

THE
RELIGIOUS TEACHERS
OF GREECE

BEING GIFFORD LECTURES ON NATURAL RELIGION
DELIVERED AT ABERDEEN

BY

JAMES ADAM, LITT.D.

HON. LL.D. OF ABERDEEN UNIVERSITY,
FELLOW AND SENIOR TUTOR OF EMMANUEL COLLEGE, CAMBRIDGE

EDITED, WITH A MEMOIR,

BY HIS WIFE

ADELA MARION ADAM

EDINBURGH: T. & T. CLARK, 38 GEORGE STREET

1908

CONTENTS



LECTURE I

THE PLACE OF POETRY AND PHILOSOPHY IN THE DEVELOPMENT OF GREEK RELIGIOUS THOUGHT

	PAGE
Introduction—The feud between Greek philosophy and Greek poetry—Its causes to be sought in differences about religion—Evidence in support of this statement—Philosophy seldom just to her rival—Homer along with Hesiod represents the “orthodox” Greek conception of the divine nature—In what sense these two poets are the “makers” of the Greek theogony—The poet as a teacher in ancient Greece—Use of poetry in Greek education—Homer sometimes regarded as an encyclopædia of human knowledge—Allegorical interpretation of Homer—Later history of this method—Practical effect of the poetical theology on Greek life—Two main streams of development in Greek religious thought, the poetical and the philosophical—Plan and scope of the inquiry	1-20

LECTURES II AND III

HOMER

Religion and theology of Homer—“All men have need of Gods”—The divine omnipresence—Homeric polytheism—Fate in Homer—The position of Zeus—Homer’s anthropomorphism—Inherent dualism of the Homeric theology shown first in the physical, secondly in the mental, and thirdly in the moral attributes of the Gods—Tendency to spiritualise Zeus—Are the Homeric Gods omnipotent and omniscient?—Homer’s inconsistency on this subject—Moral qualities of the Homeric Gods—Here the vein of idealism is much less prominent—God in Homer the cause of evil to men—Envy of the Gods—*Quem deus vult perdere, prius dementat*—The Gods deceive mankind—Yet

are the givers of good and the guardians of justice—Was Homer conscious of the antagonistic elements in his theology?—The Homeric view of sacrifice and prayer—The conception of sin in Homer—Infatuation—Influence of circumstances on character—Responsibility for sin—Punishment of sin—Atonement—Homer's psychology—What does Homer mean by "self"?—He means the body rather than the soul—Death the separation of the soul from the body—The disembodied soul a phantom of the living man—Homer's view of immortality and the future world—Islands of the blest—Pathos of the Homeric view of life—Nobility of the Homeric man 21-6

LECTURE IV

FROM HESIOD TO BACCHYLIDES

The Hesiodic poems—Progress in the *Theogony* from anarchy to law—Successive dynasties of Gods—Traces of a still higher Power—The Gods hardly as yet conceived as moral beings—The *Works and Days*—Attributes of Zeus—The divine justice—The Hesiodic doctrine of *daemons*—Justice, in Hesiod, rewards virtue, and is not merely the punisher of sin—Sacrifice and prayer—The moral law—Requite evil for evil, good for good—The five ages of the world—Hints of a golden age hereafter—Pessimism of Hesiod—The origin of evil—Immortality in Hesiod—The duty and dignity of labour—Remarks on the Homeric Hymns—Hope of immortality through initiation in the mysteries—Lyric and elegiac poetry—The inferior Gods more and more overshadowed by Zeus—Fate generally identified with the ordinance of Zeus—Religious interpretation of Destiny—Man's dependence on the Gods—Can man by searching find out God?—Righteousness of Zeus—Sins of the fathers visited upon the children—Hebrew parallels to the perplexity of Theognis about this and similar difficulties—Anticipations in gnomic poetry of the moral and religious doctrine of Greek drama—The morality of the Gods higher than in Homer—Other noteworthy features—Greek melancholy—The future life 68-1

LECTURE V

ORPHIC RELIGIOUS IDEAS

The Orphic religious revival in the sixth century—Centres of Orphic teaching—Organisation of the brotherhoods—Authorities for early Orphism—Pantheistic character of Orphic theology—The

