

Demop. That may be; but a wooden leg is of great value to those who have no natural leg. You must keep in view that the metaphysical requirements of man absolutely demand satisfaction; because the horizon of his thoughts must be defined and not remain unlimited. A man, as a rule, has no faculty of judgment for weighing reasons, and distinguishing between what is true and what is false. Moreover, the work imposed upon him by nature and her requirements leaves him no time for investigations of that kind, or for the education which they presuppose. Therefore it is entirely out of the question to imagine he will be convinced by reasons; there is nothing left for him but belief and authority. Even if a really true philosophy took the place of religion, at least nine-tenths of mankind would only accept it on authority, so that it would be again a matter of belief; for Plato's ?????????? ?????? ?????????? ?????? will always hold good. Authority, however, is only established by time and circumstances, so that we cannot bestow it on that which has only reason to commend it; accordingly, we must grant it only to that which has attained it in the course of history, even if it is only truth represented allegorically. This kind of truth, supported by authority, appeals directly to the essentially metaphysical temperament of man--that is, to his need of a theory concerning the riddle of existence, which thrusts itself upon him, and arises from the consciousness that behind the physical in the world there must be a metaphysical, an unchangeable something, which serves as the foundation of constant change. It also appeals to the will, fears, and hopes of mortals living in constant need; religion provides them with gods, demons, to whom they call, appease, and

conciliate. Finally, it appeals to their moral consciousness, which is undeniably present, and lends to it that authenticity and support from without--a support without which it would not easily maintain itself in the struggle against so many temptations. It is exactly from this side that religion provides an inexhaustible source of consolation and comfort in the countless and great sorrows of life, a comfort which does not leave men in death, but rather then unfolds its full efficacy. So that religion is like some one taking hold of the hand of a blind person and leading him, since he cannot see for himself; all that the blind person wants is to attain his end, not to see everything as he walks along.