

# The Open Court

A MONTHLY MAGAZINE

Devoted to the Science of Religion, the Religion of Science, and the  
Extension of the Religious Parliament Idea

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CHICAGO

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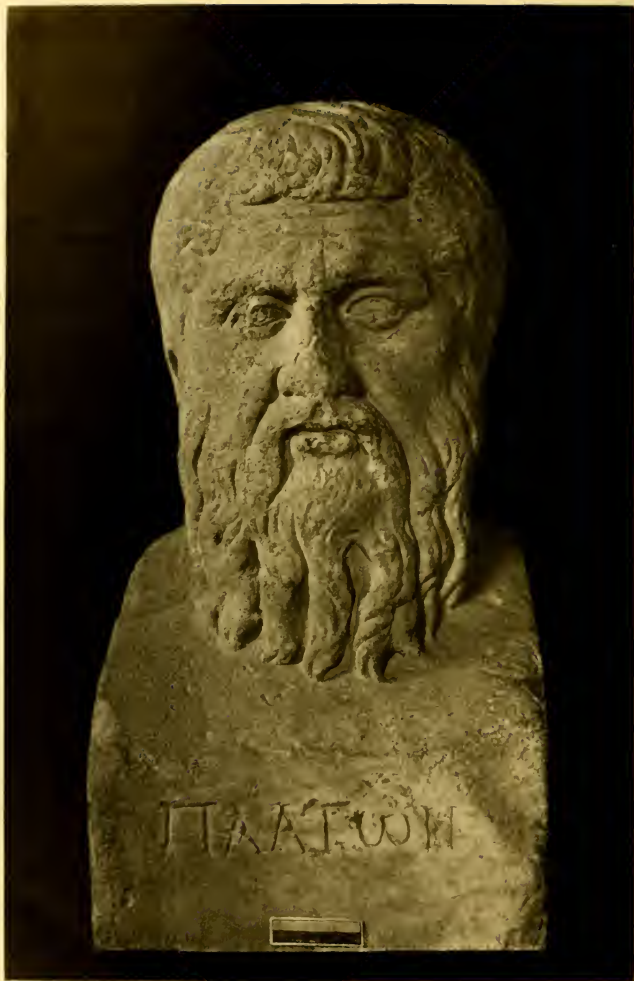
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PLATO

(429-347 B. C.)

From a photograph of a bust in the Berlin Museum, published by the  
Verlaganstalt für Kunst und Wissenschaft.

*Frontispiece to The Open Court.*

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## ON GREEK RELIGION AND MYTHOLOGY.

BY THE EDITOR.

### THE FATHERHOOD OF ZEUS.

HOMER anticipates the preamble of the Lord's Prayer when he addresses Zeus as ὦ πάτερ ἡμέτερε, O our father! (*Od.*, I. 45); and in many other places, prayers begin with the words, Ζεῦ πάτερ, "Father Zeus!" (See for instance *Od.*, v. 7; xxiv. 351, and *Il.*, iii. 319.)

This same poet, the father of Greek poetry, glorifies Zeus as "ever powerful" and "great." He says:

Ἄλλ' αἰεὶ γε Διὸς κρείσσων νόος αἰγιόχοιο.

—Homer, *Il.*, XVII. 176.

"But ever prevaieth the spirit of Zeus, the wielder of lightning."

And in another place:

Τοῦ γὰρ κράτος ἐστὶ μέγιστον.

—Homer, *Il.*, IX. 25.

"For his is the power, the greatest!"

The same sentiment is echoed in the writings of Anaxagoras, who says:

Ζεὺς κάρτιστος ἀπάντων.

—Anaxagoras.

"Zeus is the mightiest of all."

Greek mythology is polytheistic, but the thinkers of Greece are monists or monotheists. Pythagoras (according to Diogenes Laertius, *De vita Pyth.*, 582) said that

"The principle of all things is Oneness."

Ἄρχὴν τῶν ἀπάντων μονάδα εἶναι.

Aristotle leaves no doubt as to his conception of the plurality of gods ; he says :

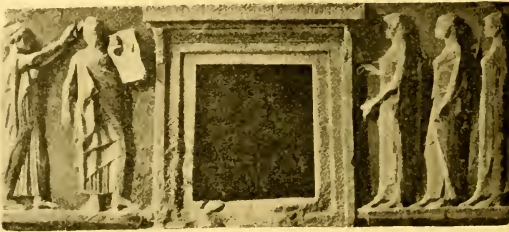
" Being one, God has many names, for he is called according to all the states in which he manifests himself."

*Εἰς ὧν πολυώνυμός ἐστι κατονομαζόμενος τοῖς πάθεσι πᾶσιν, ἅπερ αὐτὸς νεοχμεῖ.*—Aristot., *De mundo*, V.

In Orphic poetry Greek polytheism was broadened into the conception that all the gods were manifestations of Zeus. A poem ascribed to Orpheus teaches the unity of all the gods in the words :

*Εἰς Ζεὺς εἰς Ἥλιος εἰς Διόνυσος.*

" Zeus, Helios, Dionysos are all one and the same."



