

THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

DISPROVED

BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.



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LETTER I.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

"For all the gods of the nations are idols; but the Lord made the Heavens."
—PSALM XCVI.

CHRISTIANS,

Sensible that any attempt to disprove the existence (*whether as a god of flesh and blood—inspired prophet—or mere man*) of Jesus Christ will be met by a most vigorous opposition from Christian clergymen of all denominations—we are not unprepared for the encounter; nor shall we object to opposition, however earnest or even fierce in its character, if adorned by a kindly and loving spirit, which ever commands respect for arguments, even when they fail to reach the understanding. We, however, candidly confess, that past experience does not warrant us in expecting so wise a course will be pursued by our Christian opponents—whose custom it is to answer an argument by torrents of invective, and overpower their opponents by eloquent abuse. Nevertheless, we shall not, by any mere personal considerations, be turned aside from the path duty has marked out and conscience has prescribed—nor do more than smile at any other species of opposition than that supported by facts drawn from the records of ancient times—nor surrender to the wielders of any weapons not tempered and

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sharpened by the power of truth. Coarse, vulgar, and most unfair allusions (so frequent in public discussions, vitally affecting the highest interests of human beings, and therefore to be treated with a gravity suitable to their importance) may sometimes appear to give unscrupulous reasoners a temporary advantage—but in reality, they ever injure the cause they are intended to promote, and can only disgrace those who use them. To slander us will not be the best way to prove our arguments unsound, or our positions untenable—which, however, may easily be done, *if it can be done*, by theological professors, who are sufficiently numerous in these countries, and are certainly of no use, if not to expound and defend the doctrines of Christianity! Those who live by the altar, are expected to support the altar,—nor can they by any other means so effectually do this, as by proving the *reasonableness* of the worship offered up by those whose spiritual interests they profess themselves to be the ever-watchful guardians of. The duty of a Christian minister is “to watch for souls as one that must give an account”—and at all times to *act* as one “set for the defence of the gospel,”—and this, too, in the spirit that the Psalmist has ascribed to Jehovah: “But he being full of compassion, forgave their iniquity, and destroyed them not; yea, many a time turned he his wrath away, and did not stir up all his wrath. For he remembered that they were but flesh—a wind that passeth away, and cometh not again.”

These Letters being written by a Jew, will not, it is hoped, weigh against the arguments they contain, nor fill the breasts of Christians with malice and disgust. Arguments are arguments, as truths are truths, no matter by whom urged; yet it must be confessed that all are not sufficiently enlightened to view the subject in this fair and candid manner,—and prejudices against our race are still rife and strong in the bosoms of all—but the children of wisdom, who have the best assurance that individual and national differences, with the hates and heartburnings, the weeping and wailing and gnashing of teeth, to which they give birth, will retrograde as a knowledge of the causes of these differences advances. The prejudices of caste and system have been the curse of Jew and Gentile, and involved all in one common moral ruin. Happily, we live in an age when religious prejudices (the most fatal of all) are comparatively weak, and as a consequence, the times are out-of-joint for

persecution. We live at an epoch when men are free to write and speak *almost* all they think, and as a consequence, superstition is dying a natural death; truths which, in times not very remote, would startle and affright, are now received, not merely without fear, but with joy and gladness! nor are they merely loved because they *are* truths—but from a deeply-rooted and hourly-growing conviction that their acknowledgment and practical adoption by the wise of the earth, will lead to universal redemption from sin and misery. When the people shall no longer “spend money for that which is not bread; and their labour for that which satisfieth not; but hearken delightfully (unto the voice of reason), and eat that which is good, and let their souls delight themselves in fatness.” From the Atlantic to the Ganges the faith of Mahomed, at this day, insults the understanding of at least a hundred and thirty millions of our fellow beings. Nearly an equal number of Hindoos, in the vast Indian Empire, under British rule, drink the very dregs of superstition, while untold myriads wallow in the mire of an abominable idolatry, and in the worship of stocks and stones, dishonour that nature which, when guided by right reason, and that firm faith in truth, which is its first-born, would cover the earth with men as gods—wanting only their immortality. “For wisdom is better than rubies; and all the things that may be desired are not to be compared to it.” Therefore should we “get wisdom, and above all things, get understanding,” by maintaining the *right* and *duty* of every human being to speak and act according to the dictates of his conscience in matters of a religious nature. This is a truth which should be insisted upon by men of all creeds, castes, and denominations—as it is equally true, whether issuing from the lips of an Infidel or Christian; indeed, whatever is by nature good (as truth manifestly is) can neither be honoured nor disgraced by any human being: Yet that a Jew—one of a tribe *whose badge is sufferance*, remarkable for what Christian writers are pleased to call “stiffneckedness and obstinate credulity,” upon some points, and equal stiffneckedness and obstinate *incredulity*, with regard to others—should appear, without invitation, at the present alarming crisis in religious affairs, *to defend the scepticism of the Jewish people*—boldly and without reserve or mysticism—within hearing of the trumpets and organs of the Christian churches in this Christian land! to proclaim a GREAT TRUTH, that will shake the world of super-

stition from its centre to its circumference, and put to shame the worshippers of *idols* in all the countries of Europe!—will doubtless fill the credulous, who measure virtue by the length of belief, with horror and dismay; while hypocrites of every shape and hue—tost on the stormy ocean of contending passions, fear of exposure, and hate of the exposor, anger and affright struggling for mastery, making up the wretched sum of their existence—will gather courage from despair, when the highest note of hypocrisy will be sounded in every corner of the land—*lest that which hath been enjoyed so long, should be enjoyed no longer!* while the lover of his species will look on and smile, exclaiming in the joy of his heart: “The people that walked in darkness have seen a great light; they that dwell in the land of the shadow of death, upon them hath the light shined.”

If it can be shown, by clear and indisputable evidence, that the history of Jesus Christ (as commonly received among Christians) is a forgery and a fiction—that he was not the son of a virgin called Mary, the wife of Joseph the carpenter, who conceived through the power of the holy ghost, and ceased not to be a virgin even after she had become a mother—that he did *not* converse with the Jewish doctors in the temple—nor preach to the populace in Jerusalem and elsewhere—nor perform miraculous cures—nor hold communion with the devil—nor, in point of fact, *do any one act that pious enthusiasts and ignorant devotees have ascribed to him;* and further, that neither a god nor a man called Christ was crucified by Pontius Pilate, the Procurator, and therefore could not by possibility have arisen from the dead three days after an event which did not happen, and ascend into heaven, as is vulgarly *supposed*,—if, we repeat, it can be clearly proved that the foregoing assertions about the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, *are idle tales, having no foundation whatever in truth—mere fictions stolen from the mythological fables of ancient nations,*—the very root of the Christian system will be as nought! “Therefore, as the fire devour-eth the stubble, and the flame consumeth the chaff, so their root shall be as rottenness, and their blossom shall go up as dust.”

We are aware that with some men the oracles of faith are better heeded than the oracles of sense—as is fully proved by the fact that a vast majority of the human race believe, not merely that which is *superior* to sense, but that which is *contrary* to it. By such, the evidence of the senses is discarded—unless it accord and

harmonise with the evidence of faith; nor will our most sanguine anticipations justify us in declaring our conviction that the multitude, *as a multitude*, can be at once taught to see as clearly, and argue as rationally, on religious as on other subjects. No; religious prejudices are the most inveterate, destructive, and firmly rooted of all,—often sinking deep even into minds which have been polished by liberal and elegant society, and matured by anxious study—but who, nevertheless, have a tinge of religious fanaticism, which darkens reason—inducing moral disease, of a specific and isolated character, which, wherever it exists, undermines veneration for the majesty of truth, weakens the perception of right and justice, and gives over its unhappy victim as a prey to contending feelings and opinions, which rend and tear his moral being. But there are others ready to renounce their prejudices the moment they are proved to *be* prejudices—and to these we address ourselves; and, as the first step to be taken by those who would instruct mankind, is to implant a desire to know—stimulate curiosity, and arouse a spirit of investigation, that will not stop short in its career, but if possible, grasp the universe, and all its wonderful phenomena,—willing, nay eager, to emancipate itself from the thralldom of error,—we here offer to such, the files and pincers of argument—the material for thought,—the weight of which will crush Christian dogmatisers! who, while steeped to the very lips in ignorance as to the source and origin of the religion they proclaim, are yet generally better instructed than the majority of their opponents, who, if more honest, have unfortunately (*if possible*) less actual knowledge of the matter in hand. To such honest reasoners we recommend the perusal of our Letters—not in a vain or boastful, but friendly spirit,—so that they may hereafter exclaim: “And he hath made my mouth like a sharp sword; in the shadow of his hand hath he hid me, and made me a polished shaft.”

Inquiry can only be carried on *beneficially* by those who have knowledge of men and things; and whatever inquiry effects, as regards religious opinions, can never alarm the wise man—for *his* soul is comforted by the assurance that the reason of man is that which giveth dominion over the beasts of the field, the fowls of the air, and the fish of the sea, and will one day regulate and keep within due bounds, the passions of men. That, as “godliness profiteth in all things, both in this life and that which is to come,”

godliness must have a moral basis—it being evident, to all reflecting minds, that any attempt to separate godliness from morality shows an utter ignorance of the true meaning of the terms, which, being one and the same, is, as a moral element, incapable of division. Now, all morality is nourished by truth—that is to it as sap or vital juice to the plant—without which, it withers and dies. The rays of the morning Sun act upon the bosom of the chilled earth—when life, in its myriads of animal, insect, and vegetable forms, springs forth,—withdraw their cheering influence—all becomes stiffened and dead; so, without the rays of truth, would all moral existences lose vitality, and perish! Whoever, then, suppresses truth, or injures the truth-teller, makes war upon morality, and thus aims a malignant and deadly blow at our happiness in this life and that which is to come. Yet, with this truth staring us in the face, the custom of mankind has been—to hate those who hastened to deliver them from evil, by teaching them that morality is everything in the arithmetic of life. They have been called—*“Infidel scoffers—libertines—men who love not the law of the Lord—evil men and seducers—filthy dreamers, who set their mouths against the heavens—men who may be seen walking in the counsel of the ungodly, standing in the way of sinners, and sitting in the seat of the scornful, instead of finding their delight in the law of the Lord”*—who are, moreover, *“waxing worse and worse.”*—which seems barely possible in human beings so criminal. Such a farrago of abuse from the lips of Christian clergymen—directed against those who have been no otherwise criminal than in differing or departing from such opinions as the said clergymen deemed orthodox—is, as before noted, only disgraceful to its authors; but such is the line of argument ever adopted by the professors of law-made religions, who support their authority by vindictive personal slander—not seldom backed by sticks and staves, the dungeon, the faggot, and the rack!—in which most unjust and reckless course they have found a steady support in the fanaticism and vulgar prejudices of the multitude.

Some there are who will sit down to peruse these Letters in a warped spirit of incredulity, and not draw so much of intellectual nutriment from them as they otherwise might—because they argue, that if Christ had no more a real existence than Adonis, Bacchus, Mithra, or Hercules, the fiction would long since have been disco-

vered and exposed—so that the very existence of the belief in a *god, prophet, or man*, called Christ, after the lapse of so many centuries from its origin, is sufficient guarantee for its soundness ; which sort of reasoning is vastly popular, but most unsound,—as will appear by reflecting that the Chinese have, from time immemorial, worshipped the god Foh as an incarnate god,—precisely as Christians believe in the existence of an incarnate god in the person of Jesus Christ,—but surely no Christian will allow that the belief proves any thing more *than* the belief—they will surely not allow that the finger of the god Foh will work miracles !—as the Chinese now contend that it will, and would sooner suffer death than proclaim anything to the contrary. They held this belief before the advent of the Christian religion—centuries before the wonderful conception, by the power of the holy ghost, in the womb of the Virgin Mary,—yet none of our Christian readers will think that a proof of its soundness ! Those who think highly of antique opinions, simply because they are antique, would do well to remember that time may give error consistency and strength, and its roots a firmer hold of the soil in which they are cast—but cannot consecrate them. No prescriptive lease can show falsehood's right and title to reception among men ; for as things are eternal, so is the nature of things eternal,—and time, *itself ever the same*, changes the form, and in a manner gives a new dress to things—but cannot change their essence or principle. What is true now, was true a thousand years ago, and will be no less true *a thousand years hence*,—as beautifully observed by the Psalmist : “ A thousand years in the sight of God are but as yesterday, when it is past, and as a watch in the night.” To others who may object to our reasonings—not because they are inconclusive, but on the ground that the majority of mankind ever have been, and ever must be, kept in the dark, and their reason abused, if we desire to maintain even the appearance of virtue—we shall often have occasion to allude thereto in the course of these Letters.

It is matter of history, that religion has hitherto been the most powerful political instrument of which corrupt legislators have ever availed themselves in order to effect their selfish purposes. By religion we mean, the sentiment of faith in things beyond the visible, which, when warped and made the plastic instrument of political tyrants, becomes a cruel and desolating superstition ! Nor are

the superstitious notions of the lower orders fostered and encouraged by bad men only, but even by those reputed wise and good, if, indeed, it is possible that men can be wise or good who hold the fatal maxim—that *it is necessary to deceive the vulgar!* The practical application of this maxim gave birth to the opinions of the ancient philosophers spoken of by Cicero, who declared that—*all religious dogmas* had been *imagined* by ancient sages, with a view to guide those who could not be guided or restrained by reason. Numa, that wily Pagan, so much lauded by those who would fain smother, because they dare not develope, the human intellect, to us appears little better than a cheat, who cunningly feigned to have secret conversations with the nymph Egeria, with a view the more readily to impose upon his countrymen, and give them such a character and consistence as would fit them to bear the yoke of servitude—to which he gave a lasting character by the establishment of pontiffs, augurs, and that troop of deluders who for ages fattened on the vitals of the Roman people. As observed by a modern author—it would be superfluous to shew how much *ancient* priests followed this maxim, in keeping for themselves sublime doctrines, while they fed the people with fables—to which we may add, that the modern priests are not far behind in this particular; but in no country were priests and legislators of this class so numerous as in Egypt, where the trick, so profitable everywhere, of pretending to govern by divine authority, never failed of complete success. Diodorus Siculus (b. 1, p. 59) after mentioning that Muenes, the first mortal legislator among the Egyptians, pretended to derive his laws from Hermes, adds, “similarly it is said, that of the Grecians, Minos in Crete, and Lycurgus in Lacedæmon, gave out that they had derived their laws, the one from Jupiter, and the other from Apollo;” and among the nations it is reported that this maxim obtained and was a cause of great advantage to the believers. We, however, who think that none can be permanently *advantaged* by falsehood—who hold for maxim, that it is necessary to *undeceive* the vulgar,—promise our readers to do it—boldly! but at the same time, shall carefully avoid shocking, wantonly, the conscientious scruples of the most orthodox. Evidence none can gainsay will be furnished—let it be examined by those who are competent to the task,—we ask no more, and fear not the result!

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LETTER 2.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I *even* I am the Lord; and besides me there is no other."—**Psalm XLIII.**

CHRISTIANS,—Those among you familiar with the old Jewish writings—as well as modern Jewish opinions—are aware that we reject the Christian Histories touching the divine character of Jesus Christ—and read as fable what is told of his resurrection from the dead—together with what is said of his *second* coming in power and glory, in order to judge the world—in a word, all that is included under the head Christian Doctrine. We have heard the Bible justly called "The Compendium of Ancient Hebrew Literature"—and it is not a little strange that the prophecies therein contained, so often triumphantly referred to by Christians as proofs of the soundness of their doctrines, are considered by the Jews as the very pillars of *their* heterodoxy—as to them it appears that a careful examination of the prophecies, so far from supporting, offer a complete refutation to the notion that the Messiah has fulfilled his mission upon earth according to the promises made by the God of Hosts through the mouths of his prophets. At the very time Christ is *said* to have appeared, the Jews, we are informed, rejected him as an imposter—except a few of the most credulous, who, like the credulous people of all other nations, are ever ready to swallow strange stories and follow the first cunning man who sets about religion-making—nor will the strangeness of his doctrine be any ob-

jection to it, but rather tell in its favour and swell the number of his dupes. Josephus observes—that the belief in a Messiah was a “vulgar error,” which obtained credence among some few of his nation, by their building their expectations “*on but one ambiguous oracle or prophecy found in their sacred books.*” What say the prophecies of Ezekiel, Jeremiah, and those in Deuteronomy? By Ezekiel we are told that when God shall deliver Israel, “The tree of the field shall yield her fruit, and the earth shall yield her increase. And they shall be safe in their land, and shall know that I *am* the Lord, when I have broken the bonds of their yoke and delivered them out of the hands of those that served themselves of them.” And what was to be the sign of the covenant of Christ according to Jeremiah, but this: “And they shall teach no more every man his neighbour, and every man his brother, saying know the Lord; for they *shall* all know me, from the least of them unto the greatest of them, saith the Lord; for I will forgive their iniquity. And I will remember their sin no more.” In Deuteronomy we read that “The Lord God will raise up unto thee (that is the Jews) a prophet from the midst of thee, of thy brethren, like unto me; unto him shall ye hearken.” Daniel prophecies that in the days of the Messiah there should be only *one* kingdom and *one* king on earth, the King Messiah—and any who are sufficiently pains-taking to read the beautiful Prophecies of Isaiah, will find it therein declared that there shall be *one* religion and *one* law throughout the world in the days of the Messiah.—What the above prophecies prove, we leave every candid reader to determine. For ourselves, we rely not upon interpretations of prophecy *merely*, but draw apologies for our bold declaration, that no such God, prophet, or mere man ever did exist, from the fountain of nature itself. We have grown grey in the study of these subjects, and hasten to give all it may concern the results of our experience.

The opinion that the character of Christ was a Mythos, has long been held by the most distinguished among the literati of Europe—but none have been so successful in working out and giving currency to that opinion as the celebrated Straus, a German writer of immense erudition and research, who, in his “New Life of Christ,” has done more than any who have preceded him to sap and undermine the foundation of the Christian System. The work is almost unknown in this country, as it has not yet been translated—and

few even among the élite of society care to read German books—besides the work is very expensive, and therefore beyond the reach of the millions—else, perhaps, would it be unnecessary that our Letters should appear—but *the poorest may read these*, and at their leisure—and as our philosophy is *in substance* the same as this learned writer, all may now become acquainted with his wonderful conceptions, in a modified, and we trust, simple form.

The term Mythos has been variously interpreted, but may be shortly stated as incarnated conception, or purely ideal personifications of certain vague and slender ancient traditions—partly true and partly false—in part historic, in part philosophic—imaginatively amplified—from which slender traditions and veritable history the materials were drawn of which the character of Christ was made up—precisely as was the case with Osiris and Isis with the Egyptians—Jupiter, Minerva, Venus, and others among the Greeks.

Our readers will be materially assisted in the comprehension of the full meaning of the term Mythos, by being reminded that it was formerly the custom with Hebrew, Pagan, and Christian doctors to write in an allegorical style—but as the unlettered may not know what is conveyed by the word allegorical, for their benefit we may observe that it is that mode of speech in which the words used enclose a meaning which does not appear by attending only to the letter of the discourses. Varro, a celebrated Roman writer, mentions three ages of the world—the unknown, the mythological (when everything was concealed, except to the few, under the veil of allegory), and the historical. We profess now to speak only of the second, or age of mythology. As to the first, or what Varro calls the unknown, we believe that it is treated of in the sacred book, but almost always under the veil of allegory, as will presently appear, when we refer to the books of Genesis, written by the sagest of all human lawgivers—if he can be called a *human* lawgiver who was inspired by God himself—stood face to face with The Most High—and received laws written by the finger of God amid the thunders of Mount Sinai. Zathraustes, Minos, Zamolxis, Muenes, Zaleucus (who gave out that he was assisted by Minerva), and Solon (who availed himself of the sanctity of Epimenides)—all professed to hold a divine right to teach and govern mankind—but who were then wise enough to question the validity of their credentials? The same, perhaps, may be said by sceptics with re-

spect to Moses, when he demanded submission to his laws on the ground that he had received them from a god called Iao—but we, as believers in the Mosaic dispensation, cannot admit that the doctrines of a Mohammed and a Moses rest on the same authority—to do this would be to overturn the Bible. No!—we claim for Moses a higher rank than can be claimed for any other human legislator—as one endowed by the Creator of all things with more of his divine spirit than ever fell to the lot of any other mortal. Our authority for saying this—is the Scripture—and no higher authority can a Christian desire, where we find it written, “And God said unto Moses *I am that I am*; and he said, Thus shalt thou say unto the children of Israel, *I am* hath sent me unto you;” and that Moses was valued more than any who had preceded him, must appear, when God spake unto him and said “I am the Lord. And I appeared unto Abraham, unto Isaac, and unto Jacob by the name of God Almighty; but by my name Jehovah was I not known to them.” And yet it is past contradiction that the books written by Moses cannot, without the grossest absurdity, be taken *literally*, or as any other than figurative expressions—which are, and ever have been, a riddle or enigma to the vulgar—nor have we any evidence that Moses *desired* them to be understood by the Jewish people—for it is contrary to reason and common sense to suppose that if he desired them to understand, he was deficient in the power to make them do so. We need hardly insist that the pretended God called Jesus Christ, is inseparably connected with and dependent upon the literal interpretation of the first chapters—of the book of Genesis, where we read of the fall of man, and the great disorder introduced into the world by a serpent, which invites a woman (Eve) to pluck the forbidden fruit in a garden eastward of Eden, where the Lord put the man that he had formed, and then commanded the man, saying “Of every tree of the garden thou mayest freely eat: But of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil thou shalt not eat of it; for the day that thou eatest thereof thou shalt surely die.” The consequence of the fault said then to have been committed by our first parents, has been the knowledge of good and evil: “And the Lord God said—Behold the man is become as one of us to know good and evil; and now lest he put forth his hand, and take also of the tree of life and eat, and live for ever. Therefore the Lord God sent him forth from the Garden of Eden

to till the ground from whence he was taken." And unto the woman he said—"I will greatly multiply thy sorrow and thy conception; in sorrow thou shalt bring forth thy children; and thy desire shall be to thy husband, and he shall rule over thee." The dullest will see that as Christ came into the world to repair the sins of the world, had man not fallen into sin there could have been no *atonement* for sin, unless we can suppose atonement for a sin that had never been committed. These two dogmas cannot be separated—they must stand or fall together. Without sinfulness practised by our first parents in the Garden of Paradise, Christ would not have appeared to bear our iniquities. Let us, then, examine the story about the fall of man, or that supposition of the double state of man, first created by the good principle or God, and afterwards passing under the dominion of the bad principle or Devil—and if we show that neither Moses, nor the learned among the Jews, at a subsequent period, considered it any otherwise than a cosmogonique fable—an ingenious allegory—through the veil of which the vulgar could not penetrate—precisely of the same nature as those made by the Magi or Persian priests respecting Ormusd and Ahrimanes and by the Egyptians upon Osiris and Typhon—at least one half of the work we have undertaken will be accomplished. Zoroastre, the reputed author of the Genesis of the Magi, thus expresses himself when speaking of the successive action of the two principles in the world: "Ormusd, he observes, God of light and good principle, learns to Zoroastre that he has given to man a place of delights and abundance. If I had not given to my creatures that place of abundance, no other power could have given it. That place is Eiren; which at the commencement was finer than the whole world besides, and only exists by my will. Nothing can equal the beauty of that place of delights that I have given. I have acted first, and then Petiare (that is Ahrimanes, or the bad principle). That Ahrimanes full of death, makes in the waters the great serpent, mother of winter, which spreads cold in the waters, in the earth, and in the trees. In another part of the same work we find the following: "Ahrimanes or the principle of evil and of darkness, that by which evil comes into the world, appears in the sky under the form of a great serpent, accompanied by dews or bad geniuses, carrying everywhere death and destruction."

The above are specimens of the eastern or allegorical style of

writing—and it must be at once evident to the most superficial reader that Ormusd is but a Mythos, or personification of the principle of good, whilst Ahrimanes is a personification of the principle of evil. The remark applies in like manner to the tales about Osiris and Typhon, Mithra, Hercules, Isis, Adonis, and all the deities of which we read in fabulous histories. The similarity between the tale told by Zoroastre about the garden of delights called Eiren, and that told by Moses about Eden, cannot fail to strike our readers—the *causes* of which similarity will be seen in future Letters—where it will also be shewn that the most fatal, as well as the most general, of all errors have had their origin in the mistakes of the ignorant, *who could not distinguish between a poetical personification and a real existence*—which fatal mistakes the ancient priests cared not to correct. We may add, that the reason why in the one case the garden is called Eiren and in the other Eden, is that the Hebrew copyists, instead of Eiren have put Eden—which will not appear wonderful to those who know that the two letters *r* and *d* in the Hebrew language, are very much alike in their form. Maimonide (one of the most learned of the Jewish writers) observes, when speaking of the books of Genesis, “We ought not to take literally that which is written in the Books of the Creation, nor to have the same ideas of them as are common with the vulgar. Were it otherwise our ancient sages would not have taken so much pains to *conceal the sense*, and keep before the eyes of the uninstructed the veil of allegory which conceals the truths it contains. Taken literally, that work contains ideas of the divinity the most extravagant and absurd. Whoever can guess at the true sense of these should take care not to divulge it. It is a maxim taught us by our sages, above all, in connection with the work of the six days. It is possible that by our own intelligence, or by assistance from the lights of others, some may come at the true meaning—then they should be silent respecting it; or, if they do speak of it, they should do so obscurely, as I myself do, leaving the rest to be divined or guessed by those who have the ability to comprehend me.” It is also observed by this learned Jew, that “the love of allegory and enigma was by no means peculiar to Moses and the ancient Jewish writers, but common to all the sages of antiquity.” Philo (another Jewish writer of great reputation) held precisely the same opinions with regard to the character of the

sacred books of the Hebrews. "It is confessed by all who know anything of the Scripture, that all is there enveloped under the veil of enigma and parable," said Origen (a doctor of great reputation with the Christians) who regarded the history of Adam and Eve, the serpent, and the waters of Paradise as an allegory. St. Augustine, in his work called the "City of God," acknowledges that "all wise men agree that the adventure of Eve in plucking the fatal apple and giving it to her husband, together with the tête-à-tête said to have taken place between her and the serpent, is a mere fiction." If we compare the allegory concerning Mithra, the great divinity of the Persians, with the history of Jesus Christ, we shall be at once struck with the remarkable coincidence in all the essential particulars. Thus, Mithra, we are told, was born on the same day as Christ—and that Mithra, it is well known, was but a personification of the sun—or the great luminary which seems to be the parent or cause of life and vegetation. Mithra was called the sun, and Christ was called the light which enlightens every man coming into the world. Mithra was born in a grotto—Christ in a stable—Bacchus and Jupiter in a cave, which St. Justin has remarked. We are told that Christ reposed in a grotto, when the magi, or wise men, came to adore him. But who were these wise men? The adorers of Mithra or the sun. What presents did they carry to the rising god? Three sorts of presents consecrated to the sun by the worship of the Arabs, of the Chaldeans, and other Eastern people. By whom were they informed of his birth? By astrology, their favourite science. What were their dogmas? They believed (according to Chardin) the eternity of the first being—which is light. How are they said to occupy themselves in that fable? In fulfilling the first duty of their religion—which commanded them to worship the rising Sun. What name was given by the prophets to Christ? That of East—The East, said they, is his name. Did space permit, we might pursue the parallel,—but must content ourselves for the present in calling the attention of all Christians to such striking coincidences.

There are few, even among the most unthinking of our readers, who will not laugh at the strange remark of Firmicus (a Christian doctor) who, when vigorously attacking the ancient religions, or, as he called them, *degrading superstitions*, has taken great pains to compare the characters of Mithra and Christ—noting the traits

peculiar to each—not forgetting to dwell on the astonishing resemblance between the Persian or Mithriaque mysteries and the European or Christian mysteries,—however, explains this remarkable similarity between these mysteries and gods by observing (as did Tertullian and Justin) that long before any Christians existed the devil took great pleasure in copying their mysteries and ceremonies, *that were to be—so that he might enjoy a laugh at the Christians' expense!* For ourselves, who are not in the devil's secrets, (as some philosophers seem to be), we freely confess that to us it appears that the religion of Christ, borrowed from that of the ancient Persians, which was itself but the worship of the Sun, has conserved the same dogmas—the same practises—the same mysteries—or nearly so—that the accessories may have been more or less different—but the basis was precisely the same.

It is undoubtedly true that Tertullian, Firmicus, Justin, and others, call the devil to their aid in order to explain this wonderful resemblance—but as without the intervention of the devil, it is easy to perceive that when two religions resemble each other so perfectly, the most ancient is the mother, and the youngest is the daughter—it seems beyond dispute, that since the worship of Mithra is infinitely more ancient than that of Christ, and his ceremonies practised long before Christ was in existence, that the Christians are incontestably either a sect—or mere copyists of the religion of the magi or priests of Mithra—unless we are prepared to invert the order of things and prove to the satisfaction of all parties (which, perhaps, expert sophists may do) that new religions do not grow or spring out of old ones, but on the contrary, old religions spring out of new ones—but always aided by the accoucheury of the devil, who, according to the above-mentioned saints and fathers of the Christian Church, overreaches God by anticipating and making common to many nations that faith which he had intended for his chosen people. All that we insist upon is, that the most learned apologists of the Christian faith admit that the religion of Mithra had its sacraments, its baptisms, its eucharists, its consecrations by mystical words—in short, all that paraphernalia which ill-informed theologians, and their equally ill-informed disciples, have supposed were first introduced at what they term the coming of Christ!

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THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

AS A HUMAN BEING,

DISPROVED!

BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,
FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 3.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. *I, even I*, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

"Every man is *brutish by his knowledge*; every founder is confounded by the graven image: for his molten image is falsehood, and there is no breath in them."—JEREMIAH LI. 17.

We offer an unbroken chain of evidence, of which all may, if they be diligent, reach the point of suspension, to prove, as far as anything in morals can be proved, that Jesus Christ, the supposed author of the Christian faith, never had more than an ideal existence—but then, it must be born in mind, each link of this chain must be examined, or there will be a defect—a kind of chasm in our proofs—as it is clear that the evidence unexamined is *de facto* no evidence at all—the strongest reasons unsought into are but on a level with the weakest,—nay, it often happens that the advantage lies on the side of the latter, as they generally float upon the surface of things, and therefore require no effort in those who compass them. To the blind, the most beautiful productions of a Raffaele or a Carracci are in no wise preferable to the miserable daubs of a village painter—in like manner, the deepest or the shallowest reasonings are of equal worth and brightness to those afflicted with mental blindness, who are too often led (as the blind need a guide) by imposters, sacred and profane, who, in the words of our text, make them *brutish by their knowledge*.

It was fabled by ancient sages—that truth lay hid in wells, or deep pits—thereby intimating that if we would possess so bright a jewel, we must dive and search for it—and however true it may be that there is one “whose ways are past finding out,” all besides seems open to our investigation, and shame upon deluders who would hinder the right use of our reasoning faculties. Let us, then, dig for truth into the very bowels of antiquity, and draw from thence mythologic lore—that rich material, without which we cannot have a solid and lasting foundation upon which to raise the imperishable superstructure of rational opinion. The treasures that a knowledge of mythology would pour into the lap of humanity are now, as in times long past, hidden from the vulgar gaze, and like parks, pleasure-grounds, and all things else, belong only to the few. The touch of Midas, it is said, turned all things into gold—but the magic touch of the searching investigator will do more than that; for it is surely more noble, as it is infinitely more useful, to add to our stock of sound information, or rub off the rust it had accumulated by lying idle, and so to speak, give it a brightness it had not before, than to convert by the simple touch, all things into a barren metal. Some, as though possessed by the spirit of darkness, seem to pride themselves in the renunciation of reason—that most precious gift of God to man—and roll on in the mire of their own superstition until, like the swine into which we are told a legion of devils entered, they are hurried down steepes and precipices, and perish in a sea of fanaticism.

The hater of instruction must needs be a helper, if not a lover of deception—as it is manifest that all ignorance is negative deception; besides, how shall the ignorant man be guaranteed from the evils which beset him on every side? Alas! how is he to be protected from the pitfalls dug for him by the enemies of truth—more cunning than the fox and cruel than the wolf?—or how should he upon whom “the light hath not shined,” do ought but stumble in his darkness? We love not the traders in human ignorance—who, like the spotted hyæna, in silence and in darkness, seize upon their prey—but would scare them off, or make their intended victims strong enough to wrestle with and destroy them—by imparting that light which will enable them to see things as they *are*, and not as they have been told they are: having ever admired and felt the full force of the singularly expressive adage in Plutus—

Scire meum nihil est, nisi me scire hoc sciat alter.

My knowledge is nothing unless I can cause another to know what I know.

Those who have examined, in a candid spirit, the contents of our former letters, will now be in a condition to descend with us and obtain that which is to all but the bold and single-minded, a hidden treasure. The mine of intellectual wealth has been opened to the view of all—let those who have the courage proceed to explore it, which all may do with perfect safety, if guided by experience and accompanied by the inestimable safety lamp of a pure and upright conscience. The promise made to enlighten—not to deceive—unvulgarise the vulgar—shall be faithfully kept—that is, if our ability to do, keep pace with our desire to do; and above all, we shall aim at simplicity of style, so that, if possible, our observations may be within the reach of the humblest capacity—striving in this matter to imitate Plutarchus, of whom it was said by Scaliger, that “he wrote more for men of the world than men of erudition.” Nevertheless, the latter class of readers, it is humbly hoped, will have little cause to complain of our want of research—as it is by no means impossible to put much valuable learning in a very simple dress, free from that profusion of ornamental rubbish which serves only to encumber, and, as it were, hide it beneath a heap. Such abuse of language deprives the mind of its energy and suffocates judgment; and some one has happily observed, that even truths, if they deprived the mind of its elasticity, would degrade human intellect into brutish instinct. What, for example, can we learn from such pretty jargon as the following—that “God is a circle, whose centre is everywhere and circumference nowhere!” or the gratuitous nonsense of Albert Vieira, a Portuguese preacher, who wrote that “If the Almighty should happen to appear in a geometrical form, it would surely be the circular in preference to the triangular, the square, or the pentagonal!”

If Firmicus, and others, mentioned in our last, were in the devil’s secrets, surely this bold preacher must have had commerce with the Deity—else how should he come to know that God preferred the shape of a circle to that of a triangle, or a square?—truly such preachers are rare blasphemers. Surely, if they had such astonishing information, they should have set about writing a history of God, as Defoe did that of the devil, for the edification of all true

believers ! Synesius, a Christian bishop, in his Hymns, speaks of the Deity in the following impious manner—"Thou art a father and a mother, a male and a female ; thou art voice and silence ; thou art the fruitful nature of nature ! Thou art the father of all fathers ; and being without a father, thou art thine own father and son !! O, source of sources, principle of principles, root of roots ! thou art the unity of unities, the number of numbers ; being both unity and number !!! Thou art one and all things, one of all things, and one before all things !" This ridiculous and, to us it appears, most mischievous mode of writing, we shall carefully shun, else we might invent "most serious names to hide our ignorance" and dogmata, the hollowness of which might be covered by shewy language,—but we have yet to learn that the sublime drivel above quoted from the early Christian writers, and to which we might add a moderately sized volume, on the "transcendental qualities," "imaginative re-actions," the "vibratiuncles," "intentional species," "love spirits," and other figments or mental fungusses of modern ideologists, have done anything more than sharpen the weapons of the Atheists, who, like John Toland, laugh at the pains taken by unwary theologians to refine the Deity into a mere nothing, and exclaim—

Others, whose heads sublimer notions trace,
Cunningly prove that thou art almighty space ;
And space we're sure is nothing—*ergo*, thou ;
These men slip into the truth they know not how !

That subjects, however abstruse, about which something can be known, may, by a proper course on the part of public teachers, be made perfectly intelligible to the meanest capacity, is an opinion in which we are fortified by Moses and the prophets, in the sacred volume, and the writings of such men as Bacon, Locke, and others, among the profane ; the latter are remarkable for the clearness of their style and the modesty with which they publish their views upon all subjects—and like Moses and the prophets, insist most eloquently upon the incomprehensibility of the Deity ; as it is written that "none could look upon the face of the Lord and live." We read in Exodus, "And Moses said, I will now turn aside and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt ;" but the Lord (evidently not caring to be seen) said, "Draw not nigh hither, put off thy shoes from thy feet ; for the place whereon thou standest is

holy ground." We elsewhere find that "the Lord spake to Moses from a thick cloud;" to be sure, one reason was that the people might not hear him when he spake—but it also served as a sort of screen through which the eyes of Moses could not penetrate.

To return from this short digression, which, however, we trust will not be without its uses, as it may shew our readers the necessity there is that all who love wisdom should confine themselves to those subjects which lie within the domain of reason—beyond the boundaries of which "the wisdom of the wise is as foolishness." Nor will such limits be so hard to bear as some may be disposed to believe—for in reality, the knowledge of things is as the horizon that flies before us, and seems to mock our pursuit—keeping those who seek to grasp it in never-ceasing eternal motion. Had we all knowledge—all mental, nay physical motion would stop—none could bear the weight that *omniscience* would cast upon them; and those who desire it, like Semele, who wished that Jupiter might visit her in all the bright refulgence of his glory, would be destroyed in its fulfilment.

The fable of the Sphinx has been supposed to enclose as in a semi-transparent shell or covering, many useful hints affecting the acquirement of knowledge to those who are sufficiently sharp-sighted to penetrate beneath the surface. The Sphinx, as the ancients inform us, had the claws of a Griffin, the face of a woman, and the wings of a bird, and resided somewhere near the city Thebes, on the top of a high mountain—was noted for her cruelty in destroying all those who were unable to interpret her riddles—until Oedipus, a cunning man, induced by the hope of high reward, interpreted her famous riddle—slew, and took the monster—then placed the carcase upon a slow-paced ass,—by all of which is evidently meant what we have endeavoured to convey to the minds of our readers, that knowledge is a monster which can only be conquered by the brave and prudent, as Odipus is represented to have been. We are moreover told, that he was lame in his feet—by which we are admonished, that all who would vanquish and overcome knowledge, must do it slowly and by degrees—not running foolishly and out of breath—but, as before observed, calmly and deliberately, as though lame in our feet—so that we may not justify the proverb—swift a-foot, slow in head. Placing the empty trunk of knowledge upon an ass—which is here meant to signify experience—also en-

closes a moral pregnant with wisdom, the substance of which we have before given—which is, that however difficult it may be to unriddle riddles, when once this is effected in the manner described, they are placed upon the back of dull experience—or, as the fable hath it—mounted on a slow-paced ass,—an illustration of which is furnished by the workings of the human mind in this our time, when men may be seen the most obstinately dull—to compare whom with the inoffensive ass, would certainly be libelling the latter—are nevertheless made by the triumphs of experience, masters of more actual knowledge than fell to the lot of many who were reputed wise among their ancestors.

The remarks in our last, touching the allegorical character of the ancient Hebrew, Pagan, and Christian writings—the parallel drawn between the character of Mithra or Persian Deity, known to be the personification of the Sun, and that of Jesus Christ, will fill pious bigots and gloomy fanatics with dismay—nay it has so filled them; and terrible are the denunciations—and awful the threatenings of the morally diseased!—but, if what we have already written has unfortunately plunged them into choler—that which we have to write will but plunge them into more choler!—as our moral physis will, we fear, only increase their distemper! We are not among those who think it wise “to do evil that good may come of it;” and surely to desert the post of truth, and cease to publish that which all should know, from fear of the tintamara of interested bigots and their stupid dupes—however good as regards ourselves—would give a mortal stab to the progress of truth and liberty. It can be no matter of astonishment to the reflecting mind that the ill-instructed among the people should be ever ready to support public persecutors in their attacks on the consciences of all who dissent from them, or that they should remain in profound ignorance as to the origin of their religion, when in matters of faith, unlike the deaf adder, they *have* heeded the voice of the charmer, charmed he never so *sillily*—nay, we know that the *charm*ers themselves—(we of course mean the priests)—know not that the Christian religion is but a branch—and a fast withering branch—of the great Upas tree of mythologic fiction; but it is with religions as with streams at which many slake their thirst—but few care to examine their source. Serapis, Isis, Anubis, Osiris, and Typhon were adored in Egypt—but all these gods were ridiculed and despised by the Romans, who

themselves adored Jupiter, Mercury, Diana, Ceres, and Pluto—that is to say, precisely the same Deities under other names. Such, it has been truly remarked, is the empire of names over the unthinking multitude, whose dogmatism upon these subjects is ever (to speak like mathematicians) as the squares of their ignorance; and what can be more evident than if those who, born on the banks of the Tyber, thus laughed to scorn the gods of the Egyptians, had been born on the banks of the Nile, they would have held that Serepis, Isis, and the rest, were the true Deities.

In Plato we read, that at periods very remote the Greeks worshipped the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars; but he did not seem to be aware, or have the slightest conception of what all now know, that Hercules, Apollo, Bacchus, Esculapius, &c., were but imaginary characters—like Christ—having no real existence—mere idols of the mind. We know that expressing ideas by symbols was universal throughout the ancient world. Thus—a harlot being despised by the Egyptians, was symbolized, by a creature like the Sphinx, with huge claws, the face of a woman, and the body of a beast. The famous Hercules and his twelve works will be shewn to be fictional, as Hercules was a mere personification of the power, force, and grandeur of the Sun and his supposed twelve works—the seeming motion of that luminary through the twelve signs of the Zodiac, or as they have been figuratively called, houses of the Sun. We have already called your attention to the fact that the Persian Divinity, Mithra, was but the Sun, as is shewn by ancient records. The philosopher Julian observes—“We celebrate some days before the first day of the year with magnificent sports, in honour of the invincible God, Mithra or the Sun. May we long have the happiness to celebrate thy appearance, O Sun, king of the universe!” This expression is after the manner of Plato, who calls the Sun, the “Son of God;” and we are informed that all the monuments raised by the Persians to their great Divinity, have these words inscribed on them “To the God Sun, the invincible Mithra.” It is supposed even by many who have reputation for intelligence, that Hercules was a robust Greek prince, who conquered the Nemean lion, and did other wonderful things, in the same manner that many intelligent people as erroneously imagine that Christ and a cortège of twelve apostles performed certain extraordinary things eighteen hundred years ago.

Hercules was reputed among the Greeks to be the son of Alcemene, by Jupiter the father of the Gods; this story is wonderful enough, but by no means so extraordinary as that of the Christians who maintain that the Holy Ghost was the father, whilst a virgin was the mother of Jesus Christ who, born in Judea, early in life worked at his reputed father Joseph's business, namely, carpentering and joinering.—Hercules, according to the fable, was born in Thebes, had many wives and children, and many princes of Greece put in a claim to be considered as his kinsmen—hence the Heraclides, who boasted that they were descendents from Hercules. The tomb of Hercules is also shewn in Cadiz, as that of Christ at Jerusalem, and temples, altars, solemn fetes, hymns, and sacred traditions, nourished and kept alive the delusion in the minds of the common people, whatever opinion the few who thought thereupon might have held respecting it, so that all contributed to swell a chorus in praise of the wonderful Hercules, who came upon earth to benefit the world in general, and the Greeks in particular, in the same manner that all orthodox persons in our own time lift up their voices in praise of Jesus Christ, who came to save souls in general, and those of the Jews in particular, each people believing that God has a special interest in their exclusive welfare. That the Egyptians and the Phœncians have had the most influence upon the religions of other nations, is universally admitted, and that astronomy was the very soul of the Egyptian and Phœncien system, is well known to those who have studied these subjects—together with the fact which my readers should carefully remember, that the Sun was their grand divinity, and called Hercules, the worship of whom extended itself from Meroe in Ethiopia (the Ethiopians were the fathers of the Egyptians) and Thebes in Upper Egypt, to the frozen regions of Scythia—from the remotest parts of India to the shores of the Atlantic—from the forests of Germany to the burning sands of Lybia. Let not the honest reader be scared by the above facts, but have *faith in truth* as the best anchor of safety—of which it has been poetically said “No tint of words can spot its snowy mantle, nor turn its sceptre into iron.” Let none fear that a Divine Religion will be unable to withstand the shock of the most eloquent sophistry—but Superstition is DEVILISH, and must be destroyed!

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LETTER 4.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 8, 10, 11.

"They provoked him to jealousy with strange Gods; with abominations provoked they him to anger."—DEUT. XXXII. 16.

CHRISTIANS,

An acute modern author has observed,* that "the ordinary stages through which any discovery in phisiology, involving views that go greatly beyond those commonly entertained, has to pass, are first, to be positively denied as false, contrary to experience, absurd, and unworthy the attention of sensible men; secondly, to be shewn to have been known and admitted before, to a degree depriving the observer who was just now ridiculed for having believed it of any credit—for having seen with more justness and originality than others, the disputed novelty; thirdly, to be denounced as a perilous innovation—endangering religion and the moral bonds of society; fourthly and finally, to be received by every body as a matter of common knowledge—the only wonder being that it was ever doubted, and its supposed anomalies and contradictions to nature's laws shewn to be, and represented by the writers of the day as, the most striking illustrations of the harmony of the physical world."

The above remarks apply with equal force to opinions in general, and need not be confined in their application to those affecting

* See accounts of some recent effects of Mesmarism, by Herbert Mayo, F.R.S.
—MEDICAL GAZ. Nos. 31, 32, 33.

physiology in particular, as all opinions have been thus treated which tended to disturb received notions in moral as well as physical science. Who has ever attempted to pluck up the ancient tree of superstition, under the shade of which the entire human race has hitherto reposed—but has deeply felt the withering effects of the ridicule of the unscrupulous and the denunciations of those whose *craft* is in danger?—while, alas! but few have seen their opinions, however sound and healthful, take root in the human mind, and put forth fruit beyond the reach of cant and cavil! If this *has* been the case—if such the fate of opinions but moderately heterodox—what are *we* justified in expecting, who would plough up the very foundations of superstition's temple in this the most civilized portion of the globe, by proving that Jesus Christ—now worshipped as a once incarnate God, said to have been born in Judea, and crucified on Mount Calvary—never had more than an ideal existence—and that the religion which rests thereon is a desolating superstition—invented by those who “make lies their refuge.” Already have we been told that our Letters are “false and contrary to experience—totally absurd, and unworthy the attention of sensible men;” so that these opinions, in common with all others, have passed through their *first* stage. With regard to the *second*, we lay no claim to originality as respects the grand conception—but we do lay claim to originality in all that affects execution; but even this we would willingly give up, if by so doing we can give satisfaction to our opponents—not being over anxious to be thought originals—but rather desirous to be the propounders of correct opinions, caring little by whom they were *first* broached; and as to the matter of *credit*, we are not very solicitous thereupon, except inasmuch as the reputation our writings may obtain will be a kind of passport, and find them more ready acceptance with those who only read works of great repute, about which all the world talk.

Were it worth the pains we might insist with Solomon, that there is nothing new under the sun, or as a witty profane author has remarked—that “originality is but judicious imitation.” We shall, however, no farther notice this matter of originality than to say, that we agree with a writer in the “Edinburgh Review,” who observed, that “he is not so much the inventor of an opinion who first conceives and proclaims it, as he who proclaims it so loudly, so perseveringly, and so clearly, that all are compelled to hear and understand him.” We shall presently—nay we have arrived at the third stage—that is, we

are denounced as haters of truth—unbelieving Jews—perilous innovators, who wish to overthrow religion, and loosen the moral bonds of society ; but then, it has been by those who, “born as the wild ass’s colt,” are moreover, not likely to be tamed by reason and common sense, who have sagely denounced our opinions without taking the pains to read what we have written, and farther, *protest* that they will not examine anything we do write—so that if they know our opinions to be subversive of religion and morality, their knowledge must be intuitive. In this they imitate the Pharisees, who, we are told, contemptuously asked—“Can any good thing come out of Nazareth?” Saying in scorn, “Look and see! for out of Galilee ariseth a prophet.” *They* have passed to the silent tomb, but their spirit remains. The lapse of eighteen hundred years has made little improvement in the character of spiritual teachers. The Pharisee of to-day is the Pharisee of all time; he is still the “whitened wall” who makes the credulity and misery of the people the ladder by which he mounts to power and fortune—blowing the trumpet of his own renown and publishing his own sanctity at the corners of our streets, as in olden time—and, as then, making all those not so hypocritical as themselves, feel their galling yoke and the sharp edge of their authority! Priests of former ages are said to have crucified Jesus, and would willingly have crucified all those who believed in him; now—oh strange difference!—they would willingly crucify those who do *not* believe that he, who has been called by Luciana a “crucified sophist,” was a God in human shape. Bitter, and never to be forgotten, were the persecutions suffered by the Jewish people, through ages of Christian bigotry and intolerance, because they laughed to scorn the idle, but to Christians profitable tale, that a man called Jesus Christ, whose very existence we deny, was the temporal Messiah promised by Jehovah to come in power and might to resuscitate the fallen glories of the children of Israel! We may be taunted, despised, and rejected—Christians may still spit upon our Jewish gaberdine—they may accuse us to the judges of the land as stubborn heretics, desirous to undermine the *sacred* foundations of their *holy* faith—but in the words of the poet we may exclaim—“Oh! father Abraham, what these Christians are! whose own hard dealings teaches them to suspect the thoughts of others!”

Our opinion that the character of Christ is a Mythos, if founded upon the rock of truth, cannot perish, but may safely defy the waves

of error, which will dash over it in vain ; we prophecy that ere long it will be received by all as a matter of common knowledge, when this opinion will have reached its *final* stage, and the wonder will be great that *any* people upon whom God had not sent a "strong delusion that they might believe a lie," should, for a single hour, have credited the monstrous fiction ! The stars fought against Sissera ; and surely the heavens will fight against the depravers of the human mind, and put them to flight, when it shall be known that Christ was but a personification of the Sun—and no more existed either as man or God, in divine or human shape, than Adonis, Atys, Bacchus, Osiris, or any other heathen personifications of the Sun.

It is now past doubt, that what we read about Adonis and Venus is mere fiction, as that of Osiris, Bacchus, and Atys, which in all essential particulars are precisely the same—all having no other object than to represent by a sign or symbol in human shape, the Sun's apparent motions through the twelve signs of the zodiac ; but we shall presently prove that Hercules and his twelve works related to the Sun and the twelve signs—as we shall also shew that Christ and his twelve apostles relate to the same phenomena.

We do not deny that many men called Christ, *may* in former times, have existed in Jerusalem and elsewhere, any more than we deny that such a person or persons as Hercules once existed in Greece—but we do distinctly deny that either Christ or Hercules were gods, demi-gods, or prophets, or performed the works commonly attributed to them. Christ no more foretold the destruction of Jerusalem than did Hercules conquer the Nemean lion. Christ no more performed the miracles, Testament-makers have ascribed to him, than did Prince Hohenloe the miracles ascribed to *him* ! To destroy the divine and prophetic character of Jesus, is to destroy all that which renders him sacred in the eyes of Christians, and at once strips his character of that gaudy plumage which dazzles the eyes of his worshippers. When this is done, it will be time enough to consider whether one or fifty Jesus Christs walked about the streets of Jerusalem eighteen hundred years ago ; and really, of no more practical consequence than it would be to inquire whether certain men called Bacchus once lived in Thebes.

In periods very remote, the phenomena, so extraordinary to the eyes of uninstructed mortals, the rising and setting of the Sun, and its apparent motion from east to west, was alternately a subject of

the most doleful lamentations and wild rejoicings—when the god Sun was worshipped in the religious temples. Adonis is represented by the poets as lying on a superb bed by the side of the goddess of generation and of spring, the mother of love and of the graces. His adorers prepared for him flowers, essences, the first-fruits of the earth; he was invited by prayers, sometimes dolorous—sometimes full of joy, that he might be induced to remain with them; for, having personified their deity, they attributed to him feelings and passions—supposing, as ignorant devotees ever do, that the gods are much moved by human prayers, and love to be thus addressed. Before he returned to life—for, during the winter, the Sun was said to be asleep by the priests, while the god was said to be dead by the uninstructed multitude—fêtes were celebrated in honour of his resurrection. This fête, according to Corsini, was held on the 25th of March, on the 8th day before the kalends of April. The women of Argos—who, like the women everywhere, are the great supporters of superstition—went, just as we are told that Martha and Mary did to the sepulchre of Christ, to weep over the remains of Adonis; and that doleful ceremony was performed in a temple dedicated to the Saviour god, or god Lamb. The funeral of Adonis was annually celebrated at Alexandria with much pomp, when his image was carried in procession to the tomb. The like took place in Athens, if we may credit Plutarchus, who, in his *Life of Alcibiades*, informs us that upon one occasion, at the moment of the celebration of the death of Adonis, the Athenian fleet was fully equipped for the unfortunate expedition to Sicily—when nought was to be seen in the streets but the image of Adonis surrounded by a throng of women—tearing their hair, beating their breasts—playing off all those mad antics common among crazy fanatics.

Plutarchus tells us that the Egyptians thought that Hercules had his seat in the Sun, and that he sailed round the world in that star. The hymns attributed to Orpheus treat of the relation, or rather, the identity of Hercules with the Sun, by whom he is called “the god generator of time, of whom the forms are various, the father of all things, and who destroys them all. He is the god who by turns gives us the dawn and dark midnight, and runs through the career of the twelve signs; valorous Titan, thou god unrivalled and all-powerful, who destroyeth all maladies, and delivereth us from the evils which afflict us.” Bacchus, son of Semele, born in Thebes, according to the Greeks, was an ancient hero who was raised to

the rank of the gods because of his conquests; but it is no less a fact, whatever the Greeks or Egyptians might have thought that Bacchus was not born in Thebes any more than Hercules was, or Jesus Christ in Judea, that he was not placed among the gods after his resurrection, any more than were Hercules, Adonis, Osiris, Atys, or Christ—it is no less a fact, that these personages were nothing more than personifications of the Sun. Here, however, is the difficulty—Christians will be incredulous, but let them reflect that the Romans would have believed—nay *did* believe, that the Egyptians were idolators; and the Egyptians in like manner complimented *their* ancestors, who probably did not fail to do the same to all who in *former times* worshipped any but the *true lath and plaster divinities*,—each people being far-seeing as the vulture with regard to the superstition of their neighbours—but blind as bats and stupid as owls with respect to their own.

We know that all our readers will disclaim being superstitious—they would shrink with horror from the idea of worshipping idols, having read the command, “Thou shalt not make thee any graven image, or any likeness that is in heaven above, or that is in the earth beneath, or that is in the waters under the earth;” but we shall presently see, when we have proceeded a few steps further, that all Christians are idolators—that is, worshippers of symbols, or signs of things, which worship has not even the poor merit of originality. This bold assertion may startle—but the many must be startled if we desire ultimately to benefit them. Old prejudices, like old diseases, must be shaken out of the system, or the patient dies; it is mere murder to flatter and dally with the sufferer, when by a little vigorous treatment he might be thoroughly cured,—but then, the treatment, though vigorous and firm, should not be cruel. The surgeon who finds it necessary to amputate a withered limb, should use sharp instruments, with a steady and determined hand; but none but Tyros or bunglers will inflict unnecessary torment.

The necessity there is that human beings should be shocked, and thus aroused from their present state of stupor, will appear from a consideration of their utter helplessness as regards the fulfilment of the highest and noblest duties—a helplessness born of habit and confirmed by it, like that acquired by the animal nick-named the Sloth, by ignorant naturalists, who had only seen the creature when confined in the cages of our menageries, where its natural powers are deteriorated for the want of that healthful exercise necessary

for the developement of its energies ; but when ranging the trees of his native forests—he is *slothful* no longer ; his idleness and stupidity vanish when the restraints which produced them are removed ; nor shall we be wide of the mark in saying, that caging human beings in *theological menageries* is most destructive and pernicious to their physical and mental faculties, and moreover, as in the case of the sloth, led philosophers to make sad blunders as to the nature of man—judging him by what he was, and overlooking, or not knowing what he might become when his cage should be broken to pieces, and he permitted to breathe the pure air of Nature, and exercise those divine energies which now lie dormant within him. Men would then no longer need keepers—but gather stores of knowledge from the great garner of Nature herself—her book, the “ Elder Scripture,” would be ever open to them—which is written in a language intelligible to all, and convincing as intelligible.

