
Exhortation to the Greeks,

BY

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TRANSLATED FROM THE GREEK,

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&c.

IN beginning this exhortation to you, O Greeks, I pray God that I may be enabled to address you as I ought; and that you, laying aside your wonted spirit of disputation, may at the same time abandon the errors of your fathers, and embrace at length more profitable doctrines. And think not, that by thus rejecting the false belief of your ancestors, and adopting contrary opinions, you will be guilty of any irreverence to their memory; since accurate research, by revealing more clearly the nature of things, often demonstrates the fallacy of doctrines, which presented before the exterior of truth.

The question, which I design at present to consider, is this—WHAT IS THE TRUE RELIGION?—the most momentous question, as it appears to me, that can be proposed to beings who look forward in hope to a state of future felicity. Its importance arises from the fact, that after death there is a judgment—a doctrine not peculiar to our faith, but taught also by those whom you call wise, by your Poets, and, which is more important, by your masters of genuine and elevated philosophy. Such being the object of our inquiry, let us first ascertain, who were the earliest teachers of our religion and of yours; what were their characters, and at what periods they lived. I would investigate these facts, in order that, by viewing the faith which you have inherited and profess, as it really is, you may be induced to abandon it; and that it may at the same time be clearly seen, that in belief and worship we are indeed the followers of holy men of old.

To whom then do you appeal as the teachers of your

religion? To the poets? A reference to their authority will meet with no flattering reception among those who are familiar with their writings, and know any thing of the ridiculous doctrine of *Theogony* or *generation of the gods* there taught. Let us gather a few of their theological principles from Homer, the first and greatest of them all. By him we are taught that the race of the gods had its origin in *water*.

Ἦκεανόν τε Θεῶν γένεσιν, καὶ μητέρα Τηθύν,*

The parent of the gods
Oceanus, and Tethys his espoused,
Mother of all.†

As to Jupiter, the supreme Deity, whom he repeatedly calls the *Father of gods and of men*, we are told that he is the steward or dispenser of wars upon earth,

Ζεὺς ὅς τ' ἀνθρώπων ταμίης πολέμοιο τέτυκται,‡

* * * * Jove,
Dispenser of the great events of war—

and, as if not satisfied with thus making him a *ταμίης* to mortal armies, he represents this same deity, as instigating, through the agency of his daughter, a breach of truce on the part of the Trojans § He is also exhibited to us in love, in affliction, and in danger from a conspiracy of the other immortals. On one occasion, we find him thus bewailing himself on account of his son Sarpedon,

ὦ μοι ἐγὼ, ὅτε μοι Σαρπηδόνα, φίλτατον ἀνδρῶν,
Μοῖρ' ὑπὸ Πατρόκλοιο Μενoitιάδαο δαμῆναι,||

Alas for my beloved son, my own
Sarpedon! whom the fates ordain to die,
Slain by Patroclus!—

* Iliad, xiv. 302.

† Cowper.

‡ Iliad, xix. 224.

§ Iliad, iv. 60—100.

|| Iliad, xvi. 433.

on another, lamenting, in like manner, the condition of Hector,

ὦ πόποι, ἦ φίλον ἄνδρα διωκόμενον περὶ τείχος
Ὀφθαλμοῖσιν ὀρῶμαι, ἐμὸν δ' ολοφύρεται ἦτορ—*

Ah, I behold a warrior dear to me
Around the walls of Ilium driv'n, and grieve—

The story of the famous *Plot* is simply this—that,

μιν ξυνδῆσαι Ὀλύμπιοι ἤθελον ἄλλοι,
Ἥρη τ', ἠδὲ Ποσειδάων, καὶ Παλλὰς Ἀθήνη,†

Once the gods,
With Juno, Neptune, Pallas at their head,
Conspired to bind the Thunderer,

and, had not these *blessed gods* been afraid of one Bria-
reus, would have succeeded in the attempt.

The extent of his libidinous indulgences may be learned
from his own address to Juno,

Ὅ γὰρ πάποτέ μ' ὦδε θεῆς ἔρος, ἐδὲ γυναικός,
Θυμὸν ἐνὶ στήθεσσι περιπροχυθεῖς ἐδάμασσεν, (κ. τ. λ.)‡

For never goddess poured, nor woman yet
So full a tide of love into my breast;
I never loved Ixion's consort thus
Who bore Pirithous, wise as we in heaven;
Nor sweet Acrisian Danaë, from whom
Sprang Perseus, noblest of the race of man;
Nor Phoenix' daughter fair, of whom were born
Minos unmatched but by the powers above,
And Rhadamanthus; nor yet Semele,
Nor yet Alcmena, who in Thebes produced
The valiant Hercules; and though my son
By Semele were Bacchus, joy of man;
Nor Ceres, nor Latona, nor—thyself,
As now I love thee.

Ilad, xxii. 168.

† Ilad, i. 399.

‡ Ilad, xiv. 315.

From Homer we may also learn something of the character of the other gods, and the sufferings which they endured at the hands of men. Both Mars and Venus, he informs us, were wounded by diomedes, and similar evils are also described as having been inflicted upon many other of the deities, as we may perceive from the consolatory speech of Dione to her daughter,

Τέτλαθι, σέκνον εμὸν, καὶ ἀνάσχεο κηδομένη περ,
Πολλοὶ γὰρ δὴ σλῆμεν Ὀλύμπια δώματ' ἔχοντες (κ. τ. λ.)*

My child, how hard soe'er thy sufferings seem,
Endure them patiently, since many a wrong
From human hands profane the gods endure--

* * * * *

Mars once endured much wrong, when on a time,
Otus and Ephialtes bound him fast,
Sons of Alcæus, and full thirteen moons
In brazen thralldom held him.

* * * * *

Nor Juno less endured, when erst the bold
Son of Amphytrion with trident al shaft
Her bosom pierced; she then the mis'ry felt
Of irremediable pain severe.

Nor suffered Pluto less, of all the gods
Gigantic most, by the same son of Jove
Alcides, at the portals of the dead
Transfixed and filled with anguish, &c.

The following description of a battle between the subordinate deities, is from the same poet.

Τόσσοσ ἄρα κτύπος ὤρτο θεῶν ἔριδι ζυγιόντων, (κ. τ. λ.)†

With such a sound,
The powers eternal into battle rushed—
Opposed to Neptune, sovereign of the waves,

* Iliad, v. 382.

† Iliad, xx. 66.

Apollo stood with his winged arrows armed ;
 To Mars, Minerva ; to Jove's awful spouse
 Diana of the golden bow ; * * * *
 So gods encountered gods.

Such are the doctrines which are taught with reference to the Deity, not by Homer alone, but by Hesiod also. If then, you choose to rely upon the authority of these celebrated poets, who have given us the genealogy of the gods, you are reduced to the necessity of believing, either that the gods whom you worship are such as we have just seen them described, or that they are no gods at all.

But you will perhaps decline an appeal to the authority of the poets, on the ground of that license, which they are permitted to use, of embellishment and fabrication even respecting the Deity himself. If so, to whom will you refer me, as the teachers of your religion? And, whoever they are, by what means do you suppose them to have acquired the knowledge which you thus attribute to them? For I hold it to be impossible, that any man whatever should have an intimate acquaintance with a subject so vast and elevated, without previous instruction. You will, no doubt, mention your sages and philosophers, for, I am well aware that you always fly to them as to a place of refuge, when the absurdities of your poets are exposed. Beginning, then, with the most ancient of these wise men, I shall lay before you the opinions of each, and show them to be far more ridiculous than the Theology of the poets themselves.

Thales, of Miletus, who may be regarded as the father of Natural Philosophy, considered *water* as the principle of all things ; believing that from it they had at first proceeded, and into it would be finally dissolved. After him, Anaximander, also of Miletus, taught that the principle of all things is *infinity* ; that from it they arose at first, and

into it would be again annihilated. Anaximenes, a third Milesian, declared *air* to be the universal principle, in which all things had their origin and end. It was supposed by Heraclitus, of Metapontum, to be *fire*; by Anaxagoras, of Clazomene, *similitude of parts*; and by Archelaus, the Athenian, an *unlimited atmosphere*, with its attributes of density and rarity. All these, in regular succession from Thales, pursued the study of what they called Natural Philosophy.

Turning to another school, we find Pythagoras, of Samos, laying down as principles, *number*, and its proportions, the combinations of which it is susceptible, and the elements thus composed; together with *Unity* and undefined *Duality*. Epicurus, of Athens says, that the elements of all things are certain substances, perceptible only to the mind, incapable of a vacuum, uncreated, indestructible, indivisible, admitting neither change of form nor combination of parts. Empedocles of Agrigentum taught the existence of four elements, *Fire, Air, Earth, and Water*; and two active principles, *Affinity* and *Discord*, the one having a conjunctive, the other a disjunctive power.

From this view you may perceive the utter confusion of opinion among those whom you are accustomed to call *wise*. One declares the principle of all things to be *water*; another, *fire*; another, *air*; and another, something else. Each, too, uses all his powers of persuasion and eloquence, to establish the truth of his own false hypothesis, and to prove its superiority to every other. Now how can it be safe for those who desire salvation, to depend for religious instruction upon men, who could not so far persuade themselves as to avoid a total difference and even contrariety of opinion?

