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A table of contents for *Bibliotheca Sacra* can be found here:

[https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles\\_bib-sacra\\_01.php](https://biblicalstudies.org.uk/articles_bib-sacra_01.php)

also, the great gathering with the body of the Galilean disciples may have taken place, "as Jesus had appointed."

2. By a similar appointment, forty days after the resurrection, he met at Jerusalem the apostles and some others of his nearest friends, especially the most devoted Christian women, with his mother and his brethren. We have already remarked that the presence of these female Christians at the feast of pentecost, and so long before the feast, is fully accounted for by a summons from the Lord.

3. The events between vs. 4 and vs. 12 all occurred on ascension day, and from this time it was that they waited for the promise of the Spirit to be fulfilled, which should begin the spread of the new kingdom of Christ.

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## ARTICLE II.

### THE DEVELOPMENT OF MONOTHEISM AMONG THE GREEKS.

BY DR. EDWARD ZELLER. — TRANSLATED FROM THE GERMAN BY  
EDWIN D. MEAD.

THE subject with which the present Article has to deal has claims upon our interest from more than one side. If it is a grateful task, in and for itself, to follow the history of the human mind in one of its highest relations and among one of the most cultured peoples, the attraction of the task is greatly enhanced if it is connected with other questions of the most universal importance. And this is precisely the case in the present instance. The history of religion has to do with no more important fact, none which takes deeper hold of the spiritual and moral life of mankind, than the origin of monotheism and the rise of Christianity, but also none the thorough historical understanding of which is attended with greater difficulties. It is then fortunate that we meet, in a people so well known as the Greeks, a process which offers for the one of these facts — the genesis of monotheistic faith —

at least an analogy; while, at the same time, it contains one of the essential presuppositions by which the other—the origin of Christianity—is historically conditioned. If we see how the faith in the unity of the divine nature was developed among the Greeks from polytheism, we shall likewise find more comprehensible the same faith among other peoples,—even though it may have made its appearance among these in another way and under other conditions; and if Christianity found a definite form of this faith already existing in the province of Hellenic culture, we shall be able the more easily to explain how it could not only conquer the Hellenic portion of the old world in a comparatively short time, but also how it could itself become what it is.

The Greek religion was originally, as is well known, and like all natural religions, polytheism. But the human spirit cannot long rest satisfied with the mere multiplicity of divine natures. The empirical connection of all phenomena, and the need of a fixed moral order in the world, early necessitate the reduction of the multiplicity, in some way, to unity. We find, therefore, in all religions which have only worked themselves in some measure out of the first rude condition the faith in a supreme divinity, a king of gods, who is commonly not thought of as simply dwelling in the heavens, but is really the all-embracing heaven itself. And the world of Greek divinities, so far as our knowledge extends, is brought to a point of unity in Zeus, the lightning-launching god of heaven. The nature of this god, however, appears in the older popular faith, as the Homeric and Hesiodic poems represent it, to be limited in a threefold relation. In the first place, he has above him the dark power of Fate, to which he has to subject himself, against his will and with grievous complaint, as at the death of his son Sarpedon, when he cries: "Woe is me, woe, now Fate wills that Sarpedon, to me dearest of men, shall be slain by Patroclus, the son of Menoetius." Further, he has beside him, in the other Olympians, a rather insubordinate aristocracy, to which he is, indeed, decidedly superior in force and sovereignty, but

which in particular things not rarely contradicts or circumvents him, disturbs his plans, and puts hinderances in the way of their execution. To this double limitation, however, Zeus is subject, in the third place, only because his nature is in itself limited, because he is not yet endowed with the entire fulness of that spiritual and moral perfection which, where it is once received as indispensable in the conception of Deity, immediately excludes every thought of a limitation of the divine power.

The Homeric Zeus is, indeed, a moral being,—the protector of right, the avenger of crime, the shield of states, the source of law and custom on earth, the father of gods and men. But, aside also from the fact that the divine rule of the world is not here free from despotic arbitrariness,—that Zeus has two vessels in his store-room, as the proverb goes, one of good things and the other of evil, and deals out according to his discretion,—what judgment must a thoughtful Greek of the subsequent time have passed upon the king of the gods, who, now in Here's arms, now with mortal women, forgets the affairs of his government; who afflicts men with evils of every sort because Prometheus had deceived him in the sacrifice; who dooms the Achaian army to defeats to please Thetis; who sends a deceiving dream to Agamemnon, in order to animate him for the combat, etc.? The weaknesses of sensuous and finite nature appear far too glaringly in these old Greek gods, and even in the highest god, to allow the germ of a higher conception,—which surely is not lacking even in the Homeric theology,—to come to development without a thorough-going change; and if the most offensive narrations are to be interpreted in great part as the personification of existences and forces of nature,—the transformation of natural events into a history of the gods,—this origin of the myths was still hidden from the consciousness of the Greek people itself; to this they appeared with the claim to be a faithfully true delineation of the divine world. In the mysteries, too, which in modern times have been not seldom regarded as the school of a purer religious

faith, such a faith is surely not to be found ; as, indeed, it is in and for itself a strange idea that in the worship of Demeter or of Dionysius a monotheistic creed could have been communicated. This secret service, moreover, first attained a higher significance for the life of the Greek people after the sixth century, i.e. precisely from the time in which the gradual purification of the popular faith and its approach to monotheism began.

This purification was accomplished in two ways : on the one hand, the representations of Zeus and his government of the world were elevated and refined, and thus the monotheistic element, which lay in polytheism itself without deranging its foundations, was elevated, the polytheistic element being subordinated to it. On the other hand, the multiplicity of gods and the anthropomorphism with which the popular faith had environed the gods were opposed. In the first of these ways the poets worked, seeking to improve the mythology at the very time it was most complete. The philosophers united with this the second way ; and from this union proceeded that more spiritual faith, which, extending itself from the time of Socrates and Plato in ever widening circles, had become, wherever the influence of the Hellenic mind reached, the religion of the cultured classes before the appearance of Christianity.