Let, therefore, no sincere Christian be deterred from examining his religion, and thereby be convinced in his own mind that what he has hitherto strained to his breast as religion, is not the viper superstition, which poisons while it fascinates its victims ! We hold that the worshippers of Jesus Christ are superstitionists—mere idolaters, who have raised temples, and offered up their incense therein to a borrowed symbol—instead of using them for the purposes of knowledge and holiness. Altars are raised, and the divine worship, instead of being full of charity, peace, and affection, like the ox offered up by Prometheus to Jupiter, contains nothing more than dry bones. Thus is the worship of deity one of empty rites and barren ceremonies, with which human beings stuff out their sacrifices—leaving no room for love, peace and charity, which should be as its bowels. Nor is this the only effect which deifying idols produces—but makes sincere idolaters hate those who will not “ bow the knee to Baal.” How far the *early* Christians were infected with the spirit of idolatry, may be seen at large in the books of the holy fathers ; and never did the degenerate Jews lust after the flesh-pots of Egypt more shamefully than did the early Christians lust after the false Pagan deities ! In the Life of Gregory, surnamed Thaumaturgus,* we read that “ When Gregory saw the simple and unskilled multitude persisted in the worship of images, he granted them permission to indulge in like pleasures in celebrating the memory of the holy martyrs.” This may have been

* As quoted by Mosheim the Ecclesiastical historian, vol. 1, p. 202

politic in Gregory, but certainly speaks trumpet-tongued as to the morals and intellects of the new sect who thus went a whoring after *old* inventions—but more of this hereafter. At present, it is sufficient to know that the worship of Nature preceded the worship of idols ; the first is commonly called natural religion—having nothing whatever to do with any other revelation than that the material universe offers to the senses of man ; whereas, idolatry grew up with human error, and is an abomination in the sight of the Lord, as appears in Scripture, where we are told—“ Jehovah, he is God in heaven above, and upon the earth beneath—*there is none else !*”

Few will believe that men in any age worshipped blocks of stone *as* blocks of stone ; but it is evident the word god, having no prototype in nature, philosophers took refuge in their own conceptions, which being more or less grand and imposing, were put into shape by the chisel of the sculptor, hence signs, emblems, or, as they are generally termed, symbols ; which latter word we shall hereafter use as being the most expressive ; the full and true meaning will, we trust, soon fall within the comprehension of the dullest. We *did* intend to have entered at large into a consideration of the word *Symbol* ; but such a course would too far distract the attention of our readers from the great question we have pledged ourselves to consider ; but as it is indispensable that all should have a correct idea of symbolic worship fully before them, we have determined to publish a SUPPLEMENT with our fifth Letter, containing the great Lord Bacon's curious, and truly extraordinary explanation of PAN, or, as the name imports, UNIVERSAL NATURE ! We cannot too highly recommend this singular performance to all those who would fully understand in what consists the essence of physical mythology. To the *unlettered*, we recommend it as a simple explanation of what a symbol is, which in no way else can they so well comprehend. To the *philosophic* we recommend it as a key with which to open the great store-house of ancient wisdom—a performance at once simple and sublime, containing the most profound reflections and speculations touching the nature of man and the origin of the universe. We may add, that in no other of his works did that great philosopher, publish his sentiments so unservedly and so fully as when explaining and enlarging on ancient fable.

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THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

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BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

SUPPLEMENT.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

THE FABLE OF PAN.

The ancients have with great exactness, delineated Universal Nature, under the person of Pan. They leave his origin doubtful : some asserting him the son of Mercury—and others the common offspring of all Penelope's suitors. The latter supposition doubtless occasioned some later writers to entitle this ancient fable "Penelope:" a thing frequently practised, when the earlier relations are applied to more modern characters and persons; though sometimes with great absurdity and ignorance; as in the present case: for Pan was one of the ancientest gods, and long before the time of Ulysses; besides, Penelope was venerated by antiquity for her maternal chastity. A third sort will have him the issue of Jnpiter and Hybris—that is reproach. But whatever his origin was, the Destinies are allowed his sisters.

He is described by antiquity with pyramidal horns, reaching up to heaven, a rough and shaggy body, a very long beard, of a biform figure, human above, half brute below, ending in goat's feet. His arms, or ensigns of power, are—a pipe in his left hand, composed of seven reeds; in his right a crook; and he wore for his mantle a leopard's skin.

His attributes and titles were—the god of hunters, shepherds, and all the rural inhabitants; president of the mountains; and after Mercury the next Messenger of the gods. He was also held

* Penelope.

the leader and ruler of the nymphs, who continually danced and frisked about him, attended with the Satyrs, and their elders the Sileni. He had also the power of striking terrors, especially such as were vain and superstitious: whence they came to be called panic terrors.

Few actions are recorded of him, only a principal one is, that he challenged Cupid at wrestling, and was worsted. He also caught the giant Typhon in a net, and held him fast. They relate farther of him, that when Ceres growing disconsolate for the rape of Proserpine, hid herself, and all the gods took the utmost pains to find her, by going out different ways for that purpose—Pan only had the good fortune to meet her, as he was hunting, and discovered her to the rest. He likewise had the assurance to rival Apollo in music—and in the judgment of Midas was preferred; but the judge had, though with great privacy and secrecy, a pair of asses ears fastened on him for his sentence.

There is very little said of his amours; which may seem strange among such a multitude of gods, so profusely amorous. He is only reported to have been very fond of Echo, who was also esteemed his wife—and one nymph more, called Syrinx, with the love of whom Cupid inflamed him for his insolent challenge.

Lastly, Pan had no descendant; which also is a wonder, when the male gods were so extremely prolific; only he was the reputed father of a servant girl, called Iambe, who used to divert strangers with her ridiculous prattling stories.

This fable is perhaps the noblest of all antiquity; and pregnant with the mysteries and secrets of nature. Pan, as the name imports, represents the Universe, about whose origin there are two opinions, viz.—that it either sprung from Mercury—that is, the divine word, according to the Scriptures and philosophical divines; or from the confused seeds of things. For they who allow only one beginning of all things, either ascribe it to God, or if they suppose a material beginning, acknowledge it to be various in its powers; so that the whole dispute comes to these two points, viz.—either that Nature proceeds from Mercury, or from confused mixture, according to the fable.

The third origin of Pan seems borrowed by the Greeks from the Hebrew mysteries, either by means of the Egyptians, or otherwise; for it relates to the state of the world—not in its first creation, but

as made subject to death and corruption after the fall ; and in this state it was, and remains the offspring of God and sin, or Jupiter and reproach. And therefore these three several accounts of Pan's birth may seem true, if duly distinguished in respect of things and times. For this Pan, or the universal nature of things, which we view and contemplate, had its origin from the divine word, and confused matter, first created by God himself ; with the subsequent introduction of sin, and consequently corruption.

The destinies, or the natures and fates of things, are justly made Pan's sisters—as the chain of natural causes links together the rise, duration, and corruption—the exaltation, degeneration, and workings—the processes, the effects, and changes of all that can any way happen to things.

Horns are given him, broad at the roots, but narrow and sharp a-top, because the nature of all things seem pyramidal : for individuals are infinite ; but being collected into a variety of species, they rise up into kinds ; and these again ascend, and are contracted into generals,—till at length nature may seem collected to a point. And no wonder if Pan's horns reach to the heavens, since the sublimities of nature, or abstract ideas, reach in a manner to things divine : for there is a short and ready passage from metaphysics to natural theology.

Pan's body, or the body of nature, is, with great propriety and elegance, painted shaggy and hairy—as representing the rays of things ; for rays are as the hair, or fleece of nature, and more or less worn by all bodies. This evidently appears in vision, and in all effects or operations at a distance—for whatever operates thus may be properly said to emit rays. But particularly the beard of Pan is exceedingly long ; because the rays of the celestial bodies penetrate and act to a prodigious distance—and the Sun himself, when clouded on its upper part, appears to the eye bearded.

Again, the body of nature is justly described as biform, because of the difference between its superior parts ; as the former, for their beauty, regularity of motion, and influence over the earth, may be properly represented by the human figure ; and the latter, because of their disorder, irregularity, and subjection to the celestial bodies, are by the brutal. This biform figure also represents the participation of one species with another ; for there appear to be no simple natures ; but all participate or consist of two : thus man has

somewhat of the brute—the brute somewhat of the plant—the plant somewhat of the mineral ; so that all natural bodies have really two faces—or consist of a superior and an inferior species.

There lies a curious allegory in the making of Pan goat-footed ; on account of the motion of ascent which the terrestrial bodies have towards the air and heavens : for the goat is a clambering creature, that delights in climbing up rocks and precipices : and in the same manner, the matters destined to this lower globe strongly affect to rise upwards ; as appears from the clouds and meteors.

Pan's arms, or the ensigns he bears in his hands, are of two kinds ; the one an emblem of harmony, the other of empire. His pipe, composed of seven reeds, plainly denotes the consent and harmony, or the concords and discord of things, produced by the motion of the seven planets. His crook also contains a fine representation of the ways of nature ; which are partly strait, and partly crooked : thus the staff having an extraordinary bend towards the top, denotes, that the works of divine Providence are generally brought about by remote means, or in a circuit ; as if somewhat else were intended, rather than the effect produced, as in the sending of Joseph into Egypt, &c. So likewise in human government, they who sit at the helm, manage and wind the people more successfully, by pretext and oblique courses, than they could by such as are direct and strait ; so that in effect all sceptres are crooked a-top.

Pan's pipe, composed of seven reeds, leads to curious reflections, as the number seven is a mystical number, like the number twelve, and three-hundred-and-sixty-five, or that of the days of the year. In the apocalypse of St. John we find that the numbers seven and twelve are repeated at almost every page,—the first is mentioned fourteen and the second twenty-four times. The chandelier with seven branches, which we are told represented the planetary system, is the Temple of Jerusalem ; the seven doors of the cave of Mithra, or the Sun, the seven stages of the tower of Babylon, surmounted by an eighth, which represented the sky, and served as a temple to Jupiter ; the seven gates of the tower of Thebes, each carrying the name of a planet ; the lyre with seven strings, touched by Apollo, or by the god Sun ; the book of destiny, composed of seven tablets ; the seven prophetic seals of the Brahmins, on each of which is marked the name of a planet ; the seven consecrated stones to the same planets in Laconia ; the division into seven

castes adopted by the Indians and Egyptians from the highest antiquity ; the seven idols that the Bonzes carry every year in great pomp to the seven temples ; the seven mystical vowels which formed the sacred formula in the temple of the planets ; the seven altars of the monument of Mithra ; the seven great geniuses invoked by the Persians ; the seven archangels of the Jews and the Chaldeans ; the seven resounding towers of the ancient Byzance ; the seventh day with all people, or the period of seven days, each consecrated to a planet ; the period of seven times seven with the Jews ; the seven sacraments with the Christians, &c. &c.

Pan's mantle, or clothing, is with great ingenuity made of a leopard's skin ; because of the spots it has : for, in like manner, the heavens are sprinkled with stars, the sea with islands, the earth with flowers, and almost each particular thing is variegated, or wears a mottled coat.

The office of Pan could not be more lively expressed, than by making him the god of hunters : for every natural action, every motion and process, is no other than a chase ; thus arts and sciences hunt out their works ; and human schemes and counsels, their several ends ; and all living creatures either hunt out their aliment, pursue their prey, or seek their pleasures ; and this in a skilful and sagacious manner. He is also stiled the God of the rural inhabitants ; because men in this situation live more according to nature, than they do in cities and courts ; which corrupt them with effeminate arts. He is likewise particularly stiled President of the mountains, because in mountains and lofty places, the nature of things lies more open and exposed to the eye and the understanding.

In his being called the messenger of the gods, next after Mercury, lies a divine allegory ; as, next after the word of God, the image of the world is the herald of the divine power and wisdom ; according to the expression of the Psalmist : " The heavens declare the glory of God, and the firmament sheweth his handy-works."

Pan is delighted with the company of the nymphs ; that is, the souls of all living creatures are the delight of the world ; and he is properly called their governor, because each of them follows its own nature as a leader ; and all dance about their own respective rings, with infinite variety, and never-ceasing motion. And with these continually join the Satyrs and Sileni, that is, Youth and Age ; for all things have a kind of young, cheerful, and dancing time ; and

again their time of slowness, tottering, and creeping. And whoever in a true light considers the notions and endeavours of both these ages, like another Democritus, will perhaps find them as odd and strange, as the gesticulations and antic motions of the Satyrs and Sileni.

The power he had of striking terrors, contains a very sensible doctrine ; for nature has implanted fear in all living creatures ; as well to keep them from risking their lives, as to guard against injuries and violence : and yet this nature, or passion keeps not its bounds ; but with just and profitable fears always mixes such as are vain and senseless ; so that all things, if we could see the insides, would appear full of panic terrors. Thus mankind, particularly the vulgar, labour under a high degree of superstition ; which is nothing more than a panic dread that principally reigns in unsettled and troublesome times.

The presumption of Pan, in challenging Cupid to the conflict, denotes that matter has an appetite, and tendency to a dissolution of the world, and falling back to its first chaos again ; unless this depravity and inclination were restrained and subdued by a more powerful concord and agreement of things, properly expressed by love or Cupid : it is therefore well for mankind, and the state of all things, that Pan was thrown and conquered in the struggle.

His catching and detaining Typhon in the net, requires a similar explanation ; for whatever vast and unusual swells, which the word Typhon signifies, may sometimes be raised in nature, as in the sea, the clouds, the earth, or the like ; yet nature catches, entangles, and holds all such outrages and insurrections in her inextricable net, wove as it were of adamant.

That part of the fable, which attributes the discovery of lost Ceres to Pan, whilst he was hunting ; a happiness denied the other gods, though they diligently and expressly sought her, contains an exceeding just and prudent admonition, viz.—that we are not to expect the discovery of things useful in common life, as that of corn denoted by Ceres, from abstract philosophies ; as if these were the gods of the first order ; no, not though you used your utmost endeavours this way ; but only from Pan, that is a sagacious experience and general knowledge of nature ; which is often found, even by accident, to stumble upon such discoveries, whilst the pursuit was directed another way.

The event of his contending with Apollo in music, affords us an useful instruction, that may help to humble the human reason and judgment, which is too apt to boast, and glory in itself. There seems to be two kinds of harmony; the one of divine Providence, the other of human reason: but the government of the world, the administration of its affairs, and the more secret divine judgments, sound harsh and dissonant to human ears, or human judgment; and though this ignorance be justly rewarded with asses ears; yet they are put on and wore, not openly, but with great secrecy: nor is the deformity of the thing seen or observed by the vulgar.

We must not find it strange if no amours are related of Pan besides his marriage with Echo: for nature enjoys itself, and in itself all other thing; he that loves, desires enjoyment; but in profusion there is no room for desire: and therefore Pan, remaining content with himself, has no passion, unless it be for discourse, which is well shadowed out by Echo, or talk; or when it is more accurate, by Syrinx, or writing. But Echo makes a most excellent wife for Pan, as being no other than genuine philosophy, which faithfully repeats his words: or only transcribes exactly as nature dictates; thus representing the true image and reflection of the world, without adding a tittle.

Philosophers who speak doubtingly of things are much abused and derided by those who hold a more certain creed; but surely to say, as some have said, that we know nothing—one thing is not more certain than another—is far better than to erect our own conceits into oracles, making our faith the standard by which we measure that of other men, when it is manifest that minds like bodies vary as regards strength and fitness, and when again we reflect that about things heavenly there hangs a mystery—a thick mist, which has hitherto clouded the intellects of the most far-seeing of mortals. The world seems given over to our disputes—but did men know all things they would dispute no longer; the heavens teach not their own cause—merely their own existence; and though some may know by revelation the nature of divine things, it is in a sense totally distinct from that now in vogue; for the heavens merely display a character of perpetuity and unchangeableness, which contrasts admirably with the ceaseless motion and and strugglings and changes of matter on our own planet; but whether we cast our eyes towards the stars, or down upon the earth,

It should be with a view, not merely to gape and wonder, but if possible, to grasp and enclose, as in a net, all that it displays ; but this has not yet been accomplished by men. Had philosophy done its duty in times past, and not crept timidly along, as dreading the sound of its own footsteps, God would have been glorified by the mind of man, and philosophies would no longer be as a stage play got up for vain shew, and exposed as at a fair, to the highest bidder ; but become next to religion, the divinest thing ; for religion is to the imagination of man, what philosophy is to the judgment ; that is, imagination when it thwarts not judgment, but merely leads the way to things unknown, meddling not with those of earth, except in harmony with judgment, which should be the prime disposer of mortal bliss, and sit enthroned as the supreme arbiter of human destiny. Whereas with the puffed-up and swollen superstitionist, the reverse holds, for he applies his judgment to that it fitteth not, making use of his imagination when the matter lieth beneath his feet, this is mere vanity, and those so acting are generally men of small capacity but large assurance.

It tends also to the support and perfection of Pan or nature, to be without offspring ; for the world generates in its parts, and not in the way of a whole ; as wanting a body external to itself, wherewith to generate.

Lastly, for the supposed or spurious prattling daughter of Pan, it is an excellent addition to the fable, and aptly represents the talkative philosophies that have at all times been strirring, and filled the world with idle tales : being ever barren, empty, and servile ; though sometimes indeed diverting and entertaining ; and sometimes again, troublesome and importunate.

We may add—Pan was with the Egyptians what Vishnow seemed to be with the ancient inhabitants of the vast continent of India, as we read in their sacred books—that the Universe is nothing more than the form of Vishnow—that he carries it in his bosom, that he is all that is, all that was, all that will be—that he is the principle and end of all things, that he is all in all, that he is a being who displays himself to our eyes under millions of different forms.

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LETTER 5.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

"And I will destroy your high places, and cut down your images, and cast your barcasses upon the carcases of your idols, and my soul shall abhor you."—LEVITICUS. XXVI. 30.

CHRISTIANS,

To prove by abstract reasoning that the worship of Christ is a borrowed worship—and, moreover, the worship of an idol, would be difficult, if not impossible. The majority of readers are, we fear, not yet prepared to deal with abstractions—but of historic evidence all may judge. Mere reasoning, however just, will not enable us to effect the object we have in view. Idleness, physical and mental, is the radical vice of the human constitution, and leads us to rest content with what we have, rather than exert our energies to obtain that we ought to have. To arouse, therefore, sluggish minds, much evidence is necessary—and this too, of a clear and simple character, so that its results may be perceived at a glance, and our readers stimulated to inquiry by the interesting thoughts such evidence suggests. We rely, therefore, *principally* upon historic testimony to bear us out in our assertion—that the Christian religion was borrowed from ancient religions, and was originally a mere solar fable.

Many Infidels, who have not hesitated even to doubt the existence of one eternal God, have nevertheless admitted that a man called Christ once played a certain part in Palestine, and was the founder of the religion bearing his name. These men appeal to reason; and as they profess to be guided by no other authority, they must, if consistent, abide by its decision. "Hast thou appealed unto reason? unto reason shalt thou go"—at that severe tribunal their opinions must be judged—received if sound, and rejected if erroneous.

That the unthinking multitude should have held so erroneous an opinion through many ages, is by no means wonderful, as from the cradle to the grave they hear the one falsehood hourly reiterated; and such is the nature of the human mind, and so susceptible is it to the influences, whether of truth or fiction, that the veriest absurdity, oft repeated, is an absurdity no longer, but a serious truth, as observed by Addison—"tell a man anything, however absurd, every morning before breakfast, and depend upon it, he will believe you in the long run;" and what other tale have Christians been allowed to hear since Christianity wedded itself to the civil form, and became part and parcel of the ever-varying law of the land, than that Jesus Christ did this, and Jesus Christ did the other, some eighteen hundred years ago? which, moreover, all were told that, not to believe, was to inherit damnation! Nor are the injurious effects of error confined to the taught—but speedily effect the teachers thereof, as it is by no means seldom that expounders of falsehood begin by deceiving, and end by being deceived; error being by its very nature contaminating, like pitch or glue, adhering to those who handle it; hence we find that where superstition prevails—(and where does it not?)—both priests and people are more or less the victims of their own arts; and few even among the more cunning, entirely escape the moral infection—whereas, the many are inevitably destroyed by it. "Thou canst not touch pitch without being defiled," saith the Scripture.

Sceptics who support their opinion that Christ did not exist as a god, but merely as a reformer, as did Zoroastre, Minos, Moses and others, make great parade of historic proof, which, they contend, shews that it is at all events *probable* that such a character actually existed; but reject the idle tale about his birth, resurrection

from the dead, &c. Nor is it uncommon to hear them treating, in their public discourses, what they are pleased to call the precepts, doctrines, and life of Jesus Christ; and though we may be justified in supposing that not a few of such Sceptics make a shield of the name of Christ, with a view to back up their own weakness and ward off public odium, and thus call the attention of simpletons from their real designs and ultimate objects, yet we cannot doubt that some few of these men are sincere, and really do suppose (being very ill read in the matter) that what is said in the Testamental books is something more than an old wife's fable, made up of the rakings and scrapings of worn out philosophies.

Oh, say these oracles, to disbelieve in the existence of Jesus Christ, is to produce a moral earthquake, and throw into the air the very foundations of history—not to believe what the apostles have said, is to shake our belief in the sayings of Plato and Aristotle, or the doings of an Alexander. This is the same in substance as was formerly said by the brother of Cicero, who declared that to deny the truth of the oracles of Delphi, would be to overthrow the foundations of all history; but there are few Christians who will admit, that by attacking these pretended oracles, they would not rather be strengthening the foundations of history; but so it is, each defends his own chimera, and leaves history and science to shift for themselves.

When we demonstrate to our readers that the incarnation of Christ is that of the Sun—that what is said of his death and resurrection relate entirely to that brilliant luminary, and that all calling themselves Christians are merely worshippers of the Sun, as the Peruvians that they so cruelly slaughtered, the great question, to wit—whether a man called Christ did or did not exist, shall be freely and fully discussed. If it be demanded whether we consider that the object of the Christian worship was a real being, or merely ideal?—we reply, that it was certainly real, inasmuch as nothing can be real, if the Sun is not so,—that brilliant star which enlightens every man coming into the world.

If we search for evidence of the existence of Christ, whether as philosopher or impostor, in the writings of the Pagan authors, we shall find that none of them—at least those of them whose works have floated down to us like light planks upon the waves of time—have

treated *ex professo* that question, or given a history of Christ; but great stress has been laid upon the observations of Tacitus, in his *Annals*—"that the Christians derived their name and origin from Christ, who in the reign of Tiberius, had suffered death by the sentence of the Procurator Pontius Pilate;" but what do these words amount to, when it is evident that they are used by Tacitus to give the etymology of the word Christian? which he informs his readers, came from one Christ, put to death under Pilate; and this too, happened somewhere about a hundred years after Christ is said to have existed—that is, Tacitus relates a legend about that time, and we shall hereafter see that the legend was a solar fiction.

If Tacitus had spoken of Bramins, he would doubtless have said that they derived their name from a certain Brama who had lived in India; nor would the present Bramins be slow to avail themselves of such historic testimony in their favour; and yet none but silly believers in Brama would, on that account, think it *proved* that the god came on earth in human shape, especially if they knew that the term Brama is but a name for one of the three attributes of a personified divinity.

It is clear that Tacitus, having, in his history of Nero, to give an account of the Christian sect, gives to the name the received etymology, without troubling himself to inquire whether a man or a god really existed, or if he was the hero of a sacred legend, such an examination would have been quite out of place in his work. Suetonius, another author of repute, when speaking of the Jews, states that "there was much agitation among them during the time of Claudius, and that they were moved and incited by a certain Christ—a turbulent seditious man, who was the cause of the expulsion of the Jews from Rome." It would puzzle even orthodox Christians, which of these two historians to believe, seeing that they contradict each other, or at all events, do not accord as to the time and place *where* and *when* the pretended Christ lived; but the righteousness of faith will enable its professors to remove mountains, so that, perhaps, they will find little difficulty in believing both these accounts. The Christians generally, however, seem to prefer Tacitus, and he certainly the most accords with the solar fable.

Nothing can be more clear than this—that the above-quoted historians have spoken of Christ upon vague rumour, without attach-

ing any importance to the tale, and therefore, their testimony by no means offers a safe satisfactory guarantee of the existence of Christ, whether as god, legislator, or impostor. If that existence had been an indubitable fact, it is hardly credible that from the times of Tertullian, authors who had seriously discussed the question and examined the origin of Christianity, should have written that the worship of the Christians was that of the Sun, and by no means connected with a man who had formerly existed. Those persons who pretend to the character of philosophers, and make of Christ a reformer, or an impostor, only display their ignorance of ancient history, and are brought to such an erroneous conclusion because they have not enough of faith to believe in Christ as a god; and on the other hand, not had an opportunity to compare his fabulous history with the solar legend; hence they do not see in his character what it really is—a sacerdotal fiction.

Those who cannot admit as authentic history, the famed exploits of Hercules, nor see in him a god, have concluded that he was a great prince, the history of whom has been embellished by the marvellous. Such an explanation certainly has the advantage of simplicity in its favour—and is, moreover, a quick and ready method of getting rid of a subject that its examiners have not had the resolution and patience thoroughly to probe and search into; but, unfortunately, it does not give us true results; and though such explanations are duly received as genuine, Hercules is no less the Sun personified. But when an error is once established, and considered respectable in the eyes of the people—when spiritual pastors prohibit any but orthodox criticisms—when they make books and destroy them, proving some divine and others heterodox—there is little chance that the people should be in a condition to get correct knowledge therefrom.

If there are ages of light for philosophers—that is to say, for a small number of men,—all ages are ages of darkness for the millions—especially in matters which affect religion; nor shall we be wide of the true mark, if we judge of the credulity of the people by the impudence of the authors of the first legends. If we are to believe them, they were eye-witnesses—they saw what they relate. We are told that the authors of the Christian books were plain and simple men: however this may be, one thing is certain—that the

trashy stories they have told are fit only for idiots or children—differing only from Tom Thumb, Little Red Ridinghood, and the like, in being incalculably more mischievous, and far less amusing. The legend is indeed sufficiently simple,—no one can justly deny that the apostles were simple men—but still men so simple as to believe every thing, or to say that they have seen, when it was quite impossible they ever could have seen,—are surely but bad authorities to rely upon in the building up of our faith. Besides, these writings carry upon the face of them, not to be mistaken signs of imposture. One of them, after having written as nearly as possible the same that is to be found in the books of the other three, says that the hero of his legend had performed such a crowd of miracles, that if a book containing them all could, by any possibility, be made, the universe would be unable to contain it! The hyperbole is rather strong; but how is it possible that, of such a sum of miracles, none have been related to us, save those contained in the four Evangelists, who all confine themselves within the same, or nearly the same, circle of facts. Truly the manufacturers of these books were simple workmen, or they would have managed matters better; but no, out of the more than can be counted of miracles and facts, they have all related the same, or nearly the same, circumstances, with a difference so trifling, that if the four had clapped their simple heads together with a short-sighted intention to cheat the people, they could not have succeeded better. What! out of so many millions of remarkable events, the four *evangelicals* agree to write only about the same facts!—all the rest are consigned to oblivion—traditions as well as sacred writings are dumb!

The author of the legend known under the name of St. John, whether simple or sage, has undoubtedly reckoned upon having none but true-believers for readers—that is, simpletons. Indeed, to admit the testimony of these books as proofs of the existence of Christ, is to believe everything; for if they write truly when they say that Christ lived among them, what possible reason should we have for believing that he lived among them, as they have related he did—especially when we further consider what an abandoned and scandalously impudent band of imposters early Christian writers were—how filled to the brim with fanaticism and intolerance? One Sant Denis attests, that himself and the sophist Apo-

lophane, were at Heliopolis, or the town of the Sun, when he saw an eclipse of the Sun when the moon was at full!—that is contrary to the nature of things,—and that the eclipse happened at the death of Christ, or the Sun! He affirms that he distinctly saw the moon place itself under the Sun, where it remained three hours, and when satisfied with its visit, travelled back again to the east, or point of opposition, where it should have been fourteen days after!

When such trashy stuff as this is fabricated, and a market found for it, it is a pretty good proof that there are a number of simpletons ready to purchase such folly; and from our experience of human nature, we are warranted in saying—that where fools are, there will *knaves* be—“where carcases are, there will eagles be gathered together.”

Printing has been called the art preservative of all others; four centuries have elapsed since men received so valuable an auxiliary in the acquisition of knowledge,—but even now we may only print that which is orthodox, and deemed right and true by ghost-seers who hold the power of the state. Those who write in defiance of the phantom orthodoxy, must do it at some risk; but when the press shall be free, and men permitted to speak and write all they think and know, it is impossible that the Christian superstition can maintain its ground. Christian preachers dread inquiry, because inquiry must sooner or later destroy error. What people, aided by a free press and illumined by knowledge, could believe the ridiculous fictions above related, or the miracles said to have been performed by Christ and his disciples? Who, save a wretched fanatic, would pride himself upon the abandonment of reason, or have faith in idle tales that even well-instructed children laugh at, and despise? Pope Leo X. is reported to have said—“This fable of Christ maketh us rich.” Aye, truly does it! and if the divinity of a religion is best proved by the fatness of those who teach, and the leanness of the taught—if the luxury of the dupers, and the squalid wretchedness of the duped, prove that a religion is of God, then is Christianity of God.

The prodigies said to have been performed by Simon the magician, and the full faith the people seemed to have in that tissue of imposture, shews clearly that in those times the people believed all they were told to believe. If we read with attention the mar-

tyrology of the three first centuries, and the history of the miracles of Christianity, we shall have good cause to crimson with shame, that by imposture on the one hand, and blind credulity on the other, the human race should have been so foully dishonored!—and is it upon such a basis that any will now have the boldness to support the existence and history of a god, or man divine, of whom no writer of sense—no writer strange to his sect—has spoken—in times too when his miracles, had they been performed, would have astonished the Universe!—when we are actually compelled to search in a book written a hundred years after by Tacitus, a Pagan historian, for the etymology of the word Christian, in order to prove the existence of Christ; or, to interpret by a pious fraud a passage in Josephus, long since known to have been an interpolation?

When we shall have sufficiently explained the legend—when we shall have shewn that its authors have collected different marvelous fictions, which lay scattered up and down in the works of the adorers of the Sun—that Atys, Adonis, Hercules, and Christ, were only different names for the same personification, and nothing more than the Sun, worshipped under different names—when we shall have compared their characters, the points in which they agree, noting at the same time any disagreements, and trace them to their causes, the fallacy of relying upon bold lying records of spiritual imposters, in opposition to such a mass of proofs, will at once appear ridiculous and vain. To explain the fable of the death and resurrection of Christ, by collecting and bringing under one head, legends of different religions, which, born in the East, have been propogated in the West about the time of the first Christians, will be the first great division of our subject. Should we be successful thus far, and prove beyond the reach of cavil, that the theology of the Christians is founded upon the same basis as that of the Indians, the Egyptians, and the Greeks, we shall then enter more at large upon the second grand division of the subject, which we have simply touched upon in this Letter, with a view to remove some misconceptions that many of our readers, we are told, have fallen into.

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THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

AS A HUMAN BEING,

DISPROVED!

BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,
FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 6.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

"And they brought forth the images out of the house of Baal, and burned them."—2 KINGS X. 26.

CHRISTIANS,

It seems reasonable to suppose that human beings observed the operations of matter upon matter—the action and re-action of the particles of the universe, long ere they had the power by abstraction to arrive at a conception, however rude, of Deity. They adored the world they *saw*, before they had any distinct idea of a Creator they did *not* see; the worship, therefore, of the Universe and its parts, seemed to have preceded, nay, it is past doubt, was the origin or root of all others—giving birth to certain religious sentiments, when men were rude, uncivilized, or in what is commonly, though erroneously, understood by the terms, natural state; such religion was called natural religion.

The turf was then men's fragrant shrine,
Their temple, Lord, that arch of thine;
Their censor's breath the mountain air,
And silent thoughts their only prayer.

Of all the phenomena which bewildered and astonished the half-savage beholder, none could have been so suggestive and inspiring as the machinery of the heavens,—the secret springs of which, baffle the ingenuity of the curious, and are an eternal record of

human ignorance : for if the heavens declare the glory of God,—they equally publish the ignorance of man, who has gazed till his sight aches at them ; but while feeding his eyes, his understanding hath not been fed ; and if men have conceived of the causes of these wonders, they have done so at the expense of the Deity—inasmuch as presumptuous philosophers have degraded God by reducing him to the level of their own conceptions—instead of elevating their conceptions up to God !

To see the minutest insect made sensible to sight by the microscope, is to behold a wonder ; but what words can describe the mingled feelings of awe and delight, which seem as struggling for mastery in the mind of the true man, when he sees the morning Star of day, as it seems to rise majestically in the east—dissipating the shadows of night—sailing above the horizon—infusing joy and life and gladness by its presence—heralding in the day, and arousing Nature herself from her drowsiness ! Who, not hooped about by a heart-chilling stoicism, corrupted by affectation, or degraded by fanaticism, but must feel a thrill of ecstasy, and long to know how such things can be ! Great is the vanity of that man who struggles to free himself from the shackles which bind his body and soul, though in his efforts to do so, they eat into his flesh, making him suffer the torments fabled of the damned ! Vain are all strugglings against the nature of things—which is one and eternal—giving birth to folly and its hideous train of falsehood, treachery, racking doubts and fears—making the garden earth a thorny wilderness !

Darkness to the mentally blind, was and is a mystery ; the witching time of night was a time of terrors to the uninitiated into the causes thereof,—for the phenomena we know not the cause of, we instinctively fear ; hence the science of causation is that which would tend more than ought else to disabuse us of vain alarms,—as wise men fear no darkness, save that of ignorance, but rather woo and love it, when they would enjoy negative bliss, “the balm of hurt minds,” compose themselves to sleep, and shut out for a season the remembrance of their toils and anxieties. If, to the superstitious, darkness and dread came hand in hand, like twin fiends, light must have been welcomed as the harbinger of exceeding joy ; and the Sun being the never-failing source of light and heat, which is the principle of life, how can we wonder that the splendid luminary should have been hailed as a deliverer !—chaunted by the poets as the generator and preserver of all things, and by the common people

as a living god—eternally occupied in combating with and chasing away the spirits of evil or darkness—those destructive foes of the human race!

The Sun neither rises nor sets in reality—nor does it move from east to west, but merely *appears* to do so. No! the Sun is ever the same, and like to itself; to our eyes, it carries an air of perpetuity and unchangeableness—seeming to bear upon it the seal of eternity! Our first fathers have not seen its beginning—our remotest posterity will not see its end! Were it annihilated, or did its rays no longer penetrate, as now they do, the very innermost recesses of matter, all would be a stiffened heap—without form, and void! Generations rise from the earth—strut and fret their hour upon the stage of human affairs, and pass again to that earth from whence they sprang. Thus does matter, the common mother of all—most unnaturally, as to some it seems—devour her own offspring. We are born and die; scarcely are we born—hardly do we spring from the common womb, than we return to it all entire; and when decomposed, our bodies' wreck furnishes material for new existences!—and so short is the span of mortal bliss, or woe—so quickly does death tread upon the heels of life—that the wonder only is, that men should not long since have shaken off fear, and learned to endure the grim monster, which “must come when it will come.” But if death be the common lot of all that is on earth—not so with heavenly things, which give no indication of progress or decay, improvement or deterioration. The Sun seems as bright—grand—imposing now, as in any former times!—redolent of beauty, strength, and majesty!—that to the imaginative and ardent mind it may to-day appear as to the first mortals who beheld its lustre, and were dazzled by its brightness!—the fiery-chariot of an Eternal God, who chaseth before him through the etherial vault, the demons of night and of evil!

The basis of all natural religion is, and ever was, the Universe, or great whole, which in former ages, was worshipped as one being made up of many parts, under names and forms innumerable; and not, as now, considered as distinct from the Deity. To suppose a Deity distinct from the Universe, capable of creating it, was an effort of the mind which, as before noted, benighted heathens were not equal to; accordingly, we find that the worship of the material world was the *first* worship, which, however unreasonable and absurd, was of a tangible character; and though injurious, was but nega-

tively so ; for the insufficiency of human reason to comprehend by any kind of abstraction the attributes of Deity, makes men fly for refuge to revelation ; but then, the heathens had no revelation, general or special, save that which Nature herself gives to all : but Nature's revelation teaches not the existence of a God, but rather leads the mind to a Pantheistical philosophy, which is a philosophy that in fact, shuts out all, save matter and motion, from the world. No ; if we desire a proof of God's existence, we must seek it in the Scripture, where we read that God, by the mouth of Moses, said unto the Children of Israel, " And I will take you to me for a people ; and I will be to you a God ; and ye shall know that I am the Lord your God, which bringeth you out from under the burdens of the Egyptians."

If in this our day science is in its cradle, and rocked by superstition—if philosophers with all their boasted knowledge, are ignorant—whether heat be itself a substance, a subtle fluid, or merely a condition of substances—if none, however learned, can teach us the precise nature of the brilliant Star which seems to be the parent of life and vegetation—if we are ignorant whether the Sun is a ball of flame, or as thought by Anaxagorus, a huge red hot stone, or as others, that it is an opaque body, more or less dense, surrounded by an atmosphere of a brilliant and luminous appearance, the grand source of heat and light, or as the heathens supposed, and millions now believe, that it is the seat or residence of intelligent deities—it will be perhaps wise in us to hazard no conjectures upon the subject, which would be but adding one more to the million and one idle theories which have been ventured thereon, proving little else but the ingenuity of those who use them. No ; it is rather our duty to clap an extinguisher upon so curious a spirit, which contenteth not itself with things, the nature and properties of which lie open to our investigations. Scripture is dumb as to what the Sun really is ; and however unsatisfactory what is therein contained, touching the matter, may be to inquisitive philosophers, it has the negative merit of being as good as any other. All we are there told being, that God made the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars, together with all things else ; and " he made two great lights ; the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night ; he made the Stars also ;" but, as before hinted, what is contained in the book of Genesis affecting the creation, is a mere cosmogonic fable, most

likely picked up by Moses in his commerce with the Egyptians; as we read that he was skilled in all the learning of that people.

The god of day, or the god Sun, was the great god of the ancient world, and has been worshipped by every people on the globe; we shall find that it prevailed in both continents—the *old* as well as the *new* world, and was personified in all the sacred allegories, and poetically described as suffering the destiny of mortals; everywhere we read of the birth, death, and resurrection of the Sun; he had his cradle and his tomb, whether called Adonis, Osiris, Hercules, Bacchus, Atya, Chrishna, Mithra, or Christ!

In Ethiopia the worship of the Sun prevailed, and temples of a most magnificent character were erected in honour of that deity; and symbols of his power, strength and glory, were placed therein to receive the homage of the adorers; but the people of Ethiopia were black, and among them, as we may readily suppose, black was the most orthodox and beautiful of colours: and, as when human beings personify their ideas, and “give to airy nothing a local habitation and a name”—when they conceive of good and bad deities—they invest them with all those attributes which to themselves seem good or bad; hence in our own climate, gods and angels are delicately fair, with ruddy complexions, sweet and most heavenly countenances: whereas the devil and his imps are of a dense sooty blackness; strange heaps of ugliness, oddly compounded of every conceivable deformity: so that if the deformed, whether in body or mind, are objects of pity, then the devil and his unfortunate companions should keep our eyes eternally moist; and truly, as one of our modern orators has expressed it—these devils, as depicted by Christians, are much ill-used gentlemen. But in Ethiopia, devils were white, so that, while we say “black as the devil,” they, with equal propriety, and certainly, to us it appears, with more elegance, say “as white as the devil”—themselves being black, and that of course being the right colour, they could not do less than dress up their gods in the best manner, and with the choicest material they had; while the unfortunate devils were made not unlike a very ugly, pale, and deformed Englishman, with certain additions, according to the taste of individuals.

A modern writer* of great research, has the following curious observations relating to Chrishna: “On the colour of the gods of the ancients, and of the identity of them all with the god Sol, and with

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* Mr. Godfrey Higgins.—See *Anacalypsis* v. 1, p. 138-9.

the Chrishna of India, nothing more need be said. The reader has already seen the striking marks of similarity in the *history of Chrishna, and the stories related of Jesus* in the Romish and Heretical books. He probably will not think that their effect is destroyed, as Mr. Maurice flatters himself, by the word Chrishna, in the Indian language signifying black, and the god being of that colour, when he is informed of what Mr. Maurice was probably ignorant, that in all the Romish countries of Europe, in France, Italy, Germany, &c., the god Christ, as well as his mother, are described in their old paintings and statues to be *black*. The infant god, in the arms of his black mother, his arms and drapery white, is himself perfectly black. If the reader doubts my word, he may go to the Cathedral at Moulins, to the famous Chapel of the Virgin at Loretto, to the Church of the Annunciator, to the Church of St. Lazarro or the Church of St. Stephen at Genoa, to St. Francisco at Pisa, to the Church at Brixen in the Tyrol, and to that at Padua, to the Church of St. Theodore at Munich, in the two last of which, the whiteness of the eyes and teeth, and the studied redness of the lips are very observable; to the Church and to the Cathedral of Augsburg, where are a black virgin and child as large as life; to Rome, to the Borghese Chapel Maria Maggiore, to the Pantheon, to a small Chapel of St. Peter's, on the right-hand side on entering, near the door,—and in fact, to almost innumerable other churches in countries professing the Romish religion. There is scarcely an old church in Italy where some remains of the black virgin and black child are not to be met with." The same author observes that "the Romish Chrishna is black in India, black in Europe, and black he must remain, like the ancient gods of Greece, as we have just seen. But, after all, what was he but their Jupiter, the second person of their trinurti, or trinity, the Logos of Parmenides and Plato, an incarnation or emanation of the Solar power!" So much for the black virgin and her black child, formerly worshipped by the dark races of India, and even now adored in our Catholic churches—the devotees little dreaming that the black god Chrishna was but a symbol of the Sun, and that the black virgin mother was nothing more than the virgin of the constellations, painted black, because, as before observed, that was the national colour; had the people been green, their gods, angels, and virgin mothers would have been the colour of grass.

The idea of a son born of a *virgin-mother*, clearly relates to the

Sun, which our readers will at once allow, when they are informed that in ages past, on the 25th of December, precisely at midnight, the celestial sign which appeared above or upon the horizon, and seemed to preside at the opening or commencement of the new solar revolution, was the virgin of the constellations. The Sun was said to be born at the solstice, or the standing still of the Sun in winter, after which it seemed to retake its route towards our hemisphere, and re-unite itself to the virgin at the grand fete of the Assumption, or the re-union of the mother with her son. It is an interesting fact, that the Sun, called sometimes Chrishna, sometimes Atya, sometimes Adonis, and sometimes Christ, appeared in the heavens to pass from the womb of the virgin of the constellations at the very moment that we celebrate his appearance in the world, or his nativity. No fact in history is better established than this—that it was customary, in times past, to represent the Sun under the emblem of a newly-born infant, at the solstice of winter, when the great luminary seemed to have so little force, that it was aptly typified by the weakest of all creatures—an infant just passed from the womb of its mother. *Let our Christian readers bear in mind that the worship of the virgin and her child, was common in the East, ages before the generally received account of Christ's appearance in the flesh; that the god Sun, or of day, was adored under the name of Bacchus in Thrace, Greece, India, Arabia, and Asia Minor; under the name of Osiris in Egypt, of Mithra in Persia, of Adonis in Phenecia—and all the ancient authors who treat of these subjects, confess that Bacchus, Adonis, and Osiris are mere symbols of the Sun, under different names, as Pan was a symbol of the Universe!*

It is impossible to walk ten yards in Egypt without at once seeing that the genius of its ancient people led them at all times to give an outward and tangible form to their astronomical speculations. Personification of the apparent strength, grandeur, and motion of the heavenly bodies, was the very soul and basis of their theology. The gods of the Egyptian priests were material gods; this is proved by the admirable writings of their poets and philosophers. Thus we find that Sirius, or the dog star, was honoured under the name of Anubis, and in the form of a *sacred dog*, worshipped in their temples. It was this star that appeared above the horizon just before the periodical inundation of the Nile; and seemed to warn the Egyptians of the approach of the inundation; and as dogs are the most faithful and watchful of all animals, it re-

ceived the appellation dog star, or *sacred dog*. The species of vulture now found in South Africa, the large light-coloured *percnopterous*, was one of the sacred birds of the Egyptians. The sparrow-hawk was typical of the Sun; the Ibis the Moon; and cats are even now held sacred by that singular people; indeed, so great is their devotion to those creatures, that were even a priest by accident to destroy one of them, it might cost him his life.

In Egypt was erected the famous temple in the town of the Sun, or Heliopolis; wherein was placed a statue of the *god of day*. We are told it was splendidly ornamented, and represented a beardless young man, with one arm elevated, holding in his hand a whip, in the attitude of the driver of a chariot; in his left was a thunderbolt and a bundle of ears of corn: such was one of the Egyptian symbols of the Sun in their ancient temple.

We learn from Cheremon, and the most learned Egyptian priests, that the ancient priests of their nation admitted no causes nor existences independent of the universe itself; but acknowledged for gods, the Sun, the Moon, and the Stars, which composed the zodiac; and all those which by their rising and setting marked the division of the signs; their subdivision into decans, the horoscope, and the Stars which presided over it, which were called chiefs of the sky. They assure us that the Egyptians regarded the Sun as a great God, architect and moderator of the universe; explaining not only the fable of Osiris, but all other religious fables, by the Stars; their motions, their appearance, and disappearance, by the phases of the Moon; the increase or the diminution of her light, by the progressive march of the Sun, by the division of the heavens, and the division of time into two great parts; the one affecting the day, the other the night; finally, by the action of physical causes, which they considered as the sovereign arbiters of human destiny, that they honored by sacrifices, and to which they raised images. Our readers will we trust now understand why it was men became idolators, and worshipped many gods; but they will also not fail to perceive, that to admire the operations of Nature, and to consider it as *unique* and *one*, was not idolatry; which can only truly be said to have commenced when men forsook Nature, and blindly adored the lifeless block of wood or stone as a *real God*; when it was merely a symbol or sign.

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AS A HUMAN BEING,

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BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 7.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

"He removed the high places, and brake the images, and cut down the groves, and brake in pieces the brasen serpent that Moses had made : for unto these days the children of Israel did burn incense to it : and he called it Nehushtan."—2 KINGS XVIII. 4.

CHRISTIANS,

Our bare assertion—that the worship of the ancient world was Pantheistical—that the people of all climes, and every part of the globe, adored as gods, angels, or fiends, the Universe, and the parts thereof—will have little weight, unless supported by well defined evidence, which we now propose to furnish. This position must be made good before we proceed to occupy another ; and though it would undoubtedly be far easier to gallop over the course by contenting ourselves with mere assertion—such haste would not be speed ; and all lovers of truth will agree that it is wiser to proceed slowly but surely, than to go ever so fast out of the right road ; and certainly no man of liberal mind—none, save the narrow and contracted intellect—will grudge us a fair opportunity to prove the absurdity and ignorance of those who believe in Christ, and think to wash out their sins in the blood of the Lamb !

Could a goodly array of names, ranged in support of error, make that error respectable—could eloquence and learning make black appear green, or some other colour, according to the taste of the

expounder—or, if the truth or falsehood of a doctrine is in anywise determinable by the number of books written in support of it, or the confidence and self-sufficiency of those who teach—then are the dogmas held by Christians sublime and heavenly. Thousands of volumes have been written to prove the reality of Christ's mission, and with very many, the notion holds that where quantity is there quality *must* be; so that, with such, big books carry with them their own justification. Now, we freely declare, that if any parties expect a big book from us, they will be disappointed; for our study is to concentrate—not to diffuse,—to collect the scattered rays of truth into one small focus, and as a moral Archimedes, burn up the vessels of error. *Multum in parvo*—a great deal in a small compass is what we desire to give. The worshipper of old authorities, merely because they are old, will not follow in our train; for no authority, ancient or modern, will be here acknowledged save that consonant with right reason, and wearing upon it the seal or mark of experience. If the sanction of names, eminent in the Christian world, is to prevail against the teachings of history, sacred and profane, our little work will be beaten “all the world to nothing,” and it will remain undoubted that Christ did live and was a god incarnate—was born of a virgin—and a real *bona fide* descendant of Abraham—conversed with the doctors of the Jewish temples—was crucified three times in three different places, as stated in Scripture, and of course ascended into heaven, at least an equal number of times, as such authority might equally decide, and make it believed too, that upon a certain occasion it was broad day at full midnight! To our evidence.

We read that at periods very remote, the Blemmyes, situated upon the confines of Ethiopia, immolated to the god Sun, human victims. The Island of Nasala, near the territory of Ichtyopages, was consecrated to that star; and so superstitiously was it revered, that none dared to approach so awful a place, or profane by their footsteps that holy ground.

The Carthaginians invoked the Sun as a witness in their treaty with Phillip, son of Demetrius,—the Sun, the Moon, the Earth, the rivers, the meadows, and the waters were their divinities. Massinassi, when thanking the gods that Scipio had arrived in his empire, addressed himself to the Sun, as Agamemnon in Homer sacrifices to the Sun and to the Earth.

All the inhabitants of the immense African continent revered the

Sun and the Moon as the two grand divinities. The inhabitants of Congo, Angola, the Peak of Teneriffe—all joined in one worship—the worship of Nature. We have this on the authority of the Spaniards, who first visited them.

The Caabah, before the coming of Mahomet, was a magnificent temple, consecrated to the Moon; and the black stone, so fervently kissed by Musselmen at the present day, is pretended to have been part of an ancient statue of Saturn. This most ancient of all the gods was symbolized by a serpent with its tail in its mouth, signifying that time neither had beginning nor end,—an idea aptly typified by a circle. The god was represented with a scythe in his right hand; for that time, while itself ever the same, “without change or shadow of turning,” mows down all things else. The fable relates that Saturn devoured his own offspring—by which is meant, that time swallows all things, though nothing is added, nothing diminished, from the sum total of matter, by the different forms and existences such matter assumes.

The worship of the Arabs was Sabism—a worship universally spread in the East,—the Sky and Stars were the great objects of adoration. The Moon was an object of special worship. By the Saracens it was called Cabar, or great; and the crescent yet ornaments the religious temples of the Turks.

Sabism was the system of the Chaldeans; and all the orientals pretend that Ibrahim, or Abraham, was educated in that doctrine; thus runs the story; whereas Ibrahim, or Abraham, is a purely fabulous character, and all that is related in Genesis thereupon, is allegory. Let the reader remember what is said by Saint Paul, that “God quickeneth the dead, and calleth those things which be not, as though they were.” This we know was the case “when all were children and were in bondage under the elements of the world.” Vain are the attempts to conciliate such fables with the facts of history, and barren of good results, producing only a moral abortion in the shape of a romantic fictitious philosophy. St. Augustine fell into this error, and most inconsistently maintained the existence of Christ as a real personage—acknowledging his mission as Saviour of the world at the very moment he declared the two first chapters of the book of Genesis were allegorical!—but what reader, not blinded by fanaticism, can fail to see that the two first chapters of the book of Genesis are the fundamentals upon which the belief in Christ rests. To give up the literal meaning of those chapters,

to declare as Augustine did, that all was fabulous—pure romance—is at once to give up the literal history of Christ, which is based upon it.

Well might Beausobre say that Augustine abandoned the Old Testament to the Manicheans, by declaring that it would be impossible to believe the Scripture as it is written, without wounding true piety, and attributing to God acts that would be held disgraceful in men, and yet more unworthy in a Creator or Ruler of the Universe. The story about Abraham was first told and first believed in the East—the very fountain of allegory; and if we dwell upon it, it is with a view that all may know the true spirit of the gospel; besides, the history of Adam and Eve, Abraham and Christ, must all stand or fall together; for if Adam did not fall from a state of innocence, as is generally supposed, Christ's death upon the cross, as an expiation or atonement, rendered necessary by the fall, is clearly absurd. If Abraham never existed, how can Christ have been his son?—and yet we read in the new Testament—“The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham.” For the honour of Moses, and the sake of right reason, we must recur to allegory. In the 12th chapter of Genesis we read, “And the Lord appeared unto Abram and said, unto thy seed will I give this land; and there builded he an altar unto the Lord, who appeared unto him.” “And the Lord plagued Pharaoh and his house with great plagues, because of Sarai, Abram's wife.” The idea of the Lord God of the Heavens and the Earth, who can measure the waters of the globe in the hollow of his hand, plaguing Pharaoh about Abram's wife, is preposterous and absurd! In the chapter which precedes this, there is a ridiculous story about Babel, in which we are told that in those times the whole earth was of one language and of one speech! “And they (the people) said, go to, let us build us a city, and a tower whose top may reach up unto heaven; and let us make us a name, lest we be scattered abroad upon the face of the earth. And the Lord came down to see the city and the tower, which the children of men builded.” The idea of an omnipresent God “coming down to see,” is comical enough: a God that is everywhere, taking a trip from the clouds, to see a tower that, ten miles from the earth, to ordinary optics, would have looked like an ant hill, or a dust heap,—besides there are neither tops nor bottoms in Nature—ups nor downs; but nothing is difficult with believers, who, while they one moment declare that the

heaven of heavens cannot contain their God, the next moment represent him, not exactly like Plato's man—an animal without feathers, but with two wings growing out of his shoulders, flapping between earth and heaven, bearing, as some one has observed, a most scandalous, profane, and impious likeness to the old Pagan Jupiter. "Go to, (said the Lord) let us go down and there confound their language, that they may not understand one another's speech." Now, we ask any sensible reader, whether it is not enough to shock all sense of propriety to interpret such language *literally*? There was some magnificence in the conception of Jupiter hurling his thunderbolt, and Neptune with his trident, exciting and calming by his will, the immense ocean of waters; but a literal interpretation of the book of Genesis is horrid blasphemy, if anything can be blasphemy. The metamorphosis of Jupiter with the Greeks, as that of Vishnou with the Indians, are ridiculous enough, but are certainly entertaining: but who can be entertained by stories which degrade human conceptions of the Deity? Well might the apostle say, "there is none that understandeth—there is none that seeketh after God!"

The idea of a Deity, "who covereth the heaven with clouds, who prepareth rain for the earth, who maketh grass to grow upon the mountains"—the uncreated—the eternal—the Holy one of Israel! promenading in a garden, crying out to Adam—the man whom he had made—"Where art thou!" as though omnipresence needed such information! and after Adam was found, and had called Eve (the mother of all), "Unto Adam also, and to his wife, did the Lord God make coats of skins, and clothed them!" Strange employment for Deity; but the truth is, all shocks and offends when read as matter of fact,—all is pleasant and ingenious enough as an allegory. The hidden meaning of the sacred books is worth searching for; but to believe chapter and verse, *according to the letter*—to suppose that "the Lord God took the man and put him into the garden of Eden, to dress it and to keep it;" that he, the Lord God, caused a deep sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept, and he took one of his ribs and he closed up the flesh instead thereof; "And the rib which the Lord God had taken from man, made he a woman, and brought her unto man;" that these beings were organized to reproduce, and yet destined to be immortal! to produce an infinity of other beings, who would again go on peopling to all eternity,—all to be nourished by the fruits of a great garden, some-

where in the east, but the Lord only now knows where! that an apple was gathered by our common mother Eve, tempted so to do by a cunning serpent, "more subtle than any beast of the field," which fatal act caused the Lord to inflict miseries that the tongue of man cannot describe, upon countless generations, who were unborn when this deed was done!—a crime which our priests inform us, could only be expiated by another infinitely greater—the nailing of a god upon a cross!—to suppose all this, is to dishonor Deity, and degrade human reason!—farther, the stain transmitted to us from our first parents, was only to be washed away by the blood of Christ—an incarnate god!! But, nevertheless, though this has been done—though we have been washed in the blood of the Lamb, we are not pure—not a stain has come out! In addition to all this, we are told, that since that terrible event, as a punishment for the curiosity of the woman Eve, all women are condemned to bring forth in sorrow and in pain—as though the pains of child-birth were not a necessary result of her organization, and suffered more or less by all animals who have not partaken of the fatal apple. This is of a piece with what is said of the serpent, who was "cursed above all cattle, and above every beast of the field; doomed to crawl upon its belly, and eat dust all the days of its life,—as though a serpent could ever do any thing else but crawl! With regard to eating dust, serpents are by no means contented with that fare, but gorge good things most desperately; but, in a figurative sense, or rather a philosophic one, all things are dust,—“from dust they come, and to dust they all return.” Well might the Christian saints and doctors, the Augustines, Origenes, and the rest, desire to throw the book of Genesis overboard, as an allegory; but in doing so, they not only disprove the real history of Adam, Eve, and their companion, the wily eloquent serpent, but make an allegory of Abraham, an allegory of Christ, and an allegory altogether; which view of the subject is precisely that we are endeavouring to support,—and to call us blasphemers for so doing, is to affix the brand of blasphemy upon the respectable and most honored saints and doctors of the Christian churches!

To return. Abraham is said by Orientals, to have been a worshipper of the elements, the stars—the religion called Sabism, before mentioned. It is said that even now, upon the ruins of ancient Persepolis, may be seen a mosque called Mesched Eschams, or Mosque of the Sun. In that town was erected the famous an-

cient temple of Bel, or the Sun, the great divinity of the Babylonians. They also worshipped the sky, under the name of Jupiter, the moon, and the planet Venus, fire, earth, air, the winds, and the waters. Each Arab tribe was under the invocation of a star, that they honored as their protecting deity, or guardian angel: the tribe Asael was consecrated to the star Mercury; the tribes Idumus and Lachanus honored the planet Jupiter; the tribe Hanuaz was consecrated to the Sun; the tribe Cennab to the Moon; the tribe Misa was under the protection of the star called Aldebaran; the tribe Tai under that of Canopus; each tribe revered one of the celestial bodies as its tutelary genius.

The fire worshippers of Persia have been immortalised by the poets in their religious books: at every page may be seen invocations to Mithra, or the Sun, to the moon, to the stars, and to the elements, the mountains, and the trees. The rivers and the fountains were the subject of their delicious poetry, which chanted the wonders of nature. The fire Ether, which they supposed to circulate throughout the universe, was represented in their pyrees, or fire temples, by the sacred fire kept continually alive by the Magi, or priests; we find also the same worship among the Greeks, who had the sacred fire in their temples, tended by Vestals, so called from Vesta, or Earth, models of purity and excellence; as fire was held to be the most subtle and pure of bodies. None but virgins could be Vestals, who were greatly honoured by the Greeks, and other nations; but any departure from the strictest chastity was punished by burying the unfortunate culprit alive.

By the Persians, each planet was supposed to contain a portion of the subtle fluid, so that each planet had consecrated to it a pyree, or temple, in which incense was offered up to its honor,—Mars, Jupiter, and all the planets were thus worshipped. We read that Darius, before giving battle to Alexander, invoked the god Mars, and the sacred eternal fire, and on the top of his tent might be seen an image of the brilliant star of day, enclosed in crystal, reflecting its scorching rays to an immense distance.

The disciples of Zoroastre, the celebrated Persian sage, addressed their prayers to the Sun, the moon, the stars,—but principally to fire, as being the most subtle and most pure.