It may, however, be objected by those who are unwilling to abandon ancient errors, that religious instruction is to be derived, not from the sages whom I have mentioned, but from those most illustrious and virtuous of all philoso-

phers, Plato and Aristotle, who, they say, possessed a clear and perfect knowledge of the subject. I would gladly learn, in the first place, from whom that knowledge was derived, it being impossible, as I have already said, that, without instruction, they should understand the matter themselves, much more, that they should be able to teach it aright to others. In the next place, I shall examine the respective opinions of the philosophers cited, that we may see how far they are consistent; for a want of agreement, I conceive, will be a sufficient proof of the ignorance of both.

Plato, with the manner of one who had descended from heaven, and was accurately acquainted with celestial things, asserts, that the essence of the Deity is *fire*. Aristotle, in a compendious view of his philosophical opinions, contained in his discourse to Alexander of Macedon, openly and explicitly denies this assertion of Plato, saying, that the essence of God is not *Fire*, but a certain fifth substance, ethereal and immutable, which he creates for the occasion. His words are these: "The essence of God is not *fire*, as some foolish speculators on the divine nature have asserted." Then, as if not satisfied with this insulting reflection upon his master, he brings forward as a witness, to prove the existence of his *ethereal substance*, Homer, whom Plato had excluded from his republic as a liar, and, as he expressed it, an imitator of imaginary things.

The verse cited by Aristotle for the purpose is this :

Ζεὺς δ' ἔλαχ' ἕρανὸν εὐρὺν ἐν αἰθέρι καὶ νεφέλῃσι.*

The heavens,

The clouds, and boundless æther, fell to Jove.

He seems not to have been aware, however, that if the poet could thus be cited as a witness in his favour, his tes-

* *Iliad*, xv. 193.

timony might with equal propriety be employed to prove many of his doctrines false. For example, Thales, of Miletus, the first Natural Philosopher, might upon the same principle disprove Aristotle's notion respecting first elements. The latter regarded *God* and *matter* as the principles of all things; but Thales had, long before, assigned the same place to *water*, believing that from that substance all things had been originally generated, and into it would ultimately be dissolved. He founded this hypothesis on the fact, that the presence of water is essential to the generation and subsistence both of animals and plants.

But, as if not satisfied with these grounds of conjecture, he adduces the testimony of Homer:

Ὀκεανὸς, ὅσπερ γένεσσι πάντεσσι τέτυκται.*

Ocean, Sire of all.

Now, might not Thales very justly say to Aristotle: How is it, that when attempting to disprove some doctrine of Plato, you consider Homer as a competent witness, but when desirous of refuting my opinions, will not admit his testimony?

But that this is not the only point on which these admired philosophers are at variance, we may learn from the following facts. Plato asserts that the principles of all things, are three: GOD, MATTER, and FORM; *God*, being the creator; *matter*, the subject and the occasion of creation; and *form*, the model upon which every thing is made. Aristotle makes no mention of *form*, as a principle, but enumerates only two, *God* and *matter*.

Again, Plato asserts that the supreme Deity and the *forms* above-mentioned reside in the immoveable sphere of the highest heaven. Aristotle places next to the supreme Deity, not these *forms* but certain θεοὶ νοητοὶ, or *gods comprehensible by the understanding*.

* Iliad, xiv. 246.

Such is their discrepancy of opinion respecting celestial affairs. And, indeed, how can those who know so little of things on earth as to differ wholly respecting them, be worthy of our confidence when they tell us of things in heaven? That these philosophers so differed, is evident from their conflicting accounts of the human soul. Plato informs us that the soul consists of three distinct parts, *reason*, *passion*, and *appetite*. Aristotle asserts, that it is not so much extended as to embrace in it corruptible particles, but consists of *reason* alone. Plato vehemently declares, that every soul is immortal. Aristotle affirms it to be endowed with a natural tendency to perfection, but regards it as perishable. The one says that it is perpetually in motion; the other, that it is immoveable, being prior to all motion.

Thus far we have seen them at variance with each other. A little attention will show, that the writings of neither are consistent with themselves. Plato, at first, enumerates three universal principles: *God*, *Matter*, and *Form*; but afterwards makes them four, by the addition of what he calls a *universal soul*. He first declares matter to be uncreated, and afterward, to be created. He first asserts *Form* to be independent in its origin and existence; and afterwards, that it exists only in the conceptions of the mind. He first affirms, that whatever had a beginning may have an end; and afterwards, that some created things may possibly be indissoluble and incorruptible. Now to what cause can we ascribe the fact, that these men whom you regard as sages, differ so widely, not only from one another, but even from themselves? To nothing but their unwillingness to learn from those who really knew, and from their imagining that by the power of human intellect they could acquire a knowledge of celestial things—even when they knew nothing aright of things upon earth.

Some of your philosophers teach, that the soul is *in* the body ; others, that it is *about* it. For they are so far from being in unison upon this point, that they seem to have divided their ignorance into shares, and to have deliberately resolved on disagreement and dispute respecting the nature of the soul. By one we are told, that it is *fire* ; by another, *air* ; by another, *thought* ; by another, *motion* ; by another, *exhalation* ; by another, an *influence proceeding from the stars* ; by another, *number, endued with the power of motion* ; and by another, the *generative fluid*. Such is the dissonance and confusion of opinion which prevails among them, none of them deserving any applause, unless it be for the successful efforts of each to convict the rest of ignorance and falsehood.

Since then, there is no genuine knowledge of religion to be derived from the writings of your teachers, their disagreement furnishing a demonstration of their ignorance, let us now turn to *our* progenitors—to men, who in point of time, were far before the Greek philosophers ; who taught nothing from the suggestion of their own imaginations ; who neither disagreed nor endeavoured to refute each other's doctrines ; but in perfect consistence with themselves and harmony with one another, derived their information immediately from God and imparted it to us. For, a knowledge of things so elevated and divine must be revealed to us, not by the efforts of unassisted human reason, but by a supernatural gift descending from heaven upon holy men. To such men, there can be no need of rhetorical art, or of a talent for argumentative and controversial address. They have only to yield themselves free from impurity to the energies of the spirit of God, that the divine impulse of which I have spoken may act upon them as upon the strings of a lyre or harp, and through them instruct us in divine and heavenly things. It is thus, that we have been taught as with one mouth and a single

tongue, though by men who lived in times and places widely different, respecting the creation of the world, the origin of our race, the immortality of the soul, and the judgment after death; in short, respecting every thing, the knowledge of which is essential to our happiness.

I shall begin with Moses our first lawgiver and prophet, and demonstrate his antiquity from evidence, which even you cannot call in question. For, I shall not rely wholly upon our own sacred histories, which your attachment to the error of your fathers will prevent your believing, but upon records of your own, entirely unconnected with our religion. From their testimony you will be convinced, that all your sages, poets, historians, philosophers, and lawgivers, were long posterior to the first teacher of our faith. By them Moses is mentioned as having been a lawgiver in the days of Ogyges and Inachus, who are supposed by some of you to have sprung from the ground. This statement is made by Polemon, in the first book of his History of Greece; and Appion, in his work upon the Jews, and again in the fourth book of his History, relates that during the reign of Inachus, at Argos, the Jews, under the command of Moses, rebelled against Amasis, king of Egypt: which statement is confirmed in all points by Ptolemy Mendesius, in his history of that country.

Moses is also mentioned, as an ancient and primeval leader of the Jews, by the Athenian historians, Hellanicus, Philochorus, Castor, Thallus, and Alexander Polyhistor; as well as by those able Jewish annalists, Josephus and Philo; the former of whom entitles his work, “The *Antiquities* of the Jews,” intending to express by that name the ancient date of the events which it records.

Diodorus, also, your most eminent historian, who wrote his forty books, as he informs us, after having abridged whole libraries, traversed Europe and Asia for thirty years, and surveyed in person, many of the things

which he describes—states it as a fact which he had learned from the Egyptian Priests, that Moses was the most ancient of all lawgivers. The following are his words: “After the state of things which is fabled to have existed in Egypt under the gods and heroes, the first who persuaded the multitude to submit to written laws was Moses, a man still remembered on account of his greatness of spirit and excellence of life.” And again, a little afterwards, when enumerating the most ancient lawgivers, he begins with Moses, saying that “he was called a god by the Jews, either on account of the benefits which it was supposed the people would derive from his wonderful and even god-like genius, or because it was believed, that a reverence for the dignity and power of the lawgiver would induce the multitude to respect the laws themselves. The second Egyptian legislator, it is said, was Sauchnis, a man of eminent wisdom. The third was Sesonchosis, who is celebrated, not only for having performed more signal military exploits than any other Egyptian, but for the greater achievement of subjecting a warlike people to the government of laws. The fourth recorded is Bochoris, who was remarkable both for wisdom and ingenuity. The next, who is said to have given his attention to the subject of government, is Amasis, who created the office of Nomarch and established the whole municipal system of Egypt. The sixth, who is recorded as a lawgiver to the Egyptians is Darius, the father of Xerxes.”