CONTENTS

xi

	PAGE
body as the soul's prison-house or grave—Celestial origin of the soul—Fall of the soul through sin—The "wheel" or "circle of generation"—Transmigration—"Purity" and "purification" in Orphism—Purity to be attained by a particular way of life, and by religious rites and ceremonies—The "Orphic life"—Rules of abstinence—Ritual of Orphism—Plato's condemnation of Orphic religious practices—Orphic eschatology—The intermediate state—Reincarnation—No absorption of the individual—Orphic pictures of heaven—The "restoration of all things"—Contrast between Orphism and the Homeric religion in regard to their doctrines of immortality, ain, and the relation of the human to the divine—Deification in Orphism—Intellectualisation of Orphism by Plato	92-114

LECTURE VI

PINDAR

Essentially religious character of Pindar's poetry—Connexion between Pindar and Apollo—His theology is anthropomorphic, but he endeavours to purge the legends of their grosser features—Passages illustrating the lofty idealism of his conception of the Godhead—No conflict between Zeus and Fate—Deification of the Fates—The goddess "Fortune" in Pindar—Various attributes of the Gods—Their omnipotence and omniscience—The divine justice rewards virtue as well as punishes vice—Providence—God is faithful and true—To Pindar, though frankly polytheistic, there is but one divine will determining the course of events, and that is the will of Zeus—The Greek doctrine of the "Envy of the Gods"—Pindar's treatment of the doctrine—Conception of sin in Pindar—Ever-recurrent warnings against insolence and pride—For the most part Pindar makes the transgressor himself responsible—Punishment of sin—The innocent suffer with the guilty—The "melancholy" of Pindar never sinks to pessimism—A characteristic feature of his poetry is the emphasis which he lays on aspiration and hope—Orphic and Pythagorean features in his anthropology—Immortality in Pindar—He bases the belief on the Orphic doctrine of the soul's divinity—Discussion of the eschatological passages and fragments—Metempsychosis—Reward and punishment in the future state—Pindar's interpretation of the <i>fortunatorum insulæ</i> —His debt to Orphism—Pindar and Plato—Conclusion	115-137
---	---------

LECTURE VII

AESCHYLUS

PAGE

Connexion of Greek tragedy with religion—Aeschylus pre-eminently a religious poet—The Promethean trilogy illustrates the substitution of harmony and justice for discord and violence in the divine government of the world—Zeus and Fate—Attributes of Zeus—Aeschylus is not a monotheist, although he believes in a single all-controlling will—The divine justice a cardinal feature of Aeschylean drama—Sin in Aeschylus—Are the gods authors of infatuation?—Doctrine of inherited guilt—The <i>Alastor</i> or family curse—Responsibility for sin—Tragic conflict of duties—The <i>lex talionis</i> —Punishment regarded as a discipline—How Aeschylus corrects the popular interpretation the "Envy of the Gods"—Attitude of the poet on the question of the divine truthfulness and purity—Immortality—Alleged Orphic and Pythagorean features—Influence of Homer—Judgment and punishment hereafter—No Elysium in the underworld of Aeschylus—The leading characteristic of his teaching is the stress which he lays on the punitive aspect of the divine justice—Contrast with Sophocles	188-162
---	---------

LECTURE VIII

SOPHOCLES

The serenity of Sophocles as compared with Aeschylus and Euripides—Piety in Sophocles the foundation of virtue—Sophocles does not deliberately break with traditional theology—His doctrine of an eternal and immutable morality, or prior obligation to merely human law, illustrated from the <i>Antigone</i> —Religious significance of this doctrine—Sophocles' view of suffering—Though frequently the result of sin, suffering is yet compatible with moral innocence—Can undeserved suffering be reconciled with the divine justice?—The discipline of pain—Hope of recompense hereafter—Individual suffering may subserve the larger purposes of Providence and contribute to the universal harmony—Resemblance to Heraclitus—Is Sophocles a monotheist?—True religion, in Sophocles, means purity of heart—His sympathy for human weakness— <i>Imitatio Dei</i> —The "sense of tears" in Sophocles—Faith in Zeus forbids despair—The future life in Sophocles—Consideration of the relevant passages—Conclusion	163-18:
--	---------