How man first applied fire, or even discovered its qualities, is not known; but as fire always produces the sensations of warmth and heat, and as the Sun's rays produce analogous effects, that luminary

was considered as the focus of heat, and the generator of life. Pythagoras placed the substance of the divinity in the fire or fluid called Ether, of which the Sun seemed to be the source or focus. Parmenides supposed that the world was enveloped by a crown of fire or of light—contending that fire was the substance of deity. Zeno called Ether the great god. Cleanthes, another celebrated ancient philosopher, admitted the dogma of the divine nature of the Universe, but considered Ether as universally active, enveloping the spheres and penetrating all substances. Anaximander held the like notion—calling gods Ether, and the Air.

That the ancients were aware that heat is life, and the absence of it death, is certain. They also knew that the luminous body called the Sun, if not hot itself, was at least the generator of heat—that is, of life. They called heat the soul of man; and as all heat came from the Sun, the souls of animals were supposed to have no other source. They contended that one sort of soul, or life, had been distributed to all animals without reason; but intelligent beings had something superadded, to mere life; but as all bodies are formed from one kind of earth, and all living and breathing things see but one light, and receive the same air, so, in like manner, there is but one soul—which is heat, variously distributed in an infinity of organized bodies; there being but one intelligence, though unequally distributed and mysteriously divided and subdivided: as the light of the Sun is one, however dispersed upon the walls, upon the mountains, and the millions of divine objects.

Among the ruins of Persepolis may be distinguished the figure of a king on his knees before an image of the Sun, and an emblem of the sacred fire, that the Magi tell the people, formerly descended upon the earth. In ancient fable it is related that man was formed of clay by Prometheus, or providence, only the artificer mixed up with the mass, particles taken from different animals—seeming to intimate that other creatures lived and breathed before man; and the fable runs that he, Prometheus, being desirous to endow the clay he had modelled with vitality, stole up into heaven with a bundle of birch rods, and kindling them at the fiery chariot of the Sun, did bring down fire from heaven, and endowed dead clay with heat, the principal of life.—This was the origin of man according to the fable!

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LETTER 8.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. *I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.*"—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

"Every abomination to the Lord, which he hateth, have they done unto their gods; for even their sons and their daughters they have burnt in the fire to their gods."—DEUT. XII. 31.

CHRISTIANS,

The story related of Jupiter is fabulous—the story of Christ is no less so; the basis of the Pagan religion was allegory—and the foundation of the Christian faith is allegory; Jupiter, we read, was cut to pieces by the giant Typhon, who carried away his sinews, which were afterwards stolen by Mercury and restored to their owner. Jupiter took Metis to wife, when, finding her pregnant, he did eat her up, when he himself did conceive, and from his head sprang forth Pallas—armed. No sane reader will take this story in a literal sense; but, however it may appear when thus taken,—as an allegory it is pleasant and admirable; for as Typhon signified swelling, and sometimes evil, to the Egyptians, the sea, which they detested, was called Typhon, as Pan signified universality, and Nemesis revenge, so Metis signified counsel, which at once gives us a key to the fable; for after Jupiter devoured Metis, that is, *good counsel*, he became pregnant with wisdom, and from his brain burst forth Pallas, sometimes called Minerva, the goddess of wisdom.

Nor is this love of allegory so heathenish as some may be dispo-

sed to believe, nor by any means confined to historians called profane; for the most valuable philosophies contained in the Scriptures, are concealed under the veil of allegory. Whatever sceptics may say against the Bible, it is at least an old book—a most useful record of ancient times and usages—full of comparisons, allusions, similes, tropes, metaphors, fables, and parables,—as said by God himself: “I have also spoke by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions; and used similitudes by the ministry of the prophets.” How absurd, then, must those writers be, who would pass off fables and parables as facts and literal truths; this course it is which has thrown such disgrace upon teachers of religion, that is, multipliers of visions and venders of similitudes—visions so perfectly ridiculous, and similitudes so *unsimilar* to anything bearing the impress of right reason, that human nature was disgraced thereby; and truly is it said, “Their throats are as an open sepulchre; with their tongues they have used deceit; the poison of asps is under their lips.”

In ancient times, it was common to speak in parable; for, as Lord Bacon observes, “Hieroglyphics were in use before writing; so were Parables in use before arguments;” the use of parable, or, indeed, any form of teaching, is to illustrate and instruct; the abuse of it, is in wrapping up and concealing the sense of our speech or writing, “darkening counsel, by words without knowledge.” From the Scripture, then, we learn that the Scripture abounds with allegory, fiction, and fable; and from that same Scripture we also learn, that Christ was not a descendant of Abraham, but an ideal embodiment of good,—as Satan was an ideal embodiment of evil; nay, it can be shewn, and shall be shewn, by Scriptural texts, that Abraham never had a real tangible existence—but is an allegorical character. Let the Christian reader remember that we are told in the first chapter of the new Testament, that Christ was the son of Abraham; we read, “The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham;” but, as shall be hereafter seen, there never was such a person as Abraham; so that, to talk about Christ being the son of a man that never existed, is to talk wildly. Well may it be said, “There is none that understandeth, there is none that seeketh after God.”

In due season we shall come to a full consideration of Biblical history; the arguments it contains against the existence of a bodily Jesus Christ, are crushing, and amount to moral demonstration;

nothing can long resist their force. Yes, the book so extravagantly lauded by some, and as extravagantly abused by others,—hated by the thorough-going Infidel—adored by the thorough-going Believer,—but used by men of wit and sense; the idol of the spiritualist—the abomination of the materialist; the latter rejecting all—the former swallowing everything;—here both are right, and both are wrong. Neither the mere materialist, nor the mere spiritualist, can study the Bible with full profit; they may search the Scriptures—they may toil much, and catch but little: unless they unite and cease to run, as heretofore, in parallel lines; for materialism may be aptly called the first person of the philosophic trinity; spiritualism being the son,—for spirit is born of matter; and few will deny that it is within the compass of human ability to conceive of existences without motion, substances without spirits, matter without mind, body without soul; but a first-rate spiritualist would be puzzled to imagine soul, spirit, or sense, without substance, or motion without parts.

Matter, then, in the moral trinity, is the father—spirit is the son, as begot of matter—but reason is the holy ghost, which will reconcile the father and the son, shew that they are one, that these three are one, that all are *one*—a trinity in unity, comprising universal unity. The holy ghost, or right reason, would shew at once that a peacock is a peacock, as materialists insist; while the holy ghost would agree with the spiritualist, that in a spiritual sense, serpents might speak, and asses discourse most eloquently, as in the case of the ass of the prophet Balaam. Nor will the Scriptural text, “The same hour was the thing fulfilled by Nebuchadnezzar; and he was driven from men, and did eat grass as oxen, and his body was wet with the dews of heaven, till his hairs were grown like eagles’ feathers, and his nails like birds’ claws,” be any difficulty in the way of the spiritualist—for he searcheth not the Scripture for the *letter*, but the *spirit*; for the spirit is life; but the letter killeth: and Paul speaketh wisely when he saith, “As it is written, I have made thee a father of many nations, before him whom he believed, even God, who quickeneth the dead, and *calleth those things which be not, as though they were*,” so that, although, as said (2nd Tim. 3, v. 16) “All Scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,” it is only profitable to those who take from materialism that which is good, who cast not off spiritualism, but use it for what it

is worth, led by the holy ghost, or right reason, which, though the last person in the moral trinity, is the first in excellence. Let no Christian be alarmed, for are we not told, that the first shall be last, and the last shall be first?

Taken literally, no person, of sane mind, can believe that Samson's strength lay in his hair—that he caught three hundred foxes, or three hundred jackals (as some natural theologians *now* contend that they were), tied their tails together, and setting fire to them, sent them amid the standing corn of the Philistines; what is said in the book of Judges, notwithstanding. "And Samson went and caught three hundred foxes, and took fire-brands, and turned tail to tail, and put a fire-brand in the midst, between two tails. And when he had set the brands on fire, he let them go into the standing corn of the Philistines, and burnt up both the shocks, and also the standing corn, with the vineyards and olives." The character of Samson, like that of Hercules, is purely fabulous. What is said about his rending a young lion as a kid, and, he had nothing in his hand—killing three thousand Philistines with the jaw-bone of an ass—being deprived of his strength, and subsequently of his life, by the artifices of a woman,—squares exactly with the stories told of Hercules, who, like Samson, was destroyed by the artifices of a woman, and so enamoured of fighting, that when he had nothing else to fight, he amused himself by slaughtering wild beasts, and other heroic exercises.

The Bible is a book of riddles, parables, allegories, and deep meanings; almost every line has a spiritual, as well as material sense; that which appears, and that which doth not appear; food for faith, and food for wisdom; rank nonsense, and fine philosophy; according to the capacities of those who read. Nor need our readers be informed that the most admirable philosophy, if misconceived, hath no advantage over folly. What can be more absurd than the literal interpretation of Scriptural texts; what more admirable than that truly sublime sense within the heaps which form a kind of envelope or covering; transparent to the man possessed with the holy ghost, but opaque, dense, and impenetrable to the mental visions of others. Yes, mere idle words are Scriptural texts, as now used—mere shells, which must be broken ere we can obtain the kernel of truth. To believe it as it is written, is to outrage reason, and common sense; it is to sacrifice judgment upon the altar of folly, and at the same time, run counter to Biblical

texts, which plainly tell us that the Bible is a book of allegories, parables, similitudes, and words, which carry upon the face of them one sense—but when probed and searched into, are found to possess another; in short, “*calleth those things which be not, as though they were.*”

That the Scriptures are much abused by unscrupulous men; that they are ransacked for texts, to support the most impious and unholly dogmas, is plain; all parties have used them in turn, and all found arguments in support of their views;—the tyrant an apology for his despotism; the murderer for his cruelty; the debauchee for his lust; and the deceiver for his jesuitry. This, which, in the eyes of some, is as dust, rendering them blind to the real merits and demerits of the book; to the sharp-sighted, will merely shew that it is a book of riddles—much read, but little understood; like all ancient writings, disfigured by mysticism; like them, a compound or medley of good and evil—truth and falsehood. The Bible is a sealed book; and the like may be said of all, or nearly all, the books of the ancient poets: for verily, they are books of wonders, of riddles, and of spiritualities, which a mere matter of fact reader can never comprehend; in short, the Testaments, old and new, are full of many important truths believed to be false—and many falsehoods thought to be true. ‘But as gold can only be purged from its dross by physical labour, so the saving truths, contained in the Scriptures, can only become the prize of those who are content to pay the legitimate price—mental exertion: “for the husbandman that laboureth must be the first partaker of the fruits.”’

Did not men most inconsistently hate those who tell them the truth, they would long since have known that no book can be so written as to contain all truth, and nought but truth; besides, the Bible was written in remote times, when men were just emerging from the darkness of idolatry. The early Christian fathers were infected by a superstitious spirit—“mere children in bondage, under the elements of the world,” “who observed days, months, times, and years.” Even Origen, one of the most learned Christian writers, held the opinion, that the government of the world was presided over by gods and spirits. “I advance boldly (said he) that there are celestial virtues which have the government of the world; the one presides over the earth, the other over the planets, others over the rivers and the fountains, some others superintend the wind and the rain.” Astrology placed a part of these powers in the stars;

thus, the Hyades controlled the rains, Osiris the tempests, Sirius the great heats, Aries the flocks and the birds. The Hebrews and the Christians supposed that four angels had charge of the four corners of the world. The Persians believed that four great stars, which were placed at the cardinal points, performed that duty; and their astrologers in like manner accorded the surveillance to four planets; in short, the administration of the universe was divided between an infinite number of intelligences,—whether called gods, angels, heros, or geniuses,—all of whom interested themselves, more or less, in human affairs; for, with the uninstructed among the ancients, wherever motion was, there life was supposed to be; and all effects, of which the causes were unknown, seemed to those who knew not the mechanism, as intelligent living effects. The Sun appeared to move; the savage did not for a moment suppose that it could move, except by its own will,—it appeared to him, a huge hill of flame, moving majestically from east to west,—and he in his simplicity, concluded that the Sun was a living creature—adored and worshipped it accordingly, and statues were placed in temples, to represent the force, brightness, and grandeur of the great luminary.

The opinion that the Sun, the Moon, and even the Stars, were animated and conducted by intelligences, was common among the Chaldeans, the Jews, the Persians, and the Greeks, as well as the Phenecians, the Ethiopians, and their descendants the Egyptians. The Christians placed an angel in each star, and these angels were supposed to conduct the celestial bodies, and regulate the movement of the spheres. Each of these geniuses, or angels, were charged with a certain department, or particular function; cold, heat, rain, dryness, the fruits of the earth, the multiplication of flocks, the arts, the operations of agriculture, &c., all was under the inspection of an angel or a deity.

In the seventh book of the Enead, where Anchises reveals to his son the origin of souls, and the fate which attend them after death, he says—"You should know oh my son! that the sky and the earth, the sea, the brilliant globe of the moon, and all the stars, are moved, by a principle of life, which perpetuates their existence; that it is a great and intelligent soul, spread in all parts of the vast body of the universe, which mingles with all, and agitates all, by an eternal motion. It is that soul which is the source of the life of man, of the flocks, of the birds, and of all the monsters which breathe in

the bottom of the waters. The living force which animates them, emanates from an eternal fire, which shines in the sky, and which, held captive in the gross matter of our bodies, is only developed as far as is permitted by the diverse mortal organizations which deaden its force and its activity. At the death of each animal, these germs of life, these portions of the spirit universal, return to their principle and to their source of life, which circulates in the starry sphere."

The Persians had their angel Chur, which guided the chariot of the Sun ;—and the Greeks their Apollo, who had his seat in that star. The theological books of the Persians speak of the seven grand intelligences, under the name of Amshaspands, which formed the *cortege* of the god of light, called the geniuses of the seven planets. The Jews made of them, their seven archangels, ever present before the Lord. To the number seven of the planetary sphere, have been added, the fixed sphere, and the circle of the earth. The Greeks attached to these nine muses, who by their songs produced the universal harmony of the world. The Chaldeans and the Jews placed in the planetary system, other intelligences, called cherubims and seraphims, &c., to the number of nine choirs, who, by their concerts, were supposed to rejoice the Eternal. The Indians had also their geniuses ; who presided in the different regions of the world. Their astrological system had submitted each city and each town, to the influence of a star ; it was natural for them to suppose that they were the seats of intelligent deities, who were the souls of the stars, as we find the sacred books of the Jews admit a tutelary angel of the Persians, and a tutelary angel of the Jews. That the number seven is a mystical number, and had a relation to the planetary system, was shewn in a former letter ; and in like manner the number twelve, or that of the signs through which the Sun seems to pass.

The worship of Nature and its parts, was not peculiar to the Egyptians, but universal in the ancient world. In the Egyptian system the world was regarded as a great divinity, made up or composed of an assemblage of inferior gods, or partial causes, which were nothing else than the members of the great body called God. If any curious reader doubt this, let him read the highly poetical Hymns of ancient authors, as Hesiod, Orpheus, and others, and his scepticism will be cured ; for they all relate to Nature—the motions and modifications of matter, " Let us sing (says Hesiod, when invoking the muses) to the immortal Gods, children of the earth, and

nourished by the ocean; the brilliant stars, the immense vault of the heavens; and the gods that from it spring; the sea, the rivers," &c.

Even in the comparatively modern theology of the Greeks, who stole, without acknowledgment, the gods of Phenecia and of Egypt, and who were themselves so largely plundered in turn, by the first Christians, we find that the parts of the universe—the various arts, and the divers works, were divided among a crowd of deities. Jupiter was master of the heavens, yet submitted, as all the other gods, to fate or destiny, Pan's fatal sisters. Pluto presided over the lower regions, or hell; which meant, in former times, a place for the dead;—but since the introduction of the doctrine of the immortality of the soul, and the opinions which grew out of that doctrine, the word hell has been wrested from its true signification,—and, from being a place for the dead, religious imposture has made of it,—a place for the damned!—a fiery bottomless pit—to the bottom of which, nevertheless, we are told, the devil lies chained!! Who has not read of the angry god Neptune, and his trident, stirring up by his will, the waves of the mighty ocean? Vulcan was the god of fire, to whom the works of the voluptuary arts are attributed. He was also the husband of Venus, or goddess of love,—which seems to intimate, that luxury and a certain kind of that passion, are wedded to each other. Diana presided over the chase, Ceres was the goddess of harvest, Bacchus was the god of wine, and protected the vintage, while Minerva, the genius of wisdom, taught the arts, and how to excel in the production of various fabrics. Every fountain had its Naiads, the mountains their Oreades, the forests their Dryades, and Hamadryades. In the Greek Pantheistical system, all was personified; not merely had the parts of the universe, and the universe considered in its totality, a living, moving representation, or protecting genius, but even abstractions were personified. To symbolize the Sun, under the form of the robust Hettules, or the Moon by the beautiful Isis, was not all; but wisdom, folly, rage, and lust, were typified. That Minerva was the goddess of wisdom, has been already noted. Jupiter and his thunderbolts convey an idea of power. Pandora was a highly poetic personification of the evils and the pleasures, the miseries and the happiness, that the arts of civil life introduce.

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FROM A GERMAN JEW,

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LETTER 9.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 8, 10, 11.

"The simple believeth every word; but the prudent man looketh well to his going."—PROV. XIV. 15.

CHRISTIANS,

That singular people, the Chinese, worshipped the Sky, the Earth, and the elements, which they considered as parts of one grand whole, one intelligent being, that they called Tangki: the Chinese rendered up their offerings and prayers at the two solstices.

Of the Japanese the same may be said, as they believed that the stars were animated by intelligences or by Gods. They have even now a most splendid temple consecrated to the Sun, and they celebrate the fête of the Moon on the 7th of September.

The Talapoins, or the priests of Siam, have the greatest veneration for all the elements and the parts they called sacred of nature; and that the ancient Indians worshipped like the Persians a sacred fire, is well known to all readers. This sacred fire was produced by drawing the Sun's rays into one focus upon the summit of a stupendous mountain, regarded by them as the central point of India; and so great was their veneration for the Sun—so heart-felt their admiration—that according to Lucian, they never rendered homage to the morning star of day without turning themselves to-

wards the East, and preserving the most profound silence; they also formed a kind of dance in imitation of the apparent motion of the brilliant luminary.

The superstitious respect paid by the Hindoos to the river Ganges, is matter of notoriety, and annually hundreds of miserable fanatics commit suicide by burying themselves beneath its waters—believing that river to be a powerful divinity; these victims of error and delusion thus dispose of their wretched lives.

What the Ganges was, and, indeed is, to the Hindoos, the Nile was to the Egyptians, for these latter worshipped that river, the source of which was so ardently and anxiously sought after, by enterprising travellers, as a God, or one of the beneficent intelligent causes of nature. Juvenal states that the Egyptians worshipped plants and onions, which, assertion has been doubted by Millot, without, as it appears to us, sufficient reason; for, as to the ridiculousness of such a deification, it is really no more absurd to worship plants and onions as deities, than to offer up prayers and sacrifices to the river Nile, which it is past doubt that the Egyptians did. There were altars and temples consecrated to its worship at Nilopolis or town of the Nile, with a college of priests attached thereto, who, like the generality of their order, turned the folly and credulity of the people to account, by swelling their own revenues at the expense of the pockets of their dupes.

The periodical inundation of the Nile is, indeed, a most extraordinary phenomenon, and as Egypt would have been one of the most sterile and barren of countries but for such inundations, it is easy to understand why that noble river should have been devoutly worshipped by the Egyptians,—for though they had a strange antipathy to the sea, and, indeed, water of any kind, yet they sincerely adored the river Nile, because, by its overflowings, their dry and arid lands were moistened and converted into the richest of soils; and the Egyptians, like other men, love exceedingly that which benefits and gives them pleasure, and have a full measure of hate for all those things which mar their happiness.

The water of the Ganges was a source of innumerable blessings to the Hindoos; hence it was esteemed divine; they also worshipped the Sun as a great divinity: this we have on the authority of Clement of Alexandria. All the Indians, even the spiritualists, revered those magnificent flambeaux of nature—the Sun and the

Moon, that they sometimes called the two eyes of the Deity. Every year a fête was celebrated in honour of the Sun, on the 9th of January. They also admitted five elements, to which they have erected five Pagodas. The Bramins of the present day tend a sacred fire, drawn from the Sun, upon the mountain called Sirou-namaly, for which fire they have the most profound veneration; nor do they ever suffer it to become extinguished. We have good reason to believe that the fires at this day tended by the priests of India, have been kept alive through countless centuries.

Enough has been said to shew that the worship of the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, and the elements, in short, of Nature, as a whole, and in its parts, was the basis of the religions of Asia. We might fill a volume with additional evidence, but however desirable this may be thought by a certain class of readers, such an extensive review would too far swell the bulk of this little work, and defeat the object we have in view—which is, to give an epitome of ancient superstitions as they existed in the different quarters of the globe, with a view to prepare the mind of our readers for the great truth—that *the Christian religion was borrowed from the religions of the East!* which were themselves based upon the worship of the Universe and its parts. Religious opinions have travelled from East to West—civilization has travelled with them, and materially modified them, but *their grand features are still the same.*

We have seen that the ancient Greeks, according to the divine Plato, had no other gods than those adored by the barbarians—as the Greeks used to call them—of other nations, and these gods were the Sun, the Moon, the Stars, and the Earth. The choir in the *Œdipus* of Sophocles invoked the Sun as being the first of all the gods, and their chief. The Earth was adored in the island of Cos, and a temple was erected for its worship at Athens and Sparta, its altar and its oracle were at Olympia. The oracle of Delphi was originally consecrated to it. Pausanias, an author of much reputation, has given a description of Greece, and its religious monuments, in every page of which may be seen traces of nature and its worship,—every where we read of altars, of temples, of statues, consecrated to the Sun, the Moon, the Pleiades, the Goat, the Bear, also to night, to the seas, lakes, rivers, &c.

In Laconia might be seen seven columns raised to the seven planets. The Sun had his statue and the Moon her fountain in

the same country, and the inhabitants of Megalopolis sacrificed to the elements,—particularly to the air. To the north wind they had consecrated a temple and built a sacred wood.

The Macedonians adored Estia, or fire, and addressed prayers to Beda, or the element of water. The celebrated Alexander, king of Macedonia, sacrificed to the Sun, to the Moon, and to the Earth. Homer gives the epithet of sacred to several rivers. Nestor and his companions sacrifice a bull to the river Achelous: Achilles invokes the north winds and the sweet zephyrs. The Greeks considered rivers as sacred and divine, as well because of the perpetuity or unchangeableness of their courses, as because they seemed to infuse strength and nutriment into vegetables, watered the plants, and allayed the thirst of animals; and probably, because water is one of the first principles of nature—one of the most powerful agents of the universal force, or great Being.

In Thessaly the people honoured and nourished the sacred raven, in honour of the Sun. A representation of that bird may be seen at this day upon the religious monuments of Mithra, in Persia. In Rome and Italy there are innumerable monuments of the worship rendered to Nature and its principal agents. All the world has heard of the famous temple of Tellus, or the Earth, which served for the assemblies of the senate. In Latium was a fountain consecrated to the Sun, by the side of which were raised two altars, upon which Eneas sacrificed when he arrived in Italy; and we are told, that Romulus instituted certain games called games of the circus, in honour of that Star, which measures the year in its course, and the four elements, which it unceasingly modifies by its powerful action. The Emperor Aurelian built at Rome a temple to the star of the day, that he enriched with gold and precious stones, and Augustus, before him, had caused the images of the Sun and of the Moon to be taken from Egypt and carried before him to Rome in his great triumph over Anthony and Cleopatra.

In the history of Sicily we read of oxen consecrated to the Sun; and the island itself was once called the Island of the Sun. The oxen which devoured Ulysses and his companions, when touching upon that place, were consecrated to that star. In Crete and in Spain the same worship was formerly found; in the latter country special honour was given to the star of the morning and twilight.

All the northern nations, known under the general name of Celtic, worshipped fire, water, air, the earth, the Sun, the Moon, the stars, the vault of the heavens, the trees, the rivers, the fountains, &c. Julius Cæsar, the vanquisher of the Gauls, assures us, that the ancient Germans adored nought, save the visible cause, and its visible agents,—worshipping nothing more than the gods they saw, and by which they were influenced,—the Sun, the Moon, fire or Vulcan, and the earth under the name of Herta.

The celebrated Charlemagne, in his “Capitulaires,” proscribed and forbid, under pain of the severest penalties, the ancient usage of placing lighted candles by the sides of trees and fountains, with a view to render them a superstitious worship. Canute, the great Danish conqueror of the Saxons, prohibited the worship that the people of this country then offered up to the Sun, to the Moon, to fire, to running waters, to fountains, forests, &c. We read that the Franks, who passed from Italy under the command of Theudibert, immolated the wives and children of the Goths, and offered them up as a sacrifice to the river of the Po, as the first fruits of the war. The Germans also had a custom of immolating horses to the rivers,—nay, it was a common practice with the people of many ancient nations, to precipitate animals into the waters, as an offering to the deities they supposed to preside over them.

From what has been already written, the careful reader will gather the fact, that we cannot point to a single people of the ancient world, among whom was not formerly established the worship of Nature and its principal agents; and in order to complete this abridged history of ancient worship, we will pass to America, and shew that all was there new, *save the religion*; for the religion of the Aborigines of America, like the religions of all other nations, was natural religion. Yes, in America, all presents to the traveller from the old continent, a new scene, as well in the order physical as the order political or moral. All there is indeed new,—quadrupeds, plants, trees, fruits, reptiles, birds, manners, usages, laws, government,—all, *save religion*, which alone harmonizes with that of the ancient world. On both continents temples were raised to the Sun, the Moon, the sky, the stars, the earth, and the elements, which were adored as living, moving intelligences.

The Incas of Peru called themselves children of the Sun; they raised magnificent temples and consecrated them to that star, and

fêtes were instituted to its honour. In Peru, the Sun was regarded, as well as in Ethiopia, India, Egypt, and Phenecia, as the great and eternal source of the best gifts of Nature. The Moon was likewise an object of adoration with the simple Peruvians, and was called the mother of all sublunary things. She was honoured both as the wife and mother of the Sun. Venus, the most brilliant planet, after the Sun, had also her altars and her worshippers, as well as the meteors, the lightning, the thunder, and, above all, the brilliant Iris, or rainbow; and, singularly enough, in Peru, virgins were charged, as the vestals at Persia and Rome, with the sacred and perpetual fire.

The same worship was established at Mexico, with a pomp and magnificence that might be expected from a comparatively instructed people. The Mexicans adored the sky, to which they gave the name of Creator, or Admirable; and we are told that there was not a single known part of nature that had not its worshippers and adorers.

The inhabitants of the Isthmus of Panama, and of all that part of America called Terra Firma, believed that there was one god in the sky, and that god was the Sun, husband of the Moon; they adored these two stars as the two supreme causes which regulated the world. It was the same with the people of Brazil, with the Caribs, the people of the Floridas, the Indians on the side of Cumana, the savages of Virginia, of the Canadas, and of Hudson's Bay.

The savages of North America make no treaty without calling the Sun to witness, as a pledge of their faith, as we have seen done by Agamemnon, in Homer; the same is also related by Polybius of the Carthaginians. When the North American Indians smoke with their enemies, the Calumet, or *Pipe of Peace*, they push its smoke towards the Sun. According to the ancient traditions of these Indians, it was to a certain people called the Pani's, that the god Sun had given the Calumet.

It would be easy to extend our researches in this direction, but enough has been said to prove that the worship of Nature should be regarded as the primitive and universal religion of the two worlds. To which proofs, drawn from the history of the people of the two continents, others might be added, did space permit, derived from their political and religious monuments, of the divisions

and distributions of the sacred and social orders, of their fêtes, of their hymns, of their religious chants, and from the opinions of their philosophers. Nor will the reflecting mind fail to be struck with the fact, that it must necessarily have been that when man ceased, from causes various, and to us unknown, to assemble upon the tops of mountains, there to contemplate the wonderful machinery of the heavens, the Sun, the Moon, and the stars,—their first divinities,—and offered up their incense within the precincts of their own narrow temples, that they wished to worship *there* the images or symbols of their gods, and that wonderful *ensemble* called the Universe. Figuratively it may be said, that the starry heavens descended upon the soils of Egypt and Greece, there to take a body and a form in the images of the gods, whether living or dead. We may likewise remark, that all the ancient fêtes were connected with the grand epochs of nature, and to the celestial system. Everywhere we find the solstitial and equinoctial fêtes,—above all do we find that of the winter solstice, when the Sun seems to augment its force, and retake its route towards our climate ; also that of the equinox of spring, for it is then we have in our hemisphere the long days, and all nature seems laughing and glad, as though rejoicing in the presence of the Sun, which, by its active and beneficent heat, sets in motion the springs of vegetation, develops all the germs enclosed in the chilled earth, and ripens our fruits.

We now take leave of this part of our subject, as every careful reader who has attentively considered our former Letters, will agree that they fully prove that personification was not merely the basis of poetry in the ancient as in the modern world, but likewise the basis of ancient as well as modern religions. It has been shewn that the Indians, the Ethiopians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, the Romans, and last, though not least, the Christians, are worshippers of the Sun under the form of a man. Christian priests, while denouncing the worship of Atys, Adonis, Bacchus, Mithra, and Hercules, as the worship of idols, have been too ignorant of their own religion, and the source from whence it was derived, to know that the god Chrishna, the black god of India and Ethiopia, was a mere personification of light ; that Chrishna was among those nations worshipped as the light which enlightens every man coming into the world,—precisely as Christ is worshipped as the light

which enlighteneth every man coming into the world; that the Sun, the great fountain of light, was personified by Chrishna in the countries before mentioned, who was said to have been born of a virgin, differing only from the orthodox Virgin Mary, in being black; because, as before noted, when blacks personify, they personify in their own manner,—there being no standard of excellence or beauty, but each nation or people setting up one of their own, purely arbitrary, delightful enough to themselves—but often ugly and detestable to others. Had all men been black, we should undoubtedly have heard of nought but sooty gods, angels, and superior intelligences; for, as observed by a witty philosopher,—“If God has made men after his own image, men have not failed to return the compliment, and made God, or gods, after their own image.” The Chrishna of India was the same as the Hercules of Egypt and Phenecia, the Mithra of Persia, the Bacchus of Greece, and the Christ of Europe,—that is, neither more nor less than a personified idea of the strength, virtue, and grandeur of the glorious Star of Day; in short, as we asserted in our second Letter,—a Mythos! Proofs of this will thicken upon us at every step, and in our next we shall pluck *another* feather from the wing of the orthodox Christian, by shewing that the supposed birth of Christ on Christmas day, was the birth of the Sun, or the winter solstice. It will also be made manifest, not merely that the festival of Christmas had its origin in the heavenly appearances, but in fact, that *all* religious worship, ceremonies, fêtes, and festivals, bore a relation to heavenly phenomena, and the effects such phenomena produced on the destinies of men.

This was the origin of the fêtes and rejoicings at Christmas, or the solstice of winter and Easter, or the equinox of spring, by the worshippers of Christ, or the Sun; but though many rejoice—few inquire. The true cause of such fêtes and festivals, was unknown, except to the instructed. The ancient priests were well informed respecting these things, but modern priests, bewildered by dogmas, know nothing of their origin. May-day sports, as well as those of Christmas and Easter, were first enjoyed in ancient times, and were always meant to celebrate certain natural events.

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LETTER 10.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. *I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.*"—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

The dogma, so long and strenuously insisted upon by the *knowing* among the nations—that opinions which affect religion, or in anywise concern our eternal salvation, it is good to receive without question, or examination, as a sacred heritage—a divine gift, of which priests are the donors, too sacred and too divine to be searched or sought into—has lost much of its dominion over the minds of men; who, since they learned to reason, have discovered that such a dogma was both mischievous and absurd, tending more than any other to perpetuate delusion, and make of religion, which ought to find its support in the sublimest speculations, "a mere rhapsody of words," a jargon most discordant and confused, that, instead of exciting the tenderest sympathies of human nature, and giving birth to actions generous and noble, fill weak-minded men with a fanatical and most unjust hatred of each other. The teachers of religion *ought to be* the most meek, the most humble, loving, charitable, and disinterested of men—shewing examples of virtue and probity—promoters of peace and good-will among mankind, the terror of the evil-doer, the champions of the weak, lovers of the sciences and the arts; they *should be* stimulators and directors—not deadeners and checkers, of the spirit of inquiry, and by their conduct leave no

room for men to say, "Ye are forgers of lies ; ye are all physicians of no value ;" to which they sometimes, in very bitterness of spirit, add, when they see religion converted into an engine of despotism, and its teachers the faithful allies of the spoilers, "The tabernacle of robbers prospers : and they that provoke God are secure ; into whose hand God bringeth abundantly."

Is it not true, that "a righteous man hateth lying ; but a wicked man is loathsome, and cometh to shame ?" No orthodox divine will say nay to this ; but it must be evident that the man, be he king, priest, or legislator, who teaches, or causes to be taught, that it is good to believe, and bad to examine, is an unrighteous man, for he loveth lying ; for what is error but a lie,—which it is only necessary to know as such, when it will receive its death-blow. Error is only supported because men think it good—falsehood always wears the mask of truth ; but dabblers in human credulity, who go to market with their cunning, seldom fail to find a purchaser for the wares they carry—for with traffickers in opinion, what matters who buys, so that they sell ; or who loses, so that they gain : they know that to make others as cunning as themselves would be to break up their holy and profitable monopoly ; and hence it is, that quacks, theological and political, determinedly oppose any inroads upon ancient theology, or ancient kind of government. No, no ; they stand upon the ancient ways, and say they have a *prescriptive right* to torture both body and soul. The theologian loves the good old times, and the good old things—once so well enjoyed, when there was no hubbub about rights of conscience or liberty of speech ; but all was smooth, oily, and harmonious ; when the glory of the church of Christ blazed forth amid the darkness of the people ; when it was duly taught, and duly believed, too, that "the fear of a king is as the roaring of a lion ; whoso provoketh him to anger sinneth against his own soul." We need not be surprised that the human heart was essentially corrupt, and all the thoughts of the mind evil continually, when such orthodox dogmas were given forth from our pulpits by holy men—most eloquent divines—whose wits were sharpened by the desire of court favour and good livings in perspective. How could the hearers of such inspired preachers be calm under their exciting influence ? Can we wonder that their hearts burned within them when the Scripture was opened to them by men who knew that "the king's wrath is as the roaring of a lion, but his favour is as dew upon the grass !" and seeing

that "wealth maketh many friends; but the poor is separated from his neighbour;" they did, not having the fear of poverty before their eyes, preach to their dupes the *excellence* of poverty, as that which chasteneth us—turneth our thoughts towards heaven; while they piously did keep the wealth for themselves. Verily, this was the generation "whose teeth were as swords, and their jaw-teeth as knives, to devour the poor from off the earth, and the needy from among men."

What but the influence of such godly ravings could have so long bewildered the people, and kept them in the mazes of error, the worse than Cretan labyrinth of Christian mysticism; but alas! the credulity of the people is as a rich mine that each knave thinks he has a right to dig into; and the priests early saw that if they would maintain their power, they must oppose every species of knowledge, except that particular kind of knowledge they wished to give. They supported error, because error supported them; and of this we may be sure, that as long as men profit by error it will not want champions. This is the grand secret; here we have the true cause why the opinions of one generation are adopted as infallible by the next; sacred truths, to doubt which, is sinful and unholy, injurious to public morals, and opposed to the glory of God!" Seneca finely observes, "that plurality of voices is still an argument of the wrong; the common people find it easier to believe than to judge, and content themselves with what is usual, never examining whether it be good or no. By the common people is intended the man of title, as well as the clown; for we do not distinguish them by the eye, but by the mind, which is the proper judge of the mind."

Men wise in crooked policy, who prefer ease to honesty, before they write or speak, feel the pulse of those they profess to teach. Sounding opinion from its lowest note to the top of its compass, and understanding the sharps and flats of discourse, they chime in most harmoniously with the voice of the age, or speak not at all, sheltering themselves under the wise maxim, "He that hath knowledge spareth his words; and a man of understanding is of an excellent spirit;" but there are others, who, not knowing how to write, so as to get readers, or to talk with the slightest prospect of getting ears that *will* hear, do make a virtue of necessity, and stammer out their opinion—that the world will be best reformed by saying nothing—by preserving a dignified silence. These people should

have been born before the flood. They hold the sage maxim that the mind is better improved by thought and meditation than by talking; besides, our great men of the present day, who are reputed wise for saying nothing, have Solomon to back them, who observes, that "even a fool, when he holdeth his peace, is counted wise; and he that shutteth his lips is esteemed a man of understanding."

It is much to be lamented, that the human mind should be clogged and fettered by those who are set apart to teach truths, and should teach them; but alas! it is but too true, as said by Fletcher, the celebrated divine, that "there is not a pulpit in the kingdom where more has not been said *for* sin than *against* it:" and yet such preachers are orthodox, forsooth,—that is, fall in with the most common, and therefore the most profitable opinions. Oh, how strange, that while ancient philosophers are honoured as something more than men, and permitted to occupy a niche in the temple of fame, their teachings are set at nought. Socrates, though a Pagan, is little less than deified by all but the most bigotted—that is to say, the least instructed Christians; yet Socrates was not satisfied to believe, but taught the necessity of searching and probing into Nature, so as, if possible, to pluck out the heart of her mystery. Yes, Socrates is considered one of the wisest of mortals, though his orthodoxy was of a most questionable and crazy kind; nor were his opinions found to be of the right length, breadth, and thickness, when measured by the foot-rule of bigots. And to his cost he discovered that "a stone is heavy and the sand weighty, but a fool's wrath is heavier than both."

How, in the name of reason, shall we understand the genius of the ancient priests and poets,—how get at the spirit of their works, except by persevering industry, aided and supported by an ardent love of truth. How important, for example, it is that all Christians should know that in former ages, when priests were at once the teachers and the rulers of the people, their guides and their protectors, Nature's phenomena was only observed by them; all learning was then concentrated in the religious temples; the priests were the historians; all books were written by priests—in short, human condition was in former times, entirely prescribed by priests. But what is perhaps of more importance to know, their histories were histories of nature, not histories of men; and in their sacred books their custom was to put in action all the intelligences they sup-

posed to be spread throughout the universe,—giving them a character and manners analogous to their supposed nature; making of the Sun, the moon, the stars, the earth, the elements, &c., so many heroes, angels, or deities, each playing his or her part in their poetical fictions, and religious chants; as all know who have read the poems which treat of the works and wonders of Bacchus, of Jason, of Osiris, of Theseus, of Hercules, of Christ.

This custom of the ancient priests to personify natural phenomena, gave birth to idolatry, its absurdities, and cruelties, and the error was so much the more easily credited as the priests relaxed not in their efforts to persuade the people that the gods they adored had really lived and performed the extraordinary feats related of them; that they were *bona-fide* men, princes, legislators, and the like, who, when on earth, were as Hercules, the terror of the guilty, and the shield of the innocent.

The people in former times, like our friends and neighbours of the present moment, were not in general very solicitous to search into the real merits of such recitals, but were well content to be led, if always fed at the same time; a neglect of the latter condition makes the task of leading rather difficult; and it may be true that the ancient priests, or teachers of mankind, were prompted to act by the best possible motives when they gave currency to pious frauds, and taught that the gods worshipped by their devotees, had formerly resided upon the earth—been examples of virtue, truthfulness, bravery, and honour—thereby worthy of deification—leading the people to admire those virtues, and thus set in motion the springs of imitation; there being a natural tendency in men to aim at achieving those acts which they admire when performed by others; besides, such stories, they probably thought, would have the effect of stimulating the ardour for good deeds, which otherwise would have lain dormant in the breasts of the chiefs and leaders of the people; or it may be, that the priests connived at the cheat, with a view to excite, in the minds of the people, a love of virtue, by teaching them that great actions would ensure great rewards,—not merely on earth, but in heaven,—and that it was great and noble deeds which gave their forefathers a claim to wield the sceptre of their country, which was ever the reward of merit—not the patrimony of individuals.

A comparison of the ancient calendar, with the works said to have been performed by Hercules, will throw a strong light upon

this subject. The Phenecians had a tradition that Hercules was the god Sun—that magnificent star which vivifies all nature—which engenders the year, composed of twelve months, figured by the twelve works called the twelve works of Hercules. We are informed by Porphyry, that Hercules was a personification of the Sun, and that the fable of the twelve works merely expressed, and did convey, the idea to the learned, of the apparent march of that star through the twelve signs of the zodiac. Hesiod informs us, that the zodiac, in which the Sun achieves his annual course, is the veritable career run through by Hercules in the fable of the twelve works; and that by his marriage with Hebe, goddess of youth, that he espouses after finishing his career, we are to understand, the year which renews itself at the end of each revolution.

The celebrated ancient poet Nonus, gives to Hercules the name of Helios, or Sun, and further says, that he is the same god that divers people adore under a host of different names—as Belus upon the shores of the Euphrates, Ammon in Lybia, Apis in Memphis, Saturn in Arabia, Jupiter in Assyria, Serapis in Egypt, Helios with the Babylonians, Apollo at Delphi, and Esculapius in all Greece.

A comparison, that we here challenge all readers to make between the said works of Hercules and the works of the Sun during the twelve months, or with the signs and the constellations which mark the division of time during each month of the annual revolution, will set all doubt as to the mythological character of Hercules—for ever at rest.

If the story told of Hercules be a solar fable, instead of, as is generally supposed, a matter of fact,—if the hero of the twelve works, to whom the Greeks attributed so many marvellous actions, and that they honoured, under the form of a hero invested with the skin of a lion, and armed with an enormous club, is the great god Sun, worshipped by all people,—we shall know how to estimate what are called “the historical proofs of his existence.” In various countries they *prove* the existence of Hercules by shewing what they are pleased to call the marks or traces of his footsteps, which plainly indicate, say they, that he must have been a man of colossal stature. The priests attached to his worship have conserved correct likenesses of Hercules, as the Christians have of their god Christ. Dr. Arnott has felt annoyed that the features of Christ had been borrowed from handsome persons of but questionable cele-

brity, and gravely says,* that "It can produce no pleasing impression on a Christian's mind to be told, that an admired painting of the crucifixion was made chiefly from the body of an executed murderer (!), or that, for a praised representation of the triumphal entry into Jerusalem, the painter had deemed his own physiognomy the most befitting for the principal figure, while he copied the portrait of a noted modern sceptic as a specimen of the bad men—of an equally noted believer as a specimen of the good,—while wives, cousins, acquaintances, and old clothes men, served to make up the remaining groups." What a pity the apostles did not look to this, and, as they had the gift of tongues and the power of the holy-ghost upon them, have taken care to leave us a correct portrait, and thereby rendered it unnecessary for orthodox artists to look out for an executed murderer (as the above *Christian* writer asserts) in order to find a set of features to convey his idea of Christ nailed upon the cross!!

Again, Hercules is represented as strong and nervous, with an aquiline nose, dark, glossy hair, and showing signs of the most robust health. He was styled the universal benefactor of the world—so was Christ; the one was invested with the skin of the lion, the emblem of the solstitial lion, or lion of the constellations, and Christ took that of the equinoxial lamb, or the lamb of spring, which repairs the evil of the world; but the god Sun will not escape us under this flimsy disguise, and the lion of the tribe of Judah will be no less the Sun, which has its domicile at the sign of the celestial lion, and its exaltation in that of the lamb or ram of spring. This, no Christian will have the rashness to deny, after having read the account of ancient festivals published in the two following Letters, where the truth is established that the god of the Christian sect is the star which regenerates nature every year at the moment of the celebration of Easter.

Who after having compared the ancient calendar with the fabled works of Hercules, will care one straw what is said by historians about the existence of a valiant hero called Hercules; in vain will people shew in Italy, in Greece, in Egypt, or in Phenecia, towns that he had founded, canals that he formed, rocks that he had separated, columns that he had raised, or the stones which Jupiter is said to have thrown from heaven to assist him in his conflict against the Liguriens,—in vain will the temples, the statues, the

* In his "Elements of Physics," part 1, page 218, vol. 2.

altars, the fêtes, the solemn sports, the hymns, the sacred traditions spread over half the world, be referred to as proofs that he really existed; the comparison of the reputed actions of a man called Hercules, with the ancient calendar, will scatter such flimsy evidence to the wind. We have in our possession a copy of this curious calendar, and shall publish it in a future number, when every reader will be enabled to judge for himself, and see to what point it harmonises with the poetic fiction. There is not, we feel assured, a single Christian reader who, after comparing the calendar with the fictional history, will not exclaim—"Well, it is clear, all that has been written about the wonderful Greek prince, called Hercules, is mere fiction, and relates to the Sun;" but how will those same Christian readers be startled, but we hope not dismayed, to find, that what is written about Christ is equally a poetic fiction—that Christ no more existed than did Hercules,—that, in fact, *Christ has been worshipped ever since men worshipped the Sun*—that himself and his twelve apostles, the chief of whom has all the attributes of Janus, bear a relation, or rather, owe their existence to the Sun and the signs of the zodiac through which it annually passes. It will be idle for Christians to declare that the tomb of Christ is to be seen even now at Jerusalem; so may that of Hercules be seen at Cadiz; and those of Bacchus and Jupiter in Greece; and if, as historians tell us, Christ was born at Jerusalem, they with equal plausibility inform us that Hercules was born at Thebes, as well as Bacchus, son of Semele, an ancient hero, who, on account of his glorious conquests, was placed in the rank of the gods. Again we repeat that in former times it was customary to write the history of nature and its phenomena, as we now write that of men; and that the Sun was everywhere the hero of these marvellous romances. If the reader admit this truth, he will also, without difficulty, admit our explanation of the solar legend, known among the Christians under the name of the life of Christ,—which is but one of a thousand names for the Sun, whatever may be the opinion of his worshippers.

In every nation the credulous and the *knowing* shew the tombs of their great and little gods to the generally incredulous traveller; everywhere are fêtes celebrated, and doleful lamentations uttered, the end of which seemed to be the renewal, every year, of the sorrow the loss of their gods had occasioned.

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THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

AS A HUMAN BEING,

DISPROVED!

BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER II.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

Herodotus, the celebrated Greek historian, who had travelled long in Egypt, carefully collecting the sacred traditions of that ancient nation, and made himself familiar with the rites, ceremonies, manners, and customs of that learned people, assures us that not merely was Osiris (or the Sun honoured under that name) worshipped by the Egyptians as a living God (the same Deity as that to which temples and alters were raised in Greece under the name of Bacchus), but that they likewise appropriated to themselves all the other gods worshipped upon the soil of Egypt, and faithfully copied their forms, ceremonies, fêtes, and mysteries; in short, the superstitions of Egypt were transplanted to Greece, from Greece to Rome, and are now spread over all Europe. The spirit of imitation is national, as well as individual; and we find in Herodotus that if Egypt had its initiations, known under the name of mysteries of Osiris and of Isis, the Greeks had also theirs under the name of Bacchus; a short account of which mysteries may be useful and instructive—useful as shewing the causes why certain days were set apart as festivals (for the mysteries were festivals of a splendid character)—and instructive as proving that in the early ages of the world all festivals owed their existence to the appearance of some remarkable natural phenomena.

The mysteries of Eleusis were celebrated with much magnificence by the Roman people; and the great orator Cicero, one of the noblest of men, speaks of them as fêtes most useful to humanity, for, observes he, "their effect has been to civilize societies, soften men's hearts, and humanize their manners, making men who would else be savage and ferocious, civilized—penetrates them with a love of their fellow-creatures, and leads them to a knowledge of the true moral principles, which can alone lead men to those practices which are worthy of them." So thought Cicero; and such was the opinion of the greatest philosophers of his time, who gave currency to the fable that Orpheus, whose delicious music subdued the cruel rage of lions and tigers, and touched the sensibilities of trees and rocks by the harmonious accents of his lyre, was the god who first carried into Greece the mysteries of Bacchus,—and as the mysteries had for their end the support of social order, justice, and religion, in the system of those who only hoped to support the one by the other, Orpheus received much of honour. This double end is enclosed in the verse of Virgil,—

"Learn of me to respect justice and the gods."

And such was the grand lesson given by the priest to those who were initiated and allowed the privilege of taking part in the mysteries. Modern festivals and rejoicings are all of a meagre character. Our Christmas and our Easter fêtes, and our May-day sports are fast sinking into oblivion, and people are travelling towards the conviction that no one day is more holy or preferable to another; but it was not so with the ancients, who imprinted a supernatural character upon their legislation; and in their religious temples the people were taught the duty they owed to each other, and their duty to the gods. Mythological poetry furnished to the legislators of those times the subject of scenes as astonishing as varied—as interesting as magnificent, which dazzled the eyes of all beholders. In the temples of Egypt, of Asia, and of Greece, all that illusion could effect—all the resources of mechanism and of magic (which is nothing more than the knowledge of the secret effects of nature, and the mastery of that art which enables us to imitate them), the brilliant pomp of the fêtes, the variety and splendour of the decorations, the rich vestments, the majesty of the ceremonial, the grace of those who took part, the enchanting force of the music, the chorus, the songs, the dances, all imitative of the motions of the planets, the sound of the symbols, so well calculated to excite en-

enthusiasm, and even delirium, always more favourable to such religions than the calmness and placidity of reason,—all these were employed to draw and attach the people to the celebration of the mysteries under the mask of a not-to-be resisted pleasure; the joy and the dance concealed the design that the honest priests had to give useful lessons, they treating the people as children that we never instruct half so well as when we seem to have no other object in view than to amuse them. Upon these grand occasions not only was the universe exposed to the view of the initiated, under the form of an egg, but the principal divisions of nature were traced thereupon, and an explanation given of the cause active and the cause passive, into which they divided all causation,—likewise explaining the two principles of light and of darkness, of good and of evil. In some of their mysteries they exposed the generative organs of the two sexes. It was the same with the Indians, who had their Lingam; but space forbids us to pursue this truly interesting subject further at present, than to say that Herodotus writes at some length respecting the similitude between the ceremonial of the Phallopore, or the Festival of Generation, which was formerly celebrated with much pomp in Egypt in honour of Osiris, and that in Greece in honour of Bacchus. That the people called Phœnecians, Indians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, and others, had at stated seasons ceremonies, fêtes, sometimes joyful, sometimes full of lamentations, in honour of their gods, is now matter of common knowledge; but that all modern fêtes, rejoicings, feasting, and lamentations, were borrowed from the ancients, and had one only source, is not so generally known. The April fooleries are fast going out of fashion. The ancients had many rites and ceremonies in honour of their gods. The Romans kept their Saturnalia in honour of Saturn, beginning on the 17th of December, which lasted during five days. Bocharius is of opinion, that they took their origin from Noah's drunkenness. These were times when all business ceased, except cooking; when servants might command their masters, and slaves become unruly without fear of punishment. The Bacchanalia, or feasts in honour of Bacchus, lasted three days, and commenced after the vine harvests, and then drunkenness was the privilege of all. The Stultinaria were confined to one day, the 1st of April, when the idiots had their annual holiday, and when children were encouraged to make derision of them, and send them on needless errands, &c. Some writers are of opinion that the Romans had much policy in allow-

ing these feasts or holidays. By the first, they saw how servants and slaves would act, had they power. By the second, they were able to discover the natural inclinations and vices of all that inebriated themselves. And the encouragement they gave to the children, in the third instance, to deride the fools, would, they hoped, make them desirous to receive their education, lest they might in time become themselves the objects of contempt.

To bring the custom nearer to our own times, if any of the old accounts of London are looked into, it will be seen, that when Bedlam was first built and endowed, there was a part appropriated for the reception of idiots. They were designated by the title of *Abraham men*, because that was the name of the ward in which they were confined. On the first of April, such as were not too far incapacitated had a holiday to see their friends; such as had not any, begged about the streets. They wore the dress of the hospital, and excited the compassion of many, on account of the game made of them by the vulgar, and children, who knew no better; which induced numbers of vagrants to imitate the dress, and pretend idiotism, till an order was issued from the governors, that if any person should *sham* an *Abraham*, he should be whipped and put in the stocks; from whence came the saying of "*Shamming an Abraham*."

Tertullien, the celebrated apologist of the Christian system, avers, that when that religion passed to the West, enlightened men who examined it, gave as their opinion that the Christians were but sectaries of the religion of Mithra, and that their god was the same god as that worshipped by the Persians. It will be useful here to note, that in the practices of the Christians, we see the not-to-be-mistaken marks of their origin; for example, the Christians never pray without turning themselves towards the East, or towards that part of the world where the Sun rises. All the Christian temples, all their places of worship, were anciently turned towards the rising Sun. The day of festivity which, however, has of late by canting hypoerites been converted into a day of gloom, called the seventh day, answers to the day of the Sun, and is called *Sun-day*, or day of the Lord Sun. The ancients used to call Sunday the day of the Sun.

The Manicheans, whose religion was a strange compound of Christianity and Magism, always turned themselves, when in the act of praying, towards the East. Zoroastre has given the same

instructions to his disciples ; also the Manicheans, who do not appear to have lost the thread which connects the Christian religion with that of the Persians, with regard to the two principles, and with respect to the Sun-Mithra, of whom Christ is a copy, stoutly contended, as we contend, that Christ is the Sun ; but they seemed to suppose that the Sun really contained a man or god called Christ, in the same manner that the ancients placed Apollo and Hercules in that planet. All this is attested by Theoderet, Saint Cyprian, and St Leon. This without doubt was the cause why the other Christians were so angry with the Manicheans—pluming themselves upon being the best believers, that is, the most ignorant ; nor would they in their wrath admit the Manicheans to their communion until they consented to abjure their heresy, and give up the pernicious dogma of their religion, which consisted in believing that Christ and the Sun *were the same thing*—at all events, that he had *no existence out of that star*. There are, *even now*, in the East, two sects of Christians adorers of the Sun. The Basilidians and the Gnostics were two of the most learned, and at the same time, the *most ancient* professors of that religion, which only needs an examination to be convinced that it had its origin in solar worship. They gave to their Christ the name of Iao, the same name that the oracle of Claros, according to the most learned ancient authors, gives to the Sun ; in fine, so much of conformity had Christianity with the worship of the Sun, that the Emperor Adrian called the followers of Christ the worshippers of Serapis, that is to say, of the Sun ; for Serapis was the same as Osiris ; and the ancient medals which bear the features of the god Serapis have inscribed upon them the legend Sun Serapis. This will clearly shew that there is nothing novel about the opinion that Christ was a personification of the Sun, and that all his worshippers are, like the Persians, the worshippers of fire ; so that, if what we assert seem paradoxical, at least it is not new,—and will doubtless, on that account, appear more respectable in the eyes of the moral antiquary, who would not give one brass farthing for an opinion if it were not at least a thousand years old, and wearing upon its face the rust of many ages.

It was a fundamental point of all religions which had the worship of the Sun for their basis, to treat of its birth, death, and resurrection, and to retrace, or, as it were, record those events by religious ceremonies and sacred legends,—hence it was that tombs were raised to the divinity of the Sun, under different names, and to

commemorate its death and resurrection; a vast number of which may now be seen in Egypt. Hercules had his at Cadiz, where his bones were formerly seen, and, as before said, Jupiter and Bacchus had theirs in Greece. The priests of Delphi used to shew the tomb of Apollo; and the tomb of Christ is now shewn to credulous pilgrims in Jerusalem. Three females, it is related, went to shed their tears upon the tomb of Apollo, after the serpent Python had put him to death, as the three females that we are told with equal truth, went to wet with their tears the tomb of Christ. Apollo took the title of Saviour—so did Christ. At Athens and Sparta were celebrated, in honour of Apollo, fêtes of joy at the full-moon of spring,—for the grand festival of Easter is fixed, as all our readers probably know, exactly at the same time. Easter is a time of rejoicing over by far the largest portion of the earth. The fête, the most solemn and grand, of the Tartars, is the *Joun*, or that of spring; also the grand festival of the Calmucs falls at the first moon of April; they call that first day equinoxial, and the fête itself *white-day*. Everywhere in Greece it was customary to celebrate fêtes in honour of the Sun, or god of Spring, vanquisher of winter and the great serpent Python; and these fêtes were called fêtes of felicitation—rejoicings for their safety and wonderful deliverance from the devil, or powers of cold and of darkness.

Christ is called by his followers the Lamb who repairs the evils of the world,—which symbolical expression requires some explanation. In the mysterious book called the Apocolypse, we read of the slaughtered Lamb, worthy to receive wisdom, honour, divinity, glory, and benedictions. It is the Lamb which opens the book of fate, designed under the emblem of the book with seven seals. All the nations of the earth are represented as placing themselves before the throne of the Lamb,—they are clothed in white, with palms in their hands, and chanting with loud voices—glory to our god, who is seated upon the throne. It would be superfluous, if not tedious, to multiply passages in which that mysterious name is repeated,—but all who are curious can examine the matter further by referring to the Apocolypse, where they will see that the god of Light was *the* Christ under the name of the Lamb—that grand divinity to which the Christians consecrated themselves in their initiation. The festival of Easter, therefore, simply relates to the god Sun, in its triumph at the vernal equinox, when it takes the form of the first sign, or constellation, called the celestial Lamb, when

that majestic star, seeming to triumph over the spirit of darkness, and bring back to our hemisphere the long days, its appearance was annually hailed with delight and gratitude; this was the origin of the festival of Easter, and this and this only was the Lamb that came to save the sins of the world. No wonder that men should have worshipped the Lamb, when its appearance in the heavens was the signal for the enjoyment of all the blessings that the presence of the Sun can diffuse; nor shall we be surprised, moreover, to find that the figure of the Lamb was the character or seal with which the priests formerly marked the professors of that religion, or that the early Christians placed around the neck of their children—the symbolical image of the Lamb. Who has not heard of the famous *Agnus dei*?