Such is the testimony of men wholly unconnected with our religion, respecting the antiquity of Moses; the facts having been derived as they themselves inform us, from the priests of Egypt, where Moses was not only born, but educated in all the learning of the country, being thought worthy of that distinction on account of his adoption as the son of the king's daughter. The Jewish historians, Philo and Josephus, in treating of his actions and the dig-

nity of his birth, inform us, that he was of Chaldean extraction, his forefathers having been compelled by a famine to emigrate from Phœnicia into Egypt. There he was born ; and an account of his eminent virtues thought worthy by God of being appointed the commander and lawgiver of his peculiar people, when he should think proper to conduct them from Egypt into their own country. To him the divine gift of prophecy was first imparted ; and he was designated by God to be the first teacher of the true religion. In this office he was succeeded by the other prophets, who received the same gifts and gave the same instructions. These are the men whom we acknowledge as the teachers of our religion ; teaching, not of human wisdom, but by the immediate gift of God. But as for you, since your attachment to hereditary error forbids your depending upon these, to whom will you turn as the teachers of your faith ? From what has been said, it is sufficiently clear that the writings of your philosophers contain nothing but ignorance and deception. You will, therefore, I suppose, relinquish them, as you before relinquished the poets, and betake yourselves to the delusion of oracles. I have indeed heard as much from some of you. Let me then, remind you of some facts which I have learned from yourselves upon this point.

An oracle,* being questioned by an individual—it is your own tradition—what men had ever been truly pious, returned this answer,

Μουνοῖ Χαλδαῖοι σοφίην λάχον, ἡδ' ἄρ' Εβραῖοι,
 Αυτογένητον ἄνακτα σεβάζόμενοι Θεὸν ἄγνωσ·

“Wisdom has been attained only by the Chaldees and Hebrews,
 Who worship in purity God the self-existent King.”

* The Clarian Oracle, which commended its responses a century before the Trojan War.

Now, believing as you profess to do, that a knowledge of the truth may be derived from oracles; and knowing from the testimony of historians who did not believe in our religion, that Moses (as well as the other prophets) was both a *Chaldee* and a *Hebrew* by descent—you cannot think it strange, that, being sprung from a race emphatically pious, and living worthily of his hereditary belief, he was favoured by God with this extraordinary gift, and selected to be the first of all the prophets.

I think it necessary, also, to inquire, in this place, at what time your philosophers lived, that you may be sensible of their modern date, and perceive at once the comparative antiquity of Moses. As I would not, however, in treating of those times, be guilty of wasting my own by adducing a superfluity of evidence, I shall content myself, with the few facts which follow. Socrates was the teacher of Plato, and Plato of Aristotle. These flourished in the age of Philip and Alexander of Macedon, and were contemporary with the Athenian Orators, as we learn from the *Philippics* of Demosthenes; and that Aristotle resided with Alexander after his accession to the throne, is asserted by all the historians of his reign. It is evident, then, on all sides, that the most ancient of all histories are the books of Moses. Nor ought the fact to be overlooked, that, before the first Olympiad, there was no Grecian history in existence, and, indeed, no ancient writing whatever giving an account of either the Greeks or Barbarians. The only history extant, was that which Moses wrote by divine inspiration, in Hebrew characters. For those of the Greeks were not yet invented; your own grammarians informing us, that Cadmus first brought them from Phœnicia and introduced them into Greece. Plato, indeed, your greatest philosopher, asserts, that their invention was still more recent. He states in his *Timæus*, that Solon, the wisest of the wise men, on his return from Egypt, repeated to Cri-

tias the following words as having been spoken to him by an Egyptian Priest, and that not a very old man—"O Solon, Solon, you Greeks are always children. A Greek never grows old;"—and again, "You are all children in understanding; for you are possessed of no ancient traditional knowledge, nor any learning that is hoary with age. Of this you are destitute, because all the generations before you have perished without the knowledge of letters." It is evident then, that all the Grecian histories were written in a character of modern invention; and if any one will refer to the ancient lawgivers, poets, and philosophers, he will find them all to have employed the same. It may however be objected by some, that perhaps Moses and the other prophets made use of these characters also. Let such consider the following facts, as they are proved by the testimony of profane historians.

Ptolemy, king of Egypt, having founded a library in Alexandria, and collected books for it from every quarter, was informed, that there were certain ancient histories which had been carefully preserved in the Hebrew language. Being curious to know the subject of these books, he sent for seventy learned men from Jerusalem, well acquainted with both the Greek and Hebrew tongues, and employed them in translating them. In order that they might be able, by freedom from interruption, to perform their task more speedily, he caused to be erected, about seven stadia from the city, at the place where the Pharos was built, as many small houses or cells as there were translators, so that each might labour by himself. The persons, who were appointed to attend them, were commanded to supply all their wants; but at the same time to prohibit all intercourse, that the accuracy of the versions might be known from the degree of coincidence between them. When, therefore, he learned, that the seventy men had not only agreed entirely in sense, but had used precisely the

same language, not differing in so much as a word, he was struck with astonishment, and believed the translation to be effected by the power of God. Thinking its authors worthy of all honour as men enjoying the favour of the Deity, he loaded them with gifts and dismissed them to their own country, while the books were consecrated and carefully preserved. You are not to regard this statement as a fiction. I myself, when in Alexandria, saw the remains of the seventy cells in the Pharos, and learned from the inhabitants, who had received it from their fathers, all that I have now related. The same facts are recorded by those able and respectable historians, Philo and Josephus, as well as by many others.

It may however be objected by some disputatious spirit, that these books belong, not to us, but to the Jews, since they have been preserved in their synagogues; and that we cannot justly lay claim to them as the oracles of our religion. Let such learn, from the contents of the books themselves, that the doctrine which they teach, is the doctrine of the Christians, and not of the Jews. And as to the fact, that the books of our religion have been preserved among the Jews, it is to be regarded as a dispensation of Providence in our favour. Had they been at first brought forth from our churches, a plausible pretext would have been furnished to our enemies for accusing us of fraud. But now, proceeding as they do, from the Jewish synagogues, where they have from the first been preserved, the application of what is there written by inspired men to us and our doctrines, is more palpable and striking.

Looking forward, now, into futurity, and contemplating the certainty of a final judgment, which has been taught both by our holy men, and by profane philosophers, you ought not surely without investigation to adhere to the error of your fathers, and to receive all that they have ignorantly handed down to you, as truth. On the contrary,

considering the danger of your being finally disappointed in your hopes, you should diligently examine what may be learned even from those whom you acknowledge as teachers, who have been compelled against their will, by a providential influence, to bear testimony upon many points in our favour. This is especially true of those who visited Egypt, and experienced the benefits to be derived from the religion of Moses and his ancestors. For it can scarcely have escaped such of you as have read the histories of Diodorus and others, that Orpheus, and Homer, and Solon the Athenian lawgiver, and Pythagoras, and Plato, and several others who visited Egypt and derived instruction from the books of Moses, afterwards retracted their former false opinions respecting the gods. As to Orpheus, who may be called the first teacher of polytheism among you, it may be proper to add what he afterwards addressed to Musæus and his other children :

Φθέγξομαι οἷς θέμις ἐστί, θύρας δ' ἐπίθεσθε βέβηλοι
 Πάντες ἡμῶς· σὺ δ' ἄκουε φασσφόρου ἔκγονε μήνης,
 Μουσαί' ἐξερέω γὰρ ἀληθεῖα· μηδέ σε τὰ πρὶν
 Ἐν στήθεσσι φανέντα φίλης αἰῶνος ἀμέρῃ.
 Εἰς τε λόγον θεῖον βλέψας τέτῳ προσέδρευε
 Ἰθύων κραδίης νοερὸν κύτος· εὗτ' ἐπίβαντε
 Ἀτραπιτοῦ, μοῦνον δ' ἐσόρα κόσμοιο ἄνακτα.
 Εἰς ἔστ' αὐτογενῆς, ἐνὸς ἔκγονα πάντα τέτυκται,
 Ἐν δ' αὐτοῖς αὐτὸς περιγίγνεται· ἐδέ τις αὐτὸν
 Εἰσορᾷ θνητῶν, αὐτὸς δέ γε πάντας ὀρᾷται
 Οὗτος δ' ἔξ ἀγαθοῦ κακὸν θνητοῖσι δίδωσι
 Καὶ πόλεμον κρυόνετα, καὶ ἄλγεα δακρυόνετα.
 Οὐδέ τις ἔσθ' ἕτερος χωρὶς μεγάλου βασιλῆος.
 Λύττον δ' οὐχ ὀρώ· περὶ γὰρ νέφος ἐστήρικται.
 Πᾶσιν γὰρ θνητοῖς θνηταὶ κόραι εἰσὶν ἐν ὕσσαις,
 Ἀσθενέες δ' ἰδέειν Δία τὸν πάντων μεδέοντα.
 Οὗτος γὰρ χάλκειον ἐς οὐρανὸν ἐστήρικται

Χρυσέω εἰνὶ θρόνῳ, γαίης δ' ἐπὶ ποσσὶ βέβηκε,
 Χεῖρά τε δεξιτερὴν ἐπὶ τέρματος ὤκκεανοῖο
 Πάντοθεν ἐκτέτακεν· περὶ γὰρ τρέμει οὔρεα μακρὰ,
 Καὶ ποταμοὶ, πολιῆς τε βάθος χαροποῖο θαλάσσης.