GREEK TOMBS. RELIEF OF THASOS.<sup>1</sup>

Discovered in 1864 on the island of Thasos, now in the Louvre. (After Rayet, *Mon. de l'art ant. livr.*, I., pl. 4., 5.)

Two hexameters from the same source read as follows :

*Εἰς ἐστ' αἰτογενής, ἐνὸς ἐκγονα πάντα τέτυκται,  
οὐδέ τις ἐσθ' ἕτερος χωρὶς μεγαλοῦ βασιλῆος.*

" One alone is unbegotten—one of whom we all are children.  
And no other godhead, truly, is beside this mighty ruler."

<sup>1</sup>The relief of Thasos is dedicated to Apollo, the Nymphs, and the Charites; Apollo may be recognised at the left leading the four female figures, and Hermes as the fourth in the group at the right.

Zeus, though he is kind to his children, will not be an abettor of fraud. Says Homer:

Ὀὐ γὰρ ἐπὶ ψεύδεσσι πατὴρ Ζεὺς ἔσσει' ἄρωγός.

—Homer, *Il.*, IV. 235.

"Not in lies will father Zeus appear as a helper!"



ADONIS SARCOPHAGUS.<sup>1</sup>

(Louvre. Bouillon Musée, II., 51, 3.—*B. D.*, 15.)



OFFERING A SACRIFICE TO PALLAS ATHENA.<sup>2</sup>

(From Jahn, *loc. cit.*, pl. II., 1.)

Epictetus says:

Ἐπὶ παντὸς πρόχειρα ἔκτεον ταῦτα

Ἄγον δέ μ' ὦ Ζεῦ καὶ σὺ γ' ἡ Πεπρωμένη,

ὅποι ποθ' ὑμῖν εἶμι διατεταγμένος:

Ὡς ἔψομαι γ' ἄοκνος.

—Epict., *Enchir.*, 52.

<sup>1</sup> There is some doubt about the meaning of the scenes here represented. At the left Adonis takes leave of Aphrodite; in the center he is killed by the wild boar; and at the right he returns to the upper world from the abode of the dead. We must remember that the legend was represented on sarcophagi for the purpose of comforting the survivors with the hope of a resurrection from the grave, which was suggested by the myth.

<sup>2</sup> Cf. Jahn, *loc. cit.*, 14, 47. The priestess apparently sprinkles the altar with holy water. The statue is fully armed and may stand for the palladium, the prototype of which was believed to have fallen from Heaven.

"In every condition we must have ready the following saying ;  
 'Lead me, O Zeus, and thou Providence,  
 Whithersoever thou decreest I shall go,  
 Resolutely will I follow.'"

Concerning sacrifices Euripides says that "God needs them not if he is truly God."

*Δείται γὰρ οὐ θεός, εἴπερ ἐστ' ὀρθῶς θεός.*

The Christian expression "Deus optimus maximus" is only a new version of the Roman "Jupiter optimus maximus," and this again has been anticipated by Homer who tells us that Agamemnon, when solemnly making his peace with Achilles, first prays and offers sacrifice, saying :

"Hear us, first, O Zeus, of the gods thou the best and the highest."

*Ἰστω νῦν Ζεὺς πρῶτα, θεῶν ἵπτατος καὶ ἄριστος.*

—Homer, *Il.*, XIX. 258.



Worshippers

Kora

Demeter

SACRIFICE OF A PIG TO DEMETER.

Initiation scene from the Eleusinian Mysteries. Found in Eleusis, now in Paris.  
 (From Taylor's *Eleusinian and Bacchic Mysteries*.)

Æschylus says that none save Zeus is truly free.

*Ἐλεύθερος γὰρ οὐτις ἐστὶ πλὴν Διός.*

—Æschyl., *Prometh.*

Socrates is reported by Xenophon (*Mem.*, I. 3. 2) to have prayed simply for receiving "the good" because "the gods knew best what is good."

*Ἐίχτο δὲ πρὸς τοὺς θεοὺς (ὁ Σωκράτης) ἀπλῶς τὰγαθὰ διδόναι, ὡς τοὺς θεοὺς κάλλιστα εἰδότες ὅποια τὰγαθὰ ἐστίν.*



In the same spirit Christ taught his disciples to pray to God "Thy will be done" and he said :

"Your father knoweth what things ye have need of before ye ask him."—Matt. vi. 8.

Plato advises his followers to pray to Zeus not for the fulfilment of their wishes but for the good, and quotes an unknown poet who says :

Ζεῦ βασιλεῦ, τὰ μὲν ἐσθλά καὶ εὐχομένοις καὶ ἀνένκτοις  
ἄμμι δίδου, τὰ δὲ δεινὰ καὶ εὐχομένοις ἀπαλέξειν.

—Plato, II. *Alcib.* 9.<sup>1</sup>

"Ruler Zeus, give us the good whether or not it be prayed for ; but the evil, even if we pray for it, ward off."