The most ancient representation of the god of the Christians was the figure of a Lamb, sometimes united to a vase, in which its blood flowed, sometimes sleeping at the foot of a cross. That custom subsisted until the year 680, but it was ordained by the sixteenth synod of Constantinople (canon 82) that in place of the ancient symbol, which was the Lamb, they should in future represent a man attached to a cross, which policy was confirmed by Pope Adrian I. In our churches may be seen this symbol, upon the tabernacle or little press, in which the priests enclose the sun of gold or silver that contains the circular image of the god Sun, as well as in front of their altars. The Lamb is there often represented sleeping, sometimes upon a cross, sometimes upon the book of fate, which is closed with seven seals. That number seven is that of the spheres, of which the Sun was reputed by ancient mystagogues to be the soul, and of which the motion or revolution is reckoned from the point of Aries, or the Lamb of the equinox. This is the Lamb that the Christians tell us was immolated from the beginning of the world. *Agnus oecius ab origine mundi*. It would fill a folio to enumerate one tithe of the fêtes and rejoicings practised among the ancients at Easter in celebration of the victory obtained by the Lamb, or the god Sun, over the devil, or god of darkness. Hence the origin of lighting wax tapers, known under the name of paschal tapers, as symbolical of the triumph of light. It is at Easter that the Persian priests clothe themselves in white, the colour affected to Ormusd, or the god of Light. The festival of Easter was also celebrated in Egypt under Aries, or the Lamb, in gratitude that the light of the heavens had trampled over the genius of evil,—in which

the all is red, or the colour of fire, as in the Easter fête of the Jews—their fête of the Lamb. That resurrection of the eternal fire, which the ancients supposed bubbled or boiled in the Sun, and which every spring returns to render vitality and joy to our hemisphere, was the true and only resurrection of Christ. It was this idea that led the Bishop of Jerusalem every year to shut himself up in a little cave, called the tomb of Christ, and carry with him a bundle of small wax candles, and by the aid of flint and steel contrive to produce an explosion of light, such as that to be seen at the body of the Opera; in order that the people might believe that sacred fire had fallen from the heavens to the earth, which they readily did. Then the worthy bishop had the second part of the farce to play, and ran out crying lustily that the fire from heaven had descended, and the holy wax candles were illumined by it, and the open-mouthed multitude ran in crowds to buy his holy wax candles; for in Jerusalem, as elsewhere, the priests sell holy things, and the people purchase them,—the more silly the latter, the richer the former,—everywhere the people are duped out of their substance, and where dupes are, dupers will be.

The reason why the name of Lamb has been given to Christ, and that the latter has been in so many nations worshipped under that emblem, is because that Christ is the Sun, and that the triumph of the Sun is gained every year, under the sign of the Lamb, or under that sign which was then the first of the twelve signs, when happened the equinox of spring. The mysteries of Atys lasted three days; these days were days of mourning, and that fête of the Sun Atys fell on the 25th of March, or the eighth day before the kalends of April, that is to say, it fell upon the same day that the Christians ordinarily celebrate their Easter, or the triumph of Christ, when they chaunt Hallelujah, the true chaunt of joy of the *Haries*, or days of joy; indeed, there is not the slightest difference between these two fêtes, those of Atys god Sun of the Phrygia, and Christ the god Sun of the Christians, only in the name of the hero of the tragedy, who in both fables is reputed to have done precisely the same acts. In our next we shall conclude our remarks on the origin of Christmas and Easter Festivals, and in the following Letter will publish, according to promise, the ancient Calendar, and compare it with the twelve works of Hercules.

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LETTER 12.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. *I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.*"—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

The Sun neither rises nor sets in reality—it is in itself ever the same,—always majestic, always brilliant; but in the relation the days have with the nights, there is in the world a progressive gradation, of increase and of decrease, which phenomena have given birth to ingenious fictions on the part of ancient theologians. They have likened the birth and the apparent growth and decay of the Sun, to that of a man who is born, grows, and, after having attained the age of maturity, degenerates or decreases in force, until he arrives at last at the term or end of the career that Nature has enabled him to run through. The god of day, or the Sun, personified in the sacred allegories, was reputed to have suffered the destiny of man; he had his cradle and his grave, under the names of Hercules, of Atys, of Adonis, Bacchus, Osiris, or Christ. He was a child at the solstice of winter, or at the moment when the days began to lengthen, and it is under that form that the Sun's image was formerly exposed in the ancient temples, there to receive the homage of his adorers; because, according to Macrobe, "the day being then the most short, the god Sun seemed to be as a feeble infant. It is the child of the mysteries—that same infant that the Egyptians drew the image of from their sanctuaries every year upon a day appointed."

It is that same child of whom the goddess of Sais called herself the mother. In the inscription to be found upon the celebrated ancient temple erected to her honour, might be seen these words—"The fruit that I have brought forth is the Sun." It is that child, feeble and weak, born in the middle of obscure night, of which the holy virgin of Sais was delivered at the solstice of winter,—according to Plutarchus.

The Sun god had his mysteries and his altars, and statues were raised which represented him in the four ages of human life; nor were the Egyptians the only people who celebrated at the winter solstice the birth of the Sun—of that star which every year seems to triumph over darkness and death. The Romans had on a day fixed their grand fête of the Sun, when they celebrated solar sports, known under the name of sports of the circus. They fixed it on the eighth day before the kalends of January, that is to say, on that day which answers to our 25th of December, or to the birth of the Sun, adored under the names Mithra, Christ, &c. This is shewn in a calender printed in the Uranology of the celebrated Petean, where we read, that "On the eighth day before the kalends of January, *natalis invicti*, or birth of the invincible." That invincible was Mithra, or the Sun. "We celebrate," said Julian the philosopher, "some days before the day of the year, magnificent sports in honour of the Sun, to which has been given the title of Invincible." The same epithet, as before stated in one of these Letters, is to be found upon all the monuments of the Mithriac religion, and is applied to Mithra, or to the Sun, the great divinity of the Persians,—their great god Sun, the invincible Mithra.

In the sphere of the Magi and the Chaldean priests was represented in the sky, a newly-born infant, called Christ, or Jesus, placed in the arms of the celestial virgin, that is, the virgin of the signs, to which some philosophers have given the name of Isis, mother of Horus. And at what point of the heavens did that virgin and her son answer? (Let every Christian note this well.) It was at the hour of midnight, on the 25th of December, at the very same instant when the god of the year, the Christ, is said to have been born, and at that very point where the Sun seemed to rise on the first day above the eastern horizon.

To this fact we call the attention of all who are willing to be convinced, as it is of vast importance; it is a fact independent of all mere hypothesis—independent of all conclusions we may draw from it—that at the precise hour of midnight, on the

25th of December, in the ages when Christianity appeared,—the celestial sign which then appeared above the horizon, and of which the ascendant presided at what astronomers call the opening of the solar revolution,—was the virgin of the constellations. It is also a fact, that the god Sun, born at the solstice of winter, that is, the 25th of December, is re-united to the virgin, and seems to envelope her with his fires at the epoch of our grand fête of the assumption, or the re-union of the mother with her son, and that she seems to go out from the solar rays heliaquement, at the very moment when the Christians celebrate his appearance in the world, or his nativity.

These are facts which cannot be abused away ; nor do we doubt that they will produce great and lasting effects upon the minds of all candid readers. No reasoning, however sophistical, can set such evidence aside ; but the attentive observer, who has the least acquaintance with the genius of the ancient writers and teachers, will draw from them consequences of vast importance, unless they can suppose that all these things are merely accidental—mere matters of chance,—this, however, few will do who are on their guard against all that is likely to mislead their reason, and perpetuate their prejudices. One thing is certain, which is, that the same virgin—that virgin which can alone become a mother without ceasing to be a virgin—fulfilled the three grand functions of the virgin mother of Christ, whether in the birth of her son, in her own birth, or her re-union to him in the heavens ; but it is, above all, in her function of mother that we shall examine her here. It is natural to think that those who personified the Sun, and made him pass through the different ages of human life—who attributed to him marvellous adventures, which they chanted in poems, or related in their sacred legends—would not fail to draw his horoscope, as it was the custom to draw the horoscope of other children at the moment of their birth. That usage was, above all, that of the Chaldeans and the Persians ; and such fêtes were celebrated under the name of *dies natalis*, or fête of the birth. But the celestial virgin which presided at the birth of the god Day personified, was reputed to be his mother, and fulfilled the prophecy of the astrologer who had said, “ A virgin will conceive and bring forth,” that is to say, that she will bear or bring forth the god Sun, as the virgin Sais ; hence the designs traced in the sphere of the Magi, of which Abulmazar has given us a description, and of which also, Albert the Grand, Roger Bacon, Selden, Kirker, and others, have

written. Abulmazar says, "In the first decan, or in the first ten degrees of the sign of the virgin, according to the traditions of the most ancient Persians, of the Chaldeans, of the Egyptians, of Hermes, and of Esculapius, is a young girl, called in the Persian language Seclenidos de Daryama, a name translated into Arabic by that of Adrenedefa, that is to say, a virgin chaste, pure, immaculate, with a delightful figure, sweet and most agreeable features, with long flowing hair, and a modest air; she holds in her hand two ears of corn, she is seated upon a throne, she nourishes and gives suck to a young infant, that some call Jesus, and the Greeks Christ." The sphere of the Magi, or Persian priests, published by the learned Scaliger, at the end of his notes upon Manilius, describes, in nearly the same manner, the celestial virgin; but he does not name the infant which is milked, or receives support from the virgin; and placed by her side is a man who can be no other than Bootes, called the nourisher of the Sun, and of the virgin Isis.

In the Bibliotheque national of France might formerly be seen an Arab manuscript which contained the twelve signs designed and illuminated, and there was represented a young child by the side of the celestial virgin, as nearly as possible like our representations of the virgin and son, and as the Egyptian Isis with her son. It seems probable that the ancient astrologers would have placed in the sky the infantine image of the new Sun in the constellation which presided at the re-rising, or that of the new year, the solstice of winter, from which simple root have sprung up all the fictions about a god conceived in the chaste womb of a virgin, since that constellation was really the virgin. That conclusion is surely more probable and therefore more sensible than the fanciful notion which many simple and not a few cunning fanatics so obstinately believe, or pretend they believe, that there did once exist a woman called Mary, who became a mother without ceasing to be a virgin, and that the fruit which she brought forth is an eternal being that moves and rules all nature. The Greeks said of their god, worshipped under the form of a ram or a lamb, the famous Ammon or Jupiter, that he was nurtured by Themis, one of the names of the constellations; she was also called Ceres, to whom the epithet Holy Virgin was applied, and was said to be the mother of the young Bacchus, or of the Sun; the image of which, with all the traits of infancy, was annually exposed at the solstice of winter in the holy temples or sanctuaries. The author of the Chronicles of Alexandria expresses himself in these terms, "the Egyptians have

up to this day consecrated the *couche* (lying-in) of a virgin and the birth of her son, that it is customary to expose in a cradle to the adoration of the people. The great king Ptolemy having demanded the reason of that usage, he was answered that it was a mystery taught to their Egyptian forefathers by a great prophet. It may be well to add, that with the Egyptians the term prophet meant simply a chief of the initiations.

It is contended by many learned authors that the ancient Druids rendered honours to a virgin, and that her statue was formerly in the territory of Chartres, with this inscription—*Virginis pariturae*. It is certain that on the monuments erected to Mithra, or the Sun, of which the worship was formerly established in Great Britain, might be seen the figure of a woman with an infant sucking at her breast, which doubtless represents the mother of the god Sun. An English author who wrote a dissertation upon that monument, detailed all the similarities and all the circumstances which could establish a relationship between the fêtes of the birth of Christ and those which related to the birth of Mithra. That author, very pious, but not philosophic, can only see, in the very remarkable relationship between these two fictions, a prophecy as to the birth of Christ. He however remarks truly, that the Mithriac worship was spread over the Roman empire. He cites also the testimony of St. Jerome, who complained bitterly that the Pagans celebrated fêtes in honour of the rising Sun, or of Adonis, and likewise in honour of Mithra, in the same country, where it was said Christ was born, that is, Bethlehem; these, according to the theory we are endeavouring to support, were but the same kind of worship under different names, as an examination of the fable of Adonis, which will be given in a future number, will prove to every intelligent reader, when it will be seen that Adonis, like Christ, was miraculously born—suffered a cruel and untimely death—followed by a glorious resurrection.

We have shown upon what astronomical basis is founded the fable of the incarnation of the Sun in the bosom of a virgin, under the name of Christ; and now we will pass on to an examination of the supposed death—then to his resuscitation or resurrection at the equinox of spring, under the form of the pascal Lamb.

The Sun, the only Redeemer from the evil that his absence had produced, was said in highly poetic sacerdotal fictions, to be born at Christmas, or the solstice of winter, when he remains three months

in the inferior signs of the heavens—in the regions affected to evil and darkness, and is there compelled to suffer the malignant power of their chief before he (the Sun) passed the famous passage of the equinox of spring, which assures his triumph over darkness, and covers with fruits and flowers the face of the earth. The priests having personified the Sun, made a mere mortal of him—made him live exposed to all the infirmities of mortal life, until, triumphing in his course, he regained all that brilliancy which darkness for a season had wrested from him. The genius of allegory, so devoutly studied by the ancient mystagogues, or as they are very well called among the North American Indians, *mystery-men*, led them to compose a life, and imagine adventures analogous to the character that they had given to him, and which led to the attainment of the end proposed by the initiations. It is thus that Esop, wishing to picture men strong and unjust, who oppress the weak, has put *en scene* various animals, to whom he has given opposing characters, and has imagined an action proper to attain the moral end of his apologue. This is hinted at by Bacon in his Critique upon the Mythology of the Ancients, where he says, “In the first ages, when such inventions and conclusions of the human reason as are now trite and common, were new and but little known, all things abounded with fable, parable, comparison, allegory, &c., and even to this day, if any man would let new light in upon the human understanding, and conquer prejudice without raising contests, animosities, opposition, or disturbance, he must still go in the same path, and have recourse to the like method of allegory, metaphor, and allusion.” Again he observes, “The concealed and secret learning of the ancients seems separated from the history and knowledge of the following ages, by a veil or partition wall of fables, interposing between the things that are lost and those that remain.”

Besides the wrecks of ancient sacerdotal fictions, which were handed down to us in the works of Diodorus and Plutarchus, we have seen a life of Osiris and of Typhon (the god and devil of the Egyptians), composed by the Christian Bishop Synesius, who did not disdain to fabricate legends, believing, as he said he did, that fables were good for the common people, as they amused and kept them out of mischief. “When I am in my closet (said this worthy) I am a Philosopher—when with the vulgar I am a Bishop!” In these adventures, the characters and the portraits of the two principles of the Egyptian theology were traced from the imagination.

with a bold and skilful hand. These principles were light and darkness, which seem ever to be struggling for mastery—poetically personified by Osiris and Typhon. The Persians had also their history of Ormusd and Abriamanes, which contained a stirring recital of their combats, ending with the victory of the good principle.

The Persian priests had their legend of the chief of their religion, and they tell us that prodigies announced his birth. He was exposed to all sorts of danger from his infancy, was obliged to fly into Persia, as Christ was obliged to fly into Egypt; he was pursued as him by a king who wished to destroy him; an angel transported him into the skies, from whence they said he brought back the book of the law; as Christ, he was tempted by the devil, who made him magnificent promises, if he would but follow him; he was pursued and calumniated, as Christ, by the Pharisees; he performed miracles, in order to confirm his divine mission and the dogmas contained in his book. Such was the history of the god Mithra given by the Persians—squaring exactly with the history of Christ given by his worshippers. Now, Mithra was but a personification of the Sun,—and we dare to say, what all intelligent readers will certainly think, that Christ was no more,—nay, that the Christian religion is a mere copy of the Persian—a branch of the same allegorical tree.

In concluding this hasty notice of the Festivals of Christmas and of Easter, we deem it necessary to impress upon the minds of all readers, that it is precisely at the equinox of spring that Christ triumphed, when he repaired the evils of the human race, according to the fable of the Christians, called the Life of Christ. It is at that annual epoch that are held the fêtes which have for their object the celebration of that grand event; for the Easter of the Christians, as that of the Jews, is necessarily fixed at the full-moon of the equinox of spring—that is to say, at the moment when the Sun passes the barrier which separates the empire of the god of Light from that of the prince of Darkness,—when re-appears in our climate the magnificent star which gives life and light to all nature. The Jews and the Christians call it the fête of the passage,—for it is then that the god Sun, or the lord of Nature, passes towards our regions, and distributes those benefits, of which the serpent of darkness and of autumn had deprived us during the winter. It is the festival of the lord, so called, because it was cus-

sonary to give to the Sun that title; for Adonis, or Adonai, are mere names for that star, Lord of the world. In the Oriental fable Adonis, or the god Sun, like Christ, goes out victorious from the tomb after his worshippers had deplored his death. In the consecration of the seven days to the seven planets, the day of the Sun was called the day of the lord, or commonly Lord's Day or Sunday. It precedes Monday, or the day of the Moon, and follows Saturday, or the day of Saturn,—two planets which occupy the extremes of the musical scale, of which the Sun is the centre, and number the fourth; thus the epithet Lord agrees in all its relations to the Sun.

The Festival of Easter, called the fête of the passage, was originally fixed on the 25th of March, that is to say, three months, day for day, after the fête of the birth, or the Festival of Christmas;—the birth of Christ was, as before proved, the birth of the Sun.

The learned Cedrenus says, that Christ died on the 23rd of March, and the resurrection took place on the 25th, from hence came the usage in the church of celebrating Easter, the 25th, that is to say, the eighth day before the kalends of April, exactly three months after the eighth of the kalends of January, epoch of the birth of the Sun. The fête of the passion, or of the death of the god of day, was fixed at the equinox of spring, and held by the worshippers of the Sun in every country of the world; with the Egyptians, it was the death and resurrection of Osiris; with the Phenecians, it was the death and resurrection of Adonis; with the Phrygians, it related to the tragical adventures of Atys; but it is above all in the religion of Mithra, or god Sun of the Persians, that we find the most perfect resemblance to the death and resurrection of Christ, and the other mysteries of the Christian faith, Mithra, as Christ, was born on the 25th of December, performed many wonders and miracles, and like him, suffered a resurrection, and his sepulchre was raised where the elect went to shed their tears, and idolize their god. It is for those who so obstinately believe that Christ was a man-god, to account for so singular a coincidence, by an appeal to reason and history; but this appeal, we know, they dare not make, the evidence we have offered is irresistible—it is drawn from the nature of things, and the most authentic records of past times.

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THE
EXISTENCE OF CHRIST
AS A HUMAN BEING,
DISPROVED!

BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,
FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 13.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

It is certain that if Hercules, of whom we read so much, was not really a Greek prince or *bona-fide* hero, but simply a personification of the Sun, as we have proved by authorities cited in former Letters, the fable of the twelve works is a solar fable, which can have no other relation than to the twelve months, and to the twelve signs—one of which the Sun appears to pass through each month: the consequence will have all the clearness of a demonstration, when we compare each of the works with each of the months, or with the signs and the constellations which mark in the heavens the division of time during each month of the Earth's annual revolution.

Among the different epochs at which the year formerly commenced, that of the solstice of summer was the most remarkable. It was at the return of the Sun to that point that the Greeks fixed the celebration of their olympic fêtes, called olympic games, established, it was said, by the great Hercules; this was the most ancient error of the Greeks. In comparing the ancient calendar with the twelve works said to have been performed by Hercules, we shall fix the departure of the Sun Hercules in his annual course. The sign of the lion domicile of that star, and which furnishes to him his attri-

butes, having formerly occupied that point, his first work will be his victory over the lion, which is really that which has been placed at the head of all the others: but before we compare month by month the series of the twelve works with that of the stars which determine and mark the annual route of the Sun, it will be well to observe that the ancients, when regulating their calendars, employed not only the signs of the zodiac, but more often remarkable stars placed beyond or without the zodiac, and the several constellations which by their rising or setting announced the place of the Sun in each sign. All who have read the poems of Ovid and Columelle will have full proof of this; but it is yet more completely shewn in the ancient calendar. Our readers will now be prepared to compare the subject of the twelve chants with the constellations which preside at the twelve months—the bare reading of which will convince the most sceptical that the poem of the twelve works is nothing more than a sacred calendar, embellished by the lovers of the marvellous, who in distant ages made abundant use of allegory and poetry, in order to give life and soul to their fictions.

CALENDAR.

FIRST MONTH.

Passage of the Sun under the celestial lion, called lion of Nemea, fixed by the setting in the morning of the ingeniculus, or the constellation of the celestial Hercules.

SECOND MONTH.

Passage of the Sun to the sign of the virgin, marked by the total setting of the celestial Hydra, called the Hydra of Lerne, the head of which is next morning renewed with the crab.

THIRD MONTH.

Passage of the Sun to the sign of the balance, at the beginning of autumn, fixed by the rising of the celestial Centaur, who receives Hercules with hospitality. That constellation is represented in the skies with a bottle full of wine and a thyrsus, ornamented by vine leaves and grapes, and all of the season's productions. Then the celebrated bear rises the same evening, called by others the hog and the animal of Erymanthe.

POEM.

FIRST WORK.

Victory of Hercules and his triumph over the Nemean lion.

SECOND WORK.

Hercules defeats the Hydra of Lerne, of which the heads, if cut off, miraculously renewed themselves, whilst he is constrained and resisted in his work by the cancer, or crab.

THIRD WORK.

Hospitality given to Hercules by a Centaur, and combat of the Centaurs for a tun of wine, victory of Hercules upon them, and defeat of a frightful wild boar which ravaged the forests of Erymanthe.

FOURTH MONTH.

Passage of the Sun to the sign of the scorpion, fixed by the setting of Caiope constellation, in which was painted formerly a biche, or kind of dog.

FOURTH WORK.

Triumph of Hercules over a biche with horns of gold and feet of brass that he took upon the borders of the sea where it reposed.

FIFTH MONTH.

Passage of the Sun to the sign of the sagittary, consecrated to the goddess Diana who had her temple at Stymphale, in which was seen the birds Stymphalides. That passage is fixed by the rising of the three birds, the vulture, the stork, and the eagle, pierced by the arrows of Hercules.

FIFTH WORK.

Hercules near Stymphale, gives chase to birds known under the name of birds of the lake Stymphale, as represented to the number of three, on the medals of Perinthe.

SIXTH MONTH.

Passage of the Sun to the sign of the buck or old Capricorn, son of Neptune according to some, grandson of the Sun according to others. That passage is marked by the setting of the river Du Verscare, which flows under the point of Capricorn, and of which the source is directed by Aristeo, son of the river Penee.

SIXTH WORK.

Hercules cleanses the Augean stable, or stable of Augeas son of the Sun, or according to others, son of Neptune. He there made to flow the river Penee.

SEVENTH MONTH.

Passage of the Sun to the sign of the Aquarius, and at that part of the heavens where the moon is every year at full, which served as epoch, when were celebrated games called Olympic games. That passage was marked by the vulture placed in the sky by the side of the constellation called Prometheus, at the same time that the bull of Pasophae or of Marathon, calminated to the meriden, at the setting of the horse Arion or Pegasus.

SEVENTH WORK.

Hercules arrives in Elide—he was mounted upon the horse Arion, he leads with him the famous bull of Crete which had ravaged the plains of Marathon. He caused the Olympic games to be celebrated of which he was the institutor, in which games he was the first combatant, he kills the vulture of Prometheus.

EIGHTH MONTH.

Passage of the Sun to the Pisces, fixed by the rising in the morning of the celestial horse, which carries its head towards the Verscan, son of Cyrene.

EIGHTH WORK.

Hercules makes a conquest of the horses of Diomedes, son of Cyrene.

NINTH MONTH.

Passage of the Sun to the sign of the ram, consecrated to Mars, sometimes called the ram with the fleece of gold. That passage is marked by the rising of the ship Argo; by the setting of An-

NINTH WORK.

Hercules embarks in the vessel of Argo, to go to make conquest of the ram with the golden fleece; he combats with female warriors, daughters of Mars, from whom he ravishes a superb girdle,

dromede, or the celestial woman, and of her girdle; by that of the whale; by the rising of the Medusa; and by the setting of the Queen Cassiopee.

and he delivers a young and beautiful female exposed to a whale or a marine monster, such as that to which was exposed Andromache daughter of Cassiopee.

TENTH MONTH.

The Sun quits the ram of Phryxus and enters under the bull. That passage is marked by the setting of Orion, who was amorous of the Atlantides or of the Pleiades, by that of the Bouvier or cow-herd, conductor of the oxen of Icarus by that of the river Eridan, by the using of the Atlantides and by that of the goat, wife of Faun.

TENTH WORK.

Hercules after the voyage that he made with the Argonautes to conquer the ram with the fleece of gold, returns to Hesperee to the conquest of the oxen of Geyon; he kills also a cruel prince who pursued the Atlantides, and he arrives in Italy with Faun at the rising of the Pleiades.

ELEVENTH MONTH.

Passage of the Sun to the twins, indicated by the setting of the dog Procyon; by the rising or appearance of the great dog in the train of which is seen the Hydra; and by rising in the evening of the Cygne celestial.

ELEVENTH WORK.

Hercules triumphs over a frightful dog, of which the tail was a serpent, and of which the head was bristled with serpents; he defeats also Cygnus or the prince Cygne, at the moment when Canicule, or dog, comes to burn the earth with his fires.

TWELFTH MONTH.

The Sun enters into the sign of the cancer or crab, to which answers the last month; at the setting of the river of the Verscare and of the Centaur; at the rising of the shepherd and his sheep; at the moment when the constellation of Hercules descends towards the western regions called Hesperie, followed by the dragon of the pole, guardian of the apples of the garden of the Hesperides, dragon which is represented in the sphere as crushed at his feet, and which falls near him towards the setting.

TWELFTH WORK.

Hercules' voyages in Hesperie, there to gather the golden apples guarded by a terrible dragon, which in our spheres, is near the pole; according to others, to carry away the ram with the golden fleece. He prepares to make a sacrifice, and invests himself with a robe stained with the blood of a centaur that he had killed at the passage of a river. That robe burns him with its fires, he dies and thus finishes his mortal career, in order to retake his youth in the skies, and there to enjoy a glorious immortality.

Here then we have a description comparative of the poetic chants and the twelve works, and of the heavenly appearances during the twelve months of the Sun's, or rather the Earth's annual revolutions; the Sun, as our readers already know, having only a local motion on its own axis. Who will now deny that the indefatigable Hercules was a personification of the Sun? Let every reader judge of the relations, and see to what extent the poem and the calendar agree. It is sufficient for us to say that we have not inverted the series of the twelve works, but have given it precisely as related by Diodorus of Sicily; and as to the celestial phenomena, all can verify them with a sphere, by causing the colure of the solstices to pass by the lion and aquarius, and that of the equinoxes by the bull and the scorpion, which was the position of the sphere at the epoch when the lion opened the solstitial year about four hundred years before our era.

Even if the ancient philosophers had not informed us that Hercules was the Sun, even though the universality of his worship did not prove that a Greek prince could not possibly have produced such astonishing results in the religious world, and that so high a destiny belonged to no mortal, but only to the great god Sun, the benefactor and preserver of our existence, it would suffice to seize all the relations of the double tableau, in order to conclude with moral certainty that the hero of the poems is the god that measures time; who conducts the year, regulates the seasons and the months, and distributes heat and life to all nature. To read the history of Hercules as a *bona-fide* hero, is to read a monstrous tissue of absurdities—a heap of fable, which accords with no chronology, offering in every page the most absurd contradictions, when men ignorantly insist that what was ascribed to Hercules was really performed by a man; but it is a poem, vast, comprehensive, and ingenious, when understood to treat of the god which fructifies the universe. There all is movement, all is change, all is life. The solstitial Sun represented with all the attributes of force and power that he has acquired at that epoch, and that seems contained in him the depository of the universal force of the world. He is invested with the skin of a lion, and armed with an enormous club. He throws himself majestically and fiercely into the career that he is obliged to run through by the eternal order of nature. It is not the sign of the lion that he runs through—it is a frightful lion that

ravages the country ; he goes to offer it combat ; he attacks and stifles it in his arms, decks himself in the spoils of the vanquished animal, then passes on to achieve another victory. The celestial Hydra is the second monster which presents an obstacle to his course. Poets represent this monster as a serpent with a hundred heads, which it is vain to cut off, as they renew themselves, and with terrible additions ; but Hercules burns them with his destructive fires. The ravages which that frightful animal made, the fright of the inhabitants who resided near the cavern which served as a retreat for the monster ; the horrible hissings of the hundred heads, and on the other side the undaunted air of the vanquisher of the Nemean lion ; then his embarrassment when he saw the heads that he had cut off renewed by the power of the monster ; all is painted or described in the same manner that Virgil describes the victory of the same hero upon the monster Cacus.

It is besides, a consequence fairly to be drawn from the comparison we have instituted, that Hercules was not a mortal elevated to the rank of a god for his courage and the benefit he had conferred upon mankind ; nor the events of his pretended life, historical facts ; but merely astronomical phenomena, and further proves that the testimony of many ages and many people, in favour of the existence as men of the heroes of the different religions, the memory of whom is consecrated by a worship, by poems, and by legends, called sacred, is not by any means a sure or certain pledge of their historic reality : the example of Hercules shews that consequence in all its force. The Greeks believed in the existence as a man of Hercules quite as sincerely as the Christians believe in the existence as man of Christ ; but as before hinted, the belief of a people proves nothing more than the belief ; which must always give way before the evidence furnished by experience. What excellent matter for reflection to those who repose confidently upon the grand, but most fallacious, argument, that the belief of one or many people, and of many ages, can establish the truth of a matter of dispute ; above all, in that which touches religion, where the first duty is to believe without examination : surely, in such a case, the philosophy of one man is worth more than the mere opinion of thousands of men born and nursed in ages of credulity. These reflections find their application in the solar fable made upon Christ, the chief of the twelve apostles—the hero of the Christian legend ! nor will

eighteen centuries of fraud and imposture destroy the striking relations between that fable and the other sacred romances made upon the Sun, that Plato called the only Son of God ; but the Christians will speedily be compelled to acknowledge, at least those among them who dare to examine our Letters, that they are worshippers of the Sun, as the Indians, Americans, Phenœcians, Ethiopians, Egyptians, Greeks, Romans, and in short, all people, ancient and modern ; only they worship the Sun under the name of Christ instead of Atys, Adonis, Jupiter, Apollo, Hercules, Bacchus, or Chrishna. Yes, the star which regenerates nature every year, at the moment of the celebration of Easter, is the great God of all the nations, and much lauded Christianity is mere idolatry. This has been proved in our two last Letters, when treating on the origin of the festivals of Christmas and of Easter, and their connection with the supposed birth, death, and resurrection of Christ.

It is easy to understand what kind of developement a true poet was able to give to singular ideas, which were derived from physics in general—and astronomy in particular—whether agriculture or geography, or even politics or morals ; for all particular ends entered into the general system of the first philosophic poets, who sung of the gods, and introduced man into the sanctuary of nature, which seemed to have revealed to them all its mysteries. What a delightful field for the display of genius, when fiction and allegory had full liberty—all to feign and all to dare ! for nothing can be impossible to the gods—of course, we allude to the gods of human imagining, to whom it belonged to astonish all mankind, by a display of their magnificence and power ! What a wonderful career for genius to describe and paint, with all the force human language would permit, the wonders of the universe ! That was indeed the age of gold for poetry, which has been called the child of the sky and the gods. Since those ancient times, all poetic compositions are comparatively tame and spiritless—having little of that sublimity and that boldness of speculation sustained by all the force of genius when excited and sustained by the phenomena of nature, or that great God, of whom the poets were, in former times, the only priests and interpreters. There is very little poetry about modern priests, who are, in general, prosy, dull, and stupid enough ; but with the ancient teachers of the nations, all was enthusiasm and sublimity ; and nothing can open a vaster field to our conjectures

upon the antiquity of the world, and general civilization, than reflections upon the heavenly appearances set forth in those splendid poems, in which the constellations played so conspicuous a part. We might also give an analysis of the poems which treat of Bacchus, and shew that the supposed son of Semele was, as Hercules and Christ, a personification of the Sun—that physical being, the most powerful, as the most beautiful, agent of nature; and if we attach so much importance to proving that Bacchus and Hercules were but symbols of the Sun, adored by all ancient people under various forms and different names, it is because the conclusion is inevitable, that in former times men wrote the history of nature and its phenomena, as they now write the history of men, and that the Sun was, above all, the great hero of all such marvellous romances; with regard to the true character of which, posterity has been so grossly deceived. If the reader is convinced of this truth, he will easily admit our explanation of the solar legend, known by the Christians under the name of the life of Christ, which, it cannot be too often repeated, is but one of a thousand names of the god Sun, whatever may be the opinion of his adorers as to his real existence as a living god, prophet, or mere man; for their opinion unsupported by evidence, no more proves that Christ really existed, than did the opinion of the Greeks, unsupported by evidence, prove the existence of Mercury, Bacchus, Jupiter, or Hercules. The Christian fathers, who were learned enough to know the character of the ancient religion, immediately saw the wonderful similarity between the religion of Christ and the religion of the ancient Bacchus, Adonis, Hercules, and a crowd of others, but above all that of Mithra in Persia; but then, they contended that the devil copied the Christian religion before it existed, in order to spite God and bring his worship into contempt. Oh, wonderful theologians!—ye have, indeed, a thread for every needle! Just the same was said by the Greeks, who contended that the Egyptians stole from them (the Greeks) their gods, although these same gods were worshipped in Egypt ages before the Greeks existed! Nothing, surely, but the introduction of the devil can render this clear and convincing. Alas! poor devil! you have much to answer for!

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THE
EXISTENCE OF CHRIST
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FROM A GERMAN JEW,
ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 14.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. *I*, even *I*, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

The preposterous vanity which leads human beings to suppose that a God they themselves acknowledge is incomprehensible—is something, yet immaterial—filling all space, yet occupying none—creating every thing, yet itself uncreated—loving truth, yet permitting falsehood—desiring man to be virtuous, yet tolerating their viciousness; that such a deity should assume the human form, and come masquerading among men, as God is said to have done in Christ, is certainly the very quintessence of the *deliramentæ doctrinæ*, or fanaticism run mad. We hear much of the presumption of the Jews, but surely nothing can equal the presumption—the maniac folly of the Christians,—nought but itself can be its parallel! The Jews say that God is a Spirit, that is, a something, the nature of which we know nothing,—here, at all events, there is no presumption; but Christians have not been content to worship a Spirit in spirit and in truth, but must needs have—oh horrible insanity!—a god of flesh and blood, a real man-deity,—an eating, drinking, talking god, who formerly ate upon the earth, and, in the opinion of some pious Catholics, is now eaten! And this they call honouring the Deity! and those who scorn to assist in their mad orgies, and refuse to dishonour their own nature, and bow down to the idols

Preacher.
 superstition has erected, are denounced as irreligious, forsooth ! called infidels, deists, atheists, and other hard names, by the wise interpreters of what they call God's will, which is of course, that they should teach and we *pay*—they command and we obey ! These sleek-haired, hypocritical, spluttering, and shamefully ignorant preachers, who devour widows' houses, and, for a pretence, make long prayers, have the brazen-faced audacity to say, that all who resist their will, resist the will of God, for they are God's representatives on earth, and the preachers of his word ! Verily, if there be a devil, or spirit of evil, they represent *him*, and are most admirable preachers of *his* word. Resist the will of God ! Where can be found a Jew who would utter such impious balderdash ? Why, even Christian writers themselves tell us, "How vain is all resistance to God ; but the very will, the wish, the power to resist cannot rise into being unless supplied and supported by him." So that, according to these wise-acres, men are to be eternally punished for that resistance which God himself had supplied and supported them in. Oh priests, priests !—ye are the curse of the human race !—the plague-spots of society !—and while ye are permitted to domineer over the intellects of men—bend them to your hateful will, the earth will continue what it has hitherto been, through your accursed instrumentality, the abode of fiends in human shape ! Your unholy frauds *must* and *shall* be exposed !—aye, your frauds, cruelties, and most shameful opposition to human liberty and happiness, from Aaron downwards. The world has had more than enough of fable, and it is now prepared for noble truths ; and one, the most important of all, is, that it is not the Deity who has commanded that men should believe and worship—it is cunning men, who have insolently dared to deceive their fellow-creatures, by pretending that a god or gods, one or many, just as it suited their purposes, had made them his confidants ! Yes, knavish hypocrites have, in all ages of the world, set up systems of religion as an engine of tyranny, and a means by which they might plunder the people ; for what is it but desire and fear which leads men to worship with disgraceful insincerity the gods of their several nations. It is not respect and gratitude that fills our churches,—it is hope and fear. Relieve the human mind from the terrors of hell, and priestcraft will be for ever annihilated ! therefore it is, that the priests so strenuously support the notion of a deep fiery-gulf for sinners, and a place of delight for good believers, that is, for all who

pay them well ; for if you pay, they care little what you believe. Who can be so silly as not to understand, that if the gods, or the priests in their name, promised nothing, their splendid temples would soon be deserted—converted into temples of science, or halls for the education of the people. All religions, whether Christian, Jew, or Mahomedan, have one common character, which is, to establish a correspondence between men and invisible beings, whether called gods, geniuses, angels, fairies, or devils—imaginary existences, to which half-crazed, half-rascal soul-torturers have created—spun out of their hot brains with a view to explain in their own manner the phenomena of nature ! The selfishness and vanity of men is never shewn under so disgusting and truly contemptible a form as when they are trafficking with the *unseen powers*, which they suppose rule, after having created, the universe. These creatures make praying an article of commerce—they give their prayers that the gods may give them something *better* than mere words. It is always “give us this day our daily bread,” forgive us this and lead us out of that,—indeed, we always find that those who want the most, pray the most ; so that the length of our prayers prove not our sincerity, but simply the length of our desires. Of course, it would appear very ridiculous to be offering up tears and beseechings to a nothing,—so a something is imagined, to which a shape, a form, and a character is given, according to tastes of individuals and nations. An old man with a long beard is sometimes the symbol of deity in Europe ; in other parts of the world, an old woman without a beard is selected for adoration ; the colour of the gods varies with the climate : nor are human beings content to give form and colour to the gods,—but also give them human passions, feelings, opinions, vices, and follies. This is happily hit off by Fontenelle in his *Dialogues des Morts* (Dialogues of the Dead), a part of which we shall transcribe :—

HOMER. You ought to know that my gods, such as they are, and all mysteriousness apart, have not been thought ridiculous.

ÆSOP. That makes me tremble ; I seriously fear that people will think that beasts have spoken, as they are represented to have done in my fables.

HOMER. A truly pleasant fear.

ÆSOP. Ha !—what, and if people believe that the gods have delivered the discourses that you have put into their mouths, why should they not equally believe that beasts may have spoken in the manner that I have made them speak ?

HOMER. It is by no means the same thing. Men wish that the gods may be as foolish as themselves; but they do not wish that beasts may be as wise.

This sage remark of Homer will hardly be disputed; for, though men pull down in imagination the gods to their own level, they have no desire to lift up the beasts to the same. God made man after his own image, saith the Scripture; the fool takes this literally, and says in his heart, I am like unto God—thereby likening God unto a fool; truly that is making a fool of Deity. The agents of this correspondence between men and gods are skilful tricksters, called priests, magicians, and impostors,—which last, may be considered as the generic name for magicians, jugglers, conjurors, and priests,—for mysterious men of all kinds, who are paid for teaching what they themselves don't know, are only the several species of the genus impostor, who all agree in saying, that they are the organs, if not the intimate friends, of invisible beings! Such is the foundation of all worship, and of all religion, which places man in relation with the gods, and the earth with the skies; in plain language, all organized worship which is superintended by priests, has for basis an ideal order of invisible beings, who are charged with the destinies of men who are more or less obedient to the voice of the true priesthood; and of course there are as many true priesthoods as there are true religions; and there are as many true religions as there are people who understand their own nature, and the nature of things beyond that which nothing is beyond—that is, the universe. Nor do the worshippers at the shrine of Jehovah, who hope one day to sing hallelujah above the clouds, entirely neglect the little comforts to be enjoyed beneath the clouds. Mammon has almost as many, perhaps more, worshippers than Jehovah; and the text, “what shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul,” is little regarded. “It is by Plutus, or the god of riches,” said Aristophanes, “that Jupiter reigns; it is for him that sacrifices are made;” and goes on to say, that “since Plutus enriched so many men, Mercury complains that the gods received very few offerings, and wanting little, offered up very few prayers.” So that we perceive the priests, in the times of Aristophanes, were just the same kind of men as the priests of our times; for if these latter pray to Jehovah, with all their lips, they worship with all their hearts, and all their souls, the god of riches; thus we have the singular spectacle of a proud, wealthy, and rapacious priesthood, preaching humility, poverty, and charity! Let us root out

false hopes and shameful fears, and supply their place by a love that never tires, and a courage that never fails; then, and not till then, will there be morality and peace on earth. Take away from the people false and delusive hopes and fears, and false religion will be annihilated; for never are men more falsely religious than when they are poor, sick, miserable, and degraded; let it be remembered that it is weakness and fear, not strength and courage, that has raised altars to the gods. For the true philosophers, life has many charms—but death no terrors; they may desire to live, but cannot fear to die,—*the basis of their virtue is love of man, not fear of God.*

That many readers will admit the force of our arguments when applied to the heroes of the ancient religion, and yet persist that Jesus Christ was a man, or even a god, none can doubt; though if the reason be sought into, it will be found that it is simply this, that such readers had formed that idea before they read this book, and found it difficult to get rid of their first impressions and long cherished opinions, while others are so badly organized, that they will receive as sacred and divine, all, save that which is dictated by good sense and sound reason, and who seem to be as much on their guard against philosophy as though they had a natural innate antipathy to it: such unfortunate creatures are as much horrified by truth as mad dogs by water, or turkey-cocks by a scarlet mantle. We need hardly add, that with such men, their first opinions are their only opinions; and besides, as the habit of thinking enables us to think with precision and accuracy, so slothfulness corrupts the mind—destroys its force, elasticity, and power to separate truth from falsehood. Yes, it is thought which improves the mind, strengthens its powers, and renders it impervious to sophistry; but the majority of mankind do not think, but pay others handsomely to do that business for them; so that thinking has been erected into a profession,—the people seeming to forget the saying of Locke, “That a man could no more think through another man’s thoughts than he could see through another man’s eyes.” To decide between a possibility and an impossibility is the talent of all but the most grossly ignorant; but to separate truth from the errors with which it may be associated, to decide with precision and accuracy the degree of force in different kinds of opposing evidence, is a rare talent, belonging only to the few who have long laboured and meditated with the anxious desire to know the truth and act upon it. Men of these two orders of mind have

been noticed by Fontenelle, who observes, that "Clocks, the most common, and made with least of art, suffice to mark the hours; but it is only those made with more of art which indicate time to the minute. In the same manner, ordinary minds understand very well the difference between a simple likelihood and an entire certainty; but it is only fine and delicate minds who catch at once the more or less of likelihood or certainty, and can mark, so to speak, the minutes of their sentiments." The gross and ill thinking, it is not expected, will read these Letters,—all who do so will surely think a little; and, we may say without vanity, that no human being could read attentively, and examine patiently the evidence adduced, and the arguments enforced, in the Letters already written, without his faith in the existence, even as a man, of Jesus Christ, being much unsettled and greatly shaken. It is not pretended that the evidence already offered is so complete, that it is either full or sufficient to destroy the historical character of Jesus Christ—this evidence has yet to be furnished; and all we have attempted to do, up to the present moment, is to shew that all religions have one common source, which source is nature; that the Sun, being to human beings one of its most brilliant agents, has been the object of adoration and worship from the earliest recorded periods of history. That the force, grandeur, and the effects produced by the Sun, were the subjects of the songs or chants of the ancient priests and poets, and that what is foolishly called idol worship, was not at first, at least, the worship of the stock or the stone, the gold or the silver, as a real deity or deities; but these were borrowed only as emblems, symbols, or as mere signs of natural objects. The symbols of the Sun were placed in the religious temples as symbols, not as real gods; and though the common people did commit the egregious error of mistaking the sign for the thing, and even now, in some parts of the globe, worship idols of brass and of wood as real deities, the priests of those nations, although they find it expedient to nurse the delusion, are not themselves very often deluded; but it does however, sometimes happen, that priests become the victims of their own arts. As for the people, ancient or modern, whose kingdom is not of this world—that is, the world of reason—these remarks will produce little effect upon them,—but then, they are told for their satisfaction, that the blessed are the poor in spirit, and that the kingdom of heaven is for those who believe; and it would indeed be a pity if they should be deprived of their expectations of a future happy life, when they suffer so much misery in this,

The Catholics have been much abused as the worshippers of idols ; and we are told, that Catholics worship images, as did the Pagans of old, and that like them, they give the glory of God the Eternal to the works of men's hands ; but the Catholic denies this, and the Catholic Bishop of Siga, in a sermon preached at the consecration of the Catholic chapel at Bradford, in the county of York, on Wednesday, July 27th, 1825, said, "I know how common these charges are (that is, that the Catholics worshipped images as did the Pagans of old), and how otherwise respectable are the sources from whence they spring, or I should fear to insult your understandings, by supposing that any of you are capable of believing them ; for, is it possible that in any age and country which claims to be so learned and enlightened, men should be found capable of believing that the majority of the Christian world—the great, the good, the learned of almost every civilized nation under heaven, are so ignorant, so debased, so stupid, so wicked, as to give divine honours to a likeness and senseless image ? Is it possible that any of you should persuade yourselves that the most ignorant Catholic here present should be capable of adoring, for instance, the ivory image which you see upon that altar ? But why, it may be inquired, if the image of Christ is not worshipped, is it there ? Ah, my Christian brethren, look at that image and tell me, what impression does it make on your minds ? It represents your Redeemer nailed to the cross, and dying for your sins. Can you behold such objects, unmoved ? Can you fix upon it a vacant eye ? Can you gaze upon it, and not reflect how great was *his* goodness who thus suffered !—how criminal were those sins which caused those sufferings,—how sincere ought to be your sorrow in having participated in the commission of them ? It is to excite such emotions that the image is placed there ; and let me ask you, could a more appropriate object stand upon a Christian altar, or be placed before the eyes of a Christian assembly, when they meet to pay their worship to their divine Redeemer—when every mind should be impressed, and every heart penetrated with the remembrance of his sufferings—the source of all our happiness, and all our hope ?" This is the answer of the Catholic divine to the charge of idolatry, and he justly says "it is to excite emotions that the image is placed there—not that it may be worshipped as a real living God." The people require images and pictures ; their eyes must be fed by sights and shams ; for, as to spiritual deities, the people can have no notion

of them; and however it may be that no image could be more appropriate to excite superstitious, or as the worthy divine would call them, religious emotions, as that of a man-god nailed upon the cross, such representations can only excite the ignorant multitude, who are ever the dupes of appearances! But surely the Catholic divine must be a bold man who would answer that the most ignorant Catholic can and does distinguish between symbols, or signs of things, and the things themselves. The worship of images was prescribed and rigorously enforced by the first Christian councils,—and we read, “that the seventh general council, or the second of Nice, was assembled in 787, by Constantine, son of Leo and Irene, to re-establish the worship of images. The reader must know, that two councils of Constantinople, the first in 730, under the emperor Leo, the other twenty-four years after, under Constantine Copronymus, had thought proper to proscribe images, conformably to the Mosaic law and to the usage of the early ages of Christianity. So also the Nicene decree, in which it is said, that ‘whosoever shall not render service and adoration to the images of the saints as to the Trinity, shall be deemed anathematised,’ at first encountered some opposition. The bishops who introduced it, in a council of Constantinople held in 789, were turned out by soldiers.”

It has been shewn that from time immemorial men have symbolized their ideas of Deity—that in ancient times the notion was that the universe itself was a great god, got of itself, born of itself, and subsisting of itself; but as it was a great whole, consisting of many parts, it was supposed that there were as many intelligences, angels, deities, or geniuses, as there were parts in nature. In the Greek mythology, more especially, all was personified, or symbolized; the rivers, the mountains, the forests, the stars, the elements; and all know that in Greece as well as in Egypt, the land was covered with statues erected in honor of the gods.

In our next we shall proceed to another branch of our subject, and consider the doctrine of the Trinity as a preparatory step to a right understanding of the collateral circumstances touching the religion of the Christians; after which, nothing will remain for us to do than to shew, by an appeal to history, that what is said about Christ in the four gospels is a fiction, and, that the evidence set forth in proof of his existence, just proves the reverse.

THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

AS A HUMAN BEING,

DISPROVED!

BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 15.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. *I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.*"—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

The doctrine of the Trinity, observes Dr. Drummond, informs us that the Godhead consists of "three persons, of one substance, power, and eternity;" "God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Ghost." Now, any man, under the influence of such vulgar principles as "reason and common sense," would conclude that three persons must mean three distinct beings, and consequently that there are three Gods! This, Dr. Sherlock candidly admits, and says, "it is plain the persons are perfectly distinct. A person is an intelligent being, and to say there are three divine persons and not three distinct infinite minds, is both heresy and nonsense." Here then is palpable polytheism, from which, thus fairly exhibited, even orthodoxy recoils astounded. Doctor South, scandalized by such an admission, from a Doctor of his own church, showers down upon him a torrent of theological vituperation; and alleges that there is only "one infinite mind, with three modes, attributes, or offices, manifested under the different states or relations of father, son, and spirit." Thus the meaning of the word person is explained away; and after the most painful struggles against the conviction of their own minds, that God is one, the most eminent divines are reduced to the necessity of maintaining that the three

persons of their imaginary trinity are not persons, but something else. Tillotson calls them "three differences,"—Burnet "three diversities,"—Seeker "three subsistencies,"—others "three pos-
tures!"—Le Clerc thought them to be "three distinct cogitations;"—and that the subject might be explained by the philosophy of Des Cartes. Some are for a specific, some for a numerical unity, and others for both united, though involving a monstrous contradiction. Waterland speaks of a "three-fold generation of the son, two antemundane and one in the flesh. The substance of the one person," he says, "is not the substance of either of the others, but different, however of the same kind or united." Barrow speaks of "the mutual inexistence of one in all, and all in one." "They are joined together," says another, "by a perichoresis—and this perichoresis, circumincession or mutual inexistence is made very possible and intelligible by a mutual conscious sensation." Some divines understand the words person and personality in a philosophical sense, others in a political, and a third class in a theological sense. The doctrine of three persons, according to Watts, must be true, "at least in a political sense, yet cannot amount to so much as a philosophical personality, unless we allow a plurality of Gods." We sometimes find the same Trinitarian Divine confuting himself, for error is always inconsistent, and maintaining in one part of his writings, propositions subversive of those which he has maintained in another. We are told of a Ciceronian, a Platonian, an Aristotelian, and a Swedenborgian Trinity, and finally "the Trinity of the *Mobile*, or common people and lazy divines, who content themselves by calling it an inconceivable mystery."

Now, what is this but darkening of counsel by words without knowledge? Which of these contradictory schemes is to be embraced by the man who is determined to depart from the simple truth, that God is one? "What is there" asks the author of an excellent letter on this subject, "to guide me through the dark and dreary labyrinth? Not one solitary ray of light glimmers to direct my path. All is darkness and confusion: the more I read, the more I am confounded. I cannot advance a step, and I end as I began, without being able to find two men or two creeds agreeing in a similar answer to my inquiry—What is the Trinity?"

The dogma of the unity of God, the first theological dogma of the Christians, is not peculiar to their religion. It has been admitted by almost all the ancient philosophers—and even the

Pagans, whose worship was polytheistical in appearance, always acknowledged one grand chief to whom all others were submitted, under various names, whether gods or angels, as the Christian angels and saints are to the supreme God. Such was the great Jupiter with the Greeks and with the Romans—that Jupiter called the father of the gods and men, who was said to fill the universe with his substance. He was the sovereign monarch of nature, and though the name of gods was given to the other divinities, it was an association in the title rather than in the power; each divinity having his particular department under the control or empire of the first God, sovereign, and absolute master of all others. The Scripture itself gives the name of gods to beings subordinate to the first God, without injury to the unity of the chief, or first cause. It was precisely so with the Jupiter of the Greeks; they repeated, without ceasing, the epithet of *one* or *unique* that they gave to Jupiter; Jupiter, said they, is one. The oracle of Apollo admitted also an uncreated God, born of himself, whose dwelling place was the bosom of the fire Ether; a God placed at the head of all the hierarchy.

In the mysteries of the Greeks, it was customary to chant a hymn which expressed clearly that unity. The high-priest addressing the word to the initiated, to him said, “Admire the master of the universe; he is one, he exists every where.” It is a truth acknowledged by Eusebeus, Augustine, Justin, and other Christian apologists, that the dogma of the unity of God was received by the ancient philosophers, and that it was the basis of the religion taught by Orpheus and the mysteries of the Greeks.

It may be urged by Christians, that the ancient philosophers, who existed many ages before the establishment of Christianity, held the dogma touching the trinity from the revelation made to the first men; but it may be replied, we have not the slightest necessity to have recourse to the supernatural machinery of revelation, which, naturally considered, is an absurdity, when we know the reasonings or the series of abstractions which led the ancient philosophers to acknowledge the unity of the first principle, and when they have themselves given us the motives which led them to admit the monad or first unity. These motives are simple—they rise from the nature of the operations of our minds, and the form under which the universal action of the great whole presents itself to us.

The correspondence of all the parts of the world between themselves, and their tendency towards a common centre of movement and of life, which has caused men who regarded the great whole as an immense God, to admit his unity, not being able to conceive anything beyond the assemblage of all beings, or beyond the whole. It was the same with those who regarded the universe as a great effect. The union of all parts of the work, and the regular *ensemble* of all systems of the world, led them also to admit one only cause of one only effect; so that the unity of God was acknowledged as a principle in the minds of those who placed God, or the first cause, beyond the world, and in the minds of those who confounded God with the world, and did not distinguish between the workman and the work,—as Pliny, and all the most ancient philosophers, who held that all things are connected together by a sacred chain; nor can there be one thing strange to another, for all that is, they held to be combined to form a definite whole, upon which depends the beauty of the universe. There is, say they, but one only world, which includes all; one only God, who is every where; one only matter, which is eternal; one only law, which is reason, common to all beings. It is easy to deduce as a consequence, from the above dogma, the unity of God, that is to say, the philosophical opinion and the motive which gave birth to it. The fathers of the church themselves have inferred the unity of God from the unity of the world, that is to say, the unity of the cause from the unity of the effect; for with them the effect is distinguished from the cause, or God is separated from the universe; by which, we mean, they admitted an abstract cause instead of a real being, which is the universe. Saint Athanasius thus expresses himself: "As there is in Nature but one order for all things, we ought to conclude that there is but one God, artist, and ordainer, and from the unity of the work deduce that of the workman."

We perceive then, that the Christians deduced their unity of God from the unity of the world, or rather the universe, as all Pagan philosophers had done before them. In all this we observe the natural march of the human intellect, and therefore it is quite unnecessary to attempt any explanation by an absurd supposition of a special revelation.

All Platoniciens admitted the unity of the archetype, or of the model upon which God created the world, as well as the unity of the *demiourgos*, or god artist, by a consequence of the same philo-

sophical principles, that is to say, from the unity itself of the work, as may be seen in the works of Proculus, or, indeed, any of the Platoniciens.

Those who, like Pythagoras, employed the theory of numbers to explain theological truths, give equally to the monad the name of cause and of principle. They express by the number *one*, or by unity, the first cause, and conclude that God is unity, from mathematical abstractions. Unity reproduces itself every where in numbers; all sets out from unity. It was the same with the monad divinity. Others, remarking the various forms of human administrations, and above all, that of the governments of the east, where through all time monarchy was the only known form of administration, believed that the government of the universe was conducted upon the same principle, in which all partial forces seemed united, under the direction and authority of one only chief, in order to produce that perfect accord and admirable harmony of which the whole system of the world is the result. Despotism itself favoured this opinion, which pictured monarchy as the image of the government of the gods; for all despotism tends to concentrate power in unity, and confound legislation with the execution.

Thus the *tableau* of social order, mathematics, and the reasonings of philosophy, have, by different routes, but all merely human, led the ancients to prefer unity to multiplicity; in the first and supreme cause, or as it is sometimes called, the principle of principles. Simplicius thus expresses himself, "The first principle being the centre of all others, it encloses them all in itself by one only union,—it is before all—it is the cause of causes—the principle of principles—the god of gods." Let us then call simply principles, those particular principles; and let us call principle of principle, that general principle called cause of all placed above the visible universe.

It is thus that the universe, or universal cause, enclosing within itself all the other causes, which are its parts, was regarded as the principle of principles, and is the supreme unity from whence all flowed. Those who created an abstract or ideal world, and a God equally abstract and ideal, separated from the world, and by whom the world had been created after an eternal model, reasoned in the same manner upon the God, or cause of the universe; for the material world has always furnished the type of the intellectual world; and it is from what man sees that he creates his opinions

upon that which he sees not. The dogma of the unity of God, even with the Christians, takes its source in purely human reasonings—reasonings which have been adopted ages before Christians were known in the world, as any may be assured by the works of Pythagoras, or Plato, and in the books of their disciples. It was the same with regard to their triad or trinity, that is to say, the subdivision of the first cause into intelligence, or divine wisdom, and spirit, or the universal soul of the world.