Poetic imagination created the Greek gods and the mythical history of the gods ; and it was for the most part the poets by whom this mythology, so readily answering all their wishes and adapting itself with such charming facility, was perfected and fostered. But it was also these same poets who transformed and ennobled it, removed the too rude features, filled the traditions of the olden time with the moral perceptions of more highly educated centuries. Indeed, the great poets of the Greeks were at the same time their first thinkers, the "wise men," as they are so often called, the oldest and most popular teachers of the nation. This idealizing must needs touch, first of all, the figure of Zeus, in which, to the Hellene, everything great and sublime, all his

highest conceptions of sovereign power and wisdom, of cosmic regulation and moral order, were condensed. But the higher Zeus was placed, the more completely the mythical anthropomorphisms fell back behind the idea of a perfect being, a righteous, gracious, omniscient ruler of the world; the more completely, too, was monotheism developed from polytheism.

The older poets had, indeed, as we have remarked, praised Zeus as the guardian of right, the representative of moral laws. What Homer and Hesiod had said in this connection, the later poets repeat with stronger emphasis. Zeus beholds, as we read in Archilochus (700 B.C.), the deeds of men, the just and the godless; indeed, the wickedness and the uprightness of the animals do not escape his notice. We must commit all things to his hands. He is, as Terpander says a little later, the beginning and the guide of all. He has, as Simonides of Amorgos sings, the end of all things in his hand, and orders all things as he will. But the further we descend in time, the more strongly do we see this thought developed. Zeus gradually becomes exclusively the supporter of a moral order of the world, the idea of which is freed from the gloom of the old belief in fate, and from the caprice of arbitrary tyranny. Fate, which according to older representation stood behind and above him, melts into unity with his will; the other gods, who still in Homer oppose his purposes in so many ways, become willing instruments of his world-ruling activity. Thus even Solon (590 B.C) teaches us that Zeus watches over all things, and punishes all wickedness; but that he does not fly into a passion over single things, like a man, but suffers wrong to heap itself up before the punishment breaks in. So, a hundred years later, the Sicilian poet, Epicharmus, sings: "Nothing escapes the eye of Deity, of that mayest thou be sure; it is God who watches over us, and to whom nothing is impossible."

Still more decidedly does this purer idea of God appear in the three great poets whose lives fill the period from the last third of the sixth till toward the end of the fifth century,—

Pindar, Aeschylus, and Sophocles. Everything comes from the Deity alone, says Pindar; Zeus sends to mortals everything which happens to them; he grants success, and sends misfortune; he is able to let clear light spring from black night, and to veil the pure brightness of day in thick darkness. Nothing that man does is hidden from Deity; only when it points out the way is blessing to be hoped for; in its hand lies the result of our labor; from it alone spring all virtue and wisdom. In the same sense speaks Aeschylus. The sublimity and omnipotence of Deity, the inevitable fulfilment, the crushing power, of its judgment are impressed by all his tragedies. What Zeus says is done; his will is infallibly accomplished; no mortal has any power against him; none can escape his decrees. The other gods all act in his service; his dominion is also acknowledged in the end, in voluntary submission, by the most opposed powers, even by the titanic defiance of a Prometheus. These thoughts have with Aeschylus such deep and prevailing significance that it would not be difficult, in spite of the polytheistic faith as to which this man of antique honor — this man of Marathon and Salamis — had no doubts, to gather from his poems, with little change of form, the ground features of a pure and lofty monotheism. That which stands before all else in these works is the idea of the divine justice. If even Aeschylus is not yet entirely free from the ancient conception of a jealousy in the Deity, — if we still also read in him that God inflicts misfortunes upon mortals as the very means of working their utter ruin, — the ruling tenor of his works leads us, nevertheless, to recognize the connection of misfortune with guilt, the high justice of the divine judgment. As the man acts, so must he suffer. He whose heart and hand are pure moves sorrowless through life; but retribution surely comes upon the wicked, now with a sudden stroke, now with slow pressure. The Erinyes control the fate of men; they drain the vital powers of the criminal; they cling without rest to the soles of his feet; they throw around him the snare of madness; they follow his track to the very grave. But the divine grace,

even with Aeschylus, is able to overcome the strength of the penal law, and even an Orestes is, in the end, freed from the curse with which matricide had loaded him. In this Aeschylus is, indeed, conscious that he transcends the original character of the Greek religion; but with a most noteworthy, and deeply poetical turn, he transfers the change which, partially through his own instrumentality, took place in the religious mind of his people, to the divine world itself. He makes use of the old, obscure legends of a struggle between the old gods and the new, in order to show us, in profound representations, how the awful law of the Eumenides gave place, in consequence, to a milder and more human system; how the original despotism of Zeus was transformed into a benevolent, moral rule of the world.

The fairest blossoming of this gentler spirit appears in the works of Sophocles. As no other poet brought classic art to such harmonious perfection, so there is no nobler representative of a pure religious faith, so far as this was possible on the ground of a Greek polytheism. With a feeling of the purest piety Sophocles delineates the gods, whose power and law encompass human life. All things come from them — the good and the evil; no mortal can withstand their never-changing power; no act nor thought can escape their all-seeing eye; none can venture to transgress their eternal laws. From the gods spring all wisdom; they guide us ever to the right. Their dispensations man may bear with resignation; he may commit all sorrow to Zeus; beyond the limits of man's nature he need not aspire. These propositions it is, and such as these, which cheer us so repeatedly in Sophocles, but which we also meet not rarely in other poets of that period. The bounds of Greek polytheism are by this certainly not transcended; yet still we must form another conception of the faith which expresses itself in this manner, than that which is commonly connected with the name of heathenism. The many gods are here, in the end, only the representatives of the one "Divine," or Deity. From their action in the world the caprice and conflict of

which Homer is able to tell us so much has disappeared. There is one moral order of the world, which uses now one god, now another, as its instrument. The plurality of gods remains as the imagery of faith; but the discord which it threatened to create in the religious consciousness is in great part avoided.