Statues of praying persons bear witness that there were people in Greece who prayed in spirit and in truth with child-like sincerity.

Zeus is omniscient, for he sees everything. Says Hesiod :

Πάντα ἰδὼν Διὸς ὀφθαλμὸς καὶ πάντα νοήσας.

—Hesiod, *Opp.* et *d.*, 267.

"All sees the eye of Zeus and everything he knows."

As the poor were blessed by Christ, so it was a fundamental tenet of the Greek religion that strangers and beggars were under the special protection of Zeus. Says Homer :

Πρὸς γὰρ Διὸς εἰσὶν ἅπαντες  
ξεῖνοί τε πτωχοί τε.

—Homer, *Od.*, IV. 207.

"For to Zeus's special care,  
Belong the stranger as well as the needy."

Ζεὺς ἐπιτιμῆτων ἱκετῶν τε ξείνων τε.

—Homer, *Od.*, IX. 270.

"Zeus the Avenger of supplicants and strangers."

St. Paul speaks of the development of the spiritual body which is immortal, and in like manner Plato speaks of the soul as acquiring wings wherewith to lift itself up to the heavenly spheres of divine life and to escape the mortality of the body.

The same philosopher quotes Pindar as saying that "he who is conscious of not having done any wrong may cherish sweet hope, which will be a good sustainer in his old age."

Τῷ μηδὲν ἐαντῷ ἄδικον ξυνειδότι ἡδέια ἔλπις ἀεὶ παρέσσι καὶ ἀγαθῇ  
γρηοτρόφος, ὡς καὶ Πίνδαρος λέγει.—Plato, *De rep.*, I. 330.

<sup>1</sup> See also Plato, *De legg.* III. 687d and VII. 80ra et seq. The same idea is insisted upon in *De legg.* III. 589 and II. *Alc.*

## COINCIDENCES.

There are three passages, one written in India, another in Palestine, and a third in Greece, all insisting on the omnipresence of the moral law and teaching that the effects of evil deeds are unavoidable; and this triple coincidence is enforced by a striking similarity in the mode of expression. The Hebrew Psalmist says (Psalm cxxxix, verses 7-10):



THE PRAYING YOUTH.<sup>1</sup>

"Whither shall I go from thy spirit? or whither shall I flee from thy presence? If I ascend up into heaven, thou art there: if I make my bed in hell, behold, thou art there. If I take the wings of the morning, and dwell in the uttermost parts of the sea; even there shall thy hand lead me, and thy right hand shall hold me."

This sentence can be paralleled in Buddhist literature as well as in Plato. The *Dhammapada*, the famous collection of Buddhistic aphorisms, and one of the best authenticated and most ancient books of Buddhism, speaks of the inevitableness of law and says to the sinner:

"Not in the heaven, O man, not in the midst of the sea, not if thou hidest thyself in the clefts of the mountains, wilt thou find a place where thou canst escape the effect of thine own evil actions. (Verse 127.)

Plato, who can scarcely have been familiar either with the Hebrew psalms or with the Buddhist sacred books, expresses the same truth as follows:

Ὁὐ γὰρ ἀμελέηθήσει ποτὲ ἐπ' αὐτῆς (τῆς δίκης θειῶν)· οὐχ οὕτω μικρὸς ὢν δίσει κατὰ τὸ τῆς γῆς βάθος· οὐδ' ἐψηλὸς γενόμενος εἰς τὸν οὐρανὸν ἀναπτήσει· τίσις δὲ αὐτῶν τὴν προσήκουσαν τιμωρίαν εἴτ' ἐνθάδε μίνων εἴτε καὶ ἐν Ἄιδου διαπορηθεὶς εἴτε καὶ τούτων εἰς ἀγριώτερον ἔτι δικομισθεὶς τόπον.—Plato, *De legg.*, X. 905.

<sup>1</sup> Bronze statue (Berlin). In praying the eyes were raised toward heaven and the hands lifted, palms upward, as Horace says, "*cælo supinas si tuleris manus*" (*Carm.*, III., 23, 1). See *B. D.*, p. 591.

"Never wilt thou be forgotten by the justice of the gods; not when by making thyself insignificant thou descendest deeply down under the ground, nor when by making thyself high thou flyest up to heaven, wilt thou be able to escape the punishment which thou deservest, whether thou stayest here or art carried away to Hades, or art transferred to a place still more desolate."

Not only did Plato prepare the way for the doctrine of the Logos as the revelation of God, which in the shape that it received



HERMES PSYCHOPOMPOS PRESENTING A SOUL TO THE RULERS OF THE UNDER WORLD.

(From *Pict. Ant. Sep. Nasonum*, pl. I., 8.)

at the hands of Philo became later the basic idea of Christian philosophy; not only are there many other closer coincidences as to



DECKING THE ALTAR OF DEMETER.

