered by the Ahrimanic devotion. On the other hand, he weakened the witness which was latent in the priestly character, which could not be wholly lost even after the priest had become a servant of evil powers, that there is a refuge for the oppressed subject when the visible ruler becomes a mere self-willed despot, when all feeling of relationship to his subjects has forsaken him, when he pays habitual homage to Ahriman. The later history of Persia, while it interprets the meaning and illustrates the power of Zerduscht's principle, shows also how small a protection it afforded against this danger; what an opening, nay, what a necessity there was for Magian conspiracies and counter-revolutions to check the regal tyranny, even to restore it when it had fallen through its own crimes and weakness; what a still greater need there was that some witness, which Asia could not afford, to prove that life and movement are necessary for man, as well as a fixed eternal law.

16. **Zerduscht's ambition and fanaticism.** Those who find an especial delight in proving eminent teachers of former generations to be impostors, charlatans, or knaves, dwell much upon some of the legends of Zerduscht's life, which convict him, they think, of many

violent and ambitious acts. When it is settled how much of these legends are entitled to credence, we may accept them as evidence against the Reformer. But to reject all the records which show the high estimate that his countrymen formed of him, as mere fictions —to assume those as veracious, though not less miraculous, which offend our consciences—is a monstrous violation of critical fairness. The total inference which they leave upon our mind is certainly this, that Zerduscht was possessed with a sense of his vocation to put down, by all possible means, the Ahrimanic worship, to assert the worship of Ormuzd. Whether this should be done or not was a question of life and death; the material, as much as the spiritual, well-being of Persia depended upon it. We have no doubt that, in the accomplishment of this purpose, he stirred up wars, persecuted, urged his own claims to inspiration, till he may sometimes have forgotten the work in its champion. But we are equally convinced, from the results of his labours, that he did, in the main, sacrifice himself to the cause, and not the cause to himself.

17. **Zerduscht, in what sense a philosopher.** By doing so he has, we think, earned for himself a right to no unimportant place in a history of Philosophy. The name does not belong to Persia, or to the Persian character as it was formed by Zerduscht. The light which the Persian worshipped told him what it behoved him to follow, what to shun. Their rule of right was given once and for ever; whoso transgressed it was doomed. There was no room for speculation. They abhorred it as leading to confusion and darkness—refined symbolism implied in their minds falsehood, and traffic with evil spirits. Intellectual subtlety of all kinds in the days of their strength they crushed with law and the sword, as leading to dishonesty and trickery; in the days of their weakness, they shrunk from it as an unknown mysterious power which they could not cope with. The fanaticism of Cambyses in Egypt, the struggles which are attributed to Zerduscht with the intellectualism and priestcraft of the Brahmin, exhibit some aspects of this character towards foreigners. We have now to contemplate another; we have

to see in what sense the Persians were philosophers, by viewing them in contrast with the nation to which that title strictly and originally belongs; the nation which, in every stage of its existence, merits the apostle's description, "They seek after wisdom."

CHAPTER VI. GRECIAN PHILOSOPHY.

DIVISION I.—PERIOD BEFORE SOCRATES.

SECTION I. GREEK WISDOM IN THE LEGENDARY AGES.

1. **Greece and Asia: the contrast between the histories.** The opposition between Greece and Asia presents itself to the schoolboy who is reading the Homeric poems. It meets him again in the first pages of Herodotus; he traces it through the whole of his varied narrative; it connects the episodes with the main story; it gives a unity to books which strike him at first as confused and miscellaneous. In them, Persia gradually becomes the representative of Asia; the glorious conflict of the historian's own age interprets all the ages that had preceded it. Wherever the young reader turns he is reminded of this contrast, and the connection between the two people. He finds it in the retreat of the Ten Thousand; it is forced upon him by the efforts of the leader of that retreat to bring Persian manners and Persian virtues before the minds of his countrymen. He cannot dwell upon the conflicts of the republics among themselves without some event to recall to him the monarchy which had sought to crush them, and which they had defied. The mind of Demosthenes is inspired by the thought of that republican triumph, when he determines that a pretended Greek shall not obtain the dominion which the ruler of the whole barbarian world could not win. It inspires no less the heart of the son of the hated Macedonian, when he goes forth to prove that the signal-fires which proclaimed that Troy had fallen were faithful prophecies that the furthest regions of the East should bow before the descendants of Odysseus and Neoptolemus.

2. **Ground of this contrast.** A few very notorious facts will show that the opposition which thus presents itself on the surface of the history existed in the heart of these nations. **Ormuzd and Zeus.** The student perceives at once that Ormuzd was not the god of the Greeks. Goodness is not the primary characteristic of any one of their divinities. What their essential and common quality is, it is not, we think, hard to discover. The continually recurring epithet μητίετα, as applied to Zeus, immediately suggests it. The title Cloudcompeller may express his acts: this is clearly meant to be significant of his very nature. For it is not a solitary expression; the more we consider the different transactions which Homer attributes to the father of gods and men, the more do we find "counsel" to be the main quality which is indicated by them. The mind of the god may be swayed by various impulses and passions, but he always acts with a purpose and devises a train of means for the accomplishment of it.

3. **Counsel the attribute of the Greek god.** The other gods are like Zeus. Apollo is the deviser and suggester of counsels; Athene still more conspicuously. If this character is wanting in Ares and Aphrodite, they become, for that reason, objects of ridicule to mortals, let the sword of the first and the girdle of the other be ever so mighty.

4. This quality seems to involve at once the idea of secresy and of society. The counsels are carried on deep within the heart of the divinity, but they must be shared. **The divine assembly.** Zeus must communicate his intentions, or part of his intentions, to the Olympian assembly; they must be submitted to discussion, deliberation, opposition: there must be ministers to execute them; often opposing agents to thwart them. Instead of various beneficent powers, all proceeding from Ormuzd, all invoked by his name, all united against the realm of darkness, the Greek does homage to a number of beings who are bringing about a result by their conspiracies and contradictions, who are in themselves neither good nor evil, who have the same inclinations to good and evil with human beings, who often seem physically not

more powerful, but who have a depth and subtlety of wisdom to which men cannot attain.

5. **The Greek heroes and kings spring from Zeus.** In Persia the king presents an image of god, but he is not personally related to him. Ormuzd is continually contemplated as the unapproachable light; his goodness, though it is shown in acts of mercy to man, is not to be confounded with human goodness. But the counsellors in Olympus are always related to sages below; they meet with mortal nymphs, become the fathers of earthly heroes, impart to them their sceptres and their wisdom. The kings reign as sons of Jove. In early times the feeling of belonging to the divine race is the warrant of their sharing the divine attributes. **Wisdom or counsel the royal characteristic.** There is never the least doubt what is the special and necessary constituent of royalty; it is not physical strength—it is not mercy, kindness, justice—it is not courage; it is the being a man of many devices. Courage, justice, mercy, may or may not be added to this gift or be involved in it; but *it* is the fundamental one, all others are accessory. Strength is thrown into the shade in those heroes in whom we would expect it most; lightness and grace are preferred to it: Achilles is the "swift-of-foot." The ambush and stratagem, as has been so often observed, are quite as much the test of the hero as the open fight. Diomed shows his heroic talent not more in wounding Ares than in persuading Glaucon to change the golden armour for the iron, that worth a hundred oxen's hides for that worth nine, when they are meeting as friends on the field of battle and telling the story of their kinsmanship. These are indications of a deep and pervading spirit, exhibiting itself, be it remembered, in a stage of society which we are wont to speak of, and in one sense rightly, as one of great simplicity, and in those fights where strength and personal prowess might seem to be all in all. **The Homeric battle-field and council-chamber.** Clearly they are not all in all; the council-chamber is as much a part of the Homeric picture as the field of battle: on that field, if we see distinct heroes in a death-struggle, we see also the troops moving collected, in ranks, in silence

(an excellence which, except on a field of battle, would not have been specially characteristic of Greeks).

6. **Odysseus the type of the Greek nation.** No one who considers the story of Odysseus, and feels, as all have felt, that he represented actually and prophetically all of his country's mind and tendencies, will doubt that πολύμητις is the epithet for the Greek hero as much as for the god. But no one who feels the exceeding beauty, delicacy, pathos of that story, will admit for a moment that "cunning" or "crafty" is an adequate—even the most distant approximation to an adequate —version of that title. All possibilities of craft and cunning lie in it; such qualities can scarcely have been morally offensive to the man or the nation that claimed it as the most honourable of all badges. **Trick not essential to the character.** Within it also lay the possibilities of a wisdom which might rise superior to tricks and falsehood, which might discover them to be essentially foolish. The "man of many counsels" had a large sympathy, a wonderful power of communicating with men, of receiving impressions from them, of making an impression on them. **Its noble qualities.** He had the clearest, sharpest faculty of observation; all the forms of nature presented themselves to him in their distinctest outline, with all their varying shadows. Animal nature did homage to the higher instinct which dwelt in him. He felt that material things were given him to shape and mould, and quicken. Though fond of seeing the ways and the cities of men, he had still the sense of a home; the rocks of Ithaca were dearer to him than all the world besides—dear to him for the sake of those who dwelt there. **Sacredness of voluntary ties: marriage.** He might cast away many ties which he found established at his birth; he might leave his father's house to become a wanderer and seeker of new lands: but the voluntary bonds into which he had entered, the marriage-tie, the oath to the kinsman, or fellow-citizen, or even the stranger, confirmed by the divine sacrifice, were unspeakably precious; no perils or wars were too long or distant to punish the breach of them. Of all men he most understands the meaning and worth of association, yet he is of all men

the most tempted to choose a way of his own: of all men he is most disposed to recognise law and government as especially belonging to man, and distinguishing them from the inferior creatures; the most inclined to break loose from law and government, in his eagerness to assert the skill of men to create them for themselves.

7. **Contrast of Dorian and Ionian.** In process of time some of these great contrasts, especially the last, were exhibited in the rivalship of the Dorian and Ionian tribes. Though we may be continually tempted to fix upon the last as the proper specimens of the Greek character, though there is great excuse for such a notion, yet it is only in contemplating them as both equally Greeks that we can attain to a full appreciation of that which distinguished this people from every other on the face of the earth. **The character of both opposed to the Persian.** If there were points of sympathy between the Lacedæmonian and the Persian character, there was also the strongest repulsion between them. The Spartan Pausanias, affecting the airs of an Asiatic satrap, is a far more ludicrous object than Themistocles would have been in the same position. The Spartan kings when compared with *the* king exhibit the difference between the East and West even more strikingly than the Athenian democracy. The legislation of Lycurgus is as little like that of the Medes and Persians as Solon's. **Both essentially Greek.** If we inquire the reason of the difference, we shall find that counsel or wisdom, not goodness, is the object of faith and reverence as much with one tribe as the other. It was the very fact of their having this common ground to start from—the sense of a community of feeling and of language—which made the differences of their conceptions respecting the conditions of wisdom and the modes of attaining it so remarkable, and their actual contests so terrible. Indeed, the existence of such opposing tribes, and the vast influence which they were both able to exert, suggest the greatest and most memorable contrast between European and Asiatic life. The vastness of the oriental despotism, with all the different races blended together, submitting to one central lord—what a picture is this to contemplate side by side with

the struggles of two small cities, each possessed with the idea of one government or principle being better than another, ready to destroy or be sacrificed for the sake of its own maxim—imparting the conviction of it, and the enthusiasm for it, to twenty other cities in different parts of the world, and in a measure to every man who dwelt in every one of them! And it must never be forgotten that, amidst all these conflicts, there was still the common Hellenic name—there was still the feeling in all Greeks that they were separated from barbarians by that name, and by the gifts which it indicated—there was still the god of Delphi who gave counsel to the Ionians and Dorians alike, and from whom the rulers of Asia believed that oracles proceeded, by which they also might be guided.

8. **Delphi.** The acknowledgment of this teacher of civil wisdom, who at the same time could not easily be separated from the source of light to the world, is one of those facts in Greek history which every thoughtful student has seen to be full of significance. **Apollo and the light.** Apollo and Artemis, as our own great poet has said, "held the sun and moon in fee;" they, beautiful beings, with human forms and human sympathies, possessed and governed these natural orbs; the material light which proceeded from them was only an emblem of the light which was imparted to the mind of him who sought help from the divine priestess. This inspiration was not merely produced by the exhalations of the cave, nor was it confined to her—the votary shared it in a much more practical sense. **Inspiration.** In later times, belief in an inspiring god, prompting the highest song as well as the wildest revelry, became embodied in the legends and the festivals of Dionysus. The Greek felt an impulse near him which was degrading him into a beast and a slave, and one which could raise him into a man and freeman. His actual history proved the truth of both his convictions.

9. **Zeus and Brahm.** If the Zeus of the Greeks is very different from Ormuzd, he is almost as unlike to Brahm. The object of Hindoo worship we have seen is *Intelligence*, but it is intelligence as contrasted with action. Every Greek legend exhibits gods or heroes as the teachers

of some art, as deliverers from some plague or nuisance, as making some one region habitable, or introducing communication between different regions, as establishers of law and order, as builders or defenders of cities. The main tendency of the Greek mind is certainly to contemplate intelligence only as bearing upon action, leading to direct practical results, governing material things and bodies of men.

10. Hence the skill, or counsel, or wisdom of the Greek was especially valued for its creative or productive powers. The more this power exerted itself, the more various the directions which it took; **Greek scepticism.** the more the suspicion began to arise in the minds of the people, that they were themselves the authors of that to which they looked up,—that the king, the priest, the god, were their own handiwork. Hence there lay in the very heart of the faith of the Greek a seed of unbelief, which was continually fructifying. Hence this unbelief was likely to be most active in those whose faculties were the liveliest and the most energetic. Hence, also, there was something akin to it in the popular feeling and sympathy, even then when it clung most fondly to its old legends and ceremonies. These were loved with a parental more than a childlike fondness; the Greek clave to them as his own, as something which he was to hold against others, not which he depended upon and revered himself.

11. **Hermes.** If Zeus and Apollo hold the highest place as objects of Greek devotion, Hermes had his own special honour. The teacher of words, the author of eloquence, had conferred a gift upon mortals which the Greeks felt to be greater and more wonderful than the gifts of corn and wine. **The power of words.** Their latest historian points out with especial carefulness and earnestness, how in the very infancy of the nation the power of words was recognised; how significant was the picture on the shield of Achilles, of the trial in the Agora, and the pleaders who supported each side; how public speaking was felt to be "the standing engine of government and the proximate cause of

obedience,"[1] long before the heroical had given place to the historical period. The most careless reader of the Iliad must have been struck by the poet's sense of the wonder which lies in "winged words," by the emphasis with which he recognises them as the especial characteristic of human beings, by his feeling that through them men held communication with the gods as well as with each other. The power of wisdom and the power of words became indissolubly connected in the Greek mind. By these, men exerted the highest influence of which they were capable; they flew forth from the lips of the speaker messengers of health or of destruction; they were in the most remarkable sense *his*. Yet there was that in them which he did not make; an order to which he was obliged to conform.

12. **The mysteries: what they imported.** The mysteries expressed something which words could not express. So far as these were connected with Demeter and her worship, they bore reference of course to the secret and productive powers of vegetables or animals; they might be invested with a more material significance, they might be associated with all gross and sensual images. But the importance which was attached to them by statesmen showed that they were acknowledgments of a wisdom dwelling somewhere, which could not be measured or reduced into human forms, by which the operations of nature, of the mind, and even of political society, were ultimately regulated.

SECTION II. THE BEGINNING OF PHILOSOPHY.

1. **The wise men of Greece.** The seven wise men bear the same relation to the after history of Greece which the seven champions of Christendom bear to the history of the Middle Ages. No doubt Bias, Pittacus, Periander, Solon, belong to the region of fact; St. George and St. Denys chiefly to that of fable. But their mystical number shows that they were felt to represent different aspects of the same character. Amongst them are included tyrants, legislators, students of

[1] Grote, vol. ii. c. xx. p. 106.

nature. There were the most various reports respecting them. One said that they all occupied themselves with poetry.[2] Another that they were merely a set of clever men concerned about law-making.[3] They were reported to be favourites of Croesus, with the exception of Thales. Others spoke of their meeting together at the Panionium, or at Delphi. **The various notions of them reconcilable.** These reports may all be correct. They were, no doubt, mainly men of sagacity, συνετοί, held to possess the divine, heroic, Odyssean gift in a greater degree than their neighbours. That they should have been fond of putting their thoughts in verse was natural. It was a language different from that which men spoke in the market—more than met the ear was expressed by it; common men felt the power of it; a notion of prophecy was still connected with it. That these sages should have cultivated the acquaintance of a great Asiatic dynast, some for a directly personal object, some for the sake of their city, some for the pleasure of exhibiting the power of the Greek in contrast with that which seemed so much greater and was so inferior, is probable. That they should still have been thoroughly Greeks, should have interested themselves in all Greek events for council and government, might also have been concluded. For this reason they will no doubt have held much intercourse with Delphi.

2. **The different directions which their wisdom took** But, supposing these to have been common characteristics, there was room for the widest divergency in their pursuits. One might glorify himself upon his knowledge of all the weaknesses of his fellows; might apply to his own use the recognised Greek maxim, that the wise man was to have dominion over fools; by fair means or foul, by courtesy or violence, by beneficent acts or destructive ones, he might make himself a tyrant. **The tyrant.** His claim to that title, his power of holding it, would still be, not that he was member of some illustrious family, or that he supported some particular theory, or that he was a military chief; but

[2]Diog. Laert. lib. i. c. i. s. 14.

[3]συνετούς τινας καὶ νομοθετικούς.

that he was a wise man. Another might count it a much nobler work to lay down rules for the preservation and well-being of the city in which he dwelt—rules that would endure after he ceased to belong to it; he might part with ease, wealth, temporary power, for the sake of compassing this end. **The legislator.** Such a man would be a legislator in the higher sense of the word; but his legislation would still be a form of his "wisdom." He would be listened to and obeyed only so far as he had acquired the reputation of being a wise man, and could retain it. **The student of physics.** Lastly, if a man had acquired any of the properly oriental lore, if he had studied astrology, and could calculate eclipses of the sun, there would be some perplexity in the Greek mind respecting him. If he turned his studies in nature to account, either for his own benefit or for the good of his country, he would be regarded as essentially a politician; if he was seen to retire from society for the sake of contemplation, he would be stigmatised as a stargazer. But still the phrase "wise man" would describe him in both characters. It would denote the shrewdness which he displayed in the common affairs of life; it would intimate that he knew or pretended to know things which people in general were ignorant of.

3. **Thales, born Ol. 35, 3, or 36, 1. B.C. 639, or 636. Clinton, F.H.** In this last description our reader will recognise *Thales*, who commonly holds the first place among the σοφοί. Herodotus says that "he was a citizen of Miletus, and a Phœnician by descent;" Diogenes Laertius,[4] that "he was believed by some to have come from Phœnicia, and to have been made a citizen of Miletus, but that the greater number of people believed him to have been a native, and of an illustrious family." **His Asiatic origin.** The authority of Herodotus must assuredly outweigh the judgment of this "greater number of people," who, of course, were not willing to share the glory of such a name with Asiatics. After all, the Greeks have immeasurably the largest portion in him. If he brought his astrology from Phœnicia, he was a thorough

[4]Diog. Laert. lib. i. c. i. s. 1

Milesian in the application of it. To the Ionians, says Herodotus,[5] he predicted the eclipse which happened when the Lydians and Medes were fighting, and which led to a peace between them. It was he, the Greeks generally believed—Herodotus had a different opinion—who enabled Croesus to pass the Halys, by turning the course of the river, when he was making his fatal attack upon Persia.[6] It was said, however, by others that he was no friend of Croesus, that he prevented Miletus from allying itself with his fortunes, and so saved it from the wrath of the conqueror. Bias of Priene gave good advice to the Ionian cities after their overthrow by Harpagus, but Thales, says Herodotus,[7] had urged them before their fall to establish a common assembly, and to fix it at Teos.

4. **The perplexity of the Greeks respecting him.** There were very opposite reports current respecting Thales. Some said that he bought up the oil-presses just before the olive season, that he might show how easily a wise man could make himself rich; others told of his falling into a pit while he was looking at the stars, and of his being mocked by an old woman for knowing that which was over his head so much better than that which lay at his feet.[8] These stories are both probably the produce of Greek invention, but they indicate the uncertainty of his countrymen whether they should assign him a place among men of business or theorists, and their notion that in some way or other he blended the two characters. Neither of them, however, accounts for the special distinction which he has acquired, that of being separated from the rest of the σοφοί, and being named a philosopher. He obtains that title from no less an authority than Aristotle,[9] who certainly would not have given it him merely because he calculated eclipses, or studied

[5]Κλείω, c. lxxiv.

[6]Κλείω, c. lxxv.

[7]Κλείω, c. clxx.

[8]Diog. Laert. lib. i. c. i. pp. 5 and 8.

[9]The words of Aristotle are not so strong as they are sometimes made to appear. He calls him (Met. A. c. 3) ὁ τῆς τοιαύτης ἀρχηγὸς φιλοσοφίας, meaning the philosophy which sought for a physical ἀρχή or element. But as this was the first school of Greek inquiry, the language certainly implies that he was the first philosopher.

astrology, or made himself rich, or turned the course of the Halys, or suggested a common assembly of Ionians. Nor was the judge a specially favourable one. Aristotle seems to have known little of the Ionian sage. His words intimate that he had seen no writings of Thales, or that there were none. He includes him in a class which he compares to the untrained boxers, who deal out many good blows, but without science.[10]

5. **The philosophy of Thales.** "He maintained water to be the ground of all things, and the world to have a soul, and to be full of demons." Such is the account which the gossiping Greek biographer gives of the "philosophy" of Thales. But this surely was not his philosophy; it is merely the index to his philosophy. How came Thales to think about water at all, or about a ground of all things, or about a world with or without a soul, full or empty of demons? What put him upon seeking when he had the reputation of having found out so much more than other men? And what was he seeking for? The word *Philosophy* is the plainest and best answer to the question. **Wisdom seeking to regulate human affairs.** He was thought to have got *Wisdom*, a wisdom which might be used for ruling men, or making bridges, or making money, or making laws. He had tried it in some of these ways; not altogether without success. He had obtained his full share of admiration. Probably if he had wished to put himself at the head of some party in Miletus, or to embroil it with some other city, he would have found his wisdom amply sufficient. **Disappointment.** But he had cherished a more extravagant ambition; he had thought he could bind his countrymen and their cities together; that he could make them a peaceful community. Then he discovered that he had elements to deal with which did not acknowledge fixed laws, like the stars; bodies subject to alternations of light and darkness that could not certainly be predicted; strong currents which could not be turned out of their courses so easily as the Halys. **The order of nature.** Was

[10] Ἀμυδρῶς καὶ οὐδὲν σαφῶς, ἀλλ' οἷον ἐν ταῖς μάχαις οἱ ἀγύμναστοι ποιοῦσιν. These words apply directly to Empedocles, but they evidently include all of whom he has been speaking before.

it among these that he could look with any hope for the principle of order and unity? Must it not rather be in the world which offered itself to his senses, a world subject no doubt to fierce convulsions, but even in them confessing a control? And the wisdom that we boast of so much, can the first principle and root of it be in us? Must it not be somewhere else? Must it not be there where the caprices of men are not at work, or are counterworked by an order which is mightier than they are? *Philosophy* was the search not for something else, but for Wisdom itself; for the very thing of which other people thought he had the full usufruct and mastery.

6. **The application of wisdom changed into the search for it.** Whether, then, Thales dealt straight blows or random ones, he was the Greek who discovered that he must ask the question which the man of Uz asked long before: "*Where* is wisdom found, and where is the place of understanding?"—that it was one to which he and his countrymen were not yet provided with an answer; that it was one to which they might from some source or another expect an answer. If it is said, the answer of Thales was poor and unsatisfactory—even more poor and unsatisfactory on this showing than on any other—we may admit at once that it was not *the* answer which was wanted for the sake of Thales, or of Ionia, or of mankind. **The result at which Thales arrived.** But we cannot admit that it was a worthless answer. The fact that moisture is necessary to the life of all things that live, to the growth of all things that grow, is it nothing? Does it not deserve to be noted? No doubt every one has noted it; as every one has remarked the fall of an apple. Is not almost the whole difference between a man whose eyes are in his head and one whose eyes are in the ends of the earth, just this, that the one observes commonplaces, and thinks of them, and that the other passes by and despises them? It cannot be said that Thales exaggerated the importance of the fact which seemed to him so wonderful. He probably underrated its importance. **His fact not an insignificant one.** And if it appeared to him the one all-absorbing fact, that to which every other was to bow and do homage, let it be

remembered that it was *his* fact, that for which he had travelled, that which had presented itself with mighty force and conviction to his mind. The world would not surely be the better if there were not some to treasure such facts with a mother's love; we suspect it would be very barren of all precious observations and discoveries.

7. **Greek scepticism.** It may, however, be urged that such a course actually led and could only lead to scepticism; that the early Greeks, if they had an insecure faith, had still some faith; that they referred wisdom to divine persons, if those persons were called Zeus, Apollo, Athene; that what is personal must be better than what is impersonal; that to find the beginning of things in an element like water is virtually to deny the existence of any distinct divinity; that the doctrines attributed to Thales concerning the world's soul, and the world being full of demons, contain the germ of all the later Greek pantheism.

8. **The true source of this scepticism.** These objections are very important, and require a serious treatment. What we shall say of them at present will only be for the sake of removing perplexities from the student's mind, and enabling him to see more clearly the answer which the subsequent history gives to them. We have observed already that the seed of the most widely-spreading scepticism lay in the Greek mind. The wise Greek had learnt to believe that he was not sprung from the gods, but that they were sprung from him; that their wisdom was derived to them from his. Every new exercise of his faculties—those exercises especially which led to the production of beautiful forms of the divinity—strengthened this conviction; it had already taken unconscious possession of a multitude of minds, it was working itself rapidly into consciousness. Now surely the feeling, "I do not possess wisdom, I must look for it," instead of being an aggravation of this tendency, was a powerful counteraction of it. **The philosophy of Thales an effort to rise out of himself.** If Thales had discarded all faith in Apollo and Athene, and had substituted the belief in water as the first germ of all things for it, he would at least have been laying hold of a fact in nature of which he was not the author, while the tendency

of his countrymen was to believe nothing except that which they had created. But, so far as we see, the effect of physical inquiries on his mind was not this at all. **The religious awe which accompanied it.** The acknowledgment of something beyond himself, out of himself, seems rather to have given a religious awe to his mind. "Can our ill doings escape the eye of the gods?" "Nay, not our thoughts," Thales is said to have answered. The words are less like what a later Greek would have uttered than most of those which are attributed to him; if they are genuine, they may be taken to interpret the other words, "that all things are full of the gods or of demons."

9. **The world full of demons.** Whether this phrase of Thales pointed most directly to the connection of demons with himself, or with the world which he beheld through his senses, we may not be able to ascertain. Probably if we had asked him, he could not have told us. The question which occupied him was just this: whether that which he knew was working in him might not have its original home, its highest throne, in Nature; whether the order which he perceived there might not be the order to which he belonged? But it would be a very great mistake to suppose that because he was engaged in this inquiry, all past traditions which reminded him of beings like and related to man were indifferent to him. **The World.** Poseidon and Oceanus may have been more, not less, venerable to him, from the significance which he attached to the element of water. And when he is said to have believed in "a world with a soul," we must not allow ourselves to be perplexed by the determinations of the more recent schools from which this language is derived.[11] Aristotle felt that Thales was rather seeking to know what the soul is, than settling whether it should be attributed to the universe. Thales seems, he says, to have considered it "a moving power or principle."[12] He found a living moving power in himself, apart from which his own solid body would have been a mere heap of atoms ready to fall into pieces. He found a living power in nature—

[11] Ἔμψυχος κόσμος. Diog Laert. lib. i. cap. i. 27.

[12] Κινητικόν τι Περὶ ψυχῆς, lib. i. cap. v.

water or moisture—apart from which the solid framework of things would have been a mere dead heap of atoms. The two facts illustrated and explained each other. It was natural to give a common name to both. **The soul.** What is this which I call soul, or wisdom, in myself—that which distinguishes Greeks from barbarians, slaves from freemen? Is it not here also, or a particle of it, or perhaps the very root and ground of it?

SECTION III. THE FIRST SCHOOL.

1. **The word "school:" what it meant to the early Greeks.** We ought to distinguish the first philosopher from those who follow him, that we may not be confused by the word *school*, or derive our definition of it from times in which it meant chiefly the receivers, transmitters, expounders, developers of a certain set of theories about gods, men, and nature. The men of that which is called the Ionic school were not, in this sense, disciples of Thales. They did not adopt his maxim respecting water, incorporate it with certain maxims of their own, and establish a sect called after their founder. They were connected together by a real bond; but it was one of quite another kind. They were all seekers after wisdom, and they all sought in the same direction, though the conclusions at which they arrived were markedly distinct and opposite. There have been some who have represented this opposition as even more decided than it actually was. It was a favourite practice in old digests of philosophy to speak of Thales as referring all things to *water*, Anaximander to *earth*, Anaximenes to *air*, Heraclitus to *fire*. Thus the so-called four elements were amicably apportioned among four Ionic teachers. **The elements divided between the philosophers** In more learned and modern treatises, the natural philosophers of Greece are divided into the dynamical and mechanical—Thales being assigned to the former class; his immediate successor, Anaximander, to the second: whence it is concluded that they cannot have stood to each other in the relation of master and disciple.

2. **Anaximander, born B.C. 610. Ol. 42,3. Clinton, F.H.** Now Thales did, as we have seen, refer to water as a first principle. *Anaximander* was a geographer and an inventor of geographical instruments. The earth, therefore, considered as the complex of sea and land, occupied much of his thoughts. But the Infinite (τὸ ἄπειρον), not the earth, was his watchword. Such a phrase shows that an aggregate of phenomena seemed to him a worthier and more profitable subject of contemplation than a vital power. On this ground he may be called antidynamical. But the historian of philosophy has no right to adopt a classification which is formally correct, if it is not one which represents the contrast between the mind and purpose of two inquirers. **Division between dynamical and mechanical philosophers: why objectionable.** This opposition of "mechanical" and "dynamical" suggests the notion that Thales and Anaximander devoted themselves to the study of nature, in the sense and spirit in which a modern German or Englishman devotes himself to it; that is to say, with a distinct consciousness that the physical world is one field of investigation, and the political or human world another. It is very important, we conceive, to recollect that this was not the case at all; that they were by vocation wisdom-hunters; that they started their game in another ground, and were led by various accidents and impulses to follow it hither. The track of the first pursuer was that in which the next ran, till some fresh scent turned him out of it. **Relation of Anaximander to Thales.** Anaximander can hardly have been old enough to hear Thales, yet he belonged to the same city, and was greatly influenced at least by the reports and traditions of his predecessor. But Thales discoursed; he wrote—a difference of the greatest practical importance. Thales, seeking for that order in things which he could not find among men, lighted upon a fact. **The Ionian philosophers were seeking for an ἀρχή.** Anaximander having to set down in written characters the object of the student's inquiries *calls* it the beginning or element (ἀρχή or

στοιχεῖον).[13] The *name* which seems so convenient for pointing out the direction of the philosophy, to a certain extent changes it. The pursuit of an ἀρχή threatens to take the place of the pursuit of wisdom. Still more dangerous was Anaximander's other phrase, "the Infinite." A formula so comprehensive seemed to exhaust all possibility. Philosophy, just beginning, had already reached its goal. What could it find which lay beyond the unbounded! **The infinite no mere phrase. Anaximander.** Let us, however, do Anaximander the justice to believe that "the Infinite" was not merely a formula in his mind; that the name expressed thoughts too deep for utterance; that he really bowed before that which he could not measure and comprehend, while he seemed ambitious of summing it up in a few syllables.

3. **ANAXIMENES WAS flourishing B.C. 548; Ol. 58; lived to Ol. 74.** In *Anaximenes* we perceive the effect of the step which Anaximander had taken, and at the same time evident indications of a return to the line which he abandoned. **The double force of the word ἀρχή.** The word ἀρχή is equivocal. It suggests the idea of "rule" as well as that of "beginning." Anaximenes seems to have perceived that the philosopher should seek for a power which rules, not merely for an element or starting-point. Plutarch, who can never be taken as a fair judge of the old philosophers, seeing that he contemplated all the subjects of their inquiry from entirely a different point of view, may be received as evidence respecting them when he attributes language to them which he is not likely to have invented, and which has all the marks of an earlier stage of thought. **The air and the soul.** Anaximenes, he says, held that "the air rules over all things, as the soul, being air, rules in man."[14] Such a phrase at once explains the assertion of Aristotle, that Anaximenes made air his ἀρχή, and connects him with the seekers for wisdom. This ruling power in man—this invisible, intangible power, which nevertheless accomplishes such wonders, compels huge bodies

[13]Diog. Laert. lib. ii. cap. i. s. 1.

[14]Plutarch, De Placitis Philosophorum, lib. i. (περὶ τῶν ἀρχῶν) οἷον ἡ ψυχή, ἡ ἡμετέρα, ἀὴρ οὖσα, συγκρατεῖ ἡμᾶς.

to obey it—what is it, where is it? We are looking into the natural universe to see if it is there. Is not this air—invisible, impalpable, all-penetrating, all-commanding,—the very thing? **The air and Jove.** Jove was said of old to rule in the air; to be the cloud-compeller. May he not *be* this air? It was a perilous question. When it was answered in the affirmative by the untrembling lips of later teachers, the result was fatal to all sense of a personal moral ruler. We conceive the suggestion of it by Anaximenes may have been in quite a different spirit. The air may rather have been humanised and glorified by its association with Jove, than Jove naturalised and materialised by his identification with the air. The coarseness of the old mythology may have been diminished in the mind of the student; it may not have been stripped of all its real associations.

4. **HERACLITUS flourished B.C. 503; Ol. 69,2 died at the age of 60. Clinton, F.H.** There was, however, another danger lurking in such language, though not caused by it. The Greek was more liable, in practice, to confound the "great Counsellor" with the soul, the ruling element which dwelt in himself, than with the air. **Heraclitus.** Of that tendency in his countryman, *Heraclitus* the Ephesian seems to have been especially aware; his dread of it seems to be connected with all his political theories, his physical speculations, his individual sorrows. **Politics of Heraclitus.** In his mind, it is quite evident that these were never separated.

5. **Love of law.** He believed that we should fight to death for the law. But he would not be a magistrate of Ephesus; he would rather play at dice with the children before the temple of Artemis.[15] **Dislike of Greek democracy.** What good could come of making laws for evil men? He would live upon herbs upon the mountains rather than among those who banished their best citizens, and would not of their own choice have a good one left among them. Heraclitus, therefore, was considered a stern aristocrat and despiser of the people. Yet he

[15]Diog. Laert. lib. ix. cap. i.

is said to have received the civilities of the great king with even more indifference than those of his countrymen. His feelings towards *them* were, we should judge, much more those of a disappointed lover than of a scorner. "Pride or insolence," he said, "should be stifled more diligently than a fire." The vaunting of the Greeks, their sense of superiority to the rest of the world, seems to have inspired him with pity and mourning. "Your knowledge of many things," he said, "does not give you reason or wisdom." An obvious saying, in which, nevertheless, much of his philosophy is latent. Is the individual soul, as Anaximenes thought, the ruling power in man? **How his natural philosophy grew out of his personal feelings.** Is it not in itself a very poor, weak, insignificant thing, most contemptible when it is most presuming? **All things, considered apart, unreal.** Separate a man from his fellows, and what is he worth? Abolish laws, government, and what becomes of the atoms which compose your society? What is each good for? You Greeks are always making the experiment. See what comes of it in this city of mine! See what infinite disorder, what infinite cause for sorrow. Would not nature have told you the secret if you had studied her? We do not find a set of individual energies and powers at work there. All things are efficient and energetical only in their harmony; **The central force.** only in their subjection to some central principle of life. **Flux and reflux.** Take that away, and the things we behold are only phantoms; the phenomena of the universe exhibit only an endless flux. The coal without the fire, is a man trying to exist in himself; the coal ignited, receiving communication from another nature, there is a man's soul enkindled by communication with a higher diviner reason.

6. **Fire.** This statement and this comparison may explain why Heraclitus has been supposed to attach so much sacredness and significance to the element of fire. **Heraclitus.** It seemed to him (old fables, diligently considered and connected with facts of experience, might teach him the lesson,) the vital quickening power of the universe; **Symbol of the central law or power.** that which *was* or which *expressed* —sometimes it might present itself to him as the symbol, sometimes

as the thing symbolised—the universal life, by participation in which all particular things have their being; apart from which they are unsubstantial, unreal. But this physical fire was never divorced from the law which holds societies together, from the higher and universal mind with which the individual mind is meant to be in communion. **The name of Jupiter.** When, therefore, we are told that Heraclitus said the object of man's life is to know the name of Jupiter, we may be sure that Jupiter did not mean to *him* either air or fire; that it did mean a reality which he could not comprehend, which he desired should comprehend him.

7. Such was Heraclitus, a man with a marked individual character, full of deep and pregnant intuitions. **The crying philosopher.** The vulgar notion of him as the crying philosopher must not be discarded as if it meant nothing, or had no connection with the history of his speculations. His thoughts are like fragments torn from his own personal being, and not torn from it without such effort and violence as must needs have drawn many a sigh from the sufferer. Neither is that other notion of him, as "the obscure or dark" man, an unfounded one. The fire that was in his heart and brain, and of which all the world around had presented to him the image, no doubt emitted much smoke which confused and stifled, not, perhaps, to his displeasure, the careless gazers and passers by. But there was something within him which neither his tears nor his smoke at all adequately represent. The sense of a harmony existing beneath a perpetual conflict of powers, and making that very conflict the means of their preservation, pervaded his being, gave the tone to all his thoughts, and realised itself to him in all the inner forms and outward images of nature.

8. **The Ionians proper. The other naturalists.** These four men, Thales, Anaximander, Anaximenes, and Heraclitus, have been usually regarded as constituting the Ionic school. There is a reason and an advantage in the classification. They belonged to the same region, they were exposed to similar external influences; they succeeded each other at no very considerable intervals; there was, we think, a certain

transmission of apprehensions and discoveries from the first to the last. Still it is a needful preparation for the study of those writers who were technically and practically the moral and metaphysical philosophers of Greece, that we should speak briefly of two or three others, who, in different circumstances, were led to occupy themselves chiefly with the phenomena and powers of Nature.

9. **DEMOCRITUS. B.C. 460. Ol. 80. Clinton. The traditional contrast between him and Heraclitus not unimportant.** We depart a little from chronological order,[16] for the sake of bringing *Democritus* of Abdera into immediate juxtaposition with Heraclitus of Ephesus. The old story, which opposes the smiles of the one to the tears of the other, is not without its significance, either as to the characters of the men or of their philosophies. He who recognises the existence of a central power adequate to keep all things at one, who believes in an order, must at times be overwhelmed by the distractions which the actual world presents to him. In proportion to the intensity of his belief will he be oppressed by the contradictions of experience. Heraclitus worshipped law, and saw a multitude of incoherent elements resolving to disregard it. He found a refuge (but how imperfect a refuge!) in nature. There he could detect an uniting organising energy. But how, with his mind harassed and tormented by human confusions, could he help also seeing their counterpart here; a whirl of atoms, which, if the invisible compulsion that bound them together was for a moment forgotten, must make the brain sick, and the heart sadder than it was before.

10. **Effects of a good temper and easy circumstances.** But suppose a man should arise, whose position did not lead him to meditate much on the perplexities of human society, or to seek for the removal of them; a man provided with external comforts, blessed with a good

[16]Γέγονε δὲ τοῖς χρόνοις (ὡς αὐτός φησιν ἐν τῷ μικρῷ Διακόσμῳ) νέος κατὰ πρεσβύτην Ἀναξαγόραν. Diog. Laert. i. ix. c. 7.

digestion, indifferent to fame,[17] with a Greek habit of observation, with opportunities of seeing various cities and men, for no one of which he has any passionate preference; and we need be at no loss to conjecture the results at which he would arrive both in practice and theory. Every one will see in such a man the elements of a benignant, agreeable, sociable companion; **View of humanity.** of one who would regard the disorders of humanity as mere eccentricities, to be noticed with so much the more kindliness if the suspicion should intrude itself that some of their results may be serious, even painful, to those who exhibit them. **View of nature.** He would gradually come to think even the word "eccentricities" too strong to express variations which after all might not be deviations from any standard. **Atoms, no centre.** For is there a standard, is there a centre? Can we find one in human beings, can we find one in the physical world? Our senses tell us of no such. Perhaps we cannot depend on our senses. But have we anything better to depend upon? Can we see more than those atoms, the sight of which so disturbed Heraclitus? Is it not worth while to get at them; to examine and dissect the world; to see what it is actually made of; to leave our own guesses, dreams, beliefs, hopes, as much as may be out of the question? **Democritus.** Is not that the course for the sound physical inquirer who wishes to know what may be known? **How a wise man is to behave himself.** Is it not the course for the man who wishes to keep his mind quiet, easy, and healthy, without the disturbance of expectations, dark or cheerful, that may never be realised?

11. **Democritus held in respect by Aristotle and Bacon.** Here we seem to have Democritus the Thracian, whom Aristotle and Bacon both honoured above the majority of Greek speculators, because he mixed, they thought, less of speculation with the actual observation of facts—because he looked hardily at the materials of which the world is composed, without fearing that he might meet something in it which must not be looked at. We do not undervalue qualities which two such

[17] Δοκεῖ δὲ καὶ Ἀθήνασε ἐλθεῖν καὶ μὴ σπουδάσαι γνωσθῆναι, δόξης καταφρονῶν. Diog. Laert. *ubi sup.* 5.

judges felt to be important. **Use of the atomic doctrine.** Democritus no doubt has filled his place among physical inquirers, and has brought to light a kind of investigation which is indispensable. **Insufficiency of it for its own ends.** But we may venture to remark that if there had been no men more sombre and less pleasant than he was, no inquirers who were haunted by the sense of powers and mysteries of which he ignored the existence, physical philosophy would have been as little possible as moral, the examination of atoms would have been as lazily pursued and as little productive as the study of laws and of spirit.

12. **Empedocles, flourishing B.C. 455. Ol. 81, 2.** *Empedocles* of Agrigentum presents us with yet another phase of Greek life and feeling. **A lover of equality.** Utterly unlike Democritus in his indifference and equanimity, not less unlike Heraclitus in his scorn of the mob and his hatred of equality, this enthusiastic Sicilian exhibited in his acts, his poetry, and his philosophy, all the strange elements that were at work through so many ages in the political and physical microcosm in which he dwelt.

13. **Influence of Sicily upon his mind and philosophy.** Nowhere had a man such an opportunity as in Sicily of witnessing every change and condition of society; nowhere had he more temptation to take part in its revolutions. Nowhere would he be more constantly reminded of the similar convulsions which are going on in the earth's womb, of the influence of Nature upon man, of the powers which man is able to put forth in opposing Nature. The last observation seems to have impressed Empedocles most, and to have connected itself with all he had heard and read of divine helpers of men, who had instructed them in mysterious arts, and had delivered them from oppressive plagues. **Divine teachers and inspirers.** That there were still such helpers, and that he who studied the powers of nature diligently might still be guided and inspired by them, seems to have been his inmost conviction. It procured him the name of an enchanter; it was mixed partially in his own mind with a confused notion that he was himself a kind of celestial person, who could wield natural powers at his pleasure.

Empedocles. But in general it would seem that he used the wisdom which he had, honestly and benevolently, for the good of others more than for his own glory; and it is certain that he was not content with that wisdom; he was a seeker after the springs and fountain of it. For him the varied powers in the universe could reduce themselves into no one element; **The war of elements.** the endless warfare of opposing forces, none of which could destroy the other, none of which, perhaps, could subsist without the other—this was the marvel which filled his heart.

14. **The human passions at war in nature.** It was no imaginary battle-field in the mind of Empedocles; the selfsame powers which Homer had exhibited fighting for Greeks and Trojans were engaged in it. The human passions,—love, hatred, friendship, dissension,—were all seen mixing in the war of earth, air, fire, and water. Aristotle, the great classifier of the world, is of course shocked at this confusion of physics and ethics. With much admiration for Empedocles as an artist, he seems to have had a more than common dislike to him as a speculator. **Value of this seeming confusion.** We may be excused from participating in his feelings, since that which offended him is for the historian of human inquiries one of the most interesting of all facts, that these early and zealous students of the outward world did not and could not disengage it from the deeper perplexities which they found in themselves and in human intercourse. To insist upon their doing so is simply to insist upon their not following out the great question which agitated their whole being. For ourselves, we have no wish to separate Empedocles who won at the chariot race, as his father had done before him, and who fought for the liberty of Agrigentum, from Empedocles the author of the Καθαρμοί, who as a poet forms a curious link between Homer, Pindar, and his Roman admirer Lucretius.

15. **Anaxagoras, born B.C. 500, died B.C. 428. Clinton.** *Anaxagoras* of Clazomenæ belongs by birth and early education to the Ionic school. **Teaches in Athens.** But it was at Athens that he taught; to the influences which surrounded him at Athens the direction of his mind

and the peculiarity of his doctrines may, we think, clearly be traced. Anaxagoras would have been most reluctant to confess this obligation; he was, it would seem, even more utterly without patriotism, in the ordinary sense, than even Democritus. "You care nothing for your country," some one said to him. **The stars his country.** "Very much indeed," was the answer; "my country is there," pointing to the stars. There appears to have been no affectation in such language. He was, to a degree in which no Greek before him ever had been, absorbed in mere physical contemplation. Natural philosophy in his mind was separated from political wisdom, even opposed to it.

16. **Anaxagoras. Effect of Athenian life upon him.** But this violent reaction against the habits and tendencies of his countrymen must have been produced by seeing them in their fullest activity. The bustle of Athens drove him to the stars. And into that country of his choice and adoption one finds him unawares introducing the maxims of the one which he despised. As he listened, wearily and with forced interest, to the accounts of party affinities, club fellowships, alliances among leaders formed and broken, which were brought him by some favourite and admiring disciple, one can conceive how he was led to reflect on the way in which a whole is made up of certain portions that seem perfectly distinct, and which have a mysterious attraction for each other; how the loss of that attraction is what we mean by dissolution or destruction, how by it all things are preserved in life. **Homœomeriæ.** Out of such reflections, quickly transferred from the region for which he had an utter distaste to the one in which he delighted to dwell, the theory of *Homœomeriæ*, in which modern students have perceived the germs of important discoveries respecting the laws of cohesion, may easily have developed itself. **Political and natural. Application of the doctrine by Pericles.** Pericles, we may be sure, would at once perceive the human analogy of which his master had lost the sense, and though he might feel pleasure at being transported for a while into a world so different from that in which his ordinary work lay, and may have found his thoughts elevated by the clearer and

rarer atmosphere which he breathed there, we cannot doubt how *he* applied the doctrine; where he looked for the similar particles which he was to combine. For that there must be a combiner, Anaxagoras also taught. The mere cohesion of particles was not sufficient. As Aristotle observes, the particles could not be the cause of the change which took place in their position and relation to each other.

17. **Nous. Its part in the scheme of the universe.** Nous (Intelligence) was called in to produce and maintain their fellowship—called in, the critic remarks, merely as a resource when the other expedient for solving the difficulty had been tried and failed. Be that as it may, the philosopher clearly told the Athenians that "all things at first were in a heap; that Nous came in and set them in order" (turned a chaos into a universe); a doctrine which had been always latent in the Greek mind, of which the μητίετα Ζεύς in Homer had been the indication which was implied in the Ionic search for wisdom amidst natural elements.