It was also of great importance for the moral character of the religious convictions that, together with this development of the idea of God, the faith in a future recompense became stronger and more widely spread. In Homer and Hesiod only the barest beginnings of this doctrine are to be found. It first attained higher significance in the Eleusinian, but especially in the so-called Orphic, mysteries—a later branch of this form of worship, belonging seemingly, in its origin, to the sixth or seventh century B.C.; and in Pythagoreanism, which in the first place had its rise likewise from moral-religious, not from scientific, motives. The form, as well as the content, of this faith, whose history we cannot here follow further, was surely, in the first place, somewhat confused and cloudy; with the Orpheans and Pythagoreans it was joined with the mythical doctrine of the transmigration of souls; and that which was to decide future happiness or misery was, at least with the former, less moral worth or worthlessness than the relation to the secret services and to the asceticism bound up with them. He who had received initiation, who had kept himself from eating meat and the like, who had followed certain external rules of life, should in the future sit at table with the gods in the lower world; but the unconsecrated, on the contrary, should be cast into a slimy pool. But even by the Pythagoreans the belief in immortality was used in a more purely moral sense. In Pindar it contains the strongest moral incitements. Aeschylus's picture of the divine judgment concludes with the threat that even death does not free the criminal from the spirits of vengeance. Sophocles makes frequent reference to the recompense after death. And in Euripides we find the words: "Who knows whether, in truth, death be not life,

but life death?" It is very clear how greatly the thought of the divine justice must needs win strength through this extension of its operations, and how much more actively the unity of the divine must have presented itself to consciousness when one and the same moral order embraced the living and the dead.

Greatly, however, as the older form of the Greek religion was thus ennobled, its polytheistic basis, as has been said, was not immediately touched by this development of the monotheistic element, which also lay in it. Another and a bolder course was taken by philosophy.

The Greek philosophy did not grow up, like the Christian, in the service of theology; its oldest representatives did not wish to defend or explain religious belief, but to investigate the nature of things. In so far they had no such immediate occasion to express themselves concerning the content of that belief as their Christian successors had. But since in their explanation of nature they fixed attention upon the world as a whole, in order to determine its ultimate grounds, they all proceeded expressly or tacitly from the presupposition of a unified, world-forming force, whether they thought of this as bound up with the material substance or separated from it—whether they designated it as Nature, or Deity, or in some other way. And several of them declared expressly that this force was to be sought only in the highest reason, only in the Infinite Spirit; most decidedly, and with the clearest scientific consciousness, among the pre-Socratic philosophers with whom we first have to do here, did Anaxagoras, the friend of the great Pericles, who lived in Athens until toward the end of the Peloponnesian war do this.

Towards the popular religion these men assume various attitudes, according to their own various characters. Many of them pursued the course of their scientific investigations, without defining their exact relation to the popular faith, and usually, indeed, without even settling the matter for themselves. Others leaned upon the popular representations so far as to use them for certain philosophical con-

ceptions, treating the two as directly equivalent. And so it is naturally the form of Zeus, again, in which the ultimate ground of all things, the unity of the cosmical system, and of the forces working in the world are brought to view. Democritus makes the attempt to explain the gods themselves, along with the belief in the gods, from the pre-suppositions of his materialistic doctrine of nature : Through a concurrence of atoms, like that to which all else owes its existence, had risen also natures of superhuman form and greatness, whose appearance had called forth the belief in gods. And in like manner Empedocles causes the gods, "the long-living, the most honored," to be formed out of his four elements, like animals and men and all other things. To us, with our purer idea of God, these are most astonishing positions ; but not so to the Greeks, in whose mythology, from the beginning, the generation of the various races of gods holds an important place, and among whom Pindar sings : "The race of men is one, the race of gods another ; but one mother gave birth to both." In this no attack was intended upon the popular faith.

Very decidedly, on the contrary, does this latter intention appear in the utterances of a man who belongs among the most remarkable phenomena in the history of the Greek consciousness — Xenophanes. This philosophical poet, the founder of the so-called Eleatic school, whose long life extends from the first decades of the sixth to beyond the beginning of the fifth century, was led, according to all advices, purely through his own reflection, to the most thorough-going doubts concerning the religion of his people. What impels him to this is not simply the likeness of gods to men, with their frequent excessive weaknesses, but also their multiplicity as such. Mortals believe, he says, that the gods are generated, as though it were not alike godless to speak of them as having become or as to die. And he expressed himself in the same sense, according to Aristotle, concerning the sacrifice and the lamentation for the sea-goddess, Leucothea : If men deem her mortal, they should not sacrifice to her ; if they

deem her a divinity, they should not lament for her. The contradiction in the religion, in assuming a divinity, an infinite, and at the same time attributing to it finite conditions and properties, proves to the philosopher that this religion cannot be the true one. A similar contradiction, however, is pointed out by him in many other features of the Greek religion. As men think of the gods as having become, so they regard them as changeable. Motion in space is ascribed to them, when they are allowed to descend from heaven to earth, to visit this or that place of their worship, to appear here or there to render assistance, etc. It were not seemly for deity, he declares, to wander now here, now there; it can only remain unmoved in one place. Yet more strikingly in contradiction to his idea of the divine is the attribution to it of a human or of any outward form. Men lend the gods, he said, their own form, feeling, and voice, and each people lends them its own: the negroes think the gods black and flat-nosed; the Thracians think them blue-eyed and red-haired; and if the horses and oxen could paint, — he adds with bitter sarcasm, — they would, without doubt, represent them as horses and oxen. And it goes almost worse still with the gods in the depiction of their moral nature. “Hesiod and Homer attribute everything to the gods which redounds to the shame of men and calls forth censure — thievery, adultery, and mutual deception.” But not alone these weaknesses and the likeness to men; the multiplicity of gods as such is inconsistent, according to the purer insight of Xenophanes, with the conception of the divine nature. Deity, he shows, must be the most perfect; there can, however, be but one most perfect. Deity can only rule, it cannot be ruled; the existence, therefore, along with the highest, all-ruling God of other gods, subordinate to him, cannot be admitted. He is therefore himself able to think of but one God, who is high above all finite things. “One God,” he sings, “among gods and among men,” is the highest, not to be compared, in form or in thought, with mortals,” — a God who, as it is said in another place, is all