By the ancients, man was compared to the universe, and the universe to man; and as man was called the *microcosm*, or little world, they made of the world an immense giant who enclosed all in one great whole, containing in its source what man had in little and by emanation. They remarked, that in man there was a principle of movement and of life, which was common to him with other animals. That principle manifested itself by the breath—in Latin, *spiritus*, or spirit. Besides that first principle there existed a second, that by which man reasoned, combined his ideas, and arrived at wisdom; it is the intelligence which is found in him in a much greater degree than in the other animals. That faculty of the human soul was called in Greek *logos*, which is translated into Latin by *ratio* and *verbum*. That Greek word expresses two distinct ideas, rendered by two different words in Latin; and in French by *ai son*, by *verbe*, or *parole*. The second is nothing more than the image of the first; for words are, or should be, the images of the thoughts; they are a means by which our thoughts are rendered sensible to others, and which, in some sort, seem to take a body in the air, when it is modified by the organs of speech. These two principles in man do not constitute two beings distinct from himself; but we may, however, of these two principles make two distinct existences by personifying them; but yet, it is always the living and thinking man in whose unity, or oneness, are composed all his faculties as in their source. Analogously did the ancients consider the universe as an immense God, one and unique, which enclosed all, and was itself all. His life, or his *spiritus*, as well as his intelligence, or his *logos*, which is eternal and immense, as himself was confounded in his first and radical unity called father, since it was from it that these two faculties emanated. None could conceive the universe God without conceiving him as living the universal life, and intelligent of an intelligence equally universal. Life was not intelligence, but both life and intelligence were

the life, or *spiritus*, and intelligence or divine wisdom which, in their mode of reasoning, belonged essentially to the divinity of the world, and made part of his unique substance, since it is impossible any could exist which was not one of its parts. All these distinctions, so subtile and refined, belonged to the Platonicien and Pythagorean philosophies, and had nothing whatever to do with what is called revelation.

There were no expressions more familiar to the ancient philosophers than the following :—"The universe is a great animated being, which encloses within itself all the principles of life and intelligence spread in its parts. That great being sovereignly intelligent is God himself, that is to say, God, word or reason, mind or universal life."

The universal soul designated *spiritus*, and compared with the spirit of life which animates all nature, distributes itself principally in the seven celestial spheres, of which the combined action was reputed to regulate the destinies of man, and spread the germs of life in all that which exists on this globe. The ancients symbolized that breath or *spiritus* which produces the harmony of the spheres, by a flute with seven reeds, that they placed in the hands of Pan, or the image meant to represent universal nature ; from whence comes also the opinion, that the soul of the world was enclosed in the number seven, an idea that the Christians borrowed from the Platoniciens, and that they have expressed by the *sacrum septenarum*, or by the seven gifts of the holy spirit, as the breath of Pan, that of the holy spirit was, according to Saint Justin, divided in seven spirits. The unction of the proselytes was accompanied by an invocation to the holy spirit ; they called it the mother of the seven houses, which signified, according to Beausobre, mother of the seven skies ; the word *spiritus* in the Hebrew language feminine.

The Musselmen and the eastern Christians give to the third person of the trinity, for its essential property, life, that is, according to the first, one of the attributes of the divinity. The Syrians call it *mehaia* or living, and the *credo* of the Christians gives to it the epithet *vivificantem*. It is then, in their theology, the principle of life which animates nature, or that universal soul, principle of movement of the world, and also of all the beings it contains. This is the vivifying force, emanating from God, who, according to Varro, governs the universe by movement and by reason ; for it is the *spiritus* which spreads life and motion in the world, and it is reason or wisdom which gives to it the direction and regulates its effects. That

spiritus was God, in the system of the ancient philosophers, who wrote upon the universal soul, or *spiritu mundi*. It is the nursing or nourishing force of the world, according to Virgil, *spiritus hinc alit*. The divinity, according to their system, emanated from the first monad, and extended itself as far as to the soul of the world, according to Plato and Porphyry, or as far as the third God, to use their own expressions. Thus the *spiritus* was God, or rather a faculty of the universal divinity.

Besides the principle of life and of motion, these same philosophers admitted a principle of intelligence and of wisdom, under the names of *we* and of *logos*, or of reason and the word of God. God was said to reside principally in luminous substances. The word *light* in some languages, the French for example, signifies equally intelligence and physical light, for intelligence may be considered to the soul what light is to the eye. We need not, therefore, feel astonished that the Christians should contend that Christ is the light which enlightens every man coming into the world, and to make him the son of the father of all light; that which is certainly true in a metaphysical and in a merely physical sense, as Christ was nothing more than the luminous part of the divine essence rendered sensible to man by the Sun, in which, practically considered, it may be said to be incorporated or incarnated. It is under that last form that he is susceptible of augmentation and of divination, and that he has been the object of sacred fictions made upon the birth and the death of the god Sun or Christ.

Another Letter must be devoted to the subject of the trinity, and if our readers object that the ideas we have attempted to set forth, touching the trinity, are of a mystical and unsatisfactory order, we can assure them, that, at all events, is not to be placed to the accounts of our misdeeds. There have been no ideas of God, yet given in the world; which have not been mystical and unsatisfactory, and the reason is, that there is no prototype in nature answering to the word God. Before we can hope to teach others, we must first comprehend ourselves,—and if we fail in this, our lessons are given at random. All that has been written about trinity, has not helped us to one atom of real knowledge upon the subject; nor should we have noticed the question were it not necessary to establish our position—that there never was an incarnated God, or mere man, called Jesus Christ!

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FROM A GERMAN JEW,
ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 16.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

The Stoics taught that Jupiter, or that sovereign intelligence which they supposed to rule the world, was contained in the luminous substance called Ether, which substance they regarded as the source or spring of human intelligence. Such an opinion, it must be confessed, savored much of Materialism; but, that should by no means surprise us, as it is clear that men were in former times accustomed to reason upon the matter that they saw and which struck their senses, before they dreamt about an immaterial being—or existence that they have since created by abstraction. If Plato were to shew his head above ground just now, he certainly would not complain, as he did in his Republic, of "blind men and dreamers who neglecting divine ideas and heavenly truths (that he names, strangely enough, the only beings, as though truths could be beings), give themselves up entirely to the body," which, he contends, is nothing more than a shade or shadow of a thing. It is clear, that matters have greatly changed since Plato wrote, as little now is taught but "divine ideas and heavenly truths;" ideas so essentially divine that divinities alone can comprehend their truths—so very heavenly that inhabitants of earth, mere mortals, fail to reach

their sublimity,—and souls by our spiritual teachers, are far more considered than bodies, the latter of which, Plato (by sages called divine) informs us, are nothing more than shades or shadows of things, and as for the former, we suppose they are the shades or shadows of nothing ; but this is merely supposition on our part,—and as about the shadows of souls, little is known and a great deal said, the question can be best settled by theologians ; in the mean time it will be well to proceed with our subject.

It is certain that matter, how subtile soever, is still matter ; and as the ancient philosophers contended that the soul of man, as the souls of brutes, was but an emanation of subtile matter endowed with the faculty of thought, they have been called, and very properly, called, Atheists ;—and we may add, that the assertion made by Catholicus, a writer in the “ Times ” (some few weeks since), that the more modern experimental philosophers of Greece and Rome were Atheists, is also beyond dispute ; but as to the question of experimental philosophy, it was a philosophy little understood, and very partially adopted by either Greeks or Romans. One thing, however, is certain, which is, that in the early ages of the world, matter was deemed capable of thought, and what is called animal life was considered as a phenomenon necessarily resulting from certain combinations and conditions of matter. We have grown so much wiser since the schoolmaster was abroad, at least we think we have, that such opinions appear abominable, absurd, and heterodox wild dreams ; but then, it should be remembered that philosophers of all climes, complexions, degrees, and ages, have occasionally been found napping ; surely if they fall asleep and dream, the vulgar may be expected to follow their example—nap and dream likewise ; and if such sleepings and dreamings should be flattering and pleasant, wish to dream on, and dislike not a little any who rashly arouses them from their delicious reveries,—growing angry, like Mycille, in Lucien, who is said to have well supped with a neighbour, and dreaming during the night that he had become rich, that he was carried about upon the shoulders of slaves, and enjoyed all the pleasures of opulence, was so enraged against the cock that crowed him out of his delicious dreamery, that he felt every disposition to choke it. The fate of the cock is that of all men who, by their crowing (*i. e.* speaking or writing) arouse their fellow-beings from the slumbers of fanaticism—disturb their

superstitious dreams, and thereby bring them to a sense of their miserable and degraded condition. But enough of dreaming and dreamers for the present.

Pythagoras has called God the active, ever-varying subtile particles, which seem in eternal and universal motion; and distinguishes God by the epithet luminous, from which all other existences he supposed to have been created; and according to Saint Augustine, the creation of celestial intelligence is comprised in the substance called light. All these were said to be participators in that eternal light which, they tell us, constituted the wisdom of God; and that we call, (say the saints,) his only Son. The most learned and ancient fathers of the Christian church, and the early orthodox writers, constantly say that "God is a light, and a light very sublime,—that all we behold of brightness, however brilliant it may be, is nothing more than a portion—a feeble ray of that light; that the Son is a light without commencement; that God is a light inaccessible, which enlightens eternally, and which never disappears; and that all the virtues which surround divinity are lights of the second order—rays of the first light."

The theology of Orpheus likewise taught that light, called the most ancient of beings, and the most sublime, is God—that inaccessible God who envelopes all in his substance, called counsel, light, and life; which theological ideas have been copied by Saint John, the Evangelist, who says "The life was the light, and the light was the life; and that the light was the word, or the counsel, and the wisdom of God."

A sufficient number of authorities have been quoted to shew that it was a received dogma among the ancient theologians, that God was a luminous substance, and that light constituted the intelligent part of the universal soul of the world, or universal God. The Sun seeming to be the great focus of light, was regarded as the intelligence of the world, or at least, its principal seat,—hence the epithets *animus mundi*, or intelligence of the universe,—the eye of Jupiter, that the ancient mystics applied to the light, as well as that first production of the Father, or his first-born Son.

These ideas, with many others of an equally useless character, have passed into the theology of the adorers of the Sun, known under the name of Christ, the Son of the Father or the first God; his first emanation—a God consubstantial, or formed of the same lu-

minous substance. Thus the god Sun is also the *logos*, the word or intelligence of the grand Being, or of the great universe God—that is to say, the god of Day has all the characters that the Christians give to their Redeemer, who was nothing more, as must appear from an analysis of their religion, than a personification or ideal embodiment of the Sun.

Proclus, in his Commentary upon the Republic of Plato, considers the Sun under two relations—as God non engendered, and as God engendered. Under the relation of principle of light, which illumines all, he is sacred; he is not considered as body; under the relation of being uncreated, he was said to rule over visible bodies. This is certainly not very intelligible; but ancient philosophers did not always desire to be intelligible,—of them it may be truly said, they used language not to convey but to conceal their thoughts; but let us make the best of them. Well, then, under the relation of a created being, he was ruled and suffered certain modifications like all other beings; but as the principle or source of light, he was held sacred, and not as a being or body. In the Platonic subtlety we perceive the distinction of two natures in the Sun, and consequently of Christ, that we have proved to be nothing more than an ideal incarnation of the great luminary. Such was the character of philosophy in the famous schools, when the Christians composed their theological codes; and the authors of these works spoke the language of the philosophy of their time. Saint Justin, one of the most zealous defenders of the Christian dogmas, tells us that there are two distinct natures in the Sun—the nature of light and that of the body of the Sun, with which it is incorporated. He adds, that “it is the same with the two natures of Christ, the word or *logos*, when he is united to God or the Father, and human or incarnated word, when he resides among us.” Our readers, we suspect, will not say with the worthy saint, these were the two natures of a man called Christ, but the two natures of Christ, or the Sun adored under that name.

Light, supposed to be incorporeal and invisible in the system of the Spiritualists, is that pure *logos* which, in the ancient mystical phrase, was said to reside in the intellectual world, and in the bosom of the first God,—but the light becoming sensible to man when collected in the radiating disc of the body called the Sun. Here we have the uncreated light which took a form, and came among men.

It is that *logos*, incorporated or incarnate, descended in the visible world, which has been called the repairer of the sins of the world, the redeemer who triumphs over darkness or Satan; for, as Christ is an ideal personification of light, so was Satan an ideal personification of darkness, physical or mental, and all its attendant evils. It is nevertheless true that the system of the Spiritualists is based entirely upon that of the Materialists. Spiritualism was born of materialism, and borrowed from it all the divisions in order to create the chimera of a god, and of a universe purely intellectual. That men contemplated visible light before they imagined an invisible light, is certain; they must have adored the Sun which struck their eyes before they created by force of abstraction an intellectual Sun; they admitted one universe or God before they supposed the unity of a great Being distinct from the universe, yet enclosing all, and absorbing all in his own substance: but when men reasoned upon a fictitious universe or world, as their forefathers did upon the real universe, and the intellectual God was endowed with a principle of intelligence, and a principle of life, equally intellectual, all the life and intelligence in the world of realities was said to emanate from him.

The early Christian fathers who, as before observed, were more or less Platoniciens, had one Sun intellectual, of which the visible Sun was only the image; one incorporeal light, of which the light of the world was a corporeal emanation; finally, an incorporeal word and a word invested with a body and rendered sensible to men. That body was the corporeal substance of the Sun, above which they placed the uncreated and intellectual light or *logos*. That refinement of philosophy has furnished the Evangelist John with the only morsel really theologic to be found in the Evangelists—"The word took a body he inhabited with us, and we have seen his glory; it is that of the only Son of the Father."

The distinction of intellectual and corporeal Sun is beautifully set forth in the admirable and really superb discourse that the Emperor Julian addressed to the Sun, which contains the principles of the theology of that age, and furnishes the best explanation of the two natures of Christ and his incarnation, that foolish fanatics talk so much and know so little about,—which conception of the two natures originated the fable believed literally by imbecile and

ignorant Christians, which relates that Christ took a body, was born of a virgin, died, and was resuscitated !

Enough has been written in this and former Letters to shew that the Christians really have nothing in their theology which properly belongs to them, and that all that which savors of metaphysical subtlety in their discourses and dogmas, was borrowed from the ancient philosophers—above all the Platoniciens. Borrowing without leave and without acknowledgment, is little better than robbery—a species of literary petty larceny ; but, indeed, the Christians are thieves in more ways than one—of course we allude now to the early Christian writers, who palmed off upon their dupes something original as their own, which was, in point of fact, neither the one nor the other. They were, besides, fools as well as knaves ; indeed, these two characters are generally coupled, as Madame Deshouliers pithily observes,—

On commence par être dupe,
On finit par être coquin.

Which may be translated thus :

Men commence by being dupes,
They end by being knaves.

Whether Christian or Hindoo, however harsh it may sound, they certainly cannot help being the most mischievous of all thieves, as they rob us of both time and temper, whatever may be their honesty in other respects. But still it must be granted, that if the Christian fathers did steal from the ancient writers their thoughts, they did so with a good grace, backed by the most consummate impudence, most likely, however, calculating that the vulgar might be prevented, by judicious arrangements, from learning either to read or write, so that there would not be the slightest danger of detection ; and as to the enlightened, they belonged to the same class, and practised the same craft, and would not, as the common folks say, *split*, or let the cat out of the bag : no, no ; “ there is honour among thieves ; ” and so all was kept perfectly snug,—or if an upstart, dissatisfied individual did write against Christianity, or the tricks of its professors, these gentle pharisees and soothsayers, did answer him and his arguments by burning his books, and so gained an easy victory. This was the way they handled the celebrated Celsus, whose books were used as church fuel, while those of his

opponent, Origen, who wrote in its support, were carefully preserved! Heaven preserve us from the tricks and clutches of such holy controversialists! But, to return, Macrobe has given us an idea of the ancient opinions from which those of the Christians were borrowed, which idea encloses a true Trinity, of which that of the Christians is but a copy: "The world (he says) has been formed by the universal soul, which soul answers to our *spiritus* or mind. The Christians, when invoking their Holy Spirit, call it also their Creator,—*Veni, Creator Spiritus, &c.*" He adds, that from that mind or soul proceeds intelligence, that he calls *mens*. It is this that we have before shewn to be universal intelligence, of which the Christians have made their *logos*, or word, wisdom of God, which intelligence he has made to emanate from the first or supreme God. Here, then, we have the Father, the Son, and the Holy Ghost, which creates and vivifies all. The same author goes still farther and recalls the three principles to a first unity, which he calls sovereign God; and after having based his theory upon that Trinity, adds—"You see how unity, or the original monad of the first cause, conserves itself entire and indivisible, as far as to the *spiritus* which animates the world.

Thus the dogma of the Trinity, or the division of unity or the first principle into principle of intelligence and principle of universal life, which encloses within itself in some inexplicable manner, all things and all partial or second causes, is merely a theological fiction, and only one of those abstractions which separates for a moment, in idea, or by thoughts, that which is in itself indivisible and inseparable by essence, and which isolates, in order to personify them, the constituent attributes of a being or universe necessarily *one*.

In the same manner the Indians personified the sovereign power of God, and gave to him three Sons. The one is the power to create, the second to conserve, and the third to destroy. Such is the origin of the famous Trinity of the Indians,—for the Christians are by no means the only people who have had Trinities; and we may add, what should be well remembered, that *the Indians had theirs before the era of Christianity!* They had likewise the incarnation of the second person of that Trinity, known under the name of Vichnou. In one of these incarnations he takes the name of Christnou. The Sun is supposed by them to be the depository of

this triple force or power,—and they give to the Sun twelve forms and twelve names—one for each month—as we give to Christ twelve apostles. It is in the month of March, or under the sign of the Lamb, that he takes the name of Vichnou. The triple power in their theology represents only unity—so that, like the Christians, they have a trinity in unity, or three in one!

The Chinese have likewise their Trinity, equally mysterious. According to them, the first being engendered the second, and the second the third. With us, the Holy Spirit proceeds also from the Father and from the Son. The three have made all things. The grand terme, or grand unity, say the Chinese, comprehends three—one is three, and three are one! The Jesuit Kirker, in a Dissertation upon the Unity of the First Principle and the Trinity, traces back all these metaphysical subtleties as far as to Pythagoras and to Mercury. Augustine himself pretends that all the people of the world have opinions upon the Divinity very like those of the Christians,—that the Platoniciens, the Pythagorians, and many other philosophers,—Egyptians, Indians, Lybians, Persians, Chaldeans, Scythians, Gauls, and Spaniards, had many dogmas in common with them upon the unity of God—the source of light and of good; to which we may add, that all these philosophers existed ages before the appearance of Christianity in the world,—and the conclusion, that the Christians borrowed from them their theological dogmas, at least in the points which are common to them all, is irresistible.

So much for the mysterious dogma of the Trinity, about which so many thousands of volumes have been written, without conveying a single definite or truly rational idea; but if doctors live by disease, soldiers by war, lawyers by litigation, and priests by folly, it is too much to expect that they would, if they could, destroy these evils. A man was once taken before a French magistrate charged with stealing a loaf; the culprit pleaded guilty to the charge, but urged that sheer hunger compelled him to do it,—adding, “Sir, I must live;” to which the worthy magistrate replied that he “saw no necessity for that.” Now, lawyers, soldiers, priests, and others, when they are charged with grave offences against society, insist that they must live; but the people begin to say, “we really do not see the necessity for that;” and then we shall have the *commencement du fin* of all quackeries.

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"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. *I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.*"—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

The first part of our work is accomplished; the origin of all religions, including the Christian, has been shewn by a reference to history,—and if our reference to the multitudinous facts of history has not been so full or complete as some, who love to search, probe, and examine, with a view to obtain truth, may desire, it will, we think, be efficient for all practical purposes. All are not searchers and inquirers—when that searching and inquiring is of a difficult and abstruse character; besides, the object of these Letters is not to give a history of religion, but only so much of evidence, drained from authentic records, as will suffice to satisfy the unlettered reader, who desires to know, that information, without which he cannot understand how human errors have taken root, grown up, and, like the poisoned trees of fable, spread evil and death around. Error is poisonous—its antidote is Truth! but there is no royal road to truth,—the path is beset with difficulty and danger,—and those who seek and find it, must be bold, enthusiastic, and persevering—not to be deterred by danger. This is not the language of hyperbole—it is the language of common sense and plain reason,—nothing but industry, determination, and perseverance, can emancipate the human mind; but, at the same time, to

abuse those who differ from us—to use foul language and denounce men—is not the best way to implant truth. It is far wiser to implant a truth than to extirpate an error, as education is now given, errors are far more numerous than truths,—for, as Rosseau justly observes, “truths come single, whilst errors run in crowds;” but one truth well understood will destroy all that opposes it,—for truth is to falsehood what light is to darkness—they cannot co-exist, for, as in nature there must be either light or darkness, so in man or man’s conceptions there must be truth or error. Error is the Satan, Devil, Great Fiend, or Spirit of Evil personified by poetic theologians,—error is moral darkness, while truth is moral light, personified, and called Jupiter, God, Jehovah, Lord, &c. This makes plain and intelligible the Scriptural language, that “God is a Spirit, to be worshipped in spirit and in truth;” for as light was to the Jews, and others, the body of divinity—the divine essence,—and as truth is to the mind what light is to the eye, darkness being antagonistic and typical of evil or error, which is its parent, the demon of darkness was and is the demon of error,—said to be immortal, because error is immortal, as darkness is. Both are inseparable, from the nature of things; but it is with truth as with light—the more of these we have, the less of darkness and error; the strengthening of the one is the weakening of the other: so we find that in Egypt the triumph of Osiris, or the god of light, was the defeat of Typhon, or god of darkness or evil; in Persia, Ormuzd, or the luminous deity, was worshipped and adored, while Ahrimanes, the spirit of darkness and protector of error, was dreaded as an embodiment of all that is bad in nature. When we read in the book of Genesis that “the earth was without form and void, and darkness was upon the face of the deep, and the spirit of God moved upon the face of the waters,” &c., we have the language of the ancient mystics; for no man in his senses—no man who does not sacrifice sense and reason upon the shrine of folly—will for a moment suppose it possible that the earth could be without form, and void; for whatever *was*, must have had *some* form, and could not by possibility have been void, unless we believe (for we cannot really think it) that the earth *was* and *was* not at the same time, or that what *was* existed without form, and was void, or, that the spirit of God moved upon the face of that which had no face! but all these mistakes have been a consequence of the false teaching of theologians, who, forgetting that God is a spirit, and a spirit of

love too, and that he who hath not love hath not seen God, for God is love," have read the Scriptures; and expounded the Scriptures, without knowing the true meaning of its contents; but the time has arrived to give a true interpretation of Scripture, which must be read aright ere it can be realized: this we do not propose to do in this work, though we may attempt it in some other; but a concise exposition of Biblical history, at least such portions as relate to the supposed existence of Christ, will now be useful. The Christian expounders, or confounders, of the Bible, are certainly, taken en masse, the most ignorant, invincible simpletons, that ever profaned the sanctuary of reason,—like certain filthy creatures, they defile while they attempt to undermine the temple of true philosophy. With all our boasted science—with all the practical improvements in the arts of life—our rail roads, canals, steam-ships, and wonderful results of human curiosity, pricked on by avarice, this country, which prides itself upon its enlightenment, is overrun by wild fanatics, whose ignorance is only to be equalled by their presumption,—who rave about gods and devils as though both gods and devils were among their familiar acquaintances,—who talk so lustily about heaven, that such vulgar things that belong to earth seem to these celestials as unworthy of regard. They tell us what is, what was, and that which is to be, which, if all do not believe, hell is to be their portion; from which horrible place there is, we are told, no redemption! They are far better acquainted with the government of hell than the government of earth; but then, indeed, the earth under their teaching is but a hell in miniature,—so that in describing the one they give a tolerably correct account of the other. Their descriptions of hell are warranted sound and orthodox, though no two of their descriptions entirely agree; they cannot all be accurate, though in the main they may be tolerably correct; and we are told that it is a pit to which there is no bottom—full of devils of all sorts of shapes, with some green devils, which are shapeless, like Milton's Death,—shapes they can hardly be called that shapes have none—whose only occupation seems to be to roast and torture and torment, by sundry tricks, those unfortunate souls whose deeds done in the flesh have been displeasing to the Deity, that is, to his agents the priests, who are rarely particular as to what may be said about religion or Deity, if they are left alone. These people are remarkably sensitive when the honour of Deity is concerned—when the honour of Deity and their own power and emoluments

are concerned. This greatly puzzled Moliere, the celebrated French wit, who, when in one of his comedies he made an exposé of the rogueries of the priests, found that he had greatly sinned; and thrust himself into a lions' den without any of the preternatural protection afforded to the lucky and prophetic Daniel; but a friend let him into the grand secret, by saying, "Ah! Moliere, if you had been content to write against religion, you would have been perfectly safe; but you wrote against the priests, and that priests will never endure." There is an old proverb, that "what can't be cured must be endured," and the modern priests have found to their cost, that the arm of flesh, upon which they formerly relied, is now palsied, like that of the tyrant Gloster—it is shrunk up like a withered shrub. Persecution, once the staff which supported their giant corruptions, is now snapped asunder! and if the priests of these times rely upon persecution as the prime support of their power, they will find it as a "broken reed, which not only basely fails, but cruelly wounds the hand that rests upon it." Already they have many splinters sticking in their flesh—true thorns goading them into wisdom, which, however painful, do not convince priestly sufferers that the reed is a broken and dangerous one; they are incurable in their folly, and armed to the teeth in their own incurable and *horny* bigotry; the arrows of reason cannot reach them; they strike, but do not penetrate,—so the Bible, which ought to be *the book*, telling us of things as they were—is made an instrument of despotism—wielded by knaves and fools!

It has been contended that neither a god nor man called Jesus Christ existed in Jerusalem; but, as stated in a former Letter, it is not contended that neither a man or men called Christ once existed in Jerusalem, any more than we should deny that a man named Brama, Vishnou, or Krishnou, once did certain things in India; or that a man called Hercules once played a conspicuous part in Phenecia and Egypt; but it is denied that a man or god called Christ was born of a virgin, performed certain miracles, was crucified by the Jews, and after remaining three days, or nearly so, in the tomb, ascended into heaven,—it is denied that a man called Jesus Christ performed those wonders, and delivered those instructions which have been ascribed to him. All Christians will agree that the story told by ignorant and abused Indian enthusiasts about the god Brama coming down upon the earth in the form of a man, and eating of flesh like a Canibal, is absurd and unworthy

of credit. What Christian would believe that Christnou, or Krishna, or Vishnou, suffered all the metamorphoses which credulous Indians believed they did? Who, one degree above or below lunacy, would credit the idle tales (for idle and most mischievous they are when taken in relation of facts) about Hercules and his club, Balaam and his ass, Sampson with and without his hair, Jupiter and Juno, Ceres and Bacchus, Proserpine and Pluto, and a hundred other gods and goddesses, whose histories have been deemed veritable, sacred, and most holy,—to disbelieve which, was deemed execrable, and a crime worthy of death. The poet says,

Would that God the gift would gie us
To see ourselves as others see us.

If Christians could see themselves as others see them, they would be far more humble—far less self-sufficient and arrogant than they now are—think less highly of themselves, and far better of others—have less of love for themselves, and more for their fellow-beings,—or rather, their self-love would be far more social in its consequences.

Fearful denunciations are uttered against those whose interpretations of Scripture are not *a la mode*;—pulpits ring with the indignant eloquence of divines, who forget the text, "Judge not, lest ye be judged; condemn not, lest ye be condemned; and forgive, as ye desire to be forgiven;"—men who seek to, blow the coals of bigotry, and re-ignite the torch of persecution at the almost expiring embers of fanaticism. Such impotent rage we fear not, and shall proceed to prove by the Bible that *neither Christ nor Abraham ever existed*; but were purely fictional characters. Christ was, as all Christians, we presume, know, a branch of the genealogical tree of which Abraham was the root; but as there can be no branch without roots—and as the existence of Christ, according to the Scriptures, is contingent upon that of Abraham, to destroy the belief in the existence of Abraham, is to destroy the existence of Christ. It is easy to lop a branch from a tree without disturbing its root, but when the root is destroyed the branches wither; and where there never was a root, there never could have been branches. Priests, who are ever straining after types and shadows, affect to believe that what is written in Zechariah, "Thus speaketh the Lord of Hosts, saying, Behold the man whose name is *The Branch*; and he shall grow up out of his place, and he shall build the temple of the Lord," is typical of Christ; but theological eyes can see—theological ears can hear, what can neither be heard nor seen by

others. What a man whose name is "the Branch, growing out of his place," has to do with Christ, we are at a loss to discover; but this probably arises from the obliquity of our mental vision, which cannot perceive relations that sound believers can; whose faith is of so plastic and accommodating a nature, that it squares itself to all occasions, and loses nothing by subtraction; and men of much faith can say as Juliet of her love, "the more I give the more I have to give;" and the wider any proposition is of reason and consistency, the more room has faith to play and exercise itself. Much faith and poverty and spirit are the indispensables of all true Christians, "for blessed are the poor in spirit, for they shall inherit the kingdom of heaven;" and again, "he who believeth shall be saved, and he who believeth not shall be damned;" so that, poverty of mind or spirit, and much belief, theologians consider go hand-in-hand,—and consistently enough, denounce reason, temperance, &c., as of the devil. Infidels are, according to these worthies, an abomination upon the face of the earth—men who have "deserted the fountain of living waters, and made unto themselves cisterns—cracked cisterns—that will hold no water." Of course, by living waters is meant streams of faith, so that, those who drink them not, and thirst after the dead waters of reason, are to die of thirst, and perish everlastingly!

The faithful we hope not to convince—the reasonable only are appealed to,—and to these we undertake to shew that it is impossible that what is related in Scripture about Abraham can be true, or anything more than an Eastern romance or allegory. The Bible, say our preachers, is a revelation from Deity, and call upon us to believe it upon that ground; but then, after all, reason must judge whether it be revelation or not. Those who declaim against reason are not expected to be reasonable,—the pillar of their orthodoxy is faith, and their pride is not to try books and systems by their sense, but bend their sense to books and systems. The reasonings of theologians generally turn upon one proof, that may be likened to a mathematical point, which is without length, breadth, or thickness, and therefore purely imaginary. There is no such thing as a mathematical point, say the men of science, so that, a mathematical point is in reality no point at all; and if the comparison hold good, theological reasonings have no point, save an imaginary one,—existing only in the minds of those who repose upon it; but to proceed with our exposition:

"The book of the generation of Jesus Christ, the son of David,

the son of Abraham,"—so says the first verse of the first chapter of St. Matthew: thus Christ, according to Matthew, descended in a right line from Abraham,—as we are afterwards told in the same chapter, "So all the generations from Abraham to David are fourteen generations; and from David until the carrying away into Babylon are fourteen generations; and from the carrying away into Babylon unto Christ are fourteen generations." Now, this Abram, or Abraham, or, as called among the Arabs, Ibrahim, was said to be the son of one Terah, "And Terah lived seventy years and begat Abram, Nahor, and Haran;" then we read that "the days of Terah were two hundred and five years; and Terah died in Haran;" immediately afterwards we are informed that "The Lord had said unto Abram, Get thee out of the country, and from thy kindred, and from thy father's house, into a land that I will shew thee. So Abram departed as the Lord had spoken unto him; and Lot went with him; and Abram was seventy and five years old when he departed out of Haran." Here there is a slight discrepancy in the two statements,—Terah begat Abram when he was seventy and five years old, and died at the good old age of two hundred and five years. So that, at the death of Terah, according to vulgar arithmetic, Abraham was 135 years old when the Lord said, "Get thee out of thy country, &c.;" but theologists have an arithmetic of their own, and have one reply to all objections, which is, that they, the objectors, must have faith, and then all difficulties will vanish—mountains will be removed; those who have it will believe. Abram was but 70 years old when Terah died according to Scripture, and 135 years old according to Cocker. Contradictory absurdities and impossibilities, all sink before faith. A great deal more is said about Abram; and among other interesting particulars we are told, that "the Lord appeared unto him in the plains of Mamre; and he sat in the tent door in the heat of the day; and he lifted up his eyes and looked, and, lo, three men stood by him; and when he saw them, he ran to meet them from the tent door, and bowed himself towards the ground." This *tete-a-tete* between the Lord and Abraham is inexplicable to mere reasoners; for what are we to understand by the term *Lord*, if not Jehovah the great God of the Universe?—but then, how can we suppose that Abraham would address such language as the following to God, or Gods?—for there were, according to Genesis, three of them in the shapes of men; but, the Trinitarians contend that three are one! so we must understand, if it be understandable at all, that the three angels

were, in some mysterious and inexplicable manner, one. This mysteriousness and inexplicability is rendered more inexplicable and mysterious the farther we proceed with the text; for after it is said, that Abraham ran to meet them at the tent door; he addresses *them*, and said *My Lord*, as though the three were one; which idea is strengthened by the fact, that Abraham always addresses the three as *My Lord*, and not *My Lords*—and *the Lord* always replied; so that, if there were three, one only acted as spokesman; but, to suppose that God took an angelic, or human shape, and talked with Abraham in the plains of Mamre, is, of course, out of the question, especially when we consider the language Abraham addressed to him, or them, for he said, "*My Lord*, if now I have found favour in thy sight, pass not away, I pray thee, from thy servant;" and again, he is exceedingly familiar when he says, "Let a little water, I pray you, be fetched, and wash your feet, and rest yourselves under the tree;" but certainly, not at all according with sober notions of Deity. A God, devil, or angel with dirty feet, and so tired as to need to rest himself under a tree, savours of the absurd.

Longinus, the great critic, dwells much upon the sublimity of the Scripture; but really the above borders upon the ridiculous; *du sublime, du ridicule*, says the proverb, and whether it is sublime or ridiculous to talk or write about Gods washing their feet, or resting themselves under trees, we leave others to determine. We read also, that Abraham said "and I will fetch a morsel of bread, and comfort ye your hearts; after that ye shall pass on: for therefore are ye come to your servant. And they said, So do as thou hast said." Now let every thinking reader reflect upon this passage, and ask himself, or herself, this simple question—can such language be received as literally true? The answer of every reasonable being must be in the negative, which will lead us to considerations of a very grave and important character,—for if we cannot literally interpret the language of Genesis, and if the very existence of Abraham depends upon such literal interpretation, it will be clear that the man called Abraham never existed; but as we proceed, this allegorical character will be proved by Scripture itself, for it is our intention to destroy the belief in Abraham and Christ, by an appeal to ancient philosophers, Biblical, and what is called, profane history.

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THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

AS A HUMAN BEING,

DISPROVED!

BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 18.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

The common cry of Christians is—the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible; so say we—the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible; for by that same Bible, we will prove to all capable of exercising their reason, whose brains are not rheumatized and palsied by fanaticism, that the books of Genesis are the books upon the literal interpretation of which the whole Christian scheme depends. All that is written about Christ and Abraham must be *true* or *false*, a *fable* or a *real history*: we say it is a fable, and will prove our assertion by the Scripture itself. Hast thou appealed unto the Bible? then by the Bible must thou abide,—it is a weapon, O Christians! that you have long wielded; but it is now to be used against yourselves by those who have deeply studied its contents, not in the spirit of a Jew, Christian, or Infidel, but in the spirit of a philosopher, who searches not for evidence or argument to support some profitable darling theory, but that truth may be established, and the mind of man freed from the shackles that a grovelling and most debasing superstition imposes upon it. That a lie cannot live, has passed into a proverb; and if the belief in Abraham and Christ be a lie, it cannot live,—truth alone being eternal and immortal, all lies must die.

The book of Genesis is either a scientific exposition of the gene-

ration of things, or a mere cosmogonic fable ; if the former, it will bear the test of a precise and searching investigation ; if the latter, it will not bear that test ; for falsehood and truth, being necessarily antagonistic, have been through all time, are now, and will eternally be opposed to each other ; nor let our Christian readers fear, for if they hold the truth, *it cannot perish* ; and those who dread investigation, only prove this, that they have not perfect faith, but fear, lest their opinions and systems should be scattered to the winds by the breath of free inquiry.

It is most inconsistent in Christians, who appeal to the Bible as a casket containing all sorts of moral treasures, to shrink from the consequences of such appeal. They say, search the Scripture ; but wherefore are we to search, if not to find that which lies hidden there ; that which we see requireth no searching out, it is that we see and know not we hope to see and to know by seeking for it. The outcry against inquiry is the outcry of knaves and fools, who howl against the march of intellect, and the spread of what they call Infidel principles, as though possessed by the spirit of a wolf, or, as the poet has happily expressed it, as if "their curish spirit governed a wolf, who longed for human slaughter ; even from the gallows did his fell soul fleet, and infused itself into them, for their desires are wolfish, bloody, starved, and ravenous." It is ignorance, not knowledge, that the wise man dreads, whether on Scriptural or other subjects ; and they look anxiously forward to the time, when the same rules of inquiry and reasoning will be applied in morals as in physical science. It is shameful to fetter the human mind, and make it bow down to creeds and systems—creeds of human invention in times of barbaric ignorance, and systems, revolutions to common sense, established by fraud, falsehood, and treachery, and now supported by them. No truth in moral science is more clear than this, that it is ignorance and error, not knowledge and right reason, which renders individuals full of fancies and apprehensions—robs them of their usefulness, and gives them over, bound hand and foot by their own slavish fears, to the cunningly bold, who triumph in their weakness,—as observed by Andrew Combe, M.D. in his *Principles of Physiology*, "If, indeed, ignorance were itself a preventive of danger, or could provide a remedy when it approached, then it might be said, that 'ignorance is bliss ;' but as it gives only the kind of security, which shutting the eyes affords against the dangers of a precipice, and, consequently, leaves its victim doubly exposed, it is high time to renounce its friendship and protection,

and to seek those of a more powerful and beneficent ally. If ignorance could divest us, even of the sense of anxiety attending the apprehension of evil, the consequent tranquility of mind, deceptive though it were, would be, at least, some compensation for submitting to its rule. But, unhappily, so far from ignorance of the nature and extent of the threatening danger saving us from gloomy anticipations, the fact is notoriously the reverse; *for the darkest picture ever drawn, is assuredly that devised by an unenlightened imagination.*'

Let us, therefore, heed not the stupid and canting cry about the danger of inquiry, the evils of knowledge, and the happiness of ignorance; but persevere in the great work of social, political, and religious reform; examine boldly and calmly, that the chaff of human opinions may be separated from the wheat of fact and philosophy; all of which is the proper object of human reason, that cannot more nobly employ itself than in the destruction of idolatry, physical and moral, the worship of idols, whether those idols be gods, devils, angels, or men; for all worship is slavish, fearful, and most irrational, having its root in folly, and the degradation of spirit to which fear ever gives birth. The virtue of the fearful man is not to be relied upon, it is a virtue which, "like wax, melts in its own fire;" but enough of fear and the fearful, for we write to the courageous, not to the cowardly—to the philosophic, not to the faithful—to the inquirer, not to the taker upon trust—to the man of science, not to the man of imaginings—in short, to the man who seeks for truth, that his reason may be strengthened and his heart purified,—not the man who refuseth the truth when it alarms his fears, weakens and corrupts his reason instead of strengthening it, and hardens his heart by a soul-debasing superstition. In the words of Solomon, "Every prudent man *dealeth with knowledge*; but a fool layeth open his folly. Poverty and shame shall be to him that refuseth instruction; but he that regardeth reproof shall be honoured."

We shall not stop here to combat the absurd opinion, (once deemed incontrovertible, but now abandoned by all Christians who make the slightest pretensions to knowledge,) that the Bible is an infallible book, an unerring guide, even though the literal interpretation should be admitted as genuine; though by the way there are almost as many interpretations as divine interpreters, and as many divine interpreters as parsons, each claiming to be *the* man who alone can explain the deep and hidden meaning of the sacred volume; we say, to combat the argument of infallibility, will be

displaying our valour, and using what strength we have to very little purpose, as we repeat, the point is now given up; and we are told by orthodox divines, that the Bible is full of errors, "errors that cannot be numbered," which is certainly startling to those who think that the word of God is immutable, unchangeable, like himself, without change or shadow of turning; and, though not ourselves over orthodox, or righteous overmuch, we are compelled to declare our conviction, that if God had spoken to man, intending him not only to hear but to understand, he would have used a language as clear, as immutable, and eternal, as the truths he intended to convey; but the Bible is not written in such a language, as will appear from the following note, copied from Evans's *Sketches of the Denominations of the Christian World*: "Our English translation of the Bible was made in the time, and by the appointment of James the First. According to Fuller, the list of translators amounts to forty-seven. This number was arranged under six divisions, and several parcels of the Bible assigned them. Every one of the company was to translate the whole parcel, then they were to compare them together, and when any company had finished their part, they were to communicate it to the other companies, so that nothing should pass without the general consent. The names of the persons and places where they met, together with the portions of Scripture assigned each company, are to be found in Johnson's *Historical Account of the Several Translations of the Bible*. These good and learned men entered on their work in the spring of 1607, and three years elapsed before the translation was finished. From the mutability of language, the variations of customs, and the progress of knowledge, several passages in the Bible require to be newly translated, or to be materially corrected. Hence, in the present age, when Biblical literature has been assiduously cultivated, different parts of the sacred volume have been translated by very able hands. *The substituting a new translation of the Bible in the room of the one now in use, has been much debated.* Dr. Knox in his ingenious essays, together with others, argue against it; whilst Dr. Newcombe, the late Lord Primate of Ireland, the late Dr. Geddes, of the Catholic persuasion, and the late Rev. Gilbert Wakefield, contended strenuously for it. The correction of several passages, however, would deprive Deists of many of their objections, prevent Christians from being misled into some absurd opinions, and be the means of making the Scriptures more intelligible, and consequently more beneficial to the world."

Here then, we have from Christians themselves, the important admission, that from the mutability of language, the variation of customs, and the progress of knowledge, several passages of the Bible require to be newly translated, or to be materially corrected; in spite of the great care of the forty-seven learned and holy men, time and change has changed the unchangeable word of God. After forty-seven wise heads, aided as they doubtless were by the holy spirit, had laboured for three long years *sans* intermission, we are now gravely told, not by Jews, Infidels, Deists, or Atheists, but such good and learned Christians as Dr. Newcombe, late Lord Primate of Ireland, the late Dr. Geddes, and Dr. Wakefield, that we must, if we would save our souls, substitute a new translation of the Bible in the room of the one now in common use; the text is to be reformed altogether, say these worthies, in the face of the threat held out against all innovators and uncereemonious liberty-takers with Scriptural texts, "Add thou not unto his words, lest he reprove thee, and thou be found a liar;" in the face of all this—in spite of the hurricane of passion which threatened to blow them into eternity, the above divines had the effrontery to persist, that the present version is little better than a forgery—that an entirely new translation must be made, or if they attempt to mend the old one, they propose to do it as the Irishman mended his gun, with a new stock, lock, and barrel.

The writer's gentle insinuation that "the correction of several passages would deprive Deists of many of their objections, prevent Christians from being misled into some absurd opinions, and be the means of making the Scriptures more intelligible, and consequently more beneficial to the world," is really racy, rich, and highly suggestive. The idea of appealing to revelation as a standard by which all opinions are to be measured, regulated, and determined, which reason must bend and submit to as being its superior, and then to propose the correction or mutilation of several passages in order to meet the cavils of Deists and others, is worthy of a Bedlamite, and should give the proposer the crown of folly—a crown so heavy, that, like the crook-backed tyrant Gloster, he might exclaim, "By heaven! the massive weight out galls my laden brow." Why the plain truth is, that if Christians re-translate and exclude from the Bible all that rationalists or reasoners carp and cavil at, there will not be a single page left, and the word of God would dwindle down into two pasteboard covers—a volume constructed after the manner of a back-gammon board, well bound

and marked "Bible" on the outside—but full of nought but emptiness! Yes, rationalists would find a flaw in every page—of course, we mean those rationalists who would be so irrational as to take as the letter that which is figurative—an allegory for a matter of plain and sober history. A knowledge of this double character of the Bible would, indeed, deprive Deists of many of their objections, prevent Christians from being misled into some absurd opinions, and be the means of making the Scriptures more intelligible, and consequently more beneficial to the world. We thank the Christian writer for such admirable sentiments—we thank him for teaching us those words, and shall endeavour to profit by them ourselves, and enable our readers to go and do likewise,—for who does not see that when the "forty-seven" passed with such general consent such grossly absurd passages as the following, they gave a mortal stab to their system of religion,—for though religion cannot be destroyed, all systems of religion may, if they be lying systems, "as a lie cannot live;" so that those who systematise religion should be careful lest they stumble, and in building their state-theologic house, they take or mistake not "bricks for stone, and slime for mortar." In the first chapter of Genesis we read, "And God said, Let there be light, and there was light. And God saw the light, that it was good: and God divided the light from the darkness. And God called the light day, and the darkness he called night: and the evening and the morning were the first day." Then we read, same chapter, "And the evening and the morning were the third day. And God said, Let there be lights in the firmament of the heaven to divide the day from the night; and let them be for signs, for seasons, for days, and years: And let them be for lights in the firmament of the heaven to give light upon the earth; and it was so. And God made two great lights; the greater light to rule the day, and the lesser light to rule the night; he made the stars also." Here we have a strange confusion of ideas—a strange jumble of all sorts of nonsense—when taken literally. The style of the above passage has been much commended; and Longinus the great critic, has said that the expressions "Let there be light, and there was light," are sublime. Perhaps so; but however sublime in style, it is extremely silly in matter; for how God could say—Let there be light, and see the light that it was good, and call the light day, and the darkness night, before he had made the greater light to rule the day and the lesser light to rule the night—how, in short, taking a common-sense view of the subject, could

there have been an evening or a morning, a night and a day, without sun, moon, or stars? Again we read in the 27th verse of the same chapter, "So God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; *male and female created he them*;" and in the second chapter we read, 21st verse, "And the Lord God caused a great sleep to fall upon Adam, and he slept: and he took one of his ribs, and he closed up the flesh instead thereof;" so that, after creating them male and female, it afterwards appears, according to the text, that the man was first created and slept, and the Lord God gently took out one of his ribs, closed up the flesh thereof, and of the rib made a woman. No one doubts the power of Deity to act in this or any other unaccountable manner; and nothing could have been more easy than for God to have so acted, if he desired so to do; nor is it any thing wonderful to the people of this age, that a rib should be taken from a man without his own knowledge; for the disciples of Mesner, by Mesnerizing and throwing their patients into a very strange kind of sleep, can cut off breasts, legs, and even heads, without the patient wincing a tittle, and surely God may have mesnerized or magnetized Adam, and done all related in the text without difficulty; but it is quite impossible that God could have created man in his own image,—in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them, as stated in the 1st chapter and 27th verse, and afterwards say, as is set down in the 2nd chapter and 18th verse, "And the Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him;" but this little confusion is a *trifle*. In the 23rd verse and 24th of the 2nd chapter, there is something more—another *trifle*; but as it has been well observed, that trifles mark men's characters, trifles also mark the character of books; for Adam is further made to say by the *forty-seven*, "This is now bone of my bone, and flesh of my flesh; she shall be called woman, because she was taken out of man. Therefore shall a man leave his father and his mother, and shall cleave unto his wife, and they shall be one flesh." This is strange logic; and Adam must have been a strange logician; but as it is presumed, that before the fall he had not studied the art of reasoning, he must have spoken, if he spoke at all, by intuition; because, although he may, by some means unknown to us, have come to the knowledge that his fair companion was one of his own ribs; by what strange, incontrovertible process of reasoning (though he could hardly have reasoned before the fall) he came to the conclusion, because the woman was taken out of him, "*therefore should*

a man leave his father and mother, and should cleave unto his wife, and they should be one flesh." The difficulty which besets all this is greatly increased when we reflect that Adam could not *then* have known anything about a man's leaving his father and his mother, and clinging unto his wife, any more than an Exeter-change orang-outang can know what is passing at this moment in the planet Jupiter!

As we proceed with our examination of the book of Genesis, the necessity of *rationalizing* the Bible,—in other words, giving as far as possible the *true explanation of its contents*, will be admitted by all; and it is idle for sectarians to say, that they scout all mere opinions, all creeds of human invention, and take the Bible for their guide; for when they speak of the Bible, they cannot mean a certain number of leaves, with a certain number of characters marked thereon, bound in calf and gold; no, they must mean (if they mean any thing) the truths that it contains, the dogmas it enforces, in short, the sum total of its history, its morality, and its dogmas; but if no two of those who read the Bible, attach the same meaning to its contents, a thousand individuals, each interpreting the Scripture in his own manner, might all proclaim that they took the Bible for their guide, and yet their opinions be wide as the poles asunder—the very antipodes of each. And this right of private interpretation, is what must be granted to the improved and improving spirit of the age—it demands that, and will be content with nothing less; any thing short of the full right of all individuals to interpret, as best they may, the Bible, or any other books, is a most unjust and irrational interference with liberty of conscience, and that right of private judgment so strenuously insisted upon by the first Protestants and the Dissenters of the present day,—those among them, more especially, who have as yet obtained little political power. The Protestants cry aloud "The Bible, the Bible—we say the Bible only is the religion of Protestants:" perhaps so; and if the Protestants can find their religious sentiments and feelings embodied and proclaimed in the Bible, they act but consistently if they make their lives and actions harmonize with its injunctions; but let not those who *do* find their religion in the Bible hate and persecute those who *do not*; nor should those who give one reading, or one interpretation to its contents, fine or throw into a dungeon those who give an *unfashionable* reading, or interpret disagreeably to the great monster called public orthodoxy.

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THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

AS A HUMAN BEING,

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BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 19.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. *I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.*"—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

Before proceeding further with our explication of the book of Genesis, it may be useful to correct an error which has been going the round of the press. The error to which we allude is an important one; and seems to have arisen out of an observation made by us to the effect, that we did not deny that one or fifty Christs may have walked about the streets of Jerusalem, any more than we deny that one or fifty Herculeses may have existed in Phenecia, Egypt, or Greece, which observation has been strangely enough construed into an admission that Jesus Christ actually existed, as contended by ecclesiastical and other historians; which is certainly a most extraordinary conclusion for any intelligent reader to arrive at, as the slightest reflection must convince all, that in disproving the existence of Jesus Christ as a human being, it was not the existence of a Christ that we offered to disprove, but *the* Jesus Christ conceived by the power of the holy-ghost, born of a virgin in Judea, who, after having performed many miracles and wonders, was crucified by Pontius Pilate, and according to the fable, or history, suffered a glorious resurrection, in the same way that when proving that the grand Hercules, worshipped by the Greeks as the son of Jupiter and Alcemene, was but a mere personification of the Sun; we do not deny (indeed it would be most foolish to do so) that a

man or men called Hercules, once existed in Greece. The object of these Letters is to disprove the belief in the Jesus Christ worshipped by Christians; and when that is accomplished, few will care whether any men in former times bore the name of Christ. Dozens of men called Adonis may have lived in Phenecia, but then, Adonis was no less a personification of the Sun; that is, the Adonis whom fabulists have told us was beloved of Venus, &c. It may be useful here to re-state that we have not, nor do we intend to examine whether the Christian religion is or is not a revealed religion,—for the philosophy of these times has progressed too far, and taken too firm a hold upon the mind of men, to permit that they should longer dream or dispute about the communications of Deity with man—save only those which result from the light of reason and the contemplation of nature; nor shall we yet examine whether an impostor or philosopher called Christ established the religion called Christian,—all this will be considered in due time; but we may observe that even though this last article should be accorded, that a man of consummate ability, prudence, and determination, played a part among the Jewish people, more or less in harmony with the received history, yet Christians would not be satisfied therewith, for they worship a man-god, a divine incarnation, a real flesh-and-blood-deity, in the image of man, who descended from the heavens to bear our iniquities!—"a man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief;" but we are far from being so condescending as to admit, for the sake of conciliating the favour of Christian theologians, that such things were: and as to those who will be content that we should destroy the divine character of Christ, and make of him simply a philosopher, or a man, without attaching to him a divine character,—that question we candidly invite them to consider when our Analysis of the Christian Mythos is brought to a close,—no matter when or by whom it was established—whether, as before remarked, it owe its origin to one or many men—whether its origin date from the reign of Augustus or Tiberius, as the modern legend seems to indicate, and as is vulgarly believed,—or whether it may boast a much higher antiquity for its source, namely, the Mithriac worship, established in Persia, in Armenia, in Cappadocia, and even at Rome, as we think. The point is, however, not very important,—but, it is important to know, thoroughly the nature of the Christian worship, whoever may have been its author, and wherever it may have first taken root.

The impiety and gross irrationality of interpreting literally the

book of Genesis was dwelt upon in our last ; and in insisting that the letter of the Scripture kills, and the spirit vivifies, we only followed in the footsteps of the most eminent Jewish and Christian writers, who were too learned not to see the absurdity, and therefore impiety, of such an interpretation. Origine, the great champion of the Christians, attributed to the Scripture a triple sense, as it appears in conformity with his notion of a triple division in human nature,—the first sense literal, and answering to the body ; the second moral, answering to the soul ; the third mystical, and answering to the spirit or mind : but, as observed by STRAUSS, in his *Life of Christ*, “ Nevertheless, he left generally these three kinds of sense, to subsister the one by the side of the other, although he gave to them different values ; but in particular cases he pretends that the literal explication *either gives no sense or one that is outrageously absurd*, so that the reader may be pricked or excited to discover the mystical or hidden sense. We must, without doubt, understand that the literal sense is far inferior, and therefore less useful, than that which is concealed, and more profound, if, as Origine repeats in many parts of his works, that the Biblical recitals, when understood, teach not old fables, but admirable advice how to live in justice and in truth, when he sustains that the purely literal sense *will lead to the ruin of the Christian religion.*” Here, then, is a serious dilemma, upon one or other of the horns of which the Christians must be placed, *which* they will prefer being gored and tossed by, it is not for us to determine,—but most serious is their position ! The literal interpretation, according to Origine, will lead to the ruin of the Christian religion,—and we insist that any other than a literal interpretation will equally ruin the Christian religion ! so that, ruined, theological Christian professors must be, whichever course they may choose to take,—we say, Christian professors will be ruined—who support any religion that will support them ; and as to the people, they will be far more religious when there shall be no professors of religion in existence ; but the Christian scheme has no other foundation, no other conceivable basis—than a literal interpretation of the book of Genesis,—to allegorize that book—to make of it a tissue of fables, is to allegorize and make fabulous all that is written about a redemption from sin and misery through the blood of Christ, and to show there has been no fall, no redemption, no real garden of Paradise, no birth, death, and resurrection of Christ.

The tree of Christianity has its root in the soil of Paradise, or no where. Now, a tree without a root would be an odd tree—such

a kind of tree would be the tree of Christianity, if what is related of the garden of Paradise be not true to the letter; and if it be intended that to talk about a tree without a root is an absurdity, we reply by asking, whether to talk about a redemption without a fall is not equally absurd? Christ, we are told, came to redeem the world. From what? Why sin and misery, which sin and misery was a consequence of the fall, according to Genesis, chapter iii, where we read, that "After God created man in his own image, in the image of God created he him; male and female created he them. And God saw every thing that he had made; and behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." Afterwards we find, in the second chapter, if we literally interpret the text, that though all was good, "The Lord God said, It is not good that the man should be alone; I will make an help meet for him." Then comes the tale, worthy to find a place in the Arabian tales of the thousand and one nights, about a great disorder introduced into the world by a serpent, who invites the woman to gather the forbidden fruit; but it will be better to give it as it stands in chapter third, "Now the serpent was more subtil than any beast of the field which the Lord God had made. And he said unto the woman, yea, hath God said, ye shall not eat of every tree of the garden? And the woman said unto the serpent, we may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden: But of the fruit of the tree which is in the midst of the garden, God hath said, ye shall not eat of it, neither shall ye touch it, lest ye die. And the serpent said unto the woman, ye shall not surely die: For God doth know that in the day ye eat thereof, then your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as gods, knowing good and evil. And when the woman saw that the tree was good for food, and that it was pleasant to the eyes, and a tree to be desired to make one wise, she took of the fruit thereof, and did eat, and gave also unto her husband with her; and he did eat. And the eyes of them both were opened, and they knew that they were naked; and they sewed fig leaves together, and made themselves aprons."

The grievous fault of our first parents, according to the text, as interpreted, was punished by all the evils inseparable from a knowledge of good and evil; for before the commission of this fatal act, the knowledge of Adam and Eve must have been purely negative, —they only knew that they did not know, though how they came at even that kind of knowledge it is difficult, if not impossible, for us to determine. One of the greatest philosophers that ever lived,

declared that he only knew that he knew nothing,—so that he, after all his reasonings, after the fall, knew as much as Adam and Eve did by intuition, before the fall; though it must be confessed that the woman Eve's reply to the wily serpent, "We may eat of the fruit of the trees of the garden," &c., has much of reason about it, and would lead us to imply or presume that she had some positive knowledge—else, how should she know one tree from another, or how, without a power of abstraction, could she compare together certain individual roots, trunks, and branches,—note their points of similarity or dissimilarity, agreement or disagreement, and include them all under the general term trees?

In the book of Genesis, therefore, we must look for the fundamental dogma of the Christian religion; for even in the opinions of Christians themselves, the incarnation of Christ was necessary, because the serpent had not subtilly and insidiously seduced the first woman called Eve, "because she was the mother of all living." Like the Siamese twins, these two dogmas are held together by what may be called a natural fastening; a forcible separation of the twins of Siam would probably have been fatal to both, and any theological doctor who attempts to cut the gordian knot which ties the sin of man through Adam, to the redemption through Jesus Christ, must fail; or should he succeed, he will certainly destroy the existence both of Adam and of Christ; no sin—no reparation; no fall—no redemption!

