

preserve their individuality; but with reference to the deities of the historic period, such an attempt would be desperate. All true personality is enfeebled. What is a true picture of the Olympian system of Homer, would be an untrue picture for the classical period. And now we come to the advantage in the separate treatment of the Homeric scheme of religion. In the examination of pre-historic religions generally, it is felt that they extend over long periods of time in which great changes must have taken place. If then a point of departure can be found, it is evident that the gain would be great. For example, we would then have a means of knowing whether the history of ancient religion as it grows older, exhibits at all, and if so in what particulars, an upward or a downward movement. But we find this vantage ground in the case of the Olympian religion, through the poems of Homer. He is the only primitive author who has treated the subject of religion systematically and has presented it to us as a whole. In doing this, Homer, through his poems, became the Bible to the Greeks of his own and succeeding generations, because he placed before them the Olympian religion in a systematized form. Not only did he place the religion before them, but to a great degree he was the maker of the religion of the generations following him; for doubtless, the several factors making up the half-formed nation of that time could not but have their several religious traditions. Now great poems produced in such a state of facts would bear the marks of mobile material and an advancing process. It is possible to go further and say that such poems would themselves become part of the force for pushing that process forward, and for determining its final conditions. And the brain of the man who made the poems, could not but be in a not inconsiderable degree, the maker also of the religion. We do not wish to be understood as saying that Homer actually reduced the cults that prevailed in the several neighborhoods, or among the various parts of the Greek nation, to a unified whole. We must admit that there were many popular traditions prevalent in the time of the poet, but, on the literary side at least, there was nothing to prevent the initiation of a great unifying process in religion. This for himself, and in the main for his successors, the poet seems to have accomplished. And it is because of this unifying process in religion, that we claim Homer to be the Greek's Bible, and not that the religion which was professed from the days of Homer, and which dominated the entire Greek period, was the same at its beginning and ending. In one sense it was the same, but in another it