eye, all ear, all thought, who "rules all, untroubled, with the intelligence of his understanding." Thus monotheism here first appears with full consciousness, in fundamental opposition to the polytheism of the Greek popular faith and the humanization of the gods. From the conception of the divine nature were derived, through simple reasoning, the conclusions which could but shake to its centre the whole existing religion.

It must surely excite our deepest astonishment to find such pure and lofty conceptions of the divine, so clear a consciousness of that which the idea of God demands, in the midst of a polytheistic people, five hundred years before Christ, in a period in which scientific investigation had scarcely attempted its first uncertain steps. The historical effect of this phenomenon also we must not estimate too low. The attacks of Xenophanes inflicted a wound upon the Greek polytheism from which it never recovered; and if, indeed, this philosopher, with his bold doubts concerning the nature of the existing religion, stands for a time almost alone, he does not, on the one hand, entirely lack followers in the next fifty years; and further, those doubts grew up, in the end, to a power against which the popular religion had no means of resistance to oppose beyond the habit of the masses and isolated violent measures which were entirely without general effect.

A few decades after Xenophanes, we meet the Ephesian philosopher Heraclitus, — not exactly on the same way, to be sure, but still on a way that lies nearly enough to it. The plurality of gods is not, indeed, expressly attacked by him, far as he is above it, with his idea of the universal, all-directing reason; but the religious rites bound up so closely with the belief, the animal sacrifices and the image-worship, receive his decided censure; and concerning the poets whose works were for the Hellenes the most sacred religious sources, — concerning Homer and Hesiod, — he is unable to express himself strongly enough.

Somewhat later, about the middle of the fifth century, we

hear the thoughts, and indeed the very expressions, of the old Eleatic sound through a fragment of Empedocles, which speaks of Apollo, or indeed of the highest God, — for we do not know which, — “Him can man not approach, neither view with the eyes nor touch with the hands; for no human body and no limbs pertain to him, but he is a pure, holy, incomprehensible spirit, who with quick thoughts hastens through the universe.” At the same time begins that *Aufklaerung* whose most outspoken representatives we are accustomed to designate as the Sophists — a movement which in a short time penetrated every department of Greek life and every grade of society, thoroughly shattered the traditional customs and convictions, and opened a vigorous attack from the inquiring upon the religious faith. We find the very first mouth-piece of the Sophists, Protagoras, beginning one of his works with the declaration that concerning the gods he has nothing to say, — neither that they exist nor that they do not exist, — for the subject is too dark, and human life is too short, for a thorough investigation. Another of the more famous Sophists, Prodicus, sought to show how men came to the belief in the gods through reverence for useful and beneficial natural objects; while Critias, a scholar of the Sophists, represented religion, in one of his dramas, as the invention of shrewd legislators, who wished to gain from the fear of divine retribution a support for the working of their laws. And this last was, indeed, in the circles to which the influence of the Sophistic *Aufklaerung* extended, the most current opinion. As in all other political institutions and customs, so also in religion, this school saw only the product of arbitrary agreement, and this the variety of religions seemed to them to prove. If the belief in the gods sprang from the nature of man, all men, according to their opinion, must worship the same gods; that it is precisely from the nature of the human mind and from the natural conditions of its development that the variety of religions, like that of all other historical forms of life, proceeds, — of this these Greek *Aufklaerers* had as little understanding as their modern successors.

But however superficially they might proceed in this connection, the spirit of the time came so strongly to their assistance in the intellectually most important Greek cities, and their way of thinking was so little confined to the schools, that about the time of the Peloponnesian war,—and not in Athens alone,—it is to be looked upon as the prevailing view among the educated classes.

That which the Sophists delivered in their writings and pompous speeches, the poets preached in another form, with the most important and general effect, from the theatre. While a Sophocles raised, in his tragedies, a monument no less of his pious feeling than of his art, we find his younger contemporary, Euripides, the scholar of Anaxagoras, mixing with many fine religious and moral passages a mass of doubts on dogmatic and moral points. We meet in him such a naturalistic treatment of the myths that it becomes undeniably apparent how far removed he is from the stand-point of the old religion. The comedian Aristophanes rails with passionate vehemence against him and against all the *moderns*, among whom he even reckons Socrates. And we cannot doubt that, with his zeal for the old customs and the old faith, he was in his way earnest. But is it to be called restoring the reverence for the gods, when one sacrifices them with such wild wantonness as Aristophanes to the laughter of the spectators; when one uncovers the nakedness of their humanness so glaringly and roughly as he; when one draws them so far into all the smut of the low and vulgar? And that this part of his pieces found far more sympathy among his hearers than the exhortations to a return to the good old time and its faith,—that, even in the first decade of the Peloponnesian war, it was accounted by very many in Athens as decidedly unrefined and old-fashioned to still believe in the gods, he tells us himself. If even his pious, and often so superstitious, older contemporary, Herodotus, holds himself by no means free from the influences of the rationalistic *Aufklaerung*, we see in a Thucydides how, toward the end of the fifth century, the deepest earnestness of

feeling, the sublimest moral contemplation of the world, could exist along with an utter absence of that mythical element which is so indispensable to the old Greek religion; yet even this historian sets before our eyes in striking pictures the confusion of all moral ideas, the disappearance of piety and faith, the prevalence, during the internal struggles of the Greek states, of a bald selfishness.