“I will speak to those to whom it is allowed. Let the uninitiated be excluded: Listen thou, Musæus, child of the shining moon, while I utter the truth, nor let that which has before been infused into thy breast, deprive thee of thy precious life. Behold the divine Word, and give thyself wholly to it, ordering aright the intelligent receptacle of thy heart. Come up hither, and contemplate the sole King of the universe. He is one. He is self-existent. He alone created all things, and all things are pervaded by him. To mortals he is invisible, though he himself sees all things. Though good himself, he gives evils to his creatures, bloody wars, and lamentable sorrows, and besides him there is no supreme king. I cannot behold him; for clouds are round about him, and the mortal pupils of mortal eyes are unable to look upon the ruler of the universe. He is established above the brazen heavens. He sits upon a golden throne and treads with his feet upon the earth, and stretches out his right hand to all the ends of the ocean. Then the lofty mountains tremble, the rivers, and the depths of the hoary sea.”

and again, in another place he says—

Εἷς Ζεὺς, εἷς Αἰδῆς, εἷς Ἥλιος, εἷς Διόνυσος,
 Εἷς Θεὸς ἐν πάντεσσι· τί σοι δίχα ταῦτ' ἀγορεύω ;

“Jupiter is one, Pluto one, Sol one, Bacchus one, one God in all. Why do I tell you this again?”

again—

Οὐρανὸν ὀρκίζω σε Θεοῦ μεγάλου σοφοῦ ἔργον,
 Αἰδοῖν ὀρκίζω σε πατρὸς, τὴν φθγγέζατο πρῶτον,
 Ἦνικα κόσμον ἅπαντα ἐαῖς στηρίζατο βουλαῖς.

“I swear by thee, O heaven, the work of the wise and mighty God! I swear by thee, word of the Father, which he uttered at first, when he established the Universe in his counsels.”

Now what is his meaning in the expression

Αὐδὴν ὀρκίζω, &c. ?

He no doubt uses the word αὐδὴ to express the Λόγος or Word of God by whose agency, as we learn from our own sacred prophecies, the creation was accomplished. Those prophecies he also perused when in Egypt, and learning from them this truth, that the universe was created by the Word of God, he says,

Αὐδὴν ὀρκίζω σε πατὴρ, τὴν φθέγγετο πρῶτον,

and immediately adds,

Ἦνικα κόσμον ἅπαντα ἑαῖς στηρίζετο βελαῖς.

That he uses αὐδὴ instead of λόγος merely on account of the measure of his verse, is evident from the fact, that a little before, where the metre permits, he uses the proper term,

Εἰς δὲ λόγον θεῖον βλέψας τέτω προσέειπε.

It will here be proper to inquire, what was taught respecting the one only God, by the ancient Sibyl, who is mentioned as a prophetess by Plato, Aristophanes, and many others.

Εἷς δὲ Θεὸς μόνος ἐστὶν ὑπερμεγέθης, ἀγέννητος,
Παντοκράτωρ, ἀόρατος, ὁρῶμενος αὐτὸς ἅπαντα,
Αὐτὸς δ' ἐβλέπεται θνητῆς ὑπὸ σαρκὸς ἀπάσης.

“There is one, only God, supreme and self-existent; almighty, invisible, himself beholding all things, but not perceptible to mortal flesh.”

and again,

Ἦμεῖς δ' ἀθανάτοιο τρίβες πεπλανημένοι ἦμεν
Ἔργα δὲ χειροποίητα γεραίρομεν ἄφρονι μύθῳ
Εἶδωλα ξοάνων τε καταφθιμένων τ' ἀνθρώπων.

“We have wandered from the path of immortality, and madly worshipped the graven images of mortal men.”

and again,

Ὀλβιοὶ ἄνθρωποι κῆνοι κατὰ γαῖαν ἔσονται,
 Ὅσσοι δὴ στέγξουσι μέγαν Θεὸν εὐλογέουτες,
 Πρὶν φάγειν πίειντε πεπειθότες εὐσεβήσιν.
 Οἱ νηοὺς μὲν ἀπαντας ἀπαρνήσονται ἰδόντες,
 Καὶ βωμοὺς, εἰκάϊα λίθων ἀφιδρύματα κωφῶν,
 Αἶμασιν ἐμψύχων μεμιασμένα καὶ θυσίαισι
 Τετραπόδων, βλέψουσι δ' ἐνὸς Θεοῦ ἐς μέγα κῦδος.

“Happy shall those men be upon the earth, who shall delight in praising God, and performing the duties of religion, more than in eating and drinking; who shall look down with contempt upon temples and altars, and the worthless shrines of senseless deities, stained with the bloody sacrifice of living things—and shall have regard only to the supreme glory of the One God.”

So far the Sibyl. Homer, abusing his license as a poet, and copying the early errors of Orpheus respecting polytheism, sings of a plurality of gods—and this merely in imitation of the older poet, his admiration for whom may be learned from the first verse of the Iliad. Orpheus begins his poem in these words,

Μῆνιν ἄειδε Θεὰ Διμήτερος ἀγλαοκάρπου—

Homer in these,

Μῆνιν ἄειδε Θεὰ Πηληϊάδεω Ἀχιλῆος.

In this case, the latter seems to have preferred a gross violation of the rules of metre* in the very beginning of his poem, to the imputation of having first introduced the gods by name. He afterwards, however, very clearly reveals his own opinion respecting the existence of one only God; as where he introduces Phœnix saying to Achilles,

* Didymus observed and recorded three errors in prosody in the first verse of the Iliad; and the circumstance is also mentioned by Plutarch. (Tr.)

—Οὐδ' εἰ κέν μοι ὑποσταίῃ ΘΕΟΣ ΑΥΤΟΣ,
Γῆρας ἀποξύσας, θήσῃεν νέον ἠβώντα.*

No, not if Jove himself}

Would promise, reaping smooth this silver beard,
To make me downy-cheeked as in my youth,—

where, by the use of the pronoun αὐτός, he seems to design a reference to the really existing God. And again, where he represents Ulysses saying to the Grecian multitude,

Οὐκ ἀγαθὸν πολυκοιρανίῃ· εἰς κοίρανος ἔστω.†

Plurality of Kings

Were evil. One suffices.

In which passage his design is to show the evil of such a plurality from the wars, dissensions and mutual conspiracies, which it must necessarily occasion, and the tranquillity which, on the other hand, characterizes a monarchy.

Such are the doctrines of the poet Homer. If the testimony of the drama is also required, let us listen to the words of Sophocles :

Εἷς ταῖς ἀληθείαισιν, εἷς ἔστιν Θεός,
"Ὅς ἔρανὸν τέτευχε, καὶ γαίαν μακρὰν,
Πόντου τε χαροπὸν οἶδμα κἀνέμων βίας.
Θνητοὶ δὲ πολλοὶ καρδίᾳ πλανώμενοι,
Ἰδρυσάμεσθα πημάτων παρὰ ψυχὴν,
Θεῶν ἀγάλματ' ἐκ λίθων τε καὶ ξύλων,
Ἡ χρυσοτεύκτων ἢ ἐλεφαντίνων τύπους
Θυσίας τε τούτοις καὶ καλὰς πανηγύρεις
Τεύχοντες, ἔτως εὖσεβεῖν νομίζομεν·

"There is in truth but one, one only God,
Who built the skies and framed the mighty globe.
Spread ocean's wide expanse, and formed the winds ;
But superstitious man, in madness rears,
Of wood, or stone, or ivory, or gold,
Emblems of other gods ; upon their shrines
Offers his prayers and gifts—and calls it worship."

* Iliad ix. 445.

† Iliad ii. 204.

Pythagoras, who taught the principles of his philosophy by means of mystic symbols, seems also to have imbibed correct ideas of the Deity, when in Egypt. For by saying that the principle of all things is *μόνας* or unity, and describing it as the cause of every thing good, he appears to teach allegorically the truth that God is ONE and ALONE. This would seem to be his meaning from his afterwards asserting that there is a wide difference between *μόνας* and "Ev, the former, as he says, pertaining to things comprehensible by the understanding, the latter simply to numbers. If you wish to know more clearly the doctrine of this philosopher, respecting the Deity, you may gather it from his own words.