18. **Connection of Nous with the old divinities.** But if Anaxagoras had brought to light the principle which his countrymen half-unconsciously recognised, he had stripped that principle not only of certain confused sensual additions which they had made to it, but of all which had rendered it practically and vitally precious to them. This Nous, which had set the stars in order, what was it to them? It was not Zeus; **Anaxagoras.** not the acting, living ruler, taking part in human affairs and interests, whom Homer had brought before them. **Athenian suspicions.** Yet it seemed to assume all his functions; to do all the work which they had ascribed to him. Was this what they had meant; was there nothing else in their traditions and their hearts besides this? The conscience of the Athenians answered that there was something besides this. But the answer was a confused muttering one, mixed with a painful suspicion that they did not habitually believe more than Anaxagoras told them; not generally quite as much as he told them. **Grounds for suspicions. Accusation of Μηδισμὸς.** Out of that mixed impression, with the true indignation, the malignant hypocritical bitterness which the different portions of it engendered,

an accusation of impiety against him naturally proceeded. Mixed with it was another, which Anaxagoras must have listened to with profound astonishment. He was accused of Medism—a disposition to betray Athens into the hands of Persia. Probably the fact that there was such an empire as the Persian existing had escaped him, or only remained with him as connected with some geographical observation. But his devotion to the stars may have furnished those who wished to wound Pericles through the side of his teacher with a very plausible plea for representing him as having Magian tastes and propensities. **Excuse for it.** The charge of malignancy during the English Civil Wars, and of the Popish Plot—of *incivisme* during the French Revolution—was established by evidence which can leave us and our neighbours little excuse for condemning the Athenian democracy, if they yielded to such proofs. Anaxagoras, whether condemned for political or religious offences, retired to Lampsacus, we are told, with a smile of regret that his countrymen had exiled themselves from him. He suffered less than almost any man would have suffered from the loss of home ties and affections; the stars were to be seen at Lampsacus as at Athens. **His banishment.** It is difficult to feel all the sympathy we wish for a victim to the injustice of men in whose welfare he took no interest, whose evils he had never sought to reform.

SECTION IV. PYTHAGORAS.

BORN B.C. 608 OR 605 (BENTLEY); B.C. 570 (DODWELL AND CLINTON).

1. **Transition to a new kind of inquiry.** We pass from the least political to the most political of all the Greek philosophers. The records concerning Pythagoras which we possess, imperfect as they are, are important, not only as an introduction to the next division of our subject,—to the life of Socrates, and to the doctrines of Plato; they also throw light upon the Ionic school, out of which this eminent teacher arose—some members of which, Empedocles especially, confessed the greatest obligations to him.

2. **The name "philosopher."** The same traditions which speak of Thales as the first philosopher of Greece, affirm that Pythagoras first used the name. He dared not, we are told, arrogate to himself wisdom. That he held to be a divine possession; men could only love it and seek for it. Such modesty, in the judgment of some, is very inconsistent with the character of Pythagoras; if he exhibited it, they say it must have been feigned. **Belief in his inspiration.** For he habitually claimed a divine inspiration, he took to himself the credit of most unusual gifts. Could he have renounced a name which had been freely bestowed upon quite ordinary mortals?

3. The answer to this question lies in his history. **Word "Philosopher" sometimes attributed to Socrates.** At present we shall only remark that the difficulty is not diminished, if, following other authorities, we suppose Socrates to have invented, as he pertinaciously adopted, the word Philosopher, in the sense we have given it. Socrates also claimed to be under divine teaching, and, what is more remarkable, made that claim the very reason for renouncing the title of "wise man." The nature of the inspiration which Pythagoras believed was vouchsafed to him, we may consider presently; we only ask our readers not to judge of it or of him by the reports of fanatical admirers in the post-Christian period, or by the satires of Lucian of Samosata.

4. Pythagoras was born at Samos, in what precise year may be doubtful. **His master and his early studies.** Under what master he studied has been a subject of great controversy; if we might venture to choose one guess out of many, which may all be false or all true, we should take that which assigns his early training to Anaximander. That philosopher, as we have seen, carried his mathematical studies further than any of his predecessors; his geometry in a great degree determined the nature of his theory. A youthful pupil of earnest character and high imagination, coming into contact with such a thinker, would be likely to experience a great conflict of feelings. The science, new not only to himself, but in some measure to all around him, would seem to him strange, wonderful, sublime; the doctrine appended to it would

repel him as cold, vague, and unsatisfactory. He would begin, we may fancy, to meditate on his teacher's favourite phrases, "the Infinite"—τὸ ἄπειρον—this forsooth is the sum of all things in the universe. **Geometry.** A conclusion how unlike that which geometry would have suggested! that leads us to the idea of limitation, distinctness, in each thing and in all things. And is not such limitation, such distinctness, that which constitutes their perfection? Surely it is this, the πέρας—the ultimate limit, and not the limitless, which the wise man is to seek after. **Arithmetic.** Again, Anaximander talked of an ἀρχή. Here, indeed, he has profited by his science. Mathematics did not teach him the necessity of this. He found every line starting from a point, every series beginning from a fixed number. "But why forsake the teacher? Why go abroad to look for your beginning when you have it in the very instrument which you carry with you? You Ionian philosophers are groping after unity in the world about you. But where did you get that idea? Was it not from these numbers, from this geometry? Surely it is there that we find not the mere shadow of unity, but unity itself."

5. **The τὸ πέρας.** Such thoughts we may fancy began to work in the mind of Pythagoras while he was yet among Ionians; to excite in him a discontent with previous methods of inquiry, and a hope that he might discover a better. With these feelings we may suppose him to set out on his travels, his impulse to leave his country being, it is said, the tyranny of Polycrates. He carried away another (perhaps a greater) benefit from his Asiatic education. The rhapsodists, who used to sing the legends of earlier days to the Greeks of that region in which Troy stood, and in which Homer or a number of Homers lived, these were perhaps silent. But not only their words were preserved, and by this time at least committed to enduring characters, but the melodies in which they had spoken still lived in the hearts of the people. **Music.** The impression of the Dorian and Lydian measures on a young Greek must have been very deep; it might be effaced afterwards in some by the passion for abstract speculation, in others it would give speculation itself a richer and more poetical character. All the thoughts of Pythagoras respecting

the mystery of number seemed to have combined themselves from the first with musical feelings and associations. Was not music itself an illustration, the highest illustration, of this mystery? Whence came that strange disposition of thoughts and words into verse? whence the fascination of melody and tune? whence, if number be not the secret law, the moving soul of the universe?

6. **Pythagoras a traveller.** All these apprehensions and imaginations might have dwelt in his mind and produced little fruit, or no better fruit than a crude philosophical system. But Pythagoras, as we said, became a traveller. The reports of the regions through which he journeyed are all uncertain. This at least we may conjecture with tolerable confidence, that he was brought into contact with human beings in a variety of different positions and circumstances, and that he began to think more deeply of their nature and destiny. And then what with new interest, in what a new light, would the number-mystery present itself to him! This surely was the very problem which all legislators had been seeking to solve,—in what way a number of apparently separate units might be able to feel themselves really a unity. All society, all government, was but the working out of this problem. Away then once and for ever with all Ionian experiments after a physical unity! here was the true field for examination and discovery. But what is it in man which has the capacity for association and organization? It is not resemblance in feature which produces it; it is not contiguity in space which produces it. It is that wonderful thing which inhabits this animal frame—which can transport itself beyond all limits of space and time. I, Pythagoras, can carry myself back to the age of Achilles and Agamemnon; doubtless in some condition or other I actually lived in their time. I can project myself forwards into ages that shall come; doubtless under some condition or other I shall live in those ages. But in what condition? **Metempsychosis.** This soul, which can thus look before and after, can shrink and shrivel itself into an incapacity of contemplating aught but the present moment: of what depths of degeneracy it is capable! what a beast it may become! And if some-

thing lower than itself, why not something higher? And if something higher or lower, why may there not be a law accurately determining its elevations and descents? Each soul has its particular evil tastes, bringing it to the likeness of different creatures beneath itself; why may it not be under a necessity of abiding in the condition of that thing to which it has adapted and reduced itself?

7. **Where he learnt it.** Such thoughts Pythagoras may, or may not, have borrowed from Egyptian priests. Doubtless to a man in his posture of mind every old tradition, every relic of national faith, will have been precious; still there was nothing in the doctrine of a metempsychosis which might not easily and naturally have grown out of his reflections upon that which makes men human, and enables them as human beings to associate with each other. To another and deeper discovery he was no doubt led by studying the governments of different countries, especially those which had received the Dorian impress. **Law.** He found everywhere in these communities that the bond of connection was the recognition of a power superior to man, a righteous law-giving power. No human legislature ever dared to dispense with this recognition, no society could cohere without it. Deep and awful idea! The union of men presumes a still deeper ground. Is not this ground the πέρας, the ultimate unity, after which we are seeking?

8. **Results of his inquiry.** Thus gradually we suppose the idea of limitation, which Pythagoras had acquired from geometry, and which had been brought out in his mind in opposition to the notion of an all-comprehending Infinite or Indefinite; and the idea of beginning and succession which he had acquired from arithmetic, and which had come out in his mind in opposition to the notion of a mere external ground of things, fused and softened as they both were by a sense of music dwelling deep in the heart of the world, may have become associated with practical thoughts respecting the nature of the human soul, and the bonds by which souls are related to each other.

9. The more this feeling of the sacredness and mysteriousness of human fellowship unfolded itself in the mind of Pythagoras, the more peril and evil he will have seen in the pretensions of men to wisdom. The destruction of order lay in such individual pretensions. **Wisdom above the soul.** Wisdom must be contemplated as altogether above the soul; as something which it cannot appropriate, to which it must do homage; which it must seek in silence, yet not in solitude; which each man must reverence for himself, but yet which he must feel is not his more than his fellows'; which can only be truly pursued by those who are willing to abandon outward enjoyments for the sake of it. The philosophy of Pythagoras therefore *could* not be carried out except in a community of living men.

10. In the bonds by which they were held together in their dealings with each other and with men without—in the silence and fear with which they acknowledged an invisible ruler—was his inmost meaning to be expressed. Thus would the proportions and relations of the universe be manifested on their highest ground; thus would the mystical harmony be felt and acknowledged; thus would the dignity of the human soul, its capacity for growth and perfectionment, be proved; thus would the nature of distributive justice, the geometry and arithmetic of politics, be practically realised; thus would the idea of God be felt as the foundation of social life. **The society in South Italy.** Such we apprehend was the feeling that led to the formation of the Pythagorean society, which grew up in the South of Italy; which after all deductions for the extravagance of later reporters, must have exercised a great influence on various cities of Magna Grecia; which wrought legislative and moral reforms, engaged in political intrigues, and was finally put down as a dangerous religious confederacy, incompatible with the existence of regular government.

11. In calling this society "an order," Bishop Thirlwall and Mr. Grote have done much to explain the secret of its strength and influence, as well as of its errors and its decay. **Its character and perils.** The earnest seeker of wisdom found hearts yearning for it like his

own. It was an inheritance intended for them and him: in proportion as they could make it the common object of their lives, they might hope to share it together. The lessons which they received from their master were not communicable except to those who formed the circle around him; to others they would have been different lessons: apart from the practical discipline which accompanied them, they were not true; they served no purpose of purification, they were not a method of seeking wisdom. The allegiance which men so associated pay to him who has given the first impulse to their minds, and who is directing all their energies, is affectionate, devout, dangerous. They are united by sympathies and reverence. A man is the object of their reverence and sympathy. **Sense of a vocation in the teacher.** If that man has felt deeply that their union does not stand in any power or wisdom of his, he will tell them so continually; he will strive, by all the forms and arrangements of their polity, to preserve them in the recollection. But if he believes that what he teaches is not his own, he must believe, and strive to make them believe, that it has been imparted to him; he must regard his work as a vocation. The more he uses the language which expresses this conviction, the more it will be perverted by passionate idolatrous followers; the more will his earnest desire to disclaim wisdom be made an excuse for maintaining that he possesses it under conditions altogether new and peculiar. How can that idolatry fail to react upon the object of it? **Idolatry of disciples.** How can it fail to awaken in him a vanity, a self-consciousness, a self-glorification, which have to maintain a fearful struggle with the earnest truth-seeking, truth-loving temper which led him to say, "I did not choose this course for myself; I did not make this discovery. A mightier wisdom has guided me on my way, and showed me what I could never have found." The histories of such struggles are not written, or written very imperfectly, even in the autobiographies and secret confessions of great teachers: another day may reveal them to us, with all the strange contradictions which have provoked our harsh judgments, and should have called forth our pity and sorrow. The outward results of the secret

battles are better known, and are often very tragical. In the case of the Pythagoreans, we have only indistinct glimpses of them, but enough, with the experience we have since acquired, to show how zealous the society must have been to bring others within the circle of their light; yet how proud in their boast of enjoying that light by some exclusive tenure! how resolute they must have been not to separate their essential and moral practices from their outward doctrines, yet how apt, in the vehemence of propagandism, to part with all inconvenient austerity, to tolerate and use the corruptions which they undertook to remove; how their first object will have been to use their society as a means of making all society deeper in its foundations, truer in its acts; how at last they may have come to think that it had no deeper foundation than the Pythagorean rule, and that false and dishonest means might be legitimate for the establishment of that rule. Some traditions would represent the founder as forwarding the ambitious views of his order, as sharing in its downfall. We have no means of testing their accuracy. If they are true, they need not make us doubt the sincerity of his purpose, nor the real worth of the principle for which he testified. The failure of a noble scheme may make good the internal conviction of him who planned it better than its success. **Destruction of the order desirable.** If Pythagoras believed that human society had a mysterious and divine ground, and that every true philosopher and reformer lives to convince it of that fact, it was fitting that he and his order should perish when he or they began to fancy that they could build up society by their devices, upon their wisdom. His name remained a sacred and venerable name for Greece. None might be able to tell in terms what it had done for them. Those who spoke of Pythagorean doctrines in earlier times meant the doctrine of Philolaus, Lysis, Eurytus, Archytas, —men who knew nothing of the Italian master, who had never shared his discipline, who had been brought up amidst the ordinary influences of Greek society. **The feeling about Pythagoras in after times.** Those who spoke of Pythagoras himself in neo-Platonic times meant a Thaumaturgist whom they had created by mixing Christian

and Pagan records together, to convince the world that the Christian church was a plagiarism. But Plato and Aristotle retained a reverence for the name of the original master, which they never transferred to the school where his opinions were dried for use and exportation. Iamblichus and Porphyry were bearing unconscious testimony to the fact that the best and wisest teachers of ancient Greece had been led by all their studies of nature and of man, and, as they rightly deemed, by some guide who was higher than either, to seek for a brotherhood which did not rest on human wisdom; that they tried to create one, and that they failed.

SECTION V. XENOPHANES—PARMENIDES—ZENO.

1. **Poetry and philosophy.** It has been observed before, that most of the Greek sages were poets. Verse seemed the natural language for thoughts which were to be a kind of oracles meant for the experienced ear, perplexing to the vulgar. When the wise man became the philosopher, he more rarely used this medium of communication. The mind of Empedocles was evidently rich and poetic: Anaxagoras, Anaximander, Anaximenes, probably never departed from ordinary discourse. But in each, whether they used this vehicle or not, the suspicion began to arise, that the poet, so far as he answered to his name, so far as he was a Maker, was the antagonist of the philosopher. Homer had a hold upon the sympathies of the Greek, which the most profound student did not possess. Whence did it arise? Was it a wholesome influence? Were not his creations hindrances in the way of the investigator? Had he not assumed the result of an inquiry which they were pursuing?

2. **XENOPHANES, flourished B. C. 540-500. Ol. 60-70.** The sense of this opposition reached its highest point in *Xenophanes*. He was, like Pythagoras, an Ionian by birth: he became, like him, an Italian colonist. He felt bitterly the luxury of his own city, Colophon. **Education of Xenophanes.** The manners, and especially the love of amusement in the Greeks of Asia and of the islands, disgusted him. He must have gone to Italy a discontented man,—discontented, probably,

with the investigations of Ionians, as well as with their political life. The example of Pythagoras, or his own reflections, will have taught him that what he wanted was not an element or ἀρχή. But he does not seem to have been much interested in geometry or arithmetic, or to have received any of the same deep impressions which Pythagoras received from music. The thoughts of Pythagoras respecting the soul of man and its migrations took no hold of him. In one of his fragments he ridicules a sage for not suffering a dog to be beaten because he recognised in his growl the voice of an old friend.

3. Neither does he seem to have had a desire to be the founder or the member of any political association. He may have heard of the dispersion of the Pythagorean society, and may have turned with dislike from similar experiments. His genius, however, did not impel him in that direction. Social unity was not the problem which he sought to resolve. The problem which did present itself to him concerned unity, but in quite a different sense. **His question respecting the gods.** What are the gods in the Homeric poems? Is there any reality corresponding to them? Are they not formed by the poet's brain, and clothed by him in sensible forms and images? Is it to sensible forms and images that our minds do homage? Pythagoras had approached the last question, but from a different side and in a different spirit. He had recognised a Being near to man, to be adored in silence and awe. Such a Being had not much in common with the gods whom his countrymen worshipped; but he never denied that homage was due to them. Nor can his secret instructions to his disciples have been that this homage was only to be paid in deference to the opinions of the vulgar. They must have been efforts to make it more sincere and significant than it was with the majority. Pythagoras felt that he had no substitute to offer for the personal objects he had been taught to revere. He felt that some living being, not an abstraction, not a creation of his own mind, must sustain his and every human polity.

4. In Xenophanes all these checks to freedom of inquiry respecting the faith of his country were wanting. **The nature of the answer.** The

naked question, "What does my soul affirm respecting God; what conceptions can it or can it not form respecting Him?" came before him. His verses—for he wrote in verse of various styles and measures—were answers to it. The philosopher tries as a poet to criticise the poets; to show that they have been making the beings to whom they bow down. All the Homeric gods have the shapes and forms of men; why, but because men have formed them after their own likeness? If an ox were to form a god, would he not give him horns and hoofs? How is it possible to form any conceptions of God? What mean your finite and your infinite? Are they not both alike terms of your own mind? How can you make Him out of them?

5. **Not a sceptic.** This may sound like scepticism; but it was not scepticism in the mind of Xenophanes. He did not say that because the senses cannot tell us of God—because we cannot measure Him by our conceptions, therefore He is not. He said just the reverse: he said, "My senses do not tell me that which is; they only tell me of appearances. My conceptions do not measure that which is; it lies deeper." Instead, therefore, of denying that to be, of which he said the Homeric pictures presented no likeness, his disapprobation of them arose from his desire to assert a real ground of things, independent of man's conclusions or conceptions; which he affirms to be, but which he does not make.

A very wonderful process of thought indeed, pregnant with results which our future history must unfold. Xenophanes was no atheist, but a very earnest theist. He asserted *a* Being. If he had been asked "*what* Being?" he would have owned that he could not reply. He could only say what he was not. **But the Being he worshipped almost a negation.** He approached the border of negation, but he approached it manfully and reverently; therefore he did not pass it. He pointed out a void which he could not fill. That alone would have been a reason for feeling gratitude to him. But he also saw the way to a deep and radical truth.

6. **PARMENIDES, born about B.C. 536. Ol. 61.** A healthier thinker than Xenophanes, yet one in whom it is not perhaps possible to feel

the same interest, took up his course of inquiry: this was *Parmenides*. The question respecting the nature of God, which had so occupied the philosopher of whom we have just been speaking, does not seem at all in the same degree to have agitated him. His mind rested on the principle of Xenophanes, that what the senses present to us are appearances; that only that which the mind affirms without the aid of the senses actually *is*. What is this, then, that the mind affirms? Xenophanes had said "God." Parmenides said "Unity," or "The One." **The One.** My senses tell me thousands of things, and yet has not every man who thinks and feels ever been groping after some one root and ground of all these things? This, verily, is what man wants, and this is affirmed to be by that within him which fights against apparitions and phantoms. **Plurality an apparition.** Plurality is merely one of these apparitions—deceitful, transitory; nothing abides but unity: this is permanent, eternal. Such a belief could not dawn upon the mind of a Greek philosopher without imparting to him a feeling of deep wonder. He had seen a succession of Ionians questioning all nature to tell them of this unity. He had seen Pythagoras evoking it out of the relations of number, and actually constructing a human society to illustrate it. And now this unity declared itself to be a condition of the human mind itself—it had been seeking for that in all other things which really dwelt only with itself. The confused look of a child gazing upon a new world, is but a faint emblem of the surprise with which such a thought must have possessed the mind of an earnest seeker on whom it has just burst. Yet he cannot doubt that it is a true thought. It makes so much of all that had before been perplexed in his mind intelligible, it accounts so well for the thoughts which have revealed themselves to other men. But what consequences follow? Faith in the things about us becomes impossible; we live in a shadow world; we do not, in fact, behold anything. For these distinctions of things, this apparent multitude of objects, exists not; it speaks to our fancy only. The unity which the mind beholds and demands, this only has substance.

7. Every one must see how this doctrine of Parmenides laid him open to the jests of witty men, such as grow upon the surface of all lands, and of which Greece and her colonies were certainly not less productive than others. These wits believed no doubt that they were opposing self-evident facts to mere dreams. But Parmenides had a friend and disciple who was not willing to leave them in undisturbed possession of this opinion. **ZENO, born about B.C. 500. Ol. 70. His answer to the wits and men of experience.** *Zeno* of Elea was convinced that there was not only positive falsehood, but direct absurdity in that doctrine which experience seemed so irresistibly to establish, and he boldly undertook to make this absurdity palpable to the popular mind. In a series of arguments, some of which are still preserved to us, he endeavoured to show that space cannot exist, that we cannot suppose a plurality of objects without attributing self-destructive qualities to them; that if there be a number of real existences this number must be both finite and infinite; lastly, that the notion of movement involves a contradiction. Our readers would not, perhaps, be much interested in these early specimens of Greek subtlety; nay, they would be inclined to denounce them as the exploits of a mere word-conjurer. But assuredly Zeno deserves no such name. He was both in action and speculation a brave man, and we owe to him a great practical discovery. In fact, he occupies a peculiarly important position as a thinker, which it is for the advantage of our future studies in Greek philosophy that we should understand.

8. **The Eleatic organ.** Every philosophy must have an instrument or organ to work with if it would make itself intelligible. Some external object served this purpose for the Ionic philosopher; lines and numbers for the Pythagorean. But what was the instrument of the Eleatic philosopher? He seems to have ascended into a region of such pure metaphysic, and so entirely to have rejected all common and sensible analogies, that one does not at first see how he can ever impart his doctrine to others, or at least suggest any successful method of pursuing investigations in his own direction. This difficulty seems to

have been felt by Xenophanes, and to a certain extent by Parmenides. Precious and pregnant as are the hints which each of them presents us with, it seems likely that they will be obliged to stop at the point which they have already obtained, and to leave no race of successors. But Zeno has found the solution of the puzzle; he has found that *words* bear to this philosophy the relation which sensible objects and numbers bear respectively to the other two. The language in which we discourse with each other must needs embody the law and principle of our own mental workings, and it was exactly this principle which the Eleatics were dealing with.

9. **Zeno honest in the use of words.** Zeno had only an imperfect consciousness of this truth, but he acted upon it, and it bore useful fruits for him and for us. There was no falseness in his use of words. He felt that they did affirm and embody truths, and he employed them for the purpose of elucidating truths. And herein he was surely as honest as those wits who set themselves to confute Parmenides and philosophers of his class by an appeal to experience. For they too profit by our belief in words. They awaken our consciousness to the fact, that the words which we speak bear on them an impress and image of the external world; and it is this consciousness which they rest upon as their real defence against the philosophers who set at nought the evidence of the external world. Zeno awakens our consciousness to the fact, that the words which we utter express something to which there is no counterpart in the external world, and he rests upon this consciousness to oppose the conclusions of those who set at nought the witness of their own minds. Both appeals are in themselves fair, and carry conviction with them. But the one merely convinces us of a fact which we took for granted previously; the other obliges us to perceive truths lying very near our inmost being, which were yet almost entirely hidden from us.

10. But it is the practical discovery which was the direct result of this search after an organ or instrument for the Parmenidean philosophy that obliges us to regard Zeno with most admiration

and gratitude. Mathematical science we owe, according to the best historical evidence, to the East. And it entirely accords with the calm, contemplative, and yet sensual character of the Orientals, that this should have been their contribution to human knowledge. But the science of *Logic*, the science which declares, not what are the conditions to which external things are subject, but the conditions under which we ourselves speak and judge—this was of purely Greek invention. No other people had ever the subtlety to conceive the possibility of such a science, far less to ascertain its distinct province and its appointed work. **a Greek discovery.** Though logic, in a formal and narrow sense, is considered as the antagonist of poetry, yet only a most imaginative and poetical nation could have discovered the meaning and necessity of logic, and have given it the statue-like perfection which it has attained in Greek hands. Now Zeno is believed, on the best grounds, to be the inventor of logic. He first was led clearly to perceive that the mind has a distinct law regulating its own affirmations, and he consequently was first stimulated to inquire what this law may be. How much we owe to him for this achievement we shall understand better as we advance. Our principal object here has been to point out the connection between it and the Eleatic philosophy, of which Zeno was the accomplished and able defender; to indicate the kind of influence which that philosophy exercised upon the mind of Greece; to show how important a place it fills in the history of human inquiry; and to excite our readers' interest in the future development of the doctrine which they have beheld in its first germ. In so very rapid a sketch as ours it is clearly impossible to do more than notice what seems to us the living and central peculiarity of each thinker as he arises up before us. But the real germinant principle is often hard to discover amidst the multitude of mere notions and opinions with which it has environed itself. An historian will distrust his own sagacity in detecting it, and will rejoice greatly if he can find it anywhere in its rude and primitive shape. **Value of the early schools.** Little value as it may seem to have, nay, as it may actually have, while it remains in this condition,

yet he deems it not wise to wait till the animalcule has become a perfect insect, or till the insect has died, before he commences his examination of it. We offer this apology for noticing the ante-Socratic schools, briefly indeed, but yet at a length which many may think disproportionate to the time that we shall be able to bestow upon their successors. We are convinced that our readers, whom we wish not to furnish with a history, but to put in a right method of procuring one for themselves, will have a clear or confused understanding of the palmy period of Greek philosophy between the age of Socrates and of Aristotle, as well as of the age of senility which followed, exactly in proportion as they study or pass over the years of its infancy. Let them not hope to understand Plato or Aristotle, or even Epicurus, Zeno of Cittium, and Carneades, if they have begun with despising Heraclitus, Pythagoras, and Parmenides. Nay, we might go further, and say that we should greatly doubt the pretensions of any one professing to have a real acquaintance with Hobbes, Locke, Leibnitz, or Kant, who could discover nothing but confusion and barrenness in these early inquiries.

DIVISION II.—GREEK PHILOSOPHY FROM SOCRATES TO ARISTOTLE.

SECTION I. ATHENS IN THE TIME OF SOCRATES.—THE SOPHISTS.

1. **The city of Wisdom.** If Greece was the country of wisdom and wise men, no one has ever doubted that Athens was in this sense the capital of Greece; that there Wisdom was worshipped with all her rites; that there wise men had an honour which was bestowed upon them in no other part of the world. The name of the city affected all the acts of the citizens; the meanest of them had some sense that the Goddess of Wisdom was his protectress, and that he had received some endowments from her.

2. As there is no dispute about this fact, so there is none that the age of Pericles was that in which Athens attained the glory she was always

aiming at, that it was then all the powers of her sons reached their manhood. The great statesman thoroughly understood the character of the people whom he ruled. The funeral oration which Thucydides puts into his mouth, may not have been delivered by him in the very form in which we receive it, but it expresses exactly that accurate perception of the Athenian mind which the historian knew that he possessed. **Pericles: his idea of Athenian life.** With the same dramatical propriety, if the speech be not a report, he exhibits it as the settled purpose of Pericles, not to restrain the tendencies of this character, but to give them their full play and development. He would suffer no Spartan moroseness to interfere with Athenian freedom. The corrections which it needed, so he believed, must be supplied from itself. Any attempt to introduce the maxims and habits of another tribe would destroy the Athenian energy without really imparting to it the Dorian self-restraint.

3. Whether this calculation were a right or a wrong one, the effects of it are memorable in the history of the world. **The sculptors and poets: how they were viewed by their contemporaries.** Those to which we most naturally recur are the creations of the sculptors and poets. The perception of the beauty and symmetry of the human form which was awakened at that time, the images of the gods to which it gave birth, though they may have won the admiration and influenced the character of future generations, must be considered in connexion with the processions and the temples of the people for whose use they were immediately designed. So again the works of the great tragedians, however much they may deserve the attention of solitary students, ought to be thought of as represented at the festivals, as rivals for a popular prize, as acted before delighted or critical crowds. Those which have lasted through all the changes of much more than 2,000 years, show with what deep thoughts concerning the destiny of man the minds of some Athenians were exercised. But they were mixed with multitudes of other works which were probably at the time not felt to be inferior to them; they themselves were judged

by their fitness to confer present amusement, by their adaptation to the varying demands of exceedingly clever, but also probably very impatient, spectators. The quickness and versatility of an author in creating that which should excite their sorrow or their mirth, would be the measure of his popularity, even though on the whole he who had thought and felt most would call forth the deepest echoes in their minds, and would ultimately obtain the greatest reverence. Aeschylus and Sophocles towered above their contemporaries probably even in the judgment of the many, but the qualities which we admire in them must have been to a great degree forgotten in the contemplation of the immediate effects which they produced. It was for after-times to discover how much there was in them which could not be exhausted in any shows, and which did not belong to one age or to one nation, but to mankind.

4. Why, it may be asked, are such reflections more appropriate to the age of Pericles than to the age of James I.? Were not Ben Jonson and Fletcher regarded chiefly as men who produced masques for the entertainment of the court—Shakspeare as an actor in the Globe Theatre? Such a remark is true in itself; but there is a special need for a student of philosophy, most of all for a student of the life of Socrates, to recollect in what light all the great men in Athens, whose main instruments were words, appeared to their fellow-citizens at this time. **They professed a particular kind of wisdom.** They were all exercising some kind of *wisdom*; that wisdom was addressed in the theatre, or the agora, to a class of judges who were themselves wise and conscious of wisdom; able to appreciate it, able to bestow the rewards of it. The great tragedians, fixing their minds on the heroic ages, were able to preserve themselves from making their own wisdom the creature of the mob wisdom. It required very high genius in a comic writer, whose business was with the present, to resist that influence; such a man would try to do it in a measure by choosing the most broad and conspicuous conceits and affectations of his age as objects of his ridicule. But the strongest temptation could not after all beset those

who were using their wisdom for purposes of entertainment. Those who employed it for the direct object of persuasion, those who uttered words for the sake of leading their fellow-citizens to deeds, would be in a far more dangerous position for their own honesty, might be instruments of greater and more wide-spreading mischief. By degrees the kind of power which they exercised would become the measure of all others. The rhetorician would be regarded as the man who had ascertained the effectual use of words. Poets, statesmen, thinkers of all classes, even the commonest handicraftsmen, would gradually become rhetoricians; it would be looked upon as the craft of the wise city.

5. **The Sophists** It has been commonly supposed that there was a certain class of men, formed in the different cities of Greece, but always esteeming Athens as their head-quarters, who helped to keep alive this tendency in the minds of young Athenians, and to give it a very dangerous prominence. These men have been called Sophists; from them especially the notion of the name as an evil name has been derived; it has been supposed that the main work of Socrates was to counteract and undermine their influence. **Mr. Grote's arguments.** Learned men have shared this impression with the vulgar; the most modern and critical writers with mere narrators. Recently these notions have been impugned with great skill, and apparently with a great weight of evidence. The existence of a sophistical system has been distinctly denied. Those who are designated by the common name were unlike each other, it is said, in all their doctrines, pursuits, habits of life. They were not men to whom any corrupt purpose or an immoral character can be imputed; proofs of their respectability may be obtained from the books of their greatest opponents. They did not cause Athenian society to degenerate from the standard of past ages, for no such degeneracy is visible in the history. The opprobrious epithet Sophist was not such at all in Greek apprehension; it was only a synonym for the wise man; it was conferred by impartial writers upon poets, upon philosophers, upon the supposed antagonist of sophistry himself. Plato and Aristotle have chosen to use it in a bad sense; they

had a right to their own definition; but they cannot give us a right to pronounce an *ex post facto* sentence upon their contemporaries. Finally, we may hold the object of the life of Socrates to be a decidedly good object, without blaming the different Sophists whom he or his disciple blames. He aimed at a universal standard of wisdom and truth; they professed only to teach Athenians how to think, speak, and act. These conclusions, if they are true, must affect the whole course of our after history. It becomes us therefore to consider how far they are borne out by the able arguments and undoubted facts which Mr. Grote has produced.[18]

6. **The Sophist a professor of general wisdom.** We at once accept Mr. Grote's definition of the Sophist as the Platonical and the true one. He was "the professor of wisdom; he taught young men to speak, think, and act." We wish for no other and no worse account of him. If modern artists have thrown any darker shades into their picture, we believe they have done him a benefit instead of an injury. Their clumsy exaggeration hides the essential ugliness which Mr. Grote's flattering sketch brings out in full relief.

7. **The age of the Sophists: in what respects better than former ages.** They have, we conceive, been especially wrong in their attempts to blacken the age of Pericles, as if it was, essentially and inherently, worse than any previous age. In many respects it was assuredly much better. Not only were all the intellectual energies of the people more developed, but their great writers displayed a moral insight and purpose which are not to be found in the older times or in their immediate predecessors. Who can deny that the tone of Thucydides is much higher than that of Herodotus? that there is a much deeper recognition of principle in the Œdipus Tyrannus than in the Odyssey —that even Aristophanes (though we may quite agree with Mr. Grote in refusing him the dignity of a moral teacher) yet tacitly acknowledges a standard in his satires upon bad citizens, which would not have

[18]Grote, vol. viii. cap. lxvii.

been as readily perceived by poets or recognised by their audiences in the times of Solon and Pisistratus? There had been a progress unquestionably in the minds of the better men in moral perceptions and apprehensions, a progress which could not have been found in them unless their contemporaries had been *capable* of the same. The political training and discipline of the Athenians must have greatly contributed to this result; their experience of society and government led them to practical distinctions which, without it, would have been hidden from them.

8. Whatever we may think of the Athenian democracy, we cannot doubt that it rendered this signal service to the eminent men who lived under it, and through them to the world. Its corrupt maxims and practices are made known to us by the emphatic protests against them which have come to us in historical reflections and prophecies —in lessons from the past, in ridicule of the present. **In what respect worse.** But the protests show us what the peculiar temptation of the Athenians was; why they were more prone to it in this than in any former time; what kind of influences were most certain to foster it. We have seen that a majority of the Greek wise men were tyrants (or despots, as Mr. Grote prefers to call them). The natural use of their wisdom was to obtain power—to make them fit for governing fools. Every Greek was inclined to hold this opinion. It grew in him with the growth of his faculties. Democracy afforded him an obvious opportunity of exercising them in this particular direction. The Peloponnesian war suggested thoughts (which had been latent in the Persian) of rivalry between Greeks, of Athenian ascendancy, of the difference between forms of government. The passionate impulses of patriotism, which had their own characteristic dangers, had yielded to deliberate schemes and calculations respecting the method of obtaining rule and wielding it. There might not be more of evil-doing in the one time than in the other. There must have been more consciousness of evil-doing; more internal wickedness; a greater readiness in bringing crimes under a theory, and in defending them upon that theory. This is

the inference which the Melian controversy inevitably suggests. Make what allowance you please for the aristocratical tendencies of the writer: it cannot be denied that an experienced and wise man imputes to his fellow-citizens such a distinct understanding of an evil purpose and principles as we do not meet with elsewhere, and yet such an understanding as we should, without his authority, have attributed to a people possessing the Athenian wit and subtlety.

9. **The professors all of different schools.** All that was wanting to give this wit and subtlety their full play, was, that a set of men should appear, starting from the same maxim as the wise men in general had started from, but furnished with a set of instruments which had not belonged to them, and ready to *teach* the skill which they had *used* in a narrower sphere for their own advantage. The professors of whom we are speaking exactly answer to this description. They possessed all the respectability which Mr. Grote claims for them; were many of them aged and grave; were men of uncommon sagacity and penetration. They had studied in different schools. Some had learnt under Empedocles, some under Zeno. Some devoted themselves to physical studies, some to moral, some directly to political. Each possessed some sort of wisdom. Each undertook to teach that wisdom. Each held out the acquisition of political power as the prize to be obtained. There was their common point of agreement; possibly there was no other. The young Athenians wanted to learn how to think, act, and speak upon all subjects, that they might guide the people according to their pleasure. For this purpose they sought the aid of a Sophist or Professor.

10. **How they taught to think, speak, and act.** It was very needful that the Athenians should learn to *think*. What was to be their teaching for this end? They must be told about natural subjects, about moral subjects, about political subjects, by men who had been at the pains to learn what Thales said about them, what Pythagoras said about them, what Parmenides said about them. They must be told about the views of ancient cosmogonists respecting the world and the gods; about the views of modern thinkers and allegorists upon the same subject.

They must hear about the Heraclitan flux, and the Parmenidean One: they must hear about the way in which cities were said to be built by the lyre of Apollo in former days, about the way in which they had been held together by the skill or legislation of recent despots. All these different views they were taught to compare together—to see the greater strength of the one and feebleness of the other, or to combine and reconcile them. Thus the Sophist taught his pupils to think. But all thinking is for the sake of *action*. Our professors are thoroughly practical men. They do not come to withdraw us from the business or work of the world at all. What should we care for them in Athens if they did? We want to know about men, not about the stars. We want to defeat Brasidas, or to support our party at home against Nicias, or to make ourselves rivals to Cleon, much more than to know anything about Heraclitus, or Parmenides, or Zeno. Well! But the one learning is the way to the other; for remember what comes between thinking and acting; remember what Homer says of "winged words;" remember that these have been with Greeks always "the great engines of government, the proximate cause of obedience." If we teach you to *speak*, we teach you in the most efficient manner to act. These different physical, and metaphysical, and moral theories, will furnish you with topics for speaking; they will be the tools of your trade; they will give you a wonderful power of embarrassing, confuting, overawing an uninstructed opponent. All may serve this end. Theories about the order and formation of the world in the skilful hands of Hippias may make as good a rhetorician as direct moral teaching from Prodicus, or speculations upon government, human or divine, from Protagoras. All will supply topics; all will be instruments of persuasion. And then see what power Zeno has put into our hands! Words you see may mean the most opposite, the most contradictory, things. If you could be taught the secret of this contradiction, and how to turn it to account, would not this be invaluable lore?

11. **Speech the chief thing.** In the last paragraph we have just hinted at the modern meaning of the word Sophist, which Mr. Grote so

indignantly repudiates. Unquestionably it is not *the* meaning. The one which our historian has substituted for it is far more comprehensive and satisfactory. But by the necessity of his calling, he who taught to think, to act, to speak, would come to regard the last part of his profession as that which included both the others. He would become a rhetorician and a teacher of rhetoric. For that purpose he must deal with the subtle meanings of words; whether honestly, as Zeno did, or treacherously, would depend upon the object which he proposed to himself. If that object was to influence the mind of a mob, he was at least in considerable danger of leading his pupils to give the word sophistry that force with which we are most familiar.[19]

12. We cannot think, then, that accomplished scholars and honest men, like Ritter and Brandis, are fairly charged with imposing upon their less-instructed readers when they use such a phrase as "Die Sophistik" to express their feeling that there was an art which was practised by all the different professors of wisdom in the age of Pericles. Such an opinion does not in the least interfere with the fact that the word Sophist may have been applied to a poet, to any person who

[19] As we have admitted the respectability of the Sophists generally, it is not necessary to consider the arguments which Mr. Grote has brought to prove that respectability in each particular case. But one of his statements, upon which he places much reliance, requires a short notice. Prodicus, he thinks, can be shown by more than negative evidence to be not an immoral, but a highly moral, teacher. The story of the Choice of Hercules, in the form in which we commonly read it, claims him for its author. What more decided proof can be given that he urged upon the Athenian youth a severe, even an ascetical, self-restraint? We have no wish to dispute the beauty or the worth of that fable. It must have been full of instruction for that age, since it has been found full of instruction for all ages. But we submit that the effect of the lesson which it inculcates is good or evil according to the object which the reader of it proposes to himself. If he wishes to acquire the power of draining marshes and killing noisome beasts, all must bless him for not yielding to the voice of the Goddess of Pleasure. If he merely seeks to be the strongest of men, by resisting the enchantress, it might have been better for the world and for himself that he should have yielded to her blandishments. Mr. Grote is not likely to have forgotten the celebrated paradox of Gibbon respecting the clergy, "Their virtues are more dangerous to society than their vices." On the hypothesis which Gibbon no doubt adopted, that this order is divided into those who deny themselves for the sake of obtaining dominion over their fellow-creatures, and those who yield to animal indulgences, his dictum may be easily admitted. The monk who restrains his appetites that he may be more followed and idolised as a confessor, does more harm to others, is probably more evil in himself, than the sleek abbot who is given up to his hawks and hounds. The principle is of universal application. We must know whether Prodicus departed from the general rule of the professorial class, by not holding out political power as his prize, before we can pronounce him a useful teacher, because he told his pupils how they might obtain the bone and nerve of Hercules.

exercised an influence through words rather than swords,—to Thales, to Pythagoras, to Socrates. Astrology has an undoubted meaning,—most persons think a bad meaning; yet, is an astrologer more than one who studies the stars? Why should not the man who studied them with the most ample intention of ascertaining the laws by which their courses are regulated have been called an astrologer as well as any one of the innumerable doctors who determined from the stars the events which were to occur in the political world? These traders in natural knowledge did not form one school or guild, any more than the Athenian professors; they had their different maxims; they were rivals; they were enemies: yet it has been usual to think that they had a common work, which may be denoted by a common name. And every man who claimed to be an astronomer, and not an astrologer, was bound to make good his claim by the labours of a life, to show wherein he differed from him who cast nativities. By doing so, he must put a stigma upon a name which was not necessarily evil before; he must acquire a name for himself which was in some sense new. He will have the ultimate compensation of vindicating the fame of many a worthy predecessor who had not been distinctly conscious of his own end, but who had honestly sought for light when others were boasting that they possessed it and could turn it to account. Till he has accomplished his task he must be content to bear the same reproach with those whom he is most opposing; from whom he is seeking to deliver his fellows.

13. **The denouncers of the Sophists —Aristophanes, &c.** There were many at this time who scorned and ridiculed the young men of Athens because they frequented the teaching of one or another Sophist, and because they exhibited the effects of the teaching in their self-conceited words and acts. Aristophanes, above all, could teach these young men to laugh at themselves—at their own thoughts, speculations, imaginations as well as at those of their teachers. In doing so, he expected perhaps to restore the habits of an older, and, as it seemed to him, a simpler method.

Neither reason nor evidence warrant us in believing that his success was proportioned to his zeal or to his genius. He may have abated some of the nuisances which were infesting Athens; he may have diminished the race of sycophants, have made the vulgar kinds of mob-persuasion less effectual, have even done something to abate the litigious spirit of his fellow-citizens; but he can have helped very little to root out that which was the real cancer of the nation's being, —that which fed upon the hearts, not of the worst, but of the best, and noblest, and most promising of the Athenian youth. No one could apply any sound remedy to this evil who despised the age into which he was born,—who merely saw the effects of the sophistical poison, without understanding its nature and the constitutions on which it was working. **The true Reformer.** He only could hope to reform the young men of Athens who could heartily and affectionately sympathise with them, who did not express his contempt or indignation for their favourite teachers, but was ready to follow them through all their windings and subtleties,—who, without for a moment forgetting the purpose of finding his way back to realities, could yet grapple fearlessly with the most shadowy and impalpable abstractions. A man of this kind would have sore difficulties to encounter, through which nothing but the clear perception of his object could possibly lead him unhurt. His inward conflicts, before he could be fitted for his task, must be severe; of his outward, the greatest, perhaps, would be this: that his purpose would be infallibly misconstrued by those who were aiming, with very different instruments indeed, to resist the same evils. It would be inevitable that he would pass with them for one, perhaps the subtlest and most mischievous, of the sophistical class. Because he sought to make men feel that there was no resting-place in any of their theories or opinions, he would be suspected of universal scepticism; because he led them to feel that they were not without a ground to stand upon, if they would seek for it, he would be accused of undermining the ground on which their forefathers stood; because he endeavoured to look through the clouds which had been drawn up from the earth, into

the serene heaven that lay behind them, it would be fancied that he invoked their protection and did them homage.

Such a man was Socrates, and this was his fate. He was hated by Sophists, and ridiculed as the worst of them. He treated the diseases of his country according to a method exactly the opposite of that which Aristophanes adopted, and therefore he was denounced by Aristophanes as the great promoter of them.—We have now to consider what his method was, how it affected his own age, and what traces it has left of itself for subsequent generations.

SECTION II. SOCRATES.

BORN OL. 77, 4; B.C. 468.

1. **Socrates.** THERE is little doubt that Socrates was the son of a statuary and a midwife. He was born in a little burgh of Attica. When he came to Athens we know not with any exactness; probably about the commencement of the Peloponnesian war, when Pericles was still living and Anaxagoras teaching. He frequented the school of the latter. **His first teacher.** Nor is it at all unlikely that he must have entered with considerable ardour into the studies of his master, and may have carried away from him many valuable hints.

2. **Why he did not become a student of Nature.** Anaxagoras, as we have seen, was at the furthest remove from the trading Sophists of his day. Political life was with them everything; with him it was nothing. He sought to dwell apart from the world of human beings, to find a home in the world of nature. It was surely a noble experiment. If young Pericles felt it to be so, though the desire of his life was political ascendancy, young Socrates, who never evinced that desire in any period of his life, would, one might have thought, have been carried away by it. But he could not find a country where Anaxagoras sought for one. As he listened to the sublime physical speculations of his master, he seems to have asked himself, "What are all these to me? Let atoms be connected by what law of affinity they will; let them whirl at random through space, or be guided by an intelligence;

still the question remains, What am I? They do not help to answer this question. But in some way or other it must be answered. Any carpenter or shoemaker who can put me in the way of solving this problem would be my benefactor. The profoundest teacher whose thoughts are turned in another direction is not the man I want." The school of Anaxagoras therefore was forsaken. There was something very inviting in its quietness; but if that quietness was to be obtained by the sacrifice of human feelings and interests, the gossip of the Agora, the bustle of the Pireus, was better.

3. **Why he did not become a professor of wisdom.** Socrates then was, like the Sophists, a man of business and action. His wisdom, if he had any, must, like theirs, be directed to that which was passing around him, not to that which was going on in some other sphere. But had he wisdom which was available for this purpose? Could he communicate knowledge about things on earth, or things in the skies? The more he considered, the more he found that he was not a possessor of wisdom; that it was the very thing which he needed. He could not put it into the hands of a set of disciples to use it and traffic with it. He must go in search of it. The distinction between the Sophist, or wise man, and the philosopher, had dawned upon Pythagoras, perhaps upon Thales; it became the cardinal distinction in the mind of Socrates. To possess wisdom, to profess it, would be for him at least the most utter falsehood. He did not find that he could lay down theories or maxims about the commonest things. What he needed was to understand them; and this, that he might understand himself, that he might find out what ground he had to stand upon; whether he had any, or was only floating in the air.

4. Who can assist him in this inquiry? It was one which concerned his own very self; that which no eye could see, that which lay beneath all utterance, all thought. **The Dæmon of Socrates.** There was near him (as Socrates believed) one who did take cognizance of the most secret movements of his mind and will, who reproved him, restrained him, warned him. A divine teacher was with him at all times. Though he

did not possess wisdom, this teacher could put him in the road to seek for it, could preserve him from the delusions which might turn him out of that road, could keep his mind fixed upon the end for which he was to act and live. Xenophon asks with plain, soldier-like honesty, whether his accusers could believe that he told a lie about this matter, and hints that it would shake his faith in all reality, to suppose that the mind of a man so clear-sighted and free from superstition could be the victim of an utterly false impression, or that it could produce the wholesome effects which he himself had witnessed. We believe that Socrates told no lie about his Demon; that it was precisely this faith which kept him from lying; which was the cause of his clearness of sight and his freedom from superstition.

5. This guide or teacher Socrates connected with the mythology of his countrymen. He seems to have interpreted the one by the other. He was sure that there was such a teacher of himself; he could acknowledge, therefore, a teacher of wisdom to Greeks and men. **The god at Delphi.** Much that was said about the god of Delphi might seem to him profane; he turned from it with disgust. But on the whole he believed much more, not less, than his countrymen believed, and he shrunk from the scepticism and irreverence which they and their poets ventured to indulge in. He had no notion of substituting a Nous or Intelligence for Jupiter or Apollo. It would have been altogether strange if he had done so, since he was not accounting for the existence of the universe, but craving for a light to show him his own path through it. He was not, therefore, a Monotheist in the sense in which some have represented him as being so; he did not affirm that there were not various objects of worship. In many acts of his life he confessed them. But as he felt that there was one teacher, one source of light and wisdom, who was leading him out of the confusions and bewilderments of sense, he was practically more of a Monotheist than he could have been if he had tried to reduce the traditions of Greece into physical speculations, or had treated them as mere follies.

