

RELIGION IN THE HEAVENS;

OR,

Mythology Unveiled.

IN

A SERIES OF LECTURES,

BY

LOGAN MITCHELL,

A FOLLOWER OF NATURE.

"Thus does it generally happen in human life, that when danger attends the discovery of truth, and the profession thereof, the prudent are silent, the multitude believe, and impostors triumph."—*Mosheim's "Ecclesiastical History."*



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THE SIGNS OF THE ZODIAC.

♈ Aries.	♎ Libra.
♉ Taurus.	♏ Scorpio.
♊ Gemini.	♐ Sagittarius.
♋ Cancer.	♑ Capricornus.
♌ Leo.	♒ Aquarius.
♍ Virgo.	♓ Pisces.

In nearly 26000 years the Sun passes through the whole circle of the Zodiac. That is, he is in each sign at the Vernal Equinox 2·155 years.

One universal mythos, or fable wearing the garb of history, has been the basis of all religions, ancient and modern. This mythos is rooted in, and has secret allusion to the zodiac and the solar system, in which the sun and the rest of the "Host of Heaven," were turned into imaginary personages, under peculiar nomenclatures in each country; and fanciful narratives concerning them, were invented by the astronomising priests, in order to stultify and subject the minds of the ignorant populace. This deception continues to the present day, *for the solar mythos was the true Christianity.* "When the French, under Napoleon, possessed Italy, they examined the chair of St. Peter, and found upon it the signs of the zodiac."

P R E F A C E .

ACCORDING to the ignorant prejudices which priest-craft has interwoven through the human mind, the subjects treated of in the following Lectures, are considered as sacred ground by the votaries of superstition ; and therefore every attempt to examine them with freedom, or to expose them to the test of reason and free discussion, appears shocking to the blindly bigoted, and alarming to interested priests. But as neither complaisance nor forbearance is due to either of these parties, the free inquirer, stimulated by the love of truth alone, will be earnestly desirous of emancipating the minds of his fellows from the fears and delusions of a sanguinary and distracting superstition, which has no foundation in reason, either as regards the past or the future ; and from the gloomy grasp of its active, subtle, and vindictive priesthood, who want nothing but the *power* to imprison and roast alive, as they did in former ages. Yet even in the present times of science and reform, what has been the fate of the daring wight who has ventured to expose the origin and shown the terrible effects of Christianity during fifteen hundred years ? He has drawn upon himself the concentrated essence of malice from all the hireling sacerdotal orders, abetted by their allies the aristocracy of every country, by whom he has commonly been

robbed and imprisoned, or otherwise ruined both in fortune and reputation.* How does he incur the implacable vengeance of the theologians? Because his search after truth, in the paths of Nature, has a direct tendency to overturn that monstrous fabric of delusion, which enables so many hundreds of thousands of them to live in ease and luxury, at a prodigious expense to human industry. Why do the aristocracy and the rich of the land persecute and pursue him to ruin? The aristocracy being, in point of fact, the national rulers, as such, have hitherto considered it necessary to support some kind of superstition (any sort does equally well for the ignorant and vulgar), perceiving that, by an iniquitous confederacy with its priesthood for mutual support, the strongest arm of bad government is created. Moreover, the ranks of the hierarchy are recruited by scions from aristocratical stocks, who are called by the "Holy Ghost," to receive revenues sufficient for "*the attraction of gentlemen*;" and whether these be younger sons, brothers, blackguards, or blockheads, it is all the same—they are good enough for Mother Church. This is a powerful—an almost irresistible scheme for fostering ignorance and falsehood—for upholding the foul connexion between Church and State, and for perpetuating the mental

* "Knowledge is called *infidelity* :

—— Hence the few who knew
 Aught worth recording, and were fools enough
 To vent their free opinions, what has been
 Their recompense and their reward? The stake,
 The fagot and the cross."—GOETHE'S "Faust."

INFIDELITY—we say; but to what?

To vulgar superstitions enforced.

slavery of the people. The cause of truth and the welfare of society call loudly for the exposure of these enormous corruptions; and the dangerous task will be hailed and encouraged by every true friend to human improvement, as the surest means of banishing from amongst men the blasting and demoralizing belief in supernaturalism, for that is the principal, if not the sole source of all the moral evils on the face of the earth.

It was the strikingly eloquent saying of Mr. Paine, that "prejudice is the spider that spins its web on the mind." This entangling web is so interwoven into the tender and plastic mind of youth by systematized deception, that even the strongest intellect can hardly extricate itself during life; and this spell holds equally good with Jew, Christian, Mahomedan, or in any other of all the heaven-derived superstitions that have afflicted the human race. These are the universal plagues—the fatal barriers which stand perpetually between man and the harmonious union which he would ever maintain with nature. All religions have in succession sprung out of the superstitions which preceded them, and there is no difficulty in proving that the Christian scheme is no exception to the rule; for, on its very front, it carries the most conclusive evidence of having been drawn out of the exhaustless ethnical magazines of Paganism,* and metamorphosed

* Beyond the limits of the papal conclave of cardinals, there is every reason to believe that very little true, or esoteric Christianity is known; and that only among the learned and most laborious in fearless research. In that modern cabbala of the initiated, the secret is guarded with the most solemn and profound vigilance; and the sacred trust is, that

into that unsightly and distorted texture of wild and irrational superstition, which has deluded men by teaching them to overlook the moral and physical realities of nature—fixing their minds upon imaginary existence; and by an intercourse which surpliced magicians have pretended to, with a place called heaven, everything that is good and congenial to man upon earth has been destroyed.

“For ’tis the craft of priesthood that hath shaped
A future world,—the kings of distant days
Have countenanced the fraud, that fools content,
Might look for blessings in another scene,
And bear the yoke more tranquilly in this.”

None but bigoted and priest-subdued minds will deny that it has been Christian superstition, and its offspring, cherished ignorance, that have distracted and made stages for theological gladiators, of Spain, Portugal, and Ireland, for a succession of ages. By its natural tendency to corrupt every kind of government, it has shed the blood of Erin’s priest-ridden sons, to satisfy the rapacious hierarchy of a more favored sect ! In England, at this moment, is it not a demonstrable fact that, as theology enters into, and taints everything, so it is the ready and insuperable barrier against every salutary improvement; for, whenever a reform of bad laws and abuses is proposed, or any measure attempted that would tend to the relief and benefit of the people

there is not a vestige—not an iota of Christianity, whether Catholic or Protestant, that did not belong to Paganism, thousands of years before the reign of Tiberius; and that all the “religion” practised in Europe is merely the exoteric quackery of the old universal solar mythos. In like manner, it was only the initiated Jews of their cabbala, who knew the secret of the same mythos. This was called Gnosticism.

at large, do not Churchcraft, Aristocracy and Co. put their veto upon it immediately ? *

It is the essence of this pretended science of theology, particularly that of triune-Christianity, to oppose, and in everything to combat the light of Nature and reason—to degrade and crush the human mind in youth, as the best security against its future expansion ; and hence it is that, poor deluded man, in his abject and ludicrous terrors, has been rendered the most bewildered, piteous, and contemptible of all animals,† wishing to live for ever *after death*, yet afraid to die ! Such being the nature of this dark pestilence, the terrible evils it has produced in Europe for so many centuries, and is still producing even to this day are precisely what might be expected from such a cause. To any species of political tyranny that happened to be strong enough to bestow riches and power upon its priests, it has ever been ready to link itself ; and to form the mainstay and support of that flagitious and shameful policy which promotes ignorance, as the surest medium through which to deceive mankind into submission to bad government. Even now, in the nineteenth century, there are no legislative disputes and dissensions in which it is not the perpetual bone of contention—no national interests dis-

* The demon of Toryism, which pervades Europe throughout, is the legitimate offspring of Priestcraft, Aristocracy and Co.—that is, a confederacy of the great monopolisers of the land and the church hierarchy, for the honest purpose of subjugating and fleecing the industrious wealth-producers.

† No man will ever write as a true philosopher who seeks the approbation of more than one in every ten thousand of men, as they are moulded at present by theology.

cussed wherein it forms not the most inflaming ingredient.* From a cause that is thus essentially and innately evil, such effects must emanate of necessity; and, therefore, there would be the highest folly in expecting that this baleful superstition can ever change, or be anything else than that which it hitherto has been—a burden and a scourge to every country *in the exact ratio of its influence.*

The reproachful canting cry of heretic, infidel, atheist, etc., will be raised against the author of these lectures, by every fiery intolerant bigot into whose hands they may fall. But he alone is the true infidel who forsakes the laws of his Nature, and gives up his mind to a belief in fabulous and demoralising legends, which contradict all experience, and stand in opposition to the testimony of his own senses and reason.† In regard to the term Atheist, which, of all others, is meant to be the most opprobrious, let our angry zealot, in the first place, define precisely what he means by the word:—if he explains it by saying “it signifies one who supposes that there is no God;” we reply that it is impossible to understand this definition until he declares in express and intelligible terms what he means by the word “God.” If it is used to designate that incom-

* It was formerly maintained by hangmen and funeral piles, and now by clerical riches and power, hereditary lawgivers, harsh judges, ignorant juries, fines and imprisonments.

† Diderot, in illustrating the conflict of priests against reason, says, “Bewildered in an immense forest during the night, and having only one small torch for my guide, a stranger approaches, and thus addresses me,—‘Friend, blow out thy light if thou wouldst make sure of the right path.’”—*This stranger was a priest.*

prehensible POWER by which the universe is ruled, there cannot be such a thing as an Atheist in existence.

Do the Jews, Christians, and Mahommedans, by their wild and degrading anthropomorphism, or by forming their deity in the likeness of any entity that the human mind can conceive, evince a worthy, or anything approaching to an adequate, conception of the unknown,* all-ruling *Power*? Quite the contrary; for in absurdly embodying it as a located Being, or by conferring personification in any shape or manner whatsoever, they impiously create one of those idols which they pretend to abhor, and become themselves idolators. These alone are the real Atheists, as they not only endow their man-God with the worst of human frailties and passions, but condemn and repudiate the true revelation of Nature. The mean and grovelling notions which the half-inch mind of the priest-led fanatic has of his God (for instance the Jewish one), form a striking contrast with the elevated and pure ideas which fill the mind of Nature's free votary, towards the one universal *Power*,—a veneration infinitely too exalted to allow for a moment the puerile and ridiculous notion of its being personified in the form or likeness of any existing thing.† But the priests of all religions that

* What do theologues now know of that which they call Deity more than was known to the philosophic Brahmin, Egyptian, or Zoroastrian, ten thousand years ago? *Absolutely nothing*. What does the pampered Oxonian professor of theology know more of it than the meanest cow-boy in England? *Absolutely nothing*.

† The deist talks of "Nature's God," that is, the powers of Nature personified, for it is impossible it should mean anything else. As a poetic figure, we have no objection to this.

have at any time plagued the earth, have agreed in the absolute necessity of inventing such imbodied Gods or idols ; and whether they be Jupiters or Jehovahs is no great matter, as they answer equally well as mystic sources from whence to derive the usurped power of the sacerdotal orders ; and as relentless tormentors, to keep the minds of their frenzied dupes in perpetual terror. Without these pre-requisites, their trade would soon come to an end. Hence arises their well-known malignity against all who are sceptical respecting the existence of such *supernatural personages* ; for those who have doubts about that which is indispensable to the theologians, are denounced by them as abominable Atheists, which, being explained, designates the few unfettered, ingenuous minds, who are capable of perceiving the matchless absurdity of attempting, by any entity, or personified representation whatsoever, to convey the slightest rational idea of that incomprehensible Power, by which countless millions of worlds are ruled.

LECTURE FIRST.

"Man is born in ignorance of everything around him; and this ignorance of natural causes begat terror; terror, superstition; superstition, priests and the priesthood: *whose interests and unbending efforts are exerted to perpetuate the ignorance, the fear, and the superstition that gave them birth.*"

ON MIRACLES.

THE ignorance of the natural causes of the effects which man sees around him, has ever been the foundation upon which the fabricators of all religions have built the whole machinery of those delusions by which the human race in all ages has been duped. These impostors have invariably relied on their artful jugglery in the pretended science of supernaturalism, for the success of their respective systems; and of all such means of deception, that of working miracles by legerdemain, or collusive agency, has been the most successfully palmed off upon the credulous multitude in all countries; whilst men of knowledge and reflection have in all times rejected the pretended infractions of the immutable course of nature, as the inventions of knavery to delude and thereby prey upon ignorance. The faith reposed in these delusive prodigies was always in proportion to the degree of simplicity in the deceived; they were not generally believed by those who saw, but most firmly by those who did *not* see, them performed; and though not true at first, that is, but a trivial matter, as time has established the veracity of those of the Jews and primitive Christians; and now when they are upheld by overwhelming clerical riches and power, backed by political corruption, they will continue to degrade, and be the grossest outrage upon common sense and experience, until the great and

salutary moral change shall take place, when the mind of youth shall no longer be mortgaged to the priest in education.

Though a miracle, or pseudo violation of Nature's laws, be the most certain method of exciting the admiration of the vulgar, it is contrary to reason that anything of the kind should be true; but it is by no means contrary to the testimony of experience, that impostors might have lived two or three thousand years ago, and propagated falsehood. This conclusion is fully corroborated by all modern experience, in which we find that deception and falsehood form the medium through which knavery rules simple ignorance; and to such a degree do these ingredients pervade the whole of society, that they in a great measure constitute the religious and moral element in which man lives at the present day; and so besotted has the breathing of this atmosphere of error and delusion rendered him, that the more outrageous a miracle, or other theological fable, is against rational light and common sense, the more greedily has it ever been received by the unthinking and priest-ridden million, who delight in the marvellous and the incredible—believing everything, and examining nothing:—hence the success of the ludicrous medley that makes up our Christian *Polytheism*. Admitting, for a moment, the possibility of such physical prodigies being true, what do we gain by them,—do they either confer additional authority on moral truth, or prove it false? Can they make right wrong, or wrong right? It is a melancholy fallacy to attribute to them any such power or influence, and implies a lamentably low estimate of the dignity and greatness of moral truth. All that we gain by pretended violations of Nature's laws, is dogmatism, bigotry, spiritual fear, intolerance, and superstition; together with all the other curses which come in the train of religion, when backed by authority.

A modern philosopher has given the quietus to miracles in the following death-blow:—"A miracle is a violation of the laws of nature; and as a firm and unalterable experience has established these laws, the

proof against a miracle, from the very nature of the fact, is as entire as any argument from experience can possibly be imagined ; and, therefore, no testimony is sufficient to establish a miracle, *unless the testimony be of such a kind that its falsehood would be more miraculous than the fact which it endeavors to establish.*" This argument is absolutely invincible. The boundless plenum of Nature—the revolution of hundreds of millions of globes round a million of suns, may be called miraculous, but in all this, Nature, or the material universe in motion,* is still invariable, and acting by *self-existing qualities or properties*, which are therefore inviolable and immutable. If it is asked, "cannot a law that is made by the Supreme Power be suspended by its author?" we reply, that the innate or essential properties of matter, being *principles*, could have no author—no antecedent—no beginning :—they are co-eternal as matter and motion, or the immutable Power which we call Nature. This hypothesis is plain, simple, easy, and rational : but the theory of your personified, localised artificer, is the reverse of all this ; for he himself would stand a thousand times more in need of an artificer or author than does the material universe. We *know* that matter exists : †—*there can be only one infinite*—ergo, matter *must* be that infinite.

In their secret doctrines, the philosophers and priests of antiquity admitted no miraculous powers ; and when they said that a certain thing was done by a god, or "the gods," they were merely using words suited to the capacity of the multitude, while the mystic or esoteric meaning was, that the thing arose from the concatenation of natural causes and effects, or the eternal order of necessity ; and not, as the ignorant imagine, that the laws of nature were suspended by the interference of some personified god. With the above two classes of the initiated, all their

* Lalande says that at the age of nineteen, he thought the heavens proved a personified God (the anthropomorphism of the Jews), but now, says he, I see in them nothing *but matter and motion*. He said also that *Materialism was beyond the vulgar*, to whom it would be neither agreeable nor useful.

† Begging my Lord of Oloyne's pardon.

mysteries were rooted in, and had constant allusion to zodiacal objects, and the physical powers of Nature; which objects and powers were, by the *prosopopœia*, converted into abstract existences, called gods and goddesses. This was done by all the priests of antiquity, as their varied schemes of superstition gained footing so as to foster ignorance and mental blindness amongst their dupes; and herein they were imitated by their successors, the Christians, who likewise claimed a power in their gods, to suspend or make infractions in the unalterable course of Nature. Judaism was a barbarous version of some of the beautiful and lively fables of the Pagans; and the present superstition of Europe is a rude polytheistical caricature of the whole.

The miracle-working Deity of the Jews appears to have been of Egyptian extraction; and had his prototype in the god *Jahouh*, who held a high rank in the polytheism of the Thebans. This *Jahouh* was a personification of that power which giveth forms to matter (*viz.*, motion), and organises animal and vegetable life, *alias* soul of the world. Moses, who is said to have been a priest of Isis, or Nature, the secret of whose mysteries was the unity of the supreme Power,* seems to have been wishful of preserving that unity in the Deity he had borrowed of the Thebans, as is stated by Strabo, in his Geography,† who informs us that Moses taught his followers to worship the god *Jahouh without representing it by emblems*. There can be no doubt as to the identity of this name and that of *Jehovah*. That Moses adopted this deity, and that the name when first introduced, was new to the Jews, appears from *Exod. vi., 3*. Neither Philo nor Josephus deny that the Jews borrowed circumcision from the

* Moses borrowed this of the Egyptians. Cudworth, in his *Intellectual System*, and Hyde, in his treatise on the religion of the Persians, acknowledge that the unity of God was the foundation of the religion of the Egyptians, Chaldeans, and Persians.

† Strabo's account is corroborated by his contemporary, Diodorus Siculus, and also by Plutarch. Diodorus's account of Moses not being agreeable to the Church, has been suppressed.—See Translation of the Abbé Terrasson.

Egyptians; why, then, might they not borrow a god also?*

As every nation had its cosmogony to account for the origin of things,† the Jews must have theirs likewise; so the scribes, who compiled their legends, imitated very closely the Zoroastrian fable, according to which the gods made the world in six *gahanbars*, or periods; of which the story in Genesis, even to the detail of work done in each day, is a mere copy; but the Jewish compiler mistook the matter so far as to put *days* in place of periods, or *gahanbars*; which word was significant of the six summer months, when the sun, by his genial and all-powerful impulse, makes a fresh creation every year. The learned have farther declared that, in the Talmuds, the expression in the first verse of Genesis is in the plural, viz. "the Elohim (the gods) placed in order the heavens and the earth;" that in the same verse, the word "barah," which signifies to arrange, to place in order, has been mistranslated "*created*." In like manner the words "*ruh elohim*," in the second verse, have been falsely rendered "spirit of God," though their true meaning is, *the wind of the gods*.‡ Thus, in the very first two verses of this pretended "word of God," we have no less than three instances of false translation. The learned Dr. Parkhurst has translated and shown that this word *elohim* or gods means the seven planetary bodies, as known to the ancients. He calls them *the disposers of the affairs of men*; an influence still attributed to them by the astronomical quacks called astrologers. These seven planets were the cabiri of the Egyptians and Phœnicians; of which Baal, "the

* Dr. Geddes, however, is of opinion that Moses learnt the name of Jehovah in Midian, while he resided with his father-in-law.

† The Indians had their Vedas and Pouranas; the Egyptians, the five books of Hermes; the Persians, the cosmogony of Zoroaster; the Greeks, that of Hesiod; the Phœnicians, that of Sanchoniatho. The Phœnician, though written in the style of history, is made up of personifications of time, the sun, the stars, earth, seasons, etc.

‡ In St. John's Gospel iii. 5 and 6, the Greek word *pneuma* (air or wind), is translated spirit; and in the 8th verse it is translated, "wind" and "spirit" both. In Luke i. 35, is not this word *pneuma* translated "Ghost"?

Lord," was the chief, being added as the eighth. Baal (the Sun) was also one of the names of the Jewish god, Jehovah. See Hosea ii., 16. That the astro-theology of the eastern nations had exclusive allusion to physical objects—the elements, seasons, etc., was well known to all the learned Jews. Maimonides says: "We must not, like the vulgar, understand literally what is written in the book of the creation (Genesis); otherwise our men of old would not have so earnestly recommended to conceal its meaning, *and refrain from raising the allegorical veil which covereth the truth under it. Understood literally, this work presenteth us with ideas of the deity which are most ridiculously absurd. The true meaning of the six days' work ought never to be divulged.*" The treatises of Philo Judæus have hardly any other object than the allegorical explanation of the Jewish scripture. The great Origen himself treated all these stories as astronomical emblems. "What man of sense," says he, "can persuade himself that there was a first, a second, and a third day, and that each of those days had a night, when there was yet neither sun,* moon, nor stars !!!"

Dupuis says, speaking of the astronomical origin of all religions: "The first six signs of the zodiac may be considered as forming the empire of God or Ormazdes; the remaining signs as that of the Devil or Ahrimanes (cold and darkness). After the evil principle has reigned during the six winter months, from the autumnal to the vernal equinox, the sun resumes his empire, bringing with him warmth and animation for a fresh creation; and causing the day to triumph over the night. The vernal equinox was therefore universally considered to be the time of creation. It is then that the Persians, who call April the month of Paradise, celebrate their Neurouz or the new revolution. The Jesuit Petavius has remarked that the Rabbis, when speaking of the creation, use the word *Bara*, which signifies to arrange, or rather to renew.

* Of all the glaring blunders committed by the compiler of Genesis, the most unfortunate was the miraculous production of three whole days before he thought of *making* the sun.

Syncellus, Cedrenus, St. Cyril, and others, agree that the word *creation* alludes to the vernal equinox; at which time they expect the coming of their god, who, as Cedrenus tells us, will arrive at *the Lord's Passover*; or the passage of the sun as he crosses the line of the equator at the vernal equinox point. Formerly, when the sun was in Taurus or the Bull, that sign presided over the vernal equinox, and it was to the Bull that the Persians attributed those ideas of *regeneration*, which a more recent superstition (the Christian) has naturally transferred to Aries, a sign called by the Persians '*the Lamb*.'"

But if the vernal equinox point be now in Pisces or the fishes, Christians have nothing more to do with the Ram, as he is the "*Lamb of God*" no longer; and therefore they should adopt, as of old, when the sun was in Pisces, the famous savior fish Oannes, which used to preach so prettily upon the banks of the Nile and the Euphrates. At that exceedingly remote period, say nearly 26,000 years ago, this fish must have been a principal god amongst the Egyptians and Chaldeans; and certainly, while the sun occupied the fishy sign in the zodiac at the vernal equinox, nothing could be more appropriate than that the emblem god should appear in the shape of a fish, to preach the annual salvation.* Each sign in succession has, by the slow precession of equinoxes, enjoyed a similar honor.

That the Jewish priests, from not having science within themselves, were apt to be too late in borrowing their emblem gods from the more learned hierophants of Egypt, Chaldea, and Persia, appears in that *unhandy* mistake committed by Jeroboam (1 Kings xiii., 4), in sacrificing to the golden calf, the old representative of the sign Taurus, which was then out of date, when he ought to have been paying his respects to the "*Lamb of God*," the accredited envoy of the sign of the Ram, which had come into play by the Sun's having entered it some time previously. By the mouth of his messenger, "*the Lord*" (the Sun) seems to reproach Jeroboam

* The first of the nine incarnations of the Indian Redeemer, Vishnu, was in the form of a fish.

in terms something like the following : "What ignorant ninnies you and your priests are, not to know that, having left my bull-house in the zodiacal town,* and taken a two thousand one hundred and fifty years' lease at the *sign* of the Ram, I have now nothing to do with calves : go, ye shallow novices, and learn better of your masters, my older and more scientific priests, the Magi and Chaldees, that the appropriate symbol of my worship, is now a Lamb, called the *Lamb of God*." †

Wherever such digressions as the above are made in the course of these Lectures, they are intended to show that, although we treat the Bible according to its literal meaning, the respect we have for it, *so far as it is a book of hidden science*, induces us to give such explanations, as they alone do it justice according to knowledge. But since its priests and their ignorant dupes insist on adopting the outward, or sense nonsensical, the best way to expose their folly is to take them at their word.

The legend about the first man may have been taken from Apollodorus' fable of Prometheus, who made the first man and woman with clay, and afterwards animated them with fire which he had stolen from the chariot of the sun ; or was the first creation in Genesis imitated from Plato's story of the androgynæ, or double *homo*, possessing both sexes ? Such was the hermaphrodite, or first creation in Genesis ; the second was purely masculine, and only one of his ribs turned into the feminine. In the ancient Persian traditions, there were two distinct fables about the creation of man, from which those in Genesis appear to have been taken : but the compiler of that book, knowing both of the stories, and being at a loss which to prefer, has

* The New Jerusalem.

† April-fools are no doubt of vast antiquity ; but Jeroboam is perhaps the first we met with in the Bible. This reproach was incurred by those who, like him, persisted in calf adoration, after its archetype the Bull, or sign Taurus, had ceased to be the "House of the Sun," at the vernal equinox ; that is, after the Bull of April had given place to the Ram, or Lamb of March ; and, according to the Rev. Mr. Maurice, that point could not have coincided with the first degree of Aries, later than 1800 years before our era.

foolishly mingled them together, yet still preserving the two creations. Thus it seems pretty certain that the Jewish fable about the first man and woman is of Persian origin. Henry Lord, in a book written at Surat, on the cosmogonies of India and Persia, and dedicated to the Archbishop of Canterbury, says : "In the Persian cosmogony, the name of the first man was *Adamoh* and of the woman *Hevah*. From hence come the Adam and Eve of the book of Genesis. Hevah is the name given to the woman, in an English edition of the Bible, printed in 1583."

In the Zoroastrian and Chaldean mysteries, the above supposed originals of the human race were personifications of the zodiacal signs, Bootés and Virgo ; and their *fall*, or expulsion from the summer garden of fruits and flowers, was emblematical of the solar year, after the autumnal equinox. Anciently, in India and Chaldea, the phænomenon of the starry heavens was called Aden, or the Celestial Garden. In all probability the Jews picked up these shreds of figurative astronomy when they were slaves to the Babylonians, and, ignorantly taking them in the literal sense, foisted them into their heterogeneous miscellany. Supported by the sound knowledge of Philo, and all the learned Jews, Origen again shows his contempt for those who understood Genesis literally, and cries out : "What man can be stupid enough to believe that God, acting the part of a gardener, had planted a garden in the east ; that the tree of life was a real tree, and that the fruit of it had the virtue of making those who eat of it live for ever?" * The first four chapters of that book contain parts of three, if not four distinct fables, all evidently derived from different sources. The rest of this extra-

* St. Augustine, in his "City of God," allows that in his time, the whole story about Adam, Eve, the serpent, and the garden of Eden, with its forbidden fruit, was considered as allegorical. There was not one, but there were two prohibited trees !

The Emperor Julian, with that wisdom which characterised him, observed that, "If there ever had been, or could be a tree of knowledge, instead of God forbidding man to eat thereof, it would be that of which he would order him to eat the most." *Reason is the real forbidden tree of priestcraft.*

ordinary medley, called the Old Testament, is made up of some dramatic fragments of the Egyptians and Persians (as the plague, miracles, and the book of Job), fabulous legends plagiarized by the Jews, barbarous narrative, and the rhapsodies of vagrant minstrels, who sung of past events, seemingly in the future tense.

From a mass of ill-strung fables, derived from such a variety of sources—a chaos of revolting prodigies, mixed up with a few probable facts, such as the expulsion or flight from Egyptian slavery, the murders and devastations in Southern Syria, etc., we cannot, in the bounds of a lecture, notice more than a few of the most prominent miracles, all of which had Pagan prototypes.

As every oriental country had its cosmogony, accounting very clearly, though contrarily to each other, for the origin of things, so all had traditionary floods, which each nation quoted as proof of its antiquity.* Why should not the Jews have one also? The Chaldeans said that theirs happened 15,000 years before the war of Troy, when the immense surface now occupied by the Mediterranean Sea was inundated. The Egyptians had their inundations; and hence their ark of Osiris (the archetype of the Noah's ark) the same as the constellation Argo. The Greeks had their floods of Ogyges and Deucalion; the latter of which was fully treated of by Berosus, and after him by Lucian, in his Syrian goddess; but the Jews, who took everything from their masters, borrowed the Chaldean pilot *Noë*, made him skipper of their ark, slightly changing his name to *Noah*, and appropriated to themselves the flood of Deucalion,† with all its details, almost word for word as fabled by Berosus and Lucian. That this tradition was not adopted by the Jews until long after the alleged time of Jehovah's flood, is proved by the orders which he gave Noah respecting clean and unclean beasts, the distinction whereof not being

* Even the long lives of the antediluvians, according to the Jews, are the exact copy of the Iogues of the Hindu Indians.

† The flood of Xisnthrus was almost the same as that of Deucalion.

made until several hundred years after the assumed time of Noah. Nothing can be more probable than that, amongst the initiated few, all these floods had secret reference to the supposed influence of the winter or watery constellations.