But the fall of man, or the supposition of the double state of man, at first created by God, or the good principle, enjoying all the delights of this glorious world, and afterwards passing under the dominion of the serpent Satan, Devil, or bad principle, and to a state of misery and degradation, from which he could not be saved or withdrawn but by the good deity, the principle of good or of light, is merely a cosmogonic fable, of precisely the same nature as those made by the Magi, or priests of Persia, upon Ormusd and Ahrimanes,—to which fable we have already called the attention of our readers. We say, all that is related in the book of Genesis with regard to Adam, Eve, and the Serpent, is a cosmogonic fable, of the same character as that taught by the priests of Mithra, or rather, that the fable of Genesis was copied from the Persian books, where we find that the Magi were accustomed to represent the world under the emblem of an egg divided into twelve parts, six of which parts belonged to Ormusd, the god, author of good and of light, and six to Ahrimanes, author of all evil and of darkness.

These two books also treat of the combined action of these two principles, and how the good and the evil of nature resulted therefrom. That dogma of the two principles presiding over and governing all nature, was not peculiar to the Persian cosmogonist; but, as Plutarch has properly observed, was the basis of all theologies, to which he adds, that "It is not necessary to believe that the principles of the universe may be inanimate bodies, as Democritus and Epicurus seemed to imagine,—nor that a matter without quality was organized and ordained by one only reason, or providence, mistress of all things, as said by the Stoics; for it is not possible that one only being, good or bad, could have been the cause of all things, as God, if good, could not have been the cause of evil. The harmony of this world is a combination of contraries, as the cords of a lyre, or the strings of a harp, which bend and unbend. Never, as the poet Euripides has wisely said, is good separated from evil, there is—there must be a melange, or mixture, containing the one and the other. That opinion upon the two principles (continues Plutarch) is from all antiquity; it has passed from the theologians and the legislators, to the poets and the philosophers. Its author is not known, but the opinion is substantiated and proved by the traditions of the human race; it is consecrated by the mysteries and the sacrifices with the Greeks and with the barbarians. Every where has been and is acknowledged the dogma of the two principles, opposed in their nature, which by their contrariety, produce the melange of good and evil we every where behold. It is ridiculous to suppose that there is one dispensator only, who draws events as a liquor in two casks, in order to mix them together and give to us the mixture; for nature produces nothing here below which has not both the good and the evil. But it is necessary to acknowledge two contrary causes—two opposing powers—the one carrying towards the right—the other towards the left, and which govern thus our lives and all the sublunary world, which by that reason, is subject to so many changes and alterations and irregularities of all kinds; for as no effect can be produced without a cause, and if the good cannot be the cause of the bad, it is absolutely necessary that there should be a cause for evil and a cause for good."

It will at once be perceived from the last phrase of Plutarch, that the true origin of the dogma of the two principles is to be found in the difficulty that men have had in all time to reconcile their knowledge, that misery abounds with the opinion they would wit-

ingly have entertained—that a benevolent, all-wise, and all-powerful Deity, held in his hand the universe, and weighed as in a balance the destinies of men. If, said they, God be all-powerful and benevolent, why does moral evil exist? and if he is not all-powerful, he must be controlled and thwarted in his good intentions by some evil spirit, less benevolent but no less powerful than himself. The supposition of one supreme cause could not explain away the existence of evil, nor satisfactorily account for it; and the two opposing effects led them to infer two opposing causes, antagonistic in their nature and in their actions. That dogma, adds Plutarch, “has been generally received by all people, and above all by those who have had the highest reputation for wisdom. They have all admitted two Gods, of different talents—if the expression may be permitted to me—one of whom delighteth to do good, the other delighteth to do evil; and between the two we have all the evil that exists in the world. To the first is given the title of God, and to the other, that of Devil or Demon.”

In the cosmogony, or Genesis of the Hebrews, we see the same two principles—the one called God, the author of all excellence, who exclaims, after his daily toils, that he sees this that he has made is good, “And God called the dry land earth, and the gathering together of the waters called he seas; and God saw that it was good,” &c.; and after him comes another principle, called Demon, or Devil, or Satan, who corrupts the good the first has made, and introduces evil, death, and sin, among the human family; for though the serpent was much honored by the Judæans and Egyptians, and symbolized with them as wisdom and eternity, with the Jews the serpent was despised and held in abomination; indeed, almost all those things held in veneration by the Egyptians as symbolical of physical or moral phenomena, were execrated by the Jews, who were peculiar people, with very confined notions of things, and were, in consequence, filled with antipathy and groundless prejudice against the customs and manners of other nations, whose gods they were taught to abhor, whose altars they were commanded to throw down, and whose people they were bidden to put to the edge of sword. So that we need not wonder that the serpent, so much venerated by the Egyptians, should have been despised by the Jews, and in their cosmogony made the symbol of the spirit of evil or of darkness. The cosmogony itself, we wish our readers to bear in mind, was copied from the ancient cosmogony of the Persians, as may be seen by a reference to their books. All

the dogmas usually attributed to Mosæ were, in fact, borrowed from the books of Zoroastre, who equally admitted two principles,—according to Plutarch, the one called Oromaze and the other Ahrimanes. The Persians say of the first, that he was of the nature of light; and of the other, that he was of the nature of darkness. With the Egyptians, the first was called Osiris, and the second Typhon—eternal enemy of the first.

All the sacred books of the Persians and the Egyptians, contain marvellous recitals and strange allegories respecting the divers combats that Ahrimanes and his angels delivered to Oromaze, and that Typhon delivered to Osiris. These fables have been repeated by the Greeks in the wars of the Titans and Giants with feet in the form of serpents, against Jupiter, or against the principle of good or of light; for Jupiter, in the theology of the Greeks, as Plutarch very well observes, “answers to the Oromaze of the Persians, and the Osiris of the Egyptians.

To these examples, cited by Plutarch, which are drawn from the theology of the Persians, the Egyptians, the Greeks, and the Chaldeans, many more might be added in justification of what is here advanced as to the belief so generally spread, that the universe is under the dominion of two rival chiefs, who are eternally struggling for mastery, and that this dogma belongs to all theologies.

The people of Madagascar acknowledge the two principles; they give, like the Jews, to the bad, the attributes of the serpent. They call the good principle Jachar, or the great God, all-powerful, and the bad principle they call Angat; but, like the Christians, though they make their God all-powerful, they say he has either not the power or the will to destroy Angat, or, as we call him, the Devil; but neither the priests of Madagascar nor the priests of Europe can afford to destroy the devil—his services are so valuable and necessary to the welfare of governments and religions—that is, governors and theologians, that they cannot possibly be dispensed with. The people of Madagascar, of Pegu, of Java, and the Hottentots, pray not at all to the good deity—he, they consider, is quite good enough to do without it,—so that, the very reason given by Christians why we should pray to God, is the self-same reason why the Madagascars and others, think we should not,—so true it is that.

Custom and fancy oft our fate decide;

And what is this man's shame is 'tother's pride.

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LETTER 20.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. *I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.*"—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

In Genesis we read (chapter 1, v. 31)—"And God saw every thing that he had made, and behold it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." (Chap. 2, v. 1, 2) "Thus the heavens and the earth were finished, and all the host of them. And on the seventh day God ended his work which he had made; and he rested on the seventh day from all his work which he had made." These texts require some explanation.

Time, says the author of the Boundesh, or Genesis of the Persians, is in all, twelve thousand years; the six thousand of God include the signs of the lamb, the bull, the twins, the lion, and the virgin, making six thousand years; for the Persians supposing, that from time without bounds, or from eternity, arose a certain limited period, which, however, renewed itself unceasingly; they divided such period in twelve thousand parts, that in the eastern style of allegory, they named years. Six thousand of these periods or years, they said, belonged to God or the good principle, and the other six, to the Devil or bad principle—or as they call them, Ormusd and Ahriman. And, in order that their meaning might not be mistaken, the Persian priests made each of these divisions, or each of these thousand parts, answer to one of the signs through which the Sun passes, or seems to pass, during the earth's annual revolution.

The first month, say they, answers to the lamb, the second to the bull, the third to the twins, &c. It is under the six first signs, or under the six first months of the equinoxial year, that they celebrate the reign of the beneficent Deity, or the principle of light; and it is under the other six signs that they place the action of the malevolent Devil, or the principle of darkness; and it is at the seventh sign, answering to the balance, or the first of the autumnal signs, the season of fruits, when the colds of winter penetrate in our hemisphere, that they say, commenced the reign or empire of darkness and of evil.

The reader will remark, that it is after the season of fruits that the genius of evil, according to the cosmogony of the Persians, spreads in the world his fatal and most terrible influence, covering one half of the globe as with a veil of mourning, converting its fluids into solids, and making of these one stiffened heap—disorganizing the plants, &c. It is then that man discovers the evils of which he was ignorant during the spring and the summer, in the delicious climates of the northern hemisphere.

The supreme God, according to the writer of the *Modinel el Tawarik*, in the beginning created man and the bull in an elevated place, where they remained three thousand years without evil. These thousands of years included the lamb, the bull, and the twins. They then remained yet three thousand more years upon the earth without enduring pain or contradiction, and these three thousands answer to the cancer or crab, the lion, and the virgin. Here then, we have the six thousands spoken of above, under the name of thousands of Gods, and the zodiacal signs affected to God, or the good principle.

After that, at the seventh sign, answering to the balance, evil appeared, and man commenced to till the soil, or, in the language of Genesis, the curse was pronounced; (chap. 3, v. 19) "In the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread, till thou return unto the ground; for out of it wast thou taken: for dust thou art, and unto dust shalt thou return."

In another part of the Persian cosmogony it is said, that all the duration of the world, from its commencement to its termination, has been fixed at twelve thousand years; that man on the superior portion of the globe, that is to say, in the northern and superior hemisphere, lived without evil for three thousand years. He was without evil for yet another three thousand years, when Ahrimanes, or the spirit of evil, appeared, who drew all sorts of evils and wars

and pestilence in the seventh thousand, that is to say, under the sign of the balance, upon which is placed the celestial serpent. Then was produced the mixture of good and evil, of happiness and misery.

Man had thus far been favored by the Deity, as written (chap. 1, v. 28) "And God blessed them, and God said unto them, Be fruitful, and multiply, and replenish the earth, and subdue it: and have dominion over the fish of the sea, and over the fowl of the air, and over every living thing that moveth upon the earth." Man was then good, not having plucked the fatal apple, (chap. 1, v. 31) "And God saw every thing that he had made, and, behold, it was very good. And the evening and the morning were the sixth day." But, in the season of fruits, when the wily serpent, or serpent of evil, introduced cold, sin, and death into the world—or when in the mystical language of Genesis, (chap. 3, v. 22) "And the Lord God said, Behold the man is become as one of us, *to know good and evil*," &c. "Therefore, (chap. 3, v. 23, 24) the Lord God sent him forth from the garden of Eden, to till the ground from whence he was taken. So he drove out the man; and he placed at the east of the garden of Eden, Cherubims, and a flaming sword which turned every way, to keep the way of the tree of life."—Or in the language of the Persian allegorists, Ormusd had loaded man with all sorts of delights; but the god Ormusd had a wily rival in Ahrimanes, the prince of darkness, the most determined enemy to man, who poisoned the most precious of Ormusd's gifts; and to this chief of darkness man became the victim, at the moment when the Sun, or Ormusd, the great god of Day, retreats towards the southern climates. These long nights re-take their terrible empire, and the murderous breath of Ahrimanes, who appears under the form, or under the ascendant of the serpent of the constellations, carries devastation and misery into that Paradise, or garden of delights, in which Ormusd had placed man. Here then, we have the theological idea that the author of Genesis has taken from the cosmogony of the Persians. The idea is precisely the same, but the manner of setting it forth is agreeable to the different kind of genius of the two people. Whether the Persians were indebted for the idea to the people of any more ancient but now forgotten nation, cannot, perhaps, be satisfactorily determined; but it is certain, that the Hebrew books of Genesis is a mere copy, as regards the idea of the Boundesh, or Genesis of the Magi or Persian priests.

From what has been written, the conclusion is inevitable, that the evil introduced into the world is winter, and who from such evil

will be the Redeemer?—who, but the god of Spring, or the god Sun, in his passage under the sign of the Lamb, of whom Christ, the god worshipped by Christians, assumes all the forms, for he is the Lamb who repairs all the evils of the world, evils that the serpent introduced so subtilly in the garden of Paradise; and it is under the emblem of the Lamb that Christ is represented in the monuments of the first Christians.

It must be evident, that the whole story about the fall of man, relates to the periodical physical evil, of which every year the earth is the theatre, in consequence of the retreat of the Sun—that great source of life and light to all that breathes, moves, and has a being upon the surface of this globe. That cosmogonic tale is nothing more than an allegorical picture of the general phenomena of nature, and the particular influence of the celestial signs; for the serpent, or the great adder, the cause of sin and death, is the serpent of winter, which, as the Balance (one of the constellations) is placed upon the limits, or boundary-line, separating the empires of the two principles—in other words, upon the autumnal equinox. Here, we have the true serpent, of which Ahrimanes takes the form in the fable of the Magi, as in the fable of the Jews, to introduce evil into the world; also, the Persians call that malevolent genius, the *Serpent Star*, and the celestial serpent, the *Serpent of Eve*. The following is from the Boundesh or Genesis of the Persians, “Ahrimanes, or the principle of darkness and of evil, that power by whom sin comes into the world, is seen in the sky, under the form of a great adder, accompanied by all kinds of evils and bad geniuses, who search only to destroy.” It also observes, “When bad geniuses desolate the world, and that the *serpent star* marks out for itself a course between the sky and the earth, that is to say, mounts upon the horizon,” &c.

Now, the epoch of the annual revolution of the celestial serpent, when united to the Sun, he mounts upon the horizon with that star, is, when the Sun arrives at the Balance, where the constellation of the serpent extends itself, that is, at the seventh sign, setting out from the Lamb, or that sign under which it has been shewn, the Magi fixed the commencement of the reign of the bad principle, and the origin of evil in the universe.

In the Hebrew Genesis the same expressions are not employed as in that of the Persians; but the Genesis of the ancient Tuscans is, in all the rest, conceived in precisely the same terms as that of the Hebrews, and has conserved that allegorical division of time

spoken of in the Persian Genesis, during the which, the powerful action of the Sun, or soul of nature, is exercised. In the books of the ancient Tuscans it is thus expressed :

“ The God, Architect of the Universe, has employed and consecrated twelve thousand years to the works that he has produced ; and he has divided them in twelve times, distributed in the twelve signs, or houses of the Sun. During the first thousand, he made the sky and the earth. During the second, the firmament that he called the sky. During the third, he made the sea and the waters, which flow upon and through the earth. During the fourth, he made the two great lights of nature. During the fifth, he made the souls of birds, of reptiles, quadrupeds, and all animals which live in the air, upon the earth, and in the waters. During the sixth, he made man.” “ It seems (adds the author) that the first six thousand years having preceded the formation of man, the human race should subsist for the other six thousand years ;” so that all the time, from the commencement to the consummation of that great work, may be enclosed within a period of twelve thousand years.

If the Christian doctors who argue so profoundly against the validity of argumentation, when religion is in question, who are wonderfully industrious in shewing reasons why reason should not be used—if the fathers of the church, who were nothing less than philosophers, could not, with all their disposition to believe, swallow and digest such gross absurdities, nor explain the book of Genesis without recurring to allegory—if nought but the key of allegory could open the closet where the true sense of Scripture lay concealed—if they found that to interpret literally was to shock reason and cover the Sacred Books with ridicule,—surely it will be permitted to us, who, living in an age boasting of its enlightenment, and feeling that it is better and nobler that men should be good reasoners rather than good believers, to shew the true character of such marvellous histories—give to them their true interpretation, and raise or tear aside the veil of allegory which conceals their moral beauty. Yes, let us follow in the footsteps of Origines, one of the most learned writers of whom the Christians can boast, who boldly declares the book of Genesis to be a book of absurdities—when literally interpreted, or when read by those who do not, or cannot, understand that there is a hidden and a revealed meaning in Scriptural passages—a literal and a figurative sense. That doctor, after ridiculing the idea that the tree of life in the garden of Paradise was a real sensible tree, which had the virtue of conser-

ving life, &c., continues, and compares the fable of the temptation of Adam to the fable related about the birth of love, who, it is related, had for his father, Porus or abundance, and poverty for his mother,—he sustains that a very large portion of the Old Testament is fabulous—that what is there related to have taken place, could not by possibility have happened, and are therefore nothing more than fictions which conceal certain secret truths.

As to those who are content to acknowledge in Christ a Redeemer God, and yet cannot believe in the adventure of Adam and Eve, the serpent, the wonderful tree, and the fall of man, which alone gave birth to the necessity of a Redeemer, we charge them with inconsistency,—and cannot see by what means they can escape from or rebut the charge. If no fault was committed by Adam—if there never was a Paradise, or a talking serpent, or a real tree of good and evil—how could the Lord God have driven Adam out of a garden which never existed?—or how should he put enmity between the serpent and the woman, if no such serpent existed?—or how should he inflict misery and death, as a punishment of the human race, in consequence of the sin of Adam and Eve—if Adam and Eve were not real personages? If the facts were not as the text of Genesis announces, what confidence can be placed in an author who deceives in his very first page, and an author, too, whose work serves as a basis to the religion of the Christians? Verily, the religion built upon such a foundation must be unstable indeed! If those who support old orthodoxy are reduced to the necessity of acknowledging that there is a concealed sense, they will be compelled to recur to allegory, and we desire no more; it is indeed the only crime that Christians can charge us with. All that will then remain for theological critics to do, is simply to shew by sound argument and calm reasoning, that though an allegorical explication is necessary, yet that ours is not the true one,—and we have no wish to escape behind the text, “Judge not lest ye be judged”—*as we freely judge, we desire to be judged* by those who have well considered the whole subject, and are competent to the task; for we are far from desiring that our readers should have faith in, when they should rather freely canvass, our opinions. Texts have been cited—facts carefully collected—the phenomena of the heavens, and the origin of all systems of religion, searched into,—let those who can, and dare, bring forth other texts—other facts—explaining better the phenomena of the heavens, and shew that religions could have had any other origin than human igno-

rance,—and the consequent hopes, fears, and errors of men, any other basis than human misconceptions as to physical phenomena, and the causes of that phenomena,—religious feeling, which at first must have been a sentiment, not a calculation, was no sooner systematized than it was corrupted. Religion is not a science, that it may be reduced to system, but a sentiment springing out of human contemplations of the mysteries of things. Nature speaks to man with a most miraculous organ, but few ever hear—none can entirely comprehend her; and, however melancholy may be the reflection, it is nevertheless true, that men are violent in their advocacy of theories and systems, whether of religion or politics, in the ratio of their ignorance; and it is manifestly true, that all religion is based upon opinion merely—opinion too, which, like the waves of the great Atlantic, is in never ceasing motion,—yet do men who truly have “*madmen within them*,” foolishly aim at producing a dead-sea stillness—forgetting that stagnant opinions, like stagnant waters, always engender corruption.

We shall now take leave of the garden of Paradise, its mystical tree of good and evil, and its no less mystical serpent,—feeling that enough has been written to satisfy any *considering* mind, that if we would get at the meaning of what is contained in the book of Genesis, we must not stop at the literal sense, which is most absurd, contradictory, and (if any thing can be) most degrading to Deity. As observed by Dr. Strauss, in his Introduction to “*The Life of Jesus*,” “*Divine things could not have been thus performed, or things thus performed could not have been divine*,” but that Doctor, while he disputes the literal or naked sense now attached to the writings of Genesis by orthodox theologians, condemns equally the orthodox religionist and the theological rationalist; and as remarked by M. Lettré, “after condemning both these parties, he substitutes the opinions of the theologians who regard these recitals as mythosis, that is to say, as the production of the sentiments, ideas, and beliefs which predominated in the first Christian communities.” According to Strauss, Jesus having inspired during his life, and left after his death, the belief that he was the Messiah, and as the type of the Messiah already existed in the Sacred Books, and in the traditions of the Jewish people, there was formed among the first Christians a history of the life of Jesus, in which the particularities of his doctrine and of his destiny combined themselves with that type, which passed by successive modification down to the period when it was definitely fixed in the canonical Evangelists.

It will be seen from the above, that there is a wide gap between our teachings and those of our learned countryman, Strauss, to whom may be applied the words he has himself used when speaking of Origenes: "he abstained from giving a greater extension to that mode of conception (the allegorical)—in part, because that he was himself engaged by his prejudices in the belief of the supernatural; in part, because that he feared to scandalise the orthodox Church:" but while truth compels us to declare highly against the want of nerve or moral stamina of the GREAT GERMAN,—yet it is but fair to state, that his great work, "*The Life of Jesus*," is considered in a theological point of view, one of the most important that has issued from the press during the last century. Many of our readers have supposed "*The Existence of Christ Disproved*," was a mere re-print or translation of Strauss, which all will now have an opportunity of seeing is not the fact. The German Jew is now occupied with a translation of Strauss; and as his object is two-fold—first, to correct the erroneous notion as to "*The Existence of Christ Disproved*," being written by Strauss,—and, secondly, by publishing it in weekly numbers, to bring it within the reach—as it were, to the very doors—of the thinking among the poorer classes of society, who, had the translation been published in a volume, or volumes, would have been shut out from the incalculable benefits it is likely to bestow. The people must be enlightened—they must be freed from vain notions and superstitious fears, ere society can be purified, and each man be made a "law unto himself." How it happened that our readers and the press made the mistake of supposing that Dr. Strauss ever wrote a work disproving the existence, as a human being, of Jesus Christ, it is difficult to say; but probably they mistook the import of a remark contained in this work, "that the substance or marrow of Strauss' philosophy would appear in these Letters," &c.

Those who consult the translation (the first number of which has appeared) will soon discover in what we differ, and in what we agree; nor is it necessary to say more at present than that the translation shall be (as far as our abilities will enable us to make it) a faithful one—conveying in the simplest and clearest manner that our knowledge of the English language will permit, the sense and spirit of the author.

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THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

AS A HUMAN BEING,

DISPROVED!

BY IRRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 21.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

The progress of civilization necessarily modifies the religious sentiments of individuals and nations; for religion, although a mere sentiment, having its origin and support in the explained action of Nature, and the wonder to which such mysterious phenomena give birth, it varies with the never-ceasing variations of human condition. Not only has every phase of civilization its corresponding and inseparable religious phase, but every step in the march of improvement—giving a higher tone to all the sentiments of man; that sentiment—called *religious*—cannot be excluded,—and equally with the rest, vibrates harmoniously with the spirit of the times. In vain may philosophers strive to separate intellectuality from sentimentality,—calling certain conditions in contradistinction to states of pure feeling; for though these two results of human organism may be, in order to help the human mind, considered as essentially distinct, there is, nevertheless, so far practically, a unity, that the one cannot be degraded or improved without the degradation or improvement of the other; the one cannot suffer or enjoy alone, or in a state of individualization—the one cannot exist without the other. As wise would it be to look at the first break of dawn for the full light of day—as the noon day of morality and the twilight of reason. The morality of nations may be considered

apart from what they know—but not as independent of it; for though our sentiments cannot properly be called our knowledge, they undoubtedly spring out of it,—the first giving birth, form, consistency, or in one word, character to the second. If this be, and we think the hypothesis will hardly be denied, it will appear, that the right use of reason, not confining these terms to a pedantic or merely logical sense, will not only largely contribute to moral progression, but is that alone which can develope or draw forth the germs of good, which, as the ice-bound flame, are latent in man.

These considerations open a new road for the free inquirer; as it will enable him to trace with precision, the cause and effect of religion, and how far it is dependant upon, or modified by, the advance of philosophy. It is evident, that the simple water-drinking Gentoo, whose sum of knowledge, though small, has made manifest to him, that to destroy life, or even to injure any living creature, is not good,—will, in his conception of powers more than human, or states of immortal existence, be regulated by the conclusions of his own mind—drawn from his intellectual resources. It is true, that in spite of his knowledge, the poor Gentoo may dream

Of Gods—passionate, revengeful, and unjust,
Whose attributes are—hate, revenge, and lust.

But thus it will be, in *spite* of his knowledge, which, borne down by the weight of terrors, has still an elastic spring, and eagle-like, tends to soar upwards—an eagle, however, without the necessary complement of feathers in its wing, for knowledge may properly be called humanity's wing, which only requires to be strengthened that it may soar with perfect safety upwards to the highest regions of speculation. The evil is not that men speculate *so much*, but it rather is that they know *so little*,—and mistaking their *speculations* for *realities*, they blindly fall into the deep and frightful abyss of pride and fanaticism. There is nothing absolutely hostile to human progression and universal happiness in the *religious sentiment*, which may, and will undoubtedly, receive a higher development, strengthening with the strength of reason, for the religious sentiment has its origin and support in the intellect of man, when contemplating the mysteriousness of things, and its own relationship to things, or *the thing* called universe; but, though it may be allowed, that there is nothing absolutely hostile to human progression and universal happiness in the religious sentiment, there is a something quite incompatible with human advancement, liberty, and

happiness, in a *religious system*, creed, or formulæ, based upon religious sentiment.

That the character of a religion and its usefulness is determined by the progress of just ideas, it seems hardly necessary to insist upon ; but, because the reason of man considered in its totality, or as unit, gives the law to the religious sentiment, holds in check the vagrant imaginings, and *gives its own colour to the body of faith*; by that we must not be understood as admitting that religion is based upon just ideas, or the reason of things, for, as by the very terms reason and faith, we include the idea of *difference*, if not of *opposition*, it will be allowed that faith is not reason, and reason is not faith ; hence, the expression of My Lord Verulam, "Give unto reason the things which are reason's, and unto faith the things which are faith's." The religious sentiment, say Christian writers, is indestructible ; agreed ; for *human ignorance is indestructible*, and human ignorance of the *how* and the *wherefore*, of the causes, existence, and the ends to which all tends, are subjects about which faith, as it employs itself, is manifest, that were there nothing mysterious in nature, there would be no belief or faith—which is simply the faculty to believe (if the paradox may be permitted), when more or less of doubt exists in the mind ; for where there is no existence of doubt, there is no room for the exercise of faith, *which ceases when the mind is satisfied with its evidence, when opinion gives place to actual knowledge*. If, for example, men could see God, all *faith* in his existence would be destroyed, for they would not then believe in, but know him ; and though it would be difficult for even an angel from heaven to say any thing, about which subtile spirits could not find occasion to dispute, it is nevertheless presumed, that none who saw, touched, and talked with such an angelic messenger, would say they *believed* they did those three things, namely, saw, touched, and talked with an angel, but simply declare their knowledge of the fact.

From the above reasoning, the legitimate conclusion is, that the religion of a nation, whether that nation be civilized or barbaric, is not the reason of such nation ; for, as if by reason we understand the *just and true ideas of men*, which can only be determined as just or true, because they have facts, or absolute knowledge for their ground work, it follows, that the feelings of wonder, ever excited by that with which we are not familiar, is the support, the everlasting basis of all religion, which never can properly be called *rational*, because there is no standard by which a sentiment, with regard to the unknown, can be measured—no plummet and line by which we

can sound the depths of human imaginings; and because it is inevitable, that to be familiar with, or to *know* a thing, is to destroy that sentiment which arises in the mind in consequence of our *ignorance* of it; nor is it possible to wonder at that with which we are, in the full sense of the term, familiar; and herein lies the error of Kant and other philosophers, who have made the singular blunder of supposing that religion, though a child of reason, could ever be a reasonable thing—erroneously conceiving, that as, the progress of reason always included the idea of a modification and a progression in religious sentiment, therefore, the belief, or the faith, to which such civilization gave birth must be rational; whereas, a due consideration of the subject will lead to the conclusion, that a creature capable of reasoning *perfectly* upon all existences would cease to be *believing*; for such a creature would *know* the origin, interconnections, and secret springs, of all things, and in his breast religion would cease to exist. Kant, in his Moral Interpretation of the Scripture, speaks of “a sense which accords with the universal and practical laws of a pure rational religion.” Now, to speak of a rational religion, is to speak of rational imaginings, which, if we admit, we are not one step from a rational absurdity; for what can be closer to the absurd than to call that rational which owes its existence to the very absence of materials whereon all reasoning must be based,—for man can reason without facts, or assumed facts; but, in point of reality, it is not *reasoning* but *imagining*, which is the very source and spring of religion. When the Mexican king, who, according to Gemelli Carreri, on the consecration of a temple, caused six thousand four hundred and eight men to be sacrificed in four days—he, doubtless, *imagined* such a sacrifice would be acceptable to the gods, and, though he might, had he been called upon to do so, have given *reasons* why it was good so to act, nevertheless, the first assumption upon which all his subsequent reasonings were built was purely imaginary. He believed in the gods of his nation, and passed off his belief as positive knowledge,—for, as no man can by possibility *know* that a God or Gods exist, there being no science of God, such faiths, beliefs, or imaginings, can never rise to the dignity of knowledge—however they may dress themselves in the borrowed robes of certainty.

The fear expressed by many timid, though well-intentioned minds, lest, in destroying the Christian system of religion, a stab would be given to morality, is a vain fear,—for were Christianity swept away to-morrow, the religious principle would not—could not

be destroyed, it being eternal and indestructible, as far as human reason can be considered as eternal and indestructible. All religious creeds and all religious systems are of human invention, the work of human tongues and human hands, and the workmen who build with can also pull down—what is produced by human energy can be destroyed by human energy; nor does the virtue of this, or any other nation, repose upon its belief, but rather the belief rests upon and bears down the virtue. Let, therefore, all remember, that in attacking the superstitious belief in a crucified Saviour, called Jesus Christ, and disturbing that blind confidence called faith, that has spread itself over the Christian world for more than eighteen hundred years, we do not shake or weaken the props of morality, but strengthen and consolidate them. The old belief in Christ is a moral stigma, scouted by all who have caught a glimpse of the new order of ideas, and the glorious results that will arrive out of their full realization by society; and, if it be thought, that for the preservation of order and the maintenance of the law, a religion must be taught, let it, at all events, be a religion making some pretensions to consistency, usefulness, and adaptability to the spirit of the times and the march of science; but, while so much is conceded by us to the fears of men, we are not willing to grant so much to their reason, for an appeal from human institutions to human nature, from the declamations of theologians to the arguments of facts, would decide against the long held, but most absurd opinion, that men, to be governed, must be deceived, and that it is easier to preserve order, contentment, and morality, by fraud and falsehood, than by the practice of truth and justice. Religion, we are told, ought to be made the ground-work of all education—its lessons should be interwoven with the whole tissue of instruction, and its principles should regulate the entire system of discipline in our national schools. Now, religion itself cannot be taught; for who shall teach to another the vague, indefinite sentiments which arise out of his own relations with the universe; nor can religious sentiments be systematized without being at the same time corrupted, and the only use of a system of religion is, to perpetuate error and delusion systematically, under cover of which, the vilest among men strengthen their authority, increase their wealth, and raise up barriers to the progress of the people in intelligence, virtue, and happiness.

Much is said about the necessity of filling the minds of the many with dreams and superstitious terrors, by those who value them as a sort of cheap police, deterring from the commission of crime.

Such writers seem hardly sensible of the superior efficacy of high moral teaching in repressing crime and inducing to virtue. To do right, because we love the right, and feel its value, is far better than to do right because we dare not do the wrong. The results in such a case are the same, but the dispositions, or states of mind, are the very antipodes of each other; and, if the belief in a terrible retribution tended to make man happy and virtuous, how happens it that the contrary holds? and that where systems of religion are received without inquiry or examination, and all difficulties vanish before the *ipse dixit* of the theologian, the people are invariably stupid, brutal, cruel, and unjust? whereas, many nations have existed, even though low in the moral scale, without any national faiths, and found ample protection in the laws and powers of the civil magistrate.

Herein we differ with De Wett, Kant, Strauss, and the Rationalists of Germany,—for they, not content with labouring to reduce to a reasonable standard the religious opinions of men which have incorporated themselves in human societies, but they most absurdly aim at rationalizing the religious sentiment—desiring to bring it within the grasp of reason, when, in truth, all know that *religion is religion because it is not science*. To try the reasonableness of a religious theory is useful; but any attempt to shew that the faith which grows out of ignorance, and the science which springs from actual experience of things, are identical—is misplaced labour—toiling to no purpose, save a mischievous purpose. To test the utility and consistency of the Bible, Vedan, Koran, or any other holy work, is to assist the cause of human progression, by opening the eyes of the intellectually blind to their true value; but any attempt to make it appear that one book is more holy than another—one history more sacred than another—is mere fraud—a species of moral swindling, only too prevalent in the world. Were the Bible and all other religious books destroyed to-morrow, religious systems might share in their destruction; but religion itself could not—for religious feeling has neither its source nor support in books, but in the human heart; religious feelings, we again repeat, are not necessarily rational; they may or may not be so, *for there is no standard or measure by which their reasonableness can be determined*; as the mind of man, never satisfied with the knowledge it hath, ever restless, impatient, and craving for more, stretcheth itself out into the pathless regions of speculation. Now, a speculation being a speculation, and not a legitimate result of logical deduction, it is not added to our treasure

of truth, but goes to swell the confused heap of imaginings. Religious sentiments as religious sentiments—speculations as speculations—are harmless; and it is only when men, backed by authority, and swollen by pride, insist upon their peculiar sentiments and imaginings being recognised as eternal truths, that they are pernicious and inimical to the happiness of man; but the religion which lays claim to reasonableness, must not shrink from rational inquiry; the book which contains the principles of such a systematized faith, should be open to all comers, and contain within itself, the proofs that will effectually overcome and destroy all opposition; the marks of its divinity should be plain and palpable, and, like those said to have appeared upon the body of Christ after his descent from the cross, carry with them their own evidence.

Not to dwell upon the admission of Strauss (*Life of Jesus*, 1st sec. p. 164) that “a Gallilean, of whom the genealogy was unknown, having acquired the renown of Messiah, it is easy to conceive that the legend of his descent from David, himself descended from Abraham, was developed under various forms, and that afterwards these legends served in the *manufacture* of such genealogies; the which not being founded upon authentic pieces, necessarily led to those divergences and contradictions into which Matthew and Luke have fallen;” not, we say, to dwell upon the important fact; that Matthew and Luke diverge from, and flatly contradict, each other in their sacred accounts of the genealogy of Jesus, the account of Abraham, “whose seed shall possess the gate of his enemies,” carries upon the face of it absurdity or falsehood; and it is vain that we are *told* that it is all true—though we cannot perceive its truth;—nay, though to us it appears false, for our being told does not prove it to us. When we read in Genesis, that “the Lord has fast closed up all the wombs of the house of Abimelech, because of Sarah, Abraham’s wife,” to us it appears just as absurd as though the Lord had placed a padlock on their mouths, because of some other old woman; *telling men* that such solemn nonsense was written by the finger of God, makes it no less nonsense; as well might Christians believe all the absurdities crowded into the pages of the Koran, because a fool, or an impostor, tells us it was written, as Alla commanded, by his Prophet Mahomet, with a feather plucked from the wing of the Angel Gabriel. As well remarked by Strauss, (*Life of Jesus* Intro. p. 68) “The faithful Mussulman believes that all truth is contained in the Koran, and sees only fables in the major part of the Bible; the Jew acknowledges not a divine history

in the Old Testament; he denies the divinity of the New Testament; who are reasonable of these parties? — Their assertions contradict each other; but the which of them in particular is right? Each religious sect claims for itself the truth; the pretensions are equal. Who, then, will decide the origin of each religion? But each attributes to itself a divine origin. Not only the Christian religion lays claim to divinity through Christ the Son of God, but the Jewish religion through Moses, and also Mohammedanism puts in its claim as being founded by a prophet immediately inspired by God; nor did the Greeks attribute the institution of their worship to any but the Gods." So that, the tales told about Noah and Abraham are no more necessarily true than those we hear about Mahomet; and unless we are prepared to cast aside both reason and common sense, it is impossible to believe that such a person as Abraham ever existed.

The state of our paper warns us to conclude our present Letter, and at the same time inform our readers that this work will be completed in nine more numbers—making (with the Supplement) thirty-one; the next will conclude that part of our subject touching the real character of Abraham, and the remaining Letters will be occupied with a consideration (perhaps the most interesting of all to the general reader) whether the various histories of Christ, or the times in which he is said to have existed, as well civil as ecclesiastical, Christian or Pagan, will warrant our belief that a man called Christ performed any of the acts attributed to him by the Evangelists, or whether the Evangelical histories are not purely fictional, as asserted by us. *We have disproved his existence as a God, —it now remains to disprove his existence as a human being, which we have pledged ourselves to do.* That pledge shall be redeemed, or we will candidly acknowledge that we have commenced a task beyond our power to accomplish. The origin of the Christian religion, none of our careful readers can now mistake; the belief in a man-god, born of a virgin, must vanish before the evidence already adduced,—while the remaining portion of our work will, if we mistake not—shiver to atoms the whole fabric of the Christian fiction, and demonstrate that the belief in Christ is just as absurd as a belief in Jupiter, and that a man or god of that name no more rode on an ass into the streets of Jerusalem, than did Bacchus ride on an ass into the streets of Greece.

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EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

AS A HUMAN BEING,

DISPROVED!

BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 22.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CARDUANS,

"If you receive the Bible as your guide, you cannot believe that Abraham ever had a *literal* existence, as the Scriptures expressly declare (Gal. chap. 4, v. 24) that "*the things written concerning Abraham are an allegory*"—so, admitting that (2 Tim. chap. 3, v. 16) "*All scripture is given by inspiration of God, and is profitable for doctrine, for reproof, for correction, for instruction in righteousness,*" you cannot escape from the conclusion, that what is written in the Bible about Abraham is mere allegory and not a true history, fabulous traditions *booked* by the writers of the Sacred Volume, who declares (Hosea, chap. 12, v. 10) "*I have also spoken by the prophets, and I have multiplied visions, and used similitudes, by the ministry of the prophets,*" it must be clear therefore, that to take "*visions*" and "*similitudes*" as literal matters of fact, is contrary to the teaching of Scripture itself. The things written concerning Abraham being "*an allegory*," Christ could not have descended from a man, or prophet, called Abraham,—for an allegorical history is not a history of things or persons as they were, but "*as though they were*," and this fair Scriptural view of the matter demonstrates that no literal Jesus Christ ever existed—or was ever literally crucified—or ever literally rose from the dead—or even, in short,

literally did any one thing related of him,—for either ~~Christ~~ descended from Abraham, or *Scripture is false*; and if the hypothesis of Abraham's existence be an hypothesis in the air, all that is written about Christ must be equally airy and unsubstantial, as we read, (Gal. chap. 3, v. 29) “*And if ye be Christ's, then are ye Abraham's seed, and heirs according to the promise.*” Whether you strictly adhere to the literal interpretation of Abraham's history, and insist that it does not speak of things that were not “as though they were,” or whether, driven from that ground by the force of reason, aided by the sharp and powerful weapons of Scripture texts, you are yet willing to save yourselves (for dying men catch at straws) by admitting that the things written about Abraham are only “*similitudes*,” seemingly a history, but really a fable—still must the belief in Christ be abandoned, as the literal interpretation would be in direct opposition to the plainest Scriptural teaching; while acknowledging that Abraham's history is mere romance, at once reduces the Sacred Volume to a book of fables, allegories, metaphors—a mystery to the vulgar, enclosing a hidden and deeper meaning than they attach to them—stamping moreover as imbeciles, or something worse, those holy men who preach the gospel as literally true. The rash theologians who declare that what is written in Genesis about Abraham is *partly literal, partly allegorical*—or, in plain language, *partly true and partly false*, are the men who most effectually undermine the Christian religion; for by making the important admission, that some things could not have taken place as related in the Bible, they shake all confidence in such a divine medley, and set men thinking *how much of it is literal? how much of it is allegory? how much of it is true? how much of it is false?*—so that the sacredness of the volume is destroyed, and that “*given by inspiration of God*” is reduced to a mere book of riddles, which each is at liberty to guess the meaning of, without any other than the dim light of reason, or any other aids than those afforded by a weak and fallible judgment—while a plain literal interpretation of the Holy Book, so simple—so easy—so irrefutable—so magical as it *ought* to be in its effects, when given by those appointed to “*go teach all nations*,” has this fearful consequence involved in it, that such a teaching flatly contradicts those parts of Scripture which *cannot be mistaken*. Nor will faith here step in and save us; no, not even that faith which Catholic divines tell us “serves as a remedy for our natural defects, and supplies the place of knowledge—teaches us

to believe without doubting doctrines which we cannot comprehend, or the testimony of God who has taught them;" for faith, however strong or holy, cannot reconcile contradictions *once perceived as contradictions*; a relation, however absurd, may be, through the efficacy of faith, implicitly believed; but that which is known to be its opposite cannot also be believed, as for example, when the faithful Christian searches the Scriptures, and finds there related that Jesus is the son of Abraham, he cannot, however armed in faith, believe that Abraham, his father, had no real existence, even though the same Scriptures declare that "*the things written concerning Abraham were an allegory*," that is, according to lexicographers, "a figurative discourse in which something is intended that is not contained in the words literally taken." How could that faith which "supplies the place of knowledge, and teaches us to believe without doubting doctrines which we cannot comprehend," reconcile us to the conflicting and impossible statements of the Scripture, which declares that our Lord Jesus Christ was crucified and killed at three different places,—at Calvary, according to Luke, (chap. 23. v. 33) "*And when they were come to the place which is called Calvary, there they crucified him, and the malefactors, one on the right hand, and the other on the left.*" At Galatia, according to (Gal. chap. 3, v. 1) "*O foolish Galatians, who hath bewitched you, that ye should not obey the truth, before whose eyes Jesus Christ hath been evidently set forth, crucified among you?*" At Sodom in Egypt, as written in (Rev. chap. 11, v. 8) "*And their dead bodies shall be in the streets of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.*" Here is a strange confusion, if not contradiction of texts, which no faith can clear up or reconcile, though it may enable those who possess it to skip over such vain difficulties, or pass them by as unworthy of notice; but surely, the mere literal expounder of the Bible is here foiled by his own weapons—for not only is it contrary to reason and all that we call fact, that a *real* person should exist from an *ideal* one, but it is, if any thing can be, contray to common sense, for an individual, man, prophet, or God, *to be killed and crucified three times over at three different places*. The trinity of persons in the Godhead it is difficult to understand; but a trinity of killings and crucifixions seems beyond the reach even of those "who believe without doubting doctrines which they cannot comprehend, or the testimony of God who has taught them;" but the allegorical explication will enable not only "men of little faith,"

but even Infidels, who are satisfied with nought but Reason, not having one grain of faith in holy legend and religious tale, to get a right understanding of the Scripture. Surely, the Christians who believe literally what is above quoted from the Scripture, with regard to the crucifixion, bring shame upon human reason, (Heb chap. 6, v. 6) "*Seeing they crucify to themselves the Son of God afresh, and put him to an open shame.*" The Scripture literally teems with texts, about the meaning of which there can be no two opinions; but the limits we have prescribed for ourselves, forbid that we unnecessarily multiply them; and though some may urge, that Scriptural texts thus plucked out one by one, "serve only for springs and snares," that a German Jew, like the Devil, "may use Scripture for his purpose," with other hard things—no man who has firm faith in the Scripture will do this; nor can those who produce their cause, and bring forth their strong reasons from the Sacred Volume, consistently deny the same right to others, and text for text is unquestionably fair and honorable warfare. Now, we challenge all the theologians of Europe to overthrow us in textual combat, or shew from the Bible, that Abraham was a real personage; the fact is, that "*through infirmity of the flesh, (human reason), the gospel was preached unto us at first (that is, during the infancy of civilization) as really and literally true; but, when the flesh (human reason) shall be cured of its infirmity, and be made sound,*" Scripture will be interpreted more in harmony with truth, than any interpretation could have been in former times,—its riddles may now be guessed without danger, metaphors explained—its similitudes and strange mysteries made intelligible—its literal contradictions and absurdities reconciled and made reasonable—and a rational interpretation given of its mystical sense, and plain nonsense.

The German theologians, by their boldness, immense research, and critical acumen, have fairly carried away the Scriptures from the orthodox Christian theologians; to which course they were pioneered by the great writers of the Deistical school, the Bolingbokes, Tolands, Voltaires, and others—who, by shaking the faith of millions in the *literal* reading of the New Testament—and, like Julian Celsus and Porphyry, before them rejecting as pure fable the shameful and truly disgusting recitals contained in the Holy History, made the path straight for the (perhaps in a certain sense) more elevated conceptions of the present German school; so that Strauss fails in due regard, for the parent which begat him, when he stig-

matises as "dry" "the revolutionary attempts of Deistical criticism directed against Biblical documents," as it is certain, but for so dry a root, no such leaf would have been put forth in our time, as "The Life of Jesus." And surely when Chubb had the hardihood to declare that the Jewish religion, if a revelation from God, disgraced the moral character of the Divinity, by attributing to him a declared partiality for the Jewish nation, and above all, the sanguinary slaughter of the Canaanites! his efforts were not *dry* or sterile; when Belingbroke, Toland, Morgan, and others, declared the Bible a mere collection of apocryphal books, filled with fables—denied that Biblical recitals reflected a superior or divine light—denounced the law of Moses as a miserable system of superstition, blindness, and servility—the Jewish priests as impostors—and the prophets as the great workers of desolation and intestine wars in the two kingdoms of Judah and Israel; though they may be called *dry revolutionary attempts of Deism*, they nevertheless have been fruitful in great results; and though it may be true, as Strauss remarks—that Woolston has enlarged with much self-complacency upon the absurdity of the literal sense being applied to the miracles, and a frivolous tone pervades the whole, it would be vain to deny that his works have had an immense, and admirable influence.

The celebrated De Wette, a far greater favourite with Strauss than any of the foregoing, (probably because, like him, he declared against the natural explication, and for the mythical explication of the Old Testament,) insists that it is inconsistent and arbitrary to attribute to poetry or fiction only the outside, or envelope of events related in the Old Testament, and desire to conserve the facts as historic. He takes as example, the alliance of God with Abraham, in which, the authors of the natural interpretation abandon the facts as *not facts under their present form*; but yet, pretend to conserve for their recital a foundation purely historic. According to these natural interpreters, there was no real communication between God and Abraham; but in the mind of that patriarch was excited, perhaps during a vision, or perhaps during his wakeful state, certain thoughts which, conformably to the genius of the ancient world, he referred to God. So, according to these natural explainers, Abraham had a vision, and thought he saw God, and made alliance with him, afterwards relating his dreams as a something that really took place; or he was wide awake, and communing with himself, thought he fell on his face—talked with God—was told that he should circumcise the flesh of his foreskin, that it might be a

covenant between him and the Lord, &c. To these natural interpreters of the mysteries contained in the Scriptures, De. West proposes this question: "How know you that Abraham had such thoughts?" which to us appears a very rational kind of question, which they will find it difficult to answer satisfactorily; for we are sure, with the Apostle Paul, (Epistle to the Corinthians, chap. 2, v. 6) that the judgment of God is according to truth, against them which commit such things;" for, (1st Epistle to the Romans, chap. 1, v. 22) "professing themselves to be wise, they became fools." How far from folly—how far from *naturalism* must those interpreters of Scripture be, who, in the face of its plainest declarations to the contrary, will obstinately insist that Abraham was a real personage. Truly these are the theologians and critics who bring the Scriptures into contempt—philosophers who, like Eichhorn, take away from Biblical history its divine character, and attributed the supernatural reflex which is spread over it, not to deception or fraud, but to the natural result of the peculiar manner in which the light of antiquity made itself manifest; who strive to make it appear that the vocation of Moses was not a real vocation—that the account in Exodus chap. 3, v. 2, 3, and 4, "And the angel of the Lord appeared unto him in a flame of fire, out of the midst of a bush: and he looked, and, behold, the bush burned with fire, and the bush was not consumed. And Moses said, I will now turn aside, and see this great sight, why the bush is not burnt. And when the Lord saw that he turned aside to see, God called unto him out of the midst of the bush, and said, Moses, Moses. And he said, Here am I"—is, when literally received, most absurd and incongruous; who endeavours to explain, that Moses *imagined* he saw the angel of the Lord appear in a flame—that he *imagined* he heard God call out of the bush "Moses, Moses," which call was, in fact, nothing more than the thought long conceived by the patriot of delivering his people—a thought which, renewing itself in a dream with new strength and vivacity, was mistaken by him for divine inspiration. The smoke and the flame upon Mount Sinai, or as written in Exodus, chap. 24, v. 17, "The sight of the glory of the Lord, which was like the devouring fire on the top of the mount in the eyes of the children of Israel," Eichhorn explains as a fire lighted by Moses upon the mountain in order to assist the imaginations of the Israelites; and a violent storm happening to co-operate with it, the luminous appearance of his face was a consequence either of his great heat or his position with regard to the "devouring fire," which Moses himself

not understanding the cause of, for (Exod. chap. 34, v. 29) "when he came down from the mount, Moses wist not that the skin of his face shone while he talked with *him*;" though equally with the people,—there was in the circumstance something divine. The same author has given other explanations equally ingenious and equally unsatisfactory of the histories of Noah and Abraham.

In the 21st chapter of Genesis, v. 2 and 3, it is written that "Sarah conceived and bare Abraham a son in his old age, at the set time of which God had spoken to him. And Abraham called the name of the son who was born unto him, whom Sarah bare to him, Isaac." Then the text goes on to say that "Abraham circumcised his son Isaac, being eight days old, as God had commanded him;" but before the birth of Isaac, the history states (Gen. chap. 16, v. 2, 3, 4) that "Sarai said unto Abram, Behold now, the Lord hath restrained me from bearing: I pray thee, go in unto my maid; it may be that I may obtain children by her. And Abram hearkened to the voice of Sarai. And Sarai Abram's wife took Hagar her maid the Egyptian, after Abram had dwelt ten years in the land of Canaan, and gave her to her husband Abram to be his wife. And he went in unto Hagar, and she conceived," &c. Here we have a precise account in Genesis of the conception of Hagar, the bondmaid, who is afterwards informed by an angel of the Lord that she is with child, and "shall bear a son, and shall call his name Ishmael;" also, the conception of Sarah, the free woman, and the birth of Isaac; but, what must be the astonishment of a literal interpreter of Scripture, who believes the story of Abraham to be something more than an allegory, when he turns to the 4th chapter, 22, 23, and 24th verses of Galatians, and sees the following? "For it is written, that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bondmaid, and the other by a freewoman. But he who was of the bondwoman was born after the flesh; but he of the freewoman was by promise. *Which things are an allegory.*" What evidence can be more conclusive against the supposition, that the history of Abraham is matter of fact?—yes, the weight of these Scriptural texts will bear down and crush the puny sophism of theologians—for the things related of Abraham are proved to be allegorical by texts and arguments, having all the force and completeness of a moral demonstration. He must be a knave, or an idiot, who will, after this, declare with Saint Matthew, "Jesus Christ, the son of David, the son of Abraham," in spite of common sense, reason, and Scripture; and if Jesus Christ was not the son of

Abraham and Isaac the same?—and Christ and his imaginary
 beings as well as Abraham?—which we cannot and cannot
 prove. It has now been shewn by Biblical texts, that the history
 of Abraham is an allegory—that his history is a something related
 which is not meant—that the author, or authors, attached to it
 one sense, while we are bewildered by its literal absurdity, and, in
 many cases, have lost all clue to its hidden meaning—that, while
 we “cannot judge from appearance, if we would judge righteous
 judgment,” we should do well to act upon the advice of Origines,
 and, if possible, bury ourselves in the true meaning of the writers.

In taking leave, therefore, of Abraham, and passing to a review
 of the various arguments that have been urged in favor of the
 existence as a human being of Jesus Christ, with full confidence in
 our ability to shew by reference to ecclesiastics of acknowledged
 authority in the Christian Church, as well as Pagan and Jewish
 historians, who have written, or were said to have written, corrobora-
 tory of the prevailing notion, that a God, or at all events, a man
 called Christ, was born in Judea eighteen hundred years ago; we
 will shew by these very favorable, and often certainly partial
 authorities themselves, that the books of the New Testament are
 books containing absurdity and falsehood of a most pernicious and
 demoralising character!—that what is there written about the doings
 of a Jesus—is a forgery, and an insult to the common sense of
 mankind!

The reader will not now fail to conclude, that the existence of
 Jesus Christ, so far from being proved by Scripture, is disproved
 by it. Upon this point, if on no other, the Sacred Writings are
 perfectly intelligible—for they expressly declare, that Christ was
 crucified and killed three times over, at three different times and
 places, which it is physically and morally impossible any bodily
 Christ could have been. Nay, it is beyond all human conception,
 that the Son of God could have died at three places at one time, or
 at different times; killing any thing three times over was never
 heard of any where but in Scripture: so that, it is evident the ex-
 pressions are figurative. Our critique will, it is hoped, give the
coup de grace to this moral absurdity—and by opening the eyes of
 the people, enable them to see the depths of their superstitious folly;
 —for of all moral poisons the dregs of superstition are the worst.

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LETTER 23.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

A glance at the early history of the Church of Christ will materially assist us in the very important investigation we have undertaken; and, though we shall not confine ourselves exclusively to Ecclesiastical historians, it is *principally* from them evidence will be adduced in disproof of the existence of Jesus as a human being. By such a course, malice itself will be disarmed; and, whatever may be thought of our proofs and reasonings, none will dare accuse us of partiality or unfairness. The weapons wrested from opponents in a warfare of this nature, and used against themselves—even if those weapons be not remarkable for keenness of edge, or excellence of temper—always do great execution. Acting upon this principle, sceptical authorities will be but little referred to, while special reference will be made to those who are acknowledged champions of the faith in Jesus—whether as God, inspired prophet, or human being.

Among these Doctor Mosheim claims the first rank, both on account of his shining talents, and undoubted orthodoxy. His great work on Ecclesiastical History, displays immense erudition and research; nor can it be doubted that it has had a prodigious influence in propping up the (now crumbling into dust) Reformed Church. He had, moreover, no relish for Infidels, as his writings

abundantly testify. Papistry and Infidelity were his abominations; and whatever emanated from these sources was to him distasteful and bitter. At the very outset of his book, he denounces the Sceptics as "a set of miserable and unthinking creatures, who treat with negligence—nay, sometimes with contempt—the religion of Jesus, not considering that they are indebted to it for all the good things which they so ungratefully enjoy." Bishop Warburton, pronounced his work the only one deserving the name of an Ecclesiastical History; and Doctor Maclaine, announces it as a history of the Christian Church, composed with judgment, taste, and candour—drawn with uncommon discernment and industry from the best sources, enriched with much useful learning, and several important discourses connected with the history of arts, philosophy, and civil government. One who had so profound a contempt for Sceptics, so much learning, and so much love for the Church, will have immense weight with Christians, whether his teachings tend to support or overthrow the vulgar belief in the existence of a man called Jesus of Nazareth.

The perusal of the first twenty or thirty pages of his work is sufficient to prove how unstable were all human opinions and feelings when Jesus is said to have appeared—how confused, false, and therefore little to be relied on, were all documents dignified by the name of historic, which were written at, or subsequent to, that period. In those days, if the priests were not more learned, the people were far more ignorant and fanatical than in our own times, and nothing was more easy than for the scribes and men in authority to palm upon the credulity of the multitude their own audacious forgeries as authentic and holy documents. Daring and rebellious spirits who protested against such enormities were branded as seditious and impious—their conduct as immoral, arrogant, and blasphemous—and, upon all occasions, they were held up to public execration as Atheistical disturbers of public tranquility.

The power of the priests was then enormous; and no priesthood has ever been known to part with power except when forced to do so. It was to be expected, therefore, that the histories they wrote, or hired others to write, would contain just as much of truth as suited their purposes, which, we presume, might all have been squeezed into a few pages—and yet, some would have us rely with perfect confidence upon such documents, even when they contradict the evidence of our senses. The treatment received by the first Christians, shews clearly what must have been the fanaticism of the

people, which, it has been justly observed, is the true measure of priestly power. They were denounced by the priests, aided by the respectables in society, as reckless innovators, shameless revolutionists, and brazen-faced Atheists, who, under cover of a new order of things, aimed at the destruction of property, and the disorganization of society. The feeling against the early Christians was not confined to the Jewish people, but was spread far and wide—wherever, in short, the voice of authority could make itself heard.

Tacitus, the Roman historian, renowned for his eloquence and learning—a man, we should suppose, little influenced by the vulgar uproar of knavery and fanaticism, possessing, as he did, so large and comprehensive a mind, nevertheless, “kindled in the common blaze,” and bitterly reproached the followers of “one Jesus, or Christ,” as *haters of mankind!*—styles their religion, a *destructive superstition!* using other very harsh and abusive epithets; while Suetonius, another famous historical writer, was no less severe. As observed in a note to Mosheim—“The odious epithets which Tacitus applies to the Christians and their religion, as likewise the language of Suetonius, who calls Christianity a *poisonous or malignant superstition!* (*maleficia superstitio*), are founded upon the same reasons. A sect, which not only could not endure, but labored to abolish the religious systems of the Romans, and also those of all the other nations of the earth, appeared to the short-sighted and superficial observers of religious matters as enemies of all mankind, and persons possessed with a mortal hatred of all the human race.”

It is certain, that the teachings of the early Christians alarmed the credulous simpletons, who prided themselves on standing firm in the ancient faith, from a conviction of its divine nature and excellence, and the cunning knaves who stood firm in the ancient faith, because they had no other resting place—no other source of power, profit, and emolument. Simpletons are the pasture of knaves, who always use them for their own selfish purposes; so the latter did not fail to excite in the former the most deadly hatred towards the new sect. The religion of the early Christians seems to have been, in all its essential features, the same as Christians now profess; but, the people ever so “short-sighted, and such superficial observers of religious matters,” were then taught to denounce the new doctrine as a blasphemous innovation upon long established and holy opinions, while its teachers were shunned, or persecuted as *dangerous men*, who preached a destructive superstition. Now, all is changed, and the people are instructed by the successors of these

wise and holy men, to reverence the *destructive superstition* as the only true and holy religion, and, as good Christians, resist to the uttermost all inroads upon the faith, attempted by the pretence of a *destructive infidelity*; from all which jargon about destructive superstitions and true religions, we gather the interesting truth, so well expressed by Hobbes, that true religion means the religion which is fashionable, while a dangerous superstition is the religion which is not fashionable. When Nero bore away in Rome, it was treason against the state to call Christianity *true religion*; but times were changed when Constantine the great assumed the purple; then it was treason to call it a *destructive superstition*. Varily, it is fashion decides these things.