The Sophists, with their attacks on the popular faith, are only the foremost champions of a way of thinking which, prepared for in that time from the most various sides, is not to be regarded as the work of these individuals, but only as the product of the entire historical development. So much the less was it to be expected that isolated interferences of political power, — prosecutions such as were instituted even in the lifetime of Pericles, by the political opponents of that statesman, against Anaxagoras, and later against Protagoras and Socrates, — would oppose a lasting barrier to the innovations. Certain individuals fell victims to these charges. Anaxagoras and Protagoras were forced to leave Athens; Socrates drank the hemlock; but the diffusion of the views of these men was not checked, but promoted, by persecution. When Protagoras fled from Athens, about the year 410 B.C., the unbelief which was persecuted in him had long shot forth in that city the deepest and most wide-spreading roots. A restoration of the popular religion in its former import had already become an impossibility; but beyond the standpoint of the Sophists it was certainly possible to advance, when deeper spirits and profounder thinkers took up the task which the Sophists had handled one-sidedly and unsatisfyingly.

Such a profounder thinker was Socrates. This great philosopher endeavored, indeed, on principle, to abstain from all theological investigations. The human reason, he believed, is not in a position to fathom the nature and the works of Deity, and this research also has no use; and he censured the natural philosophers for thinking that they could come upon the traces of the workings of the gods. He wished,

for his part, to limit himself to the things which concern human life and human duties. But since he reckoned among these duties, before all else, piety and reverence towards the gods, he was compelled to form a definite opinion concerning Deity and its relation to man ; and since he could naturally proceed in this only in accordance with his general principles, he became, almost against his will, the author of a theology, which, in spite of its scientific deficiencies, became of great importance for the following time. As he was accustomed to estimate the worth of human actions according to the reasonableness of their purposes, so he sought also in the universe, in the first place, for the purpose which everything has to serve ; this he is to be believed to recognize in the welfare of man. He came thus to the conviction that the world can only be the work of an almighty, all-gracious, all-wise, all-knowing Being ; a Being whose reason as far transcends ours as the greatness of the world in which it is inherent exceeds the greatness of our body ; whose eye penetrates all ; whose care embraces all, the greatest and the smallest alike. Socrates had in this no need to inquire more closely into the relation of this rational faith of his to the popular religion, to which he was uprightly attached. He speaks, according to the manner of the Greeks, without distinction, now in the plural of the gods, now in the singular of God or the Divine ; he is convinced that the gods rule all things for our best, that we have to resign ourselves unconditionally to their dispensations, unconditionally to obey their commands ; and as to the worship of the gods, he quiets himself with the remark that a pious disposition is the best religious service ; that, for the rest, each may worship the Deity according to the custom of his people. Still, it is not to be denied that his religious faith proceeds, in the main, from the unity of the divine. He does not deny the many gods of the popular religion ; much rather, he believed in them, without doubt, in all earnestness ; but above these many gods rises the one world-forming reason so decidedly as the essential, as that which for the ordering of the world

and the moral work of man is alone decisive, that they appear beside it almost as useless additions.

Socrates himself, in a declaration which Xenophon has given us, distinguishes thus between the two, when he says that the other gods, as well as the Former and Preserver of the universe, evince their kindness to us, without revealing themselves to our gaze. The main point for him lies in the conviction that everything in the world and in human life is ordered according to the best purposes, with perfect reason, according to a unified plan; whether there be only one Being from whom this order proceeds, or whether there be under the highest Deity other divine beings who serve as assistants, is a question whose investigation troubles him little, because it seems to him to be of no consequence for his practical religious needs. For his own part, however, he could but be inclined to give preference to the second postulate, for the reason that it best agreed with the faith of his people, from which he held it to be neither necessary nor permissible to separate himself. The unity of God is thus connected with the plurality of the popular gods in the way which had been approximated through the mythology, and in which the poets had already taken the lead of the philosophers; the many gods are placed in a thoroughly subordinate relation to the One; they have only to represent, in the separate portions of the world and in the various relations of human life, that reason which is viewed as universal, the power embracing the universe, in the highest sense God.

To this course Greek philosophy, in the great majority of its representatives, remained true. There were, indeed, certainly not lacking among them those who assumed a bolder attitude towards the popular religion. If Socrates had distinguished the highest God from the remaining gods, his scholar, Antisthenes, declared, with the Eleatics, that there is in truth only one God, whom we may not represent to ourselves in human form; popular opinion alone had created the many gods. And he himself, as well as his followers, the Cynics, distinguished themselves by a free-thinking which

we also find again later among the Cynics of the Roman imperial period, while they sought to use the mythical traditions for moral purposes by a free allegorical exposition. Another Socratic, Aristippus, who also strayed far in other respects from the genuine Socratic doctrine, followed with his school the sceptical views of Protagoras.

Of the later schools of the Alexandrian and Roman periods, the Sceptics and Epicureans are those who opposed themselves as *Aufklaerers* to the popular religion. The first could not, indeed, logically raise positive objections to the existence of the gods; but they declared it to be incapable of proof, like every other scientific proposition; and Carneades especially, the most acute of the old Sceptics, in the second century before Christ, raised objections against the common conception of God, in the controversy with the theology of the contemporaneous Stoical school, which have not even yet entirely lost their significance. The numerous school of the Epicureans, which extended itself especially among the Romans, withdrew from the popular faith on another side. These philosophers had no desire to question the existence of the gods; they declared this much rather to be quite incontrovertible. But, in order that the principle of a purely physical explanation of nature might not be at all prejudiced, and in order to cut away the roots of the superstitious fear of Deity, they held it to be necessary to explain away every influence of the gods upon earthly things. The gods were said to dwell in blessed rest, as objects of a disinterested reverence, in the empty spaces between the worlds, untouched by our affairs, and not intrenching upon them; whereas within the worlds everything was said to be governed partly by accident, partly by blind natural necessity.