The Pentateuch, or first five books of the old Jewish "*will of God*," have been attributed to Moses; though, from their internal evidence, it is altogether impossible that he could be the author, even if we allow him to have been a real personage. These books were most likely compiled and got up in imitation of the *five books* of the Egyptian Hermes, who was at one time the personified genius of the constellation Sirius; at another, of the planet Mercury. That the god Bacchus was the archetype of Moses, seems to have been the opinion of many learned men, particularly the celebrated Bishop Huet, and I. Vossius, who agree that the Arabian name of Bacchus is *Meses*; and the identity is further proved, inasmuch as the etymon of the two words is the same, signifying *saved from the waters*. Justin, in his "*Historium Judæorum*," seems also to favor the fact that Moses was a fabulous person, where he says that it was not he, but Abraham, who led the Jews out of Egypt; that their number was 6,000, not 600,000;* and that they were turned out of the land for uncleanness, being all lepers.

A vast and sublime idea was attached to the attributes of *Jahouh*, whilst he was at home in Egyptian Thebes; but, in accompanying Moses and his barbarians into the Arabian desert, we find him completely shorn of all grandeur and dignity of character. He was there drilled and moulded into a god, whose will and commands were precisely those of the robber-in-chief and his priests, jointly and severally; by whom he was converted into the Jewish Juggernaut, delighting in blood; and on all occasions standing

* On almost all occasions, the Jewish tales, in relation to numbers, whether of men or other animals, are so ridiculously exaggerated, that if we adopt the scale of allowing them one for every hundred enumerated in their books, we shall do them ample justice. This gives Solomon ten in place of his thousand ladies: a harem still abundantly numerous to produce "vexation of spirit."

forward to prompt and justify their villainous schemes of devastation and murder.* At a very early stage of his connexion with Moses, he is degraded by being brought into contact with the dramatic jugglers of lower Egypt; of whose legerdemain tricks we have a sample in the stage representation of what are called the plague miracles. As a priest, Moses was no doubt initiated into all the arts of these sleight-of-hand impostors. In the trial of skill exhibited by the contending operators in these conjurations, we have a tissue of the most absurd and ridiculous fooleries imaginable,—the writer having taken leave of his senses, *we have the hyperbole run mad*. Much of this jugglery was done by means of real or counterfeit serpents.† After all the water in Egypt, even the great river Nile itself, had been turned into blood, the magicians do the same miracle, though Aaron had not left them a drop of water in all Egypt! Then follow other romances, wherein the “God” appears far more blameable than Pharaoh, whose sin of obstinacy is visited upon the innocent cattle; and in succeeding plagues, all the horses, asses, camels, oxen and sheep, having many lives, are killed over and over again. The story of the locusts is not miraculous; but we have an outrageous prodigy in a darkness for three *days*; to say nothing of its substantial property of being felt or handled. Why did not the Goshenites (who had their usual light) avail themselves of so good an opportunity to run away? They were waiting until “the Lord” should issue his general order to commit the robbery on the Egyptians. Though all Pharaoh’s horses had been twice or thrice killed during these plagues, he finds no difficulty in mustering a numerous cavalry to pursue the fugitives. Moses being a mere copy of Bacchus, all the above stage trickery—the dividing of the Red Sea and the Jordan, are rude imitations of the exploits of the latter, who performed marvellous feats and gambols, *turning water into blood*, drying up rivers, converting water into wine, etc., etc.

* Oh! what a mountain of faith and prejudice is required to hide this glaring, this palpable truth!

† See Lucian’s “Alexander.”

It appears an awkward business that the omniscient Jehovah could not safely undertake the midnight massacre of Egypt's firstborn, without some sign to prevent the possibility of his committing a blunder, by falling foul of his chosen Goshenites; and, therefore, another general order is issued, to smear their door-posts with blood as a mark of security, while the butchery was going on. This shocking tale might have arisen out of the historical fact, that the seventh Ptolemy caused all the young men of Alexandria to be murdered. This inference may be objected to on account of the supposed anachronism, respecting which we shall make a short digression. Precise historical dates have been carefully avoided or obscured by the Bible-makers; and there is scarcely any allusion to *time*, that is supported by concurrent testimony; and, therefore, it is only by a cross-examination of its internal evidence, that we can judge of the various periods when the Old Testament was compiled.* The Decalogue, Chronicles, and other narrative parts, may have been written under the order of Hilkiah and Ezra, shortly after the Babylonian slavery; yet there is great reason to believe that many poetical rants called prophecies, and even some parts of the Pentateuch, were written after the Jews began to congregate at Alexandria, when the events which the itinerant Jewish bards pretended to foretel, had already taken place: for instance, Ezekiel makes the Lord say, "And I will make *Pathros* desolate." Can the cunning alteration made in the first syllable of this word conceal the evident allusion to that "wonder of the world," the famous light tower of Pharos, which was built by two of the Ptolemies! Daniel could not speak of the third

* All the narrative writings of the Jews, which betrayed too openly a recent composition, such as the Maccabees (which in a historical point of view, are the most valuable parts of the Bible), and many others were excluded, and declared apocryphal by the Old Testament composers; yet numerous tell-tale proofs escaped them; for instance, Nehemiah speaks of "Darius the Persian." Now, between Cyrus and that prince, there reigned fourteen kings of Persia, during a period of 280 years. Therefore, not only were the Jew books written after their Babylonian slavery, but many centuries afterwards.

being "like unto the Son of God," before the dogma was invented that god had a son.* Moreover, if it can be shown (as hath been affirmed) that the prophecies were partly translated and modelled from Greek originals, at a period subsequent to the time of Ptolemy Philadelphus, what becomes of their antiquity? We repeat that most of the books of this collection contain abundant proofs of their having been fabricated from materials as aforesaid, at various periods between the Babylonian captivity and the destruction of Jerusalem by the Romans, in the time of Vespasian.

We have seen that the passage of the Red Sea is drawn from the fable of the triumphal march of Bacchus, when from Egypt he went to conquer India. Josephus, though he often renders the romances of his countrymen still more monstrous, was ashamed to make a miracle of this story, and compares it to the passage of the Pamphylian Sea, by Alexander. In a jovial mood Bacchus drew wine from a rock by a stroke of his rod; but herein the imitator deviates from the original, wisely preferring water to wine in an arid wilderness.

The manna miracle has long been detected and exposed. Josephus tells us that, in his time, it was found in great quantities in Arabia; and the plant that produces it is now cultivated in Sicily and Southern Italy. Bishop Talleyrand,† in a letter which

* The Talmud acknowledges that the forgeries of Daniel, Esdras, and others, were *prodigious*.

† Talleyrand tells the Pope also, that, of the numerous blunders committed by Moses, not the least was his fixing the time of the Creation at an epoch when the earth did not only exist, but had an immense population, and actually reckoned 50,000 years of civilisation: besides his pretending to look upon the Hebrews as the most ancient people on earth, forgetting or feigning to forget, that they were a mere gang of slaves who had originally escaped from Idumea, during the intestine wars which desolated that country. After having passed into Egypt, where they were again made slaves, it was after the lapse of many years, and after having robbed their masters (as their forefathers had robbed the Idumeans), that, induced by Moses, they crossed the Red Sea in Ethiopian vessels; and having gained the wood of Heno, in Arabia Deserta, they maintained themselves there during forty years, living by the robberies they committed on travellers and the people in the neighborhood.

he is said to have written to the Pope, after their quarrel, told his holiness that the real manna of Moses was the plunder he got in the desert by his robberies and murders; these were counted so many godsend.

As it is not necessary to notice these miracles in Bible order, it may here be observed, that the fable about Lot's wife might have been taken from that of Euodia; but, more probably, from the ancient fiction of Baucis and Philemon, as the first and this are essentially the same. Irenæus and Tertullian affirm that, in their times, *the statue of Lot's wife regularly menstruated at the usual period of women!* Reader, these men were no unfair sample of the Christian fathers.

It was a part of military discipline amongst the Persians, and other nations of the East, when marching large armies through the deserts, to carry in the van, during the *night*, fires, made with such combustible matter as would make a great flame of fire, which was elevated so high as to be distinctly seen by all in the rear, appearing, in the distance, as "a pillar of fire," and serving to point out the line of march. To direct this line during the day, such combustibles were burnt as would produce the greatest cloud or "pillar of smoke." This military usage is mentioned both by Herodotus and Quintus Curtius; and Alexander himself adopted it of the Persians. If Moses was so well provided in a supernatural fire-and-smoke conductor, why was he so anxious and pressing to get his brother-in-law Hobab (against his will) to guide the march, and to "*be to them instead of eyes*," in leading them to proper places for encampment? Here we have a striking instance of the matchless effrontery of the Jewish fabricators, in thus turning a common usage into a miracle.

It was wise in Moses to retire to the top of a hill, when he played off his fire and smoke thunder-cloud to the astonishment of the dupes below. His Deity wrought a clever miracle in creating the universe in six days; but what a falling off was there, when he required nearly seven times as long to engrave two

* Numbers x., 29 to 32.

tables of stone, which a man might "take in his hand." As a proof that this job could not be done in less than forty days, the same time precisely was taken to cut the second tables, after Moses had (forgetting his meekness) smashed the first. His well-dissembled rage about the affair of the golden calf* was, no doubt, the result of a cunning scheme, concerted between him and brother Aaron, in order to possess themselves of the gold that had been swindled from the Egyptians. To gull the fools, and save this gold for themselves, the priest had only to paint a wooden calf yellow, which was easily reduced to powder—gold could not, by burning: a little powdered charcoal would do the people no harm. When the sun was in Taurus (the Bull), at the vernal equinox, the astronomising priests of Egypt turned bulls and calves into gods, that were quite good enough for the vulgar; and when the sun entered the sign of the *ram*, a lamb answered equally well for a god, and does so to the present day.

The deity of Moses was rather extravagant in fitting out his tabernacle and ark. The latter was his travelling box, to afford him ease and comfort when making long marches, and was composed of very costly materials; but, in point of room and convenience, we should think it must have been inferior to some of Punch's portable palaces. However, the God grew so fond of, and so "jealous" about, his box, that, on one occasion, he perpetrated a tremendously bloody miracle, in killing 50,070 of the "glowrin' byke," for peeping into it. Putting aside the monstrosity of this story, in relation to number, could this offence arise from looking into an *empty* box? Certainly not. Sir William Drummond, in his "*Ædipus Judaicus*," asserts that, according to the Hebrew, the Jews carried about their idol in this

* In the story about this calf, our translation very modestly says, the people "rose up to play," though it acknowledges they "were naked;" but Dr. Clarke has had the singular honesty to tell us that, in the Hebrew Bible, this rising up to play was preparatory to *pairing for open sexual intercourse*. Bruce tells us that this open intercourse was common, and formed an essential part of festive entertainments amongst the Abyssinians. There is reason to believe that it was usual in many countries, both in Africa and Asia.

box,* as was customary with the migrating hordes of the desert, all of whom, as well as the Jews, kept an ark for that purpose.† Sir William's assertion is justified by the Bible itself, where it says that the Philistines were afraid, *because the Jews brought their god into the battle* when the ark was taken, a misfortune which their deity, with all his omnipotence, could not prevent; but he took terrible revenge on the captors by smiting them with emerods: hence the story in Rabelais against a certain most *unholy* and *unsanctified* use of that book.

The stupendous prodigy performed by that free-booter and murderer, Joshua, in laying an embargo upon the sun and moon, in order to get time to kill a few thousands more of the Amorites, showed a ferocious thirst of blood, and was wholly uncalled for, victory being already secured through the powerful aid of Jahouh, who, sitting astride on the corner of a dark cloud was pelting the Amorites with great stones. Let us suppose that both the sun and the moon were in view at the same time, and that they stood still as commanded, would that make the massacre of the Amorites one iota less cruel and ferocious? It would only prove that Joshua's god was neither just nor merciful. This tale is, no doubt, a varied version of the fable of Jupiter's sending a shower of large hail-stones upon the rebellious sons of Neptune. This may be coupled with another enormous fiction, the dial of Ahaz, upon which, by a bolder manœuvre still, the sun is commanded to go backwards. Moses and

* The Christian translators of the Bible, no doubt, did all in their power to suppress the fact, that a representation of the Jewish idol was kept in this box. The Levites being the constituted priests of this idol, Micah, when he had his god made of the stolen silver, did not consider it by any means sufficient to have one of his own sons as priest. Why? Because his new idol represented the Jewish deity; and, therefore, a Levite as his priest was indispensable; for then, says he, "I know the Lord will do me good." (See Judges, xvii.) That this god was afterwards located at Jerusalem, as the other district gods of the country were stationed in their respective towns, we have many proofs in the Bible. (See 1 Kings xii.; Ezra i., 8; vii., 15, 19.)

† Did not the priests of Jupiter Ammon carry the magnet with them, in a compass-box, as the *ark of the covenant of their god*, which it was death for the unsanctified to look into.

Joshua appear to have had a sun and moon, as well as a Deity of their own. From all this does it not appear that the compilers of these fables, though under heavenly inspiration, were so ignorant as to suppose that the sun's motion caused the day, and that this globe stood still? Is it not evident also, that they took the stars to be little bright spangles set in a solid firmament (which had windows), as jewellers set brilliants in metal? The man who seriously believes in the literality of our version of these fables, is so stupidly and piteously credulous, as to be an object of compassion rather than of contempt. The two last miracles had more than one archetype in Pagan mythology:—the sun and moon were arrested by Bacchus on his march to India. In one of the love intrigues of Jupiter, he stayed the sun in order to get a double night in the arms of the fair Alcmena, when she conceived of the great Hercules. In later times the Christian priests performed a similar miracle in favor of the Emperor Charles V.

If Amphion, by the music of his lyre, made the stones dance into building order, so as to raise the walls of Thebes, why should not Joshua reverse the miracle, by tumbling down the walls of Jericho, to a tune played upon rams'-horns by priests?

In the whole history of human cruelty and wickedness, there is nothing to equal, in cool and diabolical atrocity, the plunder and massacre of the Midianites. The horrible narrative partakes but little of the miraculous; yet, as Jahouh was said to be without a material body, and purely spiritual, it has been matter of wonder what he was going to do with the thirty-two young virgins who "had not known a man by lying with him," and who were awarded as his share of the spoil. This is a mystery which we must hold in silent reverence, as being altogether unaccountable, unless we surmise that his priests kindly intended to relieve him of so numerous a seraglio.*

* Horror succeeds to wonder, when it is known that by the original meaning of the word, everything *devoted* to the "Lord," was *assuredly sacrificed*, unless redeemed.

The speech of Balaam's ass, of edifying and sacred memory with our holy church, had many precedents in antiquity. The cows of Mount Olympus had been distinguished for supernaturally inspired orations ; the doves, the fountains, and even the oaks of Dodona, had delivered heavenly oracles ; Xanthus, one of the horses of Achilles, predicted his master's death before the walls of Troy. Livy and Suetonius (we are sorry for them as they ought to have known better) furnish other examples.

Almost the same exploits have been attributed by the Jews to Samson that were related by the Phœnicians of their Hercules (according to Varro, there were forty-four Herculeses), and the imitation is palpably servile in the story of the gates of *Gaza*, and that of Hercules with the pillars of *Gader*. Lion-killing was imitated also. Hercules was one of the numerous personifications or emblems of the power of the sun ; and the Arabian name *Shams-on*, or *Samson*, signifies the sun. Hercules is made prisoner by the Egyptians, who want to sacrifice him ; but while they are preparing to slay him, he breaks loose and kills them all. Samson, when tied with new ropes, is given up to the Philistines, who want to kill him ; he breaks the ropes, and kills a thousand of them with the jaw-bone of an ass. The fables are identical. Even the story of the fox-tails is rooted in astronomy.* About the time when the corn is cut down in Palestine and Lower Egypt, and shortly after the setting of the rainy constellation Hyadēs, the sign of the fox arose, *in whose tail or train came the fires or torches of the dog-days*.

The fable of Jephtha's sacrificing his daughter has some resemblance to the immolation of Iphigenia by her father, Agamemnon, in the famous expedition against Troy, which must have been taken by the Greeks many centuries before the Jews were *known* to have writings, or even a name.

The legend about the tower of Babel seems to have originated thus : The wise men of Egypt were jealous of the Chaldean philosophers ; the former said that the

* See "New Researches."

latter were so proud of their knowledge in astronomy that they presumptuously endeavored to erect a column of science as high as the stars ; but that their pride was humbled when all their efforts failed to complete the work.

The hideously unjust dogma of original sin might have grown out of the Pagan fable of Pandora's box, the occult meaning of which most probably was the evils arising from theology and priestcraft. However, it is high time that our Christian priesthoods should invent for it some less ridiculous origin than the apple story, for that is too absurd to serve their ends any longer.

Ludicrous as the whale fable of Jonah is, the copy is fairly outmatched by the original from which it is taken. It is a Jewish version of that of Hercules, who was enclosed for three days in the belly of a whale ; but, being more witty and adroit than Jonah, he contrived to live sumptuously all the while, by feasting on the liver of the monster, which, by some means or other, he contrived to broil ! Here, for once, the Jew is outdone at his own weapons—the romance run mad. It must surely have been in ridicule of these and similar god-fables that Lucian wrote his "True History."

Isaiah says (xxxvii., 36), "Then the angel of the Lord went forth and smote, in the camp of the Assyrians, 185,000 ; and when *they* arose in the morning, behold, they were all 'dead corpses.'" The Jonah of the Jew was completely thrown into the shade by Hercules, but here he is himself again. This miracle of miracles is altogether unmatched in heathen mythology ; for we have 185,000 men, who were murdered in the night, getting up in the morning merely to find *themselves* "dead corpses." A commentator of the true impudent breed will easily explain all this by affirming that the prodigy was typical of the resurrection.

The three hours of an eclipse, which is said to have taken place on the death of one of our Christian gods, is a very modest imitation of the Pagan original, from which it has every appearance of being taken. We say modest, because on the death of the godling Phæton,

his father Phœbus withheld his light from the earth a whole day.

All the Jewish and Christian fictions about resurrections and ascensions into what is called heaven, are also clumsily taken copies of originals in the ancient polytheism. The Egyptian Osiris died, returned again to life, and afterwards obtained divine honors; he was designated "*the holy word*." The god Atys was called "*the God our Savior*." Bacchus died, was buried, descended into, and slept three nights in Tartarus* (the only hell they had in those times), from whence he brought up his mother, with whom he ascended into heaven, and made her a goddess. His return to life was annually celebrated by the virgins and matrons of Delphi.

Thus the compilers of the Jew books had exemplars in, and drew their fables from, Paganism; and were themselves imitated in turn by the fabricators of the new Testament: the stories of the manna, and the twenty loaves of Elisha, very naturally suggested the wonderful growth of Jesus' loaves and fishes; and the manner in which that prophet turned brackish into pure water, would clearly point out how that element might be turned into wine, at the feast of Cana. The above are only a few of the numerous instances which might be quoted, wherein the ignorance of the Jewish scribes disfigured the elegant and lively fables of Paganism; and it cannot escape observation that the rude recoinage in their barbarous mint has turned that which was pretty and amusing into the deformed and hideous, in a manner quite characteristic of their own semi-savage condition.

Having given a few specimens of the miracles attributed to the deity adopted by Moses, and their Pagan

* All the tales about Tophet, Gehenna, Tartarus, or Hell, had no foundation whatever "but the practice of burning mankind, either on the funeral pile, or as a sacrifice to the gods. The Greek word, Ades, or Hades, occurs eleven times in the New Testament, and is *falsely* translated *Hell* in all except one, where it is rightly translated 'the grave,' signifying the *invisible state*."

Ouranos, cœlus, or heaven, merely signified the earth's atmosphere in the summer months.

prototypes, we will take a retrospective glance at his general conduct and character, as depicted in his *old Jewish Will*. Never were higher qualities and powers ascribed to any god; and never were they so badly sustained; he is represented as omniscient, yet always taken by surprise; an omnipotent being, whose designs are commonly frustrated; immutable, yet ever changing; sufficient to his own happiness, yet always "jealous;" perfection itself, yet continually making imperfections, and repenting of that which he had previously approved; finally, he makes an *eternal* Being, about as powerful as himself, and for no other apparent purpose than to be crossed and circumvented in all his projects. Sometimes Moses and he had sharp bickerings, such as that tavern squabble in Egypt (Exodus iv., 2—4), when the god lurked about the inn,* "seeking to kill" his protégé. At other times they were good friends, merry, and frolicksome, playing at bo-peep among the rocks (Exodus xxxiii., 22), the god showing his "back parts" only, for "no man could see his face and live"; yet on other occasions he talked "face to face" with his intimate friends. He forfeited all pretensions to the attributes of omniscience and omnipresence, when he confessed that he must "*go down now and see*" what the men of Sodom had been doing (Gen. xviii., 21). Nor could he, from his villa beyond the clouds, discover the Tower of Babel, but was under the necessity of coming "down to see" (Gen. xi.). That from his Egyptian greatness he was reduced, by Moses and his priests, to be merely a provincial deity, appears in various texts, as in Deuteronomy iv., 7, where it is said he was located near or living "nigh to them" (the Jews). A district god of this kind was fashionable all over Syria at that time, each petty state or tribe having one of its own; such as Astartē, *with the cross*, of the Phœnicians; Moloch, of the Ammonites; Astoroth and Dagon, of the Philistines; Tammuz, or Adonis, of the

* We do not mean to say that he frequented inns or taverns, but it appears he was fond of a cheerful glass of wine. See Judges ix., 13. Being composed of flesh and blood, Gen. vi., 3.

Sidonians ; Chemosh,* of the Moabites, etc., etc. ; and why should not the Jews be armed with a god as well as their neighbors ? Well might Jahouh exclaim, "*save me from my friends*;" for his historians have represented him as a passionate, blustering, vengeful changeling, extremely "jealous" of all the other petty gods around him, and exciting nothing but fear and dislike in his followers ; hence the Theocrat and his priesthood were continually struggling to keep the grist at their own mill, by preventing the people from "whoring after" the more amiable rites of Astartē and Adonis. In the seventeenth chapter of 1 Chronicles this deity gives intimation that, owing to a change of habits, he was not particularly desirous of living in a house ;† that ever since he left Egypt, he had accustomed himself to go about "*from tent to tent, and from one tabernacle to another*." There is something exceedingly ludicrous in this ; yet we trust that the "long-ear'd rout," the *true believers*, will have no difficulty in preserving their gravity. In short, of all the personified deities of antiquity, Moses has caricatured his the most egregiously. All these local or provincial gods were immeasurably inferior to the Jupiter of the Greeks, who, although he "liked the lasses," always sustained an awful dignity of character.

In additional proof that the Jew books have no just claim to antiquity, there is not a vestige of authentic testimony to show that they were in existence before the King of Babylon gave the Jews permission to settle in Palestine, after their slavery. The first thirteen of these appear to have been then fabricated from loose and unconnected traditions ; of which the Pentateuch was in all probability compiled the last, as there is no mention of it either in Joshua, Judges, the two books of Samuel, Psalms, or in Kings or Chronicles, until the

* See Judges xi., 24.

† The deity set up by priests stands in no want of a house whilst among wandering tribes, who build none for themselves ; but while he is amongst the stationary cultivators of the soil he requires one, in which his *immaterial presence* is requested on stated days to hear his own praise sung : men are fond of praise, therefore it undoubtedly follows that the deity must be fond of it likewise.

time of Josiah, that is, about 900 years after the pretended time of Moses.* If a man, without slavish fear or prejudice, will impartially examine the stories in 2 Kings xxii., and 2 Chron. xxxiv., xxxv., he will see palpably the collusion between the high priest Hilkiah and his pupil, the young king Josiah, aided by the prophet Jeremiah, Shaphan the scribe, and the prophetess Huldah. These persons, some of whom must have learnt to write while at Babylon, acted in concert under the high priest, in manufacturing the books of the law, which they pretended to have found in an old chest, where, according to their story, they must have mouldered for upwards of 900 years; yet *Shaphan could read them as fluently as if he had written them himself*. The object of this fraud being to wean the Jews from the gods of the Chaldean priests, it is probable that the books of the law only were forged on this occasion; for we find that the compilation of a large portion of the Bible traditions fell to the share of Esdras (who was identically Ezra the scribe), as he distinctly tells us in the fourteenth chapter of his second book, viz., that under the orders of the Lord (read, *the high priest*), he had a number of clerks engaged for forty days, during which time they completed amongst them 204 books or chapters.† As all these men had been captives

* The proof that Moses could not possibly be the author of the Pentateuch did not escape the luminous mind of Mr. Paine. In Genesis xiv., 14, it is said, "And Abraham pursued them to Dan." Now, there was no place called Dan until the time of the Judges. See Judges xviii., 28 and 29.

In Genesis xxxvi., 31, it is said, "And these are the kings that reigned in the land of Edom *before the children of Israel had any king*." Therefore several kings, viz., Saul, David, Solomon, etc., must have reigned before the first book of the Pentateuch was written.

In the forty-ninth chapter the writer gives an account of the ultimate fate of the tribes (forgetting the tribe of Manasseh altogether). How could Moses know anything of this? How could he speak of the sceptre of Judah? If it is said that this was prophetic of Jesus, we reply that the sceptre *was not* in Judah when he (Jesus) was born.

St. Jerome, said to be one of the most learned of the Fathers, confesses he dare not affirm that Moses was the author of the Pentateuch. He even adds that he has no objection to allow that it was written by Esdras. His words are: "Sive Mosem dicere volueris auctorem Pentateuchi sive Esdras ejusdem instauratorem operis, non recuso."

† That Esdras composed these books is further proved in his first

in Babylon, and could nowhere else be taught to write, how could these books be composed in any other than the Chaldee character? The third chapter of the book of Chronicles gives a list of the Jewish kings from David to Zedekiah, and even to four generations after his time. Now, as Zedekiah was one of those who were carried to Babylon, we have a strong, an irrefragable proof that those books were written after that captivity.

Moreover, learned critics have shewn that the Bible names of angels, such as Gabriel, Uriel, Raphael, Michael, Satan, etc., are purely Chaldean or Persian! And this is confirmed by the Talmud of Jerusalem, which says expressly that the Jews borrowed the names of the angels from the Babylonians. Even the name Israel is not a Hebrew but a Chaldee word, as was fully explained by Philo Judæus, when on his embassy to the Emperor Caligula. This corroborates the opinion that, in the portions of the Pentateuch which existed only in tradition, previous to the captivity at Babylon, the angels had no names, and that they were afterwards added when these traditions were written. For instance, when Abraham entertained Jehovah and the two angels with roasted veal,* the party gave themselves no names; and those heavenly messengers whose virginity was so much endangered by the men of Sodom, when they honored Lot with a visit, were anonymous also; as was likewise the one that appeared to Manoah. The legend contained in the book said to be written by Enoch, concerning the war in heaven, fall of the angels, etc., must have

book, chap. 8, where it is said that he "had very great skill, and omitted nothing of the law" of the Lord, i.e., the laws of the king, and high priest.

* This story is taken from an old fable related in the *Fasti* of Ovid, how Jupiter, Neptune, and Mercury, having supped with an old man named Hyrieus, and finding that impotence was the cause of his having no children, each of the three urined upon the skin of the calf that had been killed for supper, and this celestial water impregnated the skin, which, after nine months' inhumation, produced a beautiful child, which became the constellation Orion. The learned say that the true translation of the words which the angels addressed to Abraham, is thus:—*A child shall be born of your calf.*

travelled from India to Chaldea, where it was picked up by the Jews. It arose from one of the astro-fables in that most ancient of all books, the Shastras of the Brahmins, wherein it is recorded that heavenly beatitude was disturbed by the pride and ambition of Mozazor and Raabon, two princes of the angelic bands, who stirred up sedition, and drew after them myriads of angels in rebellion against the *Eternal*, who sent against them his vicegerent Brahma, with his two lieutenants, Vishnu and Siva, armed with almighty power, who hurled the rebels from heaven down to a place of darkness, called Ondera. This ancient fable of the Brahmins was probably the groundwork also of the Grecian fable of the Titan war.

A word more respecting Abraham. The planet Saturn was the Israel of the Chaldees; and it was personified both by them and the Phœnicians under the name of Abraham, which signifies the *Father of a people*, figuratively, the stars of heaven, which are called "his seed for ever." Saturn was the son of *Terra* (the earth); Abraham was the son of Terah; Saturn married his own sister Rhea, a star; Abraham married his own sister Sarai or Sarah, which signifies a star (Sirius, the ever beautiful and young); Saturn had many sons, but only one whom he loved and protected as an *only* son; Abraham had many sons, though he is said to have had an only son named Isaac, whom he loved. According to the famous Sanchoniatho, Saturn offered up his beloved son Jeoud, as a holocaust, or burnt offering wholly consumed; Abraham was about to offer up his beloved son Isaac,* but a ram (zodiacal) was found as substitute. The planet Saturn was called *Israel* by the Phœnicians and Chaldees; the patriarch Abraham is synonymous with the name Israel throughout the Bible. Saturn, from his exceedingly remote situation in the solar system, and the long period taken to circle his immense orbit, was the emblem of time; hence the

* In this horrible story, as understood literally, Abraham receives quite coolly, and without either surprise or remonstrance, the order to sacrifice Isaac; which shows, even in allegory, that among the Jews the sacrifice of the first-born son by the father was nothing uncommon.

many Bible phrases about Abraham, as connected with time, such as "before Abraham was,"—i.e., before time was. Priests! are these merely chance coincidences?