6. **His calling.** Socrates spoke of his Demon as reproving and restraining himself; but since he connected this Demon with the gods of his country, he felt of course that other men had also a director whom they were to obey, and who could lead them to the object which he sought. Instead of being a solitary thinker, he had the most intense sense of a vocation to help and instruct others. Though he could not give them wisdom, he might put them into the same way of seeking it, in which he was striving to walk himself.

7. **His character and influence.** What charms he used to draw a circle about him may seem at first inexplicable. Most of the Sophists were men advanced in age and reputation when he first appeared in Athens. They promised to fit men for being politicians, orators, generals, and offered very plausible evidence to prove that they could do what they promised. He promised nothing. He was come, he said, to exercise his mother's profession on behalf of those who had thoughts of which they wished to be delivered. You could not understand what line he took; whether he was a philologer, like Prodicus, or a professor of statesmanship, like Protagoras; he seemed to be all things by turns, and nothing definitively or constantly. Personal gracefulness and beauty were great recommendations among the Athenians: he had large projecting eyes, like those of a bull, a flattened and upturned nose, a protuberant stomach; he wore a tattered cloak, and was seldom seen with sandals. Nevertheless, the youth of Athens began to flock about him; they thought that he had something to teach them; perhaps that by some means or other he would be able to impart to them the art of governing better than the more regular doctors. It is impossible to say that some of the causes which we have mentioned as likely to alienate his countrymen may not themselves have contributed to this result. The Athenians liked a humorist, and a humorist Socrates, by his outward negligences, as well as by the whole tone of his discourse, showed himself to be. Moreover, he had a most hearty, genial way of interesting himself in whatever interested those with whom he was mixing; as little of solemn quackery as was ever found in the compo-

sition of any man. Add to this that he was a thorough, genuine Greek; Greek in all the habits of his mind, Greek in his taste for society, Greek in wit and argument, Greek in a brave unflinching love for his own land, Greek in making freedom (to a much greater degree than is usually observed or acknowledged) the passion and end of his life. But all these circumstances together could not have availed to counteract the many disadvantages under which he laboured, if he had not possessed the real magnet which must draw the hearts of young men after it, be they never so reluctant—a knowledge of the thing which they are really wanting, and which they have been toiling in vain to find.

8. **His dialogues.** Political power was, as we have seen, the one prize which the Sophists proposed to themselves and held out to their pupils as the reward of all the trouble which they bestowed upon abstract speculations. Now, though there were different roads to this end, and though each teacher believed himself, and induced his disciples to believe, that his was the shortest, yet one method was common to them all; all sought to acquire power by means of *words*. The mastery over words was the great art which the Athenian youth was to cultivate; his own feelings, and an observation of what was passing every day in his city, told him that there was a charm and fascination in these which the physical force of an Oriental tyrant might vainly try to compete with. **How Socrates used them.** It seems to have been the first observation of Socrates when he began earnestly to meditate on the condition of his countrymen, that in this case, as in most others, the tyrants were slaves; that those who wished to rule the world by the help of words were themselves in the most ignominious bondage to words. The wish to break this spell seems to have taken strong possession of his mind. But the wish would have been ineffectual, and would only have interfered with the main feeling of his life, if he had not been able to connect the study of words with that deep question respecting his own being of which we spoke just now. As he reflected, he began more and more clearly to perceive that words, besides being the instruments by which we govern others, are means by which we may become

acquainted with ourselves. In trying really to understand a word, to ascertain what was the *bonâ fide* meaning which he himself gave it, he found that he gained more insight into his own ignorance, and at the same time that he acquired more real knowledge, than by all other studies together. In this work he knew that he was really honest; he was feeling for a ground; he was breaking through a thousand trickeries and self-deceptions. If, then, he was to deliver his countrymen from that miserable shallowness into which they had been betrayed by the ambition of wisdom and depth,—if he was to lead them out of the multitude of systems above morality into any firm feeling that there was a morality,—above all, if he was to rescue them from the worship of *power*,—this must be his means. He must not stop to canvass the wisdom of this proposition or that. He must not denounce with great moral indignation some that struck him as very mischievous or outrageous. He must not candidly and generously concede the truth and wisdom of those which seemed to him plausible or reasonable. But in every case he must lead his disciples to inquire what they actually meant by the words of the propositions which they were using, and must consider no time wasted which they honestly spent in this labour; no perplexities or contradictions dangerous which started out of their own minds in the course of it.

9. **His elenchus.** No doubt this would be a most irritating, vexatious course of proceeding. No doubt an opponent who had adopted a certain proposition, and was provided with abundance of arguments in defence of it, would be tortured beyond measure by finding himself not fairly encountered upon those arguments, but led back into a question which he had assumed, forced to give an account of a word which he fancied every one was agreed upon, and not permitted, after all, to bring any of his own resources into play. It was most perplexing for a disciple who had come expecting that a certain doctrine would be either established or refuted, and, perhaps, that the ingenious arguments on both sides of the question might serve his purpose in a popular assembly, to find that he got no decision either way, and,

moreover, that he himself had been talking all his life in a language which he did not understand, and using words as if they were algebraic characters. Yet in some way or other the Sophist was taught that he was in the presence of one stronger than himself. He might chafe and fret, and complain that he had been treated with great unfairness. He could not say that his opponent had not got the better of him in his own word-fighting; he could not say that all the scepticism which he had brought into play against the common thoughts and feelings of his countrymen and of mankind had not been made to tell with tenfold force upon himself; he could not help owning and feeling that there was one in conflict with him who had some other end than the mere exercise or display of power, and yet who did possess a power before which his own quailed. On the other hand, the disciple, amidst all his bewilderment, will have gone away with a feeling that he (perhaps for the first time in his life) had actually learned something, and with a conviction that if there be not something better than the attainment of dominion over other men's minds, there is at least a most important and indispensable preliminary to it, unless we would have our own the sport of every deceiver.

10. **His irony.** The infinite humour and vivacity of Socrates must of course have been of the greatest service in such dialogues as these. But oftentimes his opponents will have fancied that he was merely indulging his humour when he was, in fact, following out his principle. The practice of confessing his uncertainty or his ignorance upon any subject that was presented to him, which formed in their eyes the chief element of his "irony," was not always or generally affected. We make no doubt that he often entered upon a discussion without knowing whither it would lead; actually, as he professed, hoping to be a learner by the result of it. He was certain, not of a particular conclusion, but that his method was a sound one, and that it would conduct each person who followed it to clearness and truth. It is probable that his discoveries respecting himself and his fellow-creatures were the practical fruits of this method. **Recollection** For instance, it was by repeated

experiments that he convinced himself of the immense importance of the habit of recollection; how the mind that wants it is at the mercy of all accidents; how the mind that possesses it is continually realising its own possessions, receiving them as if they were then for the first time bestowed. Upon this principle the greatest part of his moral discipline depended. The necessity of removing the impediments to recollection, of leading the mind away from mere sensible images and impressions into an examination of its own treasures, was the purpose and ground of it. But this principle was redeemed from any Brahminical tendency by his habitual use of words and sensible images as the means whereby a man feels his way into the principles and grounds of his being. It is in trying to understand all common things—what the carpenter does with his wood, the shoemaker with his leather, the mason with his stones,—it is by really getting to know what we intend when we talk of all these things, that a man learns to understand himself. It was not therefore to an escape from common life, from daily business, that the withdrawment or recollection of Socrates pointed. It formed the habit of seeking out in everything that which it really is, and not merely its shapes, and appearances, and accidents, which the man is to cultivate, and which is ultimately to fit him for perceiving that which is deepest and truest. Now, it is the faith attained by repeated proofs and trials, that man has that in him which does desire to find out the truth of things; and again, that he has an inclination to be constantly conversing with the mere images of things, and that just so far as the first of these tendencies is kept uppermost, and subordinates the other to it, he is in his honest sound position; and that just so far as the lower tendency is uppermost, he becomes a mere shadow-pursuer and shadow-fighter, which is the soul of Socrates's doctrine. **A moral foundation.** It was not adopted as a scheme to supplant another scheme; he stumbled upon it as a fact which he could no more gainsay than any one for which he had the evidence of his senses—a fact which *was*, let it be explained as it would, and must be recognised in all our dealings with ourselves or with other men.

11. **Alcibiades the type of the Athenian character.** There was one young man in Athens whom Socrates regarded with an intense affection. In him the qualities of the Greek were exhibited in their highest perfection. Creative power, skill in the management of words, personal beauty, fascination of manner, were all united in him. The love which Socrates bore him shows how thoroughly he sympathised with the feelings which he regarded with most fear, and in which he saw all possibilities of evil. If Alcibiades could have learnt to see that there was a right and a wrong—that to walk in a line, not to devise one—to perceive, not to create—is man's business, the whole history of Athens might have been different. No doubt there must have been critical moments in the life of this youth, when he confessed to himself that there was something that was more worth seeking than dominion. No doubt there were moments when the feeling that he too had a guide and monitor within him whom he might obey, was stronger than the sense of power and the inclination to wrong-doing which accompanied it. But Ahriman prevailed over Ormuzd: Alcibiades yielded to the darker power within, which was tempting him continually to glorify his own intellect—to use the mighty gifts which had been entrusted to him, for the destruction of his country and of himself. Then all the skill which he had seen his master exercising in word-fighting became his curse. It was an instrument of mighty mischief in his hands. Having once parted with the moral purpose at which Socrates was aiming, that which he received from him became indeed sophistry of the worst kind. It taught him to act more effectually upon the maxim, that all order and society had been invented some time or other by the strongest or the cunningest, and that what they invented they could pull down.

12. **The mere art of Socrates might prove mischievous** This, says our recent historian of Greece, was not the sophistical teaching. The Sophists merely intended to fit Athenian young men for the purposes of civil life. Their aim was not so high a one as that of Socrates, but it was far from a bad aim. We believe that Socrates would have

answered, "Either it is *this* aim that I am setting before myself, or it must be a bad aim. All my own teaching, my own influence, if it has not this aim, is bad teaching, bad influence. My elenchus is nothing better in itself than the logic or rhetoric of any other professor. If it is merely taken up as a more skilful or ingenious art, it will be worse; for its purpose is to lead men into the apprehension of that which is—to sift and separate that which is from its shapes and counterfeits, from that which is not. The Sophists are destroying the heart and soul of my countrymen, because they are continually leading them to think that what they want is an *art* which shall enable them to do or to make, when what they actually want is a *science*, a means of seeing that which they did not make, that which lies beneath all our doings, which is at the root of our ownselves."

13. **Knowledge: in what sense the basis of virtue.** From this statement it will be seen in what sense knowledge seemed to Socrates the basis of morality. Those who suppose that he meant to exalt the human faculties and to make them the grounds of virtue and of truth, do not merely mistake, but invert his meaning. To destroy the worship of power, and especially of intellectual power, may be said to have been the purpose of his life. And in nothing did he show this more than in his doctrine respecting the relation of knowledge to morality. As the outward eye sees certain objects, and is good for nothing except as it sees them, so the inward eye perceives certain objects, and is good for nothing except as it sees them. The objects are there. It is the whole blessing of the man to behold them; as he beholds them he is like them, but they *are*, not the variable functions of his mind, but the eternal, unchangeable principles and grounds of it. A notice of Socrates is only an occasion for indicating this faith; in speaking of his great disciple, we must strive to expound it.

14. **Socrates the specimen of a philosopher.** Socrates then was, we conceive, as he said himself, a philosopher, a philosopher and nothing else—a philosopher in the most strict sense of the word—a philosopher who helps us better than any one else to know what philosophy

is. He never imagines that his philosophy contains or provides its own object. He is the wisest of men, as the oracle said, because he knows nothing; that is to say, because he brings nothing with him, but acknowledges or recognises that which presents itself to him. When he speaks of the dignity of the philosopher, he means us to understand the dignity of a man who does not exalt himself, who does not put himself in the way of the thing which he is examining, who has the simplest, most open eye for receiving light, whencesoever it shall come. That there is a source of light from whence it does come, and that this light is connected with man, is a principle assumed, if it is ever so imperfectly developed, in all his words and acts.

15. **The condemnation of Socrates natural.** How can such a man, it has often been asked, have been compelled to drink hemlock? Must not the restored democracy of Athens have been worse, and more intolerant, than any power which ever existed on the earth? Mr. Grote answers, we think, most reasonably, that the wonder is how such a man should have been suffered to go on teaching for so long. No state, he adds, ever showed so much tolerance for differences of opinion as Athens. We would make an addition to this statement. If it had been possible to regard Socrates merely as an utterer of peculiar opinions, as one of the Greek Sophists or professors, he might still have taught with impunity. Anytus and Meletus might have had their own special causes of dislike to him; his connexion with Critias or Alcibiades might have awakened suspicion in different minds; the ridicule of comedians might have kept up an habitual prejudice against him; but the tolerance of the Athenian people would have triumphed. He would have been acquitted on the count of corrupting the minds of the youth, as well as on that of introducing new demons. But there always has been, and always will be, a limit to the indulgence of those who regard all opinions as equally possible. If a man positively denies that he is proclaiming an opinion, if he speaks of the possibility of *knowing*, of the duty of *distinguishing*, of a truth which men do not create, and which does not change with the changes of our intellect

—he comes under quite a different category from the promulger of opinions; he is not entitled to the same mercy. **The Athenians tolerant of all opinions, not of a seeker of truth.** Tolerant people, on the very ground of their tolerance, feel bound to silence or to crush him. What business has he to insult the opinions of other men; to tell them that there is something which it is dangerous for them not to see; that there are falsehoods clinging to their lives which they ought to cast off? It is long indeed before a thoroughly good-natured man can persuade himself that any one has reached this height of criminality. All pity will be shown to his fanaticism as long as it is possible. He will be treated in spite of himself as a sectarian teacher propounding a particular opinion. But if he continues with incurable pertinacity, as Socrates did, to assert that he is not a Sophist, not the putter forth of a certain theory, it is evident that tolerant men must—experience shows that they will—resort, though reluctantly, to the same racks, dungeons, and poison-cups, which bigots are wont to employ. For it comes to this: if the teacher is right in what he says, he must be regarded as a public benefactor; the city must honour him above all its citizens. When the judges had condemned Socrates to death, they asked him, according to Athenian custom, what milder sentence he would propose for himself. He answered, "A public support in the Prytaneum." Though they might be offended at his audacity, their consciences told them that this was the real alternative. Not being prepared to take it, they allowed the sentence to be executed; so assuredly choosing a course immeasurably more honourable to Socrates, and more instructive to after ages.

16. **The discourse of Socrates on immortality** We must be careful of separating the discourse of Socrates after his condemnation from the course of his life which preceded it. His faith in a future state is often put forward as a characteristic which distinguished him from the rest of his countrymen and of the pagan world. Now, no one refers more frequently than Socrates himself to the old stories which express this faith; to Æacus and Rhadamanthus, the functions that were attributed

to them, the souls upon which they passed judgment. Evidently he believed that the essence of these stories was true; that they did set forth the fact of a correspondence between the condition of men hereafter and their condition here. As in other cases, he received the teaching of those who had gone before him; but he asked himself what that teaching meant, and how it concerned him? His countrymen believed that, somehow or other, they should be judged hereafter by what they had done here; that some particle of themselves would suffer a vague punishment or enjoy a vague happiness. He was fixed in the conviction that a man's blessedness consists in knowing that which is, in having his soul engaged in the pursuit of this knowledge; that his misery consists in being without it, in being given up to dreams and unrealities. He hoped that what he had desired to know here he should know; he sought for arguments to convince himself that, however the accidents which surrounded him might change, he himself should continue, and being more disengaged and purified from the corruptions and restraints of which he had been conscious here, should be able to converse with the perfect Wisdom and Goodness. Socrates did not tell his disciples that his future life was to be separate from his life here; it was the continuation and unfolding of that life which he looked for. He felt that his eyes had been partially opened, that they would be opened more perfectly, that he should still, and always, be a seeker after wisdom; but that wisdom would meet him and embrace him, and ever reveal to him new treasures, which would awaken in him ever fresh longings, and would continually satisfy them. The seeker of wisdom, who passed here for a pursuer of shadows, would grasp substance; the seeker of wealth and power, who passed here for a pursuer of substance, would grasp a shadow.

17. **The Socrates of the Clouds.** The hints which we have thrown out may, we think, enable our readers to reconcile the three documents which we possess concerning the life of Socrates. If we look first at the Aristophanic portrait, we shall find that it is indeed a broad and extravagant caricature, but drawn by a consummate artist, who,

even in distorting the expression of his original, shows that he has studied it. We could not consistently bestow this praise upon him if he had, as some of his commentators pretend, represented Socrates as a natural philosopher. But the name of the play of which he is the hero is almost the only excuse for such a notion. And who that knows anything of the genius of Aristophanes, or of the delicacy of the Athenian taste, will suspect him of perpetrating, or his audience of tolerating, the wretched conceit that a man worships the clouds, because he is fond of gazing at the stars? Far rather the airy nymphs whom the philosopher is said to have substituted for the gods of his country, are the patronesses of those attempts to catch the thin, delicate, evanescent meanings and shadows of the meanings of words which might so plausibly be imputed to one who estimated philology highly for its own sake, and found it so indispensable a weapon in his warfare with the Sophists. **Socrates not represented by Aristophanes as a teacher of Physics.** The basket, too, in which the philosopher is found hanging between heaven and earth, because he wishes to mingle his thoughts with the congenial air, indicates no sort of apprehension on the part of the poet that Socrates looked upon himself as a mere particle of the general life of the world, and desired to be reunited with his native element; but, on the contrary, points to that doctrine of the withdrawment of the spirit from the phantasms of the world, which we have spoken of as forming so capital an article in the moral creed of Socrates, and of which his idea respecting the condition of the soul after death is only the expansion and fulfilment. The maps and geometrical instruments which the old Athenian found in the phrontisterium partly prove that illustrations from subjects with which the education of the Athenian youth made them familiar, were frequently in the philosopher's mouth, and partly seem intended as a joke at the Socratic attempt to reduce morality to a science. The dialogue respecting the cause of thunder is evidently intended far more as a caricature of the philosopher's method of discourse than as an exposition of any of his particular opinions; the chief object

being to leave an impression on the hearer's mind, that Socrates substituted some special demon of his own (which the poet, to keep his metaphors consistent, and to strike an oblique blow at the really physical speculators, calls Δῖνος) for Jupiter. It is necessary to make these remarks in justification of Aristophanes, for if in these parts of his play he has wished to represent Socrates as a naturalist, the whole plot of it is absurd and inappropriate. Why should Strepsiades go to a natural philosopher that he may learn how to cheat his creditors? or how should such a teacher give Pheidippides lessons in beating his father? But the most remarkable feature in the whole play—the contest between the just and the unjust principle—is at once decisive as to the meaning of Aristophanes. The ingenious satirist, with the quick, intuitive discernment which might be expected from an Athenian, and such an Athenian, has perceived the conflict between an uplooking and a downlooking mind to be the most characteristic and important peculiarity of the system he was ridiculing.

18. **The Socrates of the Memorabilia.** The one point in the life of Socrates of which Aristophanes shows himself to have been utterly ignorant, is the object of it; and this is the one point upon which Xenophon is anxious to give us information. This worthy disciple is too anxious to show us Socrates in his dignity, and therefore we miss the hearty humorist who may be seen, though disguised, in the comedian's picture. It was natural that a soldier should be more struck with the positive conclusions at which Socrates arrived upon direct practical matters, than with his method of arriving at them. It was equally natural that the professed apologist should be eager to exhibit his master in the way that would be most intelligible to plain persons, who had been puzzled with reports of his strange argumentations, and who had fancied that some great mischief must lurk in them. But if we bear these facts in mind, and look upon Xenophon as rather the expounder of the Socratic discipline than of the man himself, or of his principles, we shall probably be much more struck with the agreements than with the differences between him and the

other biographers. Homage to an invisible guide and teacher, the distinction between the principle in man that looks upward and that which gravitates to the earth, the recognition of restraints upon the animal nature as means for the enfranchisement of the true man, we shall find in every page of the *Memorabilia*. Standing alone, Xenophon would be unsatisfactory—nay, even misleading. His Socrates would be almost as much a mere bundle of fine qualities or true opinions as his Cyrus. But he is most useful in giving clearness and steadiness to the apprehensions which we derive from other, and, on the whole, better sources. We see clearly in him that Socrates did from first to last keep a moral end before him. We see that he was, to all intents and purposes, a practical man. And this discovery, instead of making it more difficult to interpret the accounts of him which some think inconsistent with it, renders those accounts more intelligible and more consistent with themselves than we should otherwise have thought them.

19. **The Platonic Socrates.** In the Socrates of Plato we find both the Aristophanic and the Xenophontic Socrates—the mere humorist and debater, and the mere moralist—uniting to form the real man. It has often been said that the brilliant imagination of this philosopher created a hero between whom and the actual Socrates there were, perhaps, very few points of resemblance. Certainly it would be a hopeless task to vindicate Plato from the charge of a brilliant, and more than a brilliant, imagination. But two meanings may be given to this word. If it signifies a contempt of reason and probability, the gift, we apprehend, must belong in a much lower degree to Plato than to those who conceive it possible for a person living in the very city wherein Socrates had been for years walking and talking, to have palmed upon his countrymen a false or fantastic image of him. If, on the contrary, by imagination we understand the power of giving to that which would be otherwise a mere shadow, substance and life, it must surely be a most serviceable ally to him who would collect and harmonise the remembrances of an actual character, no less than to him who would call into being one that never existed. Strong affection

may supersede the necessity of such a faculty in a mere biographer; or rather, perhaps, may awaken it. But one who has not only to describe the thoughts, words, and acts of a friend, but to show how they bore upon the state of his country, and how they will bear upon men's speculations and lives for ages to come, has need that no ordinary measure of this faculty should be imparted to him. This is the work of Plato. It was Socrates, as the guide into a particular line and course of thought, whom he proposed to exhibit. But in order to do this, it was absolutely necessary that he should be brought livingly before us; that we should see, not his opinions, but himself; that we should be able to trace the workings of his mind, to see how he acted upon others and they upon him. By any other means Plato would have been unable to give us the true Socrates; and without presenting us the true Socrates he could never have brought out with any clearness and distinctness the different sides of his own philosophy.

SECTION III. THE SOCRATICS. 1. **The Cyrenaic school: Aristippus, Theodorus, Hegesias, Anniceris.** The immediate outgrowths of the Socratic philosophy and discipline were three schools, ordinarily distinguished as the *Cyrenaic, Cynic, and Megaric*. These may be said to be the parents of the most conspicuous theories with which later Greece was occupied. The Cyrenaic doctrine, having mingled with a tributary stream flowing from the physics of Democritus, terminated in Epicurism. The Cynic combined with the Megarian to constitute Stoicism. The Megarian, moreover, contributed one element to the important speculations which had their home at a much later period at Alexandria. It is interesting, therefore, to trace the leading thoughts of each, and to show how they originated with Socrates.

2. **Aristippus, flourished B.C. 366.** Aristippus of Cyrene seems to have been a man of a singularly easy, happy temperament. Pleasures excited him not, pains passed lightly over him. Few men, one would have thought, would have had less sympathy with Socrates, who was a hard fighter, all his life long, with himself and with the world. Never-

theless this earnest thinker had charms even for Aristippus. Socrates said that we are not to yield to circumstances, but are the masters of them; and the light spirit which no circumstance affected or oppressed found an interpretation for the maxim in his own experience. The perturbations and restlessness of the thoughtless, unrecollected man were frequent topics for the pity and warnings of Socrates; could there be a more natural inference than that freedom from annoyance, a dismissal of all careful and turbulent anxieties, is the great end of philosophy? In addition to these, the well-known commonplaces of his master's discourse, Aristippus could no doubt quote authentic fragments of his conversations, in which he had seemed to assume pleasure as the end of life, and to adjust his other maxims to this conclusion. He could tell, we may be sure, of cases in which Socrates, addressing himself to his own lazy, voluptuous habits of mind, and reprehending them, had yet seemed to make it his object to prove, not that they were leading to a wrong end, but that they were ill-chosen means for accomplishing that end. Aristippus, therefore, easily persuaded himself that he had a good title to call himself a Socratic—nay, that he was the best and most complete interpreter of the Socratic views—when he announced the great discovery that pleasure and pain are the ultimate principles of human life; that the pursuit of the one and the avoidance of the other is and must be the business of every man. **His excuse for calling himself a disciple of Socrates.** Whatever honour belongs to the first formal promulgator of a doctrine which has occupied so prominent a place in the philosophy of all ages as this, must in all justice be given to Aristippus. That in which he is distinguished from later and less practical reasoners of the same class is in the distinct and honest assertion that the momentary, concrete gratification, and not the complex notion of happiness, is and must be the object of men's desires and labours. It was easy for Aristippus to adjust some other portions of the Socratic creed to this doctrine. If the choice of what is agreeable, and the rejection of what is disagreeable, be the great virtue of the human soul, how conveniently might the language of Socrates respecting the

connection of virtue with reason and knowledge be pressed into the service of the new sect! Of course it is the intellectual faculty which prefers and discards; and why should not these acts of judgment be the same with those acts of reason, that perception of what is and what is not, to which the master had so constantly referred? And as for the apparent self-restraint and bodily privations of Socrates, these were in no real contradiction to the Cyrenaic theory, which admits, of course, all varieties of taste, and may well permit one man to seek mental pleasure at the expense of corporeal,—another, corporeal at the loss of mental. This school underwent several changes. In the hands of Theodorus pleasure and pain ceased to be real outward objects, and self-seeking and self-glorification became the defined, acknowledged ends of the wise man. In Hegesias the hope of attaining pleasure is exchanged for a mere invention of contrivances to avoid pain. Anniceris seems to have taken off the rough edges of the doctrine, and to have prepared the way for its merging in the more general notions about happiness which were matured by Epicurus.

3. **The Cynic school: Antisthenes and Diogenes. Antisthenes, about B.C. 426-371.** The Cynic school—as it presents itself in the persons of Antisthenes, its founder, and Diogenes, its only very notorious disciple —is the formal opposite of the Cyrenaic. **Diogenes, B.C. 412-323.** Yet they added one to the numerous illustrations of the old maxim, which Mr. Coleridge has observed to be of all maxims the most pregnant for the philosopher and the philosophical historian,—"Extremes meet." Both, in fact, started from the same Socratic maxim; both may probably have alleged the same discourses in vindication of their system. The wise man should not submit to circumstances, but rule them, said Aristippus; his whole business is to arrange his circumstances that they may produce the maximum of pleasure and the minimum of pain. A man is to be superior to his circumstances, said Antisthenes, and therefore he is by all means to overcome his sensibility to pleasure or pain, and endeavour to live solely within himself, cultivating that nobler part of him which is not affected by outward impulses and

impressions. If the first could allege passages from the discourses of Socrates in support of his theory, the latter could more confidently appeal to the whole course of his life, to his habitual endeavours after a victory over mere sensations. The Cynics were, in fact, more disciplinarians than doctrinists. They had a hard dogmatism of their own, but they were much more ambitious to show their own indifference to passing accidents than to discover principles and reasons for such an indifference. Of the two professors of the school, Antisthenes seems to have been the honester, Diogenes the more original. The first was hard and narrow, but apparently sincere; the second was an ostentatious coxcomb, from whose proud and insolent spirit were emitted now and then sparks of what might have been genius if it had been accompanied with simplicity of character and a true purpose.

4. **The Megarian school: Euclides, Eubulides, Diodorus, Stilpo.** Euclides of Megara was unquestionably a more sagacious and subtle man than any of those we have named. He was attracted to Socrates by no hope, either of obtaining a theory respecting life, or of discovering a scheme of self-culture, but by his unrivalled skill in disputation. Had Euclides lived thirty years earlier, he would have been an Eleatic, or else a Sophist. But in nothing is the effect of the Socratic teaching, and the change it had wrought upon the minds of his countrymen, more remarkable than in the moral tone which it imparted to the thoughts of those who would otherwise have been debaters merely. To argue was the taste and the vocation of the Megarian school, but their arguments were all irresistibly drawn to the question, "What is the Good?" In pursuing this inquiry, they were naturally led to those pregnant positions of Socrates respecting evil, as a departure from, and rebellion against, what *is*, which constituted, as we have seen, the ultimate, and, in one way, the most characteristic part of his philosophy. This principle, in fact, disjoined from all the living processes by which Socrates had arrived at it, and by which he sought to make other men conscious of it, and exhibited in naked opposition to all other ideas of virtue or goodness, constituted the Megarian doctrine.

All their labours were employed in disproving the obvious and apparently irresistible opinion, that those things whereof the senses give us information are the most real and certain. We have heard how Zeno defended the doctrine of his friend and master Parmenides by showing the utter instability of sensible presumptions and conclusions. The Megarian school adopted the same method. The difference lay in the characters of the respective periods; the purpose of Zeno was to support the metaphysical idea of Oneness,—of the Megarian, to support the moral idea of absolute, unchangeable Being.

5. **Degeneracy of this school.** The history of this school is melancholy and instructive. Euclides, though the bias of his mind was to disputation, felt the grandeur of the moral lessons which he had learned from Socrates. In Eubulides positive faith was superseded by delight in his own subtlety, and in the confutation of antagonist arguments. The mere forms of the understanding, apart from all vital principles or results, were the objects of admiration and reverence to Diodorus Cronos. Lastly, Stilpo seems to have lost the characteristic idea of the Megarian school altogether, while he carried its characteristic infirmity to its greatest height. Not to establish the existence of objective truth, but to show how an intellect may be formed which shall be most impassive to influences from without, and least disturbed by affections from within, was his problem. One of his pupils was Zeno of Cittium, the author of Stoicism.

SECTION IV. PLATO.

1. **The dream of Socrates.** Once upon a time, the biographer of the Greek philosophers reports,[20] Socrates dreamed a dream. He found an unfledged cygnet upon his knee. In a few moments it became winged and flew away, uttering a very sweet sound. The next day a young man came to him, who was said to reckon Solon among his nearer ancestors, and looked back through him to Codrus and to the god Poseidon. The name of this young man was Plato.

[20]Diog Laert. lib. iii. cap. i. s. 7.

2. **Plato's early life.** Before he came to Socrates, this youth had been a writer of dithyrambics, and songs, and tragedies. He had studied under Ariston, the Argive, a celebrated wrestler. Some say that he won his name from the breadth of his chest, and that he gained a prize for wrestling at the Isthmian games. But, whatever his earlier studies may have been, the day in which he settled on the knees of Socrates was the one which determined the course of his after-life. Nothing that he had learnt before that time was assuredly wasted, but the discourses of Socrates gave his studies a meaning and a direction. From him Plato learnt to understand himself, and thence to understand his predecessors and contemporaries. From him he learnt what it behoved a Greek to seek for, what it behoved a man to seek for, what perils and temptations beset the one and the other if he enters upon the search.

3. **The paucity of facts concerning his life.** So completely has Plato identified himself with his master, that it is difficult to discover with any certainty the events and circumstances of his own life. Less is recorded of him than of many of the most insignificant of Greek sophists. What is recorded rests upon very unsatisfactory evidence. The epistles which are called by his name have long been rejected as spurious, though some fragments of information respecting him may be derived from them. The most interesting of these concern his expeditions into Sicily, his connection with the elder tyrant Dionysius, his experiments for the reformation of the younger, his hope of realising some ideal polity through the influence of a dissolute and worthless tyrant, his direct influence upon the character and fortunes of the stern aristocrat, the conspirator, the despot Dion. Though it may not be possible to arrange the parts of this history, we may perhaps admit that Plato had an intense longing to prove that he was no mere dreamer; that what he believed was capable of realisation. We have not enough facts to point a moral respecting the infirmity of a noble mind in yielding to the hope of great results through such instruments. He may never have entertained any flattering expectations, but may simply, and perhaps reluctantly, have fulfilled a task that was imposed upon him. How far

it was *necessary* that his polity should be tried in Syracuse, or anywhere else, in order that the truth of its principles might be tested, we may understand better when we have considered what that polity was. The question which immediately concerns us is, whether Plato, when he became fledged, flew away into the air, and left his master upon the earth, as some have fancied, and as the old tradition seems to intimate, or whether he was the truest and most faithful expounder of his master's doctrines, the true Socratic, because he was not the founder of a Socratic system, but a living and original investigator.

4. **Relation between the Socratic schools and Plato.** Plato conversed with both Aristippus and Antisthenes. With Euclides he enjoyed a closer intimacy than with either of them, for to Megara he and other disciples fled after the death of Socrates, when it seemed less safe to dwell in Athens. It would be rash to say that the direction of his own thoughts was determined by his observation of these three men, for it is a notion apparently well supported by internal evidence, that his *Phædrus* and his *Laches* were written in the lifetime of his master. Yet it seems impossible to doubt that he had very early noticed the tendency in his different fellow-disciples to adopt certain sentences which fell from their teacher's lips, and from these to form systems and schools, and that he had considered very deeply whether there was no course by which he might escape from the like temptation. If Socrates had compounded his creed out of the different systems then prevalent in Greece, it could surprise no one that the elements thus artificially put together should reassert their independence, and in some new shape, perhaps, be claimed as the property of the minds to which they were severally most adapted. Everything that he had seen of his master made this supposition impossible. Whether he had studied the doctrines of other schools or no, it is evident that every thought which he uttered came fresh and living from himself, or, rather, was the united fruit of his own reflections and of those of the persons with whom he conversed. It was evident that he had been able to minister to other minds, because he knew so well what was passing in his own, and had

sought out every principle as the solution of an actual difficulty. But it is fair to suppose that every philosopher is in some sort an inquirer into the workings of his own mind—nay, that his philosophy, so far as it is sincere, is an exhibition of his own mind. How then was Socrates, who was so remarkably *himself*, preserved from that narrowness and exclusiveness into which Aristippus and Antisthenes, both sincere men in their way, had obviously fallen?

5. **How Socrates escaped narrowness and the temptation to theorise.** Plato could only answer the question by supposing that it was the healthy habit of always connecting his own thoughts with outward circumstances, and with the puzzles of the age in which he was living, which prevented the Socratic doctrines, in their owner's hands, from ever stagnating into a mere theory. The obvious resource for making a philosophy complete and general, and suited to all times, was to strip it of those accidental features which had adapted it so happily to a particular crisis. Plato was convinced, by reflection and experience, that precisely the opposite course was the safe one. The poetry of Homer could be read and enjoyed in the age of Pericles, not because it stood aloof from all temporary and local accidents, but because it was enveloped in them. It was exactly when men were presented to them as they were in an entirely different state of manners, that they were able to realise them as their brethren and their countrymen. Reasons will no doubt occur in multitudes to the reader why the analogy of poetry is inapplicable to philosophy: it is sufficient for our purpose that they did not weigh with Plato. No one knew so well as he—no one felt so strongly—the essential difference between poetry and philosophy; he even was betrayed into exaggerations in his attempt practically to assert it. But he was convinced that it did not consist in this, that the poet obtains immortality for thoughts which he utters by adapting himself to the feelings of the age in which he lives, and the philosopher by divesting himself of them all. He thought he could see that the abandonment of all living and practical sympathies, the attempt to divorce himself from human interests, gives to the philosopher that

narrow and bounded character from which he hopes by these means to deliver himself. If, then, Grecian wisdom was not to retrograde from the point to which Socrates had brought it, or if it was ever to become useful in other countries and periods, Plato concluded that it must not resolve itself into speculations or declamations about this or that scheme of life, this or that principle of action or pursuit, but must be content to exhibit itself in the conversations of actual men, not of some imaginary day, but of that day, talking about the matters of which they did talk when they met in the streets or at their feasts. He would not take the least pains to forget the people among whom he was living, or the transactions that were occupying them, or adopt any more universal mode of thought and speech than that which was common among them.

6. **Why Plato wrote Dialogues.** The *Dialogue* of Plato is not then, as some have represented it, an artistical invention, in which the philosopher sacrificed his severe judgment to his imagination, or to a desire of reputation for dramatic skill with his contemporaries or with posterity, or to the ambition of presenting truths in an agreeable form. It is evident that he regarded it as a necessary mean for the elucidation of the truths with which he believed himself to be possessed; and that he is not at all more anxious to impress any one principle upon his readers than this, that in the Dialogue, rightly used, we have the induction to all principles. It is strange, indeed, that Plato should be accused of sacrificing the interest of his disciples to a selfish desire of fame, by that method which has the effect of leading them onwards step by step in self-inquiry; or that he should be supposed to have used this as a way of conciliating their favour, when, in fact, it has caused more conscious vexation and irritation to every superficial talker of that day, than any which his genius could have devised. A mere artist endeavours to carry us at once into noble contemplations, which make us conscious of our own greatness and dignity. It is Plato's desire that we should feel our own way into these contemplations, ascending into them through rugged and thorny paths, discovering how many

frivolous difficulties suggest themselves to us, which must be cleared away before we can see anything as it is. **Character of his Dialogues.** His Dialogues are literally an *education*, explaining to us how we are to deal with our own minds, how far we are to humour them, how far we are to resist them; how they are to entertain the glimpses of light which sometimes fall upon them; how they are to make their way through the complications and darkness in which they so often feel themselves lost. Nowhere but in the sacred oracles do we find an author so cognisant of his own perplexities, so little anxious to hide them from us; nay, so anxious to awaken us to the consciousness of them, in order that we may be delivered from them. Herein lies the art of Plato. Most consummate art it is, we admit; superior in the depth of insight which must have led to it, and in the influence which it exerts, to that which is displayed in almost any human composition. Still it is not art, in the sense commonly given to that word; it has no independent purpose of pleasing. It does not work underground, leaving the ordinary man to feel its effects simply, and the thoughtful man to judge of its character by its effects. On the contrary, it anxiously draws your attention to its own methods and contrivances; that you should enter into them, and understand all the springs and valves that are at work, is as much the writer's ambition, as that you should accept any one of the final results. Indeed, he does not acknowledge the results as yours, till in the region of your own inner being you have gone through the processes which lead to them.

7. **A chain gradually unwinding itself.** Plato above all men must be studied in Plato. A hearty and sympathising acquaintance with one Dialogue will do more to initiate a student into what is blunderingly called his system, than the reports of all philosophical critics and historians. There you find no digests of doctrine, no collections of ready-manufactured notions, to be adopted and carried away. Every one is alive and at work. The actors too are not, as in our best Dialogues—in those of Berkeley, for instance—personages with significant names; they are real Phedruses, Gorgiases, and Protagorases, discoursing, in a

place which is ascertained to us by an accurate and vivid description, about some passing question in the folds of which are found to be contained the deepest and highest principles of our being. These are drawn forth, not violently by any predetermination that such and such facts shall give forth such and such a moral, but by the ordinary accidents of conversation, amidst explanations and contradictions, the confusion of disciples, the anger of doctors, clumsy attempts at reconciliation by good-natured bystanders. The dialogue is often a *Siris*. Like Berkeley's admirable treatise, it may be bound here on earth to no worthier a stake than the properties and virtues of tar-water. Oftentimes the starting-point may be one far less worthy than this, the lying speech of some rhetorician in support of some mischievous and vulgar paradox. Yet the chain is unwound with a skill of which our modest countryman would have cheerfully confessed that his was but a feeble copy, till its highest link is felt to be about the throne of Him whose name it was the privilege of Berkeley to utter, the honesty of Plato to declare unutterable.

8. **His supposed Eclecticism.** Thus far we have described Plato as reasserting the entire principle of Socrates against those who had dismembered it. But a notion has gone forth, and has received support from an able and eloquent French commentator of our day, that Plato was an Eclectic; in other words, that his object on every occasion was to set in opposition two imperfect principles, and either, by merely showing their inadequacy, to suggest the hint, or, by clear exposition, to develope the form, of a third idea which should include them both. This is the most plausible shape which the theory has taken. Another and common way in which it is stated is, that Plato framed to himself the notion of a philosophy which, taking its start from the doctrine of Socrates, should adopt into itself all the other Greek philosophies, whether metaphysical or moral, and that accordingly we do find in him not only an attempt to harmonise the doctrines of the schools which took their name from Socrates, but also of those which preceded him. In both these statements there is, as it seems to us, much truth: yet

truth put into a form which is exceedingly likely to mislead a reader, and utterly to pervert his notions respecting the real object of the Greek teacher. We suspect that, in considering these theories, we may both arrive at a clearer apprehension of Plato's meaning, and gain some light which will profit us in all our future inquiries.

9. **Moral distinction the primary purpose of Plato.** One main object of Plato in using the dialogue was, that he might discover the latent meaning of words, and might lead the inquirer to recognise this meaning as that which had been implied in them from their origin, and had been floating in the minds of those who had given them quite a different signification. Hereby he was carrying out the method which Socrates, as we have seen, had been throughout his life maturing, and to which we have traced the success of all his experiments in moral science. For this practice was grounded upon a faith which is ripened day by day into certainty, that there is in every man that which apprehends and recognises truth; that the truth is continually near him; and again, that his view of it is continually interrupted and distorted by the phantoms which are presented to his senses. In drawing forth this truth out of the mind of the student, and teaching him to realise it as his own, consisted, as Plato believed, the great duty of the Socratic teacher; to this all his labours were to be bent; so far as he did this work faithfully, he might hope to be rewarded with greater illumination. Never, however, was it to be forgotten that the discipline was a moral as well as an intellectual one, nay, that it was primarily and essentially moral; that he must resist the attractions and bribery of sense in order to escape her impositions. Now the process we have described leads to a result which often looks like the result of *Eclecticism*. An opinion seems to be rejected as false, an opinion that is set in opposition to it is shown also to be unsatisfactory, and then at last a truth is seen, or suspected to be hidden somewhere, which both alike had been aiming ineffectually to reach. The reader of Plato's Dialogues will be encountered again and again with instances of this sort. But let him beware of hurrying to the conclusion, that the reconcilement of these

opinions, or the construction of another opinion which shall be more comprehensive than both, was the aim of the teacher. If he will quietly accompany him along the road, he will find that in such conversations as these, *distinction* is much more his object than accommodation. To distinguish between those images which the mind shapes for itself out of the objects of sense when it is sense-ridden and sense-possessed, and that sound meaning and reality which it is capable of perceiving when it has sought to purge itself of its natural and habitual delusions —to teach it the art of rejecting as well as choosing, and to put it in the posture for either one act or the other; this is the intention of Plato. It may be that he has done more to introduce harmony and unity into moral speculations than any philosopher who ever lived; we fully believe that he has. But he begins with cultivating in us the habit of moral distinction. He begins with leading us to feel that truth and falsehood are radical ultimate contradictions which cannot be accounted for or resolved into any others. To see that which is, as it verily is, this is the highest privilege of the best and wisest man; to see things as they are not, confused, sensualised, corrupted, this is the misery and curse of the thoughtless, slavish victim of inclination. To open that inward eye by which the reality of things is discerned in other men, is the vocation and privilege of him who has himself served an apprenticeship to truth, and feels that he is her servant.

10. **Purely Socratic Dialogues.** Such, we conceive, is the object of one large class of the Platonic Dialogues, which are the induction or vestibule to the rest. In these Plato is distinctly and emphatically Socratic. They must, indeed, differ in an important respect from the actual conversations of Socrates, in that the end must always have been more present to the mind of the writer, than it could have been to that of the speaker. In Socrates the strongest feeling seems to have been, "I am certain there is something which is not appearance or phantasy, which man did not shape out for himself, but which will remain when all phantasies have disappeared, which is, and which I must recognise if I would be anything but a phantom or shadow myself." This was the

conclusion of a practical working mind. By earnest meditation upon this conclusion, Plato came to feel that if there is an unseen reality in all things, a truth, a substance in things, of which the eye sees only the shape and colour, there must be a truth and substance which has none of those sensible adjuncts, which is in *itself*, and the beholding of which is the function and highest attainment of the purified spirit. Now the outward shell of this opinion so closely resembles the doctrine of Euclides that we cannot wonder that some critics, in their desire to reduce the philosophy of Plato into fragments, should have pronounced several of the earlier Dialogues to be not in fact his, but productions of the Megarian school. All in which they found this substance, this τὸ ὄν, put forward as the end of human investigations, they naturally connected with a system which had the assertion that Good and Being are identical for its prominent characteristic. Those who agree with us in the view we have taken will at once see the plausibility of the critic's notion, and its utter untenableness. **These Dialogues not Megarian.** In no part of Plato's works is the distinction between him and the Megarians so conspicuous as in this where he is asserting their own principle. For by adhering closely to the method of Socrates, by making his Dialogues—not the declaration of a truth, but a mental exercise to arrive at it, he has not only divested the doctrine of all its dryness and prickliness, but he has shown how it is connected with those other more obvious notions to which the Megarian set it in rude opposition. Pleasure is not the good, they said; self-denial is not the good; Being is the good. Yes, said Plato, but there is a Being in pleasure, there is a reality in it as well as a falsehood in it. Whatever man has found an expression for in language, whatever man has pursued as an object in life, there is in *that* a truth, a substance, which may be distinguished from the lying phantom that surrounds and counterfeits it. **Opinions reconciled.** And so far as a man does this, so far does he put himself into the right condition of mind for arriving ultimately at the perception of *that* Truth, *that* Being which is encompassed with no accidents. But then, in order to attain or to cultivate this state of mind,

there must be a discipline, a curbing, and contradiction of the lower nature, and therefore this too is a good.

11. **Second class of Dialogues** Without, then, any purpose of combining opinions, nay, while resolutely maintaining boundaries, and using a most subtle test for the discrimination of the true from the apparent, Plato had actually reduced the three doctrines which assumed the name of Socratic into a certain relation and harmony. It now became him to consider how far this same doctrine and method might be applied to the earlier philosophers of Greece; how far his master had been anticipated by Xenophanes, Heraclitus, Parmenides, or Pythagoras; how far he had thrown back a light upon them which might make their speculations more intelligible and consistent with each other. Here commences, in our judgment, the second class of the Platonic Dialogues, that in which the link between Moral and Metaphysical Philosophy, between the doctrine of Being which Socrates had asserted, and the question respecting Unity, which had been so great an occupation of the Greek mind, is illustrated and developed.

12. Our readers will not have forgotten that the leader of the Eleatic school, Xenophanes, was in one respect distinguished from his successors. His language at first sight seems remarkably to accord with that of Socrates. That which he supposed to be the true object of man's contemplation was God, or "The Being." Yet, while doing justice to the course of thought by which he arrived at this conclusion, we were obliged to admit that he was essentially a destructive thinker; that he reduced his Being to a mere negation of human qualities and attributes; and that Parmenides found a happier expression for the results of his inquiries when he said that they simply led to the affirmation of Oneness. **Difference between Xenophanes and Socrates** How, then, did the doctrine of Socrates differ from that of Xenophanes? It was separated from it by a whole heaven. The Being of Xenophanes was altogether exclusive; the Being of Socrates was altogether inclusive. If the language of men contained such words as "just," "merciful," "good," if it attributed these names to certain acts, then, whether

these words had been understood or no, whether they had been rightly applied or no, there was a reality corresponding to them, there was a "justice," a "mercy," a "goodness," and all these centred and united themselves in the Being. No Sophist could embarrass him with the question, "Seeing man also uses the words 'unjust,' 'unmerciful,' 'bad,' why should not these also have their appropriate archetypes? and why may not these, as much as the others, dwell in that permanent and all-containing substance?" For it was assumed in the very hypothesis that all these are departures from that which is, that they are intrinsically falsehoods. **Ideas.** Now, it was by reflection upon this difference, so delicate yet so vital, so strikingly marking the man who was fighting against all popular opinions and faith from the man who was finding out substance and life in all, that Plato seems to have gained his first insight into that doctrine of Ideas which constitutes the most native and peculiar portion of his philosophy, that which may not wrongly be called its purely Platonic portion. We are perfectly willing to admit the assertion which the other disciples of Socrates seem to have made with no little vehemence, and which Aristotle has adopted from them, that no such principle as this was enunciated by Socrates in any of his discourses. Yet we believe as undoubtedly, that by his steady adoption of the Socratic method, Plato arrived at this principle, and that they failed in apprehending it only because they neglected that method. In endeavouring to make this remark clear, we shall also perhaps be able to give our readers such insight as a treatise like this may hope to give into the subject itself.

