

**DIONYSOS AND IMMORTALITY:
THE GREEK FAITH IN
IMMORTALITY AS AFFECTED BY
THE RISE OF INDIVIDUALISM**

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Dionysos and Immortality: The Greek Faith in Immortality as Affected by the Rise of Individualism by Benjamin Ide Wheeler

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BENJAMIN IDE WHEELER

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Jagersoll Lectures on Immortality.

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**HUMAN IMMORTALITY: Two supposed Objections
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16mo, \$1.00. 1898.

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in Immortality as affected by the rise of Individualism.**
By President BENJAMIN IDR WHEELER. 16mo, \$1.00.
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THE GREEK FAITH IN
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BY

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PRESIDENT OF THE UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA
AND INGERSOLL LECTURER FOR 1898-99



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THE INGERSOLL LECTURESHIP

*Extract from the will of Miss Caroline Haskell Ingersoll,
who died in Keene, County of Cheshire, New
Hampshire, Jan. 26, 1893.*

First. In carrying out the wishes of my late beloved father, George Goldthwait Ingersoll, as declared by him in his last will and testament, I give and bequeath to Harvard University in Cambridge, Mass., where my late father was graduated, and which he always held in love and honor, the sum of Five thousand dollars (\$5,000) as a fund for the establishment of a Lectureship on a plan somewhat similar to that of the Duddleian lecture, that is — one lecture to be delivered each year, on any convenient day between the last day of May and the first day of December, on this subject, "the Immortality of Man," said lecture not to form a part of the usual college course, nor to be delivered by any Professor or Tutor as part of his usual routine of instruction, though any such Professor or Tutor may be appointed to such service. The choice of said lecturer is not to be limited to any one religious denomination, nor to any one profession, but may be that of either clergyman or layman, the appointment to take place at least six months before the delivery of said lecture. The above sum to be safely invested and three fourths of the annual interest thereof to be paid to the lecturer for his services and the remaining fourth to be expended in the publishment and gratuitous distribution of the lecture, a copy of which is always to be furnished by the lecturer for such purpose. The same lecture to be named and known as "the Ingersoll lecture on the Immortality of Man."

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DIONYSOS AND IMMORTALITY

NO people has ever possessed a religion more delicately responsive to its moods than the people of ancient Greece. This they owed in large measure to the absence of an ecclesiastical organization. The Greek instinctively abhorred all mechanism, for mechanism, as guaranteeing like and constant output to like time and like material, ignored free personality,—and this free personality was to the Greek the one recognized source of all creative movement. Least of all did he need the ecclesiastical machine. There was no priestly hierarchy either for Greece as a whole or for single cantons; not even among priests of the same cult in different cantons was there organized coöperation. Some popular shrine or oracle might win more than local prestige and secure the

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protection and support of various neighboring states, but *there* the drift toward centralization and organization found its limit.

At no time did there exist an organized authority which could formulate standards of faith or dictate the usages of religious etiquette. Ritual, seeking that which in matter and manner was believed to be well pleasing to the gods, followed the traditions of the individual shrines, and there were no better theologians than the poets. Dogmas there were none. In contrast with the religious experience of a land like India, Greece stands at the extreme. There religion was imposed as a system from without, here it sprang as a social and civic impulse from within.

This fundamental characteristic endows the study of Greek religious thought at once with singular charm and with singular difficulty. We know on the one hand that if we can penetrate through the thick-tangled meshes of mythology and ritual to the unspoken faiths lying behind, we shall find