Stupidity itself, if honest and free from prejudice, would at once see and acknowledge the perfect sameness, the absolute identity of these astro-fables; and that the personal existence of Abraham rests precisely on the same ground as that of any other mythological or metaphysical existence whatsoever. But what will our gospel-grace baby of fifty say, when he has the mortification to see the truth of the above interpretations antecedently confirmed and justified by the gospel itself? Paul, in his epistle to the Galatians says: "For it is written that Abraham had two sons, the one by a bond-maid, the other by a free woman, *which things are an allegory*," that is, a fable. This story, then, no more belongs to the Hebrews than it does to the Laplanders, but is wholly Chaldaic, and was plagiarised by the Jews while slaves in Babylon; but the Chaldee priests would take special care that they should see only the *veil* that covered the allegory. Thus it is clear that Abraham's personal existence was as fictitious as that of Saturn, Jupiter, Orion, Mercury, Apollo, etc. He is also identified in the Hindu Brahma, with no other difference than a transposition of the letters of the name. The god Jehovah of the Bible announces himself to Abraham and Moses in almost the same terms as does the supreme god of India to Brahma, as recorded in the Bhagavat Pourana, the *Holy Bible* of the Hindus, translated from the Sanscrit by Sir William Jones, who allows the vastly higher antiquity of the Brahmin allegories.

We shall now touch slightly upon the curious question, whether the Jews did ever in reality possess any territory not subject to a higher power. The narrative of their colonisation by Cyrus is liable to much doubt and objection. No authentic historian of ancient times, Josephus excepted, has ever in any way mentioned them as an independent nation or state, or as being in possession of Palestine, or any part of Great Syria, before or in the time of Alexander. As a nation they appear to have been entirely unknown to Hero-

dotus, and all other Greek historians. What had become of them when Xenophon wrote of the eastern nations, which was only 150 years after their alleged return from Babylon? He mentions the Syrians of Palestine as under the Persian government, but not a word about the Jews. Herodotus mentions two invasions of the Scythians, through Syria, even to the borders of Egypt; but acknowledges no Jews or Israelites. In the fragments that remain of Sanchoniatho, Ctesias, Berosus, and Manetho, they are not noticed even as a petty or subject state, so that we have the fullest negative evidence that in the times of these historians, no part of Syria was a Jewish country. Diodorus, in detailing the events in that country, the siege of Tyre, etc., during Alexander's conquests, says not a word of the Jews as forming a state or colony, or of their boasted city of Jerusalem: and he is equally silent as to their existence as a nation during the times of Alexander's immediate successors; nor have we any historical account of them deserving of credit until the time of Antiochus the 4th (Epiphanes), under whom they lived, and he was subject to the Romans. If the territory of Judea was given to them by the King of Babylon, only about 200 years before the Macedonian conqueror went to the east, why did not he and his historians find them there? The plain and simple truth is, the Jews NEVER formed an independent state; and that part of Syria called Palestine, was, in all known ages, subject either to the Egyptians, Assyrians, Babylonians, Persians, Greeks or Romans (according to the tide of conquest), as it now is to the Turks. In Bible times the Jews were much more ignorant than they now are, and this is all the difference in their condition; they were always the old-clothes'-men and gold clippers of the world. They were permitted by the King of Babylon to build a temple to their idol in the rocky district of Judea, which formed a nucleus—a Jewish Mecca—to which they congregated from all parts for worship. Josephus, while he speaks of his masters, the Romans, is tolerably correct; but when he treats of the "antiquities" of his countrymen he

is not for a moment to be trusted, because he was then merely copying their legendary tales, and he frequently far exceeds the wild romance of the tales themselves. The pretended interview between Alexander and the high priest Jaddua, is evidently plagiarised from the well-authenticated scene that took place between that prince and the high priest of Jupiter Ammon.

From the times of Porphyry, Celsus, and Hierocles, to the present day, it has been the wonder of the rational philosopher, how a disjointed collection of writings, made by an obscure and barbarous race of people, came to have such mighty importance attached to them, more especially as their tendency has ever been inimical to, and subversive of, human happiness ; but this sad anomaly may be accounted for. All such tyrants as Constantine saw in these books examples of the most unqualified despotism ; and knew that, through the medium of carefully fostered ignorance, man is an animal that can be made to believe and bear anything, however absurd and tyrannical. Conquerors and devastators of countries found in them justifying precedents for all their enormities, and the rivers of blood which ambition and Christian fanaticism have shed in every part of the world. The Crusades, where millions upon millions of fanatics perished, are never-dying witnesses of this. Would any unshackled mind believe that the Spaniards could have been guilty of such inhuman and monstrous cruelties towards the simple and unoffending natives of America, if such horrid butcheries had not been sanctioned, nay, commanded, and pompously set forth, in the detailed massacres of the Bible ? Here we have the exploits of some generals of banditti—blood-thirsty robbers, who blasphemously declare that their unequalled cruelties were committed by command of the ruling power of the universe ! That the Spaniards thought themselves justified by the Bible, appears by the book which Sepulvado wrote for the express purpose of vindicating them in the murder of twelve millions of Indians, "*by the example of the Israelites towards the people of Canaan.*" Las Casas says: "I have seen in the Islands of St.

Domingo and Jamaica, gibbets erected all over the country to hang thirteen Indians at a time, *in honor of the thirteen apostles*.—"I have seen," continues he, "young children thrown to dogs* to be devoured alive." In charging the shocking barbarities of the Bible upon the Jewish deity, the fanatic devoutly accuses him of crimes and acts of wicked injustice that are hardly ever committed, even by the worst of men, such as visiting the offences of the fathers upon the children, and requiring the sacrifice of the innocent to expiate the crimes of the guilty. To what a state of mental degradation, O man, have thy priests and thy superstition reduced thee !

Thus did kings, conquerors, and corrupt rulers of nations see the justifying precedents to be drawn from these books for all their enormities ; and as for the fathers or heads of the Christian sect, and other religious impostors, they could be at no loss to find in them just whatever suited their respective schemes of deception. The learned amongst the early fathers saw and acknowledged the astro-allegories about Adam, Eve, the serpent, Garden of Eden, and fall of man ; but their successors, about the beginning of the 4th century, when they decided upon getting up a *new will and testament* for Jehovah, in order to make their system hold together, thought it necessary to cause his departure from the usual practice of testators—that he should not be allowed to revoke the old Jewish will, which, for good reasons, was to be retained in full force. Without this document their most essential dogmas would have had no foundation ; and as it "would have been too bare-faced a fable to make Jesus die on account of an allegorical tree," the forbidden one of Genesis must be converted into a real tree ; for then it would, together with its accompaniments, furnish mystical pegs upon which to hang the indispensable dogmas of original sin and redemption.

* In Hosea xiii., 16, we have a declaration "That their infants shall be dashed in pieces, and their women with child shall be ripped up"!!! This and the Midianitish slaughter and extermination, together with that of the Amalekites, will perhaps stand for ever unmatched in the history of human cruelties.

These appear to have been the ruling motives of those who gradually manufactured the Christian scheme (for it was done by piecemeal, by a number of hands, and in different centuries) and in adopting the Old Testament it was necessary, by this affiliation, to connect its list of fabulous prodigies with the new code,* or fresh series of miracles which had been invented for, and are recorded in, the new will of the Jewish deity :—†

“Ay, and sound ones too,
Seen, heard, attested, every thing—but true.”

In forcing this connexion still closer, the fabricators had no difficulty in finding that, in their series of wonders, the principal violations of Nature's laws had been foretold in the Jewish prophets.‡ This was a clincher which served to confirm the supernatural texture of their religion, quite as well as the cloud-conveyed Shastras did that of Brahma, the laws of Moses from the cloud-capped Sinai, or any other of the numerous human laws which have originated beyond the clouds, and been palmed upon ignorance by impostors. Clouds, shadows, phantoms, ghosts, etc., have ever been the favorite machinery of priests. According to the notoriously false prediction of St. Paul, Jesus, on his second coming, was to be cloud-delivered; and this advent, it was positively asserted, would take place during his own (Paul's) lifetime. But our church mystagogues will very easily reconcile this unfortunate failure with “*gospel truth*.” As the Old Testament compilers had made up their collection

* Matthew pretends that Jeremiah foretold that Christ should be betrayed for thirty pieces of silver. Where is this to be found in Jeremiah?

† When the latent astronomical sense of these two testaments is made manifest, a necessary connexion between them is perceived; owing to their common foundation in Solar adoration, and that of the other physical powers of Nature.

‡ These prophets were in reality nothing but strolling soothsayers, fortune-tellers, psalmists or palmists; and being mob orators by education and profession, with a capability of reading and writing, they were fitted to deceive the ignorant in many ways. Dodwell, *De Jure Laicorum*, asserts that they prepared themselves to prophecy by *drinking wine*. They were also jugglers, musicians, etc., etc.

chiefly of any traditionary or legendary shreds they could gather,* so did their successors, the Christians, in their new miscellany. The Therapeutæ, or Egyptian monks, had supplied a large portion, as is confessed even by Eusebius himself (see Lecture Second), but by a luckless anachronism, the spurious writings that were selected to form the new will of god, were not (according to the best authorities) finally voted to be such until the Council of Laodicea;† so that the present document had no existence till *three hundred and sixty-eight years after the death of the testator*, for it is quite orthodox to say that Jesus was "God the Testator."

From the discordant and immoral tendency of the greater portion of the old will of the Jewish god, there could arise but little hope that his new one would benefit the human race; so according to the spirit of its own terrible denunciation (Matt. x., 34, 35, 36), we find that its votaries, the religious fanatics both of early and modern times, have not yielded in the slightest degree but been fully equal in *holy cruelty* to the Jews, who were utterly inaccessible to every feeling of pity or humanity. These two superhuman Testaments now form a book, which, from its ill-deserved conventional pre-eminence, and the hydra-priesthoods which it quarters upon industry, is the chief scourge of modern Europe. The contemptible ignorance, credulity, and fraud which support its tyrannous authority as a supernatural revelation; the futile attempt to enforce a belief in its literal meaning as indispensable to the

* The Pharisees of the second temple chose the books they liked best among a multitude of forgeries. The Talmud relates that this synagogue were about to reject by far the best books of the Bible—viz., Proverbs, Job and Ecclesiastes; not owing to their not being Jewish, but Pagan writings, *but because they were contradictory to the law of god*. It was not only the opinion of Ebenezer, but even of Jerome himself, that Job is not a Hebrew book.

† The deadly animosity and quarrelling for which the Council of Nice was so famous, would prevent anything like decision; and, therefore, it is much more probable that the finishing hand in voting what should form the New Testament, was put at Laodicea, and not at Nice, especially as we know that the book of Revelation was rejected at Council of Laodicea; but again admitted long afterwards.

happiness of mankind; and the universal degradation and misery which it perpetuates, by the inbred hostility which all its priesthoods have ever evinced towards every improvement that would enlighten and elevate the human mind, have done more to disgust and misanthropize all ingenuous and rational minds, and to inspire them with a settled aversion for the ways of man and his institutions, than all the other moral and physical evils now experienced in Christendom. While these master curses are maintained in their pestiferous sway, it will be impossible for their victim, man, to taste of happiness through the attainment of civil liberty to any beneficial extent, or to approach truth and virtue by philosophical researches in the path of Nature ; for there is no arriving at these but by the utter extermination of all the fraudulent and idolatrous religions pretending to supernatural revelation.

END OF LECTURE FIRST.

LECTURE SECOND.

"Lest you start at these bold truths, and fly
These lines, as maxims of impiety,
Consider that Religion did, and will
CONTRIVE, PROMOTE, and ACT the greatest ill."
LUCRETIUS.

CHRISTIAN SUPERNATURALISM

FURTHER CONSIDERED.

IN the foregoing Lecture, it has been shown that the Jewish deity of Moses, on his being adopted and continued in power by the early sect of Christians, who were themselves Jews, was induced by his new hierarchy, as soon as they were established, to make a new *Will* (the old Jewish one not being altogether sufficient for their ends), into which they gradually, as occasion required, foisted different codicils, by which they multiplied the objects of worship, by introducing into partnership with him two colleagues, who, being each no other than himself, the three, quite arithmetically, made but "*one God*." But by this cunning and masterly manœuvre, he soon found himself fairly outwitted by his priests, who were the sole gainers by this polytheistical stratagem; whilst the supremacy which he held in the time of Moses dwindled into division, and he was obliged to share with the other two, and even with the mother* of one of them, the worship of his new votaries. Even the gods themselves, when

* When the people of Ephesus were informed that the Fathers of the Council had declared they might call the Virgin Mary "*The Mother of God*," they were transported with joy; they kissed the hands of the

they get entangled in the meshes of priestcraft, are seldom able to burst the trammels; and so it has happened in the case before us. The "New Will" was a most ingenious invention on the part of the Fathers of Christianity, as it afforded them an opportunity not only of re-modelling their deity, in person and family, but of abrogating or amending all such of his old laws as no longer suited the times or their views; and of making every change that was necessary to establish the new hierarchy in riches and power. The tithe of industry and settled money revenues must now be substituted for the bloody altars, and delectable viands of Jehovah's former priests; and as he was precisely a personification of the interests of these, so has he continued to be of those of their successors, who, having that object alone in view, have been but little solicitous about rendering him either more consistent or amiable; but on the contrary, they have sublimated his cruelty, by the invention of eternal fire torments, an idea so enormously absurd and wicked, that it never entered his head while he was merely Theocrat of the Jews.

Matters being thus settled by the rejection of the numerous theogony of which Jupiter was the head, and the adoption of unity in the godhead, under the Jehovah of the Jews, it was still considered necessary, in order to reconcile the polytheists, to preserve some vestiges of polytheism; and these were readily suggested by the waking dreams and spiritual speculations of Plato, whose "three *hypostases*" seemed wonderfully well adapted to form the basis of our triune mythology. Hence the *divinity* of Plato.

As the third part of that godhead which is now worshipped in modern Europe, was, as well as the other parts, borrowed from the heathen trinity, and forms an important dogma in our superstition, a sketch of its history may not be unnecessary. Like the meta-

bishops—they embraced their knees, and the whole city resounded with acclamations! *St. Cyril's Letter.*

Juno, the sister and wife of Jupiter, had divine honors paid to her; why then refuse the same to the mother of one of the Christian "Gods?"

physical invention of the soul's immortality, it is altogether unacknowledged in the Old Testament, as a personified deity; for the "spirit of the Lord," if rightly translated, merely signifies *wind of the gods*, or wind that has a genial and salutary influence, as that of summer. This addition made to the Christian mythology by the Platonist writers of the New Testament, was eagerly embraced and improved upon by the Fathers, as the grand source, or fountain head, from whence they could continually draw their infallible inspirations. In accordance with its occult sense in the mysteries of the Gentile trinity, they very properly made their holy ghost "proceed from" the other two "persons," though he more immediately emanates from the "son" (*i.e.* the sun), and, by the apotheosis, they armed him with authority; but as a regularly constituted and personified god, he did not come fairly into play until the beginning of the fifth century, when he came in for his third share of godhead thus:—From council to council, new creeds and dogmas were hatched; and in that of Chalcedon, in 401, *the first New Testament*, was set in the midst of the assembly, as the great appeal. The ecclesiastics who composed this council, found considerable difficulty in adding this third apotheosis to complete their trinity, until a priest, more cunning and more deceitful than the others, suggested an expedient, which was nothing less than to add to the beginning of St. John's Gospel that passage from Plato which now forms its first verse.

In the occult sense in which this windy metaphor is used in the New Testament, it is allegorical of the first winds of summer, "proceeding from" the increased power of the sun, which have a vivifying and salutary influence upon all animal and vegetable life. The writer of the Gospel attributed to St. John astronomises, perhaps, a little too openly in chap. 7, v. 39, by declaring: "For as yet there was no Holy Ghost, because Jesus was not yet glorified."* Here is a plain and unequivocal admission that even the very existence of the Holy Ghost depended on the glorification of Christ,

* This is the true translation from the Greek.

the solution of which enigma is, that *May* was not then come, for it was not until about the middle of that month that the Hely, or Holy wind of *Helios*, that is, God the Sun, was said to commence; and this constituted, *and is the only Holy Ghost*. But before that period, as the sun is not sufficiently elevated and clear, or in other words, clarified (glorified) from the denser clouds and contagious vapors of early spring, his personification, Christ, could not be said to be glorified.* Hence the Holy Ghost is an annual visitor, and with his benign influence, comes with the festival of Whitsuntide or Pentecost; but not till that is "fully come."† It was then that, symbolised in the blessed, holy, sun-heated wind, he was said to descend on the apostles, giving them "the gift of tongues," which gifts seem to have been quite in character, and fleeting as the *wind*, for they soon evaporated, leaving the possessors "unlearned and ignorant men."

That which is called the "sin against the Holy Ghost," or sinning against the *clearest light*, cannot be rationally interpreted as meaning anything else than the denial of, or refusal duly to appreciate, the sun's almighty power upon this globe—the one glorious fountain "on High," out of which springs the renovated creation, and the annual salvation of man.

It was at the famous festival of Whitsuntide also, after the sun entered the sign Gemini, or the Twin Children, that the personified sun, Christ, is very significantly made to say, "suffer little children to come unto me, for of such is the kingdom of heaven"—that is, such is my present "house" in the zodiac.

With respect to the second deity in the Christian plan of polytheism,‡ it may be justly asserted, that amongst the numerous *revealed* religions that have from time to time plagued and enslaved the world, no set

* Wherever the phrase, "The Glory of the Lord" is used throughout the Bible, it signifies nothing else than the *brightness of the sun*.

† Acts ii., 1, and iv. 13.

‡ *Jesus became God thus*:—In the year 325, Constantine having declared himself protector of the Church, convoked the grand oecu-

of theological dogmas, in any known age or country, has ever produced a tenth part of the contention, devastation and bloodshed that have arisen from those concerning Jesus Christ; and although Christendom has been the scene of the fiercest wars for more than fourteen centuries, for the absurd purpose of ascertaining his pedigree, rank and attributes, these preternatural problems are not only as far from being settled as ever, but strong doubts remain whether the person in question did ever exist in reality; many of the learned being of opinion that his positive existence rests on as visionary grounds as that of his Platonic colleague. Christ, or Christos, is not a proper name, but like the word *paraclete*, is an epithet, and signifies a principle or quality that is good and useful to man, and has been applied to the sun, as savior, and to human reason.* This nearly agrees with the hypothesis of the famous Dr. Strauss—that “the history of Christ, as related in the Gospels, is mythic—a kind of imaginative amplification of certain *vague and slender traditions*, formed with the design of developing an ideal character of Jesus, and to harmonise with the Jewish notions of a Messiah.” That some obscure person of the name of Jesus may have lived, and been put to death by the Jewish mob for ridiculing their superstition is very probable; but that the hero of the

menic council of Nice; and of all the Fathers who composed that council, three hundred were of a contrary opinion to that of Arius; and these it was who determined to acknowledge the “Divinity of Jesus.” They added to the tenets and symbols the words *consubstantial with the Father*; and concluded by anathematising the Arians.

* Christ, the anointed, is physically significative of the Sun, as being the sole source of all that man can rationally call *good*; and in the moral sense it is expressive of *reason and knowledge*. The etymology of the names of the ruling gods in different ages and countries, such as Brahma, Osiris, Krishna, Budha, Foe, Oromazdes, Jupiter, Bacchus, Jehovah and Jesus Christ, etc., will show that they were merely allegorical personifications of the Sun. Dr. Lamb, of Cambridge, has found the etymon even of the word *sabbath* to signify “*Daughter of the Sun*.”

Our O, as used in admiration, was symbolical of the orbicular figure of the Sun, as in the exclamation, “O Dens Sol invictæ Mithra!” Celsus declares that such Mithriacs were the first Christians.

New Testament was born, and lived, and died under all the circumstances, and attended by such violations of Nature's laws as are represented in that book, without the emphatic record of any historian, either Greek, Jewish, or Roman, seems quite impossible.

Mattathias, the father of Josephus, must have been a witness to the miracles which are said to have been performed by Jesus, and Josephus was born within two years after the crucifixion, yet in all his works he says nothing whatever about the life or death of Jesus Christ; as for the interpolated passage it is now universally acknowledged to be a forgery. The arguments of the "Christian Ajax,"* even Lardner himself, against it are these:—"It was never quoted by any of our Christian ancestors before *Eusebius*. It disturbs the narrative. The language is quite Christian. It is not quoted by Chrysostom, though he often refers to Josephus, and could not have omitted quoting it *had it been then in the text*. It is not quoted by Photius, though he has three articles concerning Josephus; and this author expressly states that this historian has not taken the least notice of Christ.† Neither Justin Martyr, in his dialogue with Trypho the Jew; nor Clemens Alexandrinus, who made so many extracts from ancient authors; nor Origen against Celsus, have ever mentioned this testimony. But, on the contrary, in chap. 35th of the first book of that work, Origen openly affirms that Josephus, who had mentioned John the Baptist, *did not acknowledge Christ*. That this passage is a false fabrication, is admitted also by Ittigius, Blondel, Le Clerc, Vandale, Bishop Warburton, and Tanaguil Faber."‡ Josephus was not friendly towards Herod, but rather at enmity with him; he conceals none of his faults or cruelties, which makes it appear sur-

* See Taylor's "Diegesis."

† How could Photius, in the 9th century, find that in Josephus which Origen, in the 3rd century, had declared was not in him?

‡ Is it probable, is it even possible that Josephus, a Jew extremely zealous and obstinate in his own religion, would confess that to be true which every Jew most positively and religiously denies; that is, acknowledge that Jesus was the Christ? This is making Josephus talk like a Christian in four or five lines only.

passing strange that he should silently pass over that most horrible of all butcheries ever perpetrated by man—the general massacre of the infants, to the amount, it has been said, of fourteen thousand. How is it that this event, so unparalleled that history cannot show its equal in atrocity, should not only be unknown to three of the evangelists, Mark, Luke, and John, but entirely escape the notice of the minute and circumstantial historian of the Jews? Josephus is equally silent respecting the miraculous darkness, the new star which appeared in the east, and the graves that opened of themselves to eject the dead, who, being undisposed of afterwards, may still be walking the streets of Jerusalem. The younger Seneca, a voluminous writer, was then about thirty-nine years of age, and must have been at Rome at the time; yet he says nothing whatever of those shocking cruelties and violations of Nature's laws. The elder* and the younger Pliny came into the highest repute not many years afterwards, one of whom was a most valuable historian, and could not possibly have omitted to mention such extraordinary doings and prodigies if they had taken place in any part of the empire.

If anything could be more unaccountable than the silence of the above historians, it would be that of Philo-Judæus, who was contemporary with Caligula; “and in the folio edition of his works of 1552, he speaks of the state of the Jews, and their afflictions under Augustus, Tiberius, and Caligula, the very period embracing the whole extent of Christ's life; but he says not a word of Christ, Christians, or Christianity.” This silence of Philo, a man highly esteemed for his learning and veracity, a cotemporary historian, and a

* The elder Pliny, about the year seventy-five, wrote the “History of His Own Time,” in thirty-one books, and was the most celebrated historian of that time, yet we find him as ignorant as Josephus, or any of the other writers mentioned, of the thing called Christianity, or sect of Christians; though, as an historian, he was so minute and circumstantial as to suffer nothing of importance to escape him. Why did the Christians, in after times, destroy the work above-mentioned, and leave his “Natural History?” Because he did not perform an impossibility; that is, he neither did nor could take notice of their sect, which had no known existence in his time.

public functionary, being agent for the Jews at the time, is so inexplicable, that interested priests alone can explain it away.

A question naturally presents itself—did the populace of Jerusalem and villages adjacent, who were spectators and witnesses when the miracles in question were wrought, believe in them? No, they did not; to them the operator, whoever he was, must have appeared an impostor, as fully appears by the catastrophe. That such extraordinary events and performances should make no impression upon those who were witnesses to them, is contrary to the natural feelings of mankind, particularly as regards the populace, for in all such cases where the bulk of the people believe in the truth of reputed miracles, they are more actuated by sentiments of reverential awe towards the performer, than a desire to put him to death.

After a lapse of nearly two thousand years since the epoch of these miraculous events, it must ever remain impossible to ascertain whether the second person of this triune godhead had *bona fide* an incarnate existence; or was merely a metaphorical personification of some principle, as the epithet *Christ* implies;* but it is certain that this appellative was assumed by a sect of superstitionists known in Egypt, from time immemorial, under the name of therapeutæ, or monks, whose tenets the Judaizing Christians adopted; and from whose writings they made selections in the compilation of their New Testament, as is proved by the testimony of Eusebius himself, who says in his history, book 2nd: "Those ancient therapeutæ were Christians, AND THEIR ANCIENT WRITINGS WERE OUR GOSPELS." Thus it is proved by the most zealous of all the Christian fathers, that these gospels, though not brought upon the stage until nearly two centuries after the reputed death of Jesus, existed among the Egyptian monks long before the pretended origin of Christianity. As to the four which have been selected and fitted up by the Church to make part of "the word of God," no man has ever

* "Christos being strictly a Greek epithet, would the Jewish populace give a Greek name to a Jew by birth?"

been able to tell by whom, when, or where they were written; nor are they acknowledged by any person; but as the learned Christian bishop, Faustus, declared the forgers of them affirmed, "that what was written by themselves, was written 'according' to those persons to whom they ascribed them." It appears that these adopted gospels were first mentioned by Irenæus, about the latter end of the second century; but as the writings of that saint must have come through the manufacturing hands of Eusebius, that early notice of them is rendered extremely suspicious; however, they were first known only as forming part of fifty-four gospels, all equally well authenticated; and some writers have asserted that it was this Irenæus who first selected them out of the above spurious mass, and by his own fiat alone made them canonical. Was it out of respect for the high authority of this saint that the Holy Ghost confirmed his selection, at the Council of Nice, about 175 years afterwards? It has been allowed, even by the most learned Christian divines (as will be shown in a subsequent lecture) that fraud, religious lying and forgery, were then the common practice in promoting the cause of public deception; and, therefore, we have no difficulty in believing that Irenæus had his full share in the fraudulent traffic.

If the word of a saint is good for anything, we might quote that of Irenæus in corroboration of what we have elsewhere said respecting the books of the Old Testament; for does he not tell us that "*they were fabricated seventy years after the Babylonish captivity by Esdras*"? These are *revelations* which Christians are extremely unwilling to meet, but they are much better authenticated than any of the artificial ones that claim a supernatural derivation.

Besides the writings of the Egyptian Essenes or monks, it is known that Alexandria abounded with every sort of sectarian rubbish, in the various forms of acts, gospels, epistles, &c.; so that the compilers of the New Testament had an ample supply of matter, out of which to choose what should be the new will of Jehovah. Such pieces as had been written by monks, and by their plastic spirituality, could easily

be moulded so as to represent the interests of the priests, and increase their power and importance, very naturally slid in to form part of "God's last Will;" while those which exposed the tricks and knavery of priests, like the story of Bel and the Dragon, in the Old Testament, were rejected as apocryphal.* But as the chosen books were written by unknown or obscure persons of no notoriety, their names were erased, and those of reputed apostles substituted, in order to confer respectability. And whenever it was found that this "New Testament" did not at all points suit the interests of its priesthood, or the views of political rulers in league with them, the necessary alterations were made, and all sorts of pious frauds and forgeries were not only common, but justified by many of the fathers. This was a charge constantly brought against those trimmers by their opponents, whose writings they destroyed to the utmost of their power; but it is proved by a record in the Cronicon of Muis, an African bishop, and the same is also mentioned by Scaliger, that a general alteration of the four gospels took place in the sixth century, by order of the Emperor Anastasius, who decreed:—"That the holy gospels, as written, Idiotis Evangelistis, *are to be corrected and amended.*"†

In forming the New Testament, selections were made at different councils; but from all we have been

* It may be said that the Christian compilers would be willing to expose the tricks of the Pagan priests; but the esprit du corps is sacred. Priests will not betray that fundamental deceitfulness that is common to the whole profession, and inseparable from all supernatural pretensions.

† Dr. Mill also vouches for the truth of this record, and says that Messala was consul at the time.

The great father, Origen, in his commentary on Matthew's gospel, speaking of the phrase, "thou shalt love thy neighbor as thyself," which some thought to be spurious, he says: "If, indeed, there was no disagreement in other copies, it would be irreligious to suspect that expression was interpolated and not pronounced by our Savior. But now, alas! what with the *blunders* of transcribers—what with the impious temerity of *correcting* the text—what with the licentiousness of others, who *interpolate or expunge just what they please*, it is plain the copies do strangely disagree."

able to learn, it was principally at that of Nice that the compilation was put into form, after it had been decided upon *by vote*, what should be, and what should not be, the word of God ! In order to get rid of the unpleasant truth, that this decision was made by a majority of votes, it has been pretended that the selection was made under supernatural agency, thus :—the whole collection of story, anecdote and fable, was placed upon a great table, and a prayer was addressed to the Holy Ghost, that he would be pleased to cause the apocryphal books to jump under the table, and they did so with prompt obedience, whilst the genuine canonicals proudly kept their stations above. This mode of trial was fair enough, as the Holy Ghost would surely know his own writings. This ridiculous story is recorded in the appendix to the proceedings of the Council of Nice.