13. **Practical difficulty in the Socratic doctrine.** The Greek word for *appearance* and for *opinion* is the same. An opinion is that which *seems* to each man. Now the whole of the education and discipline of Socrates had been to lead his disciples away from appearances to realities. **Opinion and knowledge.** And just so far as he did this he felt that he was leading them from Opinions to Knowledge. His experiments upon others convinced him, his own heart told him, that there is in us a thirst after knowledge, that with less than knowledge we cannot be

satisfied. These at least are Socratic assertions; no one pretends that they were palmed upon him by Plato. But how could this be? The essence, the being of a thing, or of a person, seems shut up in that thing or person. I may acknowledge that it is there, but how can it ever come within the region of my perceptions? Must it not be, after all, some shape, or image, or phantom of this thing which I take account of, and not the very thing itself? Supposing this were admitted, the Socratic philosophy falls to the ground. And what falls with it? Not a scheme or a system, but the faith that truth is anyhow cognisable by man, the faith that he is not the necessary dupe of shadows and impostures; the fact that he is a moral being. It was not a doubtful question whether these results would follow from such a determination as this; they had followed; the practice and education of Socrates had been nothing less or more than a deliverance from them. The Sophists had turned the world into a shadow world, in which they could safely practise their juggleries. It was the great assertion that something is, and that only what is may be known, which had discomfited them, and made a mock of their subtleties. Yet unless this great practical puzzle could in some manner be resolved, the conclusions of Socrates, however ascertained to be sound by the reason and moral feeling of every one who fairly worked them out, would be liable to continual assaults on the side of the understanding. On this point, too, Plato was not left to his own conjectures. The Sophists had stolen their armour from the real, the honest philosophers of Greece. *They* had not dared to grapple with this difficulty, and the proofs which they had left of its existence in their speculations had been eagerly laid hold of by those who knew so well how to suck the poison out of every flower.

14. **Heracleitans and Eleatics.** We have intimated that a faithful and affectionate study of the strange, earnest thoughts which occupied Heraclitus might be profitable to any man. But his sayings concerning the endless vicissitude of things, and the falsehood of all human conjectures, made far more impression upon the Greek mind than his deeper thoughts respecting the universal light in man, and the power

he possesses of conversing with that which is universal. These latter sentiments had only connected themselves with the vague pantheistic notions which were now gaining ascendancy (notions probably very far indeed from the mind of Heraclitus himself, who thought it the ultimate wisdom to know the name of Jupiter); the former, in the hands of Protagoras, had become a system which excluded all feeling of constancy and permanence or order. One man has one notion of the things which he beholds or meditates upon; another man another. Any one of these notions may be as right as another; and that we cannot have more than such notions, that we cannot arrive any more nearly to the truth of things, is a proposition not so much to be proved as to be taken for granted. Meantime the Eleatic "fixedness," which was the formal opposite of the Heracleitan "flux," served the purpose of the deceiver equally well. To be able to deny the fact of plurality, and so embarrass the minds of men respecting the objects of their worship, was just as convenient a line of policy as to upset their faith in their own convictions. Such observation might have led another man to despair of all inquiries; they only gave Plato a stronger moral interest in prosecuting those upon which he had entered.

15. All the notions, you say, which the mind forms respecting that which the bodily eye sees, or that which its own inward eye sees, are confused, fluctuating, contradictory. My notion of the flower is not the very flower; my notion of what is just is not the very just. Most true, Heraclitus; most true, Protagoras. But these notions are indexes, guiding-posts to that which is not false, or confused, or contradictory. This notion of the flower and of justice proves that there is a very flower—a very justice. Again, the mind is capable of beholding the Being, the One. **Notions and ideas.** But of this Being, of this One, all the notions, imaginations, premonitions of the sensual understanding offer most miserable and counterfeit resemblances. True, Xenophanes and Parmenides; yet there is that in this Being, this One, which does and must answer to these notions; that which they are trying, however vainly, however awkwardly, to express. If, then, we connect the results

of these inquiries, which start from such opposite points, what follows? There are forms permanent and unchangeable in which that which is, manifests itself as it is; in which we behold it as it is. Are these forms, then, in the beholder, or in that which he beholds? We answer, the region of pure Being, that in which the inner mind dwells, may be (one might expect that it would be) under some corresponding law to that of sensible phenomena. At all events there could be no *à priori* presumption against the doctrine that as a sound cannot, by the very nature of language and of things, be referred only to that whence it proceeds, but likewise involves the supposition of an ear which receives it, so there may be such a presentation of that which actually is, of the substance or essence of each thing, as can neither be understood merely in reference to that thing, nor merely in reference to that whereunto it is made, but must by its nature appertain one and the same moment to both. But then this presentation cannot by its very nature be fluctuating or variable; it must be permanent and substantial, or it cannot make known that which is permanent and substantial; it must be the very opposite to that which is its parallel in the world of sense. **Ideas substantial.** Are we to say of such ideas or forms that they are eternal as well as substantial? To answer "Yes," would perhaps startle no one, if these ideas or forms had merely reference to Justice, Goodness, or even Beauty. But when we speak of the actual flower and tree that we behold as having a primary form or idea, is there not something dangerous in a doctrine which would represent such forms as eternal? The reply is, that this statement would do but very partial justice to Plato. For if in the minutest thing he believes that there is a reality, and therefore in some sense an archetypal form or idea, yet he believes also, just as firmly, that every idea has its ground and termination in one higher than itself, and that there is a supreme idea, the foundation and consummation of all these, even the idea of the absolute and perfect Being, in whose mind they all dwelt, and in whose eternity alone they can be thought or dreamed of as eternal.

16. This remark may also relieve the doctrine of another objection. These ideas, being by their very nature substantial, must be substantially in him who perceives them. **Ideas–how in us.** It is only seeking to remove the difficulty a step further from us, and falling into a contradiction and absurdity in the attempt, to suppose that there are indeed forms or ideas of things, but that we have only notions or conceptions of these ideas. The idea itself must be considered as with us and in us; the notion which we form about that whereof it is the idea, when we begin to use our senses, to compare and to reflect, must not be identified with the idea, but is a witness and proof of its presence, and that we are feeling after it; to realise or to possess the idea is to have the science or the knowledge of the thing. But then this assertion, that these ideas are substantially with us, must be taken in connection with what has been said before, and it will be seen at once that, instead of affirming the ground and root of our knowledge to be in ourselves, this is the very falsehood which Plato was seeking to overturn. These ideas are the witnesses in our inmost being that there is something beyond us and above us; when we enter into the idea of anything we abdicate our own pretensions to be authors or creators, we become mere acknowledgers of that which is. And to enter into that deepest and ultimate idea, which is the ground of our being, must be in the deepest sense an abdication of our own notions and imaginations, an act of submission to, and reception of, the Truth.

17. **Plato no theorist.** Here, then, we find Plato most consistently carrying out the principle which it had been the vocation of his master from first to last to assert. Here we see how perfectly harmonious the Socratic doctrine, that knowledge is the end of life, is with that humility and confession of ignorance which are at the root of all the Socratic discipline and culture. Here we see the harmony between knowledge and being; how necessarily a certain state of character and affections is presupposed in every act of knowledge. Here, lastly, we see how truly Plato reconciled those two forms of philosophy, one of which had dealt with the objects of our knowledge, one with our acts

of perception—how truly he discovered a truth, one side of which each had dimly perceived, yet how little this was the result of any project for harmonising opposite theories,—how much rather it was the effect of resolutely pursuing a principle which supersedes theories altogether, and so far as it is faithfully acted upon, delivers us from our bondage to them. Not to frame a comprehensive system which shall include nature and society, man and God, as its different elements, or in its different compartments, and which therefore necessarily leads the system-builder to consider himself above them all, but to demonstrate the utter impossibility of such a system, to cut up the notion and dream of it by the roots, this is the work and the glory of Plato. He who is attempting the construction of such a Babel must understand not merely that he will not find the model of it in Plato, but that before he advances one step he must undo everything that Plato has done, must disprove all his conclusions, and prove the falsehood of the process by which he has arrived at them. Those commentators who can find in Plato nothing but the most exquisite ridicule of all the system-makers in his own and in past days have, it is true, understood him imperfectly. That ridicule would not be so delightful and satisfying as it is, so thoroughly genial and consolatory to every earnest student, if he did not feel that it was the handmaid of the most severe demonstration, that it was only another aspect of the most generous and noble sympathy with everything that is honest and humble, practical and true. The kind and experienced teacher smiles at our useless waste of time in attempting to build, but it is that he may urge us to the more profitable occupation of seeking after the foundation of that which is built. The first is the employment of those who desire to be gods, the second of those who believe that the highest blessing of which man is capable is to know God.

18. **His supposed classification.** But if it be true that Plato is almost free from that propensity for theories which has beset most philosophers, nay, that this principle, consistently followed out, is positively incompatible with them, how is it that he is so commonly

supposed to have mapped out the domain of human knowledge into the three provinces of Dialectics, Ethics, and Physics? In considering this question we shall perhaps discover the purpose of a third class of his Dialogues, and be able, moreover, to contemplate his so-called Eclecticism under yet another aspect.

19. The critics who have discovered this classification in Plato evidently cannot mean that there is one portion of the Dialogues which does, and one portion which does not, treat of dialectics. They must be aware that every dialogue exhibits the dialectic method of Plato, that every one is making with more or less success some new trial or application of it. Neither, we think, can they pretend, without doing violence to the purpose and language of their author, that these dialectical dialogues are not also ethical. **His dialectics and ethics inseparable** Not only is a moral purpose conspicuous throughout them, but, as we have said before, the development of the method by which the truth is perceived and ascertained is inseparably interwoven with a moral culture. The disengagement of the mind from sensible impressions and sensible fascinations is the joint effect of restraint upon inclination and of the art by which the apparent is distinguished from the real. Without the feeling of this connection and intertwining of the ethical with the intellectual discipline, the most beautiful Dialogues are unintelligible; nay, the desire to separate that which Plato has believed inseparable, is perhaps the main cause of the narrow and partial views which have prevailed as to the object and construction of his works.

20. **The Phædrus.** Look, for instance, at the *Phædrus*. Lysias had proposed a certain thesis respecting Love, and had defended it with abundance of ingenuity in studiously-balanced sentences, the aptest clothing for a rhetorical purpose and a rhetorical method. Socrates shows, first, how easy it is to meet his arguments with a counter series as ingenious and as artificially expressed. Then he discovers the radical defect of both sets of arguments, that they were dealing with a word the meaning of which had not been ascertained. In the attempt to find what this word signifies, to separate the true from the apparent

meanings of it, he unveils the principles of his dialectics. But there is combined with this exposition the most distinct declaration and warning, (assuming a form which, however unfit for us, was appropriate to the evil condition of Greek society, and proves the purity of the writer who, in the midst of such society, could maintain so elevated a standard,) that only by restraining the grosser appetites can we be in a state for apprehending the true nature of Love. In the conclusion of the Dialogue, the two principles are harmonised in a splendid mythus, wherein the disciple is taught that only he who governs himself, who has his lower nature in subjection, can be fit for the highest exercise of his faculties, for the contemplation of that which verily and indeed is. We cannot reduce this Dialogue under any of the partial names and descriptions that have been given of it. We cannot consider it a mere attack upon the rhetoricians, or a mere development of the Socratic method for testing the meaning of words. Neither does it seem to us a treatise on pure love, or on the idea of beauty. All these subjects may be hinted at, and even most valuably illustrated. But the reader of the *Phædrus* must be contented to feel how they sustain each other, and to let them form themselves into a whole in his mind, without being eager to give the absolute supremacy to any one of them. He will then find, we believe, that this Dialogue is one of the most conspicuous, we might say the type dialogue, of that class which teaches us how to make substance or being the end of our inquiries and meditations; but he certainly will not be able to discover whether it is more ethical or dialectical.

21. **The Gorgias.** The *Gorgias* is another almost equally striking instance of the same kind. Formal critics have determined that this too shall be merely an attack upon rhetoric, or else that it shall have the merely moral object of explaining the nature and purpose of punishment. It must strike a person, who only hears of this discussion, that a work which could suggest such opposite interpretations must be most incoherent and rhapsodical. The more he reads it the more he will be struck with the sequency of its thoughts, with the natural

and easy manner in which one grows out of another. And he will find, we believe, upon reflection, that as the intellectual purpose of the Sophist was inseparably combined with the moral, as the pursuit of political power for an end was inseparably united to the cultivation of a treacherous art as the means, so it was impossible to introduce a sounder intellectual discipline among the youth of Athens, without leading them at the same time to perceive that the true purpose of their lives was not the acquisition of dominion, or the escape from suffering and punishment, but the attainment, even through suffering, punishment, and disgrace, of a deliverance from the moral evil which obstructed their search after truth, and made power a curse to them. Here, again, he distinguishes the true from the apparent, not by the help of ethics without dialectics, or of dialectics without ethics, but of both conjointly.

22. How the case stands in reference to physics we shall have to explain shortly. But thus much we may affirm now, that whensoever his opponents have engaged in physical speculations, Plato is not unwilling in those Dialogues, which have most distinctly a moral purpose, to cope with them, and that he never in such wise divides these two provinces as to suggest the thought that the principles by which either is governed may not most usefully or injuriously affect the other. **The Theætetus.** Of this fact we could easily convince our readers, if we could afford space for an analysis of the *Theætetus*. But we must do no more than commend that exquisite specimen of Platonic wisdom to their careful study, and proceed to show how the notion that Plato established a formal division in the subjects of human thought may have originated, and may be reconciled with our belief in his hatred of theories and consistency of purpose.

23. **Third class of dialogues.** We have often observed that the founders of the different schools in Greece had been led by the circumstances of their position, or by the peculiar tendencies of their own minds, to choose for themselves a distinct sphere of observation. It was no forethought or wish to be a natural philosopher that drew

Thales into his course of speculation. **Search after unity.** It was merely that the outward facts submitted to his senses were those which struck him as the most likely to contain the solution of the problem which he found within. In like manner, Pythagoras was led by a series of scarcely known or acknowledged influences gradually to desert the maxims of his native soil, and to make Society, or the State, the subject of his inquiries. To these we know he added a scheme of nature which he tried to reduce under the same law as the facts which related to the order and government of men. Parmenides and Zeno again entered into their purely metaphysical region, not from any resolution of choosing one province of thought more than another, but merely by reflecting upon the two preceding systems, and finding that they were inadequate. They too sought to make their own system universal, and to make the scheme of the political world and of nature in some sense dependent on the laws which concern the region of pure mind. Plato then found the fact already established for him, that there actually are these three lines in which the thoughts of men, when they are strongly exercised, naturally run. He had not to create any artificial distinctions; the natural distinctions had been discovered by the experience of his predecessors. What remained for him? **Unity in nature, in society, in knowledge.** To follow them into each of these regions, to inquire how far any of them had discovered the unity of which he was in search, to consider whether what they had looked for *in* nature, *in* society, *in* the mind of man, may not be implied indeed in each of these, yet have its foundations beneath them all. This, we believe, was the final and consummate effort of the Platonic philosophy. As there is a set of Dialogues which seem to us designed merely to unfold the Socratic doctrine of Being, another expressly intended to develope the principle of Ideas, as necessary to the support of the former, and as solving a problem which the Heracleitans and Eleatics had shown to exist, so we believe there is a third in which Plato reflects upon his master's discoveries and his own, and exhibits them in direct application to the three subjects of nature, of society, and

of knowledge. Every one will recognise in the *Timæus* an attempt to discover a unity for the external universe; in the *Republic*, an attempt to discover the meaning of political unity. And, therefore, without contradicting our previous assertion that, in all his Dialogues, Plato is evolving a dialectical method, we may also admit that there are some in which he proposes to himself the direct and formal aim of showing how this method is a guide to the true unity in *knowledge*. **Why Plato reverses this order.** Nor must it be forgotten that Plato was enabled by his position as a reviewer of past systems, was *obliged* by his position as an expounder of Socrates, to reverse the order which we have followed in tracing the rise of these schools historically. He not only might begin with those principles which the Eleatics had expounded, and descend to the natural speculations of the Ionians, but he could not follow any other course if he was to make the Socratic doctrine of Being, and the Socratic method of distinguishing the real from the fantastic, his guiding stars through the whole journey. Here, then, we must begin our notice of his experiments in search of unity. We are eager to introduce our readers to that which we consider the crowning labour of his life, the end at which he was obscurely aiming through the whole of it—his polity; but we must first refer to his discussions respecting the conditions and meaning of SCIENCE. A few words will then be sufficient for the less important, though by no means uninteresting, question—how far his views respecting the PHYSICAL WORLD were in conformity or disagreement with his other principles.

24. **Unity in science.** There was one great and obvious difference between the position of the Parmenideans and that of the Pythagoreans or Ionians. No one could doubt that they had a real subject for their inquiries, let those inquiries be as idle as they might. But the Eleatic had to produce both the dream and the interpretation; to maintain that there was a region of pure mind, as well as to show what was transacted there. Plato, therefore, had also two tasks. He had to show that their assumption was sound, before he ventured to inquire how far it was able to carry them. For this purpose he adopted

a method which has greatly puzzled many of his readers. **The Parmenides.** In the Dialogue entitled *Parmenides* he introduces Socrates, full of youthful vivacity, broaching the doctrine of ideas in opposition to the antiplurality doctrine of Parmenides and Zeno. The aged philosopher treats his antagonist with most graceful courtesy, allows him to put forth one explanation after another of his scheme, shows him that all are untenable, then encourages him to hope that, after a more severe philosophical training, he will understand himself better, and finally proceeds to establish his own doctrine of the One in a series of annihilating propositions, wherein he shows that it must exist, and that it cannot exist under any conditions or limitations with which the understanding is acquainted. Probably no one but Plato ever ventured upon such an experiment as this—the experiment, we mean, of showing that his own principle was untenable except so far as it is connected with and grounded upon the principle of another philosopher who did not recognise it. But the Dialogue of the *Parmenides* does not merely serve the purpose of establishing the truth that the mind witnesses of something which is not under sensible laws, but it also prepares us to feel the want which the Eleatic doctrine could not satisfy. A conviction of the purely negative character of the method grows upon us as we read, and while we assent to its conclusions we feel an increasing moral interest in seeking for some higher point of view from which we may contemplate it, and that imperfect substitute which the young Socrates had proposed for it. **The Sophist.** In the *Sophist* this wish is to a great degree realised. There we have an Eleatic stranger discussing with the young Theætetus the meaning of the word Sophist, and the qualities of the animal which it denoted, how far it belongs to the same genus with the Philosopher, or how they are distinguished. In the course of this dialogue we arrive at the conclusion that the great object of the Sophist is to set up a universal science. By universal science he means merely a capacity of talking upon all manner of subjects, of framing a set of images of that which is, and passing these off for substances and realities. But here a difficulty arises: Parmenides, whose opinions the

Eleatic stranger might be supposed to favour, has told us that we are not to inquire respecting that which is not; that the conception is in fact an impossible one. **The Sophist and Philosopher.** How then will our definition of the Sophist practically avail us? How shall we be able ever to pursue him on to that ground whereunto we have had the clearest evidence that he has betaken himself? The Eleatic stranger finds himself obliged then, much as he fears the guilt of parricide, to inquire into the soundness of this doctrine of his honoured countryman and teacher. By degrees the fallacy unveils itself. We find that in refusing to recognise the notion of not-being, he was in fact shutting his eyes to something which is. The contradiction may appear startling, but we do not escape it by refusing to look it in the face. We have actually stumbled upon an instance in which that which is adverse to reality must be treated to all intents and purposes as real. And when we look a little further into the use of language, we see more and more the impossibility of giving that definite rigid exclusiveness to the word or notion of Being which it must bear in the system of Parmenides. We find that we cannot by any means identify our notion of sameness or of difference with our notion of Being. And yet the notion of Being enters into both of these; there *is* a sameness and a difference between things. Whither does all this lead? **The dialectical science.** It leads to the conclusion which, as is so constantly the case in Plato, is carried more directly home to our understanding than it is expressed in words, that Parmenides is after all dwelling in a region of words. For all that he seems to have sounded the very inmost depth of thought, and though he has actually discovered that there are depths which words do not reach, yet he himself is at last only setting up one notion against another notion. It is not Being, but the notion of Being which he has been investigating, and which he has necessarily investigated most imperfectly. And now, then, the vision of a new kind of science wholly unlike that of the Sophist, yet in one sense as universal as his, wholly different from that exclusive dogmatic national philosophy of Parmenides, yet, like his, having unity for its condition and ultimate

ground, opens upon us. This is the science of dialectics, the science expressly appertaining to the philosopher. It is that which rejects no form of thought or language as unfit for its investigation, but searches out the idea of each, and ascertains what notions and phantasms are inconsistent with it, and attach themselves to it, and have sought to make themselves part of it. Being it looks upon as the object of its search, but Being connected with life, connected with power, not a dry abstract notion, the mere negation of other notions. This must be the science of sciences; not because it reduces all forms of thought to one, or because it includes all existing sciences, but because it discovers in all forms of thought an ultimate ground of unity beneath them all, because it assigns to each science its specific object, and its relation to every other.

25. **Dialectical science the science: what it must do.** Every science is seeking after a foundation. It rests upon the faith that there is a law for the facts which it inquires into; what that law is, is the subject of its inquiry. *The* science should explain to us how the mind proceeds in the search after these laws through whatever set of facts we may be looking for them. But its own specific object is the deep ground of all laws, the Being from whom they derive their life and potency. This dialectics then is the search after premises. Parmenides and Zeno had gone no higher than to the notion of a Logic which, taking the premises of the mind for granted, should affirm what conclusions will legitimately and necessarily flow from them. This was in fact their universal science, as Rhetoric was that of the Sophist. The first overthrew all facts, setting up a law in the mind in opposition to them. The second confounded law and fact, using certain laws of the mind to overturn admitted facts, or the contradictions of facts to disprove the existence of law. The principle of seeking for laws in and through facts is the principle by which Socrates upheld the faith and morality of men against the invasions of *Rhetoric*, and by which Plato upheld the possibility of science against the invasions of *Logic*. Here is that inductive science which two thousand years after had to maintain the

same battle against the same enemies, when it for the first time clearly and efficiently asserted itself as the only guide to a knowledge of the physical world. The Socratic doctrine of Being makes us feel that it is necessary. The Platonic doctrine of Ideas makes us understand that it is possible. The demand in the mind for a Unity which shall be not negative, but positive, not the amalgamation of parts, but that which precedes all distinction into parts, and remains unaffected by it; this makes us confident that it is real.

26. **Dialectics and politics connected: how?** The connection between the Platonic dialectics and the Platonic politics is indicated by several passages in the Dialogues, which are intended to unfold the character of each. Thus in the *Sophist* the Eleatic stranger proposes to examine the meaning of three words, *Sophist, Philosopher, Politician*. The last is reserved for a separate discussion, and actually forms the subject of one dialogue. But it is obvious that Plato intended us to feel how strong was the relation between the three persons denoted by the words, and how impossible it would be to investigate the last without a previous knowledge of the other two. The young Athenian, under the teaching of the Sophist, began more and more to feel that the rhetorician and the statesman were convertible terms, that the efficient and practical ruler of men was the efficient master of words. On the other hand, it is obvious that the logic of Parmenides and Zeno must have made politics a mere set of abstract propositions, to which an earnest and enthusiastic man might impart a practical meaning and life, but which would lose all the qualities that had endeared them to him as a logician, in proportion as they received this impregnation. Zeno himself was probably a specimen of this class, but we have no reason to suppose that he left any successors; his disciples must either have devoted themselves merely to inquiries respecting entity and unity, or have become politicians of the rhetorical kind. Now, it is obvious that the dialectics of Plato, by their very nature and definition, could not pretend to be themselves Politics. They necessarily assumed facts, not indeed as premises to start from, but as the raw materials, in the heart

of which premises lay hid. The laws and conditions of society were to be investigated by this dialectic, could not be investigated without it: but they were presumed to exist, and they were perfectly distinct from the faculty and science by which they were discovered. Plato then was in a condition to do justice to Pythagoras as he had done justice to Parmenides. He could believe that there might be much in the discoveries of the one respecting the order of society, as there had been much in the discoveries of the other respecting the conditions and requirements of the pure mind, and he prepared himself to use the philosophy which he had ascertained to be true in one region for an investigation of the observations which had been made and the doctrines which had been broached respecting the other.

27. **The Republic: the notion that it is merely an ethical or dialectical treatise.** But this is not all. The reader of Plato's *Republic* will discover, not perhaps without some surprise, that questions respecting the nature and objects of dialectics occupy a considerable place in this political treatise. Hence it has been inferred that the title of the work is altogether misleading; that it is not the purpose of Plato to teach us the conditions and the relations of a State, but merely to raise a platform upon which to carry forward with more interest, and probably with greater success, the philosophical inquiries which he has commenced in his other Dialogues. The *Republic*, according to these commentators, is a kind of laboratory which he has built for the purpose of pursuing his experiments into the nature of the individual man. On many accounts this hypothesis will be likely to find acceptance in this day, even if it had not been supported by talents and erudition of the first order. We are not anxious to refute it, but we are anxious that our readers should study the *Republic* with a free spirit, and that they should not be hindered by a theory from perceiving how it illustrates a subject which has occupied us so much already, and must occupy us at every step of our future progress; we mean the relations between the mind of man and the constitution of society. To Plato we believe was committed the task of expressing the deepest wants and necessities of

our being, and of discovering or prophesying the kind of satisfaction that must be provided for them. We make no apology for dwelling so long upon his name in this rapid sketch of moral and metaphysical inquiries, because we are satisfied that if we put our readers in a right course for studying his works and those of Aristotle, and the Jewish Scriptures, they will be able to trace with little assistance from us the progress of these inquiries in modern Europe, whether in the age of the fathers, of the schoolmen, or in the period since the Reformation; whereas the most able and elaborate discourses upon the ethics and metaphysics of later times without this preparation can, we think, avail them little. It must, therefore, be a great point with us to ascertain whether Plato is silent upon those wants which belong to our social being and position; whether he thought them of a purely secondary and accidental character; or whether he found them so imbedded in the constitution of man that he could not investigate the law of each man's internal life without also investigating that by which he is related to his fellows. The supporters of the former opinion (as the readers of Schleiermacher's Introduction to the *Republic* will perceive) have felt that they needed and have not failed to exercise the most admirable ingenuity in working out their conclusion. Those who adopt the latter may content themselves with beseeching attention to the express language of Plato, and with briefly recapitulating the heads of his dialogue.

28. **The Republic, first book. Opening.** We find ourselves at the beginning of the *Republic* in a circle of Athenians met to witness a religious ceremony lately introduced from Thrace. The most prominent and interesting person in the group is old Cephalus, a cheerful and benignant octogenarian, with whom Socrates begins a discourse on the comforts of old age, and the advantage or disadvantage of riches. A remark of Cephalus leads to the inquiry, whether the definition of justice given by Simonides, that it consists in speaking the truth, and giving to each man that which is his due, is satisfactory or no? Cephalus being called away to perform a sacrifice, his part in the dialogue

devolves upon Polemarchus. **Justice.** But we have not advanced further in the discussion than to a general consent of the parties that the mere external acts indicated in the words of Simonides cannot satisfy the idea of justice; and again, that its obligations cannot be affected by our position to each other as friends or enemies; when the sophist Thrasymachus breaks in with a vehement assertion that the whole notion of justice is a fraud practised by the strong man upon the weaker. The consequence, that the life of an unjust man would be in itself desirable, is one from which he does not shrink, and to the examination of this doctrine the greater part of the first book is devoted.

29. **Second book** In the beginning of the second, we find young Glaucon and Adeimantus professing themselves dissatisfied with the manner in which Thrasymachus has defended his cause, and with his haste in abandoning it. They have no sympathy with his views, they are convinced in their feelings that Justice is intrinsically good, but the arguments by which it is proved to be so seem to them inconclusive. Is it not true that society has put honour on a certain course of conduct which ministers to its own security and advantage? Has it not succeeded in helping out the weakness of its own sanctions by religious feelings and terrors? Are we not brought into the world under this twofold set of impressions in favour of what is called justice, and against injustice? **Can justice be shown not to be the creature of society?** Can we suppose a man retaining the idea and practice of Justice in opposition to laws and his fellow-men, and without the imagination of some divine sanction or patronage? The question Socrates allows to be difficult; perhaps it cannot be at once answered. But might we not arrive at some solution of it if we examined it upon a larger scale? The question presumes an existing state of society; it supposes this notion of justice, be it a fiction or reality, to be necessary to the support of a State. Shall we inquire then how it becomes necessary to a State; what justice in a State is? Then possibly we may know better what justice in an individual is, and whether it can or cannot be maintained under the disadvantages imagined by Glaucon.

30. Now we would remark in passing, that those who consider the political part of the *Republic* merely accidental and subordinate, look upon this Preface as the great staff of their theory. They maintain that it is altogether so much easier and more consistent to believe that the subject started in the outset is really the main and central one of the book, and that all subjects which may occur by the way are merely intended for the illustration of it, that no student of Plato who really understands that teacher's method will tolerate any other supposition. **The Republic is an inquiry respecting justice.** We admit at once that this is the object of Plato; that the *Republic* is an inquiry into the nature and meaning of Justice; that if this end be lost sight of, it would be quite impossible to understand the connection of its different parts. But then we say that the most natural and obvious construction of Plato's words leads to the belief that the idea of political justice was in his mind inseparable from that of individual justice; that this was precisely the quality which he perceived to be the meeting point between the spheres of ethics and politics; say, rather, which proved that these are two concentric spheres. The clear establishment of this relation is, we conceive, the great purpose of these two first books. They are a lesson to all future reasoners with sophistical men, that they can only maintain the moral ground safely when they are content to follow their opponents to their own political ground; when, instead of contending that there is an order which the individual is obliged to follow, supposing society to have no existence, they will be at the pains to prove that there are eternal principles involved in the constitution of society itself, to which its individual members conform themselves, not because they are content to sacrifice their own distinct personality, but because they have no other way of asserting it. Whether modern writers on ethics would have fared worse or better if they had attended to the admonition of the most experienced and subtle of all the antagonists of sophistry, we may have occasion to inquire hereafter. At all events, those who believe that the main purpose of the Platonic Dialogues is to discover and develope a method of thought, must,

we think, be strangely hampered by a theory which compels them to suppose that on this occasion the result arrived at is the only important consideration; and that the processes for attaining it are altogether artificial, and yet, withal, most clumsy and cumbrous.

31. **Third book.** But to return: Starting with the hope that the proposed scheme for seeking after justice in a State will lead to a solution of our difficulties, Plato proceeds at once to the formation of a society. Now any one who looks in the arrangements which he here sets forth for the outlines of some imaginary perfect commonwealth, will unquestionably be much disappointed. **Its freedom from mysticism.** So far from there being anything mystical or Utopian in his primary conception of the society, everything is as terrestrial and commonplace as the merest materialist could desire. Men meet together, and find that each is not sufficient to provide for his own animal wants. Different necessities arise, different capacities discover themselves among the persons associated, adapted to these necessities; hence division of labour, distinct occupations and professions. By and by comes the desire for an excess of the good things which earth produces; hence tumults and external wars. **The guardians.** Now we feel the necessity for a set of guardians or watch-dogs of the state. What manner of persons must these guardians be? Clearly they are in danger of becoming wolves instead of watch-dogs. How is this to be prevented? How are we to produce in them those internal qualities which are so obviously necessary for the welfare of the whole community? We say that these arrangements are very unlike what might be expected from the builder of an imaginary commonwealth. No assumption of any advantageous position; no previous theory about the wants and feelings of the persons composing the society; above all, no hope, by outward contrivances and dispositions, to avert the occurrence of crime. How can this be accounted for? **The Republic not imaginary at all.** Does not such apparent carelessness about external contrivances rather favour the notion that the society is only a scaffolding? We answer, if it were so we should be utterly unable to

account for the scaffolding not being more elaborately constructed. If Plato had the liberty of forming his own plan and choosing his own materials; if it were a matter of utter indifference to him how far these are consistent with the nature of things, provided they did but help him to a discovery which would afterwards be good and entire on its own ground, whatever steps had led us to it, any attempt to conform to dry ordinary facts as they meet us in the world would be idle, and, as an offence against art, censurable. If, on the contrary, his object were not to frame a society after an ideal in his own mind, but, as we have supposed all along, to investigate the conditions of political unity — the idea involved in the very existence of society, by departing from which it has become confused and incoherent — if this be the view of the treatise, which is most consistent with the rest of Plato's philosophy, and which most clearly exhibits its relation to the other Dialogues, then it can be no matter of wonder to us that Plato should carefully abstain from any exercises of imagination while he is setting before us the bare and naked elements of which society is composed; that he should take pains to convince us that he is not a creator but a searcher; not one of those poets to whom he can assign no place in his commonwealth, but one of those investigators of the truth as it actually is whom he would put at the head of it.

32. **Is the Republic a treatise on education?** The *Republic* of Plato then assumes selfish desires to exist, and the evil results of them to have occurred. And it is an examination of this question,—Under what conditions can we suppose it permanently to cohere, in spite of the tendencies to decomposition which manifestly discover themselves within it? When, however, we direct our attention to the means of preserving any body from decay, we may either consider what positive precautions are necessary in order to resist the progress of its corruption; or, on the other hand, by what means it is possible to call forth and invigorate those principles of life which it must have within it in order that it may be at all, though their presence may only make itself manifest through the power which opposes them. Plato again

and again gives us to understand that it is with the development of these principles of life, and not with the outward regulations for the repression of evil, that he concerns himself in this dialogue. It is on this account that the *Republic* has assumed to many persons the appearance simply of a treatise on education, nay, of little more than a censure upon the existing Greek education. **Reasons for the opinion.** These critics remind us that he has scarcely given the first rude hint of his society before he tells us that the minds of the guardians of the State must not be corrupted by those false ideas of the gods which occur in the poems of Homer. That a great part of the third book is occupied with the consideration of two particular branches of education, gymnastics and music, and even with a minute and elaborate inquiry respecting the kinds of music which serve or frustrate the ends of education. That the subject is renewed in the sixth and seventh books, where the use of all the sciences in forming the mind of a statesman is carefully investigated. All this is true, yet we are persuaded that the value of this portion of the work will be far more appreciated by those who consider it subordinate to the great object of discovering the principle which lies at the foundation of society, which connects it with the processes of the individual mind, and which gives consistency and harmony to both of them, than by those who determine that it shall be the sole and independent purpose of the dialogue. **Character of the gods.** Nothing is more entirely consistent with the purpose which we have attributed to Plato than his placing a right view of the character of the gods at the threshold of his education; for the idea of the Good, and of this as connected with Order, is that which underlies his whole scheme. To make men feel that this *is*, that this exists, to teach them how to distinguish between the anomalies of society and its principles, is his great endeavour. Above all things, therefore, we must see that our models are not defaced with our own corruptions.

33. **Music.** For precisely the same reason the subject of music becomes invested with so much importance. To develope the sense of order and harmony in the minds of the members of the common-

wealth, is the secret for making it really that which it pretends to be. It is a part of this order that the feeling of it should be first communicated to the guiding, guarding minds of the society, that from them it should diffuse itself through the whole. By this means a new and most important element of our *Republic* is brought to light. Among the guardians will be some of a higher order than the rest. They will be those on whom the education has produced its complete mellowing effect; distinguished from the others in this, that whereas *they* have chiefly derived a more braced and masculine tone of character from the union of gymnastic exercises with the higher forms of music, these have imbibed the very essence of the music, have acquired that perfectly harmonised temper, that sense of wholeness, which makes them the true ideals and representatives of the entire community. **The qualities of the magistrates.** These are obviously our *magistrates*. But how shall we persuade our people that these different qualities exist, and that they constitute a fitness for the different offices in the state? We must tell them a story, says Plato, in order that we may bring home this conviction to their minds. We must inform them that they were all made originally out of the earth, which, on that account, they are to love as their common mother, reckoning themselves brethren in consequence of their relation to her. That however it pleased the gods to introduce different materials into their composition, making some of gold, some of silver, some of inferior metals; that it is important that these should not be confounded, but should be kept distinct and applied to distinct uses, in order that the society may receive benefit from each of them. Such is the parable by which our author teaches us that he looks upon himself not as the contriver of some imaginary scheme, but only as following out the intentions of Providence in the institution of society.

34. **Relation of the state to the individual.** All this time we seem to have been forgetting our original question respecting Justice. **Fourth book.** But we find in the fourth book that the arrangements of the State, and even our long discussion upon music, have been preparing

the way for a more clear development of this idea. We have discovered three classes in society, and we have seen that each of these classes embodies a certain characteristic quality, which through it becomes the quality of the whole fellowship. The class of magistrates expresses to us the very idea of Wisdom, superintending, distinguishing, arranging; the class of guardians, the very idea of Fortitude, sustaining, amalgamating, preserving; the inferior classes, while they keep their position, the very idea of Temperance, self-restraining, and submitting. Without any of these it is obvious that a society could not exist, and the permanence of its existence depends upon the degree in which the qualities of each class interpenetrate the rest. **Music and justice.** But then do not these imply the existence of still another quality—of some principle or power which fuses together all the classes and all these qualities—which belongs not primarily or particularly to one class, but must by its very nature be predicated of the whole? This is evidently that musical principle which we have been seeking by all our education to instil. But what shall be the name of it? Is not this that Justice which we have been trying to understand the meaning of? Do we not translate the rude outward notion of Simonides into a practical, satisfactory idea, when instead of making justice consist in giving every man his due and in speaking the truth, we describe it as that which determines the true relation of all things and persons to each other, the very law and harmony of the world. Yet may we not go still a little deeper? Our first object was to discover the nature and effect of justice, not in society, but in the individual. At every step of our progress we seem to have found proof that these two considerations are inseparable; that the law of society must be the law of the individual. Now, perhaps, we are in a condition to explain this fact more particularly. Our inquiry has brought to light three classes as the necessary constituents of the State; a class of magistrates, a class of guardians, a class occupied in supplying the animal wants of the whole body. Whence the necessity for this distribution of society? Is it not that there is a similar distribution of parts in the man himself? Is there not in him Reason, Energy,

or Will, Cupidity, or an animal nature? And if these are not to exist in perpetual discord, the man in perpetual misery, must there not be that in him which preserves each of these parts in its proper relation to the rest, giving the supremacy to Reason, preserving the strength and purity of Will, subjecting Cupidity? Is not Justice then necessary to each of us?

35. **The great problem of society.** This point being ascertained, Socrates is willing to finish the dialogue. But Glaucon and Adeimantus remind him that justice being, according to him, the principle of harmony or unity in the commonwealth, he is bound to explain the other conditions of this unity. For if any inevitable circumstances make this union impracticable, justice itself is impracticable; and if for the commonwealth, then, according to the whole tenour of the argument, for the individual also; so that we should be obliged at last to acquiesce in a conclusion not very unlike that sophistical one which we have been labouring to confute. The four next books, then, from the beginning of the fifth to the end of the ninth, are occupied with these questions: first, in what sense are family relationships compatible with the unity of a commonwealth? secondly, how far can it consist with individual selfishness and ambition? thirdly, how can it consist with that law of decay and degeneracy to which all societies seem to have been subject?

36. What Plato's statements are upon the first of these subjects we have no need to inform any reader. Those who know scarcely anything else of him have heard that he has somewhere spoken of the two sexes as intended to perform exactly the same duties and exercises, and that he has connected with this doctrine another (which indeed in a logical mind will generally be inseparable from it), of a community in wives and children. **Plato's communism.** They have heard also that these notions actually enter into the composition of his perfect commonwealth, and that he wishes to supersede all the existing relations of father and child, wife and husband, which lie, as we suppose, at the foundation of all moral apprehensions and all political order. The question, then, naturally suggests itself, not whether we are prepared

to offer any justification for this part of his speculations, but how, while such a huge and hideous blot exists in them, we can venture to speak of them as important; above all, can devote so much time to the examination of them? Many readers and admirers of Plato have dwelt with much satisfaction on the fact, that in the *Laws* (a later work, undoubtedly, than the *Republic*) he appears to have changed his views, and to recognise the sanctity of human relationships as they exist. We confess that we do not regard the passages referred to as a recantation. Even if Plato considered them so himself (of which there is no proof), we feel convinced that he would have relapsed into his former opinion, if he had again devoted himself to the task of studying the idea of a commonwealth. **The doctrine of the Laws: how and why different from that of the Republic** The *Laws*, it seems to us, are intended to explain the conditions under which any particular nation exists; whence proceeds the coercive power by which the evils of its members are restrained; how it is to be preserved as a distinct community. For this end Plato perceived the importance of distinct relationships; he could not help seeing that they lie at the very foundation of national life; that with the loss of them it would perish. The *Republic*, on the other hand, is not an inquiry respecting the conditions of a particular state. Phrases may occur in it again and again which seem to define this as its object; but others, far more pregnant in their meaning, and oftentimes uttered unconsciously, show that another and grander aim was present to the mind of the writer, and was haunting him when he could not realise it. He felt that there should be some body which expresses, not the law of a confined, definite national life, but the law of society itself, the principle of its unity. He felt that such a body as this is implied in the existence of every national community, but yet transcends it, and is not subject to its limitations. We could easily produce proofs of this feeling from every book of the *Republic*, but we know none in which it comes forth more strikingly than in that fifth book of which we are now speaking. The idea of a universal *Greek* society is there formally put forth, yet it is evident that this does not satisfy the mind of Plato; he

has the dream of something still more comprehensive: a feeble sophist would have tried to express the dream in big words; *he* is content to suggest the nearest practical approximation to an expression of it that his circumstances made possible. But with this universal society Plato does not see how distinct relationships are compatible. Perfect community seems the very law of its being; whatsoever interferes with this seems to frustrate its intention.

37. **Advantages of Plato's error to us.** Here, then, we see at once the ignorance and knowledge of Plato. How such a universal society as this could grow out of a national community, out of a family, and could preserve uninjured, in harmony with itself, both those holy institutions which had been its cradle, this he did not know; this wisdom was reserved for the shepherds of Palestine. To them it was only communicated by degrees, and their chief duty consisted in keeping that which had been divinely given them in the sure confidence that more would be added. But this *was* permitted to the sage of Greece—he was allowed to feel the necessity of a universal community to the life of man; he was permitted to feel that it was a great living truth implied in the existence of society, though yet undeveloped. To such insight and honesty of purpose, rejecting no light that has been vouchsafed, it is granted, that even the crudities and ignorances into which he fell in the search after truth shall be for the benefit of future generations, nay for the practical correction and exposure of these very crudities when they are reproduced by men of a different spirit. The fifth book of the *Republic* is a curious anticipation of every scheme of universal society which has been propounded by religious fanatics or political theorists from the propagation of Christianity to the present day. It remains a standing practical testimony from the wisest man in the ancient world, that this is the only consistent law, and must be the ultimate law of every such society, whensoever it attempts to exist alone, as a merely spiritual or cosmical family. Rejecting, then, with indignation the *errare mehercule malo* of the Roman academician, and loving Plato only as far

as he loved truth, we may yet find a worth even in this unfortunate passage of his writings.

38. **How a perfect commonwealth is compatible with selfishness.** The portion of the *Republic* comprehended in the sixth and seventh books is second to no part of it in interest. The difficulty to be solved in it is the compatibility of such a State as we have described with the selfish notions of men. Plato does not blink the question. **Sixth book.** He at once declares his conviction that such a State could only be administered by philosophers; and he then goes on to explain what he means by a philosopher; why it is that the persons generally bearing that name are unfit to be practical politicians; what their real relation to the rest of their countrymen is. Here then we have the full exposition and development of that doctrine which we found lying at the root of Socratic teaching; that the selfish, self-seeking principle, leading men to animal gratifications, is the source of disorder and confusion in the life of man, not really the moving spring of it; that there is in man something higher, which is not satisfied with itself, but which seeks after converse with the Good. The philosopher is the man who is holding this converse; whose mind is fixed on the true end and meaning of things, upon the substance, the reality of them. The rest are following images and shadows, but still in the pursuit of these are confessing their want of a Good, and are blindly feeling after it. The philosopher, if he descends to the pursuit of their shadows, becomes worthy of their contempt, for there is a perpetual contradiction between the higher aims of which he is conscious and the grovelling course he has actually taken. If, on the other hand, he steadily keeps his own idea in sight, he is necessarily unintelligible to them, and on that account they despise him. **The philosopher's duty to the multitude.** But suppose, having worked his own way out of the mine in which they are dwelling, and no longer receiving light through the little crannies which transmit it broken and confused, and lead men utterly astray as to the fountain from which it has flowed, he has come out into the open sunlight, and by it seen all objects as they are, he neither glorifies himself by

living apart from them, nor yet submits to confuse his light with their darkness, but goes down amongst them that he may lead them by the same track which he has himself trodden into the clear day—would he not then be fulfilling his function as a philosopher, and yet be most truly a politician? If the question occurs to you, what is this upward road? **Seventh book.** Plato is ready to consider it with you. There is a certain education recognised among men; they teach arithmetic, geometry, as well as the gymnastics and music we spoke of before, and they evidently attach a high value to these studies. Are they wrong? surely not. They are wrong only in this, that throughout their whole lives they are seeking shadows instead of substances, and that they have made all these sciences helpful to their low ambition. Arithmetic and geometry have been resorted to merely for secular commercial ends; they might be made the means of purifying the mind to a perception of the truth of things. What is the appropriate function of each of these sciences, with a view to this object, he carefully inquires: and this inquiry brings out the necessity of that grand, deeper science of Dialectics, which directly leads to the contemplation of truth as truth, of good as good, in its pure essence. Now a nation thus guided and educated comes into the condition of such a republic as we have described. Its wisest, deepest-minded men will be its magistrates; the community will have one end; that principle of justice, which assigns to each his proper place, imparts a sense of proportion and harmony to all, will be diffused through it and actuate it. Thus, then, the existence of ambition and selfishness does not upset the idea of our Republic, does not prove that it is not implied in the nature of society, does not show that it may not be at some time or somewhere realised.

39. **Law of decay in societies. Eighth and ninth books.** We come next to that law of decay in societies which most speculators have recognised, and which the Pythagorean philosophers fancied they could express in certain numerical ratios. Plato has given a very valuable turn to the inquiry by connecting it with the cardinal doctrine of the *Republic*, that the life of men and the life of States explain

each other. In conformity with this doctrine, he maintains that there is a democratical, an oligarchical, and a tyrannical form of character answering to those respective forms of government. This form of character is obviously a departure from some true and original model. The same may be shown of the governments; and it is possible in each case to trace the process of degeneration, and to show how that which takes place in society, and that which takes place in the individual, react upon each other. In this part of the dialogue, Plato proves that his faculty of close, lively, practical observation had not been impaired but strengthened by his converse with transcendent realities. It would be hard to find a passage in any ancient work on which a modern statesman might more profitably meditate, or in which he would be more sure to find hints explaining to him the facts of his daily experience, than the eighth and ninth books of the *Republic*. The result of the investigation is the same as in the former case. This law of degeneracy exists in the commonwealths of the earth, just because they have not understood and steadfastly contemplated that original model, that perfect idea of a commonwealth, which is also the original model and perfect idea of a human character. It is a contradiction and absurdity then to allege the fact of this degeneracy as a proof that no such model is to be found. But after all these inquiries does the thought still linger about the mind, *where* is it to be found? Plato answers (book ix. p. fin.), Ἀλλ' ἐν οὐρανῷ ἴσως παράδειγμα ἀνάκειται τῷ βουλομένῳ ὁρᾶν καὶ ὁρῶντι ἑαυτὸν κατοικίζειν. Is it wonderful that such words should have suggested to some of the Christian fathers the recollection of those words in the *Epistle to the Hebrews*, which describe the hopes of the head of the covenanted people, Ἐξεδέχετο γὰρ τὴν τοὺς θεμελίους ἔχουσαν πόλιν ἧς τεχνίτης καὶ δημιουργὸς ὁ Θεός; or those which describe this hope as accomplished, Ἡμῶν τὸ πολίτευμα ἐν οὐρανοῖς ὑπάρχει?