(From *Admiranda*, pl. 17.)

the nature of the soul and immortality; but there are also passages which strikingly anticipate distinctly Christian ideas. There are passages in Plato's works which, if they had been written after Christ, would have been regarded as indisputable evidence that the philosopher had read the Gospels. Plato says, for instance:

Αἰτῶν γε καὶ πῶδας καὶ χεῖρας ἐθέλουσιν ἀποτέμνεσθαι οἱ ἄνθρωποι.  
ἐὰν αὐτοῖς δοκῇ τὰ ἑαυτῶν πονηρὰ εἶναι.—Plato, *Sympos.*, 205e.

"People will allow their own feet and hands to be cut off when they appear to become evil to themselves."

Which reminds us of Matt. v. 29-30:

"And if thy right eye offend thee, pluck it out, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell. And if thy right hand offend thee, cut it off, and cast it from thee: for it is profitable for thee that one of thy members should perish, and not that thy whole body should be cast into hell."

Like Christ, the Greek sages also demand simplicity. Says Euripides, "Simple is the tale of truth"—*ἀπλοῦς ὁ μῦθος τῆς ἀλεθείας ἔφν*, and the Gospel of Matthew uses the same expression in the sentence:

"The light of the body is the eye: if therefore thine eye be simple (*ἀπλοῦς*),<sup>1</sup> thy whole body shall be full of light."



ÆNEAS SAVES HIS FATHER ANCHISES.<sup>2</sup>  
(Gerhard, *Auscr. Vas.*, pl. 231, 1.)

It is probably more than a mere accident that pagan augurs used the very same words in their invocation, "kyrie elçeson—*κύριε ἐλέησον*," which is still sung Sunday after Sunday in almost all Christian churches.<sup>3</sup>

But the most striking coincidence, which now sounds like a

<sup>1</sup> The English version reads "single."

<sup>2</sup> Venus leads the way; Kreusa the wife of the hero follows. Iulus, his little son, runs by his side. Æneias is regarded as the ideal of filial piety.

<sup>3</sup> See Epictetus, II. 7, 12.

prophecy, is Plato's description of the truly good man who would rather be than seem virtuous, and of whom the philosopher says :

Ἐροῦσι δὲ τάδε, ὅτι οὕτω διακείμενος ὁ δίκαιος μαστιγώσεται, στρεβλώσεται, δεδήσεται ἑκκαυθήσεται τῷ φθαλμῷ τῶν τελευτῶν πάντα κακὰ παθὼν ἀνασχιδνύενθήσεται.

"They will tell you that the just man who is thought unjust will be scourged, racked, bound—will have his eyes burnt out; and, at last, after suffering every kind of evil, he will be crucified."

#### THE ETHICS OF RETURNING GOOD FOR EVIL.

We are now prepared to consider the parallels between the ethics of the Sermon on the Mount and ethics of Grecian philosophy, and shall not be astonished at their marvellous agreement.

Plato propounds plainly and briefly the injunction, "not to return evil for evil," οὐδὲ ἀδικούμενον ἀνταδικεῖν. (*Crito*, 127.)

The same injunction is more fully set forth in the 49th chapter of *Crito*, where we read :

"One must neither return evil, nor do any ill to any one among men, not even if one has to suffer from them."

Οὔτε ἀνταδικεῖν δεῖ, οὔτε κακῶς ποιεῖν οὐδένα ἀνθρώπων, οὐδ' ἂν ὁμοῦν πάσῃ ἐπ' αὐτῶν.—Plato, *Crito*, 49.

A similar idea is expressed by Antoninus Pius, who said :

"Human beings have developed for each other.—For communion we are developed."

Οἱ ἄνθρωποι γεγονάσιν ἕνεκεν ἀλλήλων.—Πρὸς κοινωνίαν γεγόναμεν.

—Antoninus, VIII. 24, 59 and V. 16.

Compassion, in the opinion of the Greeks, is the virtue that constitutes humaneness. Says Phocion (*Apud Stobæ. Serm.*, i. 3).

Οὔτε ἐξ ἱεροῦ βωμον οὔτε ἐκ τῆς ἀνθρωπίνης φύσεως ἀφαιρετέον τὸν ἔλεον.

"As little as one may remove the altar from a temple, so little should compassion be torn out of human nature."

These sentiments are not isolated in Greek literature. Pittacus says :

Συγγνώμη τιμωρίας ἀμείνων· τὸ μὲν γὰρ ἡμέρον φύσεως, τὸ δὲ θηριώδους.

—Pittacus, *Ap. Stobæ, anthol.*, XIX. 169.

"Forgiveness is better than vengeance, the former shows culture, the latter is brute-like."