A philosopher of the present day has compared the Christian Testament to Lord Chancellor Eldon's silk stocking, that was darned all over with worsted until there was no silk remaining ; so, in like manner, it is now impossible to say with certainty what this book was originally, or by whom, where, or when, its component parts were written ; and equally futile would it be to attempt to ascertain the number of alterations, additions, varying translations,* and forged interpolations which from time to time it has undergone. Capellus informs us that he was engaged for thirty-six years in writing the book in which he detects the numerous errors and frauds of the Protestant Bible ; and even the venerable Calmet, that profound Bible critic, declares that the 7th and 8th verses of the 5th chapter of John's 1st Epistle, "*are not in any ancient Bible.*" This interpolation was a bold stroke to strengthen the Trinity. Thirty years' researches upon the New Testament alone, enabled that most learned English divine, Dr. John Mill, to detect the enormous number

* A ludicrous instance of false translation appears in Mark x., 25, where, according to the learned, the word in the original means a *cable-rope*, not a *camel*. In the notion of a cable going through the eye of a needle, an association of ideas is preserved, but the other meaning is forced and ridiculous.

of 80,000 different readings of that book, after a laborious examination of all the manuscripts, translations, and the many languages in which it is to be found. Can anything match the stupidity and monstrous credulity of calling such a book the word of God?

It has been remarked that, besides the evident dissonance and glaring inconsistencies of these books, they contain numerous proofs that they could not have been written at the time alleged, or by the persons whose names are affixed to them; for instance, if Paul was an apostle, or lived in or near the same age with Jesus, how could he speak as he does in the epistle to the Colossians, about the Church of Laodicea, which was not founded until the middle of the second century? Again, in the book called Revelations, ascribed to John the evangelist, who was contemporary with Jesus,* the writer not only speaks of this church of Laodicea, but mentions its sloth and great corruptions, arising from the possession of riches and power. Now, though of all human institutions whatsoever, a church† has the most uniform and natural tendency to grow corrupt and profligate, from the acquirement of riches and power, yet we may allow one hundred years to have elapsed after the foundation of the one in question, before it arrived at the shameless condition described in these revelations; and, therefore, it is no unfair inference to conclude that these allegorical rhapsodies were not written before the middle of the third century. Tertullion says it was Saturninus, and Luke says it was Cyrenius who was governor of Syria, when a certain event happened,‡ and Augustus issued his decree taxing "*all the world*;" but Roman history seems to deny both accounts, by not acknowledging any such decree of Augustus, even over the Roman em-

* Yet in Matthew xi., 12, Jesus is made to say, "And from the days of John the Baptist, *until now*," etc. Again, xviii., 17, Jesus speaks of "*the church*," though there was no such thing in existence in the alleged time of his life.

† Church—the shrine of credulity, where reason is weekly sacrificed—a patent for hypocrisy—the refuge of fraud, sloth, ignorance and superstition—the corner stone of tyranny.

‡ The birth of Jesus.

pire. Numerous other discrepancies and contradictions might be adduced, which all the forcing and twisting of church chronologists have not been able to reconcile. They tell us that Matthew wrote his gospel about the year thirty-five, and in that gospel the writer, whoever he was, makes Jesus tell the Scribes and Pharisees that "all the innocent blood that has been shed on earth, from that of Abel down to that of Zacharias, son of Baruch, whom they slew between the temple and the altar, shall be upon their heads." Here let it be remarked that, according to Josephus, book 4th (and the fact is nowhere else to be found) this event *did not take place* until the siege of Jerusalem by Titus. This affords proof positive that the first of our gospels could not have been written before the year seventy, but that is no proof why it might not have been written after the middle of the second century.

Recurring to the miraculous parts of these books, we think it proper to observe that the natural good sense of Mahomet prevented his making any pretensions to the power of working miracles; for those laid to his charge by Christian opponents, were the inventions of his more ignorant and less judicious successors. It was no doubt in ridicule of the New Testament fables about removing mountains by faith, and such like nonsense, that he told his disciples one day: "To-morrow I will call yonder mountain to come to me." The morrow came, his hearers assembled to see the miracle. He called the mountain to come to him, but it sullenly kept its place. "Well," says he, "since the mountain will not come to Mahomet, Mahomet must go the mountain." If he gave out that he received his Koran by piecemeal from heaven, his pretensions went no farther than to be considered the humble agent of a higher power; and such it appears was the case with his brother prophet Jesus, who wrote nothing himself, but his followers, or rather the sect which assumed his name, bent upon the establishment of their new superstition on the ruins of the old, had recourse to a series of falsehoods and deceptions unexampled in all the other pages of history. They ascribed to their reputed founder a train of

miracles and unsightly prodigies, so disgusting to reason and common sense, as to be sufficient of themselves to condemn any book at a single glance ; and which could only be palmed upon extreme ignorance and credulity ; while the inventors and propagators of these fictions agreed with each other in nothing but in the common duty of religious lying, forging and fabricating to serve the interests of the priesthood. The younger Scaliger expressly declares of these falsifying compilers, that "they put into their Gospels whatever they thought would serve their purpose." Faustus says: "We have *frequently proved* that these things were neither written by himself (Jesus) nor by his apostles ; and that they were fabricated long after their decease, from vague stories and flying reports."

As these miraculous fables are beneath criticism, the particular notice of one or two of them will suffice as a sample of the rest. It appears that the devils possessing the two demoniacs who lived among the tombs, could not be dislodged without terms of capitulation ; one article of which bore, that they should be allowed to go into the swine. The treaty being concluded with the spokesman of these devils, who had announced that he was legion, or called legion (probably from being the chief of a detachment consisting of that number) the devils took possession of their new subjects accordingly ; but they, finding a devilish commotion within them, committed suicide immediately. This "*rash act*" was not surprising when we consider that there were "about two thousand swine ;" so that three devils would be crammed into each pig, reckoning a legion of devils to consist of the same number as a Roman legion. As nothing would operate so much against the interests of theology as any diminution of the number of devils, we may presume that the swine only were drowned. Mark and Luke say that *one person* possessed all these devils ; he must have been a man of great capacity to contain that which drove two thousand swine mad. So numerous a herd of these animals in a country where swine and swine's flesh were held in abhorrence, is quite sufficient to stamp the tale as a fiction ; but taking all the circum-

stances into consideration, it is perhaps the most ridiculous romance that ever was invented. If this exploit had been laid to the charge of Mahomet, would he not have been branded by all Christians as a most wicked and abominable wizard, independently of the robbery committed on the owners of the swine, in causing this wholesale and ruinous *Hoggicide*?

It is unfortunate for the foregoing miracle, that its allegorical bearings are not so apparent as to save it from being branded as a wild and vulgar romance, rather than an instructive parable. Such, however, is not the case in the fable about the resurrection of Lazarus, which is evidently a dramatic allegory of the demise of the old, and birth of the new year; the former of which is personated in Lazarus, whilst Christ is, as usual, the personification of the Sun. This unsightly miracle, as taken literally, is narrated by John only; a circumstance so suspicious that it alone ought to shake the credulity of even the swallowers of prodigy. Our false and deceitful translation of this drama, foists in; "Now a certain *man* was sick, named Lazarus;" but there is no *man* named in the original, which merely says—"Now Lazarus was sick;" that is, figuratively, the year was spent or expiring, as in December, which month is personated by Martha, as January is by Mary. These two sister months send to Christ (the Sun) to inform him of the dying state of their brother (the old year). Now mark the equivocating answers he gives them regarding the real condition of their brother; that his "sickness is not unto death;" that he was dead in reality, and he was glad of it; that he only slept, and *would revive* or "*rise again*." These enigmatical or equivocal answers, and the four days which Lazarus is said to have been dead in the sepulchre, have most pointed allusion to the four days between the twenty-first and twenty-fifth of December, during which time the Sun seems to hang, as it were, in the solstitial balance; but at the latter period he gains his first degree of altitude, and is said to "*rise from the dead*," or to have been born again, that is he begins to *rise from the dead of winter*.

For very good reasons, the drama being finished, we are not told what became of Lazarus. What was his fate afterwards? He continued to gain strength till the summer solstice; but as he again became the *old year*, he died the following December, in the same manner.

Thus the Sun, as personified in Christ, says Rev. i., 18, "I am he that liveth, and was dead, and behold I am alive for evermore, Amen." Again, "I am the resurrection and the life; *the day star on high, that redeemeth his people*; I come a light into the world." This word *Amen* is nothing else than the disguise in which the translators have thought it proper to put *Ammon*.* The Sun, in the sign Aries, was personified in Jupiter Ammon, as well as in Christ. Ammon signifies the secret or concealed one, and *sacred* had originally no other meaning than *secret*. In Isaiah lxx., 16, is not the "God Ammon" mentioned in the original, and suppressed by the English translators?

The astro-drama of the Redeemer in the book of Job,† is another sublime allegory of the sun and circle of the seasons. Job, who here personates the declining year in its last ungenial and evil months, is of course dejected, sick, and grievously afflicted; his wife (whom we may presume to be Anna, from Annus, the circle of the year) bids him curse God and die, that is, to cease putting his trust in the sun, who had metaphorically forsaken him for the present. But Job, though nearly worn out, as the year is in December, has still hopes of his *revival*, and exclaims, "I know that my Redeemer liveth," and at the last day (the 21st December) "*I shall rise up*," etc. Yet in his exhausted state, and sore afflictions, he is so nigh to despair that his God, the sun, reproaches him for his impatience under the immutable necessities of faith, and seems to say in way of admonition, "I cannot be with you always; nor is it reasonable in you to expect the enjoyment of perpetual summer;" and in illustration thereof, he most beautifully instances

* The difference between the words *Aman*, *Amen*, and *Ammon*, says Sir William Drummond, "is nothing."

† For fuller explanation of the dramas of Job and Lazarus, see the works of the Rev. Mr. Taylor.

the summer constellations, and asks, "Canst thou bind the sweet influences of the Pleiades, or loose the bands of Orion? Canst thou bring forth the twelve signs in the season?" that is, canst thou have summer throughout the twelve months. "Canst thou guide Arcturus with his sons?" The seven summer months, from March to September inclusive, are personated in the seven sons of Job, who are killed by a "great wind from the wilderness," (winter) that is, they are killed by the five winter months commencing in October,* but as this is only an allegorical death, the drama represents them as being all alive again in the succeeding summer; and Job, the year, is fully restored to health and happiness.

With regard to the whole of that miscellaneous and discordant mass of anecdote, narrative, prophecy, allegory, gospel, epistle, revelation, etc., which compose what is called the Bible (to say nothing at present of its immoral tendency), we cannot make anything rational out of the greater portion, unless we seek the true meaning under type or allegory; but when we turn aside that veil, the nonsense of the exoteric disappears, and we perceive that the allusions are exclusively made to physical or moral principles, under typical personifications.† This is particularly the case in all those books or fragments of books which are known not to be Jewish (the book of Job, for instance), but picked up by that people among the Chaldeans and Persians, who concealed from the vulgar all the higher branches of science under the veil of allegory; and when Levi's‡ ignorant but privileged sons adopted

* These five winter months, beginning in October, when the Sun is in the sign *Scorpio*, are metaphorically alluded to as Scorpions, by St. John in Revelations ix., where it is said they shall have power "*to hurt men for five months.*" The stings in their tails were figurative of the sharpness of the four months that succeed October, which, though they "should not kill," are nevertheless so *stingingly* cold as to "hurt men."—See Revelations.

† Those parts of this collection in which we perceive that the astronomical Chronology is veiled in the allegorical picture, under the appearance of history, may be called *the word of science*. Most of the psalms are evidently hymns to the Sun, as they apply to nothing else.

‡ In dedicating one of their tribes for the priesthood alone, the Jews

these books, in making their compilation, they contented themselves with the literal, knowing nothing of the occult sense. Even the trinity in unity, as we have already observed, was one of the secrets revealed to the initiated in the Pagan polytheism; and was taught in the mysteries long before the sect Christians adopted the ascetic habits of the Essenes and Egyptian Therapeutæ. In these mysteries this trinity had a twofold allusion—under one meaning it was a personification of physical, and under the other of moral, principles; in the physical sense, those natural principles were personified, which, by their inherent properties, viz., motion, attraction, repulsion, etc., produce these changes which we perceive in matter. But of all these principles, the *Sun* was looked up to as the grand omnipotent nucleus, whose all-vivifying power is the vital and sole source of animative and vegetative existence upon this globe—the glorious fountain out of which springs all that man ever has, or ever can call good, and as such, the only proper object of the homage and adoration of mankind. Hence the Sun, as we are informed by Pausanius, was worshipped at Eleusis under the name of “The Savior.” If it is urged that the Sun cannot properly be regarded as a principle in Nature, the objection is good with respect to the universal systems which “*circle other Suns*,” but of our Solar system, he is *the* principal.

Of the thousand Pagan personifications of the Sun, which appear absurd and ridiculous when taken in the literal sense, but which are rational and highly scientific when the veil of allegory is withdrawn, one of the most beautiful is that of the solar Deity under the name of Adonai,* Tammuz, or the Adonis of the Syrians. This allegory represents him, after being

imitated the oriental nations: their tribe of Levi played the same part amongst them, that the Chaldeans played amongst the Assyrians and Babylonians; the Magi amongst the Medes and Persians; the Druids amongst the Celts; the Brahmins amongst the Indians; the Lamas amongst the Thibetians; and the Christian priesthoods now in Europe; in all it has been the game of deception.

* Adonai is synonymous with Jahouh, or Jehovah. Throughout the Psalms, the *Sun* is “the Lord God,” and Zion means the zodiac.

glorified as "The most High God," in his *exalted* reign of summer, as resigning his place in the heavens to the zodiacal animals of the winter signs; and is figured as being slain or mutilated by them, more especially by the wild boar, under whose malefic ascendancy the sun seems annually to expire. And, as personated in the beautiful Adonis, he is fabled as being mutilated in his genital parts by the boar; that is, by similitude, he is deprived of his genial or generative power over Nature during the winter. But when the annual rains of summer had swelled the river Adonis (so called from the god), its waters became tinged red by some mineral, and were fabled to be the blood of the beauteous Adonis, annually mutilated as aforesaid:—

"While smooth Adonis from his native rock
Ran purple to the sea,—supposed with blood
Of Tammuz, yearly wounded."

In lamentation over this most shocking outrage against genial Nature,—or rather to celebrate the yearly victory over it, the Sidonian damsels, *not wholly without significance*, assembled to hail the renovation of the prolific powers of Tammuz, or Adonis, as manifested in their God of summer.

That the Old Testament, as well as the New, is almost wholly allegorical of the sun, the year, and the seasons, is further proved in that apparently heart-felt complaint of St. Paul, 2 Corinthians iii., 15, "But even until this day, *when Moses is read, the veil is upon their heart.*"

The moral principles allegorised in the Christian trinity, under the names of Father, the Word, and the Spirit, were metaphorical of human *knowledge, reason* and the *spirit of truth*. Similar to these are the interpretations lately given of the moral principles of the ancient trinity, by a philosopher of deep research;* and as they make out a reasonable meaning for the Christian trinity, which is otherwise a jumble of irrational mummeries, they are so far satisfactory. The

* The modern Diagoras, who has done more towards establishing free discussion than any other man that ever lived.

ancient trinity of physical principles, of which the Sun was second to, and the most eximious representative of, the great All-in-All, was probably of Indian origin : and found its way west into Persia, Chaldea and Greece, where it was remodelled and spiritualised by Plato ; but on its being pressed into the service of the Christian fathers, the sublime knowledge which it conveyed under emblems or symbols, was soon lost in ignorance, or abused and set aside by priestcraft ; for even the apostolic fathers seemed to have had little or no knowledge of it, with the exception perhaps of St. Hermas, who most likely alluded to the share he had in falsifying those allegories (by adopting the literal in place of the occult meaning), when he declares that he “never spoke a true word in his life, but always lived in dissimulation, and affirmed a lie for truth to all men ; and no man contradicted him, but all gave credit to his words” (“Pastor,” Book iii., mandat. 3rd). The Pagan priesthood were too wise to apply the word *revelation* to anything else than the development of the secret meaning of the mysteries, which they made to the initiated ; but that only true revelation has been entirely lost to all the successors of St. Hermas in the church called Christian for the last seventeen centuries.

One word more respecting this ancient trinity, the gross and ludicrous perversion of which now forms so prominent a dogma in our superstition.* Those fathers who adopted and interwove it into the Christian system, did either ignorantly or wilfully distort the sense of the allegory (whether astronomical or moral) by turning it into three distinct personages, with human qualities, parts, and passions ; but having gone thus far,

* Though the Christian scheme of fitting up a triune Deity is in defiance of arithmetical demonstration, yet it is so far an exemplification of all the Pagan mythologies—each of them had a triad of principal gods ; the Hindus had their Brahma, Vishnu, and Siva ; the Egyptians, their Osiris, Horus, and Isis ; the Persians, their Oromazdes, Mithras, and Ahrimanes ; the Syrians, their Monimus, Aziz, and Ares ; the Canaanites, their self-triplicated Baal ; and the Peruvians had their *Father Sun, Brother Sun, and Son Sun*. The Hindu trinity were personifications of three principles, viz., the Producer, the Preserver, and the Destroyer.

they found themselves in a dilemma ; inasmuch that, though their new polytheism was in a great measure intended as a salvo to reconcile the Pagans, yet it was inconsistent with the Mosaic unity of God, which they were desirous of preserving also ; so they bundled up their three distinct personages into one identical person. Being now knee-deep, and knowing well that the credulity of ignorant man is equal to the most monstrous deceptions, those fabricators thought they might as well plunge over head and ears into absurdity, by settling the pedigree and relationship between these *triume* parties ; and this they did by mingling together a chaos of downright nonsense. Here is a child born, said to be begotten by two supernatural fathers—these fathers are *two* infinite beings, equal and co-existent from all eternity ; and yet this son, begotten by them upon a woman, is as old as either of them ! And although thus produced, and to all appearance a child of humanity, he instantly becomes the *eternal* son of the father, making the *third* infinite !!! Such stuff has turned the church called Christian into a domicilium insanorum.

If we may believe our senses, there is indeed a trinity in unity that proves its own existence—is eternal, and comprehends within itself everything which the human intellect can possibly conceive—that is, *Time*, *Matter*, and *Motion*.*

In regard to the true history of our church during the three first centuries, we know nothing whatever, except that which comes through the most polluted channels ; for the traditions and fabulous writings of the fathers who lived in those periods, are not deserving of the slightest credit ; these men being notorious for nothing but pious frauds and forgeries ; yet even in these professional arts they were far excelled in the following century, by the famous Eusebius, bishop of Cæsarea, who had no equal in fitting up and trimming off a “word of God,” to suit the general interests of the church. He says of himself “I have related what-

* *Motion* is the measure of *Time* : it is essential to, the executive of, and may be said to be identical with, *Matter*.

ever might redound to the glory, and I have *suppressed* all that could tend to the disgrace of our religion." Baronius, who was a sincere advocate of the Christian faith, branded him as "the great falsifier of ecclesiastical history—a wily sycophant—a consummate hypocrite*—a time-serving persecutor, who had nothing in his known life or writings, to support the belief *that he himself believed in the Christian religion.*" So much for the character of this main pillar of the church. Another father of the fourth century, St. Gregory Nazianzen, was of opinion that "*words are sufficient to deceive the vulgar, who admire the more, the less they understand.*" Again, he says, "Our fathers and teachers have often said, *not what they thought, but what circumstances required.*" To show that the saints of the fourth century had not only improved upon their predecessors in the arts of deception, but had grown bold enough in some instances to avow them, we quote St. Chrysostom, who declares that "miracles are proper only to excite sluggish and vulgar minds; that men of sense have no occasion for them; and that they frequently carry *some untoward suspicion with them.*" Mosheim, than whom a higher authority cannot be quoted, speaking of those times and of such men, says: "The simplicity and ignorance of the generality in those times, furnished the most favorable occasion for the exercise of fraud; and the impudence of impostors in contriving false miracles, was artfully proportioned to the credulity of the vulgar: whilst the sagacity of the wise, who perceived these cheats, were overawed into silence by the dangers that threatened their lives and fortunes, if they should expose the artifice. Thus does it generally happen in human life, that, when danger attends the discovery of truth, and the profession thereof, the prudent are *silent*"

* In the title of the 31st chapter of the 12th book of his *Evangelical Preparation*, Eusebius tells "how it may be lawful and fitting to use *falsehood as a medicine*, for the benefit of those who want to be deceived." In this chapter, says Gibbon, he adduces a passage of Plato, which approves the occasional practice of pious and salutary frauds; and he justifies this sentiment of Plato, *by the example of the sacred writers of the Old Testament.* So much for the theological pharmacopœia of Eusebius.

—the multitude *believe*, and impostors *triumph*.”—(Eccles. Hist.)

In the fifth century, the church being backed by the strong arm of imperial power, the hierarchy converted their successful institution into a channel overflowing with riches; whilst their doctrines and dogmas, continually changing, got rid of any vestiges of reason and common sense which they had originally had amongst the Therapeutæ and Essenes. The ignorance of the laity was a secure protection for the clergy in all their tyrannical usurpations, and they in their turn became fierce persecutors.* Nature and her laws were overlooked as objects of no consideration, or rather, proscribed as the deadly enemies, of the theologian, and poor credulous man sunk into slavery and misery. In the following centuries, the infatuated belief in miracles of all sorts and sizes became the order of the day, and the heads of the church, no doubt, founded their regularly organised system of deception upon the authority of St. Paul, who, in his second letter to the Thessalonians, fairly avows that, “for this cause God shall send them strong delusion,† that they should believe a lie, *that they all might be damned who believe not the truth*.” From this high authority, and from that of the Jew books, proceeded those lying miracles and stupendous prodigies which excited the idiot wonderment of mankind; hence the forged letters of Christ to Abgarus, king of Edessa, and the Apostle Peter; hence the

* Not at all scrupulous about appropriating to themselves the property of others, they have been accused of expelling the Druids or Culdees, from their temples and monasteries, and substituting their own orders; and this they called *founding monasteries*. This was the fox taking possession of the hole that had been dug by the badger.

† In this epistle to the Thessalonians, Paul seemed to have attained the acme of falsehood and delusion. He assures his dupes that the resurrection of the dead, and the ascension of the living, will take place in his and their days. “Then *we* (says he, chap iv., 17), which are alive and remain, shall be caught up together with *them* in the clouds, to meet the Lord in the air,” etc. Paul vouches for this being “the word of the Lord.” “The whole passage is in the first person and present tense.” By way of clinching this most notorious falsehood, it is elsewhere affirmed that “this generation shall not pass away till all these things be accomplished.” Priests, have these things taken place?

letters of the Virgin Mary to St. Ignatius and the Sicilians, all dated in heaven ; hence the 11,000 virgin martyrs of Cologne ; hence wood enough of the *true cross* to build a first-rate man-of-war ; hence the two or three heads of St. Ursula ; hence the girdle of the Virgin Mary shown in eleven places at the same time ; hence the remains of the ass, or asses, which carried Jesus to Jerusalem ; hence the head of the Volto Santo, miraculously sent from heaven, and carried in a ship from Joppa to Lucca, without the aid of any human being on board ; hence the annually liquefied blood of St. Januarius, imitated from the annual wound of the god Adonis,* in mount Libanus ; and hence the flight of the Virgin Mary's cottage, which winged its way from Nazareth to Dalmatia, and thence to Loretto, where it still forms the headquarters of her ladyship.

You object to the above legends on account of their being the invention of the scarlet prostitute, as you call the Church of Rome, observing that the reformed church has given up all such fooleries. Be not deceived, the priesthoods of all religions are essentially and *necessarily* the same, inasmuch as fraud and delusion, skilfully played off upon ignorance, form the apparatus of all ; and were it not that science is now beginning everywhere to grapple with the demon of artificial theology, miracles would be as abundant as ever amongst both Catholics and protestants. The increasing knowledge of the laity curbs and puts to shame all such pretensions in the present day ; but do we not see how strenuously all the priests of Christendom uphold the prodigies which they say were performed nearly two thousand years ago ? They do this, because, without the delusion of supernatural agency, immediate or remote, their trade could not stand.

Any attempt to rouse the ignorant, uncultivated mind to free inquiry, is almost a hopeless task, and it is altogether so when besotted religious prejudice

* The Tammuz of Ezekiel :—

“ Whose annual wound in Libanus allur'd
The Syrian damsels to lament his fate
In am'rous ditties all a summer's day.”—MILTON.

stands in the way ; but we ask the man who has got a vestige of mind he can call his own, whether his evidence is as satisfactory that Nature has been put out of her course by the working of miracles, as it is, on the contrary, that such violations of her laws have never in truth taken place ! Has any such thing happened in his own, his father's, his grandfather's, or his great grandfather's time ? He must answer in the negative, and thus far he has evidence from experience, we shall say, for 150 years, giving a succession of proof, which rests on the immutable order of things ; and will he abandon that invariable director for the worthless and self-convicted testimony of a few strolling vagabonds, known only as the lawless disturbers of the peace in the countries where they were vagrants, and who lived nearly two thousand years ago ? When legends and traditions are found inconsistent with nature, common sense, and experience, does their antiquity alone prove their truth against all these guides ? On the contrary, antiquity can never be divested of the mantle of fable. We know that besides the marks of falsehood which the stories alluded to bore at the time of their fabrication, the true characters of the propagators were so well known to men of sense and education among the Pagans, that their impostures were utterly despised ; and as the Jew books called the "Testaments," abundantly show that they were compiled throughout by men of similar character, to credit them is to give up all confidence in our senses, and to give the lie to natural light and reason.

Whence comes the anomaly that it is in supernaturals alone we find man departing totally from the common rules of evidence, and the respect which he owes to himself ? In this case, denying as he does the authority of his own senses, and the reason which arises from them, he has rendered himself inferior to all other animals, and this is evidently owing to his not being allowed the exercise of his intellectual powers, priest-craft having decoyed him into the regions of non-reality and delusion, where everything congenial to his nature, where all entities, or things comprehensible, can have no admittance : there theological deception

holds her dominion under the dark mask of mystery ;* and out of the fears of ignorance forges mental chains for the human race, as they come into existence, the child succeeding to the woful inheritance of the father.

Men, says a modern philosopher, blindly follow the paths their fathers trode ; they believe, because in infancy they were told they *must* believe ; they hope, because their progenitors hoped ; and they tremble, because they trembled. If by chance a young man examines his religion, he does it with partiality, or without perseverance ; he is often disgusted with a single glance of the eye, on contemplating an object so revolting. In old age, the faculties are blunted ; habits become incorporated with the machine, the senses are debilitated by time and infirmity, and we are no longer able to penetrate back to the source of our opinions ; besides, the fear of death then renders an examination, over which terror commonly presides, very liable to suspicion. Civil authority also flies to the support of the prejudices of mankind ; compels them to ignorance by forbidding inquiry ; and holds itself in continual readiness to punish all who attempt to undeceive them.†

The morality which is derived from the religion of nature, and the social intercourse of man, is everywhere the same, and unchangeable ; whereas that which is built upon priest-created theology is variable, impure, and always pernicious, inasmuch as it is made to square with the interests and power of the sacerdotal orders. This theology, from its being linked with political governments, has been enabled to insinuate its usurpations into every institution of society, where it has been the fruitful source of endless contention and

* Originally, the word *mystery* signified the veil (*mistos*) which covered knowledge : but amongst Christian priests, it has been made the veil by which the most wicked deceptions are covered.

† For, blind and superstitious man is bred,
 " And custom is his nurse ! Woe then to them
 Who lay irreverent hands upon his old
 House furniture, the dear inheritance
 From his forefathers ! For time consecrates ;
 And what is grey with age becomes religion."

sorrow. The innocent and necessary liberties of mankind are, by conventional laws of its procuring, converted into crimes; the freedom of the moral energies is crushed, and almost every pursuit that is conducive to, or connected with human happiness, is discouraged and blasted, through the influence and intrigues of this cunning and demoralising pest*—*the natural enemy of everything that is natural.*

Are we told that the fires of the inquisition, with all its accompanying abominations, have been swept away by the reformation; and that the spirit of our religion is changed from that of the raging wolf, to the mildness of the lamb? We positively deny that its *spirit* is either changed or capable of change: the light of science, and a partial exercise of reason is at present keeping it in check; but it anxiously awaits and looks forward to the return of that congenial element—the intellectual darkness and ignorance which prevailed in the eleventh century. This blessed consummation would effectually restore its power; and thus armed, the demon would quickly show, in the strongest sect, whether Catholic or Protestant, its immutable spirit of tyranny and persecution,—the human mind would again be prostrated, and all the horrors of those times would again cover the face of Christendom.

We shall conclude this lecture by asking a few questions.

What is it that has, for the last fifteen centuries, obscured the light of Nature, put human reason out of her chair, and, as much as possible, prevented the development of all scientific truths?

What was it that first occasioned the shedding of

* We know no other correct way to judge of any system, than to look at the practical effects it has produced in the world since it was promulgated. What then does the record of the past discover to have been the effects of Christianity upon men and nations? What has it done for the enlightenment and progress of the mind—for man's elevation, improvement, and happiness—his proper rank and station as a moral, intellectual, rational being? Let those who have impartially considered this melancholy subject, answer this question: do we not know what it has done for the suppression, or rather annihilation, of them all?

human blood, on account of supernatural speculations, and imaginary existences ?