40. **Tenth book. Art and poetry.** There is still one subject upon which it is needful to say a few words, especially as Plato has devoted his last book to the full exposition of it: we mean his opinion respecting the imitative arts generally, and especially respecting poetry, so far as

it is included among those arts. It is evident that our author attached great importance to these opinions, and yet that he was never wholly satisfied with them. He touches upon the question almost as soon as he has sketched the first outline of his society; he recurs to it again when his task seems completed, partly as if he felt there was no security for the reception of his idea while any doubt overhung this point, partly as if there was something in it which he had not fully penetrated. Again, in the introduction to the *Timæus*, he offers a kind of apology to the poets for his severity, and appears to think that they may have an important vocation, though he does not clearly understand what it is. It is observable that the grounds upon which he places his arguments in the third and in the tenth books, are not precisely the same. In both, indeed, he dwells much upon the fact that the poet must adapt himself to the opinions of mankind respecting actions and character, otherwise they will not acknowledge the verisimilitude of his picture; hence he must need pervert the truth of things, and can never exalt those minds to which he accommodates himself. But in the last he appears to see a peculiar mischief in poetry from its tendency to destroy the harmony of character, to weaken self-control, and thus to undermine the justice and order of the commonwealth by the honour which it bestows upon all excited and passionate feelings. **How far he was influenced by the circumstances of his own time.** The latter argument might lead one to suspect that Plato was at least in part determined to these views by the circumstances of his own age. The exaltation of passion, the want of balance and harmony in characters, the preference of weak, earthly creatures to calm and stately ideals, were the great characteristics of the Euripidean, as distinguished from the Sophoclean drama. Add to this the influence of a poetical age (an influence felt most when that age had departed) in fostering the worship of mere creative power, and the notion of the mind of man being the origin of all that is, which lay, as we have seen, at the root of Greek sophistry, and which it had been the great aim of Socrates throughout his life to combat. Still Plato's attack upon Homer, and his eagerness to disprove the common

opinion that the Greeks were indebted to him for much of their organisation and cultivation, are proofs that he was not merely affected by these temporary considerations. We leave it then as a hint for our reader's reflection, whether this reluctant condemnation of poetry by one who had been himself a poet in the formal sense of the word, and in the best sense continued a poet always, may not be explained in the same way as we explained just now his theory respecting relationship.

Poetry expressly national. Poetry seems to belong primarily and almost exclusively to national life. The sense of national union gives the first impulse to it; when that sense is weakened it withers, with its revival it starts to life again; without it men would never become conscious of their own powers, their own affections, their own wants; and in the consciousness of these consist the joy and freedom of their life as the citizens of a state. By calling this forth in the Greeks, Homer may be said to have made them a nation, a nation full of life, full of turbulence. But is there nothing better than this mere consciousness of power? Is there no higher condition of society than this of being citizens of a state? The *Republic* is an answer to the question. It teaches that far beyond this consciousness of power lies the contemplation of truth and goodness, and the assimilation of the soul to these. It shows that far beyond the mere feeling of energy to dare, to act, to revenge, lies the perception of order and harmony, an intimate fellowship with a Being above us, and the beings around us. It teaches that there is a universal society, of which this contemplation and assimilation are the ground, this perception of order and harmony the life, of which this fellowship is the result and the realisation. With this community, says Plato, poetry hath little to do. Praise of the gods, eulogies of great men, these are the only fields for its exercise. Strictly speaking, we think he is right; that is to say, if it were possible for us, as it was necessary for him, to separate (how important it is to distinguish we hope we have explained) the national life from the universal life, the national society from the universal, poetry, which is the soul of the first, would, except in the cases named by him, be excluded from the

other. If we would connect all the vital energies of which poetry is the expression, with those deeper insights, that perfect moral state and moral life which belong to the higher region, we must also understand, and by understanding realise, for ourselves at least, and, so far as is permitted us, for mankind, the law by which the universal and the national societies sustain each other.

41. **Immortality** The *Republic* ends nobly with a discussion on immortality, which has been less popular than that in the *Phædo*, because the scenery of it is less solemn and affecting, but which for its own merits seems entitled to even more attention. We are far, indeed, from thinking so lightly as some have done of those arguments from reminiscence, and from the law of interchange between light and darkness, death and life, which occur in the dying conversation of Socrates. On the contrary, they seem to us pregnant with the deepest meaning. But we cannot help thinking that when Plato had once realised in his own mind the connection between the life of the individual and the life of society, he felt he had a stronger ground to fix his hope of immortality upon—that he had found the point where the witness in the heart meets the demands of the reason. The sense of belonging to a community, stretching behind and before, outlasting the deaths of generations of men, is an evidence to each man of his individual immortality, which you may be quite unable to translate into syllogisms, but which happily supersedes the necessity of them. Plato only went to the roots of this feeling, when, having shown that the existence of the individual and of society are alike based upon the idea of justice, and are alike sustained by the contemplation of that which is true and permanent, and alike die a moral death when they contradict the principles of their being, he affirmed that the accident of physical death can as little change the condition of one as of the other, and that as they have lived here must be their life hereafter.[21]

[21]As the *Republic*, like so many other of the Platonic Dialogues, closes with a mythus, and as the passage in the third book on Lying brings the whole subject of the use which Plato thought it lawful to make of fables and legends directly before us, it may be as well to make one remark on this subject. Throughout this dialogue, even more than in his other writings, it is evident that, dearly as he loved

42. **Plato, how far a Pythagorean.** We have dwelt so long, for reasons which we have explained already, upon this great summary of the ethical, metaphysical, and political philosophy of Greece, that we can afford time but for one remark, which is necessary to show how the doctrine of Plato is connected with that of the great predecessor whose labours, we suppose, it was his intention to review. That there is a Pythagorean character in the *Republic*, the book on music, the passages on geometry and arithmetic, and certain mystical sentences respecting the law of decay in a State—which have defied the skill of commentators—prove abundantly. But if we look well at the work, we shall find that the whole of it may in one sense be called Pythagorean. For the discovery of the musical law which gives internal wholeness to a State, as distinguished from that external law by which its parts are prevented from falling asunder, is in fact the object of the treatise. Wherein then does he differ from Pythagoras? Precisely in this—that while he gives music and arithmetic their due honour as instruments for cultivating in man the feeling of his own position and relations, he does not deduce that position and those relations from any combinations of notes or series of numbers. He makes Justice—a moral principle—the music of his commonwealth. And this is the more remarkable and the more honourable, because it is evident that he felt the temptation to be a

truth for its own sake, and firmly as he believed it could be contemplated in its pure essence, he yet felt that there was no criterion of truth so sure as that it governed practice and was the law of life. To substitute a pure idealism for the faith of his country was never his object or his dream. He hated such attempts, not more for their hardness and cruelty than for their utter inconsistency with his whole doctrine. He left them to men who did not believe that ideas were substantial, who thought they were mere creations of the mind and had nothing to do with living acts. While then he was very jealous of all those stories which evidently hindered men from acknowledging goodness and truth as the ultimate ends of their existence, he was equally certain that, somehow or other, all great principles must have an investiture of *facts*, and cannot be fully or satisfactorily presented to man except in facts. And if no such series of facts embodying and revealing truths were within his reach, rather than leave it to be fancied that his truths were bare naked conceptions of his mind, he would invent a clothing for them: it was the least evil of the two. But it was an evil; it exposed him to fearful contradictions; it often put his love for truth in the greatest jeopardy. Then what pretence have those to the name of Platonists who *wish* to believe that there is no series of facts containing a revelation of supersensual and transcendent truths, who think it an *à priori* probability that the deep want of such facts which Plato experienced has not been satisfied; who are determined even by the most violent treatment of historical evidence to prove that whenever a supposed fact manifests a principle, it must be a fable?

cabbalist, and never divested himself of the belief (perhaps no deep thinker was ever able quite to divest himself of it) that there is something profoundly and mysteriously interwoven with the life of man in the relations of lines, of numbers, and of sounds. It was a great merit thus to keep the practical ground so steadily, and never to forget that this is really the highest ground. By doing so he was enabled to perform the same service in one sphere which he had already performed in another, to discover the political principle which Pythagoras had been seeking for amidst the laws that connect us with nature, as he had discerned the scientific principle which Parmenides had been groping after amidst the forms of our own minds.

43. **Physics of Plato.** It is a great satisfaction to us that our duty, as historians of moral and metaphysical inquiries, does not call upon us, or even permit us, to say many words on the subject of Plato's *Physics*. **The Timæus** Still the *Timæus* is so curiously connected with the *Republic* by the exquisite introduction to it, in which Critias tells the story of the submerged State, so like in all respects to that which Socrates had described the day before, (here we have the doctrine of reminiscence obviously brought into play, and a new evidence that our philosopher considered the *Republic* as no work of imagination, but the discovery of a truth implied and forgotten in the constitution of all societies,) and so much importance has been attached, both in early and later times, to this dialogue, as if it contained the very heart of Platonism, that we cannot venture entirely to pass it over. With respect to the link between the *Politics* and the *Physics* of Plato, we would not speak confidently. **Peculiarities of it.** He may have perceived a closer relation between the moral κόσμος, which he had been investigating in the *Republic*, and the material universe which Timæus creates, than we are able to trace. But this we think is evident, that he did enter upon his new task with a kind of consciousness that it behoved him to fill up a gap in his speculations, and to complete his review of the ancient philosophy, and at the same time with a secret apprehension that the light which had hitherto guided him might forsake him in this region. It is strange

at all events that, while undertaking to develope a subject so important in Greek eyes as the creation and organisation of nature, he should make Socrates merely a listener. To a faithful student of Plato it must seem still more strange that he should on this occasion utterly desert his customary method, that the dialogue form should be merely used to throw a graceful dramatical veil over the introduction, and that in the expository part it should be exchanged for the haranguing style to which Plato was in general so averse.

44. **Use that has been made of it.** And yet it is to this cause more than any other that the *Timæus* owes its reputation among those who undertake to furnish summaries and synopses of Platonical doctrine. Elsewhere they found him balancing opinions, often refusing to pronounce a verdict upon their respective merits—most unnecessarily tedious (as they think) in tracing the road to a conclusion, most unaccountably and ill-naturedly forgetful of the duty of clothing it in precise, available, transferable formulas. Here, on the contrary, though his language may be more obscure than it is in other places; though there may be more allusions to ill-understood portions of Greek speculation than in all the rest; though, lastly, his teachings refer to a question upon which we all believe that he could have only very partial illumination; still the manifest convenience of catching so Protean a philosopher for one moment in a rigid definite state, has overweighed all these considerations, and has made the Platonic cosmogony the grand storehouse from which diligent redacteurs have been wont to collect their notions of the mind and the works of Plato. Nay, it has even been a plausible and popular theory, ingeniously accounting for the uncertainty of the other Dialogues, that they were only intended as a vestibule to the inner oracle of the *Timæus*. Having sufficiently explained our views respecting these so-called uncertainties, and having endeavoured to show how much the method of Plato is part and parcel of Plato himself, we must needs regard this particular work with very different feelings. Not pretending to behold with indifference the splendid theory which it developes, aware how closely that theory is

connected with some of those which exercised the strongest influence upon the minds of men, especially in the first ages of the Christian Church, and being very willing to accept for Plato the compliments which natural philosophers have paid him for his intuition of truths hereafter to be established, we must yet confess that the *Timæus* seems to us chiefly valuable because it illustrates the worth of the principle from which it is so signal a departure. In every other dialogue, Plato is teaching us how to discover a universal law in any particular fact which falls under our notice; here we have huge hypotheses to begin with, and all facts fitted and disposed according to them.

45. **His confusion of theology with physics** For whatever there is of truth in these hypotheses he is indebted to his previous studies in another direction. Having arrived by his own sure course of upward investigation at the doctrine of ideas, he was able to see that the world must be created according to an idea. But having attained this point, his light forsook him; he was not able to apply his dialectic to the elimination of this idea, from the names or facts in which it was imbedded. He had simply to trust to his imagination to construct a theory. Whereas in other cases he is a philosopher seeking for light, and when he could not perceive the tract of it, showing where it ought to be, and from what unrisen sun it must flow; here he is a presumptuous theologian, assuming himself capable of declaring that which must be revealed, and thereby losing the right way to that which may be discovered. **Plato and Bacon.** Bacon does him no injustice in respect to his *Physics* when he says that he confused and corrupted them with theology; when he implicitly includes him among the giants who piled hill on hill in hopes of reaching heaven. Would that our countryman, for the honour of his own character, for the sake of the ages which were to follow him, had been as willing to recognise the truth of Plato, as he was acute in detecting his falsehood; as honest in acknowledging him for a guide, as he was right in pointing him out for a beacon. He would then have seen that the *Timæus* was in contradiction to the principle of induction, because it was inconsistent with the principle

of Plato. He would have seen that in one solitary instance the Greek sage was betrayed by that ambition of completeness and circularity (which far more than the desire of fame deserves to be called the last infirmity of noble minds) into the examination of a subject on which he could only dogmatise, and could dogmatise only by forsaking his own method. He would have confessed that the *Novum Organum* was but the extension of that method to a new class of subjects. He would have taught his disciples that the course of investigation which promised them such new discoveries in the world of sense—which was grounded upon the great principle that man is but a seeker, which is prosperous in proportion as he endeavours simply to behold that which is, and not to darken it by the mists of his own conceptions—had been ages before marked out as the only one by which they might safely hope to become acquainted with the truths of their own being. He would solemnly have conjured them to remember that a heathen, uninstructed by that revelation which deals directly with these transcendent truths and lays them open to every peasant, had yet perceived that they must be the most precious which a man can know, and that only in knowing them he is truly a man. He would have told them, that if ever that study, in which the heathen sage forgot his usual wisdom, should become the only one in which Christians care to be proficients, if ever *ex reseratione viarum sensûs et accensione majore luminis naturae aliquid incredulitatis et noctis animis nostris erga divina mysteria oboriatur*—or there should grow up a feeling towards these mysteries which is worse than unbelief, if it be not another form of unbelief, a stupid acquiescence in them without the acknowledgment that they answer to any cravings in the heart, any necessities of the reason, any predictions of the imagination, then, for the sake of the age and country upon which such a disease had fallen, for the sake of all that should follow it, for the sake of physical knowledge itself, which can never long flourish apart from moral light, it would be most desirable that men should resume the study of the Athenian philosopher, should realise the wants of their minds by

observing those which he experienced in his, should consider in what way we can find an adequate provision for both.

DIVISION III.—ARISTOTLE.

SECTION I. ARISTOTLE THE BEGINNER OF A NEW EPOCH.

1. **The age of Plato an age of ideals.** When we speak of Plato as the ideal philosopher, we sometimes forget that the people of Greece, his own fellow-citizens especially, were pursuing ideals during the whole time in which he and his master flourished. Socrates was born in 468 B.C. Plato died 347 B.C. Pericles had begun to take part in public affairs one year before the birth of Socrates; Olynthus was taken by Philip of Macedon the very year in which Plato died. If one could find an expression for this period of 120 years, it would surely be this, that sculptors, painters, poets, politicians, cities, mobs, were all occupied with some ideal of beauty, wisdom, freedom, self-government, were striving to realise it, or setting it before themselves in some dream, or playing with it to bewilder their fellow-men. The philosopher, if he belonged to mankind, belonged as remarkably to his own time; he interpreted, methodised, justified its cravings, showed that they had a true foundation, and must have an ultimate satisfaction.

2. **The Macedonian period.** It is quite clear that we enter upon a different stage of the history when Philip appears in it. His name is a sign that the age of individual energy, when pregnant events were transacted in insignificant localities, when the lowest party contests were developing the most permanent and universal principles, had passed away. His name is a signal that an age has come of concentrated organising power, of successful assaults upon freedom, of grand conceptions, of extensive conquests, of what has well been called material sublimity. This age needed its own philosophical expounder and representative. One was provided for it, who was destined to exercise a mightier influence upon after times than upon his own.

3. **Aristotle: his early years.** In the year 367 a young man arrived in Athens who was born at Stagira in Chalcidice. His father was a physician at the court of Amyntas II., king of Macedonia. This youth had already been brought to that court, and had met there Philip, the son of the king, who was a few years younger than himself. But when he was seventeen years of age, no court attractions could keep him from the city in which Plato dwelt, and in which all wisdom was to be found. Perhaps he was almost ashamed of a country which Athenians still affected to consider semi-barbarous.

4. **An Athenian student.** The most scrupulous Athenian could have detected nothing barbarous in the young Aristotle, for a certain defect which was observable in his pronunciation[22] was owing to a lisp. Some difference might be seen between him and an ordinary student, in that he was more attentive to his person, setting off, it would appear, his short and slender figure with the advantages of a somewhat fastidious costume.[23] Small quick eyes, and a sarcastic curl about his lips, were noted as characteristics of him, perhaps the only important characteristics, till Plato, who appears to have been absent on his Sicilian journey, returned and found the most promising pupil who had ever appeared in his school, one whom he surnamed "the reader," and whose philosophical devotion he found it necessary to check rather than excite.

5. **The tutor of Alexander.** Nevertheless Speusippus, not Aristotle, succeeded Plato in the Academy. Aristotle left Athens just at the time, as we have mentioned already, when the triumphs of Philip were becoming terrible to the liberties of Greece. Five years after he was at the court of Philip educating his son Alexander. It is evident that the influence of Aristotle upon Alexander's mind must have been prodigious; that all his subsequent history depended upon the period which elapsed between his fourteenth and his seventeenth year. He came into

[22] τραυλὸς τὴν φωνὴν ὥς φησι Τιμόθεος ὁ Ἀθηναῖος ἐν τῷ Περὶ Βίων.

[23] Ἀλλὰ καὶ ἰσχνοσκελής, φασίν, ἦν, καὶ μικρόμματος· ἐσθῆτί τε ἐπισήμῳ χρώμενος, καὶ δακτυλίοις, καὶ κουρᾷ.

the hands of his master a raw untamed youth, with impulses which no man could understand or govern. He left him a Greek prince, uniting the vigour and accomplishments of the republican period, with the schemes and capacities of his father, with a desire to conquer the world, and with an intellect that was able to effect what he desired. It is not necessary to inquire whether the particular projects of Alexander were inspired or favoured by Aristotle. Even if they were discouraged, it would not be less true that the direction of mind which made the conception or the achievement of them possible, was received from the teacher by one who, without this culture, might have aspired no higher than to be a victor in one of those Olympic contests from which a not very remote ancestor had been excluded.

6. **His later life.** Alexander bestowed upon his master the only reward for these precious gifts which he really prized: he enabled him to make his history of animals a book which should be one of instruction and wonder to all after generations—not least to that of Cuvier and Owen. Every nation which he conquered enriched Aristotle with some new and more valuable facts. It was in Athens that Aristotle husbanded and meditated upon these treasures. There all his great works were written. There he gathered about him a circle of devoted pupils, who listened to his more popular and his more systematic instruction; there he commented upon his predecessors, corresponded with Alexander, endured the misunderstandings of him and his court, suffered domestic sorrows, which he felt as a man, and which give us a personal interest in him; finally underwent the popular charge of impiety, which had caused the banishment of Anaxagoras and the death of Socrates. On this charge Aristotle was summoned before the Areopagus; he declined to appear, and was condemned to death. He retired to Chalcis, and died there in 322 B.C.

SECTION II. RELATION OF ARISTOTLE TO PLATO.

1. **The Dialogue and the Treatise.** A student passing from the works of Plato to those of Aristotle is struck first of all with the entire

absence of that dramatic form and that dramatic feeling with which he has become familiar. The living human beings with whom he has conversed have passed away. Protagoras, Prodicus, and Hippias, are no longer lounging upon their couches amidst groups of admiring pupils; we have no walks along the wall of the city, no readings besides the Ilissus, no lively symposia giving occasion to high discourses about love, no Critias recalling the stories he had heard in the days of his youth, before he became a tyrant, of ancient and glorious republics; above all, no Socrates forming a centre to these various groups, while yet he stands out clear and distinct in his individual character, showing that the most subtle of dialecticians may be the most thoroughly humorous and humane of men. Some little sorrow for the loss of so many clear and beautiful pictures will be felt perhaps by every one. But by far the greater portion of readers will believe that they have an ample compensation in the precision and philosophical dignity of the treatise for the richness and variety of the dialogue. To hear solemn questions treated solemnly; to hear opinions calmly discussed without the interruption of personalities; above all, to have a profound and considerate judge, able, and not unwilling, to pronounce a positive decision upon the evidence before him; this they think a great advantage, and this, and far more than this, they find in Aristotle.

2. **Was Aristotle more practical than his master?** Still we are of opinion that a person who is able to render justice to the method of the master, will, on the whole, be the most likely to appreciate the disciple; at all events we shall not understand either well if we content ourselves with a vague notion that one was a consummate artist, the other a profound practical philosopher. That Plato did not adopt his dialogue form for any artistical purpose, but simply because it was necessary for the development of his idea of science, we have contended already. And we feel it equally necessary, in order that we may claim for Aristotle the true and very noble position which of right belongs to him, not to let it be supposed that his pretensions to be either practical or profound rest upon his want of those qualities, and

his abandonment of that method, by which Plato is distinguished. In common parlance we are wont to consider those most practical whose studies are most connected with real, living, passing questions. Now it was the actual opposition of Sophists, which drove Socrates and Plato to seek for principles not yet recognised, lest they should lose those which they had. Aristotle had the advantage of being able calmly to examine sophistical arguments, because it was the hour in the school for that particular subject to be lectured upon. It was a question of life and death in Plato's day, whether we have something permanent to rest on or not; for men in every town of Greece were abusing the name of Heraclitus in support of the doctrine of a perpetual flux. Aristotle could label this question physical or metaphysical, and patiently balance it against some opposite theory. The Parmenideans forced Plato to investigate the nature and conditions of science, for they threatened it with a hopeless stationariness. Aristotle is under no such alarm; he has merely to make out a system of analytics. It was because the body of Socrates was about to pass through death, that he was led to consider the meaning, and nature, and enduring properties of the soul. Aristotle begins his treatise on the same subject, with inquiring whether it is to be considered in reference to any particular person at all or abstractedly, and whether we are to speak of it physically or dialectically. Without determining which of the two courses we have indicated is the best, we think it must be a violence upon ordinary usage to say that the latter is the more practical.

3. **or more profound?** Neither is the quality of depth precisely that one which we conceive ought to be predicated of Aristotle, when it is our object to contrast him with his predecessor. It was the necessary consequence of Plato's situation, and of the task which had been committed to him, that he was always seeking for principles. The most simple every-day facts puzzled him; nothing that human beings were interested in was beneath his attention: but then it was the meaning of these things, the truth implied in them, which he was continually inquiring after. He found the commonest word that men speak, the

commonest act that men do, unintelligible, except by the light which comes from another region than that in which they are habitually dwelling. Of this feeling there are no traces in Aristotle. To collect all possible facts, to arrange and classify them, was his ambition, and perhaps his appointed function: no one is less tempted to suspect any deep meaning in facts, or to grope after it. In like manner, to get words pressed and settled into a definition is his highest aim: the thought that there is a life in words, that they are connected with the life in us, and may lead at all to the interpretation of its marvels, never was admitted into his mind, or at least never tarried there. In this disposition there may be a comfort and an advantage; but it certainly is not that upon which persons who are careful in the use of language would bestow the epithet "profound."

4. **How far Aristotle reverenced Socrates.** Another prejudice in reference to these great men it is necessary to remove, or we shall not understand their relative positions. It is often fancied—and Aristotle seems not altogether anxious to do away the impression—that Plato's disciple forsook him when he forsook his master; that the later philosophy is in some important respects a return to the simple faith of Socrates. If what we have just said be correct, this notion must be not only wide of the truth, but in direct contradiction to it. The personality of Plato was precisely that quality of his mind and of his writings which he had inherited from Socrates. That he so seldom deviated into abstractions,—that he preserved so strongly the feeling, "we are actual men, wrestling against evil tendencies within, and evil powers without, capable of being educated, and of educating each other into a longing after, and perception of, the perfect Goodness and Truth:" this he owed to Socrates. His own especial work was to connect this personal struggle with the orderly development of principles. It was precisely then with the Socrates in Plato that Aristotle was incapable of feeling sympathy. That he had a general reverence for his good sense, that he recognised him as the useful and victorious opposer of what was mischievous and unphilosophical, and that he sincerely believed

him not to have held certain offensive opinions of his disciple: this we can easily imagine. But that he the least admired the Socratic method, or that all his wisdom could avail to teach him into what conclusions that method must necessarily lead one who habitually followed it, we cannot believe.

5. **Feelings of Aristotle towards Plato.** Though these remarks seem for a moment derogatory to the fame of this wonderful man, they will be found upon reflection to relieve his character from some unjust imputations, to set his actual merits in a clearer light, and to explain the kind of influence which he has exerted, and must always exert, over mankind. There are passages in his works which, in the opinion of over-watchful and sensitive critics, indicate a personal jealousy and dislike of Plato. They remark that he does not introduce his comments upon him in a manly, philosophical spirit, but generally with some of those affected phrases of reluctance which display often more than the strongest vituperation the ill-will that is lurking within. Possibly far less meaning would have been seen in these passages, if the gossiping anecdote-mongers of later Greece had not illustrated them by stories of dissensions between the master and the pupil, which, though obviously derived from a very vulgar invention, or a memory generally treacherous, because always trivial, still unconsciously influence our minds when we have once heard them, and prevent us from fairly looking at the evidence which gives them their only plausibility. Separated from these stories, the quotations we think prove no more than that Aristotle felt a certain irritation and displeasure when he perceived there was something in the words of Plato which his large intellect and immense information did not enable him to comprehend. To be continually haunted with a consciousness of this kind, "In all definable qualities I am equal, nay superior to my predecessor; I have reduced subjects into far greater order, I analyse far more perfectly, I have a far greater store of facts at my command; and yet there is in him something quite *undefinable*, which seems to make an incredible difference between us:" this may, no doubt, have been very vexatious even to an honest and

great mind. For it was not merely the personal humiliation of such a reflection which would be grievous to him, it would jar against his strongest conviction that nothing ought to be incapable of definition, and that whatsoever does defy it can scarcely be of any great worth. While, then, it is no doubt possible that petty quarrels may have been stirred up between two such men by admirers and flatterers, who were equally incapable of understanding either, we have no need of that supposition to account for the sneers and taunts (if such they must be called) which now and then displease us in Aristotle.

6. **The Dialectics of Plato: why different to him and to his disciples.** In conformity with these remarks, it will not be difficult to show wherein the peculiarity of the Stagirite philosophy consisted; how it grew out of the Platonic, how far they are contradictory, how far one occupies a space which the other had left void. We have seen by what steps Plato was led into his high estimate of dialectics. He watched his master maintaining a safe moral position against the attacks of the sophists. To assert realities against appearances and counterfeits was *his* single aim. Keeping this aim steadily before him, he almost unconsciously wrought out a method entirely different from that of previous philosophers. As Plato reflected upon the end which Socrates had proposed to himself, he perceived the full practical meaning of that truth which in terms had been asserted by Xenophanes and others,—that Being is the object of all our inquiries. He saw at the same time how necessary it was to connect the end with the method; for till that method had been practised, Being had been a word, a notion, a negation,—not an object to be really beheld and striven after. Hence the immense importance of bringing that method forward; of presenting it substantively, as it were, to his pupils; not allowing them *merely* to contemplate it as leading to certain results, but as the safe and universal means of arriving at any results. We have alluded to a class of dialogues having this purpose; and these, or something answering to them (*approaching*, it is possible, the nature of ordinary exposition, though we can scarcely believe that Plato *ever* abandoned

the dialogue as his vehicle of instruction), must have been the peculiar study of the Academy, as such, and expressly of the more advanced disciples.[24] Hence there will have grown up among these pupils a feeling respecting dialectics which Plato would have been anxious to discourage, and yet which his own works continually tended to foster. Seeing it used as a key to unlock the secrets of social life, of moral life, of physical life, and seeing likewise the pains which their master took that they should examine the wards of the key, it was most natural that they should think a much fuller and more systematic development of this all-important science was desirable, and even necessary. It would occur to them that there was something like confusion and irregularity in the proceedings of their great teacher. Had he not strangely mixed together inquiries respecting the grounds of morality with statements respecting the nature of science? Surely it would have been much better, much more orderly, that these questions should have been kept distinct, and referred to particular heads. And were there not also some indications of narrowness in Plato, which a more accurate habit of distinction would have delivered him from? **Ambition of greater arrangement and system.** Had not his aversion to some of the usual abuses of rhetoric led him to undervalue the whole art, when it was undoubtedly capable, like every other, of being reduced to strict laws, and must deserve to be contemplated without any reference to its accidental results? The same might be said of his doctrine respecting poetry; the same, still more strongly, of his ill-concealed indifference to physical speculations. If all these subjects could be directly looked at in themselves as distinct branches of human culture, how much increase of knowledge might be expected in each, how much increase of clearness respecting the capacities and limitations of the human intellect!

[24]In the Life of Aristotle, by Mr. Blakesley (published in the Encyclopædia Metropolitana), it has been shown, we think most satisfactorily, that the *acroamatic* treatises of Aristotle differed from the *exoteric* not in the abstruseness or mysteriousness of their subject-matter, but in this, that the one formed part of a course or system, while the others were casual discussions or lectures on a particular thesis. The remark in the text is an extension and adaptation of this doctrine to the case of Plato.

7. **Aristotle satisfies this desire.** Such thoughts, we suppose, may have been at work in the minds of many who frequented the school of Plato. In few they will have borne any fruit, in most of these few the unripe or blighted fruit of some feeble theories, professing to universalise the system of Plato, really proving that their authors knew nothing either of Plato or of themselves. But there was one who was able to make the thoughts of the rest intelligible. To him Platonism will have appeared a needful preparation for a complete and circular philosophy. Its unsystematic character, its imaginative flights, its disregard of certain provinces of thought, will have seemed to him indications of rudeness and infancy. And he will have conceived the thought of assigning to each study its true position, that one which Plato declared and proved to be so important, occupying the first place, being exhibited in its full proportions, and determining the character and treatment of the rest. Dialectics, then, was in some sense the centre of both philosophies. Nor would it be correct to say that Aristotle consciously altered the signification which the word dialectics had borne in the discourses of his predecessor. He only wished to give the study more distinctness and prominence, to exhibit the processes and operations of which it treated apart from any particular applications and results. But in fulfilling this desire, the character of the pursuit became inevitably changed. The feeling of Plato was, There are certain objects presented to my mind; they may be sensible objects, as trees; they may be objects for the understanding merely, as names; but objects they are still—things *thrown in my way*; and I must know what they mean, I must find out the truth of them. For this end I must have dialectics. The object has vanished from before the eyes and mind of Aristotle; he has begun to devote the whole energy of his mind to the contemplation of dialectics in themselves. What is the consequence? The sense of requiring them as the means of escape from the impositions which intercept our views of things as they are, becomes more and more weakened, till at last it disappears altogether. **In doing which he necessarily abandons the Platonical principle.** That principle which

it had been the business of Plato's life to assert against Protagoras and his school, that the mind is not its own standard, that the aspects under which objects present themselves to us do not constitute our knowledge of them, but that we may arrive at an acquaintance with them as they are in themselves; this principle, which had given his dialectics all their meaning, is no longer felt with any potency by his disciple. On the contrary, it is precisely the aspects under which we see and judge of things that he proposes to investigate. He wants to know what are the rules and conditions under which the mind, by its own constitution, considers and discourses. He makes the mind a centre, referring everything to itself, just as those did with whom Plato contended. But he differed from them in this, that their intention was knavish, his most honest. They set up the doctrine that all things are merely as they seem to us, for the purpose of unsettling all faith, and proving the judgment of each individual to be a lawful standard. He sought to convince men that all is not unstable and fluctuating, by showing them that there is a fixed rule to which human judgments must conform, which limits the exercises of individual taste and caprice, which tests and reduces to order those appearances which the Sophist pretended were infinite.

8. **The dialectics of realities and affirmations.** From this statement it will be easily apparent that the definition of dialectics in Plato and Aristotle may be almost the same, and yet that the whole scope and object of the science indicated by this common definition will be different. One as much as the other could say, Dialectics is that science which discovers the difference between the false and the true. But the false in Plato is the semblance which any object presents to the sensualised mind; the true, the very substance and meaning of that object. The false in Aristotle is a wrong *affirmation* concerning any matter whereof the mind takes cognizance; the true, a right *affirmation* concerning the same matter. Hence the dialectic of the one treats of the way whereby we obtain to a clear and vital perception of things; the dialectic of the other treats of the way in which we discourse of things. Words to the one are the means whereby we ascend to an

apprehension of realities of which there are no sensible exponents. Words to the other are the formulas wherein we set forth our notions and judgments. The one desires to ascertain of what hidden meaning the word is an index; the other desires to prevent the word from transgressing certain boundaries which he has fixed for it. Hence it happened that the sense and leading maxim of Plato's philosophy became not only more distasteful, but positively more unintelligible to his wisest disciple, than to many who had never studied in the Academy, or who had set themselves in direct opposition to it. When Aristotle had matured his system of dialectics, there was something in it so perfect and satisfactory, that he could not even dream of anything lying out of its circle, and incapable of being brought under its rules. He felt that he had discovered all the forms under which it is possible to set down any proposition in words, and what there could be besides this, what opening there could be for another region entirely out of the government of these forms, he had no conception. At any rate, if there were such a one, it must be a vague, uninhabited world. To suppose it peopled with other, and those most real and distinct forms, was the extravagance of philosophical delirium. Accordingly, when he speaks of the doctrine of substantial ideas—of ideas, that is to say, which are the grounds of all our forms of thought, and consequently cannot be subject to them—he is reduced to the strange, and for so consummate a logician, most disagreeable necessity of begging the whole question, of arguing that, since these ideas ought to be included under some of the ascertained conditions of logic, and by the hypothesis are not included under any, they must be fictitious.

9. **The worth of both philosophies.** As we proceed we shall have occasion to notice how this primary difference affected the views of these philosophers upon all questions which came under their notice. At present we speak of it in order to show that the methods having a perfectly distinct object, do not of necessity interfere with each other; that the Platonic doctrine is not absurd, because Aristotle could find no place for it in his system; that the labours of Aristotle are not useless

or ill-directed, because they do not supply, as he fancied they did, any satisfaction to the inquiries which Plato had awakened.

SECTION III. THE LOGICAL TREATISES OF ARISTOTLE.

1. **The Aristotelian logic the key to his philosophy.** Every orderly examination of Aristotle must then, we conceive, take its start from his treatises on logic. That these are not the most interesting of the works which he has bequeathed to the world we may easily admit; but, unless something is understood of their nature and purpose, it is scarcely possible to understand the character, the value, and the necessary limitation of his opinions on ethics, on politics, on rhetoric, on poetry. We shall presently quote the opinion of an eminent writer on physical science, to prove that a just estimate of Aristotle's labours in that department depends upon our knowledge of the importance which he attached to the forms of logic. And the settlement of the long-debated question which falls more within the province of this sketch, what precise meaning he attached to the word Metaphysics, or what portion of his thoughts his disciples referred to under that name, can, we think, be hoped for only from a previous examination of his dialectics.

2. **Completeness of these treatises.** In the Berlin edition of Aristotle, the *Categories* occupy the first place. Some doubt has been entertained respecting the genuineness of this treatise, which modern inquiries appear to have removed. It would in many cases afford a reasonable ground of suspicion against a work, that it exactly filled up a gap in a set of acknowledged works by the same author, so that with it they form a complete system of instruction upon the subject which they treat. But it is a set-off against this consideration, that roundness is the great characteristic of Aristotle; and that it is less hard to imagine how a perfect series of his logical writings can have come down to us, than to believe any pupil capable of supplying a void which he had left in it. The difficulty, too, of supposing one man to possess the full mastery of this subject indicated by the successive works which he

has left, is diminished when we remember that the original conception of the study was not his but Zeno's. How naturally that conception arose in a mind which had once entered into the great principle of Xenophanes and Parmenides, that the mind has laws of its own, and is independent of the appearances and determinations of the senses, we have explained already. What more than this discovery, and the application of it in confuting sensible conclusions, may be owing to Zeno, we do not know. It is not impossible that some of the Sophists, while they turned the art to the worst purposes, may have done something for the refinement and improvement of it. In the school of Euclides, not only the practice, but the principles of logic must have been studied and elucidated. With these materials to work upon, it seems nowise incredible that one trained in the school of Plato to the greatest subtlety and precision of thought, and possessing in himself a comprehension and a diligence quite unparalleled, should have been able to produce a design and an edifice which after ages have found it scarcely possible to alter or amend. He had not to raise a science from its foundations; but *lateritiam invenit, marmoream reliquit*, may, perhaps, be said of him with as strict truth as of almost any architect that the world has seen.

3. **The Categories: object of the work.** Now the work on the *Categories* seems to be a fitting vestibule to this building. On entering it, we feel at once that the purpose to which it is consecrated is altogether different from that which Plato has been teaching us to regard as all-important, and we feel that it is a true purpose still. There is a way of penetrating into the nature and essence of things, whether those which present an outward image to my senses, or those, equally real, which merely utter themselves to my mind. With this way Aristotle does not concern himself. But it is equally certain that our mind forms notions and conceptions about the things belonging to both these kinds which it contemplates, and it may be that these conceptions themselves are subject to certain rules. They may be defined and classified; there may be a general set of conceptions to which all particular conceptions

will refer themselves. This Aristotle affirms to be the case. Under the ten notions of Substance, Quantity, Quality, Relation, Time, Place, Position, Possession, Action, Passion, he says you may reduce all your notions. Now a Platonist is very likely to ask, "But what do these words Substance, Quantity, &c. themselves signify?" "How do I know what Substance is, better than I know what a man or a horse is?" "Quantity, better than I know what three cubits long is?" And these are questions which, as we shall find hereafter, had need to be asked, and were asked with effect and advantage when the Aristotelian province of thought had endeavoured to bring all other provinces within it. But for any further purpose than for destroying this pretension they are impertinent. When I study an actual man, or an actual horse, the substance is doubtless the *x* or unknown quantity which I am inquiring after; to assume that I know it, is to stop all investigation. But I understand the *name* substance, as well as I understand the *name* man or horse. And who told you that, because there is a science of *things*, there is not a science of *names*? that there are not laws of dependence and affinity among them? and that conformity or nonconformity to these laws is not exactly what we mean by coherent or incoherent discourse? There is no alternative between the assertion, that the desire so deeply implanted in us of arrangement and classification, is a mere disease, or the belief that it arises from the sense of certain limitations and conditions to which our minds themselves are subject, and is another name for the wish to understand what they are.

4. **Such a work necessary.** The rules of grammar, the terminology of every art and science, the very attempt to be intelligible, presume these. And there is no safety from the efforts of men to invent divisions and schemes of thought, no safety for the great principles and laws, which these dividers and schemers are continually narrowing and stifling, but in the clear and steady perception of certain necessary boundaries not imposed upon us by our fellow-men, but by the nature of our own understandings. Let, then, the reader carefully consider this work on the *Categories*. Let him ask himself whether it has not the

effect of clearing his mind, and that in no ordinary degree, respecting his own modes of speech; whether it does not lead him to feel, more than he did before, that his words, winged though they be, can take no chance flight, but must move along an appointed preordained path; and, therefore, whether there be not a witness in himself that Aristotle has a distinct and reasonable end of his own, which it is very much for our interest to be acquainted with.

5. **Logic based on facts.** From the investigation of these general forms under which we reduce all the notions that enter our minds, he proceeds in his treatise Περὶ Ἑρμηνείας, to inquire respecting the mode of our affirmations and denials. In this treatise he developes the nature and limitations of propositions, the meaning of contraries and contradictories, the force of affirmations and denials, in impossible, contingent, and necessary matter. We have no excuse for dwelling on works of a merely formal character, but we mention them for the purpose of pressing the important remark of Archbishop Whateley on our readers, that the two books of Ἀναλυτικὰ Πρότερα develope the syllogistic principle and process. Aristotle is not the mere inventor of an art, but the masterly expounder of the facts upon which that art rests, and but for which it would have no meaning. He does not teach us how to make propositions, but what propositions are, and necessarily must be, according to the conditions of the human intellect.

He does not tell us how to make syllogisms, but how we do syllogise, when we do not violate the laws of our mind as much as we should violate the laws of our body, if we tried to walk upon our heads instead of upon our feet.

6. **The later analytics.** But Aristotle perceived that this analysis of our mental operations was not sufficient. He had told us how we *discourse*, but he had not told us how we *know*. Are these forms of logic themselves knowledge? Is the syllogistic demonstration the same thing with science? Or, is one kind of it science? Or, are the results of it science? Or, are there certain premises assumed in it which also do or may belong to science? What are these? how do we get at

them? Such are the important inquiries which occupy Aristotle in his Ἀναλυτικὰ Ὕστερα. We shall endeavour to seize a few of those points in the investigation which will best enable the reader to estimate the character of Aristotle's mind, and to see how he stands related as well to his great master, as to the expounder of the inductive philosophy.

7. The treatise opens thus:—Πᾶσα διδασκαλία καὶ πᾶσα μάθησις διανοητικὴ ἐκ προϋπαρχούσης γίνεται γνώσεως· φανερὸν δὲ τοῦτο θεωροῦσιν ἐπὶ πασῶν· αἵ τε γὰρ μαθηματικαὶ τῶν ἐπιστημῶν διὰ τούτου τοῦ τρόπου παραγίνονται καὶ τῶν ἄλλων ἑκάστη τεχνῶν· ὁμοίως δὲ καὶ περὶ τοὺς λόγους οἵ τε διὰ συλλογισμῶν καὶ οἱ δι' ἐπαγωγῆς· ἀμφότεροι γὰρ διὰ προγινωσκομένων ποιοῦνται τὴν διδασκαλίαν, οἱ μὲν λαμβάνοντες ὡς παρὰ ξυνιέντων, οἱ δὲ δεικνύντες τὸ καθόλου διὰ τοῦ δῆλον εἶναι τὸ καθ' ἕκαστον· ὡς δ' αὕτως καὶ οἱ Ῥητορικοὶ συμπείθουσιν· ἢ γὰρ διὰ παραδειγμάτων ὅ ἐστι ἐπαγωγὴ ἢ δι' ἐνθυμημάτων ὅπερ ἐστὶ συλλογισμός. There are two very important words in the opening clause of this sentence which we imagine were carefully distinguished in the school from which Aristotle came, διδασκαλία and μάθησις. We feel confident, also, that the last being, by the force of its name, the method of learning and acquisition, would have uniformly taken precedence of the other, which points to the communication of knowledge. That the order is here changed, that διδασκαλία is put foremost as if it included the other within itself, is a very significant circumstance, which is an explanation of much that follows. **How Plato and Aristotle differed in their views of mathematics.** Plato, it is well known, had a profound reverence for mathematics. He was wont to say, "Let no man undisciplined in geometry enter the halls of philosophy." Now we cannot account for this admiration unless we suppose him to have perceived in the mathematical process something akin to his own method. But this resemblance certainly does not lie in that which we are wont to call the mathematical demonstration, it does not lie in the machinery of axioms, definitions, hypotheses, propositions. This machinery, valuable as it is, has scarcely a Socratic element in it. What remains? Plato, we conceive, would have answered, Exactly

that which is the essence of mathematics, exactly the μάθησις. For this demonstration is but the διδασκαλία, a necessary and inseparable accident of the science, but implying the presence of something else and unmeaning without it. The μάθησις is the process whereby in any particular triangle I arrive at this as one of the laws which belong to it as a triangle, that its three angles are equal to two right angles; the διδασκαλία is the formal verbal enunciation of that law, and the confirmation of it by certain deductions from previously admitted premises. In this sense mathematics would seem to him not indeed *the* science, but the best preparation for it, because it recognises certain permanent forms and principles existing in visible objects, which we are capable of entering into and discovering. Now Aristotle, as we have often hinted, perceives only the forms and laws of our mind. That, consequently, which was the subordinate and accessory part of mathematics in the judgment of his master, became in his judgment the whole. He looks upon mathematics simply in reference to the demonstrations; the characteristic of mathematics is that it deals with necessary matter. If you ask why necessary, the only answer you can get is, that it starts ultimately from some self-evident propositions. So that, after all, the proposition, a mode of our own mind, becomes the ultimate ground of all things. Or if you will find out a Hercules' pillar beyond these, you have the *Categories*. Pent within these limits, it becomes difficult to grasp the meaning of science. Aristotle feels the difficulty, and with his usual honesty does not evade it. **Is knowledge the result of syllogism?** He acknowledges that it may puzzle us to tell whether science is only that which we obtain after a series of satisfactory syllogisms, or whether the premises assumed in those syllogisms must not of themselves be entitled to the same character. And he can only say, that we must deal fairly with facts, and that what we are bound to assume as known, we do actually in some sort know. Ultimate knowledge, then, as well as primary knowledge, the most perfect truth which the philosopher can attain, as well as the point from which he starts, is still a proposition. All knowledge seems to be included under the two forms,—knowledge

that it is so; knowledge *why* it is so. Neither of these can, of course, include the knowledge at which Plato is aiming, knowledge which is correlative with Being—a knowledge not *about* things, or persons, but *of* them.

8. **Sensible perception: is it knowledge?** But if these forms of our mind are the ground of our knowledge, we cannot at once arrive at them. What are the steps? Here comes in the Aristotelian doctrine about sensible objects. Our perception of these is not strictly to be called knowledge; that word, whether used about premises or conclusions, the data of a syllogism or its results, has still reference to what is universal. Our sensible apprehensions refer only to particulars, to individuals. But from these, which are the most evident to us, we come to the more general by a process of induction. What this induction is, and how entirely it differs from that process which bears the same name in the writings of Bacon, the reader will perceive the more he studies the different writings of Aristotle. He will find, first, that the sensible *phenomenon* is taken for granted as a safe starting-point. That phenomena are not principles, Aristotle believed as strongly as we could. But to suspect phenomena, to suppose that they need sifting and probing in order that we may know what the fact is which they denote, this is no part of his system. The sensible impression was to him satisfactory, not indeed to rest in, but as a true beginning; all the difference between those who acquiesce in it and the most consummate philosopher, lay in the use which the latter made of his power of generalising and syllogising. **The Aristotelian induction.** It is in this way that Aristotle has become the parent of all the modern schools of sensible philosophy, which schools have, nevertheless, drawn their very best and most convincing arguments from the errors into which Aristotle and the Aristotelians were led by the adoption of their own hypothesis. The first book of Locke may be justly said to be an elaborate and satisfactory exposure of the notions into which the Stagirite school is driven, by its determination to recognise no foundation of truth but sense and experience. They were too learned and thoughtful not to

perceive that universal forms are in some way or other demanded by the mind; and because they would not acknowledge them as the grounds of our mind, they were forced to seek for them in the mind, and thus to conceive them in the shape of propositions. Hence the fancy of an innate notion that whatever is, is; that the whole is greater than its part, &c.; a fancy which Mr. Locke has confuted amidst such shouts of triumph from his admirers, while he was, in fact, conspiring with Aristotle to disparage the principle which delivers us from such fallacies. But we are anticipating a future page of our sketch.

9. **The Topics.** These later analytics deal, it will be seen, entirely with demonstrative reasoning. The *Topics*, a much longer work, refer wholly to probable reasoning. On this subject Aristotle, it seems to us, is much more at home than on the other. We have intimated our suspicion that he never did possess or could possess the idea of Science. It lay altogether out of his province; when he tried to grapple with it he necessarily brought it within conditions and forms which robbed it of its very essence. But no one ever did so much as he to give a scientific form and semblance to those subjects which are by their nature not scientific. No one ever did so much to give our thoughts precision and clearness respecting all the wavering and fluctuating matters that fall within the domain of opinion and of ordinary conduct. When we look at the *Topics*, we are brought to confess (not without a certain reluctance) that there is no method of persuasion or human discourse so loose and random but that it may be subjected to analysis, and shown to involve certain inevitable limitations. Undoubtedly there is some justification for our discontent with these resolute reductions of all our thoughts and arguments to a system; we feel that the vital power is not there; **Probable reasoning reduced to rules.** that what really brings men into consent with either a falsehood or a truth, the energy and conviction of him who utters it is taken no account of, and that the habit of contemplating arguments without reference either to the truth of that which they are meant to establish, or to the moral influence which they exert, is somewhat hardening and deadening to the mind. But we

shall find that the work of a thorough master in this line, like Aristotle, will, on the whole, produce a good effect. He so entirely understands himself and what he is able to do, that we cannot commit the mistake which inferior writers often draw us into, of fancying that nothing is wanted but what he tells us. His exquisite dissections teach us what more blundering dissectors might not; that there is something which cannot be dissected. To understand Aristotle rightly, the *Topics* should be read together with the three books on Rhetoric. We cannot speak of that work now, because so much of the moral and political wisdom of Aristotle is presumed in it. Nevertheless it is closely connected with this work on probable arguments. The *Topics* are to it what the six books of Euclid are to a treatise on practical mechanics. Now, though it may seem strange to talk of a geometry expressly for a rhetorician, and though we have already shown in what sense geometry was very alien from the habits of Aristotle's mind, yet we cannot help seeing that just so far as a person who has the faculty of persuasion can be taught that his is not a mere craft, but has maxims and laws to govern it, he will become at any rate less mischievous, and may become a sincere, true-minded man. In another point of view the *Topics* give that roundness and completeness to the logical system of Aristotle which we said that he evidently desired, and had in so remarkable a manner realised.