From this belief, which was scarcely distinguished in its practical effects from atheism, monotheism had nothing to hope. The Epicureans opposed it with the same mockery as the myths of the popular religion; and just as little could the doubts of the Sceptics concerning the popular conceptions advance a purer faith, since they held the existence of one

God and the existence of many gods to be equally indemonstrable. These schools, therefore, promoted the cause of monotheism only mediately, so far as they contributed, by breaking to pieces the existing religion, to pave the way for a new.

This way of thinking, however, as has been remarked, did not have the mastery in Greek philosophy. The most important of the post-Socratic philosophers followed much rather the course, which Socrates had already chosen, of reconciling polytheism with monotheism. Yet, at the same time, they went beyond Socrates, through opposing themselves much more freely than he to the popular religion, and insisting much more distinctly upon its purification through philosophy. In this connection, however, no other exercised so profound an influence upon the development of the religious consciousness — an influence extending itself over many centuries — as the great scholar of Socrates, Plato. This philosopher's religious view or *Weltanschauung* is, in its fundamental determinations, a highly pure and spiritual monotheism. Above and behind the phenomenal world there lies, according to him, the world of eternal, immaterial, unchangeable essences — the *ideas*; and at the head of the united world of ideas stands the *good*, the infinite essence, which is the ground of all thought and all being, which gives to all things their reality and to our conceptions their truth, towards which all our thoughts and activities in their innermost nature tend, — if, indeed, we are able to behold it only with difficulty in its pure form, and, for the most part, only in its images and effects. From the good Plato's world-forming Deity does not substantially differ, and it is the idea of the good by which his conception of Deity is everywhere penetrated and determined. Goodness is the most essential attribute of Deity; out of goodness it has formed the world; with goodness and wisdom it directs human destiny, in the small as in the great. He who imitates, by purity of life, its goodness and perfection must in the end be served by all things for the best. By the idea of the good are our con-

ceptions of Deity to be measured; according to it, are our duties to Deity to be judged. The Deity is not jealous of human happiness, as the popular belief in fate imagined; for the good is without envy. It cannot change itself, and cannot show itself other than it is, because the perfect is unchangeable, and all untruth is foreign to it. It must be throughout a spiritual nature, high above liking and dislike, untouched by every evil; of its power, its goodness, its wisdom, its holiness, its justice, we may form only the loftiest and purest conceptions; the myths, which ascribe human weaknesses, passions, and mistakes to the gods, we must oppose as unworthy fables. True worship also can consist only in pure feeling and virtuous life, not in prayers and gifts, with which unreasonableness hopes to honor the gods and baseness hopes to bribe them.

We must admit that these are principles than which purer can scarcely be found, even on Christian ground; and, indeed, these Platonic apothegms have served the teachers of the Christian church for centuries as a rule for their representations of the Deity and for their comprehension of biblical narrations. A philosopher who held such views had essentially outgrown Greek polytheism. None the less, however, Plato will not abandon it unconditionally. And even his system offered him certainly a few points of connection. On the one hand, there stand under and alongside the Deity, or the good, the other ideas, which he also indeed designates as the eternal gods; on the other hand, Plato could not forsake the popular view, according to which the constellations, in the unchanging regularity of their course, were accounted living beings, in which a far higher reason was immanent than in man; and he likewise holds the universe to be a living being, from whose soul are derived the souls of all individuals. The constellations are therefore, as he says, the visible gods, and he calls the world the god that has become, whose beauty and perfection he cannot sufficiently praise. The remaining gods of the Greek popular faith, on the contrary,—an Apollo, a Here, an

Athene, etc.,—he considers, as he unambiguously gives us to understand, as mythical forms. But even these he will not have removed, on that account, from the public religious worship, and he will have the belief in them made the foundation of public education; for men, he says, must in the first place be educated through untruths, afterwards through the truth—first through myths, then through scientific knowledge. He, therefore, who does not arrive at the latter—and this is the case with the mass of men—remains throughout life relegated to the myths and the form of worship corresponding to them. Only so much the more earnestly does the philosopher urge that the myths themselves be purified, from moral and philosophical points of view—that everything morally detrimental and unworthy of the divine be removed from the religious tradition and from the worship; and precisely here lies the main ground of the severity of his judgments upon the great poets of his people, and the strictness with which he refuses a Homer and a Hesiod admittance to his state. As poets, he would perhaps tolerate them; as teachers of religion, he must reject them.

Everything taken together, his position in relation to our question is consequently this: He is himself a monotheist, and this monotheism scarcely suffers a limitation through the doctrine of the higher nature of the constellations; for these visible gods stand essentially in similar relation to the one invisible God as man or any other of the finite beings. As a religion for the people, on the contrary, he deems the Hellenic polytheism indispensable; but he demands as the condition of its admissibility that it be subjected to a thorough reform, and be brought by this, as far as possible, into harmony with that monotheism in its workings.

Aristotle is at one with Plato in all main points. The doctrine of the unity of God is still more distinctly expressed by him than by Plato. As the world is only one, he points out, it must also be moved by one highest cause; and this cause, as he further deduces, can only be extramundane, pure spirit, working in uninterrupted, never-slumbering activity

of thought. At the same time, the determination that the Deity must be a personal Being comes out more expressly in him than in Plato, and is more deeply grounded in his entire system. The Socratic-Platonic belief in providence, on the contrary, is essentially limited. The Deity is, indeed, according to Aristotle, the first moving cause, which gives impetus to the revolution of the heaven, and the highest good, to which all tends. There rules, indeed, in nature, a universal activity, working unconsciously from within according to a purpose, and in human life a natural connection of moral worth with inward happiness; but for an immediate intrenchment of Deity upon the course of the world, extending to particulars, there is no place in the Aristotelian system. Alongside the highest God Aristotle also accepts a number of other eternal beings, in the spirits of the heavenly spheres, as he also declares the universe to be without beginning and imperishable, since the divine activity in the world must be even as eternal as Deity itself. To these spirits of the stars he also refers the polytheistic faith, so far as he concedes it any truth. "All things remaining, however," he says, "are mythical additions for winning the masses, made for the sake of legislation and common needs." We have therefore here, likewise, a monotheism which is but little modified by the acceptance of spirits of the stars, and which is chiefly distinguished from the Platonic only by a severer, less imaginative character — a monotheism which has for itself no need of the popular religion, but which still tolerates it as a political necessity, and leaves open for it certain points of connection in its own system.