What was it that spread war, devastation, and bloodshed over Europe, (agreeably to the New Testament denunciation,)* for more than thirteen hundred years ?

What is it that still divides Europe into opposing sects ; and keeps alive those deadly animosities about chimeras, for which men formerly cut each other's throats ?

What is it that most generally sets the father's heart against the son, and makes the son abhor the presence of his father ?

What is the thing which, cherished by ignorance, and sheltered by tyranny, has usurped one-tenth of the proceeds of man's industry ; and in wringing this from starving poverty, is supported by cannon, bayonets, and sabres ?

What is it that has, to serve its own ends, and wholly unsupported by New Testament authority, appropriated to itself one-seventh of the laboring man's time ; compelling him to spend that time, either in houses of idolatry, or in idleness and vice at the ale-house, to the utter ruin of his family ?

What is it that has poisoned love amongst the human species, and rendered the simple union of the sexes an unnatural bond of tyranny and slavery,† which, in nine cases in every ten, entails life-lasting misery upon the victims of the indissoluble marriages of Christian superstition !

All these questions are answered in five words :—*the artificial religion of priestcraft.*

* Vide Matt. x., 34.

† In the headlong inexperience of youth, the sexes, under an innocent impulse of Nature, enter into the perpetual snare of marriage, with tempers and dispositions as different as are their sexes ; and in a state of penury scarcely able to subsist themselves, they engage to give subsistence to a numerous family. Here is the beginning of that unhappy state of matrimonial life which exhibits the darkest portraiture of human existence—a procreative nest of nuptial misery. But as that abject condition of tollworn bondage mainly entails and fosters ignorance, by allowing the laborer no leisure for the cultivation of his mind, it has ever been cherished as the safeguard of “Church and State” despotism.

So shall the priest-ridden world go on, till

“From the lips of truth one mighty breath,
Shall, like a whirlwind, scatter in its breeze
The whole dark pile of human mockeries.”

[PUBLISHERS' NOTE.]—Since this was written vast changes have been made in England in the laws relating to marriage and divorce, and if Logan Mitchell could rewrite this he would probably be satisfied with such increased facilities for divorce as exist now in the State of Massachusetts, coupled with more complete recognition by the law of the parental rights of the mother.

END OF LECTURE SECOND.

LECTURE THIRD.

On the back-ground appeared the Christian fathers, rearing a form of superstition the most sanguinary and destructive of human happiness that has ever afflicted the world. Her limbs bestrode the prostrate nations to the extremities of the earth; her head towered to the clouds, whilst the right hand of the gigantic monster brandished a burning torch.

Beware of a bull before, a horse behind, and a priest all round.

OLD PROVERB.

THE CHRISTIAN FATHERS, AND THEIR DOGMAS.

IT has constantly been assumed by church chronologists that the Jewish sect of Galileans, who afterwards took the old Pagan appellation of Christian, had writings of their own as early as the first century; but this is mere gratuitous assumption, and rests only on the authority of men entirely undeserving of credit. As for this *new Christian Theogony*, and how it came to receive the first stitches of its patchwork during the second and third centuries, we know nothing about the matter, except what we have on the authority of Eusebius (see preceding lecture), Bishop of Cæsarea, a man who was confessedly the most notorious of all the Church historians for forgery and every other species of pious falsehood.* In getting up his history, he confesses that he entered upon "a solitary and untrodden way;" that he could nowhere find as much as the bare steps of those who had passed the same path before him; that he had "not found any ecclesiastical

* Vide Baronius.

writer which unto this day hath in this behalf employed any diligence." These confessions from such a man are ample proof that he had no authentic matter to found his "history" upon; but he could call to his aid, legends, fables, and traditions, all very plastic and convertible materials, and in the use of them he has certainly shown himself a consummate workman. The rest of that class of men who are generally denominated the "Fathers of the Church," some of whom lived before, and others after the time of Eusebius, were persons equally addicted to holy frauds and forgeries (with perhaps one or two exceptions), but most of them were much inferior to him in zeal and industry. As habitual lying and deception were charged upon most of them by the learned of their Pagan contemporaries, and also by the candid and impartial amongst their modern successors in the church, it is proper to notice what some of the latter have written of them. In this delineation of character we find that a large majority of the vices and crimes which are found among the worst of mankind, have been fixed upon them; viz., avarice, faction, ignorance, sedition, persecution of each other, lying, perjury, *Clogherism** (the crime of the Church in all ages), cruelty, and murder. And some writers have gone so far as to declare that early ecclesiastical history is nothing but a compendium of their evil deeds. In times still earlier, the grossest vices are acknowledged to have been common, if not habitual, among the "faithful;" for Paul, in his epistle to the Roman Christians, chapter first, charges his friends and followers, and even the women amongst them, as guilty of the unnatural crime. In chapter vi., 19, he evidently alludes to it again. St. Barnabas, indeed, calls the first Christians, "the most wicked of all the wicked." Some of the fathers of the second century, such as Papias, and his admirer, Irenæus, were actuated by follies so absurd, that they seem rather to have deserved the name of madmen;

* We learn from "Burnet's Exposition," that the practice of unnatural lusts had been so common among the dignitaries of the Church, that St. Bernard, in a sermon preached to the clergy of France, affirmed

witness the romances about the grape vines, and others of a similar nature, which are not exceeded by the wildest fictions of ancient or modern times. Such being the soil, Christians, out of which your religion sprung from old roots, we need not wonder that the fruit it has borne has been rather bitter.

In the third and fourth centuries, the fathers had arrived at higher tact and skill, and became adepts in trimming up all kinds of pious deceptions and falsifications, and some of them were avowed forgers on principle and by profession. But it frequently happened that as hostilities grew up between the leaders of contending sects, they were useful in exposing the nefarious inventions of each other, which led to deadly animosities amongst their followers. It was, probably, a late knowledge of the utter fallaciousness of his newly adopted religion, and the perpetual contentions which he saw to be inseparable from such a system, that eventually disgusted Origen, and caused him, as is well known, to abandon Christianity, recur to Paganism, and sacrifice to idols, publicly denying his lord and master, Jesus Christ. This appears in his own writings, but more fully in his life, written in Greek by Suidas.

Episcopus says of the Council of Nice, and others of that early period, "that they were led on by fury, faction, and madness;" and this is corroborated by another author, who relates, that at the second Synod of Ephesus, Dioscorus, Bishop of Alexandria, "knocked and kicked Flavianus, Patriarch of Constantinople, with such fury, that within three days after he died." The philosopher Ammianus Marcellinus, complains that "no beasts were such deadly enemies to men as the more savage Christians were to each other." What better could be expected, when the example was shown by the leaders of sects, the fathers themselves, who were constantly quarrelling about the smallest as well

sodomy to be so common in his time, *that bishops with bishops lived in it.*

The historians of the Popes confess that many of them were condemned by their own general councils for adultery, *clogherasty*, simony, sorcery, and Atheism.

as the greatest points, and for the smallest as well as the greatest they damned one another.*

In a former lecture, it has been observed that the famous passage which we find in Josephus about Jesus Christ, was never mentioned nor alluded to in any way whatever by any of the fathers of the first, second, or third centuries; nor until the time of Eusebius, "*when it was first quoted by himself.*" The truth is, none of these fathers could quote or allude to a passage which did not exist in their times, but was, to all points short of absolute certainty, forged and interpolated by Eusebius, as suggested by Gibbon and others. Even the redoubtable Lardner has pronounced this passage to be a forgery.

That most ingenuous and fair dealing son of the Church, Mosheim, whose authority and unimpeachable veracity have never been questioned, even by divines, certifies as follows:—"The Platonists and Pythagoreans held it as a maxim, that it was not only lawful, but praiseworthy to *deceive*, and even to make use of the expedient of a *lie*, in order to advance the cause of truth and piety.† The Jews, who had lived in Egypt, had learned and received this maxim from them (the Pythagoreans and Platonists) before the coming of Christ, as appears incontestably from a multitude of ancient records; and the Christians were infected from both these sources with the same pernicious error, as appears from the number of books *attributed falsely* to great and venerable names." The above extract refers to the second century only, when numerous gospels, epistles, etc., were fabricated and falsely fathered in the manner stated by Mosheim; but in the fourth century there were few exceptions to the standard maxim,

* In the inexhaustible arsenal of St. Paul's conundrums, ambiguous oracles, and common-sense-defying quibbles, they got arms, which answered equally well to combat each other, and to confound all experience and reason.

† Upon this principle exactly, every priest, before he can become a member of the English established church, is obliged to perjure himself on his adoption by the bishop, in swearing two tremendous, palpable, glaring lies; namely, *that he does not seek the living or office for the sake of lucre; but that he is impelled thereto by the Holy Ghost!* Hear, hear, stall-fed John Bull.

that it was an act of the highest merit to deceive and lie, whenever the interests of the priesthood might be promoted thereby.

The writings of the most virtuous and meritorious authors among the Pagans, if they inculcated good morals alone, and condemned all vulgar superstitions, were reckoned superlatively dangerous by these fathers; for even the amiable Plutarch did not escape their wasteful malice, there being upwards of a hundred of his opuscula, or moral treatises destroyed. But while they indulged in this *prudent* destruction, they took care to preserve such extracts from the writings of Porphyry, Celsus, Hierocles, and others, as they could fit up by contortion, and press into the service of their new superstition, inserting, at the same time, concessions which were never made by these philosophers, whose works were exceedingly obnoxious, on account of the reason and good sense which they contained. Nay, it has even been known that some of the finest of these literary productions have, in certain parts, been entirely obliterated by these falsifying priests, and their own knavish jargon substituted on the same parchment.

Daille freely avers, "that the writings of the fathers are in great part forged, either anciently or in latter times, full of frauds, both pious and malicious, against Pagan learning, mutually witnesses against each other, *and are absolutely not to be believed*. They would forge whole books to serve the ends of the priesthood."

These examples were too interesting and praiseworthy not to be followed, as far as possible, by the English clergy. They falsified, again and again, says Hume, the rolls of Parliament to serve their own dominion, taking care to publish only the articles that were favorable to themselves. And they were guilty of another imposture in adding one to the number—(See the first edition of Hume).

Jortin, in his remarks on ecclesiastical history, charges the fathers with *perverting, misquoting, defaming, defacing* and destroying the works of their adversaries, and even those of each other.

Blondel, when speaking of the second century, says

"whether you consider the immediate impudence of impostors, or the deplorable credulity of believers, it was a most miserable period, and exceeded all others in pious frauds; *there was more aversion to lying, and more fidelity among profane, than among Christian, authors.*"

Bishop Fell confesses, that "in the first ages of the Church, so extensive was the license of forging, so credulous were the people in believing, that the evidence of transactions was grievously obscured."

Casaubon complains as follows:—"I am much grieved to observe, in the early ages of the Church, that there were very many who deemed it praiseworthy to assist the divine word with their own fictions; that their new doctrine might find a readier admittance among the wise men of the Gentiles." This is confirmed by Scaliger, who declares that, so inefficacious did they deem their "word of God," that they distrusted the success of Christ's kingdom, *without the aid of lying.*"*

Bishop Burnet has *shown* that the Athanasian creed was a forgery of the eighth century.

To the testimony and authority of the above seven highly respectable divines, we might add that of a host of other theologians, which shows that it has generally been the sons of the Church themselves who have most fully exposed the utterly worthless and deceitful characters of the fabricators of our religion: but for the present we shall only cite the "Free Inquiry" of the ingenuous and learned Dr. Middleton, who, in quoting the authority of St. Cyprian as to the frauds of the Christians in the third century, observes as follows:—"From all these considerations taken together, it must, I think, be allowed that the forged miracles of the fourth century give us just reason to suspect the pretensions of *every other age, both before and after it.* My argument would be much the same if it

* Their "New Jerusalem" was heaven-constructed, and formed a cube of five hundred leagues; it descended through the air for forty nights successively. *Tertullian saw it himself.*—Bravo.

This "New Jerusalem" was figurative of the "Houses of the sun," or the signs of the zodiac.

were grounded on the allowed forgeries of any later age." Again, he says: "So far I agree with them both (Drs. Chapman and Berriman) and own their defence to be true, that the earlier miracles rest on no better foundation, nor are supported by any better evidence than the latter." It is true that elsewhere Dr. Middleton seems to concede the truth of the New Testament and apostolic miracles, but who does not see that this was a shift to ward off persecution and ruin?

It has elsewhere been observed, that according to the confessions of the apostolic father, St. Hermas, which we have in his book called "The Pastor," he was a liar upon principle and avowed profession. Beausobre says of him: "His principle was, that faith was only fit for the rabblement."

"Saint Augustine, one of the most veracious, and the least given to lying of all the Fathers, declares in his 33rd sermon, and stakes his eternal salvation to the truth of the fact, which he said was as true as the Gospel, that while he was bishop of Hippo Regius, he preached the gospel of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ to a whole nation of men and women, *who had no heads*, but had their eyes in their bosoms; and in countries still more southerly, he preached to a nation amongst whom each individual had but one eye, and that situate in the middle of the forehead!" What a glorious field this affords the "*long-eared rout*" for the exercise of their faith!

That falsehood was quite the order of the day amongst the Fathers, witness the maxim of Tertullian, "*Credo quia impossibile est*;" upon which unerring rule he founded his implicit belief in the resurrection and other such miracles, that is, he believed them true, *because they were utterly impossible*. Saint Jerome accuses not only St. Paul, but Jesus Christ, of frauds.

Justin Martyr speaks of the fable of the Phoenix as an incontrovertible truth. Tertullian affirms, in his usual manner, that when the Christians cast out devils, they (the devils) acknowledged themselves to be the heathen deities, Mars, Bacchus, Apollo, etc., etc. These, and such as these, are our Christian authorities!

At the head of all these *Fathers of the Church*, in point

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of rank and pre-eminence in wickedness, stands the imperial assassin, the Emperor Constantine. As a forger and falsifier, it was not in his line to equal his *protégé* Eusebius ; but in all the arts of dissimulation he seems not to have been his inferior. As a cool family murderer, Nero and Caligula may hide their diminished heads in his presence. He drowned his wife in boiling water ; put to death his son Crispus ; murdered the two husbands of his sisters, Constantia and Anastasia ; murdered his own father-in-law, Maximian Hercules ; murdered his nephew, his sister Constantia's son, only twelve years of age ; with some others, not so nearly related, amongst whom was Sapator, a pagan priest, who refused absolution for the crimes of the royal assassin.

There is nothing easier to conceive than the eagerness with which such tyrants as Constantine, and his son Constantius, would embrace so *convenient* a religion as the one newly vamped. The Pagan priest, Sapator, was put to death for expressing horror at the crimes of the former, which were readily absolved by the Christian priests ; and when the latter wanted to commit similar murders, he found a ready assistant in the Bishop of Nicomedia, a *holy father* of the fourth century, who forged a fatal deed, which he affirmed to be the testament of the deceased emperor ; in which his son Constantius was enjoined and conjured to murder his two uncles (one of whom was his father-in-law), Optatus, the husband of his aunt, and seven cousins german, one of whom was his brother-in-law. These were the first imperial patrons of Christianity ! The good bishop no doubt justified Constantine in the bloody injunction laid in his forged will, by the example of David, who, with his last breath, enjoined his son Solomon to murder his faithful general, Joab, and Shimei, though he had sworn not to harm the latter ; in like manner Constantius had pledged his solemn oath for the security of his kinsmen.

When the foregoing sketches and opinions are considered as proof specimen of the true characters and conduct of a few of the men called "the Fathers," an estimate of the general worthlessness and fraudulent

motives of the whole may easily be formed ; yet such were the men who *systematized* Christianity, headed by St. Paul, who afforded them a notable example in all the arts of mystery or fraud, these two terms being synonymous. His justification of lying is as follows :—“For if the truth of God hath more abounded *through my lie unto his glory*, why yet am I also judged as a sinner?” Rom. iii., 7. It ought not, therefore, to excite any surprise, that from so foul a source should emanate those unsightly and revolting dogmas, which, sooner or later, must bring this superstition into utter contempt, before the tribunal of reason and science. The root of all these dogmas is distinctly traceable to the astro-theology of the ancient Pagans ; but the whole has been hideously perverted by the fabricators of our religion, either by knavishly teaching the exoteric, or literal sense, though they knew the esoteric, or hidden meaning ; or by adopting the former through ignorance of the mythological mysteries. The fable of the fall of man, the garden of Eden, the serpent and Eve, etc., are clearly astronomical allegories ;* and the most learned of the early fathers held them to be so ; but they were abused by others, and taken in the literal sense, in order that they might serve as tenter-hooks, upon which to stretch the New Testament dogmas of original sin and redemption. That these fables have allusion to the signs of the zodiac, the solar system, the elements and seasons, has been shown by Volney, Dupuis, and others. Many of the apparently gross absurdities of the Bible are easily explained by the key of ancient astronomy. Indeed, all the principal

* “At the autumnal equinox, when the celestial sign, Virgo (Eve) is setting heliacally, she seems to be followed by the constellation Bootes (Adam, or a personification of solar heat) and by seeming to hold out to him a branch with beautiful fruit upon it, was said to tempt or seduce Adam, whom she appears to draw after her ; and when the two sink below the western horizon, they are said to fall ; and to resign the heavens to the dominion of the serpent, and other wintry signs, i.e. cold and darkness, figuratively, evil. While the man and woman are retiring from the summer garden of fruits and flowers, the sign Perseus is seen rising in the east, and with his flaming sword is said to drive the happy pair from the reign of summer. As Virgo sinks first in the west, she is said to be first in transgression.”

personages of that book, as well as those of remote Pagan antiquity, whether ranking as deities or men, were either personifications of constellations, planets, seasons, or other natural objects, or their effects; and whenever miraculous powers were ascribed to those fanciful creations, all men who understood the mysteries, such as Herodotus, Philo, Origen, etc., knew that the literal sense could not be true; and that the right interpretation was allegorical. The ancient languages of the East having no neuter gender, the host of celestial existences were denominated in the masculine or feminine. Amongst these, their grand immaculate chieftain, the sun, in all the eastern theogonies, and under a thousand different names, was always adored as the omnipotent *Creator* and *Regulator*. "O Sun," cried the great prophet of Persia, "thou art powerful in thy blaze! glorious in thy lustre! the burster of darkness! head of the world! king of stars! mightiest of beings above!"

That those polytheisms of the East, from which emanated Judaism and Christianity, had their root in astronomy, is proved from the most authentic sources. "The Egyptians," says Plutarch, "inserted nothing into their worship without a reason, nothing merely fabulous, nothing superstitious, as many suppose; but their institutions have either a reference to morals, or to something useful in life; and many of them bear a beautiful resemblance of some appearance in nature." Chæremon, the Egyptian philosopher, says: "What is said of Osiris and Isis,* and all the sacred fables, may be resolved into the stars—their occultations and

* According to Eratosthenes, the celestial Virgin was supposed to be Isis, that is, the symbol of the returning year. It was in honor of this goddess that the Egyptians celebrated the famous festival of light, which was imitated by the Christians in their feast of Candlemas. From the Egyptians, the Romans took their Solar festivals, in honor of the birth of the god of light, celebrated on the 25th December, at which time, says Servius, the Sun may, properly speaking, be said to be new, or to have a new birth. Hence the Christmas of the Christians, which had also been, previously, a Druidical festival, in honor of the solar God's birth; hence the evergreen emblems—the holly, the mistletoe, etc., all sacred among the Druids thousands of years before Christ.

risings—into the course of the Sun through the zodiac; or the nocturnal and diurnal hemispheres." Porphyry corroborates the above thus:—"The learned Egyptians admit the existence of no other gods except what are called the planets, the gods which give completion to the zodiac; and such as rise together with these; and likewise the sections of the zodiac into decans." Such were the Egyptian and Chaldeans roots of Christianity; and such was Christianity itself, until it became abused and falsified by the introduction of Platonic visions, and a belief in the reality of supernatural personifications, which by degrees supplanted the sublime natural and moral principles of the Pagan stock.

The metaphysical phantasma called soul (revived by Plato from the divine philosophy of the Pagans), and its future state of rewards and punishments, is one of the most pernicious and fatal of those dogmas. Without this notion priests would be comparatively harmless, as it forms the basis of their secret influence, by working upon the hopes and fears of ignorance, and thereby becomes the chief source of riches and power. By this mischievous invention they have turned this fair world into an abode of gloomy despair, terrifying their weak-minded victims into slavish obedience, by keeping them in perpetual dread of imaginary punishments, in the infliction of which they paint their god as a capricious and malevolent tyrant. This story of the soul's immortality must have been unknown, or at least not fashionable at the time in which it is said Moses lived, since no allusion whatever is made to it throughout the books attributed to him;* and David, Solomon, and Job deny it in the most positive manner. Even the testator of the Jewish will seems at that time to have had no such idea. The fact is, the Jews had heard nothing of the matter until they learnt it of the Platonist Greeks, as is proved by many parts of the

* The great Warburton has shown that the Jews in the time of Moses, entertained no such opinion as the immortality of the soul. "This is admitted (says Ensor) although unwillingly, by Tillotson and Wilkins, and candidly by Le Clercq and Geddes." This platonic notion is flatly denied in Psalms cxlvi., 4; and in Eccles. iii., 19, 20.

Bible; for instance, Moses makes the Jewish god threaten to "visit the sins of the fathers upon the children unto the third and fourth generation." The rewards were also purely temporal, such as "their corn and their wine shall abound." These were all the ideas that Moses had of future rewards and punishments; and the Pharisees did not publicly maintain the dogma of the soul's immortality, etc., until about the time of Herod.

Pythagoras and Plato seemed to have been the mere revivers of this ancient doctrine, which, as the learned say, sprang from the Brahminism of India, the most ancient of all the mythologies, the priests of which are said to have been the first who corrupted human society, by the invention of souls, and other spiritual or celestial existences; but, unlike their imitators of the west, they neither persecuted nor shed a drop of blood for religion's sake; nor the blood of animals for food. Christians! we know ye can very ill bear to be told, that from India through Persia ye have your cosmogony, fall of man, immortality of the soul, redemption, incarnation, future rewards and punishments, heaven and hell, desolation of all things, universal restoration, trinity in unity, eternity, omnipotence, omniscience, omnipresence, and omnibenevolence of God;* all are derived from the Vedas and Shastras, or Bible of the Brahmins, and the Sadder of the Zoroastrians. Out of these oriental materials, all the successive religions that have sprung up in the west have been fabricated, with such variations in the machinery as suited the civil and clerical despotism in the different countries, and the degree of ignorance in the people.

One of the insidious and baneful arts of theology, has ever been to make man believe that he is something else than that which nature has made him in reality; and this delusive flattery has moulded him into that self-important and credulous animal, which best suits the interests of his deceivers;† hence his

* And this God was no other than the Sun!

† In commencing this nefarious process, no time is lost, man is

proudly assumed knowledge of his personified deity. If this be true his boasted spiritual knowledge seems to have the effect of making him more wicked and vicious than any other animal, for he is not only the scourge of all the rest, but will, to gratify the pride and ambition of lay and spiritual tyrants (leagured together for his oppression), cut the throats of his own species; though, by so doing, he the more closely rivets the chains of his own subjection, and maintains those very delusions which enslave his mind, poison society, and distract the world.

The spiritual arsenal of Plato having thus supplied the human animal with what is called an "immortal soul,"* our Christian priests have ever since found it an excellent foundation for their scheme, and a secure medium through which to make permanent their riches and power. Plato would not at this day know his foster-child, disfigured as it now is by a train of hideous inventions, the theory of which is, that death is the only way to a new and eternal life; that all who believe in this paradoxical speculation of the priest shall be rewarded, and that all who believe him *not* shall be tortured by an eternal roasting in that life. Considering the weak and credulous nature of the human mind in a state of ignorance, we must acknowledge the bold ingenuity which invented this tremendous dogma; it is calculated to confound even the strongest intellect; for the terrors of death, under so frightful a predicament, utterly debase and enslave the prostrate mind, making it a prey to all the combined efforts of sacerdotal fraud. By this pernicious fiction, the morality of

seized upon the moment he is born, and the first sacerdotal spell is the water incantation; after which his mind is gradually mortgaged to the priest by more potent charms; he is carefully shorn of his natural liberties, and thus *donkified*, all his motions are regulated until death, when the last priestly spell is performed. But this is not all—clerical rapacity holds property even in the corpse which cannot be interred until this last grasping charge is satisfied.

* As the word soul, heaven, spirit, hell, metaphysic, ghost, immaterial, etc., are not representatives of things which exist in reality, why are they suffered to confound common sense? Because, in serving that purpose, they are the most useful auxiliaries of priest-mare delusion. The Theologian's definition of them is his best refutation.

nations has been destroyed, the blackest crimes that man can commit have been pardoned,* and the priest has filled his coffers to the glory of the three divinities! Theology, in its vain attempts to raise man above that sphere in which nature has placed him, as a link in her animated chain, hath thus created for him an imaginary futurity; but, in so doing, by a strange incongruity, the creature so exalted above himself, and made the exclusive object of divine clemency, has against him, nevertheless, 999 chances in the 1,000 that he is predestined to everlasting torments, (yet even this inexorably forlorn hope flatters his pride) whilst the remaining unit only shall enjoy the beatitude of celestial bliss :—

No matter,
Better to be in hell, it seems, than
Not to be at all. We say negatur.

To create that essential difference between man and the other animals which is necessary to the ends of priest-craft, the spiritualist conjures up his chimerical invention called soul; which, for certain considerations to him well and truly paid, he bestows exclusively upon man; and as the other animals have no money, he declares, in the not-to-be-questioned tone, that not one of them has a rag of any such appendage. There is no necessity for proving this in the usual manner, nor even to demonstrate that the article in question has a real existence, as these are points of *faith* imposed by dint of infallible dogmas, the truth of which is sufficiently proved by the power which nine millions a-year confers upon our spiritual guides; and by the ignorance which that power and influence fosters.

The bee, the beaver, the ant, and many more of those called “inferior animals,” have shown in com-

* Oh, Plato! Plato! you have paved the way
With your confounded fantasies, to more
Immoral conduct, by the fancied sway
Your systems feign o'er the controlless core
Of human hearts, than all the long array
Of poets and romances; you're a bore,
A charlatan, a coxcomb, and have been,
At best, no better than a go-between.—BYRON.

munity, equal, if not superior wisdom, in all their customs and social institutions, to that displayed by man in society; yet priests will not allow them a scrap of *soul*. But this deficiency will be remedied whenever spiritual impostors, pretending to heavenly inspiration, shall spring up amongst themselves; for then supernatural religions, with their accompaniments of priest-hoods, will be simultaneous blessings, as the latter will not only supply in abundance the little "immortal" articles in question, but save and cure them for the voyage to heaven, for the trifling remuneration of being allowed the means of living in luxury and ease for life, at the expense of the wealth producers. These conditions are so customary and moderate, that a priesthood, even amongst ants, could not be expected both to create and save souls on more reasonable terms. Before these tiny examples of industry give way to the introduction of supernaturalism, and its hierarchical plagues, let them well weigh whether the possession of souls (subject to the terrible risks above stated), and a post-mortem *life* will compensate for the corruption of government, the debasement of character, the immoralities, the vices, and shocking crimes which will most assuredly pervade their communities for ever in *this* life, whenever they adopt spiritualism, and its train of locusts to prey upon their industry. We have been more particular in regard to ants, owing to its having been ascertained that in many of their republics, a military force, or "standing army," in peace as well as in war, has been established; and as that scourge has never been known among men, but as part of a grand enslaving scheme, which embraced, as a vital correlative, some system of superstition and its priesthood, it is greatly to be feared that the ants are verging towards the sacerdotal mania, which is the hand and glove concomitant of the former evil.

The indisputable fact that man, taking him as the Christian superstition has moulded him, has more vices than any other animal whatsoever, and not a single virtue that may not be found in most of them, is rather a lame proof of his exclusive possession of the immortal item to which he pretends.

That which was called "soul" in Platonism and Christianity, was precisely the *Pneuma* of the Greeks, and the *Anima* of the Latins, to which they attached no other meaning than simply the breath of life* in all animals; and as that is composed of elements which are eternal, immortality may, in this sense, be justly ascribed to it.† But mind or soul is not a thing of itself (*res sui*), but a consequence resulting from, and depending upon, animal organisation. In regard to the "*innate ideas*" which it has pleased our theological doctors to bestow upon the human mind, the better to adapt it for their own purpose, it would be quite as philosophical and true, to assert that a violin had innate music. This physical property called mind, the result of organisation, and, in degree, common to everything that has life, is, at birth, a *tabula rasa*, but acquires ideas as it grows to maturity, from the senses being acted upon by external objects, much in the same manner that the mechanically organised violin produces music, from the external action of the bow.

The next dogma we shall notice is that of Savior, or Mediator. This is evidently derived from the Christna of the Hindu trinity, who, as the *Redeemer* of the human race, was the most important of the three. This personification of the sun seems to have been adopted by the Persian lawgiver, Zoroaster, under the name of Mithra (which still meant Mediator), when he founded the religion of the Mithriacs, or worshippers of the sun. According to Plutarch, Zoroaster taught that there existed two principles, one good, and the other evil; the first was called Oromazes, "*the ancient of days*," being the principle of good or light; the other, Ahriman, was the principle of evil, or cold and darkness. Between these personified principles, he

* Its supposed existence after death is merely a fresh version of the ancient *Metempsychosis*.