"God is One. He is not, as some suppose, without the limits of creation, but, being complete in himself, is present throughout the circle of the universe, surveying all his works. He unites in himself all periods of time, and is the author of all his own powers and actions. He is the universal principle. He is unity. He is the light of heaven, the father of all things, the mind and soul of the universe, the moving power of all spheres."*

It is probable that Plato also became acquainted, while in Egypt, with the doctrine of Moses and the other prophets, respecting the unity of God. The fate of Socrates, however, gave him reason to dread that some Anytus or Melitus might arise and accuse him to the people, as a curious speculator who denied the gods acknowledged by the state. Through fear of the hemlock, therefore, he deals out his doctrine on this subject in a disguised and fantastic form,

* 'Ο μὲν Θεὸς εἷς· αὐτὸς δὲ, οὐχ, ὡς τινες ὑπονοῦσιν, ἐκτὸς τᾶς διακοσμῆσιος, ἀλλ' ἐν ἑαυτῷ ὅλος ἐν ὅλῳ τῷ κύκλῳ ἐπισκοπῶν πάσας τὰς γενέσιος ἐστι, κρᾶσις ἐὼν τῶν ὅλων αἰώνων καὶ ἐργάτας τῶν αὐτῶν δυναμίῶν καὶ ἔργων, ἀρχὴ πάντων, ἐν, ἐν οὐρανῷ φωστῆρ, καὶ πάντων πατῆρ, νοῦς καὶ ψύχωσις τῶν ὅλων, κύκλων ἀπάντων κίνασις.

saying that there are gods to those who believe there are gods, and none to those who think there are none. He at first states, that whatever is created is mortal; but afterwards asserts, that the gods are created. Now since he considered *God* and *matter* as the principles of all things, he must, of course, have believed the gods to be material. But what may be the character of deities, proceeding from matter, which he regarded as also the source of evil, he leaves to the determination of the wise. His object in representing matter as uncreated seems to have been this, that he might avoid making God the author of evil. Respecting the inferior gods created by the supreme Deity, he speaks thus in the person of the latter—“Θεοὶ Θεῶν—the gods of gods, whose creator I am.” It is evident, however, that he had a correct notion of the true God. He had learned in Egypt that when God was about to send Moses to the Hebrews, he said to him Ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ὢν. Now he justly concluded that God did not reveal this as an ordinary proper name; for it is impossible that any such name should be applied to the Deity. Names are used for the purpose of indicating and distinguishing the many and various objects to which they are applied. Now there was no pre-existent being by whom such a title could be imposed upon God, and he saw no reason to assume one himself, because being one and alone it could not be necessary for the purpose of distinction. This doctrine of his unity he teaches us himself by the mouth of his prophet. “*I am the first, and I am the last; and beside me there is no God.*”* As I said before, therefore, he did not reveal, when about to send Moses to the Hebrews, any personal name or title belonging to himself, but by means of the participle employed, mystically taught that he was the one only God, Ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ὢν, thus placing himself as the existing God, in opposition to those who had no existence, that he might teach those who had been deluded into idolatry that the objects

* Isaiah xliv. 6.

of their worship had been not real but imaginary gods. God well knew that mankind would preserve the recollection of the deceit practised upon their progenitors by the enemy of their race, when he said, "If you will obey *me*, and transgress the commandments of God, *ye shall be as gods.*" This the fiend said, for the purpose of leading men to believe, that there were other gods besides the supreme Deity, and that they themselves might possibly become such. It was on this account, that the Lord announced himself to Moses as 'Ο ὄν, that the very terms employed might express the difference between the God who really is, and the false gods who have no existence. Now when man had yielded to the persuasions of the demon and violated the precepts of his Maker, and in consequence had been expelled from Paradise, he carried with him the recollection of those *gods* of whom he had heard, not having yet been taught the impossibility of a plurality of gods. For it was not just, that they who had broken the first command imposed upon them and one so easily observed, should in return receive an increase of knowledge; but rather, that they should suffer condign punishment. When therefore they were expelled from Paradise, they imagined that they were punished merely for the violation of the precept, and not also for believing in the existence of gods who had really no being. Under this delusion, they transmitted to their children the names of these unreal deities. This false imagination, therefore, respecting a plurality of gods had its origin with the father of lies. Now God knowing that this absurd belief adhered like a disease to the soul of man, and wishing to eradicate it, when he first appeared to Moses, said, Ἐγώ εἰμι ὁ ὄν. And it seems to me to have been highly proper that he, who was to be the leader and lawgiver of the Hebrews, should be the first to know God as the truly existing Deity. To him, therefore, revealing himself, so far as it was possible to

mortal sight, he said, Ἐγὼ εἶμι ὁ ἄν; and on giving him his commission to the Hebrews, he commands him to say, “Ὁ ὦν sent me unto you.”

Now all this Plato had learned in Egypt, and was no doubt captivated with the doctrine of the unity of God. But from a dread of the Areopagus, he did not think it safe to mention Moses, as the teacher of the doctrine, among the Athenians. The doctrine itself, however, he well explains in his elaborate work *Timæus* (which is the first of his theological writings), not as derived from any other source, but as a conception of his own. He uses indeed the very same expression as Moses: “For I think,” says he, “that we ought first to inquire what that is which always exists (τὸ ὄν ἀεί), but was never created, and also what that is, which is created, but never exists.” Now are not these expressions precisely the same, excepting in the gender of the article? Moses says Ὁ ἄν—Plato, τὸ ὄν. Both are evidently applied to the eternal God. For there is none but he that always exists and is yet uncreated. And if we inquire what it is which is put by Plato in opposition to that which always exists, as being created yet non-existent, we shall find him plainly asserting that this uncreated being is eternal, while the created gods whom he had mentioned before are finite and perishable. “The former,” says he, “may be conceived by the understanding as consistent with reason, the latter are conceivable only by the imagination with a perception of their absurdity, as things which had a beginning and were created, yet have never existed.” By these words the philosopher must certainly be considered as annihilating or denying the existence of these created deities. It is necessary also to remark this circumstance, that Plato speaks of the supreme Deity not as the ποιητής but the δημιουργός of these gods. Now there is a considerable difference between the import of these terms. The former signifies one, who, without depend-

ance upon any other being, of his own power and authority, makes what he does make—the latter, one who derives his power of creation from the matter upon which he acts.*

Some, however, who still adhere to the principles of polytheism, will cite, in opposition to what has been said, the following address of Plato's Θεὸς Δημιουργός to the gods created by him. "Since you are creatures, you are not absolutely immortal or imperishable. But you shall not die nor be annihilated, being secure from both by a stronger bond, [than the necessity of your nature]—my will." Here, it must be confessed that Plato's dread of his countrymen has led him to subject his supreme God to the charge of inconsistency. He had before introduced him as asserting, that whatever had a beginning may have an end; and now he makes him assert the contrary, not seeming to be aware, that by so doing he would infallibly expose himself to the charge of falsehood. Either his first or his last statement must be untrue. For if that which is created, is from the necessity of its nature perishable, according to his first position; how can that which is of necessity impossible in any way become possible, as he afterwards asserts? It is in vain therefore that Plato would magnify the Deity by ascribing to him an impossible power—that of rendering immortal and imperishable, beings, which, according to his own doctrine, are mortal and perishable, because material and created. Matter, according to Plato's doctrine, being uncreated, and also contemporary and coeval with the creating power, it is possible, that it may resist his will. For even a creator can exercise no authority over that which he did not create. It is not, therefore, capable of being acted upon by violence, being free from all extrinsic necessity. With reference to this

* In other words, the one creates out of nothing, the other out of matter already in existence.—(Tr.)

principle, Plato himself says, "God cannot be acted upon by violence."

Now how is it, that Plato excludes Homer from his republic because the latter represents Phœnix as saying,

Στρεπτοὶ δὲ τε καὶ Θεοὶ αὐτοί,*

The Gods themselves are flexible,

when it is evident that the poet is speaking, not of the King, or (as Plato calls him) the creator of the gods, but of the inferior deities whom the Greeks regarded as very numerous, as we may learn from the expression Θεοὶ Θεῶν, which is applied to them. To the one, supreme God, Homer ascribes authority and power over all things in his story of the golden chain;† and he seems to have regarded him as so far removed above the other deities, that he sometimes speaks of the latter in conjunction with men; as in the speech of Ulysses to Achilles, in allusion to Hector,

Μαίνεται ἐκπάγλως πίσυνος Διὶ, ἔδέ τι τίει
Ἄνερας ἔδὲ Θεοῦς.‡

Hector glares revenge, with rage
Infuriate, and by Jove assisted, heeds
Nor *God* nor man.

Here Homer seems to me to express the ideas of the true God, which he, like Plato, had imbibed in Egypt. His meaning seems to be, that Hector, confiding in the really existing God, disregarded those which had no existence. In another passage already quoted, by the use of a different but equivalent expression, substituting a pronoun for Plato's participle, he calls Θεὸς αὐτός, what Plato calls τὸ ὄν. For I think that this expression of Phœnix has an emphatical import, the pronoun being intended to

* Iliad, i. 493.

† Iliad, ix. 294.

‡ Iliad, ix. 238.

show that the reference is to the really existing God. The same language is used with the same view, in the response of the oracle mentioned before.