LECTURE IX

FROM THALES TO XENOPHANES

	PAGE
The saying of Thales that "all things are full of Gods" contains, perhaps, the germ of the later doctrine of the World-soul—Anaximander and his concept of the Infinite—Justice as a cosmic power—Anaximenes—How the cosmological teaching of these three thinkers points the way to monotheism—Pythagoras and his brotherhood—A half-religious, half-scientific foundation—Relation to Orphism—The Pythagorean doctrine of the soul—The pursuit of knowledge in early Pythagoreanism subordinate and auxiliary to moral salvation—Pythagorean dualism—Opposition of Limit and the Unlimited—Limit is apparently the active or formative, the Unlimited the passive principle—Later writers identify these with God and Matter—Pythagoras the first to make philosophy a way of life—Adoration of Pythagoras by his followers—Xenophanes of Colophon—Was he influenced by the Orphic movement?—His theological fragments—Dispute as to his monotheism—Evidence for and against the traditional view—Suggested solution—The God of Xenophanes is uncreated—Virtue and truthfulness of God—Conception of the Godhead as a moral ideal for humanity—the "one God" of Xenophanes is the World—Question of personality—In effect, Xenophanes deifies Nature	184-211

LECTURES X AND XI

HERACLITUS

Heraclitus of Ephesus—Life and temperament—He denounces alike the *vulgus*, the poets, and the philosophers—His famous book—Character and style of the surviving fragments—Proverbial obscurity of Heraclitus—Heraclitus first and foremost a prophet or seer—Regards himself as the vehicle of a new revelation to mankind—The Heraclitean doctrine of *Logos*—*Logos* not simply the discourse or treatise of Heraclitus—Fragments in which the *Logos* is described—The *Logos* eternal—a cosmic principle operating also in man—Is it only objective reason or law?—Indications showing that it is actively intelligent and thinks—It is apparently the divine reason immanent in Nature and in man—Arguments against this view considered—The *Logos* a unity, omnipresent, rational, and divine—Not, however, an immaterial essence—Identified with Fire—Fragments establish-

	PAGE
ing this identification—Rationality of Fire—Evidence of later authorities—Theological fragments of Heraclitus—Unity of God—No distinction between God and Logos—Occasional use of polytheistic terms—Deification of Fire—Part played by Fire in Heracliteanism—Fire the ever-changing reality of things—Ceaseless transmutation of the elements—Is the world, in Heraclitus, eternal?—Discussion of this question—Warfare of opposites throughout the world—Perpetual flux—Underlying harmony of opposites—The unity in which all opposites are reconciled is the Logos or God—Pantheism of Heraclitus not irreconcilable with Polytheism—Ethical doctrine of Heraclitus—Follow the Universal—Obedience to law—Evil is inseparable from good and contributes to the universal harmony—Individualism and self-seeking to be eradicated—Eschatology of Heraclitus—The relevant fragments betray the influence of Orphism—His great contribution is the doctrine of the Logos—Subsequent history of that doctrine in Plato, Stoicism, Philo, and St. John.	212-240

LECTURE XII

FROM PARMENIDES TO ANAXAGORAS

Parmenides of Elea—Distinction between the Philosophy of Truth and the Philosophy of Opinion—The Parmenidean concept of Being—Attributes of Being—Its materiality—Antagonism between the Heraclitean and Parmenidean points of view—Attempts at reconciliation—Empedocles of Agrigento—His theory of the elements or roots of things—Introduction of the "movent cause"—Love and Hate—Love combines and Hate separates—Recurrent cycles in the life of the world—Theology of Empedocles—Denial of anthropomorphism—The sphere-God—Spiritualisation of Apollo—Created Gods—Deification of the elements—Love and Hate are also Gods—No real teleology in Empedocles—The corporeal and spiritual not really distinguished by Him—Universal diffusion of intelligence in things—Karsten's attribution of pantheism to Empedocles—Empedocles' theology not a harmonious whole—His ethical and religious teaching mainly Orphic—Anaxagoras of Clazomenae—His theory of *panspemia*—The primeval mixture—The world-forming *Nous*—Fragments in which it is described—Is the Anaxagorean *Nous* a corporeal substance?—Reasons for believing it to be incorporeal—Omniscience of *Nous*—*Nous* is omnipotent and supreme—Creative function of *Nous*—What led *Nous* to

CONTENTS

xv

	PAGE
create the world?—Difficulty about the action of Mind on Matter not touched on by Anaxagoras—the teleology of Anaxagoras—Strictures by Plato and Aristotle—Did Anaxagoras identify <i>Nous</i> with the Deity?—He is the founder of philosophic Theism in the Western World—His views on immortality—Conclusion	241-264