† Aristotle maintained the eternity of matter, and did not believe that the governing power of the universe extended any particular providence to sublunary things. As for the immortality of the soul, or even the existence of any such thing, as taught in modern theology, it was quite inconsistent with his principles; yet he was, at one and the same time, *the master of theologians, and the chief of the Atheists*.

placed his Mithra, who, as the source of genial heat and life, annually redeems the human race from the power of evil or cold and darkness.* From this beautiful allegory of the sun, is derived the Christian dogma of Savior, of which proof may be found even amongst the fathers. (See Tertullian, *Adv. Gentes*.) Celsus asserts that the early Christians were merely a sect of adorers of the sun, and such a sect were the Manicheans. The principles of what man calls *good* and *evil*, have also been personified† in the Osiris and Typhon of the Egyptians, the Jupiter and Pandora of the Greeks, the Jehovah and Satan of the Jews, and the present God and devil of the Christians.

Diogenes Laertius says expressly that the Jews adopted the doctrine of the two principles from the Magi; and St. Augustine assures us that it was the foundation of the religion of the Assyrians, who were so often the masters of the little miserable Jewish horde. Manicheism (so called from Manes, the founder) was one of the first branches of Christianity; but adhered more than any other of the heresies, to the original Zoroastrian stock, though it lay as a stage between that religion and the recent version of Christianity, which, as well as Judaism, is a mere heresy from the religion of the Persians. Since the Persian cosmogony and religion, as well as all others of the East, were purely and confessedly allegorical, is it rational to suppose that anything of the kind got up by

* This Indian and Persian Trinity was symbolical of the three-fold power of the Sun, or God Mithra: in spring and summer, he is the *Producer*; in autumn, the *Preserver*; and by his absence in winter, the *Destroyer*.

† The fraud of personifying principles, and the physical powers of Nature has always been easy and indispensable with priests in all ages. During the French revolution, Gobet, Bishop of Paris, acknowledged that up to that time, himself and his clergy had taught the people nothing but a mass of falsehood, for which he apologised; disowned the god he had taught the people to worship, and promised to devote himself to the worship of reason, morality, liberty and virtue. But the stupid and credulous mob soon personified these qualities, and worshipped them as deities and real entities. At Rome, in like manner, the compliments of the new year, *Perpetua Felicitas*, were turned into two goddesses, and receive divine honors to this day.

the Jews, could be other than a rough and ignorant version of that of their masters ?

- It has been admitted by most of the learned that the *Shastras* and *Vedas*, or scriptures of the Hindus, were in existence 1,400 years before the alleged time of Moses ; and, in all probability, the *Zendavesta*, or Persian Bible, was long anterior also. Sir William Jones, of pious and orthodox memory, confesses that, "the name of *Chrishna*,"* and the general outline of his story, *was long anterior to the birth of our Savior*, and, to the time of Homer, *we know very certainly*. I am persuaded also (continues he), that a connexion existed between the old idolatrous nations of Egypt, India, Greece, and Italy, *long before the time of Moses*. In the Sanscrit Dictionary, compiled more than two thousand years ago, we have the whole story of the incarnate Deity, BORN OF A VIRGIN, and miraculously escaping in his infancy from the reigning tyrant of his country." This tyrant, alarmed at some prophecy, sought the infant's life ; and, to make sure work, he ordered all the male children under two years of age to be put to death. Here is the true origin of the horrid story about Herod, of which no Greek or Roman historian says a single word. That the Christian story was taken from the Indian allegory, is traceable in every circumstance—the reputed father of *Chrishna* was a carpenter—a new star appeared at the child's birth—he was laid in a manger—(celestial)—he underwent many incarnations† to redeem the world from sin and mental darkness, (ignorance and winter) and was, therefore, called *Savior* ;—he was put to death between two thieves—he arose from the dead, and returned to his heavenly seat in *Vaicontha*. In corroboration of this, Albert the

* Sir William Jones says, in his "*Asiatic Researches*," that he was assured by Colonel Valency, that *Chrishna* in Irish means the sun. The Baal-fire feast, or meeting, was a great festival in Ireland, on the 25th of December, and midsummer eve. Baal, or Bel, was a name of the sun all over the east.

† This probably alludes to the great period of nearly 26,000 years, in which time the sun passes through the whole circle of the zodiac. That is, he is in each sign, at the vernal equinox, for the space of 2,155 years.

Great admits as follows :—"We know that the sign of the celestial Virgin did come to the horizon at the moment where we have fixed the birth of our Lord Jesus Christ. All the mysteries of the incarnation of our Savior Christ : and all the circumstances of his marvellous life, from his conception to his ascension, *are to be traced out in the constellations, and are figured in the stars.*" Volney, Dupuis, and others, have shown that these, and many more of our Scripture stories, which are absurd and revolting, if taken literally, were originally, in the learning of the east, pregnant with truth as astronomical allegories ; having primary allusion to the sun, the elements and seasons, and to the progress of that luminary through the different signs of the zodiac ; but more particularly, as he is the sole and glorious source from which flows all and everything that man can rationally call good. We repeat the melancholy truth, that all these beautiful astro-allegories have been lost in the ignorance or roguery of priestcraft.

Miraculous conceptions.—All antiquity is full of such conceptions and births, springing from the fabulous amours of gods with *virgins*, whereby "*sons of God*" were engendered. These fables also had their origin in physical and moral allegories ; but they were subsequently found to be extremely convenient to cover the real fruits of sacerdotal intrigues and seductions, which the priests could always saddle upon some good-natured god. In all probability the virgin votaries of Vesta were instituted for no other purpose than the private *devotions* of the priesthood* and when it happened that they were unable to conceal the natural effects of these amours, the paternity was charged upon some easy accommodating god ; by which means the girl remained in spotless virginity. This opinion is the more valid from their being allowed to marry at thirty, when the priests no longer wanted *their* services,

* In the highest apartment of the Temple of Belus, in Babylon, a woman was kept for the *private devotion* of the priest whose turn it was to make astronomical observations. This was done under the pretence that the lady was visited once a year by the god Bel. History does not inform us in regard to Bel's progeny, by these housekeepers.

but those of the younger girls : if they chose to remain in the temple, however, they were

“Doomed to deck the bed they once enjoyed.”

By such artful intrigues, the Hindu virgin, Rohini, conceived and brought forth a “*son of God*,” one of the Brahmin trinity. A Chinese virgin, impregnated by a ray of the *Sun*, became the mother of the god Foë, who always acted as the *mediator* between his followers and another god of still greater power. Mademoiselle Creusa, in all her virgin purity, was safely delivered of another “*son of God* ;” as was also the virgin mother of Somonocodom, who, according to the scriptures of the Talapoins of Siam, was the god expected to *save* the universe. Jupiter himself was fabled to have given birth to children from all parts of his body, from forehead to leg : thus Minerva sprang from his head.* The followers of Plato, two hundred and fifty years after his death, and one hundred before the Christian era, raised the story that he was born of a virgin :—Aristo, his father, was on his marriage, warned in a *dream* by Apollo, not to have any commerce with his wife, because she was with child by him (Apollo) ; Aristo obeyed ; and Plato was born as another “*son of God*.” It was no doubt owing to the holy paternity of some priest, that Sylva Rhea, under cover of a love affair with the god Mars, had the honor to lay the foundation of the Roman religion, by producing another “*son of God*.”

The writers of the most ancient chronicles of Alexandria, after attesting the universal prevalence of our *gospel religion* in Egypt for ages before the date of its alleged origin, in the reign of Tiberius, testify as follows :—

“To this day, Egypt has consecrated the pregnancy of a virgin, and the nativity of her son, whom they annually present in a cradle, to the adoration of the people ; and when king Ptolemy, three hundred and fifty years before our Christian era, demanded of the

* The severe study, or brain-labor necessary in acquiring sound knowledge, is here prettily allegorized in the birth of Minerva, who was the personification of wisdom.

priests the significance of this religious ceremony, they told him it was a mystery.*

All the above conceptions and incarnations are merely the poetical and allegorical fictions of Paganism. We have already seen that the first fabricators and compilers of our religion were men of the greatest honesty and veraciousness of character: and as they had just received the divine light of "the only true revelation," we are "bound to believe" that their story of a miraculous conception is the only true one, confirmed as it is by *ghosts, dreams, angels, and shadows*. It is true that it cannot boast of such remote antiquity as the foregoing prodigies; but it is ancient enough to constitute truth in the orthodox eye of *Faith*; and we must not give way to the impiety of supposing that it is an imitation of any one of the heathen fables enumerated;† or the "blasphemy" of surmising that God's sending "his message to a carpenter's wife," is a varied version of Jupiter's loving message to Alcmena, by Mercury. Neither must we entertain the shocking idea that the conception of Mary was occasioned by any carnal agency; or that either the *shadow* or *substance* of any priest was at all concerned in the holy mystery. Yet heresy will tell untoward tales; for her pregnancy has been accounted for in the most natural way imaginable, thus:—"According to the apocryphal gospel of the nativity of Mary which Father Jerome Xavier entirely adopts, Mary, when a child, was consecrated to the Lord (that is, to the priests), by the usual vow; and was brought up in the temple, which she did not leave until she was sixteen years of age. This created a suspicion that her pregnancy was the effect of some intrigue with the priests, who made her believe, or

* According to Macrobius, this was the solar god Bacchus, who appears at the winter solstice, as an infant. Plutarch says that at the winter solstice, Isis (Nature) brought forth a son, a weak and feeble infant. On the inscription at Sais, Isis says, "The fruit which I have produced, was, and will become a Sun."

† The whole story about the conception and birth, was told in precisely the same manner as it is now, in India, Persia, Egypt, and Greece, for more than 1,500 years before its alleged occurrence in Palestine.

say, that it was the Holy Ghost who had begotten a child upon her."*—(Codex. Apox. N. T.) Some profane persons have said that the high priest was himself the chief actor in this sacerdotal amour; for he anxiously pitched upon old Joseph to be the husband of Mary. St. Epiphanius assures us in his book "Adv. Heresies," that Joseph was very old at the time of his marriage with the *virgin*; and adds that he was the father of six children by his first wife. Moreover, the gospel ascribed to St. James the younger affirms that the good old man espoused Mary with much reluctance, owing to the disparity of their ages; but the high priest prevailed on him at last; and it further informs us of the very ill-humor of Joseph, when he found that his wife had been with child before their marriage, and the reproaches with which he loaded her, on account of her lewdness, unworthy, as he thought, of a *virgin reared under the eyes of priests*. Mary excused herself with tears and protestations, and swore by the living God that she did not know who begot the child. In her distress, the best excuse would have been her adventure with the archangel Gabriel; but it appears she forgot that. [It is indeed passing strange that Mary, according to Matthew, is wholly ignorant of her justification, according to Luke.]

The fathers of our Church have disputed and quarreled in the most obscene terms, about this mystic impregnation by the Holy Ghost. St. Ambrose says:—"Non enim, secreta reseravit, sed immaculatum semen inviolabili utero spiritus sanctus infudit!!† In one of the Church hymns it was sung, "Non ex virili, sed mystico spiramine." Justin Martyr, in his apology, justifies these dogmas as modified by the Christians, *not because they were true*, but from the example of the heathen; he says:—"By declaring the Logos, the first begotten of God, our Master Jesus

* The followers of Loatze say, that his mother became pregnant of him, by a junction of heaven and earth. This is a sublime and bold conception; and far excels the puerile prating about *ghosts, angels, dreams, and shadows*.

† Of the miraculous impregnation, St. Ambrose says, "Maria per aurem impregnata est."

Christ, to be born of a virgin, without any human mixture, and to be crucified and dead, and to have risen again, and ascended into heaven,—*we say no more in this, than what you say of those whom you style the sons of Jove.*" This was honestly lugging in one fable to apologise for another. The logic of Tertullian on this subject was decisive, and peculiar to himself—it might be called an axiomatic, or self-evident mode of reasoning; for instance, he says, "I am not ashamed of maintaining that the son of God was born, *because it is itself a shameful thing.* I maintain that he died and rose again, *because it is absurd.*" When preachers use such convincing arguments, there is no excuse for the incredulity of hearers. This great Father contended also, that souls were material—that they had sexes, and were as much begotten by each other; as our bodies are by the bodies of our immediate parents. He asserted also, that "*God is a body.*"

"The word *begotten* necessarily infers and associates the ideas of three distinct and separate Beings—the begetters, the begotten, and the person on whom he was begotten; and the term *begotten*, alluding as it does to the performance of a particular action, must imply a particular time when that action was performed and of course that there was a time when that action was performed; now as the very definition of the word eternity is that which is *without beginning* as well as *without end*, to talk of a person *begotten* from eternity, is to compose a sentence of words the most contradictory to each other, or downright nonsense; it is to tell us of an action that was *begun without any beginning; of a finite infinite, or an immortal mortal!*" But the mystic conceptions, births, and incarnations of Paganism, being rooted in, and having exclusive allusion either to physical or moral principles, there were no such absurdities, terms, or monstrous perversions of them, as the early Christians fell into, by converting mere words into *beings*, in forming their mythology.

That the Christian dogma of the immaculate conception and birth of Christ, was originally an astronomical allegory of the Sun, "the day-spring from on high," can be proved by a hundred corroborating facts, which

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are irresistibly convincing, except where interest, or the most inveterate prejudice, stands in the way. These facts have been elucidated by Albert, Alphonso, Volney, Boulanger, Dupuis, Taylor, and by all astronomers, who have not been deterred from speaking the truth by their interests, their fears, or their prejudices. On the 19th of August, the constellation of the Virgin disappears in the sun's rays; and hence the figurative expression in Luke i., 35, "*The Holy Ghost shall come upon thee, and the power of the Highest shall OVERSHADOW thee.*" On the same day the ancients celebrated the assumption of Astrea,* (another name of the Virgin,) and about the same time, the Christians celebrate the assumption of the blessed Virgin. On the 9th of September, this constellation emerges out of the Sun's rays, at which time the Catholics celebrate the nativity of the mother of the Sun, or Christ.

The "star in the east," (a sign containing more than a hundred stars,) mentioned in Matthew, was no other than this zodiacal sign of the celestial Virgin, which arose on the eastern horizon precisely at the time at which we fix the birth of Jesus Christ, viz., the 25th of December, when the sun has risen one degree above the solstitial point: which answers to a moment to the births of the Egyptian Osiris, the Grecian Bacchus, and the Mithra of the Persians. These mystic births are manifestly identical, being metaphorical of the Sun's annual birth at the winter solstice, after which he gradually becomes, not only figuratively, but positively, the Savior of the world. The resemblance, or rather the sameness of every circumstance relating to Mithras, the Mediator of the Persians, and those connected with the Savior, or Mediator of the Christians, is so apparent, that no rational man can doubt, or hesitate a moment, in pronouncing the latter to be a counterpart of the former.

* That is, the starry goddess. She was also the Miriam (the same as Mary, Eve, &c.,) of Numbers xii., 14, and the seven days' leprosy of her face was allegorical of the same number of days exactly, when the brightness of the zodiacal virgin is wholly absorbed, or obscured, by the effulgence of the solar rays.

Zoroaster taught the Magi that this celestial birth would be announced by the rising of this star, or constellation of Virgo, in the middle of which would appear the figure of a young woman, suckling an infant child, called Jesus by some nations, and Christ, or Christos,* in Greek. This was the goddess of the year nursing the god of day. Under this beautiful symbol, the new born child is said to be feeble, weak, and obscure, which is metaphoric of the Sun below the horizon in winter; that he was brought forth in a stable, and laid in a manger, alluding to the "stabulum jovium," one of the winter constellations. At the vernal equinox, when the Sun entered the sign Aries, or the Ram, the emblem was a lamb, (the Lamb of God,) and as he gained strength towards the summer solstice, he became the conqueror of the powers of darkness and evil, that is, the constellations of winter; and was figuratively said to bruise the serpent's head, that constellation being, as it were, depressed below the horizon. By a like metonymy of language, the "*Ascension*" of Christ has also allusion to the Sun at the summer solstice.

Upon the sun's annual progression through the twelve signs of the zodiac was founded the mythological or allegorical astronomy of the ancients, (Christianity has no other foundation); and in this zodiacal picture, the allegory supposes that sign to have rule, through which the sun is passing; the knowledge of which science was conveyed in a striking and sublime manner, under the disguise of miraculous narrative: of this sort is the story of the three children, in the book of Daniel, a relic of Chaldean astronomy. The

* In the ancient zodiacs of India and Egypt, there is seen this virgin nursing a male child with sun rays around his head, (frown not, ye priests!) which is emblematical of the infant sun at the winter solstice, and of his being then in the sign Virgo. When he was in that sign in summer, the virgin was represented with a bunch of fruit; and when in harvest, she appropriately held out an ear of corn. These zodiacs were devised at various periods of antiquity, as the sun passed through the different signs, in the phenomena of which the learned priests always found plenty of gods and goddesses for the worship of the vulgar, as is still done in Christianity.

"burning fiery furnace" was nothing else than an emblem of that region of the great circle which the sun enters at midsummer, or the sign Cancer. Each of the twelve signs of the zodiac had a presiding genius, or imaginary personification, and these were the twelve greater gods of Paganism. Each of these signs was again subdivided into three parts, called Decans, who were also personified; and, consequently, there were three of these geniuses in each of the signs: therefore, when the sun enters Cancer, there must be three of these Decans, or personifications, in the burning fiery furnace. Here the astronomer in Daniel,* concealing his science under the veil of allegory, exclaims: "Did we not reckon three children in the burning fiery furnace? Behold, I see four, and the form of the fourth is like the Son of God!" No person but a Christian, under his strongest prejudices, is capable of denying the manifest meaning of this metaphor, that being evidently the *sun itself*; which, with three personified Decans, Shadrach, Mesach, and Abednego, in the sign Cancer, makes the fourth. It is almost needless to point out that Nebuchadnezzar, the king, is a personification of the constellation Sirius, or the dog-star, which is always supposed to heat "the burning fiery furnace," in a sevenfold degree, while the sun is in its vicinity, that is, from the 3rd of July till about the 11th of August.

What is the signification of the many Bible allusions to the "*Horse and his Rider*," the "triumphant" breaking of the arrows and his bow, he being always denoted as essentially opposed to what is good, and forming part of, or belonging to, that which is evil? This allegory evidently points to the Centaur sign, Sagittarius,† half horse and half man, armed with bow and arrows. This is the zodiacal sign of November; and the sun being in that adverse constellation in that dark and gloomy

* The zodiacal sign of the lion being below the horizon, and the sun appearing to set in the direction of that constellation, "Dom-el, Dan-el, or Daniel, that is, the *Sun*," was said to be cast into the *Lion's Den*.

† The author is much indebted to the Rev. Mr. Taylor for the satisfactory manner in which he proves many of these astronomical allegories.

month, it is naturally spoken against, as being emblematical of his weak, low, and depressed influence; and, consequently, its inseparable connexion with *evil*, or cold and darkness. But when the sun rises "triumphantly" in the heavens, and is most truly "the day star on high," as he ascends towards the summer solstice, and becomes the "Lion of Juda," in July, he has victoriously thrown the zodiacal archer, Sagittarius, as it were, "*into the sea*," that is, below where the sea bounds the horizon. Then have we Miriam's sublime song of victory:—"Sing ye to the Lord (the sun), for he hath triumphed gloriously; the *Horse* and his *Rider* hath he thrown into the sea." As this victory is achieved annually, the song is equally applicable at every midsummer. Thus, though a large portion of the miscellany called the Bible appears in the guise of immoral or absurd narrative, much of it is really and truly the allegorised astronomy of the Chaldees and Persian Magi, and therefore rooted in science.

Like everything else relating to Christ, or Christos, the dogma of the ascension has no doubt its allegorical root in the Sun's apparent exaltation in the heavens, from the vernal equinox to the summer solstice. This miraculous story, as we have seen it in the New Testament, is more replete with inconsistency than even any of the others of that book. The Fathers have attributed the anonymous book called the "Acts" to Luke; but his gospel contradicts the Acts: the latter makes Jesus remain on earth forty days after his crucifixion; whereas Luke makes him ascend into heaven the very same day he arose from the dead. Those who are stated to have been eye-witnesses of the ascension, being present as disciples at the time, viz., Matthew, John, Peter, James, and Jude, have not, in the epistles ascribed to them, left even an allusion to that most wonderful phenomenon. Matthew and John were said to be present—how came they to omit even the slightest notice of this vital root of Christianity? Mark and Luke were *not* present; yet they alone notice it, in rather a vague and abrupt manner. In short, no person whatever *says he saw it*. Mark says that Jesus ascended at Jerusalem; Luke says it was at Bethany, places two

miles distant from each other. Matthew says the last seen with the disciples was on a mountain in Galilee ; Luke, that it was at Bethany, which is at least seventy-five miles from Galilee.

The dogma of the redemption * of man by Jesus Christ, appears not to have been thought of by the New Testament fabricators ; and is clearly a subsequent invention of the Church of Rome. Paul, in 1 Corinthians xv., gives us abundant assertions about the resurrection of the same body, which is his chief doctrine, but there is not a word about redemption. This dogma, then, is the lucrative forgery of priest-craft, after the councils of Nice and Laodicea had *decided by vote* that the spurious miscellany called the New Testament should be the new Will of God. The amount of moral evil done by this fable, is enormous beyond all expression. When men are taught that their wicked deeds and vices are to be rubbed off by a device so unjust and iniquitous as the sacrifice of the innocent, to atone for the crimes of the guilty, we cannot wonder at the horrid depravity of society.

Having already shown that Christianity is merely a compound emanating from the Egyptian, Brahmin, and Zoroastrian systems, or a new version of the fables of Prometheus, Christna, Mithras, Adonis, Bacchus,† etc., engrafted with some variations upon the Jewish scriptures ; and that the above names, with hundreds of others, are so many personified emblems of the Sun, which, together with the planetary system and the fixed stars (in Bible phrase, "the host of heaven") formed the occult basis of all the religions of Paganism,‡ the important question will be asked—has

* That man should be redeemed from the sin of eating an apple, by the murder of an innocent person called Jesus, is certainly by far the strangest system of religion that ever was palmed upon the world. Never was there so great an outrage on common-sense !

† Even the word *Divine*, pluralised in *Dii Vini*, deities of wine, or priests of Bacchus, is taken from heathenism, and pressed into the service of a very different order of priests, save that wine-loving has ever been common to both.

‡ Origen tells Celsus that the Egyptian philosophers veiled their knowledge of things in fables and allegories. "The learned," he adds,

Christianity no tangible or authentic historical foundation, *to be understood according to the literal sense of the New Testament?* If such events or incidents in any way similar to those detailed in the New Testament, had in reality taken place at the times and places stated, they could not possibly have failed to excite the intense attention of the public authorities amongst the Romans, even if denuded of their miraculous accompaniments;—the infant butchery of Herod would alone have caused this attention. But as no one of all the historians or noted writers, Roman, Jewish, or Greek, who lived in the period of the alleged prodigies, nor those who came upon the public stage immediately after them, though there were upwards of twenty such distinguished authors, who wrote between the years 20 and 140 A.D., have taken the slightest notice of the life or crucifixion of a person called Christ—(the passage in Josephus is universally given up as forgery)—the inadmissible violations of Nature's laws, said to have accompanied that event, as narrated in the Gospels, which contradict each other in almost every important circumstance, we are forced to the conclusion that, independently of everything miraculous, the story is totally unsupported by any concurrent testimony;* but when the miracles are

"may penetrate into the signification of all oriental mysteries; but the vulgar can only see the exterior symbol, or the bark which covers them." Again, he says, "It is allowed by all who have any knowledge of the scriptures, that everything is mentioned enigmatically."

* Bishop Talleyrand, in a letter which he is said to have written to the Pope, after their quarrel, states that after Christianity had made some noise in the Empire, the entire absence of all testimony in regard to its pretended origin, excited the curiosity of the Roman Senate, to know what really was the foundation of the story; so they "ordered affidavits to be procured in the very centre of Palestine, in places fixed by them, which affidavits were sent to Rome, with the most conclusive evidence of the correctness of the report. These proved that Mary, who was of the tribe of Levi, and wife of the carpenter Joseph, who was of the tribe of Juda, had had an illicit intercourse with a Roman soldier, named Panther, who served in the 14th legion, stationed in Egypt, whence he was detached into Palestine. From this criminal intercourse a child was born, whom they called Ararias; and who was adopted by Joseph, according to the Roman practice, though it was contrary to the Jewish customs. With Joseph he learned the carpen-

taken into consideration in the literal sense, reason and all experience at once decide the whole to be grossly fabulous; and seems to be a circumstantial imitation of the crucifixion of Prometheus, as we have it in the tragedy of Æschylus, which is a dramatic allegory of the sun, and the planetary system.

This new version of the old mythology was gradually constructed by priestcraft during the second, third, and fourth centuries, of materials taken from all the oriental polytheisms; and is a similar sort of fraudulent quackery upon these allegorical religions, that astrology is upon legitimate astronomy. Thus, (let us repeat the melancholy truth) out of the comparatively harmless astro-fables of antiquity hath sprung a foul collusion of religious and political tyranny, that has been dreadful in its effects; and every successive invention to strengthen this accursed coalition of an aristocracy of nobles and priests, linked together with royalty,* has tended more and more to depress the interests of the laboring population, or wealth producers of Europe, and served to crush them under the most merciless of all despotisms. And as it is utterly hopeless that our English *hereditary lawgivers*, who are virtually our feudal rulers, and whose interests are entirely exclusive, will ever pass any laws but such as support and perpetuate these interests, it is much to be feared that, as in France before the revolution, nothing but a sanguinary reaction on the part of the people, will re-establish their right to just representation in

ter's trade; but after the death of his putative father, he abandoned his home and mother, and became a vagrant. Having met a few vagrants like himself, they all took the road to Galilee, where they lived for some time by begging. Having at last become the leader of a band of freebooters, he was arrested by the police of Jerusalem, and finally condemned to death by the general acclamation of the people." By thus instituting inquiries in the country in which he was born, the Roman Senate became acquainted with the origin of Mary's son, which, in regard to paternity, differs from the apocryphal gospel of the nativity of Mary.

* In 1822, the clergy of Austria persuaded the monarch of over forty millions of people to declare, "I want no men of science; I want only obedient subjects. I want no education among my subjects, but what is given by the priesthood."

Parliament, equal laws, and a dissolution of that baneful state-confederacy between our aristocratic rulers and the reigning superstition ; the support of which, we are tempted to conclude, *is more the object of government than the interests of the common weal.*

END OF LECTURE THIRD.

LECTURE FOURTH.

All these fragments of crack-brained opiniatry and silly solaces, played off, in the sweetness of song, by deceitful poets, have, by you too credulous creatures, been shamefully reformed and made over to your own God.

MINUTIUS FELIX.

PAGAN ALLEGORIES

MADE CHRISTIAN DOGMAS.

(Continued.)

DOES not the New Testament speak very distinctly of two crucifixions, viz., one as having taken place upon Mount Calvary, and another at, or in a Garden? There is even a third mentioned, as having occurred in Egypt, "where also our Lord was crucified," Rev. xi., 8; which is a plain recognition of the astro-religion, and solar worship of the Egyptian priests. The crucifixion upon Mount* Calvary was allegorical of the sun's *passing over*, or *crossing* the equator in March; of which month the Ram, or Lamb of God, was the zodiacal emblem, God, the sun, being in that sign at the spring equinox. This was also the origin of the Pascal Lamb, and the *Passover* of the Jews, which they borrowed of their masters, the Egyptians. This *crossing* of the sun, while in the Ram of March, was likewise metonymised into the phrase about "The Lamb that was slain from the beginning of the world;" that is, the Lamb that was figuratively crucified at every vernal equinox, while the sun was in the sign Aries,

* The word mount, as here used, is figurative of the sun's being in the state of elevation in the horizon, at the spring equinox.

or the Lamb. The Evangelist John, in describing God, declares that the hair of his head *was like wool*; (O, John, you are too apt to tell tales out of school!) which setting aside the ludicrous simile, is a sublime symbol of God, the sun, in the sign of the Ram, in March. Why is the second crucifixion, as narrated by this tell-tale, John, said to have happened, not upon a mount, but in or near a garden? Because this crucifixion has allusion to the autumnal equinox, when the sun *crosses* the line of the equator, in September; and nothing can be a prettier, or more appropriate emblem of that month than a fruit garden, or vineyard. Why is the mother of Jesus said to be standing by, or near him, at the garden crucifixion, as stated by John, though her presence is not at all acknowledged by any of the other Evangelists? His mother could no more be near him at his Calvary crucifixion, than August can be near March; but as she, as the sign Virgo, or the Virgin, is also the genius of August, she was, of course, near, or standing "by the cross," when her son Jesus Christ, that is, the sun, was crossified, or crossed the equator in September, that month being next door neighbor to August. The Christ, or Savior of the vernal equinox ascends into the Heaven of summer, and saves, or re-creates the organised existences of this globe, by his genial and animative power; whereas the Christ of the autumnal *Cross* descends gradually to the winter solstice, and is said, therefore, to descend into *Hell*, that is, to enter the signs and constellations of winter, which, being antagonistic to those of summer, are emblematical of evil. In the September crucifixion, Christ, as the sun, is called "the Just One," because he is then in the zodiacal sign, Libra, or the Balance.