Μοῦνοι Χαλδαῖοι σοφίην λάχον ἢδ' ἄρ' Εβραῖοι
 Αὐτογένητον ἀνακτα σεβαζόμενοι Θεὸν αὐτὸν.*

Again, how can Plato censure Homer for asserting, that the gods are flexible, when he evidently uses the term in a good sense [i. e. speaks of it as a useful attribute]? We know that those who are desirous of propitiating the Deity by prayers and oblations, think it necessary to relinquish and repent of sin. Now they who consider the Deity as in this sense inflexible, can have no motive for abandoning their sins, since they must look upon repentance as wholly ineffectual.

But, above all, how can the philosopher censure the poet for saying that the gods are changeable, when he himself has made even the maker of those gods so changeable as to call the inferior deities at one time mortal and at another immortal; and not only this, but to assert that the matter, of which they must of necessity be formed, is both created and uncreated. He seems to have been wholly unconscious, that of the very fault which he charges upon Homer, he is equally guilty, nay more so; for Homer, so far from ascribing mutability to the supreme Deity, directly asserts the contrary.

ἔ γὰρ ἐμὸν παλινάγρετον, εἰδ' ἀπατηλὸν,
 Οὐδ' ἀτελεύτητόν γ', ὃ τι κεν κεφαλῇ κατατεύσω.*

Nought, by my nod confirmed,
 May, after, be reversed or rendered vain.

* Ἀγνώσ is the last word in the former quotation; and according to Sylburgius the same reading is given by Eusebius—*Demonstr. Evang.*—(Tr.)

† Iliad, i. 526.

Plato, however, seems to have been guilty of these absurdities, entirely through fear of his idolatrous countrymen. He seems to have thought it necessary to communicate what he learned respecting the true God from Moses and the prophets, as an original conception of his own. He had been struck with admiration at the mystical name ὁ ὢν, and after profound reflection on this concise description, he concluded that the Deity by means of it intended to express his own eternity—the single syllable ὢν including not merely one period of time, but three, the past, the present, and the future. That Plato understood this participle in this extended sense (as to time) is evident from his own expression, ὃν δὲ οὐδέποτε. For οὐδέποτε is not used with reference to the past, as some suppose, but to the future, a fact clearly ascertained from the usage of profane writers. Now Plato, wishing to explain this mystical expression of God's eternity to those who were unacquainted with it, uses these words—“God, as the ancient saying is, (ὡσπερ καὶ ὁ παλαιὸς λόγος) includes in himself, the beginning, and the end, and the midst of all things.” By παλαιὸς λόγος he evidently means the law of Moses, his dread of the hemlock inducing him to suppress the name of a man, whose doctrines were so odious to the Greeks. The epithet *ancient*, however, is sufficient to show to what he refers. For that the most ancient *law* was that of Moses, has already been shown from the testimony of Diodorus and others; the former, declaring that Moses was a lawgiver at a time when the characters were not yet invented, in which the books of the Greeks are written. And let no one think it improbable, that the truths thus mystically taught by Plato respecting the eternity of God were derived from the books of Moses. For you will find that he elsewhere covertly ascribes to the prophets, under God, the only knowledge of certain principles, he says, “I lay down the principle of fire and of certain other bodies, in

such a manner as I can ; but the real principles of those substances are known only to God and to his friends." To whom does he here apply the name of *friends of God*, if not to Moses and the prophets ?

From the books of Moses and the prophets he also gathered some idea of the judgment, which he thus retails in the first book of his Republic. "When a man believes the end of life to be approaching, there arises in his mind a dread and solicitude to which he was before a stranger. The stories which he has heard and laughed at, respecting hell, and punishment there inflicted on the wicked, now torment his soul with an apprehension that they may possibly be true. And he gives the more attention to these subjects at such a time, both on account of the natural infirmity of age and his near approach to a future state. Being filled, therefore, with fear and forebodings, he begins to reason and to inquire whether he has committed any sin. If he perceives in his past life a great number of offences, he awakes like a child from a dream, and spends in despondency the remainder of his days ;—while on the other hand, if he is conscious of no iniquity, a delightful hope is constantly present with him, the sweet solace of old age, as Pindar expresses it, when he says—' He whose life is spent in acts of piety and justice, shall have for his companion cherishing and animating hope, the solace of old age, by which the varying minds of men are principally governed.' "

This extract is from the first book of his Republic. In the tenth, he clearly and distinctly repeats what he had gathered from the prophets on the subject of the Judgment, not acknowledging them as the source of his information; but professing to have heard what he relates from a man who had been killed in battle, and when about to be buried on the twelfth day after his death, revived upon the funeral pile, and described what he had seen in his

absence from the body. “He said that he had been present there when one person was asked by another, where Aridæus the great was to be found. This Aridæus had reigned in a city of Pamphylia, had murdered his aged father and his elder brother, and had committed, as it was said, many other enormous crimes. The person questioned respecting him replied—‘He is not here—nor is he likely to come here. For among other dreadful spectacles which we witnessed when we came to the mouth of the pit, in order to reascend after having suffered our appointed punishment, we beheld him and others with him, principally kings; though there were also some private men, who were eminent for wickedness. Upon these wretches offering to ascend, the mouth of the pit would not suffer them to pass; but constantly gave a hideous bellowing when any attempted to come up, whose crimes were wholly inexpiable, or whose punishment was not yet complete. We also saw, standing by, certain wild-looking men of fiery aspect, who no sooner heard the bellowing, than they seized upon Aridæus and his companions, and after binding them hand and foot, threw them down, flayed them, and dragged them over thorns. They, at the same time, informed the spectators for what crimes these torments were inflicted, and told them, that the victims were now to be taken and thrown into Tartarus. There, he said, among a multitude of horrors, the greatest was the bellowing of the pit when an attempt was made to reascend, while it was the greatest joy to any one to be allowed to escape in silence. Such he described as the punishments of the place, and the rewards of the pious as directly opposite.”

In this passage, Plato appears to me to have copied from the books of the Prophets, not only the doctrine of a final judgment, but also that of the resurrection, in which the Greeks did not believe. For by describing the soul as enduring punishment in conjunction with the body, his ob-

ject seems to be to intimate his belief in the future resurrection of the latter. That he does describe such a conjunction is very evident. For otherwise, how could Aridæus and his companions suffer the torments related above, when they had left their heads, and hands, and feet, and skin behind them, on the earth? It will scarcely be said, that the soul is furnished with such appendages. The truth is, Plato merely teaches what the Prophets had before taught him, that there will be a resurrection of the body, and that the body and the soul will appear together in the day of judgment. He is not alone, as a teacher of this doctrine. Homer also, who had acquired the same knowledge when in Egypt, represents Tityus as undergoing a similar punishment. The words are in the description given by Ulysses to Alcinous, of his communion with the ghosts.

Καὶ Τιτυὸν εἶδον γαίης ἐρικυδέος υἱὸν,
 Κείμενον ἐν δαπέδῳ, ὃ δ' ἐπ' ἐννέα κεῖτο πέλεθρα
 Ἴϋπε δέ μιν ἐκάτερθε παρημένῳ ἦπαρ ἔκειρον.*

There also Tityus on the ground I saw
 Extended, offspring of the glorious earth ;
 Nine acres he o'erspread, and, at his side
 Stationed, two vultures on his liver preyed.

The poet surely cannot intend to represent the soul in its separate state as having a *liver*. In the same way he speaks of Sisyphus and Tantalus as suffering bodily torments. As to the fact, that many things which Homer has inserted in his poems, were picked up in Egypt, we have the testimony of Diodorus your most respectable historian. He states, for example, it was in Egypt that the poet heard of the *nepenthe*, a drug occasioning an oblivion of all misfortunes, which Helen received from Polydamna the wife of Theon,

* Odyssey, xi. 575.

and carried with her to Sparta ; and which she is represented as employing to assuage the grief occasioned by a speech of Menelaus, during the visit of Telemachus to Lacedæmon.* Again, the epithet of *golden*, as applied to Venus he learned from an Egyptian tradition ; there being in Egypt a grove and plain dedicated to her under that name. But it may be asked, for what purpose I introduce these circumstances here ? To show the probability of his having thus transferred to his writings many things derived from the books of the prophets—as, for instance, the Mosaic account of the creation. The statement made by Moses is this. In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth, and afterwards the sun, moon, and stars. Homer, learning this in Egypt, and being pleased with this account of the matter, seems to have intended his description of the shield manufactured by Vulcan for Achilles as a symbolical account of the creation.

Ἐν μὲν γαῖαν ἔτευξ, ἔν δ' ἔρανόν, ἐν δὲ θάλασσαν
 Ἡέλιόν τ' ἀκάμαντα σελήνην τε πλήθυσαν,
 Ἐν δὲ τε τείρεα πάντα τὰ τ' ἔρανός ἐστεφάνωται.†

There he described the earth, the heaven, the sea,
 The sun that rests not, and the moon full orb'd,
 There also, all the stars, which round about,
 As with a radiant frontlet bind the skies.

In the garden of Alcinous he presents us with a picture of Paradise, representing it as always flourishing and abounding in fruit.