The first Christians seem to have been well-meaning sincere enthusiasts; but the wary searcher after truth will be careful to distinguish between the rant of enthusiasm and the sober truths of history. There are few religious enthusiasts who do not wilfully and wantonly deceive others, while they unconsciously deceive themselves. The maximum of religious feeling is, perhaps, always accompanied by the minimum of moral feeling—hence, the expression of a modern political writer, “maximize morals, minimize religion.” The idea of looking into the writings of the first Christians for unmixed truth, however sincere they may have been, is, when well considered, mere lunacy—the idea of a studious bed-lamite—for the most excellent intention is, at best, a most fragile guarantee against errors of judgment, and those hallucinations of intellect to which the religiously sincere are peculiarly subject. Sincere fools are the worst of fools, for their folly has neither weight nor measure, it calls no reason master, and opens for itself an interminable career.

We read in Mosheim, that “the Christians had neither sacrifice, nor temples, nor oracles, nor sacerdotal orders; and this was sufficient to bring upon them the reproaches of an ignorant multitude, who imagined that there could be no religion without these.” “Thus (continues Mosheim), they were looked upon as a sort of Atheists; and, by the Roman laws, those who were chargeable with Atheism, were declared the pests of human society. Their morality, though denounced as Atheistic, seemed to be of a practical character—for, among the virtues which distinguished the rising church in its infancy, that of charity to the poor and needy, shone in the first rank, and with the brightest lustre. The rich supplied the wants of their indigent brethren with such liberality and readiness, that, as

St. Luke tells us, among the primitive disciples of Jesus all things were in common. To those who have seen the changes which have taken place since that period in the spirit and practice of Christians, these more enlightened times, the bulk of Christians seem to revel and glory in, all the darkness of Paganism—they are not now without sacrifices, nor temples, nor images, nor oracles, nor sacerdotal orders; for, in four days they imagine there can be no religion without these. All who now imitate the first Christians, and dispense with sacrifices, temples, oracles, and sacerdotal orders, are “looked upon as a sort of Atheists”—to which it is hardly necessary to add, that by the Christian laws, supported by Christian customs, those chargeable with Atheism are “declared the pests of human society.” Nor do we now find that the rich supply the wants of their indigent brethren with such liberality and readiness, as to have all things in common.

Some conception of the revilings and bitter persecutions suffered by these men who had faith in Jesus, may be obtained by a perusal of the following passages from Mosheim. “The first three or four ages of the Church were stained with the blood of martyrs, who suffered for the name of Jesus. The greatness of their number is acknowledged by all who have a complete acquaintance with ancient history, and have examined that matter with impartiality. It would have been surprising if, under such a monster as Nero, the Christians had enjoyed the sweets of tranquility and freedom.”

The object of Nero, in persecuting the Christians, seems to have been purely political. He lay under the imputation of setting Rome in flames, and he desired to lift the load of odium from his own shoulders to those of the Christians, who were hated more on account of their seditious practices; than their peculiar religious dogmas, and this with some shew of reason and justice—for they were not content to practice their own rights and ceremonies, but they openly attacked the religion of the state and the corruptions of the times—so that the Roman government rather feared the political than the religious tendencies of their doctrine. According to Mosheim, Christ himself was first brought before the Jewish high-priest and Sanhedrim, before whom he was accused of having violated the law, and blasphemed the majesty of God, and from thence dragged to the tribunal of Pilate, the Roman prætor, where he was charged with *seditious enterprises* and with *treason against Caesar*.

All state religions—all systematized national creeds, formulæ, and ceremonies—whether called Pagan, Jewish, Mohammedan, or Hindoo—are hateful as they are demoralizing, and have, in all ages, been supported by priestly obstructions, as the most effectual drag-chain upon the energies of humanity; but, of all systems of superstition, the Christian seems to have been the most systematic. There has been more persecution for conscience sake since Christianity became part and parcel of national law, than during all the preceding ages recorded in history. The persecutions suffered by the Christians under the Roman emperors, were inflicted on account of their seditious, not their religious, practices; for, as Mosheim justly observes, “One of the principle reasons of the severity with which the Romans persecuted the Christians, seems to have been the abhorrence and contempt with which the latter regarded the religion of the empire, *which was intimately connected with the form, and, indeed, with the very essence of its political constitution.* For, though the Romans gave an *unlimited toleration* to all religions, which had nothing in their tenets dangerous to the commonwealth, yet they would not permit that of their ancestors, which was established by the laws of the state, to be turned into derision, nor the people to be drawn away from their attachment to it;” to which Mosheim adds, “these were the two things which the Christians were charged with, and that justly—*though to their honor.*”

So much is written regarding the state of the times, immediately after Jesus Christ is said to have lived, with a view to shew the reader that the great mass of the people were then radically corrupt—as corrupt as they were fanatical—and, that the few who ruled were, if that be possible, more corrupt than the people themselves. When it will appear evident, that nothing pure could emanate from so foul a source, as all experience proves that the history of a people is as a mirror in which that people see themselves. A lying people will have a lying history, it will be more or less distorted according to the moral distortion of the events it relates. Where there is a confusion of ideas, all else will be confused; hence, we invariably find, that in troublesome times, little is accurately known, and absurd fictions, such as that related about Jesus Christ, are generated, and handed down to posterity as sacred truths.

Mosheim gives as a reason *why Christ was born at all*, the corruption of the times, and the general depravity of the human race, and observes, that “the errors and disorders that we have now been

considering, required something far above human wisdom and power to dispel and remove them, and to deliver mankind from the miserable state to which they were reduced by them. *Therefore, towards the conclusion of the reign of Herod the great, the Son of God descended upon earth, and taking upon him the human nature, appeared to men under the sublime characters of an infallible teacher, an all sufficient mediator, and a spiritual and immortal king. The place of his birth was Bethlehem in the land of Palestine. The year in which it happened has not hitherto been fixed with certainty, notwithstanding the deep and laborious researches of the learned on that matter. There is nothing surprising in this, when we consider that the first Christians labored under the same difficulties, and were divided in their opinions concerning the time of Christ's birth. That which appears most probable is, that it happened about a year and six months before the death of Herod, in the year of Rome 748 or 749. The uncertainty of the point is of no sort of consequence. We know that the Sun of Righteousness has shone upon the world; and, though we cannot fix the precise period in which he arose, this will not hinder us from enjoying the direction and influence of his vital and salutary beams."*

All this pretty jargon about Suns of Righteousness shining upon the world, vital and salutary beams, &c., should not distract our attention from the *moonshine* of the above extraordinary passage. The complacency and pious pompousness of the historian is provokingly ludicrous; for, after the learned have been laboriously searching and re-searching for many a century—after John Albert Fabricius has collected all the opinions of the learned concerning the year of Christ's birth, yet proved nothing; then, in the true spirit of the fox who could not catch the grapes, and with quite as much cunning as that animal, our historian declares "the uncertainty however of the point, is of no sort of consequence!" So, after all the care of theological antiquaries, who hoard up treasures in heaven, by collecting the dates that could in any wise throw light upon the time at which the blessed man-god was born, certainty cannot be obtained; and, that which appears most *probable* now is, that it happened about a year and six months before the death of Herod; but, as no one seems to know when Herod existed, and some have doubted whether he ever existed at all, Christ's being born in the year of Rome 748, or 749, is, indeed, very problematical. It will very soon appear most *probable*, that he was not born at all; but, like

Mineva could have seen of Jesus, the first of the early Christian priests.

The translation of "Strauss' Life of Jesus," in weekly numbers, at a price within the reach of all our readers, renders it unnecessary that we should quote largely from his work in support of our position—that the whole story about Jesus is not purely ideal, is practically so far, as a pure idealism, in the first place, perhaps we could find no such thing were we to ransack the histories of Buddha, Vichnou, Adonis, Mithra, or any other wonderful man-gods. When Strauss declares, with regard to the story of the miraculous conception, that "God could not have had a sufficient motive to suspend a natural law established by himself, unless to obtain results unworthy of him ;" * and replies to the objection that the end of the redemption exacted the purity of Jesus by the exclusion from all participation in the work of begetting, of a sinful father, by saying "that if the maternal participation remained (which it evidently does, according to the Evangelists), in order to obtain the purity supposed to be necessary, we admit another divine operation, which purified the Virgin Mary from the moment of her conception—else would Jesus have been stained by the sin of his mother ; but if God purified, in that fashion, the mother, it would have been much more simple to have done as much for the father, than by excluding the latter, and by performing himself the paternal task, overthrow so glaringly the Laws of Nature !" The same author says, "We should bear in mind the phrase of Plutarch, *No woman has ever pretended to become a mother without knowing a man*, apply it to the impossible of Cerinthe ; for it is physiologically certain that the concurrence of two human bodies of different sexes is necessary in order that the germ of the new human life may be fructified and developed."

Strauss thus deals with the miraculous conception ; and his dealings with the rest of the sacred life of Jesus are precisely similar. He explains so minutely the doings of Jesus—he refines so admirably—that not even the ghost of the man or god called Jesus remains ; he explains and refines him into nothingness—makes him no longer real but ideal—in short, his ideas of the existence of Christ may be summed up in the expressive monosyllable—FUDGE!

* Vide "Life of Jesus," first Section, *between 1 & 2*.

THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST AS A HUMAN BEING, DISPROVED!

BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,
FROM A GERMAN JEW,
ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 24.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

Strauss' "*Vie de Jesus*," has done much damage to genuine orthodoxy. That singular work has unsettled the faith of thousands here and on the continent of Europe. The rage of Christian teachers knows no bounds; and ever since the appearance of the work in 1835, paper pellets from clerical pop-guns have been flying in all quarters; but the ammunition is, itself, too soft to do serious mischief, with whatever force or dexterity it may be propelled.

The first section of the above work, which treats of the miraculous conception, the genealogy of Jesus, &c., is invaluable as a criticism, containing matter which, if not unanswerable, has never yet been answered. The cool irony and the solemn sarcasm which pervades the whole, adds to it pungency and force; and of this we are morally certain, that any man who has the patience and courage to read carefully what is there written, will never again be disturbed by dreams about miraculous conceptions, or virgin-mothers! All ideas of that character will certainly give up the ghost when the section referred to is fairly examined. Many distinguished clergymen of the Established Church are tainted, more or less, by this new and most alarming heresy; among the rest may be mentioned the celebrated Dr. Milner—author of the History of Christianity from the breaking up of the Roman Empire—Prebendary of Westminster,

a writer held in great repute for his learning and leaning towards heterodoxy. Nay, the breach between him and the bigots is of so serious and alarming a nature that he has even been loudly censured by the latter for eating the bread of the church, while he is leagued with German Infidels in the work of undermining its foundation.

Opposition makes some men cruel, and the determined eaters of the church's bread, who will live by the altar human folly has erected, and gasp there their last gasp, are driven by their misfortunes to desperation, and in their frenzy seem to lose at once all sense of decency and all self-control. They hate Germany—"it is the land of thought." Germans being thinkers, have earned their abhorrence; but this work of Strauss is a dose of infidelity for which they were by no means prepared—a moral bolus they will never swallow, unless forced to do so by the dread of losing their influence. Strauss, himself, scared by the din raised about his ears, has endeavored to give a new coloring and form to the harsher points of his doctrines, leaving one more to be added to the list of men who, like Galileo and Lawrence, uttered great truths but dared not abide by them in the teeth of authority. But that Strauss, like Erasmus, had no disposition to become a martyr, may be plainly seen in his Preface to the first edition of his work, where the following ridiculous passage may be found: "The author knows that the internal essence of the Christian belief is completely independent of critical researches. The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection, and his ascension to the sky, remain eternal truths, however we may doubt the reality of these things considered as historical facts." Any man who should first read the work itself, and then turn to the above passage in the Preface, would have his feelings oscillating between disgust and pity—disgust at this barefaced moral delinquency of a man who should prove the character of Christ a myth, or myths, which he has himself declared to be a character made up of the sum total of the *beliefs*, the *ideas*, and the *sentiments* which prevail among any people with regard to some individual who was *imagined* or *supposed* to have really existed. Pity that such splendid talents should be so far bowed down by fear of persecution, or the hope of reward, as to lend himself directly or indirectly to the perpetuation of falsehood. We who have nothing to hope for, save a knowledge of the truth, and nothing to fear, if not shame, are in a condition to say the whole truth, and declare that the legitimate conclusion from Strauss' work, is, that the story of

the miraculous conception is mythic—that which is related in apocryphal books about his youth is mythic—that, in short, the whole tale from its commencement to its termination, from the conception to the resurrection, is mythic, not a history of real events, but a history of the *ideas, sentiments, and beliefs* of the Jewish people; and Strauss' opinion really was that, perhaps, a man called Jesus played a distinguished part in Jerusalem some eighteen hundred years ago, and that after the death of the individual a new character was *manufactured* for him, so that it should square and harmonize with the type of the Messiah prefigured in the traditions and sacred books of the Jews. How rankly dishonest, therefore, it is, for such a writer to declare that the idle tales told about the supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and his ascension to the sky, remain eternal truths! The gospel histories are neither eternal, nor true, as Strauss himself has clearly proved.

The four gospels were, without doubt, the inventions of the early doctors of the Christian sect who, Mosheim informs us, "had been educated in the schools of the rhetoricians and sophists, and rashly employed the arts and evasions of their subtle masters in the service of Christianity, and intent only upon defeating the enemy, they were too little attentive to the means of victory, indifferent whether they acquired it by artifice or plain dealing." Again, in the same passage, "Thus it happened through the pernicious influence, of human passions, which too often mingle themselves with the execution of the best purposes and the most upright intentions, that they who were desirous of surpassing all others in piety *looked upon it as lawful, and even laudable, to advance the cause of piety by artifice and fraud.*" Here we have a singularly important admission from an orthodox Christian historian, which proves the utter worthlessness of the writings of the early Christian writers in support of the belief in Christ—for how can any reasonable being repose in safety, or build up a belief with the materials furnished by men who "*looked upon it as lawful, and even laudable, to advance the cause of piety by artifice and fraud.*" What guarantee can we have that the four gospels were not fraudulently concocted and imposed upon the world by such pious craftsmen as genuine? Whatever affects the character of those who determined which should be the divine gospels must affect our belief in the gospels themselves, unless those gospels carry with them internal evidence of their genuineness, which is so far from the fact, that the task of recon-

ciling their discrepancies and contradictions has been long since given up as an interminable as well as a bad job.

"The opinions, or rather the conjectures (says Dr. Mosheim) of the learned concerning the times when the books of the New Testament were collected into one volume, as also about the authors of those collections, are extremely different. This important question is attended with great and almost insuperable difficulties to us in these latter times. It is, however, sufficient for us to know that before the middle of the second century, the greatest part of the books of the New Testament were read in every Christian society throughout the world, and received as a divine rule of faith and manner." None can fail to admire the coolness and gravity with which the worthy Doctor disposes of a difficulty. He treats difficulties and unexplained things quite cavalierly, and like the bold huntsman with his five barred gates, he seems to glory in leaping over them. The more the merrier—the more leaping the better sport in the theological hunt. Nothing can be more candid than his manner, more imperturbable than his gravity, or more conclusive than his reasonings, for the which three essentials in the character of an historian we honor him; for his candid statements have a weight and force no others could have; his gravity gives them character and respectability, while his reasonings tend to the overthrow of Christianity, for they shew that *when* the gospels were written is not known—that all relating to them is doubtful and uncertain; and this, remember reader, is not an Infidel but a Christian historian, not one who wished to ruin Christianity by undermining, or openly assaulting it, but a learned man who anxiously desired to strengthen and consolidate it. When he says the question is attended with great and almost insuperable difficulties, we agree with him; but when he adds, "It is, however, sufficient for us to know that before the middle of the second century the greatest part of the books of the New Testament were read in every Christian society," &c., we do not agree with him, for we can never be said to have sufficient knowledge of a subject till we are informed of all that vitally affects it. It is *sufficient* for our present purpose to shew Christian readers that the worthy Doctor, with all his learning, can give no account when the books of the New Testament were collected together—to which we may add, by whom they were collected together? So that this crack historian is constrained to acknowledge, after all his searchings, that he neither knows when

Jesus was born, how he passed his time, or what species of education he received during the first twelve years of his life—nor does he know when the books of the New Testament were patched up in their present form, and carefully separated from all merely human compositions, which abounded during the first and second century. However, he subsequently *assures* us, on the authority of Eusebius, that the four gospels were collected during the life of St. John, and that the three first received the approbation of that divine Apostle, which Eusebius, by the way, has been loudly accused of using deceit in the composition of his Ecclesiastical History.

After being well assured by such rascally authority that the four gospels were collected during the life of St. John, and that the three first received the approbation of that divine Apostle, then Mosheim proceeds to ask "Why may we not suppose that the other books of the New Testament were gathered together at the same time?" To which supposition there can be no valid objection, though the reason given in support of its probability is rather a singular one, which is no other than the urgent necessity of its being done. "For (observes Mosheim) *not long after Christ's ascension into heaven, several histories of his life and doctrines, full of pious frauds and fabulous wonders, were composed by persons whose intentions, perhaps, were not bad, but whose writings discovered the greatest superstition and ignorance.* Nor was this all; *productions appeared which were imposed upon the world by fraudulent men as writings of the holy Apostles.*" Now, we ask any candid believer in Jesus, as a man more or less inspired with the love of truth, whether he thinks it probable that immediately after the death of such an astonishing Reformer, such a multitude of forged productions could have been imposed upon the world by fraudulent men? That there were about that period innumerable apocryphal books and spurious histories, containing full, true, and particular accounts of a man called Jesus, is certain; and it is equally certain, that they must have been the fruitful cause of schism and confusion. The whole history of Jesus is a book of blunders and wonders, and it would be really more wonderful, if possible, were it any thing else; and those who wrote the four gospels, settled by pious rogues and fanatical idiots as the true gospels, wrote under the influence of inspiration, it may be safely averred that none but inspired persons can make sense of them. The four gospels contain some of the most absurd and senseless trash that ever was committed to paper; and if the apocryphal books are to be discarded by men of reflection on account of the

nonsense they contain, surely the four gospels must speedily share the same fate.

Mosheim says the rulers of the church used all possible care and diligence in separating the books that were truly apostolical and divine from all that spurious trash; but how did Mosheim *know* that the early rulers of the church did this? what guarantee have we of their infallibility in book choosing? Rulers of the church are not over diligent in separating the true and good from the spurious and trashy; their diligence in these reformed times goes quite in an opposite direction, for they take much pains to conserve trash and discard truth. They are the conservators of the prejudices as well as the morals of the people; and we have shewn from Mosheim himself, that the early Christians were indifferent whether they acquired victory by artifice or plain dealing—by fraud or by violence!

It cannot be matter of wonder that Christian ministers should desire to disclaim all connection with apocryphal books, and get rid of them by hook or by crook—though, doubtless, if they had been wary politicians, and perfectly united among themselves, gone the whole hog—bristles included, and boldly proclaimed all that had ever been written about the Lord Jesus was genuine and divine, the apocryphal books would, at this moment, have been as firmly believed in by the faithful as are now the four gospels. Besides, the history of Jesus now wants completeness, as none of the gospels, as they stand at present, relate the actions, or occurrences of the Redeemer's youth until he was twelve years old, when, we are told, he tarried behind in Jerusalem, and Joseph and his mother knew not of it; and after three days, they found him sitting in the midst of the doctors both hearing them and asking them questions; this is the first time we hear of the Saviour's doings in the true gospels: but those books now rejected as apocryphal give, at all events, a more complete history, and satisfy the laudable curiosity all good Christians must feel to know how the boy Jesus used to amuse myself? what kind of instruction he received? what trade he followed? &c., of which these cast-aside writings furnish us with. One or two of these historical anecdotes, we shall furnish as a specimen of the kind of mental diet greedily swallowed by the early Christians. It is copied *verbatim* from Sike's Latin translation of the *Evangelium Infantæ*, published in Arabic and Latin by Henry Sike in 1627, 8vo., and re-printed in Fabricius *Condex Apocryphus Novi Testamenti*. We may add, the work is generally attributed to Saint Thomas:—

“And when the Lord Jesus had completed seven years from his

nativity, he was one day playing with some other boys of the same age, his companions ; the players employed themselves in making figures of oxen, asses, birds, and others of the same kind, of mud, and each boasted of his work, and endeavoured to prove its superiority over the other figures. Then the Lord Jesus said to the boys, I will command these figures that I have made to walk. The boys then inquired if he was the Creator's son ? And the Lord Jesus commanded them to walk, and they immediately walked ; and when he ordered them to return, they returned. He made the figures of birds and sparrows ; and when he commanded them to fly, they flew ; and when he commanded them to remain stationary, they remained stationary ; and if food or drink was offered, they ate and drank. When the boys afterwards went to their parents and related this to them, their fathers said to them, avoid associating with him in future, children, because he is a magician ; fly and shun him, and never play with him from this moment."

"Joseph took the Lord Jesus with him when he went round the city ; and when he was called by men to exercise his trade, by making doors, or milk-pails, or sieves, or chests, the Lord Jesus was with him wherever he went ; and as often as Joseph had any thing to make longer or shorter, broader or narrower, the Lord Jesus extended his hand towards it, and immediately it became as Joseph wished ; so that every thing he did was done in a most excellent manner."

"One day the Lord Jesus went out into the street to play, and saw boys who had assembled for playing, and mixed with the crowd. And when they saw him they concealed themselves, and caused him to look for them. And Jesus arrived at the door of a house and inquired of women who stood there, where the children were gone ? And when none there replied, the Lord Jesus again said, what see ye in the furnace ? what are they ? And they answered, kids three years old. And the Lord Jesus cried out and said, come hither O kids ! to your shepherd. And immediately the children came out in the form of kids, and leaped around ; and when the women saw this they were greatly astonished and seized with fear and trembling ; they, therefore, directly adored the Lord Jesus, and prayed to him, saying, O our Lord Jesus, son of Mary, thou art truly the good shepherd of Israel, have mercy on thy handmaids who stand before thee ; for thou, O our Lord ! camest to heal, not to destroy !"

No Christians *now* consider these tales worthy of credit ; while, in the orthodox gospels, we are left without the shadow of informa-

tion as to the period of the life of Jesus stretching from his birth till, at the age of twelve years, we read of him conversing in an extraordinary manner with the Jewish doctors in the temple at Jerusalem, where "All that heard him were astonished at his understanding and answers;" but we are totally left in the dark by Luke as to the manner in which he became possessed of such an amount of knowledge as to confound and astonish the learned Jews: and the same apocryphal work from which we quoted above, declares that one of the Jewish philosophers, who greatly excelled in medicine and the natural sciences, inquired if the Lord Jesus had studied medicine? When he, in reply, explained physics and metaphysics, hyperphysics and hypophysics, the powers and humours of the body, and their effects—the number of the members and bones, veins, arteries, and nerves—temperaments, hot and dry, cold and humid, and what arose from them—the operations of the soul in the body, and its sensations and powers, &c. &c., which is, indeed astonishing, and redounds so much to the honor of the infant Jesus, that it is a pity it cannot be believed! What a delicious *gobe-mouche* for the faithful followers of the Lamb—if they could but get it down! Besides, it would be satisfactory to complete the history of the Saviour—beginning with the miraculous conception; then to follow, in due order, the equally miraculous bringing-forth; then an account of the miracles that the infant wrought; how he played at pic-a-back, and amused himself by frightening the lads of the village, by mud-larking; then would come a flaming account of his wonderful dexterity in making deal-boards out of sawdust, which boards had all the hardness of beech, with more than the pliability of India-rubber; then would follow the conversations in the Jewish temples, and other places, about physic, metaphysics, hyperphysics, hypophysics, &c. &c. &c., up to the glorious resurrection!—a chain of historic truth, having a beginning, a middle, and an end—its beginning a miracle, its middle a miracle, and its end a miracle—in short, a miracle altogether! which it would be quite miraculous for any one to understand.

The mental advancement of a people for whose edification such crude absurdities were written, must have been small indeed; and yet, that was the period when the gospels, upon which our faith in the existence of Jesus hangs, were written. Who with any pretension to reason would rely upon *such history*?

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THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

AS A HUMAN BEING,

DISPROVED!

BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 25.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. *I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.*"—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

Our work is fast drawing to a close; and it is now necessary to retrace our steps, and, as it were, measure and examine the ground already passed over. In early numbers it has been shewn that in ancient times the worship of Nature was universal, and that the Sun appearing to the eyes of mortals, the most splendid and useful of its parts or agents was the object of special love and adoration. Streams of heat and light seemed to pour from that brilliant luminary as from an eternal and inexhaustible reservoir; and, as without heat (called *the principle of life*) and light (called *the first being*), our globe, with its endless varieties of vital existences,—from the monad (a secret to the naked eye) which forms the base of vegetable matter, flying the light of the Sun and taking refuge in the shade—to the enormous whale, roaming the mighty deep,—from the butterfly, with wings of gold and azure, basking in the solar rays—to the majestic Condor which wings high its daring flight, proudly towering above the snow-capped mountain's summit, leaving far behind the mightiest hills that convulsed earth seems to have vomited from her bosom,—from the yellow gently-waving ears of corn, moving so gracefully and sportively in harmony with the passing breeze—to the gnarled oak, carrying upon its massive trunk the marks of many ages, standing in calm dignity, as though, like Ajax, it defied the

lightning, and the ever rustling forest of bamboos, which, like a mighty ocean of verdure, charms the eye of the traveller on the shores of the Ganges,—from the molecules of matter which seem to *hesitate*, while standing upon the limits of organization, between the plant and animal, and the polypi whose organs are hardly prepared to fulfil the actions of animality—up to man himself, who seems to be the last, the most elaborate, as he is confessedly the most noble, of Nature's productions,—all, without heat and light, would inevitably perish; the earth itself become a stiffened heap, “without form and void,” and universal silence preside over universal gloom!

That men should, in ages of error, have worshipped the brilliant Star whose appearance waked the earth into life, joy, and gladness, and whose absence seemed to abandon the world to death, darkness, and misery, cannot be matter of wonder; for they always associating the idea of life and intelligence with motion or apparent motion—the Sun appearing to be in motion, was thought to be itself a god, or a god's dwelling place. The next step was to *personify* the brilliancy, force, and goodness of that luminary; but, as upon the earth's surface there exists no type so noble as man himself, the Sun was symbolized by a man—powerful, generous, and brave, whose resistless strength and glorious ardour enable him to overpower and to destroy the powers of darkness, and extirpate those monsters so cruel and destructive to mankind. Hence, Hercules worshipped in Egypt, Phenecia, and Greece; hence, Krishna, Atys, Adonis, Bacchus, and that crowd of gods and demi-gods, said by the nations of antiquity to have existed; for, though those who first personified Nature as a whole, or in its parts, knew that such personifications were but *symbols of things*: in process of time, the personification was mistaken for a real existence, and a vulgar belief grew up, and strengthened by age, that Hercules, Mithra, Jupiter, and others, had actually existed and performed the acts attributed to them. Here is the cause of the confusion and gross absurdity to be found in all the religious systems which have been, or are now taught.

This work has shewn that Hercules, Mithra, and other gods, were but personifications of the Sun,—while, at the same time, it has incontestably proved that the religion and worship of Christ is but a copy of the religion and worship of Mithra, the god Sun of the Persians. Certainly, as noticed in the second number, Augustin, Firmicus, Justin, Tertullian, and others, having perceived the exact resemblance between the religion of Christ and the religion of

Mithra, did, with an impertinence only to be equalled by its outrageous absurdity, insist that the devil, jealous and malignant, induced the Persians to establish a religion the exact image of Christianity *that was to be*,—for these worthy saints and sinners of the church *could not deny* that the worship of Mithra *preceded* that of Christ,—so that, to get out of the ditch, they summoned the devil to their aid, and with most astonishing assurance, thus accounted for the striking similarity between the Persian and the Christian religion, the worship of Mithra and the worship of Christ; a mode of getting rid of a difficulty at once so stupid and absurd, that it would be almost equally stupid and absurd seriously to refute it. The worship of Christ, and the religion based upon it, is an exact copy, in all its essential features, of the worship of Mithra and the religion of the Magi; if so, is it not morally certain that the Persians did not copy the religion of the Christians, but that the Christians copied the religion of the Persians? The early fathers must have been very reluctant to admit the likeness was so complete; the admission was, however, wrung from them, by facts they were compelled to receive as such, and which could not be explained or argued away by any other than a *devilish* kind of sophistry. It is, therefore, incontestably proved that Mithra was the original personification of the god Sun—of which Christ is the copy—as it is certain the original must exist before the copy can be made; and Mosheim informs us that “Manes (or Manichæus, as he is sometimes called by his disciples), by birth a Persian, educated among the Magi, and instructed in all those arts and sciences which the Persians and the other neighbouring nations held in the highest esteem, who had penetrated into the depths of astronomy, in the midst of rural life studied the art of healing, and applied himself to painting and philosophy,—that this great genius (continues Mosheim) combined these two systems (that is, the Persian and the Christian system), and applied and accommodated to Jesus Christ the characters and actions which the Persians attributed to the god Mithra.” The comparison instituted by us in our second number, between Mithra and Christ, renders it unnecessary to write another line in order to shew that those who worship Christ as a god, are idolators—bowers down to an idol formerly worshipped in Persia under the name of Mithra, and that Manes was right when he accommodated to Christ the character and actions which the Persians attributed to the God Mithra.

Having thus firmly fixed upon the unshakeable basis of authentic history, the opinion with which we set out, that what is related

about Christ is an idle tale, a fiction stolen from ancient nations—let those who are still unmoved in their conviction that the man Christ existed, remember the admission made by Mosheim, that it is not known when the man Jesus was born, and that when so astonishing an event took place was not known among the first Christians—nay, not only did they not know when Jesus was born, but they each held different opinions thereupon; let them remember that in those times there existed enormous abuses and corruptions, that human viciousness seemed to be at its maximum—that, as a consequence, fictions the most gross and absurd were greedily swallowed by the people, and as readily furnished by their ghostly teachers—that with respect to written documents, forgeries were the rule, while genuine authentic documents were the exception—that such was the number of apocryphal books, and piously fraudulent writings—such the unscrupulous and barefaced manner in which sincere cheats endeavoured to palm off their volumes of lies upon credulous magistrates, that, according to Mosheim, it required “all possible care and diligence in the Christian doctors in separating the books that were truly apostolical and divine from such spurious trash;” let them remember that the passage in Josephus, relating to Christ, is now given up as a forged interpolation, totally unworthy of credit, set down to the account of Josephus by some friend to Christianity, who was anxious to strengthen the evidence in favor of Christ’s existence; let them remember that all the Pagan writers who have condescended to notice the Christians, have treated them with superciliousness, and the most marked contempt—stigmatizing them as a despicable sect, practising every imaginable crime, and professing a most malignant and diabolical superstition, whilst the observations of Tacitus, so often triumphantly referred to by Christian writers, as authority not to be resisted in favor of the actual existence of a man called Jesus, are, in reality, shaken to their very centre by that historian; indeed, so far from the Christian cause being strengthened by Tacitus, it must, in the opinion of every enlightened and candid man, utterly shake all confidence in it. Tacitus gives the etymology of the term Christian, and says it was derived from one Christ, put to death under Pontius Pilate; but then the question is not whether Christians were, or were not, called after one Christ; but whether the tale told of one Christ is the authentic history of a man who actually existed, or merely one of those legendary traditions which abound in times of superstition and general ignorance? The Roman historian might equally have said, that the Greeks

were the sectaries or followers of one Hercules, who was destroyed by fire after being enveloped in the poisonous robe of the Centaur; but no one in his senses will declare that, *therefore*, Hercules really existed. Tacitus had to write a history of Nero, from whose cruel tyranny the Christians suffered every kind of hardship and injustice, when he gave to their name the *received etymology*, without deigning to trouble himself further about the leader of so unimportant, and, as they to him appeared, so despicable a sect—besides, as remarked in the fifth Letter, an examination whether a man, or god, called Christ really existed, would have been quite out of place in his work, while that which entirely neutralizes the observation of Tacitus, so greedily seized upon by Christians, is this, that Suetonius, and other Roman historians, also speaks of the Jews, and the manner in which they were excited at Rome, under Claudius, by a *certain Christ*,—thereby contradicting, and throwing discredit upon, the observations of Tacitus, who speaks of one Christ, *put to death by Pilate during the reign of Tiberius*; and yet, these are the statements—these are the proofs of the existence of a man called Jesus Christ, upon which Christians, and even first-rate Infidels confidently rely! It is certain these historians wrote about Christ and Christians, with no other guide than vage rumours, so plentiful in troublesome times; so that what they wrote cannot be esteemed of any importance—hardly worth a passing remark,—nay, their evidence, even though it agreed upon all points, could not be admitted as decisive upon this question; but seeing that they relate two statements entirely contradictory, not only would it be unsafe to consider the mention they make of one Christ, or a certain Christ, as a sufficient historic guarantee for the reality of his existence, they, in fact, help to give consistency and strength to the mass of evidence collected in this work, in disproof of the existence as a human being of the Jesus Christ alluded to by the apostles, who is even now revered, honored, and worshipped by Christians of all denominations—revered as a philosophic reformer by Deists and Atheists—honored as a prophet, more or less divinely inspired, by the Unitarians—and worshipped by millions as an incarnation of Deity, the Son of the living God, who was miraculously conceived, miraculously born, miraculously died, and miraculously ascended into heaven; which story has been most miraculously believed in for more than eighteen hundred years!

The evidence here adduced must for ever decide the question in the minds of all who will take the trouble to examine it; and cer-

tain it is, that the belief in Jesus will speedily give way before the light of truth. The undecided whisperings we now hear, are as the rumblings which precede the earthquake; and it is certain that with a free press, the gross absurdities of the Christian religion will not maintain their ground fifty years longer. All men of intellect hold them to be beneath contempt—the very quintessence of the ridiculous—a scandal and a shame to the reason of man; the scourge of virtue, and the prop—the very corner-stone—of vice! Yes, orthodox theologians and their systems are moved and shaken “as a reed is shaken by the wind,” by the breath of free inquiry.

There are few among you fully acquainted with the dishonest practices commonly resorted to by the early Christian writers. They were notorious forgers—rarely scrupling to spin evidence out of their own brains when none could be found in authentic documents suitable for their purpose. To ward off the blows aimed at them by the Pagans and Infidels, no weapons were considered unlawful: nor was this all, for the old saints seemed to glory in their infamous prowess—wearing their vileness—as a dancing-girl her plumes and jewels—for shew and ornament,—as though rascality, in aid of what they had themselves determined, was the true religion—was the measure of holiness! It was not uncommon for these pious fathers and teachers of Christ’s word, to forge certain documents or paragraphs, and then charge the Jews, or others, with having erased them from the Bible. Thus, Justin Martyr, a most zealous Christian writer, of great reputation for sanctity, charges the Jews with having *erased* from the book of Ezra the following words—“And Ezra said unto the people, This passover is our Saviour and our refuge; and if you will but persuade to be convinced in your hearts that we are to humble to him in a sign or figure, and afterwards to put our trust in him, this place shall not be made desolate to all ages, says the Lord of Hosts; but if you do not believe in him, nor attend to his preaching, you shall be as dirt to the nations:” which passage Justin did most scandalously charge the Jews, because of their enmity to Christ, with blotting-out of the book, evidently with the two-fold object of aspersing the Jews, and by a lie, strengthening the belief in Christ; for, as the editor of Justin justly remarks, “This passage is not to be found in any copies of the apocryphal or canonical Ezra, nor in any other Christian writer, except Lactantius,—and instead of being expunged by the Jews, *appears to have been forged by the Christians.*” Who?

with any pretension to reasonableness, would build his faith upon the testimony of such men ?

A more graceless band of sanctified sinners than the saints and apostolic fathers of the Christian church certainly never before nor since profaned literature. They were truly fishers of men—not forgetting to draw up all other good things ; indeed, all was fish that came to their net. There was no fable, however extravagant, they would hesitate to trumpet forth as a divine truth !—no assertion they did not feel themselves warranted in making for the glory of the church of Christ, and the support of popular delusion ! This may be considered as an overcharged picture of their viciousness,—but what shall we think of St. Irenæus, who tells us that “ Lot’s wife remains in the country of Sodom, not in corruptible flesh, but in a state of permanent salt, and *showing by her natural parts, all the ordinary effects !*” or, of Tertullian, a famed father of the church, in his poem on the same *delicate* subject, which is curious, and should be translated, but our readers would think it richly indecent, so we leave the lines as untranslatable :—

Di citur et vivens alio sub corpore sexus,
Mirifice solito dis pungere sanguine menses.

Mosheim, a great *friend* to the saints, nevertheless deals them some heavy blows in his Ecclesiastical History (p. 124), where he observes, “ that multitudes of people of all kinds were everywhere admitted without examination, and without choice, into the body of the clergy ; the greatest part of whom had no other view than the enjoyment of a lazy and inglorious repose. Many of these ecclesiastics were confined to no fixed places or assemblies—had no employment of any kind, but sauntered wherever they pleased, gaining their maintenance by imposing upon the ignorant multitude, and sometimes by mean and dishonest practices. But if any one should ask how this is reconcileable with the number of saints who, according to the testimonies of both eastern and western writers, are said to have shone forth in this century ? the answer is obvious—*these saints were canonized by the ignorance of the times.*” If the friends of Christianity write thus about its prime supporters, the saints, what can be expected from its enemies ? But the infamy of the saints and fathers is so well established, that it would have been dangerous to the reputation and authority of any historian to throw a cloak over their enormities ; and justice compels us to add, that there is much less of bitterness and more of candour in Mosheim, than in the generality of Christian writers ; this it is which raises

his evidence against Christianity beyond the reach of cavil from the friends of that religion; and as to its enemies, if not seduced, they have but slight cause of complaint. For this ingenious ruse furnished one of the most efficient moral battering-rams that can be desired by sceptical destructives, who desire to beat down the walls of the Christian citadels; and certainly nothing that has been written by Hume, Gibbon, or Voltaire, ever did such damage to the character of Christian writers. Mark his candour when speaking of the Christians,—“This disingenuous and vicious method of surprising their adversaries by artifice, and striking them down, as it were, by lies and fictions, produced, among other disagreeable effects, a great number of books which were falsely attributed to certain men in order to give their spurious productions more credit and weight.”

Who, after this, will presume to talk about the undoubted authority, or respectable character, of the saints, fathers, and doctors of the Christian church?—and yet the gospels of Christ—the Evangelical books—were selected by these worthies, *with great carefulness*, from an immense heap of spurious and apocryphal trash, which true and holy gospels they have, with equal *carefulness*, handed down to their descendants in the church. But who will guarantee us from deception—who can now prove that these *CAREful rogues* only selected the true and authentic—leaving the false and the forged? If it be answered that they were favored in their selection by divine assistance, and therefore could not have made mistakes, such an answer assumes the whole question in dispute; for if it be allowed that men, such as Mosheim describes the saints and fathers to have been, were divinely inspired, and, as a consequence, infallible—nothing more could be reasonably advanced upon the matter; but, it is quite impossible that there can be divinely inspired rogues and hypocrites—there cannot be infallible liars—such men cannot be infallible, divine, or trustworthy, whatever name we please to call them; and they who, according to Mosheim, “were desirous of surpassing all others in piety, and looked upon it as lawful, and even laudable to advance the cause of piety by artifice and fraud, cannot in the eye of the moralist, no matter what their pretensions to divine inspiration and infallibility, be considered in any other light than as deceivers upon principle,—and by system, either knaves or fools—characters equally mischievous, and equally unworthy of our confidence.”

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THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

AS A HUMAN BEING,

DISPROVED!

BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,

FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 26.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

The famous forgery in Josephus, once thought genuine, but now given up by the learned (as a passage interpolated by *some friend to Christianity*) runs thus, "Now, there was about this time Jesus a wise man—if it be lawful to call him a man—for he was the doer of wonderful works, a teacher of such men as receive the truth with pleasure. He drew over to him both many of the Jews and many of the Gentiles; and when Pilate, at the suggestion of the principal men among us, had condemned him to the cross, those who loved him at the first did not forsake him—for he appeared to them alive again the third day, as the divine prophet had foretold these, and ten thousand other wonderful things concerning him; and the tribe of Christians, so named from him, are not extinct at this day." Strange to say, the above forged paragraph, together with the observation of Tacitus, that "the name Christian was derived from *one Christ*, put to death under Pontius Pilate, &c., and the extract from Suetonius, who, when writing about the disturbances among the Jews, under Claudius, says, "they (the Jews) were moved by a *certain Christ*—a turbulent seditious man, whose abettors were banished from Rome," constitute all the *external evidence* in support of the reality of the man Jesus, so confidently believed in by Christians, Deists, and very many Philosophers! By

external evidence is meant; that evidence furnished by writers who were either opposed, or indifferent to Christianity; as we call *internal evidence* all facts, or assumed facts, collected either by Christians themselves, or those who from political motives, regarded Christianity with a favorable eye. The first kind of evidence is of by far the most weight, as it is freed from all suspicion of partiality, which ever attaches more or less to the writing of partizans or sectaries, when engaged in defending their favorite creed, system, or party—nay, if there be any partiality at all in *external evidence*, it is a partiality decidedly hostile to the system or creed to which it refers; hence, an admission made in favor of any set of opinions by a writer known to be opposed to them, is justly considered of far more authority and consequence than the most extravagant laudations of friendly or interested minds; for these latter do not always set down what is, but that they wish to be—and too often, as in the case of the early Christians, not finding the evidence they seek, scruple not to invent it; and those writers have a very slender knowledge of human nature who expect all truth without any alloy of falsehood from the defenders of religious and political systems, whose hopes and feelings are strongly enlisted; for, as justly remarked by Heraclitus, "The light of the human understanding is not a pure dry light, but drenched in the will and the affections."

It is certain many Pagan writers noticed the sect of Christians, but in a manner far from satisfying, flattering, or honorable—dealing with them as immoral disturbers of political order—mischievous fanatics, whose doctrines, strangely compounded of mysticism, atheism, and superstition, were so pernicious and absurd, that their best refutation was loathing and contempt. Of this any one may assure himself by reading Juvenalis (A. D. 100)—Plinius and Trajanus (A. D. 106)—Antonius (A. D. 170)—Lucianus (A. D. 176)—Celsus (A. D. 176)—Epictetus (A. D. 109)—Aristides (A. D. 176)—Tacitus (A. D. 105)—and Suetonius (A. D. 115). However mortifying the reflection may be, it is unquestionably true, that these writers have treated the Christ and his followers with a most provoking indifference, rarely deigning even to hold them up to derision and scorn, as in no case have they done more than give a brief and passing notice of the Christians, invariably considering them as deluded fanatics, misguided followers of some obscure impostor. The writings of Hierocles, Celsus, and Pophyry, may be considered as exceptions to the above remark; but as these were *carefully destroyed* by the Christians, we are left without a clue as to the merits

of any, except the writings of Celsus, some of whose arguments and reasonings have reached our times; but then they cannot be relied on, as they are just what his opponent Origenes (in whose writings they are preserved) has thought proper to make them—a writer of whom it has been justly observed by Bishop Horsley, “was not incapable of asserting in argument that which he believed not.”

Many writers of well earned and great reputation, who flourished about the time Jesus is said to have played *the* Christ, do not even so much as mention him. Not a syllable about him, or his followers can be found in Pomponius Mela (A. D. 40)—Plinius, the naturalist (A. D. 70)—Aulus Persius (A. D. 60)—Annæus Lucanus (A. D. 63)—Seneca, the philosopher (A. D. 60)—Papinius Statius (A. D. 90)—Petronius Arbiter (A. D. 60)—Quintilianis (A. D. 100)—Lucius Florus (A. D. 110)—Cælianus (A. D. 120)—Dio Pruseus (A. D. 98)—Arrianus (A. D. 140)—Appianus (A. D. 133)—Ptolomæus (A. D. 130)—Pomponius Mena (A. D. 40)—Pansanius (A. D. 170)—and a host of others. Strange that so wonderful a person as Jesus is represented to have been,—such an astonishing reformer and dabbler in magic—whose boldness had made authority tremble—and whose skill in the art of legerdemain filled the earth with the fame of his seditions and miracles, should have been passed by in utter contempt, or *forgotten* by so many philosophers and sages. As to Luciana (who unceremoniously calls *the* Christ a crucified sophist), and Ulpianus, Eunapius, Porphyry, Tacitus, and Suetonius, all good Christians must feel how very equivocal was the mention they made of them—how utterly valueless when considered as evidence, that the man Jesus was *the* Christ, or actually existed.

The mere reference of Tacitus and Suetonius to a noisy and seditious sect of Christians, followers of one Christ, or a *certain* Christ, cannot be admitted as of a feather's weight in the balance of arguments for or against the existence of Jesus; their testimony, at best, only proving that there were, during the times of Nero and Claudius, certain persons calling themselves disciples of the Christ (the anointed), the Messiah long expected by the Jewish people, whose coming upon earth in power and glory, they believed, was *fully* prefigured in the Sacred Books; but, surely no man in his senses will contend, that it is thereby proved that Jesus was the Christ, or that he really existed! It will be seen in future numbers, that there were, at the time Jesus is said to have lived, many Christs—twenty at least—all having their fanatic followers—who believed in their divine character; and whose sincerity will hardly

be called in question, when the fact is recorded that they were willing to lay down their lives in justification of their faith. If many historians and writers, external to the church, had agreed when Jesus was born—had they given coherent and consistent details as to the prime actions of his life—had even one writer of imposing authority referred to him in such a manner as to preclude the idea of self-deception, or wilful imposition, such evidence in favor of the belief in the man Jesus could not be shuffled off by any kind of evasion, or sophistry; but, when we know that there is not a single writer, except among the Christians, who has mentioned Jesus by name,—never, at most, doing more than allude in an off-hand, indirect manner to *one Christ*, or to a *certain Christ*, of whose turbulent character and seditious practices the breath of vague rumour had conveyed to them crude and indefinite ideas; upon what ground, we ask, can any reasonable man build up a belief in the Jesus of the Evangelists?—especially if he reflect upon the notorious fact, that all intrinsic evidences urged in support of the supposition have been, *in some cases*, actually known as pious forgeries,—while, in *all*, they have been collected by Christians themselves in ages of intellectual darkness and monkish superstition—by men proverbially dishonest, and unscrupulous when the interest of *true religion* was, at stake.

Josephus, Tacitus, and Suetonius—here is all the external evidence worthy the name, Christian Doctors can furnish—the three great authorities which have scared so many Infidels and Sceptics, cheating them into a belief in Jesus. For example, Mr. Robert Dale Owen, justly considered a first-rate Sceptic, has not been shrewd enough to escape the trap; for in a note* he observes, “We have besides, what I consider sufficient historical evidence of the history of the Jewish philosopher. Tacitus, in the celebrated passage contained in his Annals, XV. 44, (of which, says Gibbon, the most sceptical authority is obliged to respect the truth) says, ‘they (the Christians) derived their name and origin from Christ, who, in the reign of Tiberius, had suffered death by the sentence of the Procurator, Pontius Pilate.’” Now, it plainly appears that we out-scepticize this first-rate Sceptic; as, while this letter proves, that granting Tacitus wrote truly that the Christians called themselves after one, they called was the Christ—Jesus of Nazareth, whose history is related in the four gospels, was yet not the Christ, but a purely imaginary being; nor is it

* See Discussion on the Authenticity of the Bible between Origen, Eusebius and Robert Dale Owen.

little odd, that the same writer should have gone so far to expose the hollowness of Jewish testimony in favor of Jesus, and yet, not have seen that the testimony of Tacitus was not of one jot more value. He says, "Philo Judæus, the well-known Jewish historian, was a contemporary of Christ. He was sent by the Jews as ambassador to Rome, six or (as some have it) eight years after the usually received date of the death of Jesus. He must have been in, or near Jerusalem at the very time of the crucifixion; yet not one word is there to his history regarding Christ, or the Christians, or their Scriptures." Strange that Mr. Owen should have been so near the truth, and not have slipped into it! He continues, "Josephus, who wrote his celebrated history of the Jews some forty or fifty years after Christ's death, does not even allude to the Christian books, or to the Christian sect;" adding in a note, that "the famous interpolation, so long triumphantly cited by Christians from the Jewish historian, is now, by common consent, abandoned as a forgery." It is passing strange! marvellous indeed! that so rigid an investigator should not have gone one step further, and seen the whole truth.

With respect to Tacitus and Suetonius, it has already been fully shewn, that as regards the actual existence of Jesus, they prove nothing; nay, they indirectly wound the religion they are brought to support,—for their statements are mutually destructive, as they contradict each other, and, like equal opposing forces, are held in equilibrio. At best, they only shew the etymology of the name Christ, when giving an account of the mischievous and seditious practices of the sect, and the great contempt in which they were held—whilst the renowned passage from Josephus has been abandoned by the stout champions of the holy Jesus as indefensible—a bungling forgery, carrying upon its face the stamp of falsehood—whose author cannot even claim the poor commendation of cleverness—in short, the passage is given up as an interpolation—probably slipped into the body of the work by some pious saint who saw how absolutely naked, and without solid support was the assertion that Jesus had lived, and how necessary it was for the interest of his order that idea should be strengthened by so great an authority as Josephus. Had the paragraph really been written by Josephus, it would certainly have been decisive of the question as to the existence of Jesus; but, as the passage has been reluctantly given up as not genuine, the Christian cause has suffered much in the estimation of thinking men; for it seems incredible, that the

early Christian writers would have stooped to forge, had they not been reduced to desperate shifts, when feeling the weakness of their cause, and in order to conserve popular delusion, they resorted to such scandalous means to perpetuate it. Taking Josephus from the Christians, leaves them absolutely bare of proof—without a shadow of external evidence to support their tottering superstition.

If we turn to the *internal evidence*, what a mass of confusion—what volumes of contradictions, crudities, and outrageous absurdities we everywhere behold! Knavery and folly seem to hold a divided but undisputed empire—forgery and folly in close alliance, making war upon the common sense of mankind; but of all writers, the inspired ones seem to be the most complete blockheads. Thus, we find in the gospel according to Luke, it is written (ch. 2, v. 1, 2) “And it came to pass in those days, that there went out a decree from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed.” (“And this taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.”) Matthew agrees with Luke, that Jesus was born in Bethlehem, (ch. 2. v. 1.) “Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the East to Jerusalem.” Here we have a lucky coincidence of the Evangelists; and until lately no wicked spirit in or out of the church, has ventured to breathe a doubt as to the correctness of Luke’s statement. Mosheim, our readers will remember, writes decidedly as to the place where Christ was born,—though he only ventures to think it probable—*when* saying the place of his birth was Bethlehem, in the land of Palestine.

It is a pity this harmony among the Christian writers, as to the place where the infant Jesus was born, should have been interrupted by other considerations,—as such harmony is rather novel; but it happens unfortunately for the credit of Luke that Jesus *could not have been born in Bethlehem when Cyrenius was governor of Syria*; it is a chronologic impossibility. Luke (or whoever wrote the book bearing his name) seems to have been determined, in getting up a history of Jesus, not to stop at trifles,—and remembering the prophecy of Micah (ch. 5, v. 2)—“But thou, Bethlehem Ephratah, though thou be little among the thousands of Judah, yet out of thee shall he come forth that is to be ruler of Israel,” &c.; he thought he might with a little dexterity *arrange the history in such a manner as that the prophecy might be fulfilled*; but alas! poor Luke has only succeeded in displaying his own ignorance of facts and contempt

for chronology. Jesus, we are told by Matthew (ch. 2, v. 1), was born in Bethlehem of Judea, in the days of Herod the king; and Luke begins his tale about the miraculous conception, birth, &c., with (ch. 2, v. 1) "There was in the days of Herod, the king of Judea," &c.; and Mosheim, though he speaks doubtfully as to the precise time when "the Sun of Righteousness first shone upon the world,"—says, "that which appears most probable is, that it happened about a year and six months before the death of Herod." So all authorities agree in placing the birth of Jesus before the death of Herod. Now it is certain that the census of Cyrenius was neither made under Herod nor during the reign of Archelaus, his successor; for at that time Cyrenius was not yet governor of Syria,—that office being filled during the last years of Herod's reign by Sentius Saturninus, and afterwards by Quintilius Varus: nor was it till many years after the death of Herod that Cyrenius had the government of Syria. It was that magistrate who made the census,—as observed by Josephus (bk. 18, ch. 1) "Now Cyrenius, a Roman senator, and one who had gone through all the magistracies, and had passed through them till he had been consul, and one who on other accounts was of great dignity, came at this time into Syria (that is, after the banishment of Archelaus, and more than ten years after the death of Herod) with a few others,—being sent by Cæsar to be a judge of that nation, and to take an account of their substance." That census must, therefore, have been taken more than ten years after the period when, according to Matthew and Luke, Jesus was born; nay, Luke distinctly says (ch. 2, v. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5,) "That a decree went out from Cæsar Augustus, that all the world should be taxed. *This taxing was first made when Cyrenius was governor of Syria.* That all went to be taxed, every one into his own city. And Joseph also went up from Galilee, out of the city of Nazareth, into Judea, unto the city of David, which is called Bethlehem, (because he was of the house and lineage of David), to be taxed with Mary his espoused wife, *being great with child!*" Well might Schmidt remark, that any attempt to make Luke's account of the census harmonise with chronology, is to honor the Evangelist too much, who has evidently desired to transport Mary to Bethlehem; and that having accomplished *that*, he left dates and facts to arrange themselves as best they might. It is probable Dr. Mosheim never noticed this slight chronological error of ten or a dozen years made by the inspired Luke, or he would, perhaps, have

got rid of it—*“not the slightest consequence.”* When Dr. Clarke, in his *Exposition*, commenting upon the 1st Kings, where we read that “The children of Israel slew of the Syrians an hundred thousand footmen in one day; and a wall fell upon twenty and seven thousand of the men that were left,” the worthy Doctor relieved himself by declaring, he “thought that the word ‘wall’ was a mistranslation, and that *disorder or confusion* would be better, or a *burning wind* better still, as the number twenty and seven thousand was enormous!” Surely, it is pitiful that no commentator will step forward and do something for poor Luke, and *wall-up* his reputation. It is true, Tertulian deals with the matter manfully, and insists upon giving quite a new reading to the text—attributes the census to Saturninus, putting into the text either his name, or that of Quintilius Varus,—which, it must be owned, is a summary mode of dealing with difficulties—slicing off a moiety of inspiration, as monarchs in the East do mens’ heads when they hinder their policy, or disturb their repose. It is clear, that such a mode of dealing with inspired writings may be locally convenient, but must be generally pernicious in its consequences,—and to a reflecting mind, it seems odd that men should so pertinaciously look for all truth, where already has been discovered so much of error.

It is clear, therefore, from what has been advanced (and much more might be added), that the account given by Luke of the reasons which induced Joseph and Mary to Journey to Bethlehem while the latter was pregnant, *cannot be true*; and it seems likely, as Strauss observes—“that Luke, or somebody else, was anxious that the character of Jesus should in all respects be in harmony with the prophecy, and determined to find reasons why Mary should be at Bethlehem when Jesus was born; which reasons he advanced with the more boldness, as he had a very confused idea of the political state of the times, and was entirely ignorant of the numerous difficulties inherent to that combination. Thus (adds Strauss) we have not a term fixed for the date of the birth of Christ, nor an explanation of the cause which led to his birth at Jerusalem. If then, we are justified in saying no other reasons can be found than those furnished by Luke—that we should admit Jesus was born at Bethlehem—we have not absolutely a single guarantee that Bethlehem was the place of his birth.”

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THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

AS A HUMAN BEING,

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BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,
FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 27.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. *I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour.*"—ISAIAH XLIII. 8, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

The most stiff believers in the actual existence of Jesus, called Nazarene, and born in Bethlehem, according to gospel, must now have strange misgivings, feel much puzzled, and shake the head as between little hope and giant despair, however, *at first*, they may have smiled at our attempt to disabuse the human mind of a most pernicious error. There are strong indications of a *tremblement de terre* in the Christian world, and all who have hitherto stood with the fatal confidence of ignorance upon the unexamined evidence urged in proof of the reality of Jesus, feel the ground rock beneath their feet—the rent having, *at last*, reached the foundation!

