

single petition 'Give us this day our daily bread' it hardly implies anything more than sustaining care.

So with the doctrine of the immortality of the soul. This may have been always mixed up more or less with animistic fancy, but animistic fancy is not the essence of it; the essence of it is, to righteousness assured reward, to unrighteousness inevitable retribution.

It may be that morality is now about to disengage itself finally from religion, and to find a new basis in science; but in the past it has rested on religious belief, and the collapse of religious belief has accordingly been always followed by a sort of moral interregnum.

It will not be questioned that the moral civilization of Hellas, for instance, in her earlier and brighter day, was supported by her religion. This is seen in every page of Herodotus, Æschylus, Pindar, Sophocles, the best mirrors of the heroic age. It appears in the religious character of Hellenic art, of the drama, of the games, as well as in the influence of the Eleusinian mysteries. It appears above all in the authority of the Delphic oracle. During that age, manifestly, power not seldom was led to forego its advantage, strength to respect the rights of weakness, by fear of the gods. In the relations between the separate states and their conduct towards each other the influence of religion wielded by the Delphic oracle was evidently powerful for good. Hellenic life, public and private, in those days was full of religion, which presented itself in different forms according to individual character and intellect; in the philosopher approaching moral theism, while among the people at large it was fed with ceremony and fable.

Every one knows the passage in *Œdipus Tyrannus* hymning in language of breadth and grandeur unsurpassed the religious source of the moral law: 'Be it ever mine to keep a devout purity concerning all things, whether words or deeds, whereof the laws are established on high, born of the heavenly ether, having no sire but Olympus, the offspring of none of mortal mould, nor ever to be buried in oblivion. Great in these is the divine power, and it waxeth not old.'

In Herodotus, Glaucus, renowned for his righteousness, receives a large deposit of money from a stranger. When, the depositor being dead, his sons apply for the money, the virtue of Glaucus fails;

he repudiates his trust. Afterwards he consults the Delphic oracle on the propriety of forswearing himself to keep his prize. 'O Glaucus,' answers the oracle, 'for the present it is expedient for thee to gain thy cause by false swearing and to embezzle the money. Swear, then; all alike must die, he that sweareth falsely and he that doth not. But the Oath hath an offspring that is nameless, without hands or feet; yet swiftly it pursues a man, till it overtakes and destroys his whole house and race. But he that sweareth and deceiveth not is in his posterity more blessed.' Glaucus implores the god to pardon him and to spare his race. But the oracle replies that to tempt the god is as bad as to do the act; and though Glaucus restores the money, the divine wrath extirpates his race, that penalty being the primitive and tribal equivalent for the future punishment threatened by more spiritual creeds.

That the sanction of morality in the conception of the historian and his contemporaries was not merely prudential, or of the kind cognizable by social science, but religious, appears most plainly from the words of the oracle, placing the corrupt thought on a level with the evil deed.

Hellenic religion, however, was entangled with a gross mythology, immoral legends, a worship of sacrifices, a thaumaturgic priesthood, an infantine cosmogony, a polytheistic division of the physical universe into the domains of a number of separate deities. It fell before awakened intellect and the first efforts of scientific speculation. Its fall and the rise of a physical philosophy on its ruins were ultimately conducive to progress. But Hellenic morality, especially public and international morality, felt the withdrawal of its basis. In *Thucydides* the presence of scientific scepticism in its early stage is strongly marked; at its side appears political Machiavellism, if we may use that name by anticipation; and the same page testifies to the general dissolution of moral ties and the lapse of Hellas into a state in which might made right, and public life became a mere struggle for existence, wherein the fittest, that is the strongest or the most cunning, survived. The Athenian envoys, in their controversy with the Melians, which is evidently intended by *Thucydides* to dramatize the prevailing morality, frankly enunciate the doctrine