Ἐνθα δὲ δένδρεα μακρὰ πεφύκει τηλεθόωντα,
 Ὅχραι, καὶ ῥοιαί, καὶ μηλέαι ἀγλαόκαρποι, &c.‡

There grew luxuriant many a lofty tree,
 Pomegranate, pear, the apple blushing bright,
 The honied fig, and unctuous olive smooth.

* Odyssey, iv. 228. † Iliad, xviii. 483. ‡ Odyssey, vii. 114.

Those fruits, nor winter's cold nor summer's heat,
 Fear ever, fail not, wither not, but hang
 Perennial, while unceasing zephyrs breathe
 Gently on all, &c. &c.

Do not these verses contain an exact imitation of what Moses writes respecting paradise? So if any one will examine the description of the Tower, which men erected, in the vain hope of ascending into heaven—he will find it allegorically represented by the poet in the story of Otus and Ephialtes.

Οἶρα καὶ ἀθανάτοισιν ἀπειλήτην ἐν Ὀλύμπῳ
 Φυλόπιδα στήσειν πολυάϊκος πολέμοιο.
 Ὅσσαν ἐπ' Ὀλύμπῳ μέμασαν θέμεν, αὐτὰρ ἐπ' Ὅσση
 Πήλιον εἰνοσίφυλλον, ἴν' ἔρανὸς ἀμβρατὸς εἴη.*

Against the gods
 Themselves they threatened war, and to excite
 The din of battle in the realms above,
 To the Olympian summit they essayed
 To heave up Ossa, and to Ossa's crown
 Branch-waving Pelion ; so to climb the heavens.

In the same way we find described the fall from heaven of the adversary of our race, whom the sacred Scriptures call Διάβολος, from his deception of our first parents. It will be seen, indeed, that the poet does not use this name, but Ἄτη or *Injury*, a characteristic title derived from the wicked disposition of the being to whom it is applied. This Ἄτη, he informs us, was expelled from heaven by the Deity, remembering, no doubt, the words of the prophet Isaiah on the same subject.

Ἀντίκα δ' ἔειλ' Ἄτην κεφαλῆς λιπαροπλοκάμοιο,
 Χωόμενος φρεσὶν ἧσι, καὶ ὤμοσε καρτερὸν ὄγκον,
 Μήποτ' ἐς Οὐλύμπόν τε καὶ οὐρανὸν ἄστερόεντα.
 Αὖτις ἐλεήσεισθαι Ἄτην, ἣ πάντας ἀᾶται.

* Odyssey, xi. 314.

Ὡς εἰπὼν ἔρριψεν ἀπ' ἄστρων ἀστερόεντος
 Χειρὶ περιστρέψας· τάχα δ' ἴκετο ἔργ' ἀνθρώπων.*

She spake; then anguish stung the heart of Jove
 Deeply, and seizing by her glossy locks
 The goddess Ate, in his wrath he swore
 That never to the starry skies again
 And the Olympian height he would permit
 The universal mischief to return.
 So saying, he whirled and cast her from the skies.

Plato, as we have already seen, places next to God and matter, as a universal principle, εἶδος or form. This doctrine he seems to have derived from Moses, from whom he certainly borrows the term εἶδος, but attaches a mistaken meaning to it, not having learned, that the words of the prophet were to be understood in a mystical sense. Moses relates, that God having directed him to build the tabernacle, said, *According to all that I shew thee, after the pattern of the tabernacle, and the pattern of all the instruments thereof, even so shall ye make it*; and again, *Look that thou make them after their pattern, which was showed thee in the mount*; and again, a little after, *Thou shalt rear up the tabernacle according to the fashion thereof which was showed thee in the mount*. Plato perusing these passages and mistaking the true import of the terms, inferred from them, that there is a distinct form of things which is in existence before the visible form, and is called the pattern (παράδειγμα and τύπος) in the words quoted above. A mistake of the same kind he seems to have made with respect to the creation of the earth, the heavens, and man, supposing them also to have had a distinct and pre-existent form. Moses says, *In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth*; and adds, *The earth was without form and void* (ἀόρατος καὶ ἀκατασκεύαστος.) These last

* Iliad, xix. 126.

† Exodus xxv. 9. 40. and xxiv. 39.

words Plato supposed to have reference to the pre-existent form of the earth, and the former to the visible earth, which God created in exact correspondence with the other. So with regard to the heavens, he supposes the firmament which God is said to have made, to be the visible heaven ; while that which was mentioned before is the intellectual or pre-existent heaven, of which the prophet is speaking, when he says, Οὐρανὸς τῷ ἔργον τῷ κυρίου, τὴν δὲ γῆν ἔδωκε τοῖς υἱοῖς τῶν ἀνθρώπων.

He falls into the same error with respect to man. Moses mentions man, at first, and then after recording many other creations describes the mode of his formation, saying, *God made man of the dust of the ground*. Plato therefore imagined, that the first mentioned existed before the man who was created, and that the former was the model on which the latter was formed. Homer also seems to have been acquainted with these words of the sacred history, *Dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return*. For he applies this term to the dead body of Hector, when he speaks of its being dragged around the walls by Achilles ;

Κωφὴν γὰρ δὴ γαῖαν ἀεικίζεις μενεαίνων.*

Menelaus, too, uses the same language in his speech to the Greeks on their hesitating to accept the challenge of Hector ;

Ἄλλ' ἡμεῖς μὲν πάντες ὕδωρ καὶ γαῖα γένοισθε.—†

his excess of anger leading him to resolve their bodies, as it were, into their constituent elements.

From what source could Plato have derived the idea of Jupiter's winged chariot but from the following description by the prophet? *Then the glory of the Lord departed from off the threshold of the house, and stood over the cheru-*

* Iliad xxiv. 54.

† Iliad vii. 99.

*bims. And the cherubims lifted up their wings and mounted up from the earth in my sight. When they went out, the wheels also were beside them—and the glory of the God of Israel was over them and above.** Plato, excited by this sublime description, with great boldness of speech, exclaims, “The great God drives his winged chariot through the skies.” To what source shall we trace his doctrine, that the essence of God is fire, if not to a misconception of the following passage in the third book of Kings, *The Lord was not in the wind; and after the wind an earthquake, but the Lord was not in the earthquake: and after the earthquake a fire; but the Lord was not in the fire; and after the fire a still small voice.*|| Now this cannot be comprehended even by believers, except after profound reflection. But Plato, from a want of proper attention to the language, falls into a mistake, and asserts that “God was in the fire.”

We shall find on diligent inquiry, also, that the gift descending from God upon holy men, which is called in the sacred Scriptures the Holy Spirit, is mentioned in Plato’s discourse to Menon. Not indeed under the real name, for he was afraid of being considered a public enemy if he should be discovered to promulgate the doctrines of the prophets. But he acknowledges that there is such an influence which descends from God upon men, and which he calls *’APETH, virtue*. For in his discourse to Menon respecting memory, after discussing various questions respecting this virtue, as, whether it is to be imparted by instruction or acquired by exercise; or whether it can be obtained in neither way, but is a gift of nature, he concludes the matter thus: “If in what has been said, our inquiries and assertions have been correct, the conclusion must be, that virtue is neither bestowed by nature nor imparted by instruction, but com-

* Ezekiel, x. 18, 19.

† 1 Kings, xix. 11, 12.

municated by a divine influence—and that not imperceptibly to those upon whom it is conferred.” In these words I think it evident, that he merely repeats with reference to what he calls virtue, the doctrine taught by the prophets with reference to the Holy Spirit; and as the sacred writers teach, that the Holy Spirit, though one, is divided into seven spirits, so Plato, while he speaks of virtue as one, asserts that it is divided into four virtues. And although he does not mention the Holy Spirit, he allegorically repeats all the doctrines of the Scriptures respecting it. The conclusion of his discourse to Menon is as follows: “From this reasoning it appears, O Menon, that to those who receive this VIRTUE at all, it is dispensed by the immediate power of God. The mode in which it is imparted we shall know more clearly, when we have ascertained a previous point—what virtue is.’ Here we see, that although he gives no other title than virtue to this heavenly gift, he thinks it a point worthy of investigation, whether it has not a more appropriate name; his dread of being thought a disciple of the prophets still preventing his calling it the Holy Spirit.

Again how did Plato know, that *time* and *heaven* were created together? “Time and heaven,” says he, “are coeval; so that, as they began together, they shall together be dissolved, when the period of their dissolution has arrived.” Is not this borrowed from the Mosaic history? He knew, that time arises from the succession of days and months and years. He knew, too, that this succession commenced on the first day after the creation of the heavens; for, says Moses, *God created the heavens and the earth, after which he adds, and the evening and the morning were the first day.* Plato, however, uses the whole for a part, instituting χρόνος for ἡμέρα, not daring to copy the words of Moses too closely, lest he should be arraigned before the people. From the same quarter he must have derived his opinion respecting the dissolution of the heavens, and must

have known, too, that the same doctrines were in the same manner taught in the writings of the prophets.