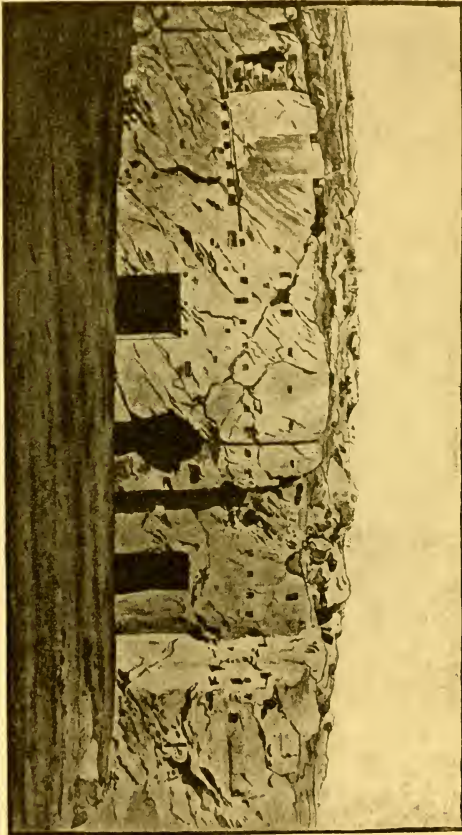
Diogenes Laertius says :

Τὸν φίλον δεῖ ἐνεργεῖν, ὅπως ἢ μᾶλλον φίλος, τὸν δὲ ἐχθρὸν φίλον ποιεῖν.—Diog. Laert., I. 6.

"It is necessary to do good to a friend, in order to make him more friendly, and to change the hater into a friend."

Plutarch tells of Diogenes, that when asked by some one how

THE PRISON OF SOCRATES  
 The holes in the rock prove that buildings were formerly attached to these cave-like rooms. (B. D., p. 155.)



he should defend himself against an enemy, he answered: *καλὸς κάγαθὸς γενόμενος*, i. e., "By becoming perfectly good yourself."<sup>1</sup>

Diodorus Siculus says that all attacks should be made with a

<sup>1</sup>He here uses the word *καλὸς κάγαθός*—so characteristic of the Greek mind.

view to future friendship. (*προσκορυστέον ὡς φίλις ἐσομένης.*—*Diod. Sic.*, II. 20.)

Pythagoras is reported to have said: "We should deal one with another so as never to convert friends into enemies but enemies into friends." (*Ap. Diog. Laert.*, VIII. 23.)

Thales of Miletus used to say:

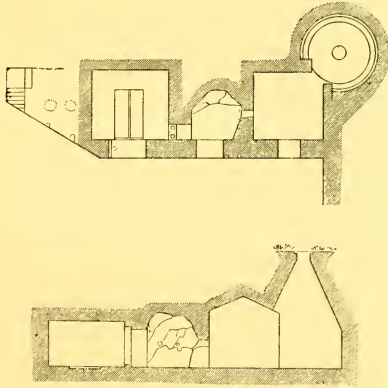
*Ἀγάπα τὸν πλησίον μικρὰ ἐλαττούμενος\**

"Love thy neighbor and suffer the little offences (he may give you)."

Egoism is vigorously condemned, and we are told that "it is a shame to live and to die for oneself alone."

*Αἰσχρὸν γὰρ ζῆν μόνους ἑαυτοῖς καὶ ἀποθνήσκειν.*

—Plutarch, *Cleom.* 31.



GROUND PLAN AND ELEVATION OF THE PRISON OF SOCRATES.<sup>1</sup>

Aristippus, the hedonist, propounded the maxim "not to hate, but to change the mind (of one's enemy) by teaching him something better." (*μὴ μισήσειν, μᾶλλον δὲ μεταδιδάξειν.* *Ap. Diog. Laert.*, II. 8. 9.)

Philemon is the author of these lines:

*Ἦδιον οὐδὲν οἰδὲ μουσικώτερον  
ἔστ' ἢ δύνασθαι λωιδροῦμενον φέρειν.*

Philemon, *Ap. Stobae.*, *anthol.*

<sup>1</sup> It consists of three chambers (of which the middle one is not completed) with doors about two meters high. At the right farther corner of the third chamber is a cistern which must have existed when the prison was excavated; the wall being afterwards broken through, so as to gain a outhouse. (*B. D.*, p. 154.)

Sweeter is nothing nor nobler  
Than bearing abuses with patience.

Greek ethics is frequently characterised as hedonistic; but the truth is that Epicurus and his school were much nobler and more high-minded than they are commonly represented. In fact, all the Greek moralists were stern anti-hedonists. It is probably no exaggeration to say that every Greek youth knew Hesiod's famous maxim by heart and believed that:



BUST OF SOCRATES.<sup>1</sup>

Villa Albani. (*B. D.*, III.,  
p. 1683.)

The original sounds like music and defies translation. It reads:

Τῆς ἀρετῆς ἰδρώτα θεοὶ προπάροικεν ἐθήκαν  
ἀθάνατοι, μακρὸς δὲ καὶ ὄρθιος οἶμος ἐπ' αὐτήν  
καὶ τρηχῆς τὸ πρῶτον· ἐπεὶ δ' εἰς ἄκρον ἵκηται,  
ῥηϊδίῃ δὴ ἔπειτα πέλει, χαλεπὴ περ εἶσα.

—Hesiod, *Opera et d.* 265.