LECTURE XIII

THE AGE OF THE SOPHISTS

Foreshadowing of humanism in the *Nous* of Anaxagoras—Diogenes of Apollonia materialises *Nous* in the element of Air, combining Anaxagoreanism with the theory of Anaximenes—His pantheism and teleology—Views on immortality—Democritus, the high-priest of materialism—His physical theory does not require the assumption of a creative Mind—Allegorism in Democritus—Origin of the belief in Gods—Daemonology—Criticism of the belief in immortality—Spread of rationalism in Athens—The so-called Sophists—What is their place in the moral and religious development of Greece?—Not a philosophical school, but a profession of mutually independent teachers—Protagoras—The tendency of his instruction was to subvert the political and religious principles of the city-state, for “Man the Measure” means individualism in Ethics, and in Theology he was an agnostic—Gorgias—The rationalism of Prodicus and Critias a form of atheism—Prevalent distrust of oracles and divination—Denial of immortality—Hippias of Elis—The antithesis of nature and law operated destructively on the established order, but at the same time encouraged the development of humanism and cosmopolitanism—The negative and positive consequences of this antithesis illustrated from the literature of the time—General effect of the Sophistic movement was to overthrow but not to rebuild—Conclusion

265-285

LECTURES XIV AND XV

EURIPIDES

Euripides as the poetical exponent of the Age of Enlightenment—His iconoclasm illustrated from the *Hippolytus*, the *Madness of Heracles*, and other plays—Exceptions to this attitude—In denying the Gods of Greece, does he intend to deny the ex-

	PAGE
istence of Gods altogether?—Sentiments suggestive of atheism or agnosticism—Positive contributions towards a purer theology contained in the poet's criticisms of the Olympian religion—Goodness essential to the Godhead—the Gods as moral ideals for mankind—A hint of monotheism—Self-sufficiency of the divine nature—Philosophical theology in Euripides—The "strange prayer" of Hecuba—Parallel from Wordsworth—Nestle's theory that Euripides was a follower of Heraclitus—In reality, Euripides has no uniform or consistent point of view—The humanism of Euripides—Views of death and immortality throughout his poems—Re-absorption in the divine element of aether—The prevailing pessimism of Euripides—Is the <i>Bacchae</i> intended as a palinode?—The leading motive of the play is to exalt enthusiasm above reason—In this consists the religious significance of the <i>Bacchae</i> , but the earlier rationalism is not yet extinct—Influence of Euripides on Greek religious thought	286-319

LECTURES XVI AND XVII

SOCRATES

A new chapter in Greek thought begins with Socrates—Union of rationalism and transcendentalism in his temperament—The "supernatural sign"—He regards himself as a divinely-appointed minister to Athens—Religious significance of his devotion to Apollo—Socrates as a "physician of the soul"—His identification of vice with ignorance, virtue with knowledge—Discussion of this theory and its implications—The Socratic method, considered first on its destructive or cathartic, and second on its positive or constructive side—Substance of the Socratic teaching—"Know thyself"—He preaches the Gospel of Noocracy both for the individual and for the State—Rule of conduct as between man and man—His views on immortality—Theology of Socrates—God as the Reason who directs the world—Socrates' teleology is essentially anthropocentric, and its motive is religious rather than philosophical—Practical religion in Socrates—"Worship God according to the law of the State"—Lessons conveyed by this precept—The Socratic conception of sacrifice and prayer—Causes which led to the condemnation of Socrates—The historical significance of his trial and death	320-355
---	---------

LECTURE XVIII

PLATO.—THE COSMOLOGICAL DOCTRINE

	PAGE
Plato's relation to Socrates—The simile of the Cave—The main lesson which it teaches is the reality of the invisible and eternal—Parallels from the New Testament—What are the chains that bind the soul?—The <i>Timaeus</i> of Plato—Platonic dualism—Plato's account of the creation of the body of the world—Principles underlying that account—The world as the expression in time and space of mathematical law—To what extent Necessity yields to the Good—The Soul of the World in the <i>Timaeus</i> —Why Plato endows the Universe with soul—Constituents of the World-soul—Its attributes of motion and intelligence—The world a "perceivable God," the "image of its Maker"—Comparison of the World-soul with the Logos of Heraclitus and of Philo—The World-soul a link between the infinite and the finite—What Plato means by the generation of the World-soul—The <i>Timaeus</i> a "hymn of the universe"—Influence of the dialogue on later religious thought.	356-374