In the next great Greek school of philosophy, the Stoic, this monotheism becomes pantheism. One Being there is, according to the Stoical teaching, from which proceed the matter and the form of all things, and which at the end of this world-period will take all back into itself, in order, after the expiration of a fixed time, to create the same world anew, and to continue to all eternity the succession of things, as it has endured from eternity. This Being is at the same time

the primitive substance and the primitive force; it is the creative fire, which in its transformation produces the remaining elements; but it is also the highest spirit, the reason and the law of the world, the Deity. Everything which exists has become from this Divine Being, and is sustained by it. All natural forces and all spirits are only portions of the one force which pours itself through all. So far now as a divine force works in everything, everything can be made an object of religious worship, be personified as a Deity; but since in truth it is only one force, which appears under different forms in all things, these divine forms may not be treated as independent personal beings, but only as mythical representations of natural forces, which, having risen from the one source of the divine nature, stream in a thousand branches through the universe. From this double point of view is the conception of religion determined in the Stoical school. On the one hand, they oppose to Scepticism and Epicureanism the substance of the popular faith; they seek to show that the representations of the gods and the myths, which are indeed apparently most unworthy and unreasonable, have their good sense; they endeavor to defend the belief in prophecy and similar things. On the other hand, however, they cannot sanction all this in the same sense which it had in the faith of the people. In place of the gods appear natural things—the stars, the elements, the fruits of the earth, great men, and the benefactors of mankind; in place of the immediate divine revelations appear the natural foretokens of future events, which the wise and experienced can recognize and explain by means of the connection and consistency of all things. Their treatment of the popular religion is therefore a continual explaining around the same; they are the chief authors of that allegorical mode of interpretation which passed from the Greeks to the Jews, and on to the Christians, and has created with both so much confusion. A pantheistic monotheism seeks here to come to terms with polytheism by artificial means. But that the two are none the less of different nature is not entirely hidden even among

the Stoics. From them, also, we receive not only many fine passages concerning the Deity, the worthlessness of a merely outward service, and the necessity of a spiritual worship, but also very sharp and free judgments concerning the myths and the public worship; but the school as a whole had too little critical sense to become perfectly clear as to its relation to the popular religion.

In Plato, Aristotle, and the Stoics we have become acquainted with the three main sources of the religious views to which for many centuries, in the Graeco-Roman and the Graeco-Oriental world, all those held to whom the popular religion was too crude and dull, irreligion too comfortless and void. In the eclecticism of the Roman period the doctrines of these men were mixed in the most various combinations. At the same time, however, even among the philosophers, the disposition became more and more extended to lean upon the positive religion, and to expect from divine revelation the communication of truth, as to the independent discovery of which the weary thought had already, since the appearance of Scepticism, begun to despair. And the further Deity was removed above everything finite and earthly, by the purer idea of God in the Platonic and Aristotelian school, the more forcibly was the need felt of finding a mediation between the two in such natures as should be higher than man, but at the same time should stand nearer to the world and man than Deity. Hence the importance now won by the belief in demons. This belief had been formerly only a subordinate element of the popular religion — was, indeed, made use of occasionally by the philosophers, as by Plato, but remained foreign to their own convictions. It now became a subject of the most earnest religious interest. Of the one God of the philosophers there existed too high conceptions to allow of the venture to weave him, with his activity and his essence, into the course of nature and human affairs. The gods of the people, who were said to be woven into both, it was impossible, for that very reason, to treat as gods in the strict and full sense. But the need which polytheism had begotten was

not yet removed ; the habit of bringing the divine to view in sensible presence and defined appearance could not be broken. What else remained but to place a number of subordinate beings beside the Deity, who should constitute the bond between it and the world ; since they carried the divine forces over into the finite, and took the particular parts of the world and individual men under their special protection ? These beings are the demons. They are the old gods of polytheism, but stripped of their independent lordship, subordinated to the one monotheistic God, as his servants and instruments. Since the demons take the place of the gods for the religious consciousness, polytheism declares itself ready to subject itself to monotheism, in case the latter is disposed to vouchsafe it at least a subordinate place within itself.

This disposition was just then widespread in the sole strictly monotheistic religion of antiquity — Judaism. In the centuries immediately succeeding the Babylonish captivity a new element had penetrated into the circle of Jewish conceptions, in the belief in angels and devils, which offered the polytheistic mode of thought a certain satisfaction inside of monotheism. Between the old gods, who had subjected themselves as demons and lower divinities to a higher god, and the ministering spirits who now surrounded the one God of Judaism, the difference was so slight that nothing essential seemed to stand in the way of a blending together of the two. And, indeed, the Jewish Alexandrians began already to set forth a theory concerning the divine forces, and concerning the bearer of all these forces, the Logos or Word of God, in which the Jewish belief in angels entered into the closest union with the Greek belief in demons, and with the philosophers' doctrines of the ideas and the universal, all-penetrating divine reason (the divine Logos).