SECTION IV. THE PHYSICS OF ARISTOTLE.

1. **Extract from Dr. Whewell.** A short treatise on *Sophistical Proofs* winds up the series of Aristotle's works on logic. Then follow his voluminous writings on physics. In these we have no direct interest. To show, however, how the logical ideas of Aristotle affected his views in this department, we shall take the liberty of extracting a passage from Dr. Whewell's *History of the Inductive Sciences*, vol. i. sec. 2; "The Aristotelian Physical Philosophy."

2. **The books on physical facts.** "The principal treatises of Aristotle are, the eight books of *Physical Lectures*, the four books *Of the Heavens*, the two books *Of Production and Destruction*, for the book *Of the World*

is now universally acknowledged to be spurious, and the *Meteorologics*, though full of physical explanations of natural phenomena, does not exhibit the doctrines and reasonings of the schools in so general a form; the same may be said of the *Mechanical Problems*. The treatises on the various subjects of natural history, *On Animals, On the Parts of Animals, On Plants, On Physiognomies, On Colours, On Sounds*, contain an extraordinary accumulation of facts, and manifest a wonderful power of systematising; but are not works which expound principles, and therefore do not require to be here considered.

3. **The Physical Lectures.** "The *Physical Lectures* are the works concerning which the well-known anecdote is related by Simplicius, a Greek commentator of the sixth century, as well as by Plutarch. It is said that Alexander the Great wrote to his former tutor to this effect: 'You have not done well in publishing these *Lectures*, for how shall we, your pupils, excel other men if you make that public to all which we learned from you?' To this Aristotle is said to have replied: 'My *Lectures* are published and not published; they will be intelligible to those who heard them and to none beside.' This may very easily be a story inscribed and circulated among those who found the works beyond their comprehension; and it cannot be denied that to make out the meaning and reasoning of every part would be a task very laborious and difficult, if not impossible. But we may follow the import of a large portion of the work with sufficient clearness to apprehend the character and principles of the reasoning; and this is what I shall endeavour to do.

4. **His use of words.** "The author's introductory statement of his view of the nature of philosophy falls in very closely with what has been said, that he takes his facts and his generalisations as they are implied in the structure of language. 'We must in all cases proceed,' he says, 'from what is known to what is unknown.' This will not be denied; but we can hardly follow him in his inference. He adds, 'We must proceed, therefore, from universal to particular. And something of this,' he pursues, 'may be seen in language; for names signify

things in a general and indefinite manner, as *circles*, and by defining we unfold them into particulars.' He illustrates this by saying, 'thus children at first call all men *father*, and all women *mother*, but afterwards distinguish.'

5. "In accordance with this view he endeavours to settle several of the great questions concerning the universe, which had been started among subtle and speculative men, by unfolding the meaning of the words and phrases which are applied to the most general notions of things and relations. We have already noticed this method. **A void.** A few examples will illustrate it further. Whether there was or was not a void, or place without matter, had already been debated among rival sects of philosophers. The antagonist arguments were briefly these: there must be a void because a body cannot move into a space except it is empty, and therefore without a void there could be no motion; and, on the other hand, there is no void, for the intervals between bodies are filled with air, and air is something. These opinions had even been supported by reference to experiment. On the one hand, Anaxagoras and his school had shown, that air when confined resisted compression, by squeezing a blown bladder, and pressing down an inverted vessel in the water; on the other hand, it was alleged that a vessel full of fine ashes held as much water as if the ashes were not there, which could only be explained by supposing void spaces between the ashes. Aristotle decides that there is no void on such arguments as this:—In a void there could be no differences of up and down; **How Aristotle proves that there is none.** for as in nothing there are no differences, so there are none in a privation or negation; but a void is merely a privation or negation of matter; therefore, in a void, bodies could not move up and down, which it is in their nature to do. It is easily seen that such a mode of reasoning elevates the familiar forms of language, and the intellectual connections of terms to a supremacy over facts; making truth depend upon whether terms are or are not primitive, and whether we say that bodies fall naturally. In such a philosophy every new result of observation would be compelled to conform to the usual

combinations of phrases as they had been associated by the modes of apprehension previously familiar.

6. **Before and After.** "It is not intended here to intimate that the common modes of apprehension, which are the basis of common language, are limited and casual. They imply, on the contrary, universal and necessary conditions of our perceptions and conceptions; thus all things are necessarily apprehended as existing in time and space, and as connected by relations of cause and effect; and, so far as the Aristotelian philosophy reasons from these assumptions, it has a real foundation, though even in this case the conclusions are often insecure. We have one example of this reasoning in the eighth book, where he says that there never was a time in which change and motion did not exist; 'for if all things were at rest, the first motion must have been produced by some change in some of these things; that is, there must have been a change before the first change:' and again, 'How can *before* and *after* apply where time is not? or how can time be when motion is not?' 'If,' he adds, 'time is a mensuration of motion, and if time be eternal, motion must be eternal.' But we have sometimes principles introduced of a more arbitrary character, and, besides the general relations of thought, the inventions of previous speculators are taken for granted; such, for instance, as the then commonly received opinions concerning the frame of the world. From the assertion that motion is eternal, proved in the manner just stated, Aristotle proceeds by a curious train of reasoning to identify this eternal motion with the diurnal motion of the heavens. 'There must,' he says, 'be something which is the first moved;' this follows from the relation of causes and effects. Again, 'Motion must go on constantly, and therefore must be either continuous or successive. Now what is continuous is more properly said to take place *constantly*, than what is successive. **Better and Worse.** Also the continuous is better; but we always suppose that which is better to take place in nature, if it be possible.' We see here the vague judgment of *better* and *worse* introduced, as that of *natural* and *unnatural* was before into physical reasonings.

7. **Circularity of motion.** "I proceed with Aristotle's argument, 'We have now, therefore, to show that there may be an infinite, single, continuous motion, and that this is circular.' This is, in fact, proved, as may readily be conceived, from the consideration that a body may go on habitually revolving regularly in a circle. And thus we have a demonstration, on the principles of this philosophy, that there is and must be a first mover, revolving eternally with a uniform circular motion.

"Though this kind of philosophy may appear too trifling to deserve being dwelt upon, it is important for our purpose so far to exemplify it that we may afterwards advance, conscious that we have done it no injustice.

8. **Elements of the universe.** "I will now pass from the doctrines relating to the motions of the heavens to those which concern the material elements of the universe. And here it may be remarked, that the tendency (of which we are here tracing the development) to extract speculative opinions from the relations of words must be very natural to man; for the very widely-accepted doctrine of the four elements, which appears to be founded upon the opposition of the adjectives *hot* and *cold, wet* and dry, is much older than Aristotle, and was probably one of the earliest of philosophical dogmas. The great master of this philosophy, however, puts the opinion in a more systematic manner than his predecessors.

9. **Contrarieties.** "'We seek,' he says, 'the principles of sensible things, that is, of tangible bodies. We must take, therefore, not all the contrarieties of quality, but those only which have reference to the touch. Thus black and white, sweet and bitter, do not differ as tangible qualities, and therefore must be rejected from our consideration.

"'Now the contrarieties of quality which refer to the touch are these, hot, cold; dry, wet; heavy, light; hard, soft; unctuous, meagre; rough, smooth; dense, rare.' He then proceeds to reject all but the four first of these, for various reasons; heavy and light because they are not active and passive qualities; the others because they are combinations

of the four first, which, therefore, he infers to be the four elementary qualities.

"'Now in four things there are six combinations of two; but the combinations of two opposites, as hot and cold, must be rejected; we have, therefore, four elementary combinations which agree with the four apparently elementary bodies; air is hot, wet, (for steam is air,) water is cold and wet, and earth is cold and dry.'

10. **Bacon infected by this nominalism.** "It may be remarked that this disposition to assume that some common elementary quality must exist in the cases in which we habitually apply a common adjective, as it began before the reign of the Aristotelian philosophy, so also survived its influence. Not to mention other uses, it would be difficult to free Bacon's *Inquisitio in Naturam Calidi*, 'Examination of the Nature of Heat,' from the charge of confounding together very different classes of phenomena under the cover of the word *hot*.

"The rectification of these opinions concerning the elementary composition of bodies belongs to an advanced period in the history of physical knowledge, even after the revival of its progress.

11. **Absolute and relative levity.** "The Aristotelian doctrines concerning motion are still founded upon the same mode of reasoning from adjectives; but in this case the result follows, not only from the opposition of the words, but also from the distinction of their being *absolutely* and *relatively* true. 'Former writers,' says Aristotle, 'have considered heavy and light *relatively* only, taking cases where both things have weight, but one is lighter than the other; and they imagine that in this way they defined what was *absolutely* (ἁπλῶς) heavy and light.' We now know that things which rise by their lightness do so only because they are pressed upwards by heavier surrounding bodies; and this assumption of absolute levity, which is evidently gratuitous, or rather merely nominal, entirely vitiated the whole of the succeeding reasoning. The inference was that fire must be absolutely light, since it tends to take its place above the three other elements; earth absolutely heavy, since it tends to take its place below fire, air, and water. The

philosopher argued also with great acuteness that air, which tends to take its place below fire and above water, must do so *by its nature*, and not in virtue of any combination of heavy and light elements. For if air was composed of two parts, which give fire its levity, joined to other parts which produce gravity, we might assume a quantity of air so large that it should be lighter than a similar quantity of fire, having more of the light parts. It thus follows that each of the four elements tends to take its own place, fire being the highest, air the next, water the next, and earth the lowest. The whole of this train of errors arises from fallacies which have a verbal origin; from considering light as opposite to heavy, and from considering levity as a quality of a body, instead of as the effect of surrounding bodies."

SECTION V. THE METAPHYSICS OF ARISTOTLE.

1. These remarks of Dr. Whewell's show how necessarily the method of Aristotle obstructed the true observation and interpretation of nature. **The two senses of the word Metaphysics** To us they are important chiefly from the connection which has always been felt to exist between the physical treatises and those which by Aristotle himself, or some disciple, are classed under the name of Metaphysical. These latter writings have been the subject of much dispute. Some have supposed that they owe their name to an accidental juxtaposition with the books on Physics, among which it was evident that they could not conveniently be classed; some to a feeling in the mind of Aristotle, that he was ascending into a region above and beyond that in which he had been dwelling previously.

2. One of his early commentators appears to adopt both explanations of the title.[25] He says, "The object of this treatise is theological. Herein Aristotle theologises. The order is this: we make our beginning from those things which naturally are the last, seeing that these are the better known to us. For this reason, then, he discoursed to us first

[25] The Scholia of Asclepius after Ammonius. Ammonius belongs to the fifth century A.D., Asclepius to the sixth.

concerning physical matters, for these are last by nature, but to us first. But this present subject is first in nature, but to us last, since the imperishable things are older than the perishable, and the ungenerated than the generated. **Old opinions on the question.** Wherefore Aristotle discoursed to us first concerning those things that are moved without an order (in his book on *Meteors*); then again concerning those things which are moved according to an order or system (in the work on the *Heavens*, concerning the stars and the spheres); and finally in this treatise he discourses to us concerning those things which are in all cases immovable. Now this is theology, for such a study befits the gods. For this reason the work is inscribed *After-the-Physics* (Μετὰ τὰ φυσικά); seeing that he first discoursed to us concerning the physical things, then consecutively concerning this; it is proper, therefore, to read it after the physical treatises: this the title shows." Another of the scholiasts is more decisive: "This work is entitled Μετὰ τὰ φυσικά, not in reference to the character of the book, but to the order in reading it, for he treats concerning physical *principles*." These hints, if considered in connection with the books themselves, will, we conceive, explain the origin of the two theories, and in a great degree reconcile them. We shall see as we proceed in what sense Aristotle "theologises;" in what sense he treats of things "unmoved," and therefore not physical; or in what sense he treats of physical "principles."

3. **The first book.** The first Book of the Metaphysics, or that which we reasonably suppose to be the first from its style and method, ascends from an investigation of the words Art and Experience (words which we shall meet with again in the Ethics), to an examination of the word Wisdom or σοφία. Wisdom is the knowledge about certain causes and principles. The question seems to follow of course, What kinds of causes or principles? But this question Aristotle thinks that he has answered implicitly already. **Experience and Wisdom.** Sense and experience take cognizance of individual cases; wisdom rises to the first causes and the first principles—those that are most universal, those that lie furthest from mere casual observation. We must continue

in his own very striking words: "Through Wonder, men both now and heretofore began to philosophise. At first, indeed, they wondered at the more difficult things which lay close by them, then went on by little and little, inquiring concerning greater things, as concerning the changes of the moon, or about the sun, and the stars, and the generation of the universe. But he that is at a loss and that wonders, thinks that he is ignorant. Wherefore also the lover of wisdom (the philosopher) is in some sort a lover of fables, for the fable consists of wonders. Now, seeing they philosophised for the sake of escaping ignorance, it is evident that they pursued knowledge for the sake of knowing, and not for the sake of any advantage. The fact supports this conclusion; this kind of wisdom began to be sought out, when things sufficient for occupation and leisure were already provided. Just as we say that a man is free who exists for his own sake and not for the sake of another, so this is the only knowledge which is perfectly free, for it is the only one which exists purely for its own sake. Wherefore the possession of it may be justly considered as not pertaining to man. For oftentimes the nature of men is servile; so that, according to Simonides, 'God alone would have this prize, and it is unworthy not to seek that (to be content with that) knowledge which is appropriate to him.'

"If indeed the poets say truly that the Divine Nature is envious, Simonides must be right, and all over-learned people must be unhappy. But the Divine Nature *cannot* be envious; rather, as the proverb says, 'the poets lie;' nor is it fitting to think any study more honourable than this, for that which is most godlike is also most honourable. Now science may be godlike in two ways; godlike because it is that thing which God hath above all others, or because it is itself the knowledge of the Divine. This fulfils both these conditions, for God seems to be a sort of beginning of causes, and God will possess this kind of knowledge alone or chiefly. All kinds of knowledge then are more needful than this (for common purposes), but none is better."

4. **The "Wise Man" of Aristotle.** The wise man now presented to us is not the old Greek sage who could overreach his fellows and build up

a tyranny; he is not the anxious questioner in all different directions, "Where is wisdom found?" he is not the Sophist who brings all different kinds of knowledge to the market, and sells them to the highest bidder, under a pledge that they will procure him power and the fruits of power; he is not the Socratic philosopher asking all the things that he sees for the meaning or truth which is latent in them; he is not the Platonic philosopher seeking for that which keeps knowledge, society, nature, at one. He is a man who must be carefully distinguished from, and opposed to, the man of business or practice (a person, nevertheless, to be highly prized in his way), who has a function altogether his own, a function which raises him to an almost Divine level, and makes him the one fit beholder of that which is Divine. If we ask what this is, the answer we receive is, the Divine is *the Cause*, that which lies beneath all other causes, that which is not subject to accident, movement, the law of growth; that which is the original root of all things. Here we have the Aristotelian theology.

5. **The Aristotelian theology and metaphysics one.** But this theology is by the definition *Metaphysics*. It comes after physics in the order of its discovery: after physics because it is implied in them; after physics because it is beyond them. Yet for this very reason it cannot be separated from them; you do not know what it is except by considering it in its relation to them. We have been careful hitherto to use the name as little as we might, at least in our sketch of Greek inquirers. It is dangerous to anticipate a name. The time will come, we may be sure, when it will be imposed if it is wanted. Soon a definer of boundaries will certainly appear, to say, "This is Morals;" "This is Physics;" "This is Metaphysics." When he appears, if he is a man who shows he has a right to be heard, we must of course listen to him. But his accurate limitations will be far less intelligible to us, we shall not appreciate them as they deserve, if we have not allowed previous students to take their own course and explain themselves. In general, however grateful we may be to our teacher for telling us what we are to call and are not to call each thing that comes before us, we must be careful of taking

him as the interpreter of his predecessors. He has a service of his own to render us, but it is involved in the nature of this service that he should be an overstrict disciplinarian, insisting that guerilla troops whose worth consists in their sudden and irregular appearance, should conform to the rules of regular warfare; compelling those whose order is quite as strict as his own, but altogether different from it, to adopt his signs and divisions under peril of being treated as disobedient and lawless.

6. **Review of previous philosophies** This remark is especially applicable to an able review of the previous Greek philosophers, which is contained in the first book of the Metaphysics. Causes, Aristotle says, are fourfold: 1. The substance of a thing, or that which constitutes it. 2. The matter of a thing, or that which is the needful condition of it. 3. The source whence the motion of anything proceeds. 4. The reason, or purpose, or good of its existence. No one can deny the value of this classification for Aristotelian purposes, nor that it may help, if used with moderation, to clear the mind of any student respecting his own objects. But Aristotle believes that one or other of these courses of inquiry *was* followed by each school of Greek thinkers, and was considered by that school as the only and all-sufficient method. Thus the Ionic philosophers studied the matter of things in hopes of discovering a primary element to which all other things might be referred. Those of this class who selected fire as their element, were naturally led by the effects which they observed resulting from that power, to speculate upon the meaning and mystery of Motion. Hence a new kind of inquiry was started, which proceeded, however, much in the spirit of those respecting elements, till Anaxagoras discovered the necessity of an Intelligence to set physical agents in movement. As, however, he had only recourse to this ultimate principle when other instruments failed him, the Atomic theory, which furnished a more plausible explanation of the facts of nature than his Homœomeriæ, easily supplanted them. Between this theory and that which affirmed Numbers to be the first principles of things, Aristotle appears to detect

a connection, one not well supported by chronology. That doctrine of numbers he considers the first form of the inquiry after the essence or substance of things. The archetypal ideas of the Platonists, who regarded numbers as a kind of intervening powers between sensible things and pure essences, is the second and higher form of it. The inquiry respecting the object or purpose of things had not, he imagines, been pursued distinctly by any class of his predecessors, but it had entered somewhat confusedly into the speculations of them all.

7. **Objection to Aristotle's classification.** Now if Socrates was, as we have maintained, the keystone of Greek speculations—an opinion which derives support from many passages in Aristotle himself—this historical sketch, however ingenious, cannot be correct. For in it Socrates is merely an interloper; of right therefore only mentioned in a parenthesis, as chiefly devoting himself to ethical inquiries, Plato's intellectual descent being traced, not through him, to the Ionian and Heraclitan schools. Throughout this treatise Aristotle shows a want of sympathy with his predecessors, which must have made it impossible for him to understand those complicated thoughts and anxieties, even if he had not been determined to arrange them, and therefore became needlessly irritated with those whose vagrant habits defied arrangement. But his hints respecting other men are very important helps in becoming acquainted with himself. The Metaphysics of Aristotle are troublesome reading, partly from the frequent repetitions which occur in them, partly from the difficulty of discovering a sequence in the books. Nevertheless they should be read by any student who wishes to investigate the questions which have occupied men in later times. We shall illustrate our previous remarks by tracing a very rude outline of the subjects which are discussed in them, and recording some of the solutions Aristotle has given of the difficulties which he starts.

8. **The theoretic and practical man.** A kind of appendix which follows the first book contains a proof that causes are not infinite, that there is consequently a possibility of carrying on that inquiry in which past philosophers had engaged. The same short book contains

some important remarks upon the manner in which the search was to be conducted, upon the contributions to truth which each school may have made, upon the advantages which a philosopher may derive from attending even to popular notions, upon the dislike which some have to exact mathematical reasoning, and the determination of others to have nothing else, and upon the proper limitation of mathematical accuracy to things without matter. We have here also the clear announcement of a principle which the student of Aristotle has need to keep constantly in recollection, θεωρητικῆς μὲν τέλος ἀλήθεια, πρακτικῆς δ' ἔργον. He adds an explanation, which still further illustrates his meaning, and makes the difference between him and his master more conspicuous, that the practical man has nothing to do with the eternal or the absolute, but only with the relative. This book ends with a promise of an inquiry into the meaning of the word Nature, which is not, however, fulfilled in that which is commonly placed next to it.

9. **Problems for solution.** This second book is a collection of doubts or questions to be hereafter resolved. The first doubt is, whether it is the business of one science, or of more, to inquire into all kinds of causes or principles. This question involves the very subject of the whole treatise. So many different subjects seem to be included in that province to which the general name σοφία has been given—matters purely belonging to the senses, the causes of motion, the nature of Being, the reason and purpose of things—how is it possible to suppose a single science dealing with principles apparently not admitting either of analogy or contrast? Secondly, are we to look upon the most comprehensive Genera to which individual things can be referred, or upon the atoms of which they consist, as their Principles? The third question is connected with this, is there anything besides individual things? If not, how can they be known, for are not individual things infinite, and is not knowledge of that which is one and universal? Fourthly, are the principles of things perishable, and of things imperishable, the same? Fifthly (which is the great question of all), are Being and Unity the

essences of things that are, and not distinguishable from them; or are we to seek for the τὸ ὄν and τὸ ἕν as if they had each a distinct nature? Sixthly, are numbers, bodies, planes, and points, substances or not? Such are the general controversies of which we are to hope for some settlement in the books that follow.

10. The third book may be considered an answer to the first question. There is a science which contemplates Existence *as* Existence, and whatever appertains to it in reference to it; not like other sciences, merely the attributes of certain particular existences. There are, he says, certain things peculiar to Being as Being, and these are things concerning which it is the philosopher's function to investigate the truth. **The Dialectician, the Philosopher, and the Sophist.** The dialectician and the sophist resemble indeed the philosopher; Being is the common subject-matter to all three. They *discourse* concerning the subjects which are in a peculiar sense his property. The dialectical δύναμις differs from the philosophical in its nature; the sophistical in the intention of him who uses it, ἔστι δὲ ἡ διαλεκτικὴ πειραστικὴ περὶ ὧν ἡ φιλοσοφία γνωριστική, ἡ δὲ σοφιστικὴ φαινομένη, οὖσα δ' οὔ. This is an important passage as illustrating the difference between the Platonic and the Aristotelian dialectics. According to Plato dialectics was *the* human science, the science of the philosopher as such. σοφία in its essence belongs to God. Aristotle, we see, discovers a difference between dialectics and the highest philosophy, and inevitably; for, as his dialectic treats only of the forms of human thought, as it deals with knowledge merely in the sense of the powers and means of knowing possessed by us, there must be another science concerning the objects of knowledge as such. But then, in this science also, the objects cease to be objects; they become *subjects* for man's contemplation; they become Metaphysics or Ontology. The hint respecting the *Sophist* contained in this sentence should also be compared with the elaborate exhibition of his character and functions in the dialogue between the Eleatic stranger and Theætetus. It connects itself with the inquiry, whether mathematical axioms are subjects of inquiry for the

Ontologist or highest philosopher. The answer is in the affirmative. Those axioms were assumed by the mathematician. The student of physics sometimes meddles with them, but rashly and presumptuously; they are first principles, and as such are cognizable only by the person whose office we are defining. Now as it was the especial delight of the Sophist to deny axioms, to say that the same thing could be and not be, this becomes the natural place for settling his pretensions. Consistently with their characteristic difference, Aristotle represents him, not in Plato's manner, as one who invents counterfeit images of that which is, but as one who attributes accidents to accidents instead of to substances. We can scarcely conceive two portraits of the same person so correct and felicitous, and yet expressing so thoroughly the manner and principle of the respective artists.

11. **Definitions.** The fourth book is a book of definitions. We can only convey a notion of its importance by giving a list of the words defined. They are Principle (ἀρχή), Cause, Element, Nature, Necessity, Unity, Being, Substance, Sameness, Opposition, First and Last, Power, Quantity, Quality, Relation, Perfection, Limitation, Τὸ καθ'ὅ (*secundum quid*); [the meaning is easily understood from Touchstone's words in *As You Like It*, "In respect that it is of the country it is a good life, but in respect that it is not of the court it is a vile life," &c.] Disposition, Habit, Passion, Privation, Inclusion, Derivation, Part, Whole, κολοβόν (the mutilated), Kind, Falsehood, Accident. The explanations of some of these words will, it is obvious, have been repeated from the *Categories* and the *Analytics*. Some of them will be better understood from the arguments in the subsequent books than they could be from any formal definitions; still they are worthy to be read and reflected on. The one on "Nature" is perhaps the most important; but to his notions of this word the entire treatise is the only satisfactory clue.

12. **Ontology: how it differs from Physics.** The fifth book explains Aristotle's view of the difference between physical and ontological science. They agree in this, that they are theoretic, not practical or poetic. They differ in this that the physical deals with that which has

a capacity for change or movement, and with that which is imbedded in matter. The primary philosophy deals with the unchangeable, and with that which is separate from matter. Mathematical science lies between them, resembling ontological science in the first characteristic, physical in the second. If there be such a science as Theology, it must be a part, and the highest part, of the primary Philosophy. The Divine Nature must be pre-eminently that which is out of the circle of composite and movable things. The condition of those things whereof physical science treats, is, that they are susceptible of accidents. Not that there can be a science of accidents; as such they exclude science altogether. But there may be, and there are, principles and causes of those things which admit of accidents. Seeking these, physical science still retains its formal distinction from that higher science which deals with beings and essences as such. There is another sense in which "Being" had been used, especially by the Platonists, which it is necessary to distinguish from our notion of it. Being had been confounded with truth, Not-being with falsehood. Now truth, according to Aristotle, is not in the things but in the mind. Affirmation combines, negation separates; falsehood separates that which should be combined, combines that which should be separate. But the existences with which we are dealing are simple or uncompounded. Here again we have one of the capital and vital points of difference between the two philosophies.

13. The sixth book contains some of the most important distinctions and differences in the whole treatise. Ontology is concerned with Substance. What is to be included among substances? Are walking, sitting, being in health, substances? No; all these imply a subject to which they must be considered as referring. In this way we get rid of the notion of a substantial good, as well as a substantial warmth or whiteness, &c. All these alike are considered as qualities of some subject, and what that subject is must be sought in each individual which offers itself to our observation.

14. **Qualities and Substance.** But does not substance when thus considered necessarily connect itself with body? Here is one of our great puzzles. Some would have the *boundaries* of body to be substances; some would have substances which are in nowise cognizable by the senses; some would make the One the primary substance, and suppose different sets of substances, such as numbers, magnitudes, souls, to be generated from this. Aristotle's opinion is this:—**Form and Matter.** To every subject belongs, first, ὕλη, which we must translate matter; second, μορφή, or form. The matter of a thing is its necessary condition. But this matter is not its essence; something else is implied in it, something which it presents or makes manifest. Applying this principle to the questions which occupied the third class of philosophers mentioned in the introductory book—the Platonists namely, and the Pythagoreans—it appears that this form is the true εἶδος of which they dreamed. It is the essential thing in each thing; it is that in virtue of which substance is possible, without which it is inconceivable. But it does not exist apart from each particular subject; it is that which enters into the definition of every subject, and without which the definition would be no definition; obviously, therefore, it must be viewed in that subject, and cannot be contemplated as a distinct, peculiar essence. Tested by this rule it is obvious also that all notions of an ideal form of hollowness or of pugnosedness (we use Aristotle's favourite illustration) must be out of the question; these cannot be, primarily at least, subjects for a definition; they presuppose something whereof they are properties, and in that, and that only, can you look for an εἶδος. All notion again of Being as distinct from the particular person who, or the thing which, is; falls to the ground. Socrates and the being of Socrates are identical; the αὐτοέκαστον, of which he had talked, is nothing else but this εἶδος, or form, inherent in the thing itself.

15. The mode in which this same principle is applied to another class of inquiries, those which relate to the genesis or first origin of things, requires a more minute examination.

In considering any production we find, first, something whence it has been generated; secondly, something by which it has been generated; thirdly, the result or the thing itself. **Production; natural, artificial, automatic.** There are three modes of production—natural, artificial, automatic. In natural productions we discern at once a matter; nay, in the largest sense, Nature itself may be defined that out of which things are produced. Everything that becomes has a nature, which is only another way of saying that it has a ὕλη; and that in each thing which might not have been is this ὕλη. Now the result formed out of this matter or nature is any given substance—a vegetable, a beast, a man. But what is the producing, generating cause in each case? Clearly something akin in kind to the result. A man generates a man. Then there is implied in the resulting thing a productive force distinct from the matter upon which it works. And this is our εἶδος. And it is the combination of this εἶδος with the ὕλη which both produces a substance and constitutes it. Look now at artificial productions. Here the εἶδος is still the producing power. It is in the soul. The art of the physician, the plan of the architect, is that εἶδος which produces actual health or an actual house. Here, however, a distinction arises. In these artificial productions is supposed a νόησις and a ποίησις. The νόησις is the perception and internal entertainment of the form; the ποίησις the creation out of the given matter. But we mentioned a third mode of production not strictly natural or artificial, but by the action of the thing itself. For instance, a cure may take place by the application of warmth; a body may become warm by rubbing; this warmth then in the body is either itself a portion of health, or something is consequent upon it like itself, which is a portion of health. Evidently this implies the previous presence either of nature or of an artificer. Evidently also there is a necessity that this kind of generative influence should combine with another. There must be a productive power, there must be something out of which it is produced. In every case, then, there will be an ὕλη and an εἶδος. That which is generated is the whole substance, consisting of matter and form. But the form,

properly speaking, is not generated. It is reproduced in each particular subject in combination with a certain matter, and it becomes a new and peculiar form in virtue of that combination. There is necessary then to every production a certain form and a certain matter; and all the qualities appertaining to this substance which is produced *must* inhere (not actually but potentially) in the substance producing, and *may* belong to the form when they are produced.

16. It remains to consider how this doctrine bears upon the inquiries of those philosophers who busied themselves with the search after a primary element: the inquiries of those who sought for the τὸ οὗ ἕνεκα are reserved for another discussion. But before we can enter upon this subject several of the doubts in our second book must be resolved. **Part and Whole.** First, as to the meaning of the words Part and Whole. The first and most obvious signification of part has relation to quantity, but this has nothing to do with our subject. What we want to know is the connexion of the idea of *Part* with substance. Assuming the division of substance into ὕλη and εἶδος, we should say that in a brass statue the brass formed *part* of the statue, as the complex of form and matter, but not of the statue considered as a Form. Now as Form is the proper subject of a definition, seeing it can be described in itself, and since that which is material cannot be so described, it comes to pass that in certain cases we necessarily speak of the parts as constituting the whole, and in other cases not. We define a circle without reference to its parts. We define a syllable by the letters or elements which compose it; for the parts of the circle are material parts, the parts of the syllable are formal, logical parts. Of course if you look upon a syllable as composed of certain letters in wax, or even of sounds in the air, its divisions become material and do not fall within the scope of a logical definition. Again, in a material division you assume the whole as preceding the part. On the contrary, logically and formally, the part precedes the whole. For instance, if you define the life of an animal you will describe it by some of its functions. None of its other functions can be performed without sensation. This

particular faculty of sensation, therefore, will be assumed in the existence of the whole animal. This principle holds equally in reference to æsthetic matter (that which the senses take account of), as in noetic (the figures of mathematics). Generally, therefore, it may be affirmed that the question as to the priority of "part" and "whole" depend upon the distinction between matter and form, and that you cannot settle it if that distinction be disregarded. At the same time, Aristotle admits the difficulty of defining simply with reference to form, and not to the complex substance, which consists of it and of matter together. He acknowledges that the attempt to divide matter from substance and to look upon things sensible as not sensible, has led to all the Pythagorean and Platonical inventions which he regards with so much dislike.

17. **Genera and Individuals.** Another question, in which these philosophers are also involved, follows immediately upon this. How are substances connected with *kinds*? If there be certain types after which all sensible things are formed, these types would seem to be universals, and those things with which the senses converse, particulars. All possible differences and properties which can be discovered in the most marked individual of any kind must then upon this showing be included in those primitive, universal forms; but, according to logic, precisely the opposite is the case. The genus is divested of the difference which goes to the composition of the species, and of the properties which go to the composition of the individual. Your genera can never be types of the individual. By their very nature they are deficient in all that characterises him. The εἶδος then which forms the essential in each thing, which makes it be that which it is, must be looked upon as individualised by the ὕλη with which it is connected. Apart from the modification which it thus undergoes it is only a logical existence, the highest genus to which it is ultimately referred being pre-eminently that which can only be contemplated by and in the mind. Such we take to be the meaning of Aristotle, and from it the doctrine seems to follow very closely with which he winds up this book, and which applies the meaning of it to those who had dealt mainly with

the ὕλη. Any fact or thing being given, I have no further occasion to trouble myself about the fact, the ὅτι. This the sense, or something corresponding to sense, supplies. I am not to ask what is the musical man when I see a musical man. He is that which I behold, and nothing else. My business is with the διότι, the cause. Why is he this or that? And the answer is in the εἶδος, the form or constitution. This is the ultimate reason of that which each thing is. Consequently I do not get nearer the cause or reason of things by reducing them into their natural elements. **The seekers for an element confuted.** The analysis may be physically proper or useful, but it does not lead me to that of which I am in search. Everything which is, and which I can either behold with my senses or my mind, is not the A or the B whereof it is composed, but is something else; the synthesis of the A and the B involves the presence of a form or existence, which cannot be found in either of them separately. So that find out as many primary elements as you will, you do not thereby find an ἀρχή.

18. **Energies.** Our main business then is to discover the meaning of this εἶδος, and the relation which exists between it and the ὕλη. The seventh book takes up this subject, and carries forward a hint which was given in the last—one which is, perhaps, the most pregnant of all the hints in Aristotle's writings, and that which has most effect upon his whole philosophy. The εἶδος or μορφή is an energy, the ὕλη is a δύναμις or capacity, implying and requiring the action or co-operation of the energy to produce a result. Οὐσία, as we said before, is the synthesis of these: omitting the ἐνέργεια you come merely to certain material elements and combinations which do not in any way give you the actual things you are examining. The difficulty is respecting those things which appear to have no ἐνέργεια in themselves, as a house. **Test of Substance: definition.** Must the substances of these be considered as something distinct from them and external to them? The answer is this:—Do you mean to ask whether the material house, that is to say the stones and cement, is a substance? Certainly not: you have excluded the very notion of substance by the mode of your question.

But do you mean to ask whether that house is actually something? You assume it by your very question. You cannot define anything without treating it as a substance, satisfy yourself as you will about the reason that it is so; there is something then not distinct from the house, but implied in it, which is a form or εἶδος. The test that there is, is your own attempt to define it.

19. **Capacity.** Proceeding upon this principle of an energy and a δύναμις in each substance, he shows how needful it is in any inquiry after causes to keep the three questions in sight. By cause do you mean capacity, δύναμις? By cause do you mean moving power? By cause do you mean the form? (The two last *may* always be the same, still the inquiry after the constitution of each thing is distinct from the inquiry after its productive force.) Do you mean, lastly, the οὗ ἕνεκα? (This also may be the same question with the last, though differently stated; that is to say, the constitution of each thing may determine the purpose or object of it.)

20. **Capacity for contraries.** But this use of the word capacity (δύναμις) suggests another doubt. Has not every subject a capacity for contraries? Must not we say that every healthy body is potentially sick? that water is potentially both wine and vinegar? The answer is, that this absence or deprivation of qualities is an accident of these qualities, and not itself a quality. For a dead body to become alive it must pass into a certain ὕλη, which has therefore the potentiality of life; for vinegar to become wine it must pass into water; nothing similar happens in the opposite case. Finally, he applies this principle to the solution of that difficulty respecting unity at which he had so often hinted, and on which he had expressed his opinion with sufficient plainness already. If the definition of a man be that he is a biped animal, how comes it that each of these—"animal," "biped," does not constitute a separate entity? What, in short, is the ground of our conception of each thing and person as one? Aristotle intimates that this question is hopeless and unanswerable if put in this form, for then by each variety of your definition you create a new puzzle. He

would rather then assume the unity of each thing as a fact or datum of the understanding, and account for its being reduced into different constituent elements. And this *is* accounted for by the necessary co-presence of matter and form in each thing, and from the matter being merely a potentiality, and the form an energy. In this way the dream of a *unity* distinct from the individual thing is got rid of, as the dream of a *substance* distinct from each particular thing had been got rid of before.

21. **Definition of Capacities.** The eighth book is still occupied with the subject of capacities and energies. Aristotle inquires into the different senses of the word δύναμις; what we mean when we say that a thing can or cannot be. There is a use of this language in geometry, which is metaphorical, and not to our present purpose. We say that a thing can or cannot be, meaning that it is or it is not. But all δυνάμεις, in their proper sense, have reference to some primary δύναμις, *which is the cause or beginning of a change in some other thing as another thing*. Warmth, for instance, is a δύναμις. It is so equally in that which warms, as in that which is warmed. The δύναμις in the thing warmed hath reference or relation to the corresponding primary δύναμις in the thing warming, and this necessary implication of that which answers to itself in something besides itself, is its characteristic nature. To every capacity there will of course correspond a certain incapacity, which may be understood either as the absence of a faculty of communication, the absence of a faculty of reception, or, again, merely as a negative want, or as a positive state involving that want.

22. **Division of them** Δυνάμεις are divided into rational and irrational; the rational those which subsist in the reasonable soul, the irrational those that are merely physical. All art and knowledge are of the first class. Now, if we look for a radical distinction between them, we may find it in this way. Warmth, an irrational δύναμις, has the power only of producing warmth; the art of the physician has the power of producing either health or sickness. Generally, therefore, the one kind of power can produce contrary changes, the other only

a certain change; and these contrary changes are wrought by the rational powers with and upon the irrational powers.

23. **Being and Becoming.** This description of δυνάμεις might seem in some points to trench upon that notion of energies which Aristotle had given us in his last book. He proceeds therefore to distinguish them. The Megarian sect, in conformity with their general rule of reducing every idea into that of Being, and of excluding all distinct notion of production and *becoming*, had identified Power or Capacity with energy. Where there is no building, said they, there is no builder. Apply this, says Aristotle, to arts, and the man who has studied the longest ceases to have the art as soon as he ceases to exercise it. Apply it to things without reason or life, and there is nothing sweet, nor warm, nor cold, except at the moment when it is tasted or felt; an argument not, perhaps, very destructive of the proposition, in our minds, but which was very effective as against the Megarians, who had a great horror of the Protagorean doctrine. It is then possible for a thing to have the capacity of being and not to be, and to have the capacity of not being and to be; that of which it is the capacity takes place when something is superadded to it, which is Energy. Energy is analogous to motion. You cannot predicate either motion or energy of things which are not; the moment energy or motion is added to them they are; but many things which are not have a possible or potential existence.[26] At the same time Energy is not to be confounded with Motion. The difference does not lie where we might suspect, in that motion belongs to that which is irrational, energy to the rational, for Learning is referred to the head of Motion, sight to the head of Energy. The difference is in this, that every motion is incomplete, tending towards an end, but not including the end in itself; that energy has an end in itself, and

[26] "Οὐκ ἔστι δέ," adds Aristotle, "ὅτι οὐκ ἐντελέχεια ἐστίν" (Met. 8, iii. 36). This passage, perhaps, determines as clearly as any we could produce, the meaning of the word ἐντελέχεια, which is so important in some branches of the Aristotelian philosophy. It is the opposite to *potentiality*, yet would be ill translated by that which we often oppose to potentiality,—*actuality*. Εἶδος expresses the substance of each thing viewed in repose,—its form or constitution; ἐνέργεια its substance, considered as active and generative; ἐντελέχεια seems to be the synthesis or harmony of these two ideas. The *effectio* of Cicero, therefore, represents the most important side of it, but not the whole.

that it does not involve a pause or a termination. Learning, building, walking, all imply a termination. Seeing, thinking, being happy, imply no termination; these are Energies.

24. Upon this showing, energy, in the order of reason and of substance, precedes δύναμις; in the order of time not always. It precedes in the order of reason because the first of all capacities or possibilities is the capacity or possibility of energising. **Relation of Energies and Capacities to each other.** A man who has the faculty of building, is one who has in him the capacity of using his energy in the art of building. In time it is otherwise. The primary energising power of course precedes, even in this sense, that which receives the impression of it, Form being older than Matter. But if you take the case of any particular person or thing, we say that its capacity of being that person or thing precedes its being such actually or energetically. Yet, though this is the case in each particular thing, there is always a foregone energy presumed in some other thing to which it owes its existence. And thus the principle is asserted, which we shall find afterwards turned to practical account in the Ethics, that the exercise of any particular energy precedes the habitual use of the faculty appertaining to that energy; that it is by playing on the harp we become harp players. Several important ethical doctrines are in fact developed in the course of this inquiry, but of these we shall take distinct notice hereafter. One pregnant notion more directly bearing upon our present subject occurs in the course of it. Δύναμις had been defined that which is the cause of change in some other thing as another thing. But this notion wants a resting-place, unless you believe that there is some primary δύναμις presupposed in all others, which is the beginning of motion. This is φύσις, and thus we have arrived at the most complete notion of it which we can expect. This first and primary cause of all change, Energy still precedes and surpasses.

Aristotle proceeds to show wherein Energy is better and more glorious than δύναμις; as, for instance, because δύναμις is the same of contraries. The capacity of health and sickness is the same; of stillness

and movement; of being raised up and of falling down. But one of these must be good, and therefore the energy which determines which of these contraries shall have effect must be better than the Faculty or Capacity. Two consequences follow. The Energy is that which makes things be evil which have only the possibility or potentiality of evil in them. Secondly, in those things which are primary and eternal there is no evil, no fault, no decay; the capacity for evil lies in Nature. The importance of these two axioms will be felt by every moral and theological student. Another proposition, which has been extensively applied in another direction, is added respecting *discovery*. It is, that Discovery means the bringing things into Energy which exist potentially; because Knowing is an Energy.

25. This book concludes with another reference to the relation between truth and being, falsehood and not-being. **Distinction of subjects.** Truth and falsehood being the accordance or discordance of our judgment with the actual state of things, there are three cases which may fall under our notice. First, things always united and inseparable, or things always separable and never united. Respecting these the judgment must be uniform; the same will be truth in all cases, falsehood in all cases. Secondly, things which may be either separated or united. Here comes in the possibility of that being true to-day which is false to-morrow; of that being true under one aspect which is false under another. Thirdly, things perfectly simple, things admitting neither of division nor combination. To these the words true and false do not apply, but merely knowledge and ignorance. You either know such things or you do not. Respecting these there is no mistake, no deception possible; but merely the presence or absence of knowledge. All sensible objects whose existence you ascertain by touch or sight are of this kind; the want of touch or sight, not a false opinion, excluding them from you.

26. In the ninth book we come again upon the question of unity. **Oneness: different definitions of it.** The name One is used, he says, in four ways. It means that which is *continuous by nature, a whole, an*

individual thing, that *which is predicated of a whole*. The general sense of the Indivisible is common to all these. And again unity in any of these senses we may attribute to some particular substance which is inseparable in place, in form, in thought, as well as to some actually indivisible whole. The fundamental notion of unity he conceives to be that of a measure to quantities; without such a measure quantity is inconceivable. There may be something actually indivisible; there may be that which is indivisible to our senses; an actual unity in form, and a supposititious unity in matter. Each will bear the name, because each will be used as a measure. The need of such a measure he asserts, in opposition to the Protagorean notion of man being the measure of all things, which he treats as a silly truism, putting on the form of a paradox, and producing the effects of a falsehood.

27. **No absolute Unity.** The existence of a distinct absolute unity is denied on precisely the same ground as the existence of a distinct absolute substance. The One is always *some* one thing or nature. In colours, if you suppose them all to originate from white, white is the one. In voices, the elementary vowel, and so in all other cases. Of course, then, the Ionic attempt to discover some matter, such as air or fire, which shall be unity, is as unreasonable as the Parmenidean, Pythagorean, and Platonic attempts to invest unity itself with a formal and separate character.

28. **Plurality.** "The One" is the undivided, or the indivisible; this is the primary notion of it, to which all others may be reduced. "The many" then will mean the divided or the divisible; from which, as more cognizable by the senses, the One will be inferred. The question occurs next, how the one and the many are opposed to each other; whether the "many" and the "few" are not equally opposed, and whether, if this be the case, unity is not merely an element of plurality. This question introduces a discussion respecting the different modes of opposition; the opposition of contradiction, of things in relation, of privation, of strict contrariety. Possibly there has been some confusion of different lectures or reports in this part of the book; for in the

lengthened explanation we seem to lose sight of the original subject. Our readers cannot fail to have remarked how much the idea of a "law of opposition" in things entered into all Greek speculations, so as to seem to many the foundation of them. Aristotle contemplates the subject from the logical side; the forms of opposition which he discovers in our minds determine his view of the actual opposition which exists in nature. And in this way his remarks on this point, though apparently irrelevant, throw considerable light on his doctrine respecting unity. What our understanding wants in order to explain to itself the existence of multitude, this he called "the One." Unity was therefore, in his mind, identical with Singleness.

29. The next book is for the most part a recapitulation of puzzles and solutions already given; not, however, to be passed over on that account, for Aristotle's repetitions of himself, or the reports of his different pupils, generally clear away many difficulties: and here, especially, the remarks on the nature and limitations of the primary philosophy, and his confutation of the two cardinal sophisms of Protagoras, are, in many respects, more complete than those in the third book. **Motion.** We shall, however, notice merely his analysis of Motion and his remarks on the idea of the Infinite. Motion is neither an energy nor yet merely a potency; but it must be contemplated, alternately, as each. A lump of brass is potentially a statue; the energy which is to make it one is in the mind of the sculptor. The motion, *i.e.* the transition from its condition as brass to its condition as a statue, is not found in the brass, neither is it found in the mind; it is that which gives the potentiality of the brass its meaning and connects it with the energy. Or to express this in a formula: "Motion is the entelechy (the perfecting power or principle) of the potential as potential." He admits the difficulty of finding an expression for this idea; but he shows, by an examination of previous attempts, that his own, however awkward, is the only one which is satisfactory.

30. **The Infinite.** On the subject of the Infinite, which had so much exercised the minds of previous Greek speculators, and had been

resorted to as an ultimate solution of so many difficulties, he aims at no precision of language. By its very nature it excludes precision. To bring it into a scheme, or regard it as a helpful definition of nature or the universe, is, in his judgment, absurd; it can only be looked upon as marking the *ne plus ultra* to which human thoughts and inquiries can reach, or, at least, have already reached. The limitations by which alone you are able to deal with the subjects that fall under human cognizance it excludes by its very name. His opinion on this point is characteristic of his mind, and it has an important bearing upon the history of metaphysics. Scarcely any more interesting question occupied the Greek mind than that which was at issue between the schools of Pythagoras and Xenophanes, whether it is more true and reverential to speak of God as the τὸ πέρας, or as the Infinite. Aristotle's concluding remark on the subject of the Infinite should be quoted for the casual light which the latter clause of it throws on his idea of Time, an idea which the student of modern philosophy has so much need to reflect on:—τὸ δ' ἄπειρον οὐ ταὐτὸν ἐν μεγέθει καὶ κινήσει καὶ χρόνῳ ὡς μία τις φύσις, ἀλλὰ τὸ ὕστερον λέγεται κατὰ τὸ πρότερον, οἷον κίνησις κατὰ τὸ μέγεθος ἐφ' οὗ κινεῖται ἢ ἀλλοιοῦται ἢ αὔξεται, χρόνος δὲ διὰ τὴν κίνησιν.

31. **Number of first principles.** Book eleventh opens with an attempt to ascertain the number of causes or first principles. There is in every sensible substance a capacity of change: these changes are four: changes in respect of substance, of quality, of quantity, and of place. Generation and corruption are the names for the first kind of change, growth and decay for the second, alteration (ἀλλοίωσις) for the third, transference (φορά) for the fourth. These are changes into contraries. But contraries themselves do not change; there must be something which undergoes the change from one to the other of them. This something must be *Matter*. Being does not arise from not-being; but being in potency is changed into being in energy; and being in potency is matter. Assuming this, there are three ἀρχαί or first

principles; the two contraries Form and Privation (στέρησις), and the Matter which passes from one to the other.