LECTURE XIX

PLATO (*continued*).—ELEMENTS OF ASCETICISM AND OF MYSTICISM

The "created Gods" of the <i>Timaeus</i> —Creation of the rational part of the human soul by the supreme God—Man's reason is divine, and this divine possession makes him specifically human—Creation of the body and the "mortal part" of soul by the subordinate Gods—Man a compound of mortality and immortality—The chains by which the prisoner in the cave is bound symbolise man's lower nature—During life Reason may either regain supremacy or still further lose it—Plato's anthropology compared with that of St. Paul—Different ways in which Plato describes the soul's deliverance—The <i>meditatio mortis</i> of the <i>Phaedo</i> —Comparison and contrast with St. Paul's doctrine of <i>necrosis</i> —In the <i>Symposium</i> the deliverance is effected by love of beauty and goodness—The earlier portion of the dialogue—The speech of Diotima—By means of love the soul rises to the contemplation of the invisible and eternal Beauty—Some points of contact between Platonic and Christian mysticism—Union of intellectual and religious enthusiasm in Plato	375-397
--	---------

LECTURE XX

PLATO (*continued*).—THEORY OF EDUCATION

	PAGE
Value attached by Plato to education—Education in the <i>Republic</i> —The preliminary discipline—Plato's canons for a reformed theology—His own ideal of Poetry and Art—Comparison with Milton—The higher or philosophical curriculum—Relation of the two schemes to one another—The philosophical discipline confined to a select class—Natural qualifications of the philo- sopher-king—The ascent into the realm of Being—Education in Plato presupposes the presence in every man of a divine element, which it endeavours to turn from darkness to light— Parallels from the New Testament—The different studies in the Platonic curriculum—Plato the founder of University education —Mathematical science in Plato a revelation of the Godhead, but the soul's deliverance is not complete till it has risen beyond mathematics to the immediate contemplation of the supreme Idea of Good	398-421

LECTURES XXI AND XXII

PLATO (*concluded*).—THE THEORY OF IDEAS

The Theory of Ideas—Aristotle's account of the genesis of the Theory
—The Ideas, in Plato, stand for the *real*—At once transcendent
and immanent—The transcendence of the Ideas—Their various
attributes, unity, changelessness, and perfection—The Idea is
the hypostasised type, standard, or ideal in manufactured
objects, in the creations of nature, above all, in the domain of
art and morality—Why the Idea is of necessity transcendent—
Plato's religion the uplifting of the soul towards this realm of
perfection—Virtual deification of the Ideas—The Ideal World
described in the language of the mysteries—Immanence of the
Ideas—"Communion," "participation," "presence"—The
transcendent immanence of the Idea comparable to the Christian
doctrine of the transcendent immanence of God—Intellectual
difficulties involved in this conception—Parallel from St.
Augustine—The "presence" of the Idea denotes the re-
semblance of the particular to its Idea—Paradeigmatic conception
of the Ideas—Christian parallels to Plato's way of representing
the relation of Ideas to particulars—The Idea of Good, as
described in the *Republic*—The Good transcends both Know-

CONTENTS

xix

	PAGE
ledge and Reality, and is the cause of both—Is the Idea of Good to be identified with God ?—Arguments in favour of the identification—The Good in Plato not a mere inanimate abstraction—In its creative aspect inseparable from soul or life—Identical with the “true and divine mind”—Parallel from Dante—Inferences to be drawn from the sovereignty of the Good—Nature a revelation of God—Teleology in Plato—Is evil nothing but negation ?—Dualism not eliminated—The Good as the final cause—Man as co-worker with God against the forces of evil—Does Plato believe in the ultimate triumph of Good ?—In the soul, perhaps, but hardly in the material universe—How we may attain to knowledge of the Ideas—The science of Dialectic—Hierarchy of Ideas—Comparison with the Christian doctrine of celestial hierarchies—The universe of knowables an organic whole—Contrast between the mathematical and dialectical methods—Dialectic proceeds through hypotheses to the un-hypothetical first principle, which is the Good—Permanent value of this method—Plato's dialectic an ideal—Immortality in Plato—Conclusion 422-460	