We conclude this collection of quotations<sup>2</sup> with a saying of Socrates which

is a parallel to the prayer of Jesus on the cross, for his executioners (Luke xxiii. 34). When condemned to drink the hemlock, Socrates said, "I do not bear the least ill will toward those who voted my death":

Ἐγώ γε (εἶπεν ὁ Σωκράτης) τοῖς καταψηφισαμένοις μου καὶ τοῖς κατα-  
γόροις οὐ πᾶν χαλεπιύω.—Plato, *Apolog.* 33.

Louis Dyer,<sup>3</sup> speaking as a Christian, expresses the opinion prevailing at present among archæologists concerning Greek paganism, in these words:

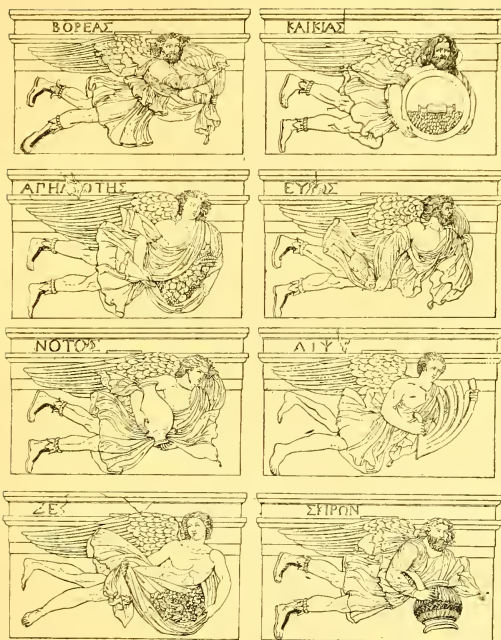
"Christianity as we know it, Christianity as we prize it, is not solely and exclusively a gift from Israel. It is time to open our eyes and see the facts new and

<sup>1</sup> This bust is regarded as the best and most artistic likeness of the great philosopher. For a description see P. Schuster, *Die Bildnisse der griech. Philosophen*, Leipzig, 1876.

<sup>2</sup> We have drawn here profusely from Prof. R. Schneider's excellent book *Christliche Klänge aus den Griechischen und Römischen Klassikern* which contains a great number of similar quotations. But even Schneider's work of 360 odd pages of quotations is by no means complete. For instance, it makes no reference to Plato's startling proposition, quoted above, that the perfectly just man should be crucified.

<sup>3</sup> *Studies of the Gods in Greece at Certain Sanctuaries Recently Excavated*. London: Macmillan & Co. 1891.



THE EIGHT WIND DEMONS.<sup>1</sup>(After Stuart and Revett. *B. D.*, III., 2116.)Silene Kephalos Eos Pan Phosphoros Stars Helios  
SUNRISE.<sup>2</sup> (Welcker, *Alle Denkm.*, III., pl. 9.)

<sup>1</sup> *Boreas*, the north wind, is strong, he holds a shell in his hand, using it as a trumpet. *Kairos*, the northeast wind, brings snow in winter and thunder-showers in summer. He holds a vessel full of hail. *Apeliotes*, the east wind, brings fertilising rains and makes the fruit grow. *Euros*, the southeast wind, carries a bag of clouds over his shoulder. *Notos*, the south wind, holds an urn containing rains. *Lips*, the southwest wind, favoring the sailors entering the harbor of Athens, holds the ornament of a ship's prow in his hands. *Zephyros*, the gentle west wind, brings flowers; and *Skiron*, the dry northwest wind, carries a large vessel, which (according to Stuart) may be a fire-pot.

<sup>2</sup> *Eos* is said to be in love with *Kephalos*, a beautiful youth who scorns her affection. She tries to take hold of him, but he threatens to throw a stone at her.

old that stare us in the face, growing more clear the more investigations and excavations on Greek soil proceed. To the religion of Greece and Rome, to the Eleusinian mysteries, to the worship of Æsculapius and Apollo, to the adoration



ERIS, THE GODDESS OF STRIFE, AND SPHINXES.

Picture on an antique skyphos.



ASKLEPIOS AND HYGIEIA.

(Diptych of Florence. After Raphael Morghen's engraving. From Wieseler, *Alte Denkm.*, II., 792.—*B. D.*, I., p. 140.)<sup>1</sup>

of Aphrodite, is due more of the fulness and comforting power of the Church to-day than many of her leaders have as yet been willing to allow."

<sup>1</sup> The worship of Asklepios, the god of medicine and the protector of physicians, was widely spread over the whole Roman empire and entered for a while into a competition even with Christianity. Asklepios is accompanied by a little boy, Telesphoros, the genius of convalescence. Hygieia is sometimes called the wife and sometimes the daughter of Asklepios.

Much that is commonly deemed specifically Christian has demonstrably been inherited from the pagans, part of which is pagan and ought to be abolished, and part of which ought to be retained because it is the truth—the truth which is the same everywhere and may be discovered in various ways.