32. **The Cause.** But Aristotle says that this enunciation is strictly applicable only to material things; in these the element (στοιχεῖον) and the principle (ἀρχή) are the same. You have heat, the εἶδος; cold, the στέρησις; that which has the potency of being either (ὕλη); the resulting substance, the flesh, bone, or whatever it may be. But in those things which are apprehended by the mind, another idea intrudes itself. Besides the two opposites, health and sickness, and the matter, which is susceptible of both, you have the health-making art of the physician. The principle in this use of it acquires a double meaning which does not belong to the element. It must be contemplated both as the stationary Form and the moving Power. There must in a sense be four ἀρχαί, though only three elements. These conclusions have been, the reader will perceive, partly anticipated, but it is needful to repeat them here; for here is the link between Aristotle's Metaphysics and his Theology; this is the road, or at least one step of the road, by which he arrives at the conception of a First Moving Cause. To the unfolding of this conception the greater part of this remarkable book is devoted. We can but give our readers the results of an argument which Aristotle evidently felt to be the summing up of his metaphysical series. There must be an eternal, immovable Substance, which is at the same time the source of all movement. The primary notion of this substance is that it is an Energy. The notion of potentiality is excluded from it, for the highest form of Being is incompatible with the mere capacity of Being. And seeing Matter and Potentiality are convertible terms, it must be immaterial. There is no refuge from the notion that all things proceeded from darkness and nothingness, except in this belief. Energy being anterior to mere potency, eternity must be predicated of the chaos or night out of which things are supposed to be formed, in a different sense from that in which it is affirmed of the Primeval Being.

33. **Eternity, how predicable of Matter.** We must attribute a continual *negative* existence to this potency, but a continual *operative* existence

can only be attributed to the First Cause. We want the one to account for Corruption and Decay. We want the other to account for actual Existence and Life. Matter is in no sense a cause either to itself or to any other thing; and to a First Cause we necessarily attribute self-causation. Other things impart motion, having first received it; this must be its own Mover. The next step in the apprehension of this Being we obtain by the consideration of our own intellect and volition. There is an object of cognition or thing to be known; an object of volition or thing to be desired. By these respectively the intellect and the volition in us are set in motion. That which appears good to each Understanding or Will actuates it; that which *primarily* actuates, must be that which *is* good. In this we discover the union of the faculty of knowledge with that which is to be known, the union of the faculty of will with that which is to be desired. Thus self-contemplation and self-delight must be the essentials of Deity…[27] By other processes of reasoning he arrives at the conclusion that the Being must be without parts (ἀμερής), without passions (ἀπαθές: our readers will perceive the change of gender, and will easily believe that τὸ θεῖον is the more common antecedent than ὁ θεός), and subject to no vicissitude (ἀναλλοίωτον).

34. **One cause, not many.** We then approach the grand question, whether there is one such cause, or many. In nothing is the difference between Aristotle and his master more remarkable than here. We have seen with what tenderness Plato treated the mythology of his countrymen, not from cowardice, but because he felt that it contained a latent truth for which no philosophical abstractions or generalities could offer a substitute. Aristotle, having satisfied himself that the *argument* was in favour of a one cause, sweeps away all notions which

[27] We must quote the fine passage in which this argument is summed up. Ἡ δὲ νόησις ἡ καθ' αὑτὴν τοῦ καθ' αὑτὸ ἀρίστου καὶ ἡ μάλιστα τοῦ μάλιστα. αὑτὸν δὲ νοεῖ ὁ νοῦς κατὰ μετάληψιν τοῦ νοητοῦ· νοητὸς γὰρ γίγνεται θιγγάνων καὶ νοῶν, ὥστε ταὐτὸν νοῦς καὶ νοητόν. τὸ γὰρ δεκτικὸν τοῦ νοητοῦ καὶ τῆς οὐσίας νοῦς· ἐνεργεῖ δὲ ἔχων· ὥστ' ἐκεῖνο μᾶλλον τούτου ὃ δοκεῖ ὁ νοῦς θεῖον ἔχειν καὶ ἡ θεωρία τὸ ἥδιστον καὶ ἄριστον. εἰ οὖν οὕτως εὖ ἔχει ὡς ἡμεῖς ποτέ, ὁ θεὸς ἀεί, θαυμαστόν· εἰ δὲ μᾶλλον, ἔτι θαυμασιώτερον. ἔχει δὲ ὧδε. καὶ ζωὴ δέ γε ὑπάρχει. ἡ γὰρ νοῦ ἐνέργεια ζωή, ἐκεῖνος δὲ ἡ ἐνέργεια· ἐνέργεια δὲ ἡ καθ' αὐτὴν ἐκείνου ζωὴ ἀρίστη καὶ ἀΐδιος. Met. xi. 7.

interfered with it, considers the gods whom his country worshipped as derived from certain astrological notions, and merely as setting forth the secondary sensible substances which proceed from the first immaterial Cause.

35. **Previous teachers.** With equal decision he denounces (upon this new ground) the different philosophical schemes which had been substituted for the old cosmogonies; attributing to them these two common vices, that they had acknowledged an antithesis and contradiction in things, but had not taken account of that third element, matter, which is the only explanation of the evil and disorder in the universe, and that they had substituted many original principles for the one.

36. **Real object of all these books.** In the two last books, their doctrines (respecting ideas and numbers) are again discussed at great length, and with Aristotle's wonted ingenuity. It cannot be expected that we should go over arguments to which we have so often adverted, and which we are less anxious to present fully and formally than to fit our readers for studying them in the places where they occur. But we may take this opportunity of remarking, that the continual renewal of these discussions with the Platonists and Pythagoreans is very important in helping us to determine the nature and connection of these particular treatises, as well as the character of Aristotle's whole mind and system. It is evident that he felt the refutation of these opinions, and the substitution of something else for them, to be in a manner the business of his life. At all events, it was the needful preliminary to his more positive proceedings: while his mind was haunted with these notions, the system—physical, metaphysical, or moral—which he proposed to rear, had, it seemed to him, a dubious and infirm foundation. We look, therefore, upon the metaphysical treatises (whether capable or not of being reduced into a formal sequence and unity) as having this subject for their centre. To show what ideas are not, and what they are; to establish the doctrine, that the εἶδος is not distinct from the particular individual substance—existing apart and connecting it

with some higher substance—but merely its inherent form; to connect the εἶδος, which is the constituent principle of each thing, with the ἐνέργεια, whereby it is called into existence, and thus to make the same answer satisfactorily to the two Greek inquiries respecting the nature of being and origin of matter; to explain the nature and conditions of the ὕλη, and by depriving it of all intrinsical substantial properties, and reducing it into a mere potency, practically to get rid of the old Ionic investigations; then finally to hint at a principle of which his moral writings are the full exposition, that the final Cause, or the οὗ ἕνεκα, is also connected with the εἶδος and ἐνέργεια; that the good or purpose of each class of substances is known when we know what its nature and proper energy are: this is the object at which he is aiming most consistently amidst all his windings and recapitulations in the books of Metaphysics.

37. **Metaphysics—how connected with Logic.** But this object is connected on the one side with *Logic*, on the other (as the scholiast is so anxious to inform us) with *Theology*. Though we have not seen our way to adopt Ritter's method of identifying the logical treatises with the metaphysical (a plan inconsistent with the very words of the third book); though, as it seems to us, we should sacrifice by such a course much insight into the habits of the philosopher's mind, and the growth of his opinions, which we obey by studying them distinctly, and yet acknowledging the most intimate connection between them, we believe Aristotle to be primarily and at heart a logician; to have become thoroughly enamoured of the forms of logic, and convinced that they supplied a satisfactory exposition of the facts of the world; and then gradually to have worked out in his mind an Ontological system, which gave the rationale of those forms and interpreted their relation to different phenomena. Now, if it be true, as we have maintained, that the *mathematician* has another set of laws, discovered to him in the course of his inquiries, from those with which the *logician* is conversant, we need not be surprised either that the arguments of Aristotle against Ideas should be so constantly mixed with allusions to

the Pythagorean study of Lines or Numbers, or that that study should actually have been the *base* of the principle which he is endeavouring to subvert.

38. **How connected with Theology.** It is on all accounts a more important inquiry how *Theology* became interwoven with either set of speculations. We think it cannot be denied that the recognition of an absolute Being, of an absolute Good, was that which gave life to the whole doctrine of Plato, and without which it is unmeaning; that, on the contrary, it is merely the crowning result, or at least the necessary postulate, of Aristotle's philosophy. In strict consistency with this difference, it was a Being to satisfy the wants of Man which Plato sighed for; it was a first Cause of Things to which Aristotle did homage. The first would part with no indication or symbol of the truth that God has held intercourse with men, has made himself known to them; the second was content with seeking in nature and logic for demonstrations of his attributes and his unity. When we use personal language to describe the God of whom Plato speaks, we feel that we are using that which suits best with his feelings and his principles, even when, through reverence or ignorance, he forbears to use it himself. When we use personal language to describe the Deity of Aristotle, we feel that it is improper and unsuitable, even if, through deference to ordinary notions, or the difficulty of inventing any other, he resorts to it himself. Theology then can have no connection with the ethics of Aristotle.

SECTION VI. ARISTOTELIAN PSYCHOLOGY.

1. **Aristotelian Ethics not based on Theology;** The light which the metaphysical treatises throw upon the point to which we last referred, makes them an important introduction to Aristotle's ethical system.

We might have concluded from his Dialectics, that he utterly rejected the Platonical doctrine of Ideas as a scientific exposition. It would not follow that he should discard that belief in some ideal of excellence which had impregnated all mythologies, and had never

been banished from the hearts of men. But the Aristotelian conception of God as a ground of nature simply, leads us at once to perceive that no recognition of his perfection can have the least connection in his mind with a scheme of practical life and conduct. It is not with Plato, or any philosopher who had attempted to give the rationale of men's dreams on this matter, that he will feel a want of sympathy; he actually has not discovered in himself, and does not recognise in his brethren, the want which all ages had been contriving in so many forms to express. And then it becomes an interesting question, what groundwork in the Aristotelian ethics will replace that Theology which is so obviously the foundation of the Platonic?

2. **but on the nature of the Soul.** The answer to this question brings us to a very important treatise of Aristotle, which embodies more of what has, in our day, been commonly called metaphysics, especially here and in Scotland, than the works professedly bearing that title. We mean the three books on the Soul. The first of these books is occupied as usual with an examination of previous theories on the subject. He despatches very elaborately the different notions respecting the soul which Democritus, Empedocles, or the Pythagoreans had encouraged. He shows why we can never be satisfied with calling it motion, or the principle of motion, or the primary element or number. He then proceeds in the second book to develope his own doctrine. The soul belongs to the category of entities. **Soul the characteristic of living creatures.** It has then, of course, a matter and a form; the matter here, as elsewhere, coincides with its δύναμις; the form is ἐντελέχεια. The soul is neither of these separately, but the result of both. There go to the forming of sight the energy of vision, and the faculty of vision, and there is, in addition to both, an organ, an actual eye. What is true of this sense is true of the whole substance of which it may be said to form a part. **Distinction of souls.** The soul, possessing both its energy and its faculty distinct from the organ through which both are manifested, does yet require such an organ. The soul is not a body, but neither is

it without a body. Generally, it is the distinction of a living creature (ζῷον), that it has a ψυχή.

3. But all living creatures have not a soul exercising the same δυνάμεις. We may define all the faculties which can exist in any living creature to be these: first, the faculty of receiving nourishment (θρεπτική); secondly, the faculty of sensation (αἰσθητική); thirdly, the faculty of motion in place (κινητική); fourthly, the faculty of impulse or desire (ὀρεκτική); fifthly, the faculty of intelligence (διανοητική). The threptic faculty is the lowest of these, and is present in all cases. The soul, therefore, as endued with this one faculty, may be attributed to vegetables. Wherever any of the higher faculties are present, there all the lower will exist also. Under each of these heads a very interesting discussion arises respecting the character and limits of the particular faculty. The question, for instance, under the first head is, whether the life in each plant or thing must be considered as the active or only the passive instrument in self-sustentation? Under the head of sensation many more complicated points arise, and Aristotle enters into the whole theory of the subject, examining the operation of each sense in detail. This, it may be remembered, is the discussion which is carried on with so much liveliness and profundity in one part of the *Theætetus*. The opinions there attributed to Protagoras (and so far as the doctrine of sensation goes, apart from its moral consequences, not denied by Plato) is nearly the same as that maintained by Aristotle. Sensation is neither in the organ of sense nor in the object, but is generated between both, and is the effect of the medium through which they hold communion with each other. The question as to the motive faculty involves us at once in a consideration of that which is higher than itself. Movement must depend upon impulse. This will be true in all creatures. And in spite of the effect of the appearances which are produced upon or by means of the senses, in generating impulses or desires, we must not impute a governing power to sensation; we must rather think that the nature of the faculty of impulse determines how these shall influence it, than that it is determined by them. It would

seem, then, that each creature has a nature, which is expressly seen in this faculty of impulse. Wherein then does man differ from other creatures? Neither, it would seem, in the absence of this impulsive faculty, nor in its being less properly his nature than it is that of other animals, but rather in his having the dianoetic faculty to direct it and act with it. In the coincidence and conspiracy then of these two faculties will consist the true nature of man. Thus, the soul may be considered as containing three portions, logically not materially separate, one absolutely without reason, the other rational, another participant of reason.

In this psychological system we discover the root of the Aristotelian ethics of which we were in search: they begin in Psychology and terminate in Politics.

SECTION VII. THE ARISTOTELIAN ETHICS.

1. **The Aristotelian Ethics.** At the outset of the Nicomachean Ethics (which has always been regarded as the most complete exposition of his views on this subject), Aristotle tells us that Ethics is an introduction to Politics. The two, therefore, are not identified in his mind as they are in Plato's; it is quite possible, nay necessary, to treat of them distinctly. According to his uniform method, he seeks for the grounds of combination and society in the nature of man. He cannot tolerate Plato's simplicity in admitting outward necessities and accidents to be the *occasions* of society; for this simplicity necessarily involves another proceeding which seemed to him not simple but pregnant with all Plato's idealism, that of supposing some higher Unity than that which is expressed in the character of any particular society to be involved in the constitution of Society itself. A principle of equality and adjustment is that which seems to him to pervade all things, to be in a manner a law of the universe, and to be especially the secret of human order and government. The like principle, taking a different form, is the mainspring of his ethical system. Virtue lies in a mean; in a sense it may be said to *be* a mean, so that, on the one hand,

Government, which is also a mean, is naturally occupied in sustaining the virtue of particular men, and on the other, this Virtue is itself the great conservation of government. This observation ought to be made, as without it the connection between these two spheres, which is as much acknowledged by Aristotle as by his master, will not be apparent. Many difficulties also will present themselves to the reader as insurmountable, if he looks at the ethics as an entire system, and does not remember that a directing educating power is for practical purposes presumed to reside in a governing body, the functions and nature of which have not yet been defined.

2. **HAPPINESS the object of human pursuit.** But we are not to suppose that Virtue, or the attainment of this mean, is in Aristotle's judgment the formal object at which either the life of each particular man, or society at large, is aiming. When once the notion of an absolute good, which "those dear" and troublesome men, the Platonists, had introduced, was taken out of the way, there remained one obvious and generally admitted end of all human desires and searchings. Happiness is emphatically the human τέλος. But if human, then the definition of this happiness must be sought in that which is peculiarly the characteristic of the human class. It cannot exist in any of those powers or faculties which are common to it with other classes; not therefore in the threptic or the æsthetic powers merely and chiefly. And anyhow, it must be in some exercises or energies that it will consist, for in these the soul or life of every creature makes itself manifest. It must be then in the energies of our best and highest nature, exercised not at intervals, but through a whole life, a life possessing so much of external prosperity as shall permit them a free scope.

3. **The human virtue.** But all energies must have a certain direction; the right direction of its energies constitutes the *virtue* of each class. What then will be specifically the human virtue? It must of course be in the man, and, according to our psychology, the ὄρεξις (the impulsive faculty) is the constitutive faculty of the human soul, though its excellence consists in its subjection to the dianoetic faculty. Virtue then will

imply the presence and harmony of both these; still it will be found most positively and characteristically in the former. It must be then a habit. But of what kind? To what does it point? What is its aim, seeing that an absolute good, or an ideal, is out of the question, and that happiness cannot be the aim, because it is the very nature of happiness which we are now resolving into its elements? We are not, Aristotle says, to trouble ourselves about scientific accuracy in our definitions; our purpose is purely practical; we want to form an actual man of a certain character, not a theoretic man.

4. **Excesses.** Well, then, practically speaking, excess is in every case that to which you attribute mischief and derangement. There is an excess called Timidity, and an excess called Foolhardiness, an excess called Prodigality, and an excess called Narrowness or Avarice. **The Mean.** But the extremes suppose a mean. This is the end at which our habit aims. Virtue generally lies in this. But we are aiming at action; and actions are not general, but specific; how then shall we arrive at the notion of specific virtues? Their species will be determined by their distinct objects. Certain tendencies and habits will be conversant with external pleasures. Certain others with passions of the mind itself; in each case it will be found that the practical purpose defines the virtue. But though a general description may be given both of the excesses and the means which correspond to them, a description which will be really applicable in all cases, it must ever be remembered that the excess itself may be different for each man, actually different according to his actual circumstances, different in its effects and influence upon him according to his greater proneness to one side or the other. For instance, liberality will be practically a different quality in the rich man and the poor man, and the temptation to profusion will be that which is to be most resisted by one, to meanness by another. Virtue will be therefore in a *mean*, that is one to *us*, and not one which can be absolutely and invariably ascertained by rule.

5. **Predetermination.** Hence it follows that this habit supposes the exercise of a faculty of choice or predetermination. But what is prede-

termination? Is it the same as the act of willing? Clearly not: that has reference to ends, this to the choice of means for the attainment of ends. It implies a right end, and a right determination of the will to that end. It may be called ὄρεξις βουλευτική (the reader will observe how steadily his psychological axiom which we have spoken of is kept in view throughout the scheme). But to what cases does this will or counsel refer, and how far is it dependent upon ourselves? Clearly we do not consult about things absolute or eternal, nor about things within the sphere of accident. What remain are all such things as are done by us or with our concurrence. Now of such some may be doubtless taken from under our control by actual violence practised upon us; such cases give rise to various questions of casuistry, as to the course which a virtuous man will choose, whether he will submit to do wrong or to die, each of which cases must be determined on its own merits. With respect to ordinary cases, the doubt arises, whether inclination is not itself a force upon the will and on the reason both. Such a notion Aristotle disposes of, first, by the remark that an influence upon the impulse or will cannot by any reasonable man be confounded with a force by which its operations are hindered; and secondly, by admitting that an incapacity for particular action may doubtless be produced in any man by these influences, but that this incapacity is itself the result of a previous habit which need not have been formed. Habits then are in our own power, actions not always.

6. **Specific characters.** Having settled these foundations, the particular ethical virtues come next under his consideration. Here lies a field for the exercise of his always acute and often delicate habits of observation. It is alien from the temper of mind which Shakspeare has wrought into us, to contemplate any character as the mere development of a single specific quality. We do not like to hear of a man as the Magnificent, or the Magnanimous, or the Modest, or the Temperate, or the Just. But, doubtless, there was something in this which suited well with Greek habits. Aristides, Themistocles, Cimon, if they had not a distinct purpose of realising a particular form of character, yet

drop more readily into certain moulds than the traditionary characters in the story either of ancient Rome or modern Europe. How a similar tendency was revived at one period in Christian society, and how its revival was connected with a scholastic reverence for Aristotle, we may have to notice hereafter.

7. Among these virtues it behoves us especially to take notice of two, because they throw some light upon the entire system, and upon ethical inquiries generally. **Justice.** The first is Justice (δικαιοσύνη). Is not this virtue itself an abstract of all the virtues? We have seen how Plato answers the question in his *Republic*. Aristotle treats it differently, yet so as to make us see how much he had felt the influence of his master's ideas, even when he rejected them. In one sense (he says) δικαιοσύνη may indeed be said to be a complex of virtues. For as it is the habit which mainly disposes us to obey the laws, and as laws prohibit excesses of all kinds, and encourage virtues of all kinds, this will have respect to them all. But yet there is such an offence as overreaching, and there must be a specific virtue answering to this. The specific virtue will bear relation to the general. Inequality, in matters appertaining to property, will be the evil. Evenness or equality will be the virtue. This evenness or equality implies, on each side, an excess, a more and a less; a more and a *less*, however, in reference to given persons. The conservation of the right proportion or relation of things to persons, and the restoration of the balance when it has been violated, is then that at which this virtue especially aims. Take away the restriction to property, and this virtue would seem to be in a remarkable manner the very virtue of virtues; so emphatically is it the preserver of the mean. But that very restriction makes it more difficult to tell how far this virtue belongs to the individual, and how far to the State, so that δικαιοσύνη, though bearing a much more limited meaning, becomes, to our author as to his master, a kind of debatable ground between the two regions. At all events δικαιοσύνη must be looked upon as *the* ethical virtue of a statesman.

8. **Moderation.** The other virtue we must speak of is σωφροσύνη. **Self-restraint.** As this is opposed to ἀκολασία, and involves the general notion of an even habit of mind not overcome or disturbed by sensual desires, it might seem to include within it ἐγκράτεια, or self-restraint. But as in the psychology of Aristotle the soul consists of a rational, an irrational, and a quasi-rational part, the quality which implies a control over the irrational or merely animal nature will not necessarily be the same with that which concerns the quasi-rational, that is, the passions and affections. As the name σωφροσύνη is given to the first, the name ἐγκράτεια is used for the second. Hence a curious consequence. This self-government seems something distinct not only from the peculiar virtue which has reference to sensual desires, but even from virtue itself. *That* has its chief seat in the nature or impulsive faculty over which *this* is supposed to rule. We are somewhat puzzled, therefore, after going through our catalogue of virtues, to find a book opening with the remark, that there are three moral states to be avoided, κακία, ἀκρασία, θηριότης, and three good states corresponding to these, ἀρετή, ἐγκράτεια, and a certain divine excellence as much transcending ordinary humanity as θηριότης sinks below it. This result will appear inevitable to any one who reflects upon the system; that which is conservative of virtue must in some way be distinct from virtue, but we must acknowledge also that it considerably impairs the symmetry of a design otherwise singularly complete.

9. **The Dianoetic faculties.** Before, however, Aristotle touched upon this conservative power, which, of course, is connected with the purely ethical part of man, it was needful for him to expound more distinctly than he had done in his psychology the nature of these dianoetic faculties to which such important functions are committed. He begins with reaffirming the position so often insisted upon, that the ὄρεξις, and the διάνοια, must co-operate in order that any good moral act may be the result, or, as he expresses it, with neatness and in more strict accordance with his own notion of the διάνοια—that what is affirmed or denied by the one should be what is pursued or avoided by

the other. Now, the soul, he says, may affirm or deny truly in five ways, by τέχνη, by ἐπιστήμη, by φρόνησις, by σοφία, by νοῦς. Τέχνη is what in modern language would be called the creative power or faculty, the poetic organ in its highest and lowest sense. 'Επιστήμη is the converse of this. It deals with that which cannot be otherwise, it does not fashion anew but perceives; what it deals with are universals, not particulars. Aristotelian science is, as we have seen already, conversant with conclusions, not premises; but there must be some faculty which deals with premises, a tact, intuition, or spiritual sense; this is νοῦς. The sphere of this faculty would seem to be very limited, for as it is bounded on one side by ἐπιστήμη, it is bounded on the other by σοφία. This faculty, we were told in the *Metaphysics*, was conversant with ἀρχαί or principles; it might therefore seem to cover the whole ground which is assigned to νοῦς. But that which affirms things to be so and so without a reasoning process, is undoubtedly distinct from that faculty which, through long and winding labyrinths, searches for causes. Now, when the νοῦς is said to deal with premises, the first kind of operation is indicated; when the σοφία, the second. Φρόνησις, the last of the five, is different, and yet has something of the character of the preceding. Its sphere is with the altering and the alterable, like τέχνη, yet it is not productive or creative, but perceptive and distinguishing. So far it resembles ἐπιστήμη, differing from it wholly in its subject-matter. It has a quickness of tact like the νοῦς, but this is merely the result of practice and experience. It is, therefore, like σοφία, a laborious investigating faculty. Yet its end is not speculation, but practice. The φρόνιμος, or practical experimental man, therefore, is contrasted with the σοφός, or the meditative speculative man; though it is not denied that σοφία may assist and be usefully connected with φρόνησις. From this analysis it is evident that this last quality is especially that which, in combination with a right ἦθος, or a proper condition of the impulsive faculty, produces virtue. The doctrine of Socrates, that virtue is φρόνησις (a doctrine, by the way, which is somewhat carelessly stated, for the real Socratic doctrine treats virtue as ἐπιστήμη, the knowledge

of what is absolutely good, prudence being only a guardian faculty to preserve the soul when seeking that knowledge from the seductions and confusions of sense), this doctrine is said to form only one side of the truth; φρόνησις is not virtue, though virtue cannot exist without it.

10. **Friendship.** We have seen that δικαιοσύνη does to a certain extent occupy the same position in the Aristotelian and in the Platonic system as a link between morals and politics. But Aristotle could not help perceiving that this quality, under the conditions which he had imposed upon it, explained but very imperfectly the connection of human society with the life of the individual. This dry and hard principle of distribution, commutation, and rectification, could never be substituted for the music of Plato's *Commonwealth*. Reflecting on this difference, it seems to have struck him, that in the idea of Friendship we have that which fills up the void, and that Friendship together with Justice constitute the social law. Regarded in this light, Friendship occupies the most important place in a system of ethics, which is always looking onwards to Politics. And we cannot wonder that Aristotle should have devoted two elaborate books to the consideration of it. Any one who is acquainted with the traditions and with the mythology of Greece, must be aware how much the Greek mind was occupied with this subject. Here, as elsewhere, physical and moral thoughts became intertwined, and the same language was used to explain the law of sympathy between the skies and earth, and that between man and man. Aristotle is careful to disengage himself from these ambiguous phrases, which he had not perhaps imagination enough to perceive were more than metaphors, and fixes his mind upon Friendship as one of the essential conditions of our nature to which the very existence of communion must be referred.

11. **Ground of friendship.** This being assumed, he has no hesitation in setting aside many popular notions of friendship as giving a wholly inadequate view of its nature. The doctrine which refers friendship either to Utility or to Pleasure as its ultimate foundation, he rejects, not with sentimental indignation, but as being at variance with facts and

reason. The transitoriness of such friendships, and their dependence upon accidents, are arguments as much to the practical man as to the philosopher, that the essence of the quality is not to be discovered in them. The friendship of good men for each other must then be that from which we are to deduce the nature of friendship itself. Here, and here only, we learn the conditions, or even the possibility of friendship, for, properly speaking, it is not possible, except upon the supposition that one man can really delight in another, and love him as himself. A politician seriously reflecting on the existence of society, must feel that a principle is at work among men which can only be defined in these terms; that all the imperfect appearances which it presents in the world, so far as they are imperfect, make its meaning less intelligible; that, supposing selfishness absolute, it could not exist at all, and that the highest form in which it exhibits itself is the test of its character. These important conclusions are stated again and again, and with the greatest precision, by Aristotle. On the strength of them he affirms, that the idea of equality or proportion is as much discoverable in friendship as in justice; only that in justice the worth of each object is the first consideration, its fitness to us the second; in friendship, fitness or suitableness the first, worth the subordinate. On the same ground he maintains that friendship is to be seen in its true operation, not in clubs, nor societies, nor partnerships, where men associate for some specific object (though here also Justice is required as its assessor and its complement, every kind of society implying a law to regulate it, as well as a motive to form it, a principle of government as well as of concord), but in a *polity* of which all these must be considered as portions. An inquiry, therefore, into the different kinds of government becomes connected with an inquiry into the law of friendship.

12. **Ground of Society in relationships** In this passage we discover how much Aristotle surpassed Plato in his apprehensions respecting the nature of relationships, while he fell so far short of him in everything that concerns the absolute. He discovers in the relations of father to son, of husband to wife, of brother to sister, three primary forms,

as it were, of friendship; and the grounds of the three kinds of government to which all others may be reduced: Monarchy, Aristocracy, Timocracy, of which the three corruptions are, Tyranny, Oligarchy, Democracy. Under each of these true forms of government, friendship and justice will be found existing and mutually sustaining each other. Friendship, however, will take its peculiar form from the form of the society. It will be the friendship of patronage and of reverence in a monarchy. It will have the conjugal model in an aristocracy, one party being respected as the superior in worth, and retaining that respect only while he asserts dominion on that ground. The fraternal type of equality will be preserved in all friendship under a Timocracy. On the other hand, in the depraved forms, friendship will be depraved and weak; and in a tyranny, which he regards as the worst of all, because the corruption of the best, both it and justice will disappear, subjects being regarded as animals, and as such incapable of human qualities. The existence of this law of sympathy being then established as one of the two necessary conditions of human fellowship, and virtue being shown to be the necessary condition of friendship, Aristotle proceeds to solve a great many questions of deep and practical interest. **Friendship and Self-love.** The most important of these turn upon the relation between friendship and self-love. In what sense is friendship a part of self-love? in what sense opposed to it? As the notion of pleasure or utility had already been separated from friendship, it is obvious that the vulgar notion of self-love must be separated from it also. Still, ordinary language intimates that there must be some analogy between the two ideas, and it seems hard to arrive at any higher description than this, that the friend is loved as another self. May not the difficulty then be solved thus? may not self-love be itself distinguished from all associations of profit and loss? and may we not affirm that the wise and good man is the true self-lover, the person who alone is at one with himself, and can take pleasure in his own company? If this be so, it would not be correct to seek for the ground of friendship in self-love; it would be more correct to say that they mutually illustrate each other. Only the

man who has the capacity of friendship will have himself for a friend; and only he who can enjoy and love himself, is capable of enjoying and loving another. These two books on Friendship are certainly not the least profound in Aristotle's writings, and to the general reader they will be far the most delightful.

13. **Pleasure.** From this subject we proceed, in the tenth book, to the question of Pleasure; what it is; how far, according to the doctrine of some philosophers, it is to be denounced as an evil, how far it is *a good*, or connected with *the good*. Aristotle argues against many prevalent definitions of pleasure. He shows why it is neither a κίνησις, a mere movement, a γένεσις, the passage into a state, or an ἀναπλήρωσις, the filling up of a want. He considers the universal longing of mankind a sufficient witness that pleasure is something real and worthy in itself, and not merely a means to some other end. An examination of the facts leads to the same conclusion. But it leads also to a refutation of the opinion, that pleasure can be made a distinct formal purpose of life. It is the flower or consummation of something else. The exercise of sight, the exercise of hearing, each brings its own appropriate pleasure after it. But the pleasure is connected with the energy or exercise, and cannot be severed from it. If then you would understand what pleasure is, and what are the highest pleasures, you must understand what energies are, and what are the highest energies. You cannot refer the last to the first, you must refer the first to the last. That energy, then, which is most appropriate to each creature, brings the pleasure which is appropriate to that creature; "the energy of the soul, according to virtue," brings the highest pleasure to man. The pleasure which an act gives to him who performs it is the test of that act having become habitual to him, of his having acquired the character corresponding to that act. The man who delights in musical energies has become a musician. The man who delights in just acts is a just man.

14. **The highest happiness.** From this analysis of the nature of pleasure, the step is easy to a reconsideration of the meaning and nature of happiness, and so to a brief review of the whole treatise.

Happiness he has found to be the end of man, and to *consist in* (not, like pleasure, merely to be the effect of) the use of his highest energies. What then, on the whole, is the highest happiness? **Contemplation.** It is that of the contemplative man. If we can imagine what the life of the gods is, seeing it is absurd to attribute to them Justice, because that has respect to contracts and conventions; Temperance, because that implies temptations to which they cannot be exposed; and so of most of the other acts which preserve the mean for man,—we must believe it to consist in Contemplation. But then for the attainment of this celestial life in those who can attain it, there is need of early discipline and education. There is need that they should be trained to the avoidance of those extremes in which evil lies, and to the exercise of those virtues which are the only conditions of, and preparations for, the contemplative happiness, though it transcends them. And for the rest there must be a discipline to cultivate what capacities there are in them; or in case of resistance to such cultivation, to coerce and punish them. Here then is the field for the science of Politics. That science, Aristotle says, the Sophists had resolved into a mere teaching how to talk and argue, but the foundations of it lie in ethical knowledge and ethical practice; it must be worthless and rotten when these foundations are not discovered. This is the introduction to the book on Politics.

SECTION VIII. POLITICS OF ARISTOTLE.

1. **How Ontology is applied to Politics.** We can but give our readers a few hints to assist them in the study of this treatise, which, valuable and interesting as it is, can never bear the same relation to the other Aristotelian writings which the Platonic *Republic* bears to his dialogues. Not, it will be evident enough from our former remarks, that the Politics of Aristotle are not most closely connected with his Ethics and his Ontology, but that they are connected with them rather as results and deductions than as being a principal and fundamental part of the design. The doctrine which has been set forth with so much

diligence in the Metaphysics, that every substance presupposes a lordly energising power, and a submissive receptive faculty or matter, reappears again here in connection with the most obvious and outward facts. The relation of Male and Female is assumed as the first hint of the existence of society, and as containing the principle of it. The idea of fellowship implied in this relation involves another, that of rule and subjection, which has its complete expression in the relation of Master and Slave. Compare these two relations with that relation in each man which has been explained in the Psychology and illustrated in the Ethics, between the reasoning power, the faculty participant of reason, and the mere animal nature, and you feel at once that the two explain each other, and set forth the condition under which society is meant to exist. Where the reason is developed and its magisterial authority acknowledged, the other faculty being in fellowship with and subordination to it, and the animal nature controlled and subjected, there you have as well the true condition of the individual man as the true condition of society; there the relations of husband and wife, and master and servant, will be preserved; they will not be arbitrary, but legal and orderly.

2. **The household and the city.** In such a state of things only a polity is possible; and, as this is the only true condition of each man, it is evident that a political state is his only proper and natural condition, every other must be anomalous. You find then the constituents of a polity in a household; but a house is not therefore a miniature city; a city is not merely a collection of households; each has its own distinct nature and laws, though each alike has this characteristic—that by human relations it consists—that in them you discover the end of its existence—and that all means and instruments are to be contemplated with reference to these. Economy is not primarily, but secondarily and accidentally, the management of the goods or property of the household; it is mainly the right ordering of the household itself. The slave is the connecting link between one branch of economy and the other; he must be considered as an instrument, and yet he must be treated as

a man. A polity can be considered only as composed of freemen, quite as much because a freeman only understands how to obey as because he only understands how to govern.

3. **The Platonic Unity rejected.** It follows almost necessarily from this view of the case—first, that the Platonic idea of unity should be as little heeded by Aristotle in his Polity as in his Metaphysics; that he should utterly abhor the attempt to embody that idea by abolishing distinct relationships, these being in his opinion the very foundation of society; that he should recognise all forms of government as good which have their ground in any actual relation, and all as evil which have become in any sense arbitrary; that he should therefore acknowledge, much as Plato did, three true forms, and three departures from these; and that he should look on the democratical departure,—the attempt to establish a society in which all should govern, with at least as little complacency as the rest; that, at the same time, he should conceive the form from which this is a deviation,—the form which makes all freemen eligible to government, though not necessarily participant of it, as his ideal. These seem to us the main principles of the book, which being understood, the occasional difficulties and contradictions it presents will be less puzzling; its position in reference to the other parts of the philosophy will be felt; its value as a key to the political science of modern as well as ancient times will be appreciated.

DIVISION IV.—THE LATER SECTS.

SECTION I. GREECE AFTER THE TIME OF ALEXANDER.

1. **The small remains of the later schools;** It may surprise our readers that so large a portion of this sketch should have been devoted to Greek philosophy, and that nothing should yet have been said about those schools which we are wont to regard as the great representatives of it. The Epicureans, the Stoics, the Academics, are continually spoken of as *the* Greek schools. Not a few young Englishmen grow up with the impression that in them are to be found those thoughts in their highest

and most concentrated form, which have made Greece wonderful. Such an impression is strangely at variance with facts. What have the teachers of these great schools left, by which we may judge of them and of their doings? Of Epicurus, we have three letters preserved by Diogenes Laertius; of Zeno, nothing; of Cleanthes, a single hymn to Jupiter; of the Academics, merely traditions. We have not spoken of the three books of Aristotle's Rhetoric, because, amidst the multitude of his books, it was necessary to choose those which refer most directly to our subject. In each of these books—we might add, in the short notes on poetry—there is five times as much matter bearing directly upon moral and metaphysical philosophy as in all the Greek remains of the later schools (of course we limit the remark to the time before Christ). If their words and those of Aristotle were weighed instead of measured, we believe the disproportion would be found far greater.

2. **yet they wrote largely.** It cannot be replied to this statement that Thales, Pythagoras, Socrates, wrote nothing, and yet that few men have done more to awaken the energies by which books are produced. Epicurus, Zeno, and their respective followers, belong to an age of books, and were in the strictest sense makers of books. Each of them may have written as much as Aristotle. The dialogue, as an interchange of feelings with disciples, can never have been characteristic of them; they were teachers, lecturers, men who laid down maxims and laws which their disciples repeated, modified, and argued for.

3. And this is in part the explanation and the justification of the place which has been assigned them among their countrymen. We have heard of seekers of wisdom, of men who were steadily working out problems. The men we are speaking of had finished their search, had solved their problems. They had ascertained what was to be known and not to be known; they could set down the results of their inquiries in definite, manageable propositions; they had a well-ascertained, transmissible doctrine. They therefore deserve the name which has been given them—they are *the* Greek *sects*. To call them the Greek *philosophers* is absurd, at least if philosophy is to bear the

sense which Socrates or even which Aristotle gave to it. But they did distinctly appropriate to themselves one set of conclusions or results; they had fixed theses and formulas which could be learned by heart; they could supply the Greeks of the ages to which they belonged with all that the Greeks of those ages wanted—topics of disputation; they could supply another, and a nobler race, with suggestions which *they* could mould into something like a satisfaction for the cravings of their energetic minds.

4. **The age of Alexander.** The great Alexandrian period had succeeded to the republican period—the age when Greeks proved that they could subdue barbarians to the age when they maintained their own freedom against barbarians, or indulged the excesses of that freedom in conflicts with each other. Of this time we have considered Aristotle as the representative. This was the time when he surveyed all the different provinces of human thought, and mapped them out; when he reproduced the inquiries of his predecessors, and cast them into moulds of his own; above all, when he assigned to the wise man and to the practical man, two perfectly distinct spheres of activity, though spheres in which each might beneficially or injuriously affect the other. Aristotle then, to a great extent, proclaimed the search for wisdom to be at an end. He left the impression on the minds of his disciples that the whole scheme of the universe could be brought under the forms of the human understanding. No doubt there was much in his teaching to counteract this impression. There was a vast range for the activity of the practical man in regulating his own mind, in preserving or improving society. The divine "Theorist" might surely hope that he, too, had a field to explore which was almost or quite inexhaustible. So long as the age of Alexander lasted, the practical man and the theorist would alike gain strength and hope from the change which was taking place in the state of the world, from the new treasures that were discovered in it, from the prospect of seeing Greek wisdom at the head of it.

5. **The age which succeeded.** That dream passed away: there were some, perhaps, who felt while it lasted how brief it was to be. An age of intrigue succeeded, in which all great principles were lost sight of; in which it was proved that the elements of which Greek society consisted were absolutely unsociable; in which, however, the restoration of the older freedom was as hopeless as the preservation of a united empire. What a sense of weariness and exhaustion must alterations so sudden have produced in the mind of the most active and feverish nation that ever existed! How certainly would the speculations of its wise men reflect that weariness and hopelessness!

6. **The new Scepticism.** Scepticism we have spoken of as a Greek characteristic. So far from attributing it to philosophy, we have supposed that philosophy was a great protest against it. If a Greek could learn that there was something which he could not create, he had advanced a certain way towards reverence and belief. But another kind of scepticism was possible, which may, in some sense, be called the fruit of philosophy. A man might say, "We have been seeking a long time; what have we found? Have we got hold of any certain determinations? Aristotle says that we have. Socrates and Plato seem to say the reverse. They perhaps are as good authorities as he is. And when we consider what a multitude of different notions have been circulating among us for these two or three hundred years, who can be confident that any one is entitled to more respect than any other? Some function there is, undoubtedly, for the wise man. We Greeks are assuredly to be still, as we have always been, the wise people of the earth. But the function of the wise man is not perhaps to determine anything. May it not be rather that he is to tell us how it is best for those to behave themselves, who, as Socrates said, know that they know nothing?"

7. **Pyrrho; his history.** Of this state of mind, Pyrrho has always been considered the representative. He is said to have been in the army of Alexander, to have conversed with the Indian Gymnosophists, to have arrived at the conclusion that there is nothing noble or base, or just or unjust; that nothing truly is; that men do all things by custom

and law; that each individual thing is not more this than that. Being naturally nervous, he is said to have cultivated, with great success, ἀταραξία, or freedom from disturbance; so that he would not leave the road to escape from being thrown down by a carriage, or bitten by a dog; that he lived 90 years; that he was made a high priest by his own citizens, who, for his sake, excused philosophers from payment of taxes; that the Athenians honoured him with their citizenship.

8. **Its internal probability.** Excepting the reports about his practical conduct, which are merely jokes, not very clever ones, upon his efforts after quietness, the outlines of this story are very credible. A Greek coming into contact with an absorbed Brahmin would be very likely to admire his seeming freedom from external disquiet, and, at the same time, to increase his own growing doubts about the importance or reality of the questions in which his people had been interested. The language about the good and the base is the ordinary language of sceptical despair. Such despair being compatible with the belief that anything is possible because nothing is true, could not the least disqualify a man for a priest. It was not natural that the city which in less degenerate days gave Socrates the hemlock, should give Pyrrho its highest rewards for stating in words that which a great majority of Athenians will at once have recognised as their own inward persuasion. Whether the history of the individual man Pyrrho is authentic or fictitious, it is no doubt in substance the history of thousands in that time.

9. But what is there in this universal scepticism which at all corresponds to the character we have given of the different *sects*? **Pyrrhonism at the root of the sects, which were, however, a reaction against it.** In one sense, Pyrrhonism lay at the root of all these sects; in another they were the reaction against it. A despair of discovery—of *philosophy* in its old sense—was implied in them all. A belief that the main object of the wise man is to seek for freedom from the disturbances and distresses of the ordinary man, is implied in them all. But men who have fallen into doubt through exhaustion soon

find doubt itself very *exhausting*. They crave for some distinct, positive decisions; decisions, if possible, which shall be novel, which shall be better than any given before; which shall make them conscious of their superiority to those in past times who toiled and travailed, and after all affirmed little; decisions which shall embody the results of much thinking without calling for the effort of it; but, at all events, *decisions*, which can be easily set forth and argued for, and used to controvert any old or new opinion that may be opposed to them.

SECTION II. EPICURUS.

BORN B.C. 342, DIED B.C. 270.

1. **Epicurus a dogmatist.** EPICURUS, we are told, liked to hear anecdotes respecting the indifference and apathy of Pyrrho. In these qualities he aspired to imitate him. But Epicurus was no doubter; he was the most imperious of dogmatists. No one had ever such entire faith in his own conclusions; no one more thoroughly and heartily rejected all conclusions but his own, as absurd, even as impossible. Unless he had attained to this perfect satisfaction in his own judgment, he would have missed the main object which he proposed to himself. But, on the other hand, any one who proposes that object to himself may be tolerably secure of attaining such self-confidence. A man must be brought into a peculiar condition of mind before he can believe that the universe and all that it contains exist only that they may tell him how he is to be comfortable; but when he has once believed this, it will be wonderful indeed if his ears ever catch any sound which is not an echo to his demand, or some fragment of an answer to it. Do you deny that all men like pleasure and dislike pain? This is his kind of inquiry, which, as it means simply, Do you deny that all men like what they like, and dislike what they dislike? certainly reduces an opponent to very considerable perplexity.

2. **His boast of originality.** Epicurus was fond of boasting that he had made his own philosophy. He was a "self-taught" man. A really original thinker seldom puts forth such a profession. He knows that

what he has learnt is his own; he is glad to confess from whom he has learnt. Epicurus might be perfectly honest in saying that he had read very little, and had worked out his conclusions in his own mind; but he was a copyist nevertheless; few men more entirely so. Aristotle had shown clearly that if an absolute good is not the end of practical life, happiness must be its end. Epicurus could say no more; he could only find out some new criterion of happiness, seeing that Aristotle's definition of it as an energy of the soul, put forth in conformity with certain existing relations, implying a body politic, must needs be unsatisfactory. In seeking for this criterion, Epicurus had no resource but to adopt the old sophistical dogma; he could only say that we must refer everything to the standard of our sensations. No doubt he may have refined considerably upon this thought, for, in the first place, he had a body of formulas provided him by Plato and Aristotle on the subject of sensations; and, secondly, he lived in an age in which thought was less active, but in which all that contributes to mere gratification, whether bodily or mental, was far better understood. **Sensation.** It is a question which has been much, and we think very unnecessarily, debated, whether, by making sensation his standard of happiness, Epicurus did, or did not, mean to encourage what is formally called sensuality. The testimonies of antiquity respecting his personal character are various, and the most modern criticism seems rather inclined to revert to the vulgar opinion respecting it, rejecting, certainly with good reason, the fanatical panegyrics of some French and English writers in the last century. Upon the whole, we are inclined to believe that Epicurus was an apathetic, decorous, formal man, who was able, without any great difficulty, to cultivate a measured and even habit of mind, who may have occasionally indulged in sensual gratifications to prove that he thought them lawful, but who generally preferred, as a matter of taste, the exercises of the intellect to the more violent forms of self-indulgence. And this life would, it seems to us, be most consistent with his opinions. To avoid commotion, to make the stream of life flow on

as easily and uninterruptedly as possible, was clearly the aim of his philosophy.

3. **Dialectics and Physics—why touched by Epicurus.** For this end it was advisable to avoid the pursuit of wealth and honours; it was better to abstain from extremely vehement enjoyments, but it was absolutely necessary to get rid of all superstitious fears. How these were produced was, therefore, an important question for the founder of such a system. The answer to it led him much further than he at first intended to go. Naturally, Epicurus cared only for moral questions, that is to say, for such questions as related to the management of human life. With dialectics, either in the Platonic or Aristotelian sense of the word, he had no proper concern; for what had he to do with a science which distinguishes the false from the true either in things or words? In physics he took even less interest; the fixed order of nature is a painful weight upon the mind of a man who aims at adjusting a scheme for himself, and who disbelieves in any actual order and government. Theology, so intimately blended with both of these in the earlier systems, would have been still more resolutely banished from his. But then all these subjects must pass under his review, because from all of them conclusions had been derived which affect man's serenity and cause him dreams. A study answering to logic may be used to explain the origin of opinions, and why some of them must, for want of better epithets, be called false and some true. A man has certain sensations, and certain images are presented to him from without. The sensations are to be trusted, the representations are to be trusted: only in the exercise of some power by which a judgment is formed from these sensations or representations does error arise. These are corrected by referring again to the sensations, the only ultimate standards. Here again the originality of Epicurus consists, it will be seen, wholly in his omissions.

4. **How to escape from the sense of an order.** The relation between the senses and the visible representations which are set before them had been treated by Plato and Aristotle, each in his own method, with

the profoundest skill and discrimination. Epicurus had only to avail himself of such fragments from the intuitive observations of the one, or the rigid analysis of the other, as were consistent with the rejection of their principle that there is another and a surer standard than that which the senses supply. In physics Epicurus was still a copyist; and any one who studies the rest of his philosophy may perceive that, as he adopted the theory of Democritus simply because it was the one which it was most comfortable to hold, so he was guided, in many changes which he introduced into it, simply by the wish to get rid of some distressing fact which interfered with his moral speculations, and made his scheme of life less practicable. The idea of mysterious powers in nature had been one which had at all times haunted the Greek mind, and to which the speculations of the philosophers bore as much witness as the fables of the mythologists. With this thought was connected another, still more oppressive to the mind of Epicurus, still more interfering with the calmness and apathy of the true sage. It seemed that these powers were organised, that there were the vestiges of a scheme in nature, that there was something in them which answered to man's own powers of art and contrivance, while it controlled them. From these painful impressions there was one joyful refuge. The notion of the world being composed of atoms which had met in empty space, had united and disposed themselves into the light forms or heavy masses of which our senses take cognizance, at once relieved Physics of its connection with Theology.

5. **The Soul of man.** And since one product of these invisible atoms was that which had been called the soul of man, a new light dawned upon the moral system from this natural philosophy, a new confirmation of the great principle that man is a machine which may, like any other, be regulated and adjusted to produce certain desirable results.