If we examine the history of idolatrous worship, and endeavour to ascertain why they who first made images for this purpose gave them a human form, I think we shall be able to trace this custom also to the Scriptures. We are told by Moses that God said, *Let us make man in our own image, and after our likeness.* It being reported among men, therefore, that man was created in the image of God, and resembled him in form, they began to make idols in the same form, supposing that by copying the resemblance of the Deity, they would imitate himself.

I have detailed these facts, for the purpose of proving, that no true knowledge of religion is to be gained from men, whose most admired conceptions are not original, but borrowed from the inspired writers, and disguised in allegory. The time has arrived, O Greeks, when, knowing as you do that our teachers were far more ancient than all your masters of philosophy, you should abandon the ancient delusion of your fathers, and diligently study the sacred books of Moses and the prophets, that you may obtain a knowledge of the true religion. *They* practise no rhetorical arts, they pretend to no powers of persuasion or conviction, which are necessary only for such as wish to tamper with the truth. But applying to every thing its plain and proper epithet, they simply teach us what the Holy Spirit, by whom they were inspired, thought proper to communicate to man. Throwing aside, therefore, all false shame, renounce the errors of your ancestors, desist from your vain affectation of a false superiority, which is now the source of your greatest enjoyment, and accept the advantages proposed to you. You cannot sin either against yourselves or others, by relinquishing the false belief of men, who are now in hell repenting too late of their fatal error. Oh, could they but speak to you from their pre-

sent abode, and recount to you all that they have suffered since the termination of their mortal existence, you would know what that misery is, which you are exhorted to avoid. But since you cannot derive instruction from them, nor from those who are falsely called philosophers on earth, your last resort is to the Sacred Scriptures. In them you are not to look for elegance of language, since the glory of the true religion consists in things, not words. But from them, you may learn the means of eternal life. The men who have unlawfully usurped the title of philosophers, are convicted of ignorance, not only by their differing in opinion from each other, but by the inconsistency of their doctrine with itself.

Now if the discovery of the truth is the end of true philosophy, how can they be called philosophers who have wholly failed in accomplishing that end? And if Socrates, the greatest of them all, who was pronounced even by an oracle, to be the wisest of men, confessed, that he knew nothing, how is it, that his disciples profess to be familiar, even with things in heaven. Socrates himself declared, that he had received the name of *Wise*, merely because while other men affected to know things of which they knew nothing, he never scrupled to confess his ignorance. "If I have any claim," said he, "to the character of a wise man, it arises from this simple circumstance, that I never imagine myself to know what I really know not." Nor is this acknowledgment to be considered as ironical, or as spoken under an assumed character, as is frequently the case in his conversations. For he concludes his defence before the Areopagus, when about to be remanded to prison, with a similar confession, which is unequivocally serious and severe. "The time is come, when we must part—you to live on, and myself to die. Which condition is the more desirable, is known to none but God."—Thus, in his last public address, ascribing to God alone the know-

ledge of things unknown to man. His successors, however, unable as they were to comprehend even sublunary things, boasted of an intimate acquaintance with heaven. Aristotle, as we have seen, pretending to a more accurate knowledge of the upper world, than his master Plato, declared that the essence of God was not *fire*, but what he calls the fifth ethereal element. He employed himself in attempting to establish his own opinion upon these subjects, by argument and eloquence, until he discovered that he was not even wise enough to comprehend the nature of the Euripus, and then from mere shame, put an end to his existence.* Let no one then prefer the eloquence of these writers to his own salvation; but rather, according to the ancient fable, close his ears with wax, and be deaf to the enchanting but fatal music of the siren. The men of whom I speak make use of their command over language as a tempting bait to allure others from true religion, after the example of those who first taught the doctrines of polytheism. To such enticements I entreat you not to yield, but on the contrary, to peruse with diligence the writings of our prophets. And if you are unwilling, either from indolence, or an attachment to the superstition of your fathers, to read these books, from which alone you can learn even the first principle of true religion, the unity of God, you will regard at least the authority of him who first taught the existence of a plurality of deities. I

* There are several conflicting accounts of the death of Aristotle. That which is here alluded to has been by some considered a fabrication of Justin Martyr, or Gregory Nazianzen. The story is this: The Euripus (a narrow sea between Eubœa and Bœotia, on the shore of which stood Chalcis, where the philosopher spent the latter part of his life) ebbed and flowed seven times a day; and Aristotle, being unable to explain the phenomenon, threw himself into it, exclaiming, "Since Aristotle cannot comprehend Euripus, let Euripus comprehend Aristotle."—(TR.)

mean the poet Orpheus, who afterwards made a becoming and honourable recantation of his former errors. To his authority I would have you yield, as well as to that of others, who have given similar instructions respecting the unity of God. For by the direction of Divine Providence, some of your writers have been compelled, as we have seen, to attest the truth of our sacred books, and the doctrines which they contain, that all the arguments in favour of polytheism might be taken away, and an opportunity afforded to its followers of embracing a purer faith.

Some genuine religious knowledge may also be derived from the ancient Sibyl, whose oracular responses, pronounced under the influence of an extraordinary inspiration, we regard as not far inferior in authority to the prophecies themselves. This Sibyl, it is said, was the daughter of Berosus, the Chaldean historian, and came over from Babylon to Cuma, in Campania, not far from Baiæ where the warm baths are—and there uttered her responses. I myself, when I visited the city, saw an edifice wonderfully and admirably formed of a single stone, in which, as the inhabitants told us on the authority of an ancient tradition, she was wont to pronounce her oracles. They also showed us three cisterns hewn from the same stone, in which she used to bathe, after which she arrayed herself in a robe, ascended into the inner chamber of the edifice, which was also built from the same stone, where she uttered her prediction, seated on the highest step of a throne. This Sibyl has been mentioned by many writers—among the rest by Plato in his *Phædrus*. He seems indeed to have been induced by the perusal of her prophecies to regard all persons of the same character as divine. For he had seen many of the things predicted by her long before, actually come to pass; and being struck with astonishment at the fact, he writes thus upon the subject in his address to Menon. “We might very properly apply the epithet divine

to those whom we now call *χρησµωδοὶ*;* and especially might we consider as divine, and divinely inspired, and, indeed, pervaded by the Deity, those who speak the truth on the most important subjects, yet know nothing of what they are saying." This passage contains an evident allusion to the verses of the Sibyl, who had not, like ordinary poets, the power of correcting what she uttered according to the rules of metre. Her gift of prophecy, continued only during the time of her inspiration, and when that had subsided, all recollection of her own words was gone. This will account for the fact, that the measure of the Sibylline verses is sometimes incomplete. And, indeed, the persons who conduct strangers to view the curiosities of Cuma, (and who pointed out to me a brazen urn, which, they said, contained her ashes,) informed us, among other facts which they professed to have derived from their ancestors, that the metrical errors found in the responses which have been preserved, arose from the fact that the Sibyl herself retained no recollection of what she had uttered, when the moment of supernatural excitement was gone; and that those by whom the responses were received and recorded were uneducated men, and of course, unacquainted with the rules of verse. It is evidently in allusion to this circumstance that Plato speaks of those who utter the truth on the most important subjects, yet know nothing of what they are saying. But since the truth of religious doctrines has no dependence either on the accuracy of poetic measures, nor on that species of learning which is valued among you, let us leave the consideration of mere words and numbers, and impartially examine the substance of the Sibylline responses. Reflect, I entreat you, of what blessings she was made the harbinger, when she predicted unequivocally the advent of our Saviour Jesus Christ, who, being the Word of God, and the same with God in power, assumed the form of man (the

* Soothsayers, pronouncers of Oracles.

image and likeness of his Maker) that he might revive the religion taught to our first parents, from which their children had apostatized under the influence of a malignant fiend, and turned to the worship of non-existent deities. But if you feel any hesitation in receiving our account of the creation of man, appeal to those in whom you still place confidence, and learn from them, that in a hymn, which an oracle once addressed, at the request of an individual, to the Omnipotent God, we have these words,

“Ὁν πρῶτον πλάσας μερόπων, Ἄδὰμ δὲ καλέσσας.

The first man whom he made, he called Adam.

This hymn is preserved by many whom we know, for the confusion of such as refuse to acknowledge the truth, though proved by universal testimony.

Unless then, O Greeks, you regard this false imagination respecting a plurality of Gods, as of more importance than your own salvation, I would again exhort you to believe the testimony of the ancient Sibyl, whose books are at this time extant in every quarter of the globe—her declarations respecting the imaginary beings whom you call gods, and her predictions of the approaching advent of our Saviour, and of what he should accomplish. But if any should still suppose, that a knowledge of the truth may be derived from your ancient teachers of philosophy, listen to Acmon and to Hermus, the former of whom applies to God the title Πάγκρυφος, or *totally inscrutable*, while the latter declares, that “to know God is difficult, and that even to one who could comprehend his nature, to describe it would be impossible.” To whatever authority, therefore, we appeal, we find it to be the conclusion of the whole matter, that a knowledge of God, and of the true religion, can be learned only from the prophets, who taught by inspiration from above.