But preparation for this blending of the religions was also made from yet another side. Partly by the mixing of peoples in the Alexandrian and Roman time, partly by the Greek philosophy, the barriers were broken through, which until

then held the nations separated from one another in self-sufficient exclusiveness. The Hellene had to accustom himself to acknowledge also among the barbarians the moral and spiritual qualities, on the presumed sole possession of which his proud contempt of everything not Greek had hitherto propped itself. The Jew was constrained to doubt the exclusive choice of his people, after he met among the Greeks a surpassing spiritual culture, which was also a gift of God, and an insight in religious things, with the acknowledgment of which his national vanity contented itself, sorrowfully enough, through the groundless pretence that the old wise men of Greece had borrowed their treasures from the Jewish prophets and the Old Testament writings. Thus the knowledge gradually broke in — the lasting extension of which is to be ascribed before all to the Stoical school, to its immortal merit — that all men, by reason of their rational character, are of the same nature and stand under the same law; that they have the same natural rights and the same moral duties; that they are all equally to be considered as children of God, as citizens of one and the same commonwealth, which embraces all mankind. Men learned to conceive the relation of man to God as an immediate and inner one, to view the service of the devout heart and the virtuous life as more essential than the national form of worship, to dispense with priestly mediation for the communion of man with God. This purification of the morally religious consciousness was first perfected in comprehensive manner among the Greeks and through the Greek philosophy; but even Judaism had not shut herself up from it; and since the second century before Christ a party had appeared here, in the Essenes, which, in undeniable connection with the Greek new Pythagoreanism, and through this with the collective philosophy of that time, devoted itself to an inner, solitary piety, directed to poverty and renunciation, to universal philanthropy and the removal of all inequality among men; was indifferent, on the contrary, to the national Messianic hopes, rejected the entire principle of sacrifices, — the central point of the Jewish religious service,

—and opposed to the hierarchical institutions of Judaism a monastically organized union of ascetics.

This change in the moral consciousness, however, stands in the closest connection with the development of the conceptions of Deity. When, in place of the many gods, there appeared the one God whose kingdom is the entire world, it became necessary also that one divine right and law should embrace all men; consequently not only did national particularism have to fall, but also the universal service of the devout life appeared as the essential, in opposition to particular and external rituals. Even so, *vice versa*, when the consciousness of the brotherhood and equality of all men was arrived at, it was impossible to hold fast to the diversity of gods; if mankind is but one,—if it has one end and stands under one law,—it can be only one and the same power by which all men are created and ruled. The belief in the unity of God and the belief in the equality of all men and their moral duties condition each other reciprocally; both developed together in the old world, and thus prepared for Christianity the ground in which it could not plant the germ of a new religion and a new moral life, as it were, from without, but out of which alone it could itself grow and draw its nourishment according to the laws of historical development.

But, important as the place is which Greek philosophy fills among the forces which prepared the way for Christianity,—when this itself appeared in its distinctness, and declared war upon the polytheistic popular religions of the earlier time, then it was precisely this philosophy which became the last champion of paganism. We certainly cannot say this without limitation. Not a few philosophically educated men went over to the new religion; very many more acquired, as Christians, in the schools of the philosophers the scientific culture which they needed for the defence and the theological formulation of their faith. The Hellenic philosophy thus worked not only outside the church and against the church, but also in it and for it. And a more careful investigation would show that its influence on the Christian theology and

Christian usage was from the beginning incomparably more extensive and permanent than is generally conceived. But the majority of the Greek philosophers regarded a faith which appeared to them in the positive part of its creed as superstition, and in its attack upon the existing religions as mischievous, with profound contempt; and as this faith grew into a threatening, and finally conquering power, they opposed it with bitter hatred.

About the middle of the third century Greek philosophy gathered together, for the last time, in the Neo-Platonic school, all the forces which yet remained to it. The doctrinal system of this school appears, in its theological content, as an acute, accomplished attempt to unite the philosophical monotheism with that polytheism from which the Hellenic feeling cut itself loose with so great difficulty. The mode of union is nearly related to that which we have already noticed in the Stoical teaching, if, indeed, the more particular determinations have a different purport. One Supreme Being is assumed, indeterminable, incomprehensible, inconceivable, but at the same time the source of all existence and the seat of all perfection. By him proceeds, by an overflowing of his fulness, by a naturally necessary working of his power, the gradation of the finite; but the farther things are removed from their source, the more mediums lie between the two, the more imperfect they become, till in the end the pure light of the divine forces goes out in the darkness of matter. All things consequently form a gradual succession, of diminishing perfection. All are sustained by divine forces; but these are apportioned to them in different measure and different purity. For this very reason, however, say the New-Platonists, is it necessary that we press upward from the lower stages, through the intermediate, to the higher; that we allow ourselves to be led, in regular ascent, from the lower gods to the highest God; that we despise not the sensuous mediums of spiritual goods. And since they explain the Greek and Oriental divinities, with all the arbitrariness of the established allegorical exposition, into the abstract

categories of their metaphysics ; since they seek the natural medium of a higher life not in the knowledge and cultivation of the real, but in the ritualistic proceedings of all the popular religions and mysteries, in sacrifices and prayers, prophecy and consecration, image-worship and theurgy, everything rude and fantastic out of the mythology, all the externalities of worship, all the varied superstition of thousands of years find in their system an artificial justification. Against the purer doctrine and moral force of Christianity this system could not long hold its ground ; but so great was the underlying power of the Greek spirit, which had become wearied and in so many respects untrue to itself, that the victorious church, even during the conflict, took up into itself the same philosophy which had made the Hellenic ground so hard to conquer. New-Platonism was conquered, so far as it had identified itself with paganism ; as a form of Christian speculation, the church itself appropriated it. To the writings which a Christian New-Platonist, about the year 500, fathered upon Dionysius the Areopagite the church paid the highest reverence. The church defended its dogmas, its sacraments, its hierarchical institutions with the same principles which it had had before to fight in its pagan opponents. On this side, indeed, the influence of the Greek nature may be traced up to the present. Far more important, however, certainly, is the service which Greek science rendered to all after time in the opposite direction, through the refining of religious ideas and the purification of moral conceptions. And of this service I trust that I have given, in the narrow bounds prescribed me, a not altogether unsatisfactory representation