The Egyptian deity, Bacchus, or the wine-producing god, being also a personification of the sun, is the same as Christ, and of course, like him, visited the "lowest regions" after being unjustly put to death. These being only the Egyptian and Indian names for the same divinity, it was quite in analogy to preserve a symbolical allusion to the vine and blood of the grape, in the crucifixion of Christ. But it requires little penetration to perceive that all we find there

said about the "agony,"* in the garden, and sweating "great drops of blood," has a very plain allusion to the wine-press and the compression of the grapes;† and here the secret meaning is as near the surface as it possibly can be in allegory. The rich, sweet juice is at first expressed in "great drops," or copiously, and is called "the blood of the grape;" by a second pressure, the thin lees, or "vinegar," is compressed, which they are allegorically said to have given him to drink; and after this last process the business is truly said to be "finished." After this manner, and in every age and country of the world, down to the present day, have the allegories invented by priests, and cunningly drawn from the astronomical phenomena of nature, passed for religion amongst the unthinking million.‡ If the cruel usage given to John Barleycorn, in the process of turning him into beer, had been allegorised to us in our present ignorance, and priest-nursed stupidity, it would have answered equally as well as the fable of Christ and the "blood of the wine-press."

The name of *Chrishna*, *Christna*, or *Christ*, was common to Egypt as well as to India, in the remotest known antiquity. In the Sanscrit Dictionary, the name of the Nile is *Christna*; which is further proof of what Sir William Jones says about the exceedingly ancient intercourse which subsisted between India and Egypt "before the time of Homer." And although this pious author, and several other writers on eastern affairs, seem carefully to have avoided saying a word about the crucifixion of the Hindu Savior, and many Christians have exulted in the similarity of the legends being entirely broken off by this pretended discrepancy,

* "An *Agony* literally is a wine-press."—Taylor.

† "And the wine-press was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-press" (Rev. xiv., 20).

‡ The Crucifixion of Christ is so manifestly a new version of that of Prometheus (another name of the sun), that in our translations of that tragedy of Æschylus, the crucifixion of the original is never acknowledged; but he is always fraudulently said to be *bound*. "The object of this impudent fraud," says Mr. Higgins, "need not be pointed out."

yet the fact is incontrovertible, that not only was Christ, or Christna, crucified in India, but in Egypt "also," as we have already shown on Scripture authority. Mr. Higgins asserts that the Brahmin "crucifixion was well known in the time of St. Jerome," who, like the Evangelist John, *was rather apt to tell astronomical secrets.*

Mons. Guigniant says—"The death of Chrishna is variously related : one averred tradition very remarkably represents him to have perished on a fatal tree, or *cross* where he was pinned, or nailed with an arrow. Mr. Moor, in the "Hindu Pantheon," states, that many of the plates and pictures of India, of undoubted antiquity, represent the god Christna, with cicatrix, or scars in his hands and feet, the very points of the nails by which he was suspended on that fatal tree. Plate 98, in the "Hindu Pantheon," shows the figure of a man suspended on a cross ; and it appears, that when the Romish artists imitated this Indian crucifixion, in their carvings and paintings, *they omitted the cross itself*; their reason for this is very obvious. The figure appears hanging in the sky, with arms distended, and the feet overlapping each other, so that one nail might perforate both at once. Now it is not a little extraordinary, *that some of the earlier Christian sects maintained, that Christ was crucified in the sky.* Here is a direct demonstration, that the Brahmin crucifixion is, wholly and radically, an astronomical allegory of the equatorial *crossings* of the sun at the Equinoxes ; and that the Christian fable is identically the same, but the scientific meaning is lost, through the fraud of priestcraft, and the ignorance it fosters.

Mr. Moor further observes, that having some apprehension of giving offence to the bigoted and prejudiced on these points, he showed the plates and paintings above-mentioned to a friend, who suggested the propriety of omitting plate 98.

"I very much suspect," says Mr. Higgins, in his Anacalypsis, "that it is from some story, now unknown, or *kept out of sight*, relating to this Avata, that the ancient heretics alluded to, obtained their tradition of Jesus being crucified in the clouds." He says again,

"That nothing more is known respecting this Avata, I cannot help suspecting, may be attributed to the same kind of feeling, which induced Mr. Moor's friend to wish him to remove print 98 from his book. The innumerable pious frauds of which Christian priests stand convicted, and the principle of the expediency of fraud, admitted to have existed by Mosheim, are a perfect justification of my suspicions respecting the concealment of the history of this Avata. I repeat, I cannot help suspecting that it is from this Avata," (*incarnation*) "of Chrishna, that the sect of Christian heretics got their Christ crucified in the clouds."

In regard to the Buddhists of India, who claim an antiquity of fifteen thousand years, Sir William Jones, though he appears to have been horrified at the idea of following truth beyond the limits of bible chronology. is constrained to assign the period of Buddha, or the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, in the year 1400 before Christ, though according to Volney and others, it was 600 years earlier. Christna and Buddha are identical* in principle; both are incarnations of Vishnu, the second person in the Hindu Trinity, and were born of virgin mothers, and each was the son of a carpenter; both suffer death by crucifixion. Christna raised the dead, by descending for that purpose to the *lowest regions*. Both names signify Shepherd and Savior. The crucified Christna is represented in the aforesaid plate 98, with rays of glory surrounding the head, as is also the head of Buddha, which may be seen in the museum of the India House. To the rational mind, this glory will appear emblematical only of the sun himself in his radiant summer brightness, because it is manifestly so of no other object in nature.

Mr. Higgins goes on to show "the idle pretensions that the Brahmins, some way or other, have got copies of the apocryphal gospels, from which they have taken

* The Negro, Mannon, now in the British Museum, corroborates the opinion, that the sciences were once in the hands of the Blacks. Mr. Higgins says, that though both Buddha and Chrishna of the India House museum, are black, the latter is easily distinguishable from the former, because he is not a Negro.

the history of the birth, life, and adventures of Chrishna. How wonderfully absurd," says he, "to suppose that all the ancient emblems and idols of Christna, in the temples and caves scattered over every part of India, and absolutely identified with them in point of antiquity, can have been copied from the gospels written after the time of Jesus! How wonderfully absurd, that the Brahmins, and people of this widely extended empire, should condescend to copy from the real or cast-away spurious gospels of a sect, at that time almost unknown in their own country; and many thousand miles distant from these Brahmins!"

The deified Hercules, the personified power of the sun, was known in very remote antiquity; yet according to Arrian, he was fifteen centuries later than Bacchus, who was the same as the Hindu deity Siva. The triplicate godhead of India, says Arrian, consisted of Brahma, Chrishna, and Seeva, *three in one, and one in three*;—viz., the Creator, Preserver, or Savior, and the Destroyer.* Now, Arrian wrote in the second century, in the time of the Emperor Adrian, when the New Testament of the Christians was not yet got up; and as for their Trinity, they did not fully imitate the Hindu in that triune point, until about the close of the fourth century.

All the garbled statements, and mean subterfuges that could be invented by powerful priesthoods, in league with corrupt Rulers, have been brought into play to oppose and stifle the above incontrovertible facts. This unblushing effrontery is quite "in trade" with parties whose interest it undoubtedly is that these things should be known only amongst themselves, lest the "simple-minded" should be induced to suspect that they had been most egregiously duped by men whose very living depends upon deception. The wonderful resemblance,—the apparent sameness or identity—of the Indian and Christian mythics, must have shaken

* According to a passage of Arrian, quoted in the Edinburgh Review, Chrishna was worshipped in the time of Alexander, at what still remains one of the most famous temples of India, that of Mathura, on the Jumna, the Matura Deorum of Ptolemy.

the well-settled faith of Sir William Jones ; and so far, his love of truth got the better of his piety ; otherwise, he would no doubt have been willing to suppress the alarming truth of the vastly higher antiquity of the Hindu allegory.* Why did he conceal the crucifixion part of the fable, *and the fact of its being represented as taking place in the sky* ? It was in vain he expected that other writers on India, many of whom were equally well-informed, would be as disingenuous as himself.

The ancient hieroglyph of the cross itself is, beyond all contradiction, of the most remote antiquity in the different countries of India ; and it is found on most of the Egyptian obelisks—all the three monograms of Osiris, and those of Jupiter Ammon,—the staffs of Isis and Osiris, etc. The pious and orthodox Mr. Skelton, in his "Appeal to common sense," confesses as follows :—"How it came to pass that the Egyptians, Arabians, and Indians, *long before Christ came among us*, paid such a remarkable veneration to the cross, is to me unknown ; *but the fact itself is known*." In Dr. Clarke's "Travels," there is an engraved copy of a Phœnician medal, found in the ruins of Citium, and proved by him to be Phœnician, on which are inscribed, not only the cross, but the rosary or string of beads, attached to it, *together with the figure of a Lamb*. The Rev. Mr. Maurice, in his "Indian Antiquities," informs us that the two principal Pagodas of India, Benares and Mathura, are erected in the form of *vast crosses*.

The famous crux ansata, says Mr. Higgins, is to be seen on all the ancient buildings of Egypt ; and is the mark alluded to by Ezekiel ix., 4. It is as common in India as in Egypt and Europe. Mr. Moor, in his "Oriental Fragments," tells us that, placed in a circle, it was an emblem of eternity, having equally neither beginning nor end. The signing of the cross † on the

* Mr. Barrow, the great astronomer, says that "The Hindu religion spread over the whole earth ; that Stonehenge is one of the temples of Boodh ; and that astronomy, astrology, arithmetic, holy days, games, etc., may be referred to the same original."

† St. Jerome has observed that this mark, or letter, in the true ancient Hebrew alphabet, *was a cross*. With the exception of the sun himself the hieroglyph of the cross has been more generally adored

forehead of individuals, as a token of security for life, is of great antiquity. Cain, it seems, wore this mark of security. Jablonski was of opinion that this figure, the *crux ansata*, was also an emblem of generation,—“*nihil aliud esse quam phallum*,” etc. However, we have historical facts stating that the women of ancient Egypt wore ornaments of a character or form so very unequivocal, as to leave no doubt about the allusion. The proofs of the vast antiquity of the cross might be carried much farther, acknowledged and confirmed as they are in many instances even by divines themselves, who have deeply investigated the subject, and could see no way to elude the unpalatable truth, that the cross was an object of superlative sanctity and veneration amongst the eastern nations, not only long anterior to the time of the Emperor Tiberius, but in the most remote of the known ages of antiquity. Thus this mystical figure was emblematical of at least four things, viz., eternity, generation, the *crossing* of the equator by the sun at the vernal and autumnal equinoxes, besides its allusion, in Egypt, to the rising and falling of the Nile.

The Spaniards, in their murderous invasion of Mexico and Peru, were astonished to find there the whole machinery of Christianity; but the priests and the court of Spain smothered the fact as much as lay in their power. The immaculate conception was in full force, by a *Virgin* of Peru becoming pregnant by the *Sun*; the cross was the principal emblem, and had been sacred from time immemorial: one of their Trinity was crucified upon a mountain, *between two thieves*; and also in the sky or heavens, where the serpent (not the boar, as in the case of Adonis, see Lecture II.) is depriving him of the organs of generation.* Here is an astro-fable, known positively to

than any other object in nature. Why? Because it is symbolic of two annual periods which mainly affect the condition of man upon this globe—the two equinoctial crossings by the sun.

* The serpent being an adverse, or winter constellation, it is almost needless to observe that this allegory points to the sun's being deprived of his generative powers, while the winter constellations are in the ascendant.

have existed in Syria, and even among the Jews, long anterior to the present version of Christianity; and, therefore, when the early Christians carried over their religion to America, they must have been wicked enough to carry over also the whole of the heathen mythoses of Africa and Asia. The Spaniards had likewise the mortification to find the resurrection of the crucified *Savior*, after three days; the ascension through the clouds, and that his return was expected, to save the human race.

There is no accounting for these astronomical fables being found in the new world, and their indisputable identity with those of the old, but in the one clear solution, of there being, in remote antiquity, one universal solar mythos, or fabled history of the planetary system, in which the sun, under a thousand different appellatives, as redeemer or savior, and as the grand ruling principle of the whole, was the chief object of adoration. This mythos is still prevalent, though abused for the most atrocious purposes.

With respect to the color of gods in the most ancient times of Paganism, there is ample proof remaining that it varied according to the color of the people who cultivate the sciences for the time being. That men with complexions perfectly black, such as the Hindus, the southern Arabians, and the Ethiopians,* were formerly the depositaries of the sciences, perhaps exclusively, is proved by monuments found throughout

* In very ancient maps, Ethiopia extended east of the Red Sea, to the banks of the Euphrates, including all southern Arabia; and if the Ethiopians originally advanced from India into Africa, and founded Egyptian Thebes, we may well suppose that their empire reached to the Indus. This opinion is corroborated by that of Sir William Jones, who says that in very remote times, a nation of people who were blacks, the seat of whose empire was in or near ancient Sidon, *ruled over Egypt and all Asia*. If this was the nation spoken of by Sir William Drummond (on zodiacs), according to him, the science of astronomy was at least as well known amongst them, as it is in modern times.

Near the city of Benares, in India, are astronomical instruments cut out of the solid rock of a mountain, and formerly used for making observations; but these are so exceedingly ancient, that it is said, *the Brahmins of the present day do not understand the use of them*.

India and Egypt. The knowledge of the great truths of astronomy seems to have been as full and perfect in those times as it is now ; and as that science, in the hands of skilful god-makers, has supplied emblem gods for the adoration of the ignorant, *in all religions whatever*, we cannot wonder that these personifications of natural objects should take the sable color of the priests who invented and deified them. The great Sphinx, supposed to be one of the oldest as well as most wonderful of these Egyptian monuments, *is a Nubian Black*.^{*} At the time the new version of Hindu superstition spread itself in western Asia and Europe, under the name of Christianity, its machinery was kept out of sight in the archives of the priests ; and, as its derivation was known to themselves alone, they did not then deem it indispensably necessary to change the color of their eastern deities ; but adopted both Chrishna and his mother, in their sable Gentoo complexions ; and, in after times, it was found no easy matter to get them whitewashed. But as these disagreeable facts will raise the angry bristles of the Christian fanatic, it is necessary to support them by the most profoundly learned authorities on the subject.

Mr. Higgins says :—“On the color of the gods of the ancients, and of the identity of them all with the god Sol,† and with 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 color, when he is

^{*} This accounts for the oracle at Dodona being, according to Mr. Potter, a *black* dove.

[†] The complete identity of the ancient religions of the Brahmins, the Magi and the Druids (solar adoration), “has been satisfactorily established by Vallency, Wilford, Davis, and Maurice.” Pliny, alluding to the Druidical religion of Britain, in his time, says:—“Britain at this day celebrates the magic rites with so many similar ceremonies, that you might suppose them to have been given them by the Persians.”—*Nat. Hist.*

informed of what Mr. Maurice was probably ignorant, that in all Romish countries of Europe, in France, Italy, Germany, etc., the god Christ, as well as his mother, are described in their old pictures and statues to be black. The infant god in the arms of his black mother, his eyes 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 Annunciata ; to the church of St. Lazaro ; 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. Peters, on the right hand side on entering near the door, and in fact, to almost innumerable other churches, in the 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. Very often the black figures have given way to white ones, and in these cases, the black ones, as being held sacred, *were put into retired places in the churches* ; they were not destroyed, but are yet to be found there. In many instances, these images are painted all over, and look like bronze, often with colored aprons or napkins round the loins and other parts. No doubt, in many places, when the priests have new painted the images, they have colored the eyes and teeth, in order that they might not shock the feelings of devotees, *by a too sudden change from black to white* ; and in order, at the same time, that they might furnish a devout pretence for their blackness, namely, that they are in imitation of bronze ; but the number left with white teeth, let out the secret : their blackness is not to be questioned for a moment.” Mr. Higgins concludes from the knowledge of the foregoing facts, that, “the Romish Chrishna is black in India, black in

Europe, and black he must remain. 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" (Anacalypsis).

Of these Trinities it is not requisite to say much here, as ample proof has been adduced in the course of these lectures to show that, from Japan in the east to Egypt in the west, every country had, in the remotest antiquity, a triad of gods for the vulgar, which, in the mystical or hidden sense, had allusion to physical principles. But as we have a partiality for the authority of theologians on these subjects, we beg to quote that of the Rev. Mr. Maurice, who traces the principles of *Tritheism* among the most ancient nations of the earth, before as well as in the times of the Greeks and Romans. He says that the Indian Temple of Elephanta, "is of exquisite workmanship and of stupendous antiquity ; antiquity to which neither the page of history or human traditions can ascend. That magnificent piece of sculpture so often alluded to in the cavern of Elephanta, *decidedly establishes the solemn fact, that from the remotest eras, the Indian nations have adored a triune Deity.* There the traveller, with awe and astonishment, beholds, carved out of the solid rock, in the most conspicuous part of the most ancient and venerable temple of the world, a bust expanding in breadth near twenty feet, and no less than eighteen feet in altitude, by which amazing proportions, as well as by its gorgeous decorations, it is known to be the image of the grand presiding Deity of that hallowed retreat : he beholds, I say, *a bust composed of three heads united to one body, adorned with the oldest symbols of Indian theology ; and thus expressly fabricated according to the unanimous confession of the sacred sacerdotal tribe of India, to indicate the Creator, the Preserver, and the Destroyer, or Regenerator, of mankind.*" Notwithstanding the absolute conclusiveness of the evidence adduced by Mr. Maurice, proving the infinitely higher antiquity of the Hindu Trinity, he still recollects his obligation to support the Christian priesthood, and argues that the Indians must have derived their notions of a

triune Deity from the Hebrews, though that people had no known existence in the time he refers to, and their books (the Old Testament) if rightly translated, do not, even by the slightest allusion, acknowledge anything of the kind. By such subterfuges theology is not ashamed to deny the clearest light.

The sacrament of Baptism, like all the other dogmas of Christianity, is drawn from the ancient religious observances of India and Egypt; and is also one of the sacred rites of solar worship, the mysteries of which required that the neophyte should be pure in body as well as in mind. It existed among the Pythagoreans and Druids. In an Arabic work, translated by Mr. Hammer, it is stated that in ancient Egypt, when a child was born, the mother took it to a priest of the temple, and laid it down without speaking a word. The priest then came, with a golden cup full of water in his hand, accompanied by six other priests. He then said prayers, and sprinkled the water over the child. The dead were also baptised, though by proxy. St. Paul establishes this point in his first epistle to the Corinthians, chap. xv., 29; and he is so far from condemning the custom, that he adduces it as an argument in proof of the resurrection.

Mr. Higgins says: "John the Baptist was nothing but one of the followers of *Mithra*, with whom the deserts of Syria and the Thebais of Egypt abounded, under the name of Essenes. He was a Nazarite; and it is a striking circumstance that the fountain *Ænon*, or Enon, where he baptised, *was sacred to the sun*." Even the name signifies the sun, or *Mithra*. If this was the *Ænon* of Locris, in ancient Greece (we know of no other), John must have taken wide excursions in his baptism. In the New Testament allegories there are many coincidences which point out that John (the Janus of the Latins) is the personified genius of January, the zodiacal sign of which month is *Aquarius* with his pitcher, the water of which is generally poured out plentifully. *Aquarius* being the mansion of the sun in John's month, or January, his pitcher is figuratively the fountain of *Ænon*, that was sacred to the sun, and where, as the Evangelist tells us

"there was much water." During this month and February the "kingdom of heaven, or Christ (the sun), was said to be coming, or at hand; but he was not considered as *come* until after the vernal equinox, in March, when, by entering the sign Aries, or the Ram, he became the Lamb, at which time John exclaims—"Behold the Lamb of God; he cometh after me, but is preferred before me." "I baptise with water—he with the Holy Ghost." That is to say, March comes after January, and the genial sun of spring and summer will always be preferred to that of January. The wilderness in which John was said to sojourn was metaphorical of the sterile and bleak face of nature during that month. In Matthew it is said—"He shall baptise you with the Holy Ghost and with fire."* The Holy Ghost was metaphoric of the salubrious summer winds in May, as the fire was of the scorching heat of the dog-days.

It has often been observed, that the learned, or the initiated in religious mysteries, had language peculiar to themselves, and unknown to the rabble, whereby they concealed science under tropes and allegories; so that, aided by the vivacity of the imagination, the most ordinary phænomena of nature were embodied as mystical existences, and there was hardly anything spoken of without being personified. Philo Judæus informs us that, amongst the arts and mysteries which Moses learnt from his masters the Egyptians, was that of philosophy by symbols, hieroglyphics, and marks of animals. Clemens Alexandrinus states, that "all who have treated of divine matters, the barbarous nations as well as the Greeks, have hid the *principles of things*, and delivered down the truth *enigmatically*, by *signs*, and *symbols*, and *allegories*, and *metaphors*."† Similar confessions were made by all the learned fathers of Christianity, many of whom allowed that their own

* The priests of ancient Egypt baptised with air as well as with water and fire. This was done by one "whose fan is in his hand, and he will thoroughly purge his floor." The use of the fan was an artificial way of creating the *Holy Wind*, or *Ghost*.

† Yet, upon a system which is thus admitted to be fabulous, or false, are founded doctrines which are said to be true.

religion was veiled in exactly the same manner; and for this they might claim even St. Paul as sufficient authority.

But in the present day, amongst an ignorant and interested clergy, although their superstition is directly derived from, and is only a varied version of the solar adoration of Paganism, the "principles of things" are lost and unknown, or if known to a very few of the learned, the little lamp of truth is extinguished by the roguery of self-interest, which will ever be sufficient to secure its suppression. Thus, from ignorance or interest, or both together, the allegories and metaphors of speech which we find in the Bible, are monstrously inculcated and palmed upon simplicity as matters of fact and history. Whilst committing these outrages upon the highest branches of science, the theologians have absurdly attempted to blend the eternal religion of Nature* with the evanescent revelations which man has, in successive ages, invented to be the greatest curse of his brother.

Having, in this and the foregoing lectures, noticed most of the leading dogmas of Christianity, and the Pagan astro-fables, from which they are derived, that exposure alone renders it unnecessary to enter upon the endless task of commenting on the unsightly mass of heterogeneous doctrines, to which the ignorant abuse of these fables has given rise. Where the foundation is fallacious, the superstructure cannot stand.

The overwhelming master-curse, springing out of these mythological fictions, in past and present times, is their perversion from a scientific purport, that was radically and wholly physical and *sub-natural*, to a sense that is chimerically called spiritual and *super-natural*. In thus fraudulently putting the latter of these words in place of the former, (which we maintain is contrary to the original meaning of the Bible itself,) does the whole science and essence of priestcraft consist. By

* The "Religion of Nature" may be defined thus:—The admiration, the love, and the veneration which we feel for that incomprehensible power which produces the beauties and bounties of the world. Beyond this, all pretended revelation is *foul imposture*.

this departure from everything tangible—from all that is to the human mind conceivable, the theologians have cunningly decoyed their dupes into imaginary regions, peopled, as in the old mythology, with existences of fabled creation, where phantasy takes all the hues of the chamelion; and where the intangibility of their whole apparatus eludes the grasp of reason, and secures their wild assertions against demonstration. When the minds of men are thus lured into the fictitious empire of theology, the good things of this world are over with them, and fall to the share of the priests, who live in luxury, while they preach to their deluded votaries the *unspeakable blessings* of poverty; and that through the *unsearchable mysteries of God's love to man*, want and misery in this world are by far the best preparatives for "their exceeding great reward," in *kingdom come*. This is what is called "religious instruction," which, being interpreted, signifies the diffusion of that abject ignorance which shuts out the light of experience and reason—puts blind faith* in its place, and thereby fits both mind and body for slavery. In this element of ignorance, so congenial to the profession, from its being of their own creation, the priesthoods of Europe, aided by the corruption of civil rulers, have been allowed to embody themselves into vast and well organised phalanxes, regularly trained to wage perpetual war against the light of nature and common sense.

It is particularly observable in the *esprit du corps* of theologians, that in order to epitomise and mould the mind of man into a total subjection to their interest and power, and to establish the absolute necessity of their mediatorial office, it is indispensable that he should,

* The only true definition of religious faith, is an implicit submission of the judgment—a belief in what we neither see, hear, feel, taste, or smell.

The veracious translators of our "Word of God," have made Paul, on most occasions, use the word *faith*, in place of *truth*; for instance, in Rom. iv., 9, they make him affirm, "For we say that *faith* was reckoned to Abraham for righteousness." Now, the true translation from the Greek is,—“For we affirm that the *truth* became to Abraham *justice*.”

through what they call original sin, be degraded below the scale of his true position in the order of nature, in exact proportion to the elevation above that scale, which they confer upon him on the score of his soul's immortality. In this final destination which they assign him, his fate must either be eternal blessedness, through their official interference in his favor, in wiping off his imputed transgressions, committed six thousand years before he was born, or everlasting perdition and misery, should that intercession be wanting.* Between these two extremes of heaven and hell they keep him suspended, themselves holding the haulyards rope in their own hands, ready to pull him up to the one or lower him down to the other, according as he believes in and supports, or rejects and condemns their craft and traffic. In the political and religious drama of enslaving the great majority of the people, the above parts of the play are, of course, the peculiar province of the priesthood, who to the fabled guilt of original sin, have charged upon the gloomy minds of their wretched votaries, an endless catalogue of sins, by thought, word, and deed; to every one of which the punishment of eternal flames has been awarded. The kingly and aristocratic part of this drama is to make laws to suit themselves and their priesthood—to bind down reason, so as to prevent it rebelling against the most shocking absurdities—compel it to acquiesce in the imperative mandates of a vile superstition; and

* Though the commissioned attorneys of the immaterial being pretend a deep interest in having his edicts obeyed, yet their real views and interests can only be served by the multiplication of offences, which is their harvest. When their sway was at its zenith, crime created the lucrative season of repentance; and the posthumous terrors with which they debase the minds of their dupes are the best of all preparatives for their dominion; for when these horrors are raised to a certain height, the fatal machinery for mental subjugation is irresistible, and almost as perfect as it is among the Brahmin priests of India. In England, the statute of mortmain is a lasting attestation of the height to which death-bed expiations and commutations were actually carried; and it is not extravagant to affirm, that if no change in public opinion had taken place, in regard to the selfish intrigues and frauds of the clergy, "and no interposition on the part of the legislature to put a stop to them, nearly all the land in that kingdom would have become the property of the church."

to *demonstrate*, through the powerful arguments of imprisonment and ruin, that all investigation of the *plot* or proof of falsehood adduced against the *actors*, is wickedness.*

This species of delusion, which passes under the name of supernatural revelation, upon which impostors in every age have founded their schemes, is too gross and palpable in many of its dogmas, to maintain a footing even among ignorant men, but for the protection of corrupt governments, that seek aid in fraud. Its ministers have ever said to civil rulers—"take us into partnership—give us riches and honors—support our pretensions when we gull the millions, and in return, with our adherence and connivance, you may safely carry oppression to any lengths you please." Thus between a governing aristocracy, (as in England) and their adopted hierarchy, there is an inborn affinity and coincidence of views and interests, which not only exclude, but are incurably opposed to the natural happiness of the mass of mankind; and as for the means of compassing their ends, each wields that sort of power which serves to uphold the other; and when united, resistance is unavailing, unless it is backed by the unanimous will of a nation. But this national unanimity in eradicating these collusive and deep rooted frauds, is not to be expected, until natural humanity and sound morality shall take place of supernaturalism, and "*religious instruction*" make way for practical virtue and useful knowledge, in the education of youth. Then, and not till then, will every individual be able to perceive, that the man who contributes to the support of *any* priesthood, subsidizes a standing army, for the perpetual subversion of his dearest rights and liberties.

We shall now make a digression from the opening

* Every rancorous feeling and motive among religious fanatics, conspire to create and provoke antipathy, and to swell it to the utmost pitch of intensity against the materialist, who holds them all in contempt. These are the only feelings in which the deluded votaries of supernatural revelations coincide, in directing their common enmity against that philosophy which, they know, treats them with derision. This enmity is inexorable and eternal, though restrained, at present, from gratifying its natural ferocity.

subjects of this lecture, with the view of adducing additional facts which tend to prove, that the chief moral and political evils which pervade Christendom, sprang from laws and institutions derived from, or sanctioned by, the books of Jewish theocracy, all of which have been uniformly calculated to uphold the injustice of the idle few, against the industrious many. Amongst these, the feudal curse of primogeniture, as "part and parcel of the law," stands prominent in bad eminence. Yet this law, even among the Jews, was not so outrageously cruel as it now is among many European nations; for, with them, the first-born son, though consecrated to the Hebrew god, was not, it seems, entitled to more than a double portion of the inheritance. In regard to the entailing of land, for the most iniquitous purpose of securing it against sale for the payment of just debts, the Jews and their deity, barbarous as they were, would probably have been ashamed of such rank injustice. In early ages, land was considered merely as the means of subsistence; but in the darkest times of ignorance and feudal oppression, it became the overbearing means of obtaining political power, and was monopolised by the aristocratic orders;* whilst their class-law of primogeniture, and its execrable concomitant of entail upon land, were unrighteously resorted to, as the only means of eternising the domineering sway of feudal tyranny, and to perpetuate possession, in defiance of all the just debts which might have been incurred by the possessor. The absurdity of these laws is no less glaring than the injustice of their original object, "when they presume that each successive generation of men have not an equal right to the earth—that the property of the present generation should be restrained and regulated to the fancy of those who lived many centuries ago."