The present age, with its new light of science and increasing power of civilisation, has broadened our minds and enables us to understand the Logos-conception of the Fourth Gospel, “the true



NIKE OF SAMOTHRACE BY PAIONIOS.<sup>1</sup>

Paris. Restored by Zumbusch. (After Conze, *Sam.*, II., 25*b.*)

light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world.” Mr. Dyer says of this broadening spirit now pervading Christianity :

“It is indeed a privilege newly and exclusively granted to the highest moods and broadest minds of to-day, this enlightened tolerance, this ‘genial catholicity of appreciation,’ which finds even in paganism a message from the only and the everlasting God. Now at last, thanks to the painstaking work which truly scientific men have done in archæology, we are receiving something of the legacy bequeathed us by those who lived and loved and prayed of old in Athens and in Rome. Now at last we may feel, with no petty wish to carp or cavil, the sacredness of ancient sanctuaries, and know them forever consecrated to ‘the sessions of sweet silent

<sup>1</sup>The original is a colossal statue, a torso, a picture of which is published by Conze, pl. 64, cf. *B. D.*, p. 1021.

thought,' where we summon up not only 'remembrance of things past,' but also much of the sweet usage and workaday reality in things now present for our spiritual aid."

### TRANSFIGURED POLYTHEISM.

Greek religion starts with a polytheistic mythology which is neither better nor worse than the mythologies of the other pagans, but develops to lofty heights and exhibits a nobility in its ethical



NIKE.

Bronze relief from Olympia.  
(Roscher, *Lex.*, II., p. 1047 )



EIRENE WITH PLUTOS.<sup>1</sup>  
(Restored).

Statue of Kephisodotos, Munich.  
(Springer, *Handb.*, 172.)

ideals which parallels the greatest and best that other religions can offer to the world.

But in spite of the acknowledged supremacy of Zeus the polytheistic background was preserved even in the writings of the most advanced sages—and the reason is that polytheism has its justification, which through the zeal of its advocates was entirely lost sight

<sup>1</sup> Peace as the mother of prosperity is more a product of reflexion than a mythological idea and illustrates well the philosophical mode of conceiving the gods.

of during the period of the ascendancy of monotheism. While it is true that those powers (be they general principles, or laws of nature, or human ideals) which are personified in the gods constitute one great system of norms, we can readily see that their efficacy is by no means without implications or conflict. Even Christianity knows of the conflict between divine justice and divine love, building upon it the drama of the salvation of mankind through Christ. Beauty and wisdom are rarely combined in one



THE ALTAR OF THE TWELVE GREAT GODS.<sup>1</sup>

FIRST SECTION.

Zeus and Hera. Poseidon and Demeter. Underneath, the three Graces.

person, and in human society the influences of both may clash, as they did when Aphrodite found herself opposed by Pallas Athene on the battle-field of Troy. In the same way the conditions represented by other gods, Warfare and Commerce, the Arts and Feasting, Wine and Health, and earnest application, as represented in Ares and Hermes, in Apollo, Dionysos, Silenos, Hygieia, Heracles,

<sup>1</sup>Ara Borghese in the Louvre. (After Wieseler, *Alte Denkmäler*, 43, 44, 45.) Probably an imitation of the altar of the twelve gods erected by Peisistratos in the market-place at Athens.

etc., are sometimes pitted against one another, and there may be virtue and goodness on both sides. Why then should not such a condition of things, a medley of contrasts in a higher unity, be represented by a whole family of gods, with one father above them?

That the Greeks were conscious of the fact that their gods represented abstractions of laws and conditions, that they were not real persons but mere personifications, is obvious to every student of Greek art. The gods became fixed types, but they never



THE ALTAR OF THE TWELVE GREAT GODS.

SECOND SECTION.

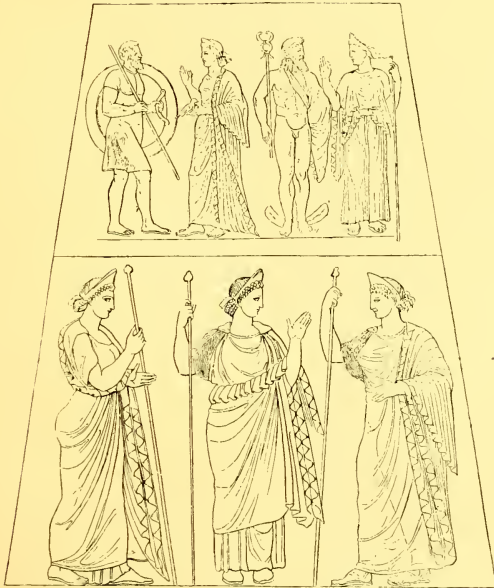
Apollo and Artemis. Hephaestus and Athena. Underneath, the three Seasons.

ceased to be the impersonal realities that prompted their conception, and above all mythology hovers the spirit of philosophy and a scientific interpretation of their legends and traditions.

At a very early date the gods were conceived as the harmonious diversity of the cosmic order,—a variety in unity and a unity in variety,—and this conception found popular expression in the

belief of "the Twelve Great Gods," in whose honor an altar was erected by Peisistratos in the market-place of Athens to denote the center of the city.