It has been seen that the writings of the early Christian Saints and Fathers were lamentably deficient in truth, that *they forged upon principle and deceived by system*—nay, worse yet than mere forgers and deceivers, for some of them did not hesitate first to manufacture the lie, and afterwards coolly charge it upon their opponents! It has been seen that by far the larger number of Pagan historians either never heard of Jesus, and his extraordinary works, or what is almost equally fatal to the vulgar belief, thought it a trumped-up affair, and, therefore, the sect called Christian was so wretchedly contemptible as to be unworthy of notice—while the few writers of consequence who condescended to notice them, wrote in

a most disparaging and off-hand manner, many of them including their notice in a single line; which kind of treatment would hardly have been so uniform, had the followers or disciples of Jesus possessed any weight in the moral scale, or been, in short, men of character and influence! It has been seen that those authors of acknowledged reputation and ability, as Hierocles, Porphyrius, and Celsus, who wrote vigorously in opposition to Christianity, were most shamefully treated by its supporters, their writings disfigured, and, in all possible cases, most religiously destroyed—whereas, all writings in defence of Christianity were as religiously preserved; and so completely successful were they (the Christians) in the work of destruction, that not long after Constantine, men of taste and learning who sought for truth, were compelled to grope for it amid that darkness the Christian priests had wilfully created. It has been seen that the believers in Jesus are left without a single classic authority—without one author who writes distinctly, and in a *there can be no mistake* manner respecting him; they do not, in truth, furnish a single argument, if not *against* the Christians—*not*; not even a peg to hang an argument upon! It has been seen that the gospel writers were as ignorant about the when and the where, the time and the place, in short, *all the circumstances respecting the infancy of Jesus*, as the meanest country bumpkin; that Luke's account of the birth, and the reasons which carried Joseph and Mary (then pregnant with Jesus) to Bethlehem, is a huge blunder, a wretched attempt at reconciliation between the made-up character of Jesus and chronologic fact; while Mosheim, who has stupidly followed in the wake of the inspired blunderer, has been theologically belwethered into a ditch of inextricable confusion and absurdity, affording another to be added to the many lamentable specimens of the learnedly imbecile, who half blinded in the fog of fable, and terrified by childish superstitions, are occupied by *chateaux en espagne*, or *castles in the fog*, and lend their fine talents to delusion and imposture! It has been seen, finally, that the Christian cause can derive no support from Josephus—nay, the arrow said to have been plucked from the Jewish historian's quiver, and used by the Christians, was their own poisoned barb, which has mortally wounded themselves by a kind of re-bound. Indeed, making clear to the world that Josephus did not write the passage in question, is to drive the last nail into the coffin of Christianity! To make this like "*the handwriting on the wall*," another paragraph or two will be devoted to it.

The famous passage given in the last number is the alpha and omega of *external evidence* in favor of the actual existence of the man Jesus; this we have already shewn in part, and the truth will appear more and more luminous as we proceed; but that cannot be dignified by the name "*evidence*," which has been incontrovertibly proved a forged interpolation. All familiar with Jewish history know that Josephus flourished, and was held in much honor, at the epoch Jesus is said to have lived; he, moreover, took a very active part in the political and religious transactions of his times; it is, therefore, quite inconceivable that a man called Jesus could have distinguished himself in so peculiar and striking a manner as Jesus is represented to have done, without receiving from Josephus a *special notice*,—it is inconceivable, we say, that Josephus should have failed to mention him—for he, of all men then living, must have felt interested in, and been best acquainted with, all that concerned the honor, fidelity, and religion of the Jewish nation—yet, not so much as a single word about a man-god, prophet, or mere man, is to be found in his voluminous work, save the one that has been thrust in neck and heels by some clumsy well-wisher to Christianity. Never was there a more audacious and disgusting forgery—a more base, fraudulent, and designing trick to serve an end, without even the poor apology of cleverness—not even the redeeming feature of talent to render more tolerable its odious face—and the blockhead who so *palpably* lied, stands recorded as the most blockish of the would-be imposers upon the credulity of mankind. Verily, it is new cloth, or a new rag, in an old garment—for it is not only different in style, but the color, and what may be called the texture of the passage marks it *patch-work*! The difference between the paltriest mosaic and the purest gold is not more complete and striking, than the branded passage in Josephus compared with the true history. In a word, it is the *ne plus ultra* of literary bungling and sneaking criminality.

It is amazing and amusing with what cool impudence the same worthies, who, when the passage was considered genuine, lauded to the skies the truthfulness and high historic reputation of Josephus, making him a very angel of light, and cracking up his authority as irresistible, have *pirouetted*, since the lie was detected, as with a magic wand, at once transforming their *angel of light* into a *demon of darkness*! This is not to be wondered at; it is simply curious and excessively amusing, for they knew their all was staked, as regarded *external evidence* in favor of Jesus, upon his testimony;

they knew, besides, that if Josephus did not bear testimony for them, he must *against* them, as the silence of so able, well-informed, and generally impartial historian as Josephus, must speedily palsy the faith in Jesus, and ultimately annihilate it!—For, we repeat, it is incredible, and quite inadmissible, that an incarnate God, a prophet, or mere man, should have performed one tithe of what is related in gospel history of Jesus—performed too under the very nose of Josephus, without his deigning so much as to give it a corner in his history!

This argument receives additional force from the consideration that Josephus *has specially mentioned John the Baptist*—which passage has never for once been suspected as not genuine, not a whisper has been raised against its authenticity—because, neither in the account itself, the manner of it, nor in the relationship which it holds to the rest of the history, is there any thing to challenge suspicion. The passage runs thus, “Now, some of the Jews thought that the destruction of Herod’s army came from God, and that very justly as a punishment, against John that was called the Baptist; for Herod slew him who was a good man, and commanded the Jews to exercise virtue, both as to righteousness towards one another, and piety towards God, and so to come to baptism; for that the washing [with water] would be acceptable to him if they made of it, not in order to the putting away [or the remission] of some sins [only], but for the purification of the body, supposing still that the soul was thoroughly purified beforehand by righteousness. Now when many others came in crowds against him, for they were greatly moved [or pleased] by hearing his words, Herod who feared lest the great influence John had over the people, might put it into his power and inclination to raise a rebellion (for they seemed ready to do any thing he should advise), thought it best by putting him to death, to prevent any mischief he might cause, and not bring himself into difficulties by sparing a man who might make him repent of it when it should be too late. Accordingly, he was sent a prisoner, out of Herod’s suspicious temper, to Macherus, the castle I before mentioned, and was there put to death. Now, the Jews had an opinion, that the destruction of this army was sent as a punishment upon Herod, and a mark of God’s displeasure against him.”

Before taking final leave of Josephus and the Christian interpolation—as we are determined *there shall be no mistake*—we here restate in the plainest possible English, that although Josephus lived

at the time Christ is said to have existed, the name of Jesus is not once mentioned by him in any of his writings—therefore, let every reader understand, that to say—as ill-informed people do—that Josephus wrote about Jesus Christ, is to utter falsehood,—the name never having appeared in his history of the Jews, till it was smug-gled there most clumsily in an edition edited by Bishop Warburton. This crushing fact, we challenge the whole religious world to a dis-proof of, which, if they are not in a condition to furnish, it must appear, that whoever declares the Jewish historian has men-tioned the existence of Jesus Christ, asserts an unconscious or a deliberate falsehood.

It now remains to brush away a few more cobweb assertions about the authority of Tacitus, urged by one of the most noted and pure minded of modern sceptics, who, it was mentioned in the last Letter, seemed to be on the right road in his reflections upon the subject, but had most unaccountably stopped short in his career.

When his opponent, Mr. Origen Bachelier asserts the divine nature of Christianity on the ground that it “succeeded in effecting a revolution in the opinions and manners of the civilized world, to which there is no parallel in the history of mankind;” and urges in confirmation of this view, that Tacitus about A. D. speaking of Christianity says, “This pernicious superstition, though checked for awhile, broke out again, and spread not only over Judea, but reached the city of Rome. At first, they only were apprehended who confessed themselves to be of that sect; afterwards, a vast multitude were discovered and cruelly punished.” Mr. R. D. Owen, in his reply to the above, observes, “Watson and Leslie set about proving the existence of Moses and Jesus. I have never denied either; but, *I confess, I am surprised to find the proofs so scanty!*” adding in a note, “Tacitus’s famous passage appears to me, how-ever, *sufficient evidence* of the existence of Jesus.”

There is no accounting for mental hallucinations, even in first-rate minds; but, really it is astonishing, that so bold and generally accurate an investigator should have fallen into the pit so warily dug for him by his opponent; though, it must be confessed, that it was not necessary for his *then* argument to disprove the existence of Jesus, as the discussion turned upon the authenticity of the Scriptures—so that the existence of Jesus was only touched upon *en passant*; otherwise, his surprise at finding the proofs *so scanty*, would probably have ended in the full conviction, not only of their

scantiness, but that, in reality, the testimony of Tacitus, which to him is *sufficient evidence* of the existence of Jesus, proved nothing more than the existence at a certain period after the supposed death of Christ in Rome, and other places, a number of people calling themselves Christians. If this is all the proof that can be furnished in favor of the actuality of the man Jesus, it is scanty indeed! and has been so completely torn to shreds in this work, that we are convinced, when it is generally read, all will at once acknowledge how glaring is this error, which evidently has hitherto maintained its ground from paucity of information, and a misunderstanding of the passage in question. But, in fact, Mr. Owen's *own reply to himself* renders superfluous any further remark on our part with respect to the evidence furnished by Tacitus, Suetonius, and the rest; for in the very next page in which he says "*he is surprised to find the proofs so scanty*, but that the famous passage in Tacitus is, however, *sufficient evidence* for him of the actual existence of Jesus, he adds, "*Now what does all this amount to? Simply to this—that in the reigns of Claudius and Nero, a sect existed called Christians.* Who denies this? Not I for one." Nor do we deny it; we do not deny that a sect called Christians existed in Rome under Claudius, Nero, or Tiberius; which, in good truth, is *all the evidence amounts to*. Then how, in the name of wonder, can evidence that only proves the existence of the Christian sect, be *sufficient evidence* for a first-rate sceptic of the existence of the man Jesus? Shade of Aristotle, hover o'er and enlighten us! for this kind of reasoning passeth our understanding! Here then is the thread, of hair like tenuity, by which the sword of reason is suspended over the neck of folly; here are all the immense heaps of proof of which theologians so loudly boast, dwindled down to the *scanty* passage in Tacitus, which is left alone in its glory to bear the brunt of the battle; when, lo! and behold! upon a little investigation, this renowned Christian pivot, the point cardinal, on which *hinged* the existence of Jesus, and left first-rate scepticism dumbfounded, is discovered to be a *pointe mathématique*, having neither length, breadth, nor thickness—a shadowy unreal mockery of proof, ending in a demonstration, not that Jesus Christ, spoken of in the gospels, was a *bona fide* individual, or even had more than an ideal or imaginary existence; but that *one* Christ, or a *certain* Christ, lived somewhere—no one knows where; did—no one seems to know what; said—what no one seems to have taken the slightest pains either to

hear, collect, or understand. All the proof amounting simply to this, that in the reigns of Claudius and Nero existed a sect called Christians, &c. This is *all* the much lauded evidence proves, and it is almost needless for us to reiterate that the *external evidence* of such writers is miserably defective, nay, the two *unique* on whom all Christians mainly rely, Suetonius and Tacitus, balance each other, as our readers cannot have forgotten that Suetonius speaks of a *certain* Christ practising sedition at Rome during the reign of Claudius—while Tacitus writes of *one* Christ, put to death during the reign of Tiberius, by Pontius Pilate the Procurator. We may believe one of these accounts, both, or neither; the latter will be by far the easiest, and certainly the safest course—though it is exceedingly possible, that there being *so many men* calling themselves *the* Christ during these and succeeding reigns, Suetonius wrote about one, Tacitus another, and somebody else a third, and so on; but here it may be useful to mention, that the account in Tacitus is preferred by the Christians, as it harmonizes with the legend—which legend, as shewn in the early numbers of this work, is a solar fable. So much for the external evidence furnished by Tacitus, Suetonius, Plinius, *et hoc genus omne*.

Those who still maintain the existence of Jesus, thus beaten off Pagan, must take refuge on Christian ground, cling to the gospel history, and the writings of the saints; the hollowness of the latter have been sufficiently exposed to prevent any reasoning mind from reposing confidence in them, except when their relations do not outrage probability, or are in harmony with other external evidences, and the general operations or modes of nature; for the scandalous manner in which the early Christians endeavoured to crush all opposition, by persecution and bare-faced fraud, must render very suspicious and of doubtful value any gospels they judged to be true.

Bishop Watson complains that Islamism was established by the sword, as though he forgot, or never knew, that it was the sword established and maintained the authority of the early Christian Church. The famous edict of the emperor Constantine issued against the Heretics (it has been remarked by a modern author) was in the same century in which the books of the New Testament were declared canonical. If the council which so declared them shared the common character of the age, it was composed of bishops, who exhibited to their flocks the contagious example of arrogance, luxury,

effeminacy, animosity, strife, with other vices too numerous to mention. A fine assemblage of holy men, truly!—admirably qualified to choose the true gospels, and carefully separate them from heaps of spurious trash and apocryphal books with which the age abounded. Mosheim observes that in the fourth century, “the monstrous error was almost universally adopted; *that errors in religion, when maintained and adhered to after proper admonition, were punishable with civil penalties and corporal tortures*: multitudes (says the same historian) were drawn into the profession of Christianity, *not by the power of conviction and argument, but by the prospect of gain, and the fear of punishment.*” Again, had the Saracens been infected with the same odious spirit of persecution that possessed the Crusaders, there would not, perhaps, have remained a single Christian in that part of the world (Asia). But, though these Infidels were chargeable with various crimes, and had frequently treated the Christians in a rigorous and injurious manner, yet they looked with horror on those scenes of persecution which the Latins exhibited as the exploits of heroic piety, and considered it as the highest and most atrocious mark of cruelty and injustice, *to force unhappy men, by fire and sword, to abandon their religious principles—or to put them to death, merely because they refused to change their opinions.* We ask, is it to such monsters in human shape as these early Christians, we are to look for authentic history?—men more cruel and lustful of blood than the Infidels and uncultivated Saracens, who looked with carnage and horror on scenes of persecution which the cruelly vindictive fanaticism of Christians had given birth to, when, like hungry Tigers in their fierce rage, they covered the fertile fields of Asia with the blood and bones of millions; and oh! diabolical superstition! when

Earth trembled as the smoke
Of thy revenge ascended up to heaven,
Blotting the constellations; and the cries
Of millions, butchered in sweet confidence
And unsuspecting peace, even when the bonds
Of safety were confirmed, by wordy oaths
Sworn in the name of Christ, rung through the land,
Whilst innocent babes writhed on thy stubborn spear,
And thou did'st laugh to hear the mother's shriek
Of maniac gladness as the sacred steel
Felt cold in her torn entrails!!

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LETTER 28.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

A careful and unprejudiced reading of Biblical history, together with the Talmudic, or *traditional* writings of the Jews, would speedily disabuse all minds, capable of grasping the true meaning of the texts, of those pernicious errors which now prevail, as to the real character of those books, and as to the sources and support of the opinions, religious and political, held by the Jews themselves, before and since the captivity; errors pregnant with mischief, which check the free current of thought, choking up by an unreasoning bigotry the source of truth, and by the weight of an odious moral tyranny, deprive the human mind of that elastic spring which is its best preservative against religious and political corruption.

The researches of Schoettgenius are of great value, and may be recommended as containing the most complete account of the texts which have been interpreted by the ancient Rabbis, or Jewish doctors, concerning the Messiah (*the anointed*), who was so long and ardently expected to appear on earth, and restore to even more than their pristine splendour, the fallen glories of the Children of Israel; when that state of things, called in popular language, *Christ's Kingdom, the Kingdom of God, or the Kingdom of Heaven*, would be established, and righteousness rule over all the earth.

There is no people of whom we have any records, who have

suffered so much for conscience sake as the Jewish ; no people whose religious opinions have been so foully abused, *without being understood* ; none who have so completely earned by a stubborn adherence to the faith and the law of their fathers—the hate and opprobrium of frantic bigotry. Literally they have had “coals of fire heaped upon their heads ;” and there are not a few Christians of the nineteenth century, who would willingly, to use Miltonic phraseology, rekindle the torch of persecution, by the almost expiring embers of fanaticism.

The excessive ignorance that prevailed, and still prevails, as to Jewish character, habits, and opinions—their modes of feeling and modes of writing, so peculiar and so strictly *national*—their historic records, which stand out or apart from all others as the reflex of the mind of a people who were and are an isolation amid the crowd of humanity, is at the root of such senseless injustice.

It may seem strange, but it is unquestionably true, that little as is known of Egyptian or Indian polity and religious character—still less is really understood of the polity and religious conceptions, hopes, and aspirations of the chosen people of God (as they delight to style themselves) ; nay, among the many who rail against the Jews, as a stiffnecked race, obstinate unbelievers, and crucifiers of the living God (!)—few, indeed, have the most distant idea *why* the Jews refused at first to believe that one Jesus of Nazareth was the Christ, or anointed king, promised by God himself, through the mouths of the prophets, to the descendants of Israel ; or *why* it is, after all that has been written for their conversion—after all the cruel persecutions which the Christian world, to its shame, has for ages inflicted upon that unhappy race—they still strenuously resist the Jesus of the gospels, and still deny that such a man (even though his actuality be admitted) was the promised Messiah, who should be (Zech. 14, v. 9) “the Lord and king over all the earth ; in that day when there shall be one Lord, and his name one.” Who should “bring them (chap. 8, v. 8), and they should dwell in the midst of Jerusalem ; and they should be his people, and he their God, in truth and in righteousness.”

The bigot nation, as the bigot individual, is either the crouching slave, or the intolerable tyrant!—enduring, nay kissing, the rod that chastiseth, or *inflicting* stripes : in both conditions bigotry is the frantic hater of all it *will* not or *cannot* comprehend. Let the bigot stand in all his native nakedness—he is the cur licking the hand of its punisher. Arm him to the teeth in authority—there is

no vice, no cruelty, he is incapable of. His appetite for vengeance is only whetted by its gratification ; and like the tiger, after tasting blood, becomes more fierce and ungovernable !

That the Jewish nation was a proud nation, swallowed up in vanity, their own literature abundantly proves ; that they were and are the dupes of appearances, shadowy, aerial conceptions, having their source in national pride, no enlightened Jew will deny ; and it must be admitted that their shamefully credulous ignorance, love of the marvellous, and all that flattered or soothed their fatal and most fallacious hope of universal dominion, has only been surpassed by the still more fatally credulous ignorance of the Christian world. The terms *Jew* and *credulous man* have been for ages synonymous, convertible terms, in the nations called civilized ; yet have those who stigmatized them thus, as far outstripped them in credulity and the love of persecution, as the light wing of the swallow outstrips the dull and heavy plumage of the raven.

That it is better to do even good *with* a reason than without one, has passed into a proverb ; but bigots set this and all other wise maxims at defiance ; and therefore it is that nine-tenths of the Christian world hate the Jews, without a reason, or caring to search for one,—unless hating a Jew because he is a Jew, can be considered a reason ; for, though it is evident the prime cause why the Jews are stigmatized as “ *an accursed race, an abomination, and a pest upon God’s earth,* ” is, their rejection of Jesus as the Messiah, and the idle tale about the supposed crucifixion of *the Christ* ; yet this harsh spirit has not been displayed towards them after an examination of their reasons for their faith, but in obedience to bigot passion.

The stern and uncompromising manner in which, from the first, they rejected the fictional history of the Nazarene, was called, as all disbelief is, obstinacy and stiffneckedness ; the generally credulous, but in this particular, firmly incredulous Jews, were by Christian accusers hunted over the face of the earth ; treated like wild boars, held at bay by the spears of their pursuers. Their traditions were scorned ; the voice of prophecy, which *they believed* was contained in their sacred histories, was despised and set at nought ; whilst, scattered abroad by lawless authority—carried before the breath of persecution, like sand in the desert blast ; despised of the nations ; their name a bye-word ; their untold sufferings the theme of demoniac laughter and derision—this people furnished the world’s choicest memorial—its best proof of superstition’s horrors—

Foul superstition ! howsoever disguised—
 Idol, saint, virgin, prophet, crescent, cross,
 For whatsoever symbol thou art prized,
 Thou sacerdotal gain, but general loss !
 Who from true worship's gold can separate thy dross ?

The Jewish writings, do not furnish finer examples of philosophy than many others called profane ; but no others contain such numerous examples of humanity, seen in its various phases, and under every variety of aspect. We may regret, with Volney, that the mind of man should be enclosed within such narrow boundaries, and be obliged to content itself with what, in a universal sense, must be considered as the mere scrap of knowledge, contained in Jewish literature ; but the fact, however it may be lamented, is yet a fact, that we have no histories of nations, but merely detached isolated accounts of this or that people ; which paucity of information, as regards the universal condition of humanity, fosters local and most pernicious prejudices, which a more enlarged view would speedily destroy.

Hennel remarks, "It is not surprising to find in the poetic writings of the Old Testament, extravagant descriptions of a kingdom of Israel, which should cover the earth—and of a great prince, who should restore the throne of David. The beautiful anticipations which, under various forms, have existed in nearly all the nations, of the future perfection of the earth, were in the minds of the Jews blended in a peculiar manner with the hopes and fortunes of Israel ; on this subject each prophet or poet indulged in his own fancies—but one prevalent notion seems to have been, that this kingdom would be established, and their final triumph over the nations effected—not so much by military means, in which they were obviously deficient, as by some special intervention of their protector, the God of Israel." Now, it is certainly not surprising, that a people with such strong passions, and poetically religious temperament, after ruling many nations—tasting the sweets of an almost unresisted authority for more than 800 years, should, in their decline, or after their fall, sigh for the fallen glories of Israel, and long for the "*yet a little while,*" when the Lord of Hosts would (Haggai 2, v. 6, 7,) "shake the heavens, and the earth, and the sea, and the dry land ; and shake all the nations, and the desire of all nations should come, and fill the house of Israel with his glory ;"—"When (Zech. 14, v. 3) the Lord should go forth and fight against those nations, as when he fought in the day of battle ;" for the vanity of nations

is no less strong and inveterate, than the vanity of individuals, which is generally in the ratio of ignorance; and though it may be humiliated, it cannot be destroyed; nay, it seems to gather strength from its very weakness,—and, like the struggling gladiator, whose blood flows from no mortal part, will gain a new energy with each succeeding wound,—as we commonly see nations and individuals increase in pride, amid the wreck of their fortunes. It cannot, therefore, be matter of *surprise*, that the Jews should have cherished the hope of a Saviour, a political Messiah, who should reign over Israel, and restore their nation to its wonted lustre—which delusive idea pervades all their writings from the era of the Babylonish captivity: and, as remarked by Hennell—great were their transports “when Cyrus permitted the small remnant of pure Jews to re-occupy their own land, and to re-build their temple and city, as their most extravagant hopes seemed about to be realized. A new era opened upon them, and they were in the way to take rank among the nations; and if this could be attained, out of a state of general servitude, a patriotic Jew might easily believe his nation destined in the end, to eclipse Egypt and Assyria.”

The idea which to-day would seem preposterous and absurd to the nations of Europe—if fallen under the yoke of slavery—of a deliverer coming in power and glory “to (Isaiah 14, v. 2) *take them captive*, whose captives they were,” to the Jews, who lived after the captivity, was both soothing and credible; it outraged not *their* idea of the possible; for with them, all things were possible to Jehovah, who could miraculously deliver his chosen people out of the hands of their enemies, and pluck them by his divine will from the furnace of affliction—a brand not consumed by the fire; for, as observed by Strauss,* “the Hebrew people, during the whole course of their political existence, never had a clear idea of history; their historic books, the most recent, those of Maccabees, for example, and even the works of Josephus, are not free from marvellous and most extravagant recitals. In fact, there are no ideas clearly historic among a people who comprehend not the indissolubility of the chain of finite causes, and the impossibility of miracles.” Now, we know that all the Jewish books abound in recitals, which, if strictly true, were clearly miraculous,—thus breaking to pieces the chain of finite causes; which impossible things were firmly believed in, before and after the decline of Jewish authority; but

* Introduction to The Life of Jesus.

such crude and idle tales were never so anxiously welcomed, or devoured with such avidity, as after the captivity; for then, as it was natural with a vainglorious, credulous, and superstitious multitude, everything that strengthened the prevailing idea that the temple should be re-built with more than its ancient splendor, by the appearance of an earthly king, who should make (Haggai 1, v. 9) "the glory of the latter house greater than of the former," was held as true by a people who had "*no ideas clearly historic*;" whose limited intelligence permitted them not to see "*the impossibility of miracles*."

The Jews seem rather to have been corrupted than improved by their bondage in Babylon; for, before their intercourse with the *Mother of Harlots*, they seem to have held much juster notions of things, than after; for, before the captivity, we hear nothing about the *nature of Gods*, nor the *idea of the immortality of the soul*; which dogmas the Jews evidently picked up in Babylon, without fully comprehending them, that is, they did not grasp the precise ideas held on such subjects by the ancient philosophers and mystics of the East. The Bible wears evident marks of the liberties taken with it subsequent to that era; for the posterior Jews, infected with Gnosticism, wished, and did not fail to incorporate their mystical jargon with the anterior history. The devil is the property of the modern Jews; for those who lived prior to the captivity, believed neither in a devil, nor have we reason to believe they had any conception that the soul was immortal. The soul was supposed to perish with the body; or, rather, the soul or vital manifestations were supposed to be matter, in the performance of its functions; or, viewed in its various relations and conditions, merely a modification of the eternally active power inherent in matter.

Their opinions upon matter and spirit seemed, in fact, the exact counterpart of those held by the learned among the ancient Egyptians, who, according to Aristotle, thought matter the first principle of all things, and that the present forms arose out of an eternal chaos, which, *prior to creation*, contained in a state of darkness, all the materials of future beings; which is not a hairsbreadth from the opinions of the famous Spinoza, who held that the soul, or thinking principle, in man and brutes, was but an attribute of the sole substance called matter, which eternally produces endless combinations of itself; while the more modern and hardly less famous Dr. Priestly, in his work on Matter and Spirit, shews that

the last line of the text (Gen. 2, v. 19) "And out of the ground the Lord God formed every beast of the field, and every fowl of the air, and brought them unto Adam to see what he would call them, and whatsoever Adam called every living *creature*, that was the name thereof;" *should* run thus, "And whatsoever Adam called every living *soul*," &c. : the Hebrew, interpreted by textual doctors, *creature*, really meaning *soul*, that is, substance performing its functions : hence the expressions, "and man became a *living soul* ; they slew a hundred thousand *souls* ; they left not a *soul* to breathe," &c. ; and it is only after the captivity we hear of devils, angels, and souls, distinct from substance.

It is true, we find in 1st Chron. 21, v. 1, that "Satan stood up against Israel, and provoked David to number Israel ;" which is the first time the name Satan appears in the Old Testament. As justly observed by a modern writer,* "The absence of this personage from the writings *prior* to the captivity, seems to prove that the Jews, in their intercourse with the Babylonians, imbibed a part of their theology, which inculcated the existence of *two* principles, under the names of Ormuzd and Ahrimanes. It is evident that the author of the Chronicles attributes to the *bad* spirit the act which the author of Samuel attributes to the *good* ; for, in 2nd Sam. 24, v. 1, we read, 'And again the anger of the Lord was kindled against Israel, and he moved David against them to say, Go, number Israel and Judah.' The writer in the Chronicles was doubtless scandalised at the Deity punishing a sin which he had just before provoked David to commit." The same writer adds, "The word in Psalm 9, v. 6, need not be interpreted of any malignant spirit, but it may stand for adversary generally. The date of Job, where the word occurs three or four times, is unknown."

With their knowledge of the dogma of immortal souls, the Jews got the first glimpse of the Devil ; so, taking the two together, it is exceedingly doubtful whether they were much the gainers thereby ; but the fact is established, that the old Jews had no notion either of the Devil or the immortality of the soul, till the mystical philosophers, called Gnostics, taught them their sublime dreamery and devilry, some five or six hundred years before the Christian era ; and it appears from Mosheim, that their mystical philosophy created much evil about the time that it, to him, appeared *most probable* the Saviour appeared ; for he observes, "no philosophy was so de-

* See article Old Testament, in Christian Reformer, No. 44. 1837.

trimental to the Christian religion, as that which was styled *gnosis*, or science, i. e. *the way to the true knowledge of the Deity*; and which we have above called the *oriental doctrine*, in order to distinguish it from the Grecian philosophy." The worthy doctor seemed, indeed, disposed to be harsh, and half angry with these Gnostics' notions of Jesus Christ, which he calls impious and extravagant; but to our mind, their notions about Jesus, as far as they can be understood, are the most rational possible—perhaps, that is because *they exactly correspond with our own*; for, according to Mosheim, *they denied his deity, and they rejected his humanity*, upon the supposition that every thing concrete and corporeal is, in itself, essentially and intrinsically evil. "From hence (continues the doctor), the greatest part of the Gnostics denied that Christ was clothed with a *real body*, or that he suffered *really* for the sake of mankind, the pains and sorrows which he is said to have sustained, in the *sacred history*." Now, as it is clear that Christ, if he lived at all, had a body, and it is equally clear that a body is a *real body*—for a body not *real*, would be *nobody* at all—and as the Gnostics' declared just after Jesus is said to have lived and died, that "he was not clothed with a *real body*," why logic would be beggared to prove *better* that we entirely agree with the Gnostics; for if Jesus neither had a *real body* nor *really* suffered on the cross, or anywhere else, for the sake of mankind—if he were neither *divine nor human*—neither *deity nor humanity*—what in the name of all the mystics at once was he? As to the senseless lunacy that the Gnostics have mingled with this account of Christ, about his *unreal* body being the son of God, *pleroma*, or habitation of the Everlasting Father, for the happiness of miserable mortals, it may be safely averred, that none but the Everlasting Father can know what or where the said *pleroma* is; or how a body clothed in *unrealness*—that is, *a body without a body*—could be sent for the happiness of miserable mortals! Mosheim complains that they entertained unworthy ideas, both of Christ's person and offices; whereas, to us it appears, that *they held no ideas at all of him*, worthy or unworthy; for how could they have any idea of a Christ, *neither God nor man*—neither with form, substance, color, or attributes—a Christ, in short, who neither had a *real body*, nor *really* suffered—nor *really* was anything, suffered anything, or did anything—save in the imaginations of men!

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J. Taylor, Printer, 29, Smallbrook Street, Birmingham.

THE EXISTENCE OF CHRIST

AS A HUMAN BEING,

DISPROVED!

BY IRRESISTIBLE EVIDENCE, IN A SERIES OF LETTERS,
FROM A GERMAN JEW,

ADDRESSED TO CHRISTIANS OF ALL DENOMINATIONS.

LETTER 20.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

The mental condition of the Jews before and at the time so many *false Christs* appeared, was touched upon in our last, where it was shewn that the Jews never fully comprehended the grand idea that "the chain of finite causes is indissoluble," and "the impossibility of miracles," which idea, it may be safely affirmed, must be conceived by all people, before they can be guaranteed from political, moral, or religious delusion.

The idea that a miracle is impossible, and involves in it an absurdity, because the eternal chain of causation cannot be broken (there being no exceptions to Nature's mode of operation) has the experience of the wisest of all ages for its basis—that invaluable experience which, though not admissible as logical demonstration, is a practically certain support, though not perfectly safe, is nevertheless, man's safest teacher. Once allow the possibility of a miracle, and that moment is reason and sound philosophy yoked to the car of wild and visionary speculation. We hold, therefore, Strauss was justified in his assertion that the Jews never had an historic age; for that which is properly historic, is a relation of facts, which facts harmonize with experience, and admit no element purely imaginative. Of this Jewish love of the marvellous, Dr. Prideaux, an able commentator, seems fully aware, for he observes, "that the Jews, after

the return from the Babylonish captivity, to the time of our Saviour, were much given to *religious romances*, as appears from the apocryphal books still extant, which are of this sort." Surely, it would be idle to look among a people given to religious romancings, for clear ideas of what is truly historic; besides, all writers admit, it was confusion worse confounded, that prevailed among the Jews, from the Babylonish captivity up to the period Jesus is said to have lived; nor were they the vulgar merely who were infected with the love of the marvellous, and ready to swallow every gross and idle fiction, for even Josephus, who had some pretensions to philosophy, did not scruple to set forth, with all gravity, the most outrageous balderdash. Of Solomon, he says, "God enabled him to learn that skill which expels demons, which is a science beneficial to man; he composed many incantations also, by which distempers are alleviated, and he left behind him the manner of using exorcisms, by which they *drive away demons* so that they never return; and this method of cure is of great force unto this day." Again, he says, speaking of one Eleazer, a caster out of devils, upon the principles of Solomon, "He, Eleazer, when he would persuade and demonstrate to the spectators that he held such a power, he set a little way off a cup or basin full of water, and commanded the demon, as he went out of the man, to overturn it, and thereby to let the spectators know that he had left the man; and when this was done, the skill and wisdom of Solomon were shewn very manifestly."

One thing here is shewn manifestly enough, which is, that the historian who wrote the above trash, whatever may be said of his skill, had very little wisdom; except, perhaps, that crooked, left-handed wisdom, which Euripides ascribes to certain sages who have *two tongues*; the one to say the truth, the other that accommodates itself to the times." And if we suppose that Josephus was wiser than he could afford to appear, the state of the multitude must have been deplorable indeed to require the wagging of so accommodating a tongue; and if he believed what he himself related, such belief establishes his character as a relater of truth, but destroys his reputation for wisdom—either way, however, the Jewish people must have been excessively credulous, which is all that concerns our present argument.

Corruption and credulity are rarely far asunder, and in the times of which we treat, the Jewish people, drawn into the vortex of superstition, were corrupt as they were credulous. Mosheim ob-

serves; "that the period in which our Saviour descended upon earth may justly be styled the pacific age, if we compare it with the preceding times;" if so, in the name of all that is vile, what must have been the condition of the Jews in ages preceding, when, in this "justly styled the pacific age," the same writer tells us "no public laws prohibited the sports of gladiators, the exercise of unnatural lusts, the licentiousness of divorce, the custom of exposing infants, and of procuring abortions—nor the frontless atrocity of consecrating public stews and brothels to certain divinities;" "at the time of Christ's appearance, (he adds) the wisest among mankind looked upon the whole system which then prevailed, as a just object of ridicule and contempt; at that time the religion of the Romans, as well as their arms, had extended itself through a great part of the world:" an odd kind of pacific age, truly! If such were their peaceful times, what shall we think of their warlike? though it can hardly be denied a Roman peace was sometimes even more fatal to virtue and independence, than a Roman war. Hence, the expression of Tacitus, "*they made a desert, and called it peace.*"

It is not wonderful, then, that the Jewish people should have groaned under the Roman yoke, and sighed after some mighty deliverer, who should be king over all the earth (Ezek. 14. 9), whose arrow should go forth as the lightning; and the Lord God blow the trumpet, and go with the whirlwinds of the South (Zech. 14). For Mosheim justly says, that at the time he supposes Christ to have appeared, "errors of a very pernicious kind had infected the whole body of the people, and the more learned part of the nation were deluded upon points of the highest consequence. All looked for a deliverer, but not such a one as God had promised. Instead of a meek and *spiritual Saviour*, they expected a formidable and warlike prince, to break their chains, and set them at liberty from the Roman yoke." What Mosheim meant by such a one as God had promised, it is hard to guess; but if he intended to convey the idea that the Jews were not justified in their expectation of a formidable and warlike prince, who should break their chains, &c., by an appeal to Scriptures, and the sayings of the prophets, nothing can be more erroneous; for they clearly allude to the coming in power and glory of a *political Saviour*, or *Saviours*, for in Obadiah we read (21) "And Saviours shall come up on mount Zion to judge the Mount of Esau; and the kingdom shall be the Lord's." Surely, Mosheim never read the texts (Isa. 32, 1, 18), "Behold a king shall reign in righteousness, and my people shall dwell in peaceful

habitations, &c."—(Jer. 23. 5): "Behold the days come, saith the Lord, that I will raise unto David a righteous branch, and a king shall reign and prosper, and shall execute judgment upon all the earth." See also, Malachi 3. 4.—Joel 1. 15, 11; 2. 32, —3. 1; 2. 9, 21,—Ezek. 39. 21, 22,—Haggai 1. 6, 7,—Hosea 11. 21, 23 and a host of others; that curious readers may refer to at their leisure. Hennell, who had paid much attention to Jewish history, observes, that "the kings of Judah were called the Lord's anointed; therefore the expected restorer of their throne came to be described emphatically as *the anointed*, or *Messiah*; and it became a favourite literary amusement with the Jews, to find passages of their Scripture applicable to him." Add to which, that the word *king*, or *anointed*, always conveyed the idea of *king*, as may be seen in Sam. 24. 6, where David exclaims "the Lord forbid that I should do this thing unto my master (Saul) the Lord's anointed." How, then, can Mosheim be justified in his ignorant assertion, that the Jews in looking for a political king, a formidable and warlike Saviour, were looking for what God had not promised; for if it be admitted God ever promised anything by the mouths of the Jewish prophets, such prophecies clearly point to a Christ who should deliver them out of their enemies' hands, and establish on earth his temporal kingdom, where he was to sit upon the throne of his glory "in that holy Jerusalem (13, 15, 18), built up with sapphires, and emeralds, and precious stones; its walls and towers, and battlements, with pure gold; its streets paved with beryl, and carbuncle, and the stones of Ophir; when all her streets should say hallelajah."

Here then, we have clear and simple reason why, as Mosheim expresses it, delirious men set themselves up for the Messiah (for supply is regulated by demand, as well in Messiahs as in bora), and the whole secret of the many *false Christs* who appeared by the shoal at the period treated of, is this—the stupid credulousness of the people, who, doing little else but gape about for the fulfilment of the prophecies, became the easy prey of every shallow impostor; for, as somebody has remarked, knaves just as naturally prey upon fools, as worms do upon dead bodies. For an account of these impostors, we refer the reader to Milner's History of the Jews, Josephus, and other writers on the same subject; as want of space will only allow us to notice one or two. Dositheus, a Samaritan, of whom Mosheim says, "he lived about the time of our Saviour (query, what time, Mosheim, and which Saviour?), and set himself up for the Messiah, whom God had sent to the Jews." The same observation

holds true with respect to Simon Magus, who opposed himself dependently to the Divine Saviour, and assumed to himself the title of the *disparate God*. "Another wrong-headed teacher (says the same writer) named Menander, a Samaritan also; by birth, appeared in this century (the first), who should rather be ranked with the *innatistics*, than with the heretics of antiquity, seeing he also took it into his head, to exhibit himself to the world as the *promised Saviour*! Now, who does not see that when such "*innatistics*" could start up like *transirens* after a smart shower, and find whole masses of *gypsies* ready to follow them—that the fanaticism of the latter must have been of a stark staring mad character; nor did Mosheim, in publishing such facts, seem to be at all aware of the strong case he was making out against the existence of the man Jesus; for if Jesus had lived and astonished the Jews, as all parties represent him to have done, is it probable, nay is it possible, a crowd of impostors, such as those named above, could have met with such astonishing success; and what must surprise every reflecting mind is, that little more than thirty years after the supposed death of Jesus the Jews either knew, or heeded so little, all that had been said and written about Jesus and his miracles, that, as may be seen in Josephus, (v. 6, ch. 6), "what did most elevate them in undertaking a certain war (against the Romans) was an ambiguous oracle found in their sacred writing, how, about that time, one from their country should become governor of the habitable earth." The same writer also says in his (Antiq. 27. ch. 2), that "the Pharisees persuaded Pheroras, Herod's brother, that he was the predicted king, who would have all things in his power;" to be sure, the priests saw the necessity of fulfilling, if possible, the prediction, by getting up a *Messiah*; for a fanaticized people, like a spoiled child, must have its *lollipop*, when its heart is set upon it, which those who manufacture, must take care is sufficiently sweet, for folly of all kinds has a liquorice tooth; and all pretenders who rely upon it for fortune, must, like the enthusiast mentioned by Josephus, who set up *Messiah*, think lying of little consequence, and contrive every thing so that the multitude may be pleased." Then they surely succeeded; or in vulgar phraseology, *do the trick*. That many "*false Christ's*" appeared, cannot, therefore, be matter of surprise—but it would have been surprising, indeed, if the true one had! seeing the then distracted state of the Jewish people, which rendered it impossible for them to unite for any great national, still less universal, purpose, without which union, it was quite impossible they could

re-establish their supremacy, or give the law to nations. Here, however, we must turn to Hennel, who maintains that "it is in times of strong excitement such men as Jesus appear," which is not denied; and only shews how necessary it is to be on our guard, when there are so many enthusiastic minds born of a certain era, in selecting one as *the* enthusiast out of the many. But Hennel committed the common and ludicrous blunder of attempting to shew that Jesus was a *mere man*, and not a prophet or God, before taking the trouble to examine or shew that such a man as *the* Jesus actually existed—that he took for granted, and as we shall presently see, no writer ever so completely and innocently refuted himself. He observes, "all classes of society must from time to time, produce individuals of rare mental superiority. In ordinary times this may remain unseen and dormant; but when some prevalent enthusiasm is abroad, it is quickened into life and action, and breaks forth to public gaze in the form of a great character—(ergo), Jesus, the peasant of Galilee, possessed one of those gifted minds, which are able to make an impression on mankind; and the age in which he lived supplied the stimulus required for its manifestation." We shall pass over his laborious and ingenious attempt to shew that Jesus, though an enthusiast, was also both cunning and ambitious, and thought "*by acquiring the reputation of a miracle worker, backed by clever preaching, to cause a general rising of the Jewish nation—the expulsion of the Romans—and the election of himself to the throne;*" we shall look to metal more attractive, for we repeat, never did refined ingenuity so completely defeat itself, for Hennel has in one short note, destroyed, evidently without his own knowledge, the supposition that Jesus ever existed. Now to the proof of this:

He says,* "The appearance, however, of an enthusiast preaching in the desert their (the Jews) long expected kingdom, produced much excitement throughout Judea;" but mark, reader, in a note to the above passage he says, "In later times, the preaching and sect of John the baptist was lost sight of, owing to the pre-eminence of the successor. But that his (John's) sect was one of much notoriety near his own time, is seen from Acts 18 and 19; for, twenty-three years after his death, Apollos and other Jews, *who had not even heard of Jesus*, were preaching the baptism of John." This admission is at once most extraordinary and most valuable, as it settles entirely the question between Hennel and us; for how is it possible that Apollos and other Jews could, twenty-three years

* See Inquiry into the Origin of Christianity.—Page 21.

after John's death, *preach the baptism of John, without having heard of Jesus?* yet, as Hennel labours to prove, Jesus had actually existed in the time of John. What! could Apollos (Acts 18. 24, 25) "*an eloquent man, and mighty in the Scriptures, who taught diligently the things of the Lord,*" could he have known only the baptism of John, and not even have heard of Jesus, if Jesus had really lived?—impossible! and never in the history of theorsing, has there been detected so remarkable an instance of self-refutation, as this of Hennel's, for the above passage completely demolishes the idea to support which, he wrote his book, and shews to the world, the curious spectacle of an author, ingeniously and laboriously attempting to prove that Jesus was *not a God, nor a prophet*, but a clever ambitious man; and then, as though bewitched, indirectly oversetting, by an astounding fact, the belief that any such *man* existed. The fact is so clear, and so startling, that it may defy resistance, and we willingly accord to Hennel the honour of furnishing, without being aware of it, the most conclusive evidence yet adduced by any writer, that the Jesus of the gospels never existed; for it was John who bare record that Jesus was the son of God; it was John made straight the way of the Lord; and can any, not lunatic, suppose it possible that only twenty-three years after John's death, Apollos and others, who were *his disciples*, should never have heard of Jesus, even while they themselves were *preaching the baptism of John*. Were they spoken of as ignorant men, the thing might be supposed possible; but they were preachers of reputation; and Apollos is particularly noted (Acts 18. 25) as a man "*instructed in the way of the Lord.*" Surely this, with the many other authentic and startling facts adduced in this work, amounts to something like an excess of evidence, a sort of out-proving *disproof*. "It is remarkable, continues Hennel, that the writer (Acts) calls these Jews (that is Apollos and others), "*certain disciples.*" Oh! Hennel, Hennel! it is much more remarkable that you should have digged such a bottomless pit for your favourite ideas, and walked with them (your eyes seemingly wide open, perhaps like Lady Macbeth's, with their sense shut) straight into it. The book, however, will be preserved, if only as a relic, quite unique and complete, of literary *felo de se*—a gem of blunders,—for it is unquestionably one of the most *valuable* ever given to the world,—and certainly no writer living or dead, ever so completely demolished, at one blow, his own framework of sophistry. We welcome it as a most apt illustration of the familiar adage, "'tis an ill wind, that blows no one good," for

the ill luck of the talented Harnack, has furnished us with an all-sufficient argument against the existence of Jesus, that no power of sophistry can prevail against. Whether, therefore, we consider the question on natural or supernatural grounds—whether we consider Jesus as an incarnate crucified God, a crucified prophet, or crucified man, put to death for his seditious and novel practises, by the Jews, the belief in his actual existence cannot stand; no, the belief in the Jesus of the gospels must now share the common fate of all falsehood,—the evidence hitherto urged in its support, must fly before the face of the reasons advanced in this work,—and the human mind be for ever freed from the thralldom of a malignant and pernicious superstition!

It is certain, that whether Jesus was a real or ideal character, will be hereafter the grand question in dispute; and all thinkers upon this important subject will form two divisions—one of which may aptly be called Realists, and the other Idealists; for, unquestionably, with the philosophic, there will in future be no difference of opinion as to the *divine*, but simply, *human* character of Jesus. The character of Jesus is either *mythic* or *historic*,—in other words, *real* or *ideal*; the *Realist* will contend that a man called Jesus actually existed; the substance of whose history is to be found in the four gospels; which actuality, they will affirm, receives confirmation in the writings of the Pagans, and others: whereas, the *Idealist* will agree with us, that the character of Jesus is mere fiction, or invention, sprung from the idealism of imaginative men; for, while by historic or real character is manifestly meant *ideas concerning an individual, formed from facts*; by mythic character is meant, *supposed facts concerning an individual, born of imaginative ideas*. Dr. Strauss calls Jesus a *myth*, which is just what we are endeavouring to prove that he is; adopting the definition of a myth given by Bauer, “*a fact invented by the aid of an idea*,” for that which to some will seem a paradox, must be admitted, namely, that *an invented fact is no fact at all*; while little logic is necessary to prove that *invented history is but another name for fiction*. If, therefore, what is related of Jesus is a myth, that is, *a string of inventions—not real, but supposed or imagined facts*—the character of Jesus must be *fiction—not truth*; in short, not *real* but *ideal*. The only difference between Strauss and ourselves being this, that we push the truth to its legitimate conclusion,—whereas, he dared not do it.

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LETTER 30.

WEEKLY.

ONE PENNY.

"I am the Lord thy God, the Holy One of Israel. Before me there was no God formed, neither shall there be after me. I, even I, am the Lord, and besides me there is no Saviour."—ISAIAH XLIII. 3, 10, 11.

CHRISTIANS,

As this Letter is the last of the series, it will be useful to consider how far the pledge given in the first has been redeemed. A promise voluntarily made, should, if possible, be scrupulously performed—breaking faith wittingly being decidedly immoral; and all literary deception, a mischievous species of public wrong, demanding a public apology.

The first Letter pledged us to disprove the existence of Jesus Christ, the substance of whose history is contained in the gospels—to disprove it, whether as a god of flesh and blood, an inspired prophet, or mere man. It is confidently believed that this work has disproved his existence, and shewn all sincere Christians to be idolaters; but, whether that conviction is or is not a just one, must be determined by the thinking public, to whom we appeal without fear, having the fullest reliance upon the integrity of their verdict; for the intelligent *vox populi*, if not the voice of God, is the most just, and therefore the safest tribunal to which the advocate of truth can appeal.

The early portion of the work incontestably proved that the Sun was in ancient times the object of adoration, among all people—in the nations of Africa, Asia, Europe, and America—upon the soil of the new as well as the old world; it proved that the name Christ

is but one of many given by men to that apparent source of light, heat, and life. It was shewn by an appeal to facts, defying contradiction, that Christ no more had a real existence than the Chrishna of India, the Adonis of Phenecia, or the Hercules of Egypt and Greece. Chrishna, Adonis, Hercules, Mithra, and a score of others, were personifications of the Sun; and the character of Christ in all its essentials, is but a copy of these, thereby proving the gospel history an imposition; or, in the words of our first Letter, *an idle tale, having no foundation whatever in truth,—a mere fiction—stolen from the mythological fables of ancient nations.*

By reference to scripture texts it has been demonstrated that the history of Jesus Christ, as set forth in the gospels, and as commonly received, must be false; for the texts prove, either, that the gospel account is allegoric, that is, expresses one thing and means another, having no literal truth; or those who insist upon a literal interpretation, and are willing to abide by the naked meaning—who insist that Jesus Christ actually lived and was really crucified, will be forced to admit that he was crucified three times over, at three different places; which extraordinary scriptural evidence, as it involves a contradiction, and an absolute impossibility, must utterly destroy the belief that Jesus was actually crucified.

These Letters have also made manifest that *when* Jesus Christ was born, is now a mystery, and was equally a mystery among the first Christians, who knew literally nothing about so important a matter,—each sect, as Mosheim observes, holding contradictory opinions thereupon. As to where the infant Saviour first saw the light, it is a question involved in obscurity; for though Luke and Matthew agree that he was born in Bethlehem, and the orthodox, as in duty bound, echo the same, yet it is certain, as Dr. Strauss observes, and we have proved, that there is not a single guarantee that Bethlehem was the place of his birth. Christians! who dare think and reason for yourselves, we ask you, is it likely, is it credible, that if the Saviour had come upon earth to regenerate the world—had he been conceived by the power of the Holy Ghost, and brought forth by a virgin—that even up to this very day none should know when he was born, or where he was brought forth? Is it credible, nay, is it possible, if such an important personage had really lived, his apostles would have failed to make everything known respecting his earthly career? whereas, even now, none know where he was born, or when; Christians, ancient and modern, holding contradictory opinions thereupon; which is a strong collateral

proof that he was not born at all ; besides, the *probability* of Mosheim is annihilated by the impossibility of the circumstances,—for he thought it probable the infant Jesus was born about a year and six months before the death of Herod ; but alas ! the unlucky bungler, Luke ; not being chronologically inspired, seemingly having the most profound contempt for mental, and every other species of arithmetic, has “ by slight mistakes,” blown-up the whole story ; for, as though his brains had been made of bran, or some equally soft material, he makes Mary pregnant with Jesus when Cyrenias was governor of Syria, that is, ten years after the death of Herod ; so, according to this *probable* invention, the virgin-mother was pregnant with the Saviour ten years after the said Saviour was born ! This could not be believed, even though it had been written under the influence of inspiration, with a quill from the wing of the Angel Gabriel himself.

The insanity of looking for truth with regard to the origin of the Christian fiction, in the early writings of the church, has been fully pointed out, as also the very equivocal character of the gospels, so snugly and carefully selected—pronounced genuine, to boot, by men of such easy virtue as the early saints, who “ were canonized by the ignorance of the times,” and the early fathers, who, like Synesius, thought, as darkness suits the blear-eyed better than light, so falsehood was better fitted for the vulgar than truth. It may be fairly presumed that such unique specimens of holiness would treat the people as blear-eyed, to whom the full blaze of intellectual light would be highly prejudicial ; in short, this work has so shewn-up the old curiosities, called saints and fathers, that all must feel, the less said about them the better for their reputation ; for, like the quack doctors of our own times, their business was to physic the fools—of course, in a spiritual sense ; in one point, they agreed to a tee with the mesmerizers of our own times, which is, that there is one nature, one disease, and one cure—that nature a fallen one ; its disease, knowledge ; its cure, delusion—delusion—and nothing but delusion ! These were the spiritual quacks who voted which should be the true life of Jesus—the genuinely inspired gospels. Who will wonder, then, that they should, as Gibbon said of Eusebius, “ relate or select whatever might redound to the glory of their own church, and suppress all that could tend to bring disgrace on their religion.” Of their extraordinary ignorance we have left ourselves no room to speak ; but thus much may be said, that no set of men ever carried on such a profitable trade in humbug, with so little intellectual

capital; whilst their eternal vindictiveness made them the enemies of every adherent and abettor of all villainies hostile to orthodoxy? Is there, as such is these, pious and holy men, as was, who picked out Constantine, and the other blessed 'emperor,' Theodosius, as do later-indeed, those deities that all writings and bases to the claims of the Christian religion should be ascribed to the deified! Is it not a sad fate, that those who are to be quoted as respectable, heaven-helped, inspired, and respectful!—If such men were pious and holy, who know the idols, plots and unity? Surely the atheism of such deities is a childish quackery, as sufficient to bear down any canon, as it is brought to support; at all events, the gospel of the resurrection are suspiciously edious, and, as we have proved, their insensibility that they were written by characters compounded and re-compounded of knavery and folly. *Josephus* is not a divinity, nor aids in

Next, the forgery of *Josephus* was fully exposed; and the hypothesis framework of sophistry urged in favour of the existence as a human being of Jesus, so laboriously and ingeniously constructed by Unitarian philosophers, completely demolished. The most remarkable of these writers is Hessel, who, with an industrious ingenuity, writes of admiration, endeavoured to prove it was beyond question that Jesus, the peasant of Galilee, actually existed, and played strange pranks in Jerusalem and elsewhere; being an enthusiastic fall of ambitious projects, and a first-rate conjuror, whose hands being much quicker than the best Jew's eyes, did practice slight-of-hand with wonderful dexterity; but being overreached at last, completely, like the *Devil*, out-shot at his own bow, was brought and nailed upon the cross.^a But, the course of lying, like the course of love, rarely does run smooth; and Hessel, as shown in the last Letter, in the very book written to prove that Jesus actually existed, he has unconsciously furnished one of the most astounding fables ever yet adduced in disproof of his existence,—and, as before remarked, never in the history of sophistry was self-refutation so complete.

As to *Josephus*, it was noted, that he has specially mentioned John the Baptist, but wrote not a line about the man Jesus, or the Christ, and the scandalous forgery of the Christians thereby exposed; but what will astonish the orthodox still more, is, that this very John the Baptist was a worshipper, not of the man or the god Jesus, but Mithra, the god Sun of the Persians! This highly important fact has been long known to the literati, and is particularly noticed by Godfrey Higgins, who observes, "John the Baptist

^a See *Anacalypsis*, vol. 2, p. 66.

yet nothing but one set of the followers of *Mithras*, with whom the deities of Syria and the Thebes of Egypt shared, under the names of *Demeter*. He was a *Nazarene*; and it is a striking circumstance that the famous *Epiphany* or *Epaoi*, where he baptised, was sacred to the Sun. *Thalberg* said to have baptised Jesus, it is very remarkable that John baptised in a religion of this sort." Dec. 1. 1871 *Starbuck*, indeed, it must be to those who believe that Jesus actually existed: for what can suppose that John would have worshipped the god *Mithras*, or have set up a religion of his own, had he known Jesus to have been the son of the living God?

The testimony of *Tacitus*, that forbids hope of the *ecclesiastical historians*—that pillar of orthodoxy, upon which all classes of Christians so confidently repose, as not to be shaken, has been snipped in this work, with as much ease as *Sampson* is said to have broken the pillars of the house of *Daagon*. It is, indeed, a broken pillar, that not only heavily fished, but has cruelly wounded those who rested upon it. In plain language, the passage in *Tacitus* has not only been proved insufficient, but absolutely made to tell against those who used it; for, fairly examined, it shows this, and nothing more, that the Christians were, in the times of which he wrote the history, a despionable sect, only known as the pretence of a malignant superstition—"men who, under the vulgar appellation of Christians, were branded with deserved infamy." Again, *Suetonius* speaks of one Christ exciting sedition under *Claudius*, at Rome; while *Tacitus* writes of a certain Christ, put-to-death by *Pontius Pilate*, at Jerusalem, in the reign of *Tiberius*; which conflicting evidence, as before urged, not merely balance, and, as it were, hold each other in equilibrio, but are mutually destructive,—at most, their joint effect is to show that there did exist in Jerusalem, and at Rome, a sect called Christian (which no one ever dreams of denying), while they leave untouched the only question which really concerns us, namely, the actual existence of the god, prophet, or man, called Jesus, who is described in the gospels.

With regard to *Dr. Strauss*, and his "*Life of Jesus*," we feel much pleasure in expressing our admiration of his great ability; but, as said by a German critic, "*The Leben Jesu* of *Dr. Strauss* is not properly a life of Jesus, but rather a critical comparison and analysis of the apocryphal and canonical gospels; though the work is worthy of all praise as a stupendous monument of patient and

laborious research, it is really no more a *Leben Jesu* than a life of Casper Hauser, or Alexander Selkirk."

It would have been easy to have swollen this little work into a ponderous tome, by piling proof upon proof against the existence of Jesus; but were we to write for an age, it would be impossible to do more than disprove his existence, which, it is presumed, is in this work effectually done. Those who will not read what is here written, it is obvious, will not be convinced by its arguments. Such as decide without examination, are bigots!—and wisdom is the price of bigotry. Those who have not the courage to examine it, are fettered by their fears—a mental condition beyond the reach of moral surgery: and as to those who cannot reason, they are the fools of society—the prescriptive property of knaves. All of the latter class have a kingdom not of this world, that is, the world of reason and reality, but one in regions somewhere beyond the moon; the willing dupes of such worthies as Tertullian, who, in the true spirit of the faithful, says, "Why am I not ashamed of maintaining that the Son of God was born? Why, *because* it is itself a shameful thing. I maintain that the Son of God died. Well; that is wholly credible, *because it is monstrously absurd*. I maintain that after having been buried he rose again; and that I take to be unquestionably true, *because it is absolutely impossible*."—Those who with Tertullian will maintain all this farrago of absurdities, and more, if necessary, will not be moved by this book, except to burn it, or to see it burned by the common hangman.

In conclusion; though to the critical eye this work may appear disfigured by imperfections—by all who look for bold and wholesome truth, it will be hailed as one of the most useful that has ever issued from the press. A work which has forced its way to public notice, under circumstances the most discouraging and difficult,—not the least of these was the spiteful—frantic opposition of bigot theologians; those interpreters of celestial things, who, when the spark of truth is thrown among them, are explosive and dangerous as gunpowder; in short, it has furnished irresistible evidence in Disproof of the Existence of Jesus Christ, in spite of bigots, who will not reason; slaves, who dare not reason; and fools, who cannot reason!

THE END.

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