The Roman jurisprudence adhered to the equality of

* At least nine-tenths of all the land in Great Britain and Ireland, have got into the hands of the aristocracy, lay and clerical, and almost wholly through the means of their selfish legislation. But this is not the worst—they say to the mass of the people: "You shall pay us whatever price we please for the produce of these lands;" and they enforce this by corn-laws, and other food monopolies, which they have

nature, by an equal division of property among the children, whether that consisted of land or other goods, and the cruel prerogatives of primogeniture and entail were unknown.

The universal degradation, poverty and misery, caused by these aristocratic scourges of society, destitute as they are of a single redeeming advantage to lessen the enormity of the evil, sufficiently betray the nefarious views and selfish ends of the feudal legislators by whom they were enacted. But these are best shown in the mischievous effects which it is impossible for them not to produce, forming, as they do, a source which diffuses fraternal jealousy, animosity, and hatred, through a thousand channels over the land : and all to perpetuate the insolent pride of family distinction, by arming an arrogant individual with unjust power to lord it over the rest of the family, and that too by means of the same wealth which ought to render the whole independent. In these cases, when the younger brothers escape penury or beggary, it is only by dint of doubling the injustice of these laws, by quartering them, as so many locusts, upon the industry of the public, under shelter of that mass of aristocratic corruption, whence issue our stall-fed hierarchy, and the thousands of other privileged idlers, whose places are created for the adherents and supporters of profligate governments. Thus the younger sons and brothers are "provided for;" whilst the poor females, if not palmed upon the pension list, are hopelessly consigned to the most abject dependence ; their only inheritance being a perverted education, by which they are moulded into mere creatures of unnatural habits and customs, and of mental impressions that are utterly false in everything.

These laws, thus infamously contrived for the exclusive benefit and aggrandisement of the makers, in perpetuating the feudal line of succession by entails upon immense tracts of land, again double the evil in a national point of view, by preventing the creation of

made for their own advantage. These laws are "a curse equal to the barrenness of the earth, and the inclemency of the heavens."

that wealth, which never fails to arise from the proper division and subdivision of over-grown estates, the parcelling out of which is sure to be followed by a superior cultivation of the land. It is impossible to suppose that the people generally, of any country, were ever so grossly and stupidly ignorant, as to have a hand in forming such iniquitous institutions, *and those who tolerate them are not worthy of better.**

These are samples of the grievances which may be expected to spring up, when aristocracies usurp and engross the legislation of countries; and when the contaminating arts of theology are allied to these, it is then that political evils of the first magnitude are engendered.

In the palmy days of our superstition, when a much denser cloud of ignorance, than even the present, had totally eclipsed the intellectual faculties of men, they were doomed through life by their tyrants, the magicians of supernaturalism, to endure an aggregate of mental and bodily misery far exceeding that of any other class of animals; and this is still the case in exact proportion to the prevalence of that delusion. But lest rebellious reason should induce people to be restive under these earthly sufferings, a mode of remuneration which costs these magicians nothing, was invented, not alone by the preternatural elevation to everlasting inheritance in the celestial regions, after death, but, in addition, all terrestrial animals were made over in fee-simple, as the absolute property of man, nothing else being in view when they were created, but the use and accommodation of the heaven-bound favorite, to kill, eat, and destroy; or if such be his interest or caprice, to hold them in that merciless state of oppression which soon leads to a cruel and lingering death. This is the usual way in which he shows his mighty superiority over them, as "inferior animals." The arrogant assumption of this absurd dogma is not only false in philosophy and analogy, but cruelly injurious in morals, and destructive of

* Napoleon observed that, "The people of a nation were not deserving of better laws than those they submitted to."

“Nature’s social union;”* or that universal harmony which is chiefly disturbed by the wanton, unfeeling dominion of man, and thus fallaciously sanctioned by the “science of God.”

These pernicious hatchings of theology are wholly unsanctioned by Nature, who, in her perfect impartiality towards every creature which her purely physical process organises into life, makes an even balance of all her grants and denials throughout the animated world: and though it may appear to the cursory observer that she has, upon the whole, favored some animals more than others, yet all these seeming advantages are counterbalanced or neutralised by other mental or physical qualities of an opposite or defective tendency which, in the most comprehensive sense, reduce the lives of all, as regards the amount of pleasurable sensations through life, to nearly an equality.† On examining this matter still more closely, we shall find that the greatest proportion of evil or misery invariably falls to the share of those animals who depart the farthest from the laws or conditions of their nature. Of this fatal estrangement, man exhibits an instance that is almost solitary on this globe; for all other creatures obey the conditions of their existence, excepting such as have been compelled to deviate from them, in consequence of being subjected to his usurped dominion. His *right* to hold a horse or a dog in slavery, is precisely the same as that of holding a negro in bondage; and as for his carnivorous habit of using almost every animal as food, it is justified by his superstition alone, and utterly condemned by his nature. His *right* to kill and eat a sheep or a deer, is exactly the same in point of moral justice, as that of a shark or a tiger, when they subdue and eat their prey; in which they feel no compunctious visitations about including their pretended lord and master, man, himself. In all these cases, the rule of right is alone established by possession of the art or strength to conquer.

Man’s dominion over the other animals, is a pure

* Burns.

† Vide *Eccles.* iii., 19, 20, 21.

usurpation : and though he differs from them in the structure of his body, he is superior to them only in some qualities, which have been greatly improved by the recorded experience of his species, handed down to him through a course of some thousands of years ; and from which springs that combination in society which renders him formidable to his "fellow worms." This is proved beyond contradiction by comparing him, as the educated and armed production of society, with what he is in the wild or natural state ;* for in the latter condition, he is so far from being "superior," that he becomes the prey of animals much smaller than himself, which look upon him as destined by nature for their subsistence, and use him as food accordingly. These facts are so well borne out by experience, that they will be denied only by that false pride which theology instils to answer its own ends.

But if the cunning and ingenuity consequent upon man's extra allowance of brain has enabled him, by dint of combination in society, to subdue many animals for his use, has he by this means, and what he calls civilisation, really and truly improved his condition for the brief term of life which nature has allotted him ? Are not the evils generated by education, in which hypocrisy and fraud are the chief ingredients—the vices—the crimes—the immoral and distracting systems of religion, which induce a general depravity of character, and the unnatural and iniquitous laws emanating from such a corrupt state of society, infinitely greater than the alleged advantages arising from this boasted civilisation ? If we take the aggregate of morality in man, as he is at present produced and educated in the great manufactory of society, in

* Man, like every other animal, is born without the quality called reason ; and like them, must gain it as the fruit of *experience*, by which all acquire it to a certain degree ; and in some of them it is much more perfect than it is in man ; but his excessive pride and love of dominion, blinds him against this great truth. That which he is taught to call *reason* in himself, must, forsooth, be only *instinct*, when applied to the mental faculties of those he calls brutes. *Here the difference is in distinction of terms :—*

"Reason and instinct, how can ye divide ?

'Tis the fool's folly, and the churchman's pride."

which Christian theology with its concomitant evils, are the principal apparatus, we shall have difficulty in finding on the face of the earth, a more vicious, treacherous, and cruel animal. This is always denied in theory; but the conduct of every man recognises its woeful truth practically. Let the man of observation and true candor of mind lay his hand upon his heart, and honestly declare whether his fellow men, and in instances, even those he calls his friends, are not the sole source of all his inquietudes and miseries—whether this demi-god is not the animal that he is obliged to be more incessantly on his guard against than any other! This universal prevalence of vice and moral depravity is primarily accounted for by the priest and superstitionist, by the equally flagitious and absurd dogma about what they call original sin; but the true cause is very far from lurking in anything innately vicious in human nature, but on the contrary, is wholly engendered by their own unearthly delusions—the contagion of supernaturalism, and its distracting train of theological inventions. These are the fatal lures which have estranged and drawn man to apostatise from the wholesome principles of his nature—surrounded him with artificial circumstances wholly adverse to these principles, and as degrading to his position as an intelligent being, as they are inimical to his peace and happiness.

Whilst the elements of society shall continue to be thus contaminated, life will be a “gift scarce worth receiving;” and though the ingenuous truth-loving mind may, on the approach of dissolution, feel dismayed at the idea of ceasing to contemplate the beautiful of nature—the sun, the green fields, the woods, the streams, and the mountains, in which alone it finds prayers and sermons; yet no reluctance can be experienced in quitting intercourse with fellow men, whose religion imposes the necessity of shunning truth in almost anything, affords an example of habitual deception,* and by placing the *unnatural*, in

* The *mask* being indispensable in theology, it is not wonderful that its votaries should appear everywhere in disguise.

the chair of the *natural*, turns man into a pitiful caricature of what he ought to be, in the nobler destinies of humanity.

END OF LECTURE FOURTH.

LECTURE FIFTH.

“Tis only thou,
Accursed superstition, cans't accord
Thy aids to tyranny, for which alone
She guards thee with the penalty of “Laws;”
Endows thee, pampers thee; and seems to bend
(Mocking herself) in reverence to thy nod.
For this imperial rapine shares with thee
Her gaudy spoil.”

ON THE EARLY EFFECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN SUPERSTITION.

IN a former lecture, when speaking of the compilation of the New Testament, we promised to show that the first idea of forming that book was drawn from a Pagan prototype; and therefore we resume the subject, in order also to adduce farther proof that the very vitals of our religion originated in heathen polytheism.

Here, it is of the highest importance to draw particular attention to the sacred and mysterious testament of the Athenians, on which they believed the salvation not only of their city, but of all Greece depended. There is now so little said about this famous testament, that it has nearly passed into oblivion; but this is easily accounted for, as the fabricators of the Christian New Testament would, as usual in such cases, do all in their power to suppress the remembrance of a volume which suggested the scheme of their own book of mysteries, in the formation of which St. Paul was not only the principal contributor, but, in point of fact, the real founder of our religion.* We ought not, therefore, to

* The famous Longinus mentions Paul of Tarsus, whom “he considered to be the first setter-forth of an *unproved doctrine*.”

pass without distinct notice, the remarkable deference and respect which he pretended to have for this book of imposture, when wishing to recommend himself to any Grecian state.

This Testament had a profound influence over those states, which, as well as the Athenians, were kept in reverential awe by its divine authority; and Paul having acquired a knowledge of this in his vagrancies,* shows his dexterity by availing himself of it in his 2nd Epistle to the Corinthians iii., 6, wherein he says, "God hath made us able ministers of the (New) Testament, not of the *letter*, but of the *spirit*." Now, we defy all our divines and commentators put together, to show that the present New Testament of the Christians was *then* in existence, that is to say, before the end of the first century, and it is on all hands agreed by church chronologists, that Paul wrote before that period; and, therefore, in writing the above epistle, it was not possible that he could be speaking in reference to any other book than that which the Greeks called "*the unspeakably holy Testament*." How was it possible for him to speak of a book which we can prove was not compiled into its present form until centuries had elapsed after his time—viz., until the councils of Nice and Laodicea? That this book existed not in all the first century we have the authority of the most learned and orthodox Dodwell,† who, in his dissertation upon Irenæus, confesses as follows:—"We have at this day certain most authentic ecclesiastical writers of the times, as Clemens, Romanus, Barnabas, Hermas, Ignatius, and Polycarp, who wrote in the same order in which I have named them, and after all the writers of the New Testament. But in Hermas you will not find one passage, or any

* When Tonstal, Bishop of Durham, burnt the New Testament, declaring it to be *doctrinam peregrinam*, he probably meant that it was only the doctrine of Paul the rambler.—Vide Tyndale.

† Dodwell says that it "was not until the reign of Trajan or Adrian that a collection of the books of the New Testament was publicly made, the priests having previous to that time concealed them in the archives of their churches." It was then that they made anything that suited them the "word of God."

mention of the New Testament, nor in all the rest is any one of the evangelists named." What! our four evangelists entirely unknown to all the five apostolic fathers! Could this have been possible if these gospels had been written when these "authentic" writers lived?

Having shown the absurdity of supposing that Paul could speak of a Testament that did not exist in his time, we repeat, that from his vagrant habits he had, in all probability, come to the knowledge that the sacred Testament of the Athenians was, like all priestly writings of the East, figurative, mystical, and would bear either the literal or metaphorical meaning, according to the views of those who used it for the purpose of deception; so he tells the Corinthians of his being aware that "the *letter* killeth, but the *spirit* giveth life." He knew also that this book of superlative authority was carefully concealed from the vulgar eye; and, therefore, he has not the presumption to say he had seen it, as that would have given offence; but merely professes to be an humble minister of its spirit, of which he might have learned something, as aforesaid; and forming his texts on the common rumor respecting it, he comments upon them in such a manner as to please his followers in those states, professing a profound awe and reverence towards the spotless sanctity of the original.

Christian bigots! We well know the angry, fiery glance with which you receive truths shocking to your prejudices; but it is time you should be told in plain terms, that this divine Testament upon which Paul comments with so much respect and veneration, and of the *spirit* whereof he declares himself an able minister, was no other than the FAMOUS ATHE-NIAN TESTAMENT, the archetype of the sibylline books of the Romans, and which was older than the time of Solon. After the abolition of the Athenian superstition, this testament was found to be a legitimate child of theology, being filled with the grossest impostures. Paul tells us that he had the happy knack of being "all things to all men;" but his pretended veneration for this sacred volume of the Greeks, was

a masterly stroke of policy, and extremely well calculated to secure his good reception amongst them. The word *new*, as we find it in the conundrums of Paul, and prefixed to the modern Testament, is easily accounted for by any person who is at all acquainted with the shameless falsifications and interpolations of those who fabricated our religion. Thus did the famous Athenian Testament become not only the prototype of the sibyline* books, but that of the new will of the Jewish deity also; whereof the writings attributed to this Paul formed a large portion, at that subsequent period when the approved collection was *voted to be the "Word of God."*

In regard to this miscellany, the Manicheans say that it was formed from scraps of legends and traditions which the itinerant fathers happened to pick up in their journeyings in the eastern countries, in search of "gospel truth." "Thus some parts would be, as we find them, Indian, some Persian, some Egyptian, etc., etc., all jumbled together, and forming, after undergoing the required fittings and alterations, the mass which we now possess. Thus from India came the murder of the Innocents; from all quarters of the heathen world came the Trinity, the crucifixion of Christ, the Lord Sol, and Iao, born at the winter solstice, and triumphing over the powers of hell, or cold and darkness, and rising into light or glory, as the *Regenerator* and *Savior*, at the vernal equinox: from the Egyptian—perhaps the Eleusinian mysteries, came the worship of the virgin and child; and from all the countries of the east, the miraculous conception."

On a careful examination of the quirks and quibbles of St. Paul, it plainly appears that he had some smattering of the Pagan mysteries; and just as it suited his interest for the time being, or the degree of knowledge in his auditors, he used the exoteric or esoteric doc-

* The sibyline verses of the Romans are known to have existed as far back as the time of Tarquinius Priscus, 717 years B.C.; they are quoted by the fathers from Tertullian, in the second, to the Christian writer, Lactantius, in the fourth century. They relate the whole story of Christ's incarnation, miracles, death, and resurrection, in almost the same words as the gospels.

trines; the former was adapted for street-preaching, and bamboozling the long-eared multitude; and the latter was used only when he was addressing the initiated few, some of whom were, in all probability, playing the same game as himself.* He designates these mysteries as being "*shadows of heavenly things*;" and "*patterns of things in the heavens*;" (Hebrews viii., 5, and ix., 23), meaning, unquestionably, astronomical truths concealed from the million, under the veil of allegory; for that word is used by him, and he frequently makes use of the term veil. St. Barnabas, in his Gospel, denies the truth of Paul's exoteric doctrine, declaring that no person called Christ did actually and *bona fide* die upon the cross: hence the quarrel between the two; and from this cause was Barnabas' Gospel rejected. In further proof that there were two doctrines in use, the ostensible and the hidden, Jesus is made to say, Matthew xiii., 11, "To *you* it is given to know the mysteries of the kingdom of heaven." This compliment could be addressed to none but such as were initiated in the symbolical worship of the sun, and other celestial bodies; whilst to the rabble multitude the secret was concealed under metaphor or parable, in order that, "hearing ye shall hear and shall not understand; and seeing, ye shall see and not perceive." (Acts xxviii., 26.) Paul, in his epistle to the Ephesians (iii., 4), boasts of a knowledge in the mystery of Christ, which he says in the 5th verse, "was not in other ages made known to the sons of men." Now, this could not possibly allude to Jesus of the New Testament, with whom, as some of the fathers have assumed, Paul was contemporary; and therefore, in speaking of "*other ages*," it inevitably follows that he was alluding to a Gentile divinity, a Christ† whose

* He makes a plain confession of having *two gospels*, in his Epistle to the Galatians, ii., 2. The "*cloven tongues*" so much spoken of, designated those who were capable of holding forth the exoteric, or esoteric doctrine, as occasion might require. Paul's tongue appears to have been cloven into more than two parts.

† Did not Cicero, when he travelled in Greece, find inscriptions on monuments to many Christs?

In the reign of Adrian, the Egyptian priests of the idol *Priapus*,

name had belonged to the heathen mysteries, in "*ages*" long prior to the reputed time of Jesus. In the 16th chapter of the Romans, Paul again lets out the secret in the 25th and 26th verses, where he speaks of "his gospel," and the preaching of Jesus Christ, "according to the revelation of the mystery, which was kept secret since the world began." What mystery of Christ can he mean, that was thus *kept secret since the world began*? He assuredly alludes to the esoteric doctrines of the Egyptian priests of Osiris; the Eleusinian mysteries; the Bacchanal orgies; and to all the ancient mythoses in which the sun, under many different names, was the secret object of adoration in all the countries of the east, as the glorious *savior* who annually *redeems* the world from the reign of cold and darkness; and of whose mysterious worship Paul had gained some knowledge.

"We speak wisdom," says he, "to them that are perfect, yet not the wisdom of this world." Certainly not; for his secret doctrine was the celestial theosophy, or astronomy in disguise; but as these mysteries were known only to the initiated few, they were *wisdom* to them alone. But when these truth-conveying allegories were spoken to the uninitiated rabble, they were received in the exoteric, or literal sense, which Paul elsewhere calls "foolishness;" yet nothing is so common in the present day as that same *foolishness*. None but minds who not only choose, but are determined to be deceived, can resist the obvious meaning conveyed in his Epistle to the Philippians, iii., 20. "For our conversation is in heaven, from whence also we look for the *Savior*, the Lord Jesus Christ." That is, the return of the Lord the Sun to the zodiacal signs of spring and summer, when he alone is truly the savior.* That even the fable of the flood is an astronomical

were called the bishops of *Christ*. Priapus was a symbol of the generative power of the sun. Socrates and Sozomen say, that when the temple of this god was destroyed, the monogram of Christ was found beneath the foundation.

* As the sun is the only true physical savior of everything that has life upon this globe, so is a free printing press the true moral and intellectual savior of the human race.

allegory, is proven in 1st Peter iii., where the writer, speaking of the ark, wherein the "eight souls were saved by water," concludes the parables thus,—"*the like FIGURE whereunto even baptism doth now save us.*"

Thus it is an astronomical key that lays open the secret arcanum of all that Paul, or any other of the New Testament writers say about "Christ and heavenly things;" for these, when the veil of allegory is withdrawn, stand confessed in the Sun,* (the Mithras, or Mediator) moon, stars, the elements and seasons, the deification of which formed the occult astro-theology which was the basis of all the religions of the east; and from which Christianity is only a distorted emanation.

From the works of Plutarch, which are now lost, Eusebius quoted a fragment in which that wise Grecian says: "It clearly results from the verses of Orpheus, and the sacred books of the Egyptians and Phrygians, that the ancient theology, not only of the Greeks, but of all nations, was nothing more than a system of physics—a picture of the operations of Nature, wrapped up in mysteries, allegories, enigmatical symbols, in a manner that the ignorant multitude attended rather to their apparent than to their hidden meaning: and even what they understood of the latter, led them to suppose there was still something more than they perceived." When the lost works of Plutarch contained such disclosures, their destruction by Christian priests is anything but wonderful.

When all these circumstances are duly weighed in the mind that dares to look truth in the face, the conviction flashes upon it instantly, that all our gospels, and everything else that is said about Jesus Christ in the New Testament, has no reference whatever to any event that ever did in reality take place upon this globe; or to any personages that ever in truth existed: and that the whole is an astronomical allegory, or

* Neither Origen nor Tertullian attempts to prove the existence of Jesus Christ on historical documents, and to establish his birth and death on unquestionable authority.

parable, having invariably a primary and sacred allusion to the sun, and his passage through the signs of the zodiac : or a verbal representation of the phenomena of the solar year and seasons. A belief in the literal or ostensible meaning of these parables, shows the sottish credulity into which man sinks after his reason has been mortgaged in youth to the priest, who keeps him in the ignorance that is suitable for mental slavery.

This view of these matters unveils and draws forth good sense and science out of both Testaments ; and all our wonder at once ceases in regard to the total absence of even the slightest corroborating historical trace of the miraculous narratives of these books. This revelation of these enigmas also reconciles with truth that apparently false prediction of Jesus, wherein he tells his auditors that some of them would live to see the coming of the Christ he alluded to ; and to do this it was only requisite that they should live until the following year, when the true Christ, the sun, would again be "triumphant in the clouds," as he approached the summer solstice. Moreover, we may here notice another similar New Testament prediction, which from the stubborn preciseness of the terms in which it is expressed, can neither be twisted by the priest nor rationally solved without the allegorical interpretation ;—it declares—"Ye shall not taste of death" till all these things are accomplished. If Christian priests are not willing that Paul should pass for a notorious cheat and impostor, let them explicate, in any other way than the above, his "*Heavenly*" enigmas and literally false predictions :—we challenge them to this ; and if they cannot or will not do it satisfactorily, to whom will the epithets of cheats and impostors properly belong ? The above solution of these astro-allegories forces so irresistible a conviction upon the ingenuous and unprejudiced mind, as leaves no room to suppose a possibility of its being otherwise :—it is the physical truths of nature and scientific demonstration, against that which is false in physics, false in analogy, and, consequently, contrary to all experience and reason.

The Jewish sects of Essenes and Therapeutæ,* out of which the Galileans and Christians more immediately sprang, had thus their superstition composed of a mixture of the Egyptian and Persian mysteries, consequently sun worship was common to many of the subsequent branches of Christianity, such as the Manichees and others. Tertullian, in the apologetics, makes a broad confession of this, as follows:—"Many think, with more probability, *that our god is the Sun*;† and they trace our religion to that of the Persians." If this is not an admission, it is the next thing to it, that about the beginning of the third century, the secret object of Christian worship *was the Sun*; and it would have been well if they had continued in that rational adoration, instead of adopting those midnight rites which were held in horror and detestation by their Gentile neighbors, as being cruel, wicked, and blasphemous;‡ and which caused the votaries of the new religion to be branded as atheists. Arnobius who turned Christian, (most probably in view of a bishopric), complains of the Gentiles thus:—"We (the Christians) are called by you ill-omened men, and atheists; you call us impious and irreligious atheists. You are in the habit of exciting the hatred of the mob against us, by calling us atheists."§

Some of the learned, however, have been of opinion

* We are told by Philo, that these pious enthusiasts abandoned father, mother, wife, children, and property, and devoted themselves to a contemplative life; which are exactly the injunctions attributed to Christ.

† In another treatise Tertullian alludes to the strong similarity between the religion of Christ, and that of Mithra, or the Sun. "The priests of the Persian god had sacraments. Their baptism procured the remission of sins to the believers and the faithful."

‡ Saint Justin also alludes to the mystical consecrations of these two religions; and to the similarity of the birth of Christ, and his Persian rival, the Sun."

§ The Agapæ, or love feasts of the early Christians, were close imitations of the bacchanal orgies; at the latter, *it was a vital principle, that no action whatsoever constituted a crime, if committed by any of the initiated during their meetings.* It appears that the spirit of this horrible license was fully entered into by the Christians.—Vide Gibbon's "Decline and Fall," vol. ii., p. 394.

§ Adv. Gentes.

that the present version of Christianity is more immediately founded on the writings of Philo Judæus, who speaks much of the "Logos," which in Greek signifies the principle of reason; having the same figurative moral sense as the epithet Christos. The epistle to the Hebrews, and St. John's Gospel, are adduced as complete imitations of Philo's manner and style. The epithet "*Logos*" is often used by him, but in John's Gospel it is falsely translated, being rendered "the word."* Philo also speaks at large of the Therapeutæ and Essenes, from whom the Christians borrowed so freely in making their collection; and though in his time they existed not as a sect, they might be mainly indebted to his writings for the groundwork of their fabric. This opinion is greatly strengthened, inasmuch as the heads of our church have always kept Philo, as much as possible, in the back ground. He was a much more learned man than Josephus—a better writer; and had arrived at the years of maturity before the period assigned for the birth of Christ.

The restless and prying zeal of Paul having gained him this knowledge in the Pagan mysteries, which he boasts of, he perceived that the spirit of the mythos in all the polytheisms of the east was essentially the same, that is, the emblematical personification of physical and moral principles; and that the removal of this veil of allegory developed all the mysteries, and was indeed the only rational meaning of the word revelation. He knew, like the Pagan priests, that in order to deceive the multitude, and make their industry maintain idleness and imposture, miracle and mystery were indispensable; and while he dealt largely in the latter article, he showed a peculiar aptitude for rendering mystery doubly mysterious, whereby he became the grand exemplar of all theological quacks, and founder of that school of quibble which has been so eminently useful to his successors in the Christian church: for whenever they cannot escape from contradictions and absurdities of their own raising, they transfer the solving of their

* The first verse in John's Gospel is literally copied from Plato. As a play upon words, it is almost worthy of St. Paul.

enigmas to the regions of Paul's "third heaven," where all are lost in his mysteries and awful "unspeakables;" fooleries which will always captivate the wonder-struck million; while common sense, with persecution before his eyes, dares to venture only a shrug of the shoulders.

Let us now attend to the moral and political effects produced by this new version of the old mythology, to which, with regard to its absurd and unnatural dogmas, St Paul is the principal contributor. After it had grown strong under the protection of the cruel, kin-killing Constantine, and his parasite Eusebius, it soon turned persecutor in its turn, and began to engender legions of other moral and physical evils, which gradually overwhelmed the Roman empire, in proportion as the human mind became debased and emasculated by abject slavery, under an intolerant superstition—the gorgeous demon of Catholic despotism, erected on the ruins of the less degrading and less expensive Paganism.* Each succeeding year and age was marked by the onward degeneracy and baseness of the Roman spirit. The new modelled mystery of a triune godhead, with its accompanying train of chimeras,† sunk all classes into mental imbecility, and such was the infatuation that nothing but the grossest supernatural

* In the mythology of the Pagans, their Theogony consisted of full thirty thousand bearded and unbearded divinities. We have reduced that establishment to three only; yet nevertheless, (unaccountable as it may appear) it has been so contrived by our modern hierophants, that the service of this triune deity, with their hosts of privileged deputies, holy days, etc., and taxing the people in one-seventh of their time, and one-tenth of their substance, has entailed on human industry, a tax of one hundred times the amount of that which was contributed to regale the nasal senses of the whole celestial army of antiquity!

† In imitation of the Pagans, the crafty Christian priests soon perceived the advantages of polytheism, and that it would tend greatly to their interest to associate some other subaltern gods along with the deity of Moses; for, by thus introducing a plurality of gods, they would not only more effectually embarrass and perplex the minds of the credulous people; but by multiplying the objects of worship, and constituting themselves the acting attorneys for these deities, they would increase their stipends and other exactions, in proportion to the various rites and ceremonies they invented for each.

follies excited their attention ; and as these were made up of insignificant mummeries—theological cant and jargon altogether unintelligible, they caused the bitterest disputes and animosities in both the empires ; and glorious high-minded Pagan Italy became the land of pious frauds, clerical knavery, and lies,* in which absurdities the effeminate and contemptible emperors joined, with their trains of monks and eunuchs. Where then, O Rome, were your Brutus', your Cincinnatus', your Catos, your Marcus Aurelius', your Julians ? The fact was, so far from being able to produce such examples of heroic virtue, your sons had nearly ceased to deserve the name of men ; and as Machiavel truly observes, the doctrines of your new religion, teaching only passive courage and suffering, had subdued the Roman spirit, and fitted you for subjection and slavery. All manly dignity, all strength of mind, and all the virtues had forsaken your sons, and you had become the nucleus of theological absurdity—of all that is worthless, vicious, and unnatural. Your handling of arms to prevent barbarian invasion had ceased, and they were used alone to cut each others throats about the supernatural phantoms of your fraudulent priests ; witness your Emperor Honorius, who was most holily employed at Ravenna “in punishing Manicheans, Donatists, Priscillianists, and heretics of every denomination, *whilst the Goths marched without opposition to Rome.*” Again, when the Heruli, the Goths, the Vandals, and the Huns, invaded the empire, what steps were taken by the two emperors to withstand their attack, and resist the torrent of invasion