The world of the Greek gods passed away, according to the law of change. A terrible storm of iconoclasm swept them out of existence. Their temples were desecrated, their altars overturned, and their statues demolished. It was an historical necessity, as natural as is death in the life of individuals. The storm made room



THE ALTAR OF THE TWELVE GREAT GODS.

THIRD SECTION.

Ares and Aphrodite. Hermes and Hestia. Underneath, the three Fates.

for Christianity, but if the vision of Elijah is applicable anywhere, it is here. God was not in the storm.

#### SCHILLER'S EULOGY OF THE GODS OF GREECE.

Not Christianity alone, with its rigid monotheism, appeared as the enemy of the poetic beauty of Greek mythology, but also the

abstract conception of a one-sided science—an idea which Schiller most beautifully expresses in his poem on the gods of Greece.

While we can never return to the naïve age of the Hellenic world-conception, we can still revert to it for more than mere historical reasons. The literal belief in the gods of Greece is gone past restoring, but we can now appreciate the truth which lay hidden in their myths, and in many respects our ultra-scientific age, forgetful of the life that animates nature and verging into the pseudo-science of a mechanical materialism, is wrong in the face of the Greek view which conceived all things as ensouled with gods.<sup>1</sup>

The Greeks faced the problems of life and science and art in a direct manner and formulated them with great simplicity, and this has become the characteristic type of all that is called classical.

We conclude with a quotation of some of Schiller's verses, following for the most part Sir Edward Bulwer Lytton's translation:

" Hail to the gods who in an age gone by  
Governed the world,—a world so lovely then !—  
And guided still the steps of happy men  
In the light leading-strings of careless joy !  
Well flourished then your worship of delight !  
How different was the day, how different, ah !  
When thy sweet fanes with many a wreath were bright,  
O Venus Amathusia !

" Round ruthless fact a veil of witching dreams  
The beauty of poetic fancy wreathed ;  
Through all creation overflowed the streams  
Of Life—and things now senseless, felt and breathed.  
Man gifted Nature with divinity  
To lift and link her to the breast of Love ;  
All things betrayed to the initiate eye  
The track of living gods above !

" Where lifeless, fixed in empty space afar,  
A flaming ball is to our senses given,  
Phœbus Apollo, in his golden car,  
In silent glory swept the fields of heaven !  
Then lived the Dryads in yon forest trees ;  
Then o'er yon mountains did the Oread roam ;  
And from the urns of gentle Naiades  
Welled waving up their silver foam.

<sup>1</sup> πάντα πλήρη θεῶν.—Heraclitus.



- "No specter-skeleton at the hour of death  
 In Greece did ghastly on the dying frown.  
 A Genius with a kiss took life's last breath,  
 His torch in gentle silence turning down,  
 The judgment-balance of the realms below,  
 A judge, himself of mortal lineage, held ;  
 The very Furies, then at Orpheus' woe,  
 Were moved to mercy, music-spelled.
- "Even beyond in the Elysian grove  
 The Shades renewed the pleasures life held dear :  
 The faithful spouse rejoined remembered love,  
 And rushed along the course the charioteer,  
 The grand achievers of heroic deeds,  
 In those days, choosing Virtue's path sublime,  
 More anxious for the glory than the meeds,  
 Up to the seats of gods could climb.
- "And gone forever with time's rolling sand  
 Is this fair world, the bloom on Nature's face.  
 Ah, only in the Minstrel's fable land  
 Can we the footstep of the gods still trace !  
 The meadows mourn for the old sacred life ;  
 Vainly we search the earth of gods bereft ;  
 And where the image with such warmth was rife,  
 An empty shade alone is left !
- "Cold, from the bleak and dreary North, has gone  
 Over the flowers the blast that killed their May ;  
 And, to enrich the worship of the ONE,  
 A Universe of Gods must pass away.  
 Mourning, I search on yonder starry steeps,  
 But thee no more, Selene, there I see !  
 And through the woods I call, and o'er the deeps,  
 No hallowed voice replies to me !
- "Deaf to the joys which Nature gives—  
 Blind to the pomp of which she is possessed—  
 Unconscious of the spiritual Power that lives  
 Around, and rules her—by our bliss unblest—  
 Dull to the Art that colors or creates,  
 Like a dead time-piece, godless NATURE creeps  
 Her plodding round, with pendulum and weights,  
 And slavishly her motion keeps.
- "New life to-morrow to receive  
 Nature is digging her own grave to-day ;  
 And icy moons with weary sameness weave  
 From their own light their fulness and decay.  
 Home to the Poet's Land the Gods are flown,

A later age in them small use discerns,  
For now the leading-strings of gods outgrown,  
The world on its own axle turns.

"Alas! they went, and with the gods are gone  
The hues they gazed on and the tones they heard;  
Life's melody and beauty. Now the word,  
The lifeless word, reigns tristful and alone.  
Yet, rescued from Time's deluge, still they throng  
Unseen the Pindus they were wont to cherish;  
Ah, that which gains immortal life in Song,  
In this our earthly life must perish!"