6. **Declination of Atoms.** One fault, however, there is in the doctrine of Democritus. His descent of atoms in a direct line savoured too much of a determinate purpose, a fixed law. Suppose them to decline a

little from the line—a very little—and this charm is broken, and, what is better still, you have a method of accounting for the existence of choice and freedom in man. If Epicurus anticipated an actual physical discovery in this speculation, it is a new evidence that the divinity which he supposed took no interest in human thoughts or designs, does sometimes shape them into a strange resemblance of what is true, when they are shaping themselves into the most grotesque forms of falsehood. On the whole, it seems unnecessary to attribute to the founder of this philosophy any deep and malignant design of undermining the foundations of human belief or human conduct. The worst that can be said of him is, that he exactly caught the impression of a wretched emasculated age; the best that can be said of him is, that he showed some skill in combining the notions of former philosophers into the only scheme of doctrine which could seem to the men of such an age plausible or possible. One thing should be noticed, that if Epicurism is ultimately destructive of moral habits, it is not to these, but to science, that it sets itself in direct opposition. **The Epicurean the enemy of science.** The Epicurean is essentially the unscientific man—it would be more correct to say, the hater of science; a fact the more striking, because in modern days, when physical science has established itself in the world by another agency than theirs, the disciples of this school have sometimes affected to take it under their patronage, and even to boast of themselves as the exclusive promoters of it. Perhaps we shall find, when we come to speak of them, that they have departed more in appearance than in reality from the fundamental principle of their sect.

SECTION III. STOICISM.

1. **Stoicism a struggle against unbelief.** The second great effort against the Pyrrhonism of this age is the Stoic philosophy. In speaking of this system, as well as of the last, we must endeavour to detach ourselves as much as possible from Roman associations and representations. To do this entirely is out of the question, for till these philosophies were

adopted by the living minds of Rome, they can scarcely be said to have found their meaning. Still it is important to consider the form of the statue as it came from Greek artists, now no longer able of themselves to impart animation to their works, before it was embraced by the Italian Pygmalion. If we reflect how deeply the feeling of an intercourse between men and a divine race superior to themselves had worked itself into the Greek character, what a number of fables, some beautiful, some impure, it had impregnated and procured credence for, how it sustained every form of polity and every system of laws, we may imagine what the effects must have been of its disappearance. If it is possible for a man, it certainly was not possible for a Greek, to feel himself connected by any real bonds with his fellow-creatures around him, when he felt himself utterly separated from every being but them. But the sense of this isolation would affect different minds very differently. **Zeno: birth uncertain; died 263 B.C.** It drove the Epicurean to consider how he might make a world in which he should live comfortably, without distracting visions of the past and future, and the dread of those powers who no longer awakened in him any feelings of sympathy. It drove Zeno to consider whether a man may not find enough in himself to satisfy him, though what is beyond him be ever so unfriendly. This again was no new problem, either for a practical man or a theorist to deal with. Again and again it had presented itself to the Greek sages; again and again experiments had been made to solve it, and the conditions under which it could and could not be solved had been profoundly investigated. Here then, as in the former case, we can expect no originality in conception; the sole interest lies in the thorough desolation of heart which led the philosophers of the Porch to venture once more upon this inquiry. We may trace in the productions which are attributed to Zeno a very clear indication of the feeling which was at work in his mind. He undertook, for instance, among other tasks, to answer Plato's *Republic*. The truth that man is a political being, which informs and pervades that book, was one which must have been particularly harassing to his mind, and which

he felt must be got rid of before he could hope to assert his doctrine of a man's solitary dignity. He appears to have carried out, with some consistency and steadiness in his life, the principle for which he was contending, really showing an indifference to outward circumstances, and maintaining, with less dogmatical affectation than many others, a creditable independence and uprightness of character. Zeno taught at Athens. **The Athenian respect for him.** He was not accused of corrupting the youth or bringing in new demons; he received a golden crown, and was buried publicly in the Ceramicus. Athens may not have sympathised with his severity as much as with the indifference of Pyrrho; but it could do justice to the good qualities of any man whom it could understand. Socrates was neither sceptic nor dogmatist; they knew not where to have him; it was safer to get rid of him.

2. **Cleanthes, born about B.C. 300.** It is pleasant to meet with a hardy, energetic, and free man in this dreary and formal time. *Cleanthes*, the disciple and successor of Zeno, seems to deserve this character.

One who began life as a boxer,[28] who came to Athens with five drachmas; who drew water by night that he might have leisure to attend Zeno's lectures by day; who was brought before the Dicastery to account for his healthy appearance when he had no obvious means of supporting existence, and who was acquitted upon the testimony of the gardeners for whom he worked; who refused the ten minæ which the Areopagus offered him as a reward of this discovery; who was accounted a very slow toilsome man,[29] and patiently endured to be called "The ass," taking it as a compliment that he could bear the burden which Zeno put upon him—such a man would be a striking figure in any time, specially striking amidst a race of clever talkers, impatient of rough toil, ambitious above all things of the reputation for quickness and wit.

[28] πρῶτον ἦν πύκτης.

[29] Ἦν δὲ πονικὸς μὲν ἀφυσικὸς δὲ καὶ βραδὺς ὑπερβαλλόντως. Ὄνος ἀκούων προσεδέχετο· λέγων αὐτὸς μόνος δύνασθαι βαστάζειν τὸ Ζήνωνος φορτίον. Diog. Laert. lib. vii. c. v.

Cleanthes wrote a great many beautiful books, says the biographer. The list of their titles makes us glad that they are lost, as they might probably have spoiled our impressions of him as a living being; degraded him into a mere discourser upon Sensation, Time, Art. He survives truly and satisfactorily in his Hymn to Jupiter, which is the only production remaining to us that connects the early Stoicism with the higher and nobler form it acquired, after it had received the Roman impregnation, in the Life and Meditations of Marcus Aurelius.

3. **Chrysippus, born B.C. 280.** The "slow" Cleanthes had far less favour in the Porch than his pupil, the rapid Chrysippus.[30] "Give me your doctrines and I will find the demonstrations," he said to the humble bearer of burdens. "If the gods have a science of dialectics among them it must be that of Chrysippus," was the reverent language of his disciples. He did not dissent from their judgment respecting him. "To what instructor shall I commit my son?" asked an anxious parent. "To me," said the Stoic; "if there were a better philosopher to be found, should not I go to him?"

Such a person was not likely to write a hymn to Jupiter; but he was the man of all others to perfect the Stoical system. There had been many differences among the professed followers of Zeno. Ariston scorned dialectics; and seems, in some of his conclusions, to have approached Epicurus. Chrysippus put an end to these heresies, and gave the school a definite form and culture. It may be worth while to point out very briefly how the first naked conception of a man striving to live apart from the time and things around him, shaped itself into a compact and tolerably consistent theory of the universe.

4. **Stoical division.** The Stoics could hardly invent any division of studies different from that which use had so long sanctioned; they could not be so negligent as not to extend their theory into the different departments of Morals, Logic, and Physics. They introduced, however, a novelty of expression. They spoke of *Virtue* as being ethical,

[30] ἀνὴρ εὐφυὴς καὶ ὀξύτατος ἐν παντὶ μέρει. Diog. lib. vii. cap. vii.

logical, and physical. It was not that there were three different kinds of virtue, but three different parts which composed it: logic, they said, was the shell of the egg, ethics the white, physics the yelk. Much may be learnt from this language. First we learn that virtue, a certain state of mind or character in the individual man, is all that the Stoic is capable of conceiving. This is the ultimate idea upon which all ideas of truth, as well as of outward tangible forms, are dependent. It will be seen at once how easily such an opinion as this grew out of the Aristotelian doctrine, and yet how it may have appeared, in certain points of view, more unlike to that than to the Platonic. In the doctrine of Socrates, developed by his great disciple, virtue in man is always a conformity to a standard out of himself, a participation in that which is absolutely good, and inseparable from the possession of that which is absolutely true. This doctrine Aristotle rejected, striving to fix practical morality in one department, and the study of Being in another. Upon his system, virtue and happiness acquired the substantive and independent character which neither Socrates nor Plato could ever have assigned them. But the very separation which he had effected between the provinces of Ethics and Ontology enabled him the more easily to follow the natural bent of his character, and to represent the contemplative life as the highest life—that which peculiarly appertains to the philosopher. **The difference between the Stoic and Socrates.** The Stoic, in carrying out his conception respecting virtue, disconnecting it entirely from every dream of an absolute good, rejected with indignation his praise of Contemplation, and seemed to return to the older Socratic language by representing virtue as consisting in a conflict with appearances and deceptions. But the fact is that the Stoic took only the negative side of the Socratic doctrine; his virtue had nothing to converse with, nothing to behold but itself; the impediments which it was to clear out of its way, the temptations which it was to resist, were not those which dimmed the human vision, and prevented it from beholding its proper object, but only those which made it less conscious of its own independence and glory. The Stoical ethics,

therefore—borrowing all which was genuine and vital in them from the language of Socrates respecting the slavery of the undisciplined and sensual spirit, borrowing also and misapplying many of his phrases respecting the connection of virtue with science—so far as they were of native manufacture, consisted merely of pithy maxims of conduct, wire-drawn and minute, entering into the lowest details and frivolities, tending to emasculate the character under pretence of elevating it, and worthy of the censure that they were fitter for nurses than for philosophers. This was the white of the egg.

5. **The Dialectical shell.** That Dialectics should have been nothing more than the shell, is a proof how very little of the real feeling of the Socratic philosophy had survived in this feeble imitation of it. In fact, the language to which we have just alluded, in which science was represented as connected, nay, almost identical with virtue, meant, in the mouths of the Stoics, nothing more than this—that a virtuous man is a man of good taste, has a shrewd discernment of what should be accepted and of what should be rejected. Truth as reality, falsehood as a positive opposite to truth, they in nowise recognised. Dialectics, therefore, in the Platonic sense, which is the science of distinguishing between truth and falsehood, they had no use for. All they understood was that in some way or other that which is desirable is preferred by some and not preferred by others, and that it was necessary, therefore, to inquire what it is in us which determines the fitness or unfitness of things; how we know when we get a right result from things, and when we get a wrong one. In all essential respects their conclusions upon the subject were the same as the Epicurean; that is to say, the one has just as little belief as the other in any standard besides sense, in any difference between the real and the apparent. The difference of their moral scheme, however, made the Stoics unwilling to acknowledge this similarity; they wished to persuade themselves—to a certain extent they could persuade themselves honestly—that those who aimed at the attainment of virtue as their end, would not have the same fluctuating rule and measure of what was good, as those who aimed only at the

production of certain pleasurable results. The Stoics sought therefore for a science, though they could not reach it; and in their attempt to reach it they invented a number of acute verbal distinctions, which, with some mixture of grammar and rhetoric, constituted their dialectical virtue, as those rules of behaviour of which we spoke just now constituted their moral. Certainly this was very fitly compared to a shell containing no nourishment in itself, and so conveniently fragile as to afford an easy passage to the yelk within.

6. **The physical yelk.** It may surprise our readers that the essential part of the Stoical egg, the whole of which is the type of Virtue, should be the physical part. But there is nothing really inconsistent in this notion, either with the origin of Stoicism or its after-development. If the Epicurean undervalued physics because they spoke of something fixed and pre-ordained, something therefore inconsistent with that adjustment and adaptation to circumstances and accidents which he considered his chief good, the Stoic, who wished to rise above circumstances, to attain a firm and independent position, as naturally delighted to contemplate an undeviating system. The perception of any real law and standard for man had forsaken both alike. But there are some who can never lose their deep feeling of the necessity for such a law; these therefore, in their despair of discovering it, will take refuge in the most exact type and counterpart of that which they are seeking, in the sequence of the operations of nature. The invariable attendant upon this feeling is, reverence for fate or necessity, with a proud and voluntary submission of ourselves to its dominion. Such a Fate became the god of the Stoic—strictly speaking his only god; but as he saw it imaged in the movements of the universe, and as he felt at times the need of something more real, more connected with himself than this abstraction, the World became the living form in which he contemplated the object of his worship. And since he found it expedient for the strengthening of some of his moral habits, and accordant with some of the maxims of his philosophy, not to reject established opinions, he easily persuaded himself to adopt the opinion

of Aristotle, that the old legends did in fact represent processes in the material world. They might, therefore, without any violation of his philosophical dignity, be recognised and defended. Theology being thus identified with physics, it surely becomes no matter of surprise that the latter should be treated as the most inward and sacred part of morality.

SECTION IV. THE ACADEMIC.

1. **Plato most perplexing to his school** One sect yet remains to be mentioned to complete our picture of Grecian philosophy in its decrepitude and decline. This is the Academic. We have seen how entirely the very power of conceiving that which we have described as the central principle of Plato's philosophy had departed from his countrymen. All his language about Being was to them the merest dream; they could not even understand the elaborate arguments of Aristotle against his doctrine. Nay, his views respecting the Form and the Matter in each substance had become practically as unintelligible as the deeper speculations of his master. Under such circumstances we may easily conceive what a change must have taken place in the schools bearing their names. The Peripatetic, who worshipped the name of Aristotle, might still satisfactorily expound his Physics, his Logic, part of his Metaphysics, and whatever of his Ethics could be detached from the Politics; but the Academics found the incomprehensible part of their master's creed impregnating all his works; it could no more be detached from the *Phædrus* and the *Phædon* than from the *Republic*.

2. **The resource** There was, however, one circumstance in their favour. For reasons which we have considered at quite sufficient length, the great principle of Plato is developed in dialogues, in which two propositions seem to be set up for the purpose of knocking each other down. Could anything be more natural than the notion that Plato intended hereby to keep men's judgments in a perpetual equilibrium; to maintain, in short, a habit of entire interminable scepticism? The

conclusion was most plausible; yet so much did there appear in the writings and in the whole purpose of Plato to refute it, so much did it seem the very object of his life to overthrow scepticism, that a long time elapsed before this plausible notion was able to establish itself. The Academy appears to have undergone many changes; what they were has been the subject of much controversy, but the language of Cicero leaves little doubt that it did at one time assert certain dogmatical propositions as the doctrine of Plato, and that it passed by slow degrees into that purely sceptical society from which he derived, or fancied he derived, his own opinions.

3. **Platonists, Sophists, and Rhetoricians.** The result is curious, but by no means inexplicable. Scepticism was, as we have said, the foundation of both the other sects, though they attempted to break loose from it. The Academic yielded submissively to the spirit of the times, and embodied it most consistently in his own *no views*. He discoursed eloquently upon all topics, carefully abstained from coming to a conclusion upon any; he could not say what was right, but he was satisfied that both Epicurean and Stoic were wrong, and this was quite sufficient for his purpose. Arguing was his vocation; a kind of arguing, however, which did not exclude an indulgence in flights and flourishes of rhetoric, when the occasion might serve for their introduction. In fact, the disciples of that philosopher who wrote the *Gorgias* and the *Phædrus* became nothing else than the teachers of men how to become Sophists and Rhetoricians. Such were the lees of Greek philosophy, from which one may conjecture how rich must have been its flavour, how full its body, when it was in its prime.

CHAPTER VII. ROMAN PHILOSOPHY.

SECTION I. ROMAN HISTORY AND MYTHOLOGY.

1. **Divinities.** In the ballads or songs, which are supposed to be the foundation of one part of Roman history, there will assuredly have been allusions to a number of divine persons. But there will assuredly *not* have been a divine counsellor, a God of wisdom, in the centre of them. This is not the leading characteristic of the Roman Jove. Neither is it the leading quality of any of the subordinate demigods. They are lawgivers, rulers, preservers of boundaries, champions of right, avengers of wrong. It could never have occurred to any Latin mind to reverence them chiefly, or perhaps at all, for their wit and subtlety.

2. **The Roman Heroes.** All the heroic characters in early Roman history or tradition are distinguished in the same manner from the Greek hero. There is not a single Odysseus among them. His countrymen, indeed, might easily have transferred his qualities to Romulus, or Numa, or Publicola; they might have said, "Intelligence is that which organises infant communities, which prescribes rites and laws; if you suppose the creation of an order, you presume device or counsel in him who establishes it." No doubt this was necessary to a Greek; he could not separate the two thoughts from each other. A Roman separated them without the least effort. Even if he felt that wisdom was necessary to the preservation of order, the order would always be first in his mind, the wisdom second. He might confess that the legislator was a wise man; he never would have allowed that the wise man was as such a legislator.

3. **The Roman Commonwealth.** Though we may reject a great part of the stories in Livy (he himself scarcely asks us to believe them), no one can doubt that he had a very deep perception of the meaning of the history. A simple reader, who takes his facts for granted, receives from them the impression that a wonderful order was growing up during a great many centuries, by mysterious influences, through conflicts of opposing forces, under a divine direction. The critical investigator brings us at last to the same conclusion. Each event, truly or falsely recorded, preserved by the vanity of patrician families, or expressive of popular sympathy or indignation, still explains the development of some new principle in the commonwealth—shows how that which had been latent became manifest, how actual institutions came forth when they were needed out of seeds that had been in the soil ages before. We may understand better than in former days what elements, Latin or Etruscan, entered into the composition of the body politic; but the fact that it was a body politic, and that influences higher than mortal gave it its coherency and preserved it from dissolution, remains as the common result of old credulity and modern investigation.

4. **Apparent absence of the elements of philosophy in the Roman mind.** These considerations may enable us to understand why the old Roman life seems so much less a preparation for philosophy than either the old Oriental or the old Greek life. The seeds of all later Brahminism were contained in the original Hindoo faith. It is a natural transition from the Homeric chief or king to the sage tyrant of Samos or Corinth; thence to the student of physics or of man. But what germs of such a student were there in the countrymen of Fabricius and Camillus? By what steps could they be led to become professors of wisdom, or hunters for it—sophists or philosophers?

SECTION II. ORIGIN OF LATIN PHILOSOPHY.

1. **Roman love of order supplies the want.** If we recollect how many of the inquiries which have hitherto occupied us have been inquiries

after an *order* in nature or in human society, we may find an answer to this question. No doubt the naked problem, "Where is wisdom found?" was not likely to present itself to the Roman of any age. Those who had been seeking hither and thither for some solution of that problem he would never really understand. The mere wisdom trader or hawker might, in certain periods of the commonwealth, be a person of some reputation; for the prizes which he held out to the Athenian —the possession of rhetorical skill and political power—were quite as precious to the Roman. But the course of the history, the forms of the constitution, the kind of arguments by which the Roman candidate appealed to the sympathies of his electors, would make the mere skill in disputation, in the use of general maxims, in word-subtleties, not generally available for his purpose. The Sophist and the Rhetorician both might exist; but they would have distinct functions. And the former trade, one may be quite sure, would not be carried on by native hands. They would be found altogether clumsy both in making the wares and disposing of them. When Sophists were wanted in Rome, they would be brought in as part of the spoils of the conqueror, to march, like any other slaves, in his triumph, and furnish him with a new luxury. But the love of order which was so deeply seated in the heart of the Roman—which was connected with all his hardest fights —which was identified with his glory—if it failed to be satisfied by the aspect of the surrounding society, might bring forth questionings as deep and earnest as those by which any Greek in the past times had ever been exercised.

2. **Motives to study Greek wisdom.** These inquiries, in any distinct shape which could be recognised under the name of philosophy, would of course be of late appearance. They would be preceded by a long internal growth of the national powers, by a sudden and wonderful exhibition of them in victories over the surrounding world, by a bewildering sense of their vastness, by an accompanying and contradictory consciousness of weakness and decay. Clever Greeks coming to Rome at such a time, with a whole apparatus of notions and phrases

which were strange to the Latin ear, would produce the most different impressions upon different minds. A new fashion is, of course, most desirable for men in search of excitement, and who have exhausted their old resources. Men tired of the monotony and stateliness of Roman traditions would eagerly catch at the promise of something that would raise them above the past, and enable them to despise it. The old conservative, who was doing much himself to separate the present from the past by his adherence to corrupt practices, and by carrying out all the worst habits of ambition and aggrandisement to which his countrymen were inclined, would be startled and shocked by the invasion of fantastic follies, and would take the coarsest and rudest methods of resisting them. He would be quite unaware that there was a class of men far more patriotic than himself, who listened to the Greek teachers in the very hope that they might find the way of recovering a state of things which they fancied had once been theirs, and which had departed, listened to them with astonishment and admiration, even with blind and devout acquiescence, and yet really brought to them far more than they received from them—feelings, recollections, hopes, which could convert the driest chips of doctrine into practical realities.

3. The young Roman, it may be said, was obliged to take what he could get. If Carneades or Cratippus was the teacher of his day, he must learn of him, and not of Plato nor of Aristotle; since the living voice will always be mightier than the book, and has the power of transforming it. This is partly true. **Why the Roman preferred the later schools.** Yet it will be evident from what we have said that the Roman had a natural affinity for the later schools, and an incapacity for appreciating the earlier. Epicureans, Stoics, Academics, were occupying themselves about the manner in which men were to live; they had distinct and definite propositions about the condition and conduct of the human or physical universe in which they were dwelling. The Roman, discontented with the political schemes and intrigues in the midst of which his lot was cast—unable to recover the maxims of his

ancestors—aware of the tricks which were resorted to by the augurs and diviners of his land—of the state-craft which had worked itself into all the religion of his country—cared little for questions about Being or Unity, but eagerly craved for anything which should give him a hope of greater coherency and consistency in his own relations.

SECTION III. THE ROMAN EPICUREAN.

1. **The poem of Lucretius.** The poem of Lucretius naturally presents itself as the first and most marvellous outburst of that spirit which all the wisdom of the Censor and of the older Romans was unable to keep in check. Everything at first sight tends to heighten the wonder which this poem produces in us. The philosophical poems of that nation which had furnished the language of philosophy, and given birth to the most splendid poetry, have perished; only a few fragments remain of the verses in which Xenophanes and Parmenides conveyed their opinions; Empedocles of Agrigentum is scarcely more than the shadow of a name. Nor have we any reason to believe that the productions of these men, though they were men of genius and originality, deserve to be regretted, at least as works of art. How strange, then, does it seem that the greatest effort of Roman genius should be a work written on a subject utterly alien from the habits of the Latin mind, by a young man struggling with a language which, for his purposes at least, was barren and uncouth; a language too which one would have thought could only have become poetical when it was used to speak of the actions of great men, and of people subdued to laws! **Its peculiarity.** It may seem to some even a more astonishing circumstance than any of these, that the theory which Lucretius undertook to defend and illustrate was, of all that Greece had produced from the days of Thales downwards, the hardest and most mechanical—one would have said the most flat and prosaic. Genius, no doubt, is called forth by difficulties, and if it had nothing to overcome would not deserve its name. Still there is a fitness in the choice of subjects

which we are generally able to recognise, and without which it is hardly possible that a work, even if it were written, could become a great national possession. With respect to the doctrine, no thoughtful reader can believe that it was adopted from a false notion either that it was particularly suited for poetry, or that great fame would be obtained by triumphing over its unsuitableness. Lucretius writes with the most entire conviction; his whole mind is evidently impregnated with his doctrine. And this was one necessary condition of his producing so great a poem,—he felt what he said: an earnestness, which had not been in the mind of any Greek for at least two centuries, had got possession of his. He may have selected a miserable idol, but such as it was he rendered to it the most entire, devoted worship.

2. **Owes its strength to Roman, not to Greek influences.** This earnestness he owed to his Roman education. He had not perhaps himself any strong impulses towards active life, or much of the legal and rhetorical abilities which were the qualification for it. The rage and contention of parties, the atrocities and the meannesses which, in the days of Marius, Cinna, and Sylla, he must have heard of every day, will have been most distracting to him. *We* may be able to perceive how much better Roman society in that age, with all its abominable crimes, was, than the dreary condition of Greece, even when its sleep was confused by those dreamy efforts of patriotism which the appearance of Flaminius and the Romans called forth. *We* may see that great social principles were struggling with each other in those conflicts of rival parties which could not have left such an impression upon history, if there had not been much good mixed with the apparently unbroken evil. **Influence of his age upon Lucretius.** But to Lucretius the misery and confusion will have presented themselves almost without relief; and then, little knowing how much he was indebted to the forms of his country's polity, and to the truths that lay underneath its false worship, for the disgust which such spectacles excited in him, he will have been led to question the worth of the faith and reverence by which a system of falsehood and cruelty seemed to be upheld. In such

inquiries he will probably have found most of the thoughtful youths about him engaged, with no great difference in the result, except that they could abide quietly in contempt of the popular opinions, while he required some positive substitute for them. Arriving with such feelings at Athens, what could be more natural than that the words of an Epicurean lecturer should take a hold of his soul which they never had obtained over the person who uttered them; that he should have welcomed them as the deliverance from an intolerable burden, as the discovery of a region of which he had been dreaming, but which he never believed to exist; nay, as the satisfaction of that love of order which his Roman discipline had imparted to him, and which the circumstances of Rome itself were continually affronting?

3. A poem on the Nature of Things, written under such circumstances by a man possessing the vision and the faculty divine, might well embody some of the deepest, nay, truest feelings. The strongest patriotism, the greatest command of his native tongue, might be exhibited by a man apparently adopting all the habits and notions of a Greek. Under the guise of Epicurism, he might express a religious desire for a deliverance from the tyranny of powers whom he could not love; the Democritic concourse of atoms might convey to him his first notion of any scheme or order in the universe: and such a poem might well become national, for it would express the very state of mind of the age in which it was produced as reflected in the person of the most genius; it would bring out the whole nature of the union which was effected in that age between Greek speculation and Roman life; would show how the latter really asserted its dominion over the beggarly materials with which it had to work.

4. We have no excuse for dwelling at any length upon this noble poem, both because it is so well known, and because the illustration which it gives of Roman feeling at this crisis is the chief light which it throws upon the history of philosophy. In reference to that point, however, we would suggest two reflections to our reader. The first relates to a marked difference between the poet and his master. Epicurus,

as we have seen, valued himself mainly upon the moral or human part of his system: the physical, which he borrowed from Democritus, was adopted only as a resource. Lucretius, on the contrary, at once fixed upon the atomic theory as the central part of his philosophy. Nothing can illustrate more strikingly the difference between them. How to find an excuse for a voluptuous and indolent temper, whether it were a sensual one or not—how to arrange the world in conformity with it—was the problem proposed to himself by the Greek; to recognise some kind of principle and connection in things was the delight of the Roman. Such being their respective impulses, we may fairly say, that Lucretius was in spirit further removed from Epicurus than either Zeno or Chrysippus. Another obvious peculiarity of Lucretius illustrates a remark which has been made already. He has evidently the greatest craving for an order in the physical world; but he does not feel the least necessary connection between it and the Nous which Anaxagoras spoke of. He can more readily regard it as the result of a concurrence of atoms. Lucretius wanted a Moral Ruler; not finding one he became an Atheist. Has the Atheism of any Latin been ever removed by the mere acknowledgment of a skilful Designer or Demiurgus?

SECTION IV. THE ROMAN STOIC.

1. **Motives to embrace Stoicism** If there were some of a more adventurous genius, who fled *ex fæce Romuli* to the study of the laws of the material universe, there were many more who found their great relief in contemplating the severe forms of the elder Romans; who either saw in the records of their country, or created out of the materials which they furnished, men of a stately character to whom wealth was indifferent, loving their country above all things, ready to sacrifice themselves, or whatever was dearest to them, for its sake. Between such simple men and the stiff solemn conscious Stoic a whole heaven would seem to intervene. Yet there was enough of

external resemblance in the two characters to deceive those who felt that they wanted some knowledge which their fathers had not, who were unwillingly half ashamed of their old ignorance, and half afraid lest their new philosophy should weaken their admiration and their patriotism. To be taught how they might upon rule and principle be that which their ancestors had been from some unattainable instinct —to be taught how they might be only better and more consistent Romans for this Greek infusion—was most soothing and satisfactory.

2. **Cato and Brutus.** That such feelings existed we have abundant evidence; but they did not, like the thoughts of the great Epicurean, find their principal expression in words. The lives of Cato and Brutus —the one more formal and severe, as of a person who felt that he was trying to support a character, the other more genial and free, like one who had really caught the spirit of the olden time,—both Roman aristocrats at heart, however they might speak the language of the schools—these are the true utterances of Roman stoicism, which have thrown a splendour around the doctrine that it could never have obtained either from its first teachers, or from Seneca and the rhetoricians who afterwards talked of it in Latin.

SECTION V. THE PROPER ROMAN PHILOSOPHY.

1. Thus far we have seen the Romans only translating into living words or living acts the dead formulas of the Greek schools. But Rome was also to have a formal philosophy of its own; if not to make any new discoveries or to follow any course of thought which had not been previously marked out, at least to give a dignity to one particular department of thought, which, in the minds of even the greatest Greeks, had obtained only a secondary importance. **CICERO.** We have spoken of Cicero as an Academic; and doubtless there was much in his character, in his political career, and in his rhetorical habits, which might have led us to predict that this was the sect to which he would be most naturally drawn. He appears to have had a singular equitable,

balancing, compromising nature. The circumstances of his age, the utter impossibility of adhering with steadiness to any one party, when parties were so constantly shifting their ground; his conscientious unwillingness not to take some part in political life, or to set up any immutable, unattainable standard for those who were engaged in it, confirmed all his original tendencies; the profession of an advocate riveted and perfected them. Though certainly not the person to be fixed upon as exemplifying the highest form of the Roman character, he had in a remarkable degree the Roman temperament, and he seems especially formed to show us what the intellect of his nation was when at its greatest natural stretch, not raised by some extraordinary impulse of genius or devotion above itself. On this account it is that his letters, speeches, and dialogues, present so perfect an image of his own age, and that some have thought a history of Rome might have been composed from them, if all other monuments were lost.

2. **Why he preferred the Academy.** But it must be observed, that merely practical wisdom is not able to express and embody itself in words till it has been mixed with an apparently incongruous element. If Cicero had not studied Greek philosophy, and been, so far as an accomplished scholar and statesman can be so, a pedant, he would not have enabled us to understand himself or his countrymen as he has done. His philosophy was unquestionably important to him and to us; still it is amusing to hear him speak as if his habits of mind had been in any considerable degree moulded by its influence, when it is evident that they were wrought into him by the influence of old forms and institutions, by the circumstances of his country, and the tone of the men who surrounded him. These determined the system of philosophy which he took under his patronage. He found the Academics treating philosophical questions in the same manner and with the same fairness as prosecutor and defendant were treated in the Roman courts: arriving at no settlement, as he could arrive at none in the disputes of factions, yet inclining to established notions in opposition to the dogmatical denials of the Epicurean, and to a

moderate behaviour accommodated to circumstances, in opposition to the fixed rule of the Stoic, he was therefore irresistibly prepossessed in favour of their views.

3. **How he differed from his teachers.** But that which gave those views favour in the mind of the Greek was their fitness for talk—a talk which might be carried on for ever without the least reference to life. That which endeared them to the Roman was their apparent suitableness for practice, their seeming to show the very point where the lines of philosophy and practice intersect each other. This was the point at which he was aiming; and in his own speculations, however they may seem to be merely derived from the Academics, he is continually bringing it before us. If there was one feeling in which the Greek Academician was utterly deficient, it was the feeling of Duty, the feeling that there is a work which a man is sent into the world to do. This feeling is wanting in all the sects: each was framing a scheme of life, or aiming at some ideal of excellence; none was acknowledging a vocation. It would be very unjust to say that the sense of duty was absent from the minds of Plato and Aristotle; they had it unquestionably, or they would not have been what they were, or have done what they did. But it is true that it was not the prominent characteristic in either of them, or in any Greek. On the other hand, this feeling is the one which gives all the meaning and interest to the works of Cicero. You can always see that he is impatient of any subject which he does not think has a direct bearing upon human life; that when he writes upon such subjects, he has only the use of his left hand; that they never do really affect him at all; that he has no opinions upon them, and does not care to have any. He will, therefore, retail the opinions of all the philosophers so far as he knows them, or will allow some able representative of the different sects to state the views of each, and will seem to have no aversion to anything but the dogmatism which each exhibits. Yet in the end you find that he has a set of firm convictions in his mind, which have remained undisturbed by all these controversies, and by his own nominal scepticism. He can see nothing but a difference of

words between the Peripatetics and the Academics, and it is quite clear that he means to extend the observation to the original masters of those two schools. **Not an Atheist nor a Sceptic.** The whole subject of Being and Ideas, about which Greek philosophy in its best days was conversant, is an unknown world to him. Plato he looks upon chiefly as the most eloquent of men; from Aristotle he has gained good helps in the study of rhetoric. One cannot discover that he cared anything about physics; logic he prized chiefly as a mental exercise, and in all disputes about the nature of the gods, so far as they bear upon either of these subjects, he seems to be neutral, and, if one tried him by modern rules, we might fancy atheistic. But he is not so at all; he has a much stronger belief in a Divine power, and a Divine government, than many whose opportunities of knowledge are infinitely greater than his. He attained this belief without any assistance from the Greeks, and he retained it, not at all strengthened certainly, but not materially weakened, by what he learnt through them. Without a Divine Being there can be no sanctity, no duties, no laws; this was the conclusion of his heart and reason both, and he felt that it was a deeper and securer one than any which arguments could furnish him with. **Idea of Duty or moral obligation.** This ground, therefore, he vindicated to himself; he brought out the idea of Moral Obligation with a distinction with which it had not been presented before. Not that it would be easy to point out passages in his books in which the subject is discussed amply and satisfactorily; not that the student will not often have to complain of much looseness in his language upon it; not that he will not be sometimes puzzled to conceive how so much indifference to absolute truth can consist with a strong sense of moral duty; yet this seems to be the total effect of his books,—the result which is left upon our minds both by their merits and their omissions. Though he has established nothing, he leaves us with the conviction that something is established, and that it is not something independent of us, but something with which we are concerned, and in conformity with which we are bound to act. His philosophical works, therefore, appear to have been unjustly

exalted, and as unjustly disparaged. When he is used as an interpreter of the older Greeks—when we try to understand Plato through his means—we confer on him a station which was never intended for him, and he will unquestionably lead us astray. On the contrary, when we regard him merely as the translator into eloquent Latin of what he had heard from his teachers in Athens, we degrade him just as unfairly. His philosophy has a substantive value; such language as his can never be a mere clothing for other men's conceptions, though it may not be a fitting expression for the very deepest ideas. And it should be observed, that in those works wherein he has adopted Plato's titles, and might seem to have followed him most closely, as in the *Laws* and the *Republic*, he has really drawn most upon his native resources, and established the truth of his own words, that he had learned more from the Twelve Tables than from all the philosophers.

4. **A new age beginning.** The sentence upon Cicero, sealed and sanctioned by the young Octavius, was the sign that the republic had really passed away; that a new age was beginning. What the character of that new age would be, how it would affect the condition of Rome and of the universe, what questions it would settle, to what questions it would give rise—we may have to consider hereafter. Possibly we shall find that the answer is not to be gained wholly or chiefly from Roman history. The youth who, as Virgil hoped, was carried *everso succurrere sæclo*, did not fulfil that task. The return of the Saturnian reign was not brought about by the son of Pollio. When Dante spoke of his noble predecessor as a teacher and guide in the search for wisdom, it was mainly because he had led his hero into the invisible world, and had suggested to his Florentine disciple the thought that thence he must obtain his knowledge respecting the destinies of Italy and of mankind.

CHAPTER VIII. THE ALEXANDRIAN PHILOSOPHY.

SECTION I. ALEXANDRIA.

1. **The Greek Egypt.** The kingdom of the Ptolemies in Egypt was the most remarkable result of the conquests of Alexander. This capital was worthy to bear his name: so much of the Greek wisdom which he sought to make supreme in the world was gathered there; so much of the wisdom of other people of the earth came thither to do it homage. There Indian sages perceived the connection between their faith and the old Egyptian mysteries. There the Persian, who had once waged war against those mysteries, might declare his own belief in the conflict of good and evil powers. Thither came the members of a nation which had had a much older connection with Egypt. A powerful Jewish colony established itself in Egypt; in Egypt the Jews had even a temple. At the command of an Egyptian monarch the Jewish scriptures were translated into Greek.

2. **Confluence of thoughts there.** Thus the country in which we find the first beginnings of civilization, and perhaps also of speculation, was appointed to receive into itself different streams of thought, which had been running, in various directions, during all the period between the birth of Moses and the birth of our Lord. Was it possible that these streams should really mingle? Could it be at all ascertained which had descended from the highest ground? To what river the rest were tributary?

3. **Feebleness of each** The Gymnosophist or Brahmin was a subject of curious speculation to the observers and geographers of Greece; but, except in the case of Pyrrho, there is no instance of any effect

upon Greek thought and speculation proceeding from him. The dualism of the Persians had actually entered largely and practically into the thoughts of Socrates and his great disciple. Neither in its own native form, nor in any other, was it likely to affect the minds of men who had ceased to feel there was a conflict in themselves—who merely discoursed and criticised. The Egyptian animal worship had become too gross for any symbolism. If symbolism took no form but that, it would only affect Greeks with disgust. None of these different doctrines then could subdue the Greek mind to itself, or even change its direction. And, certainly, the teachers of Alexandria could as little interpret the faith of any people of the East or West. They knew nothing really of Plato or Aristotle; they could comment upon them ably; they had never thought or felt with them at all.

4. **The Roman conqueror** In time another element was added to those which the patronage of the Ptolemies had collected. The Roman appeared on the Egyptian soil; Egypt became a Roman province. A sufficient proof seemed to be afforded by this fact, that there was something stronger in the world than Greek subtilty.

5. **submits to the Greek.** Yet here, as elsewhere, the Roman conqueror did homage to the Greek slave. No countryman of Cicero would have dared to express his thoughts or conceptions in an Alexandrian school which the legions of his country protected or overawed. However conscious he might be of a capacity in government, which was utterly unknown to the Greek of any age, he could yet feel that the Greeks of the lowest age had in this department of philosophy a right to be his masters and dictators. Nowhere less than in Egypt were his maxims respecting duty and obedience likely to be heeded. Among all the motley classes which composed the population of Alexandria, there were scarcely any but the Roman soldiers upon whom they would make the slightest impression.

6. **The Jew.** Among all those who visited the city of the Ptolemies the Jew is perhaps the last in whom men generally would expect to find an expounder or reconciler of the thoughts which had possessed

or disturbed the minds of other people. Was he not prevented from his very calling and position from meddling with the words and acts of the uncircumcised? Was he not bound especially to regard their search after wisdom as profane and dangerous? Did not the Divine lore which he had received exclude and condemn all other? We have partly considered these questions already, so far as the principle of them is concerned; we have now to consider what answer facts return to them.

SECTION II. THE JEWISH PHILOSOPHY.

1. **Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon.** The books which we call apocryphal, with the exception *of* the two books of Maccabees, contain little that is interesting or valuable as history. The books of Ecclesiasticus and the Wisdom of Solomon are in the strict and formal sense of the word philosophical. Amidst much that seems to most Western readers trivial and inflated, the passages which speak of Wisdom as a teacher, of Wisdom as an object of passionate love, of Wisdom as that for which all things else are to be sacrificed, possess a beauty which every one confesses. The fervour of these passages has been caught in a study of those which belong really to the age of Solomon; they are commentaries upon his writings, but not mere commentaries; the writer was not a book student only or chiefly; he has himself pursued wisdom, and lived under her discipline. There is a devout recognition of the sacredness of Jewish history in these books. The Divine Ruler of the nation is looked upon as the Ruler of the spirit of each individual man; every fact in the revelation is treasured up as needful for the education and meditation of the seeker for wisdom. And yet it is not only the language which separates these books from the Scriptures, and connects them with Greek thought; there is a Platonic character about them, such as we do not meet with in Cicero, or even in Cicero's great pupil. **Philo, born about B.C. 20.** Intellectually the son of Sirach, whoever he may have been, was

beyond measure inferior to Aristotle or to Cicero, yet we cannot help believing that Plato would have sympathised with him more than with them, and have found him capable of apprehending positions which all their intimate acquaintance with the technical phraseology of the schools could not have enabled them to master.

2. **Philo.** When these apocryphal books were written, the Jew, however, had probably not *claimed* his connection with the philosophers of Greece and of the world. About the beginning of the Christian era, a Jew was teaching in Alexandria, who, while he retained the profoundest reverence for the Divine oracles of his country, acknowledged the Indian Gymnosophist, the Greek philosopher, the Egyptian symbolizer, as having received wisdom from the Source of wisdom, as having been led, so far as they were led, out of the pursuit of visible and sensible things, by One who is seeking to bring man's spirit into communion with Himself.

3. **His mental history** There are few particulars known respecting the early life of Philo, this Alexandrian Jew. His own narrative of his embassy to Caligula, for the purpose of representing the state of his countrymen in Egypt, is a curious document both for Roman and Jewish history, but it throws no light upon his own life, except so far that it shows that when a very old man he retained his patriotic sympathies, had not destroyed his practical powers by speculation, and possessed to a great degree the confidence of his Jewish fellow-citizens. What else is known of Philo must be gathered from his books; those books which exercised so great an influence over the early Christian church, and which have procured him the name of the *Theosopher*.

4. **An admirer of philosophy.** An examination of the meaning of this word will be the best help to the explanation of the writings which have established his claim to it. The word *philosopher* is of continual recurrence in Philo's writings. He speaks of the lover and pursuer of wisdom as the spiritual or divine man; who has quitted the downward path, and is seeking his proper object. But the seeker of wisdom is also the seeker of God. Wisdom is not an aggregate of conclusions; it is

not the human soul, it is not a something diffused through all things; it is the I Am, who spoke to Moses in the bush—the Instructor and Inspirer of all the prophets—He who gave the law on Sinai.

5. **The Divine Word.** Philo confessed, as any Jew must, an absolute Being; one dwelling in light which no man hath seen or can see. How such a Being should converse with man, how there could be sympathy between Him and a creature, was the wonder of the Hebrew psalmist and prophet. But he believed while he wondered. Philo saw that such an intercourse was as much implied in all the Hebrew records; as much implied in the nature of God Himself as His self-existence and self-concentration. The two truths could not be reconciled in a theory. A Divine Word, a Logos, speaking to the mind and spirit which was opened to hear the voice, was, Philo thought, the reconciliation. Such a speaker he traced in all the most obvious and minute expressions of the divine book, in all the steps of the Hebrew history.

6. **The teacher of men.** It is this principle, worked out through all the Scripture narratives, which constitutes the peculiarity of Philo's writings. This is his philosophy or theosophy. On this ground he can contemplate with interest the Brahminical aspirations after absorption in the divine essence; the struggles of men to know the divine, the beautiful, the good; their eagerness to escape from sensual defilements and the prison-house of the body; their sense of moral obligation; their mythological or natural allegories. The path of sensuality and darkness is that which most men tread; a few have been led along the upward path; a few in all countries and generations have been wisdom-seekers, or seekers of God; they have been so because the Divine Word or Wisdom has looked upon them, choosing them for the knowledge and service of Himself.

7. **Philo's great merits.** From the hints which we threw out when we left the Jewish Prophets to enter upon the wide field of Gentile speculation, it may be fancied that we shall gladly rest in Alexandrian theosophy as the end and consummation of our inquiries. We spoke of the Divine Word who had taught the prophets as the one source

from which, as they and we believe, all illumination proceeded. Philo, holding that faith, has discovered a standing point, from which he can regard with affectionate sympathy a number of earnest thoughts which have occupied the hearts of men in different ages. He has escaped the temptation of supposing that any general theory or system can unite these thoughts; from the temptation, that is to say, of killing them, that he may harmonise them. He has told us what the philosopher is pursuing, and who is guiding him in the pursuit. But there are several serious questions to be asked before we can give ourselves up to the hopes which the Alexandrian teacher seems to hold out. What has he done to explain the great puzzle of the Bhagavad Gita—how practical life can be reconciled with the life of the Brahminical sage? What link is there between his mysticism and the dry business-like reflections of Khoung-fou-tseu? What one step has he taken towards solving the problem of Plato's republic? If the Aristotelian "theory" is abundantly honoured in his books, what hint is there which can explain Aristotle's assertion that politics is the architectonical science, or can bring his reverence for human relationships into consent with the communism of his master? If the Roman sense of duty meets with some respect from the Alexandrian, how can he enable any Roman to understand his feeling, that a divine power had been building up his city for generations; to foretell whether the battle of Actium and the death of the Egyptian queen would be the means of restoring or destroying its order; to guess whether Augustus, or some ruler of quite a different kind, would be the founder of a universal kingdom in which freemen could dwell?

8. **Philo's great deficiencies.** On all these points Philo is silent. The meditations of the philosopher or theosopher are everything to him; the condition of the universe, except as it consists of philosophers or theosophers, nothing. He cannot, therefore, satisfy the demands of philosophy, for that in its highest, as well as its humblest form, is occupied with questions, not about itself, nor about the class which professes it, but about nature, man, God. Did this incapacity arise

from his adhering too closely to his own records? *They* speak from first to last of a polity; they describe the gradual growth of one under Divine superintendence, out of a single family. Of this growth Philo sees nothing. The shepherd life of Abraham—the acts of Moses and Joshua—are nothing, except as they suggest divine allegories, from which the theosopher may derive nourishment. Is it not possible, then, that he failed to explain Plato, and the teachers of the old world, precisely because he had not a sufficiently simple apprehension of the books which he studied so profoundly, and admired so earnestly, and in which he thought that he could find the essence of all philosophy?

1. **A Jew witnessing for a divine Polity grounded in the Revelation of the Absolute Being.** A society arose in the days of Philo which said that it was the expansion and fulfilment of the polity, the beginnings of which are recorded in the Hebrew histories. A teacher who had lately become one of the officers in that society, was accused by a synagogue of the Alexandrians, before the High Priest and Sanhedrim at Jerusalem, of speaking blasphemous words against the temple and the law,—of saying that One was come who would change the customs which Moses had delivered. He defended himself, not by interpreting the story in an allegorical sense, but by showing in a plain narrative how in each period there had been a fresh unfolding of a divine kingdom, through human agents,—how each period assumed and made necessary the manifestation of One who should prove its foundation to be actually divine and actually human. That witness was stoned, as those who spoke like him in former days had been.

2. **A Jew connecting the search of Greeks after Wisdom with a divine and human Person.** Another Jew, who was present at his death and took part in it, shortly after incurred the hatred of his countrymen by inviting heathen citizens of Corinth, of Ephesus, and of Thessalonica, to become members of the society which had begun in Palestine, and which at first had only included circumcised men. His disciples at Corinth were full of the Greek passion for wisdom; they fancied that he and an Alexandrian teacher were rival sophists, each desirous to

palm his own doctrine or theory upon them, and to bind them together in a sect called after their name. He told them that that teacher and himself had come to proclaim a hidden and divine wisdom, but a wisdom which had shone forth in weakness, of which the only perfect manifestation was in a Man who had been crucified. He told them that their fellowship included the weakest, the most ignorant, the most evil; that the members of it formed one body in one Head, and that whoever sought to divide them, or boasted of some wisdom of his own, was their enemy and destroyer. He told the people of the city in which Heraclitus had dwelt, that all spiritual blessings were theirs,—all the mysteries of divine knowledge; and yet that they were composed of all the kindreds and tribes of the earth, the invisible and the visible worlds being reconciled in Him who united divine glory with human nothingness. At Jerusalem he said that this divine society was the flower and consummation of that which their fathers had possessed, —of that which had begun in Abraham's tent. Finally, to the Jews and Gentiles of Rome he asserted the worth of outward law, because it made men conscious of internal evil,—because it made them realize the opposition between the flesh, which flies from what is right and true, and the spirit, which desires but cannot attain—because it drives man to seek a righteousness above his own, which condemns his evil nature, justifies and satisfies the cravings of his inner man.

3. **A Jew the reconciler of the Old and the New.** Finally, an aged Galilean fisherman, living in the country where Greek philosophy began, proclaimed the reconciliation of that Revelation which had been from the beginning, with the Light which had shined afresh upon the world, declared that the Word was with God and was God; that in Him was Life, and the Life was the Light of men; uttered a divine Name which expressed The Being and The Unity; saw a city descending out of heaven, of which this Unity was the centre and the ground.

4. There are some readers who fancy that ancient and modern history are divided by the so-called fall of the Western Empire. The

historian of philosophy cannot adopt their arrangement. The point at which we arrived is the one at which the curtain falls on the speculations of the old world. When it rises again we shall find a set of new actors, occupied with questions closely connected with all which we have been considering, but in many important respects different from them. A new element we shall find has been infused into the minds of Pagans and Jews, as well as of Christians. If we agree with Philo that the speculations of men in the ages before Christ were under the guidance of a Teacher who knew what was in man, we need not fear to enter upon the more complicated and embarrassing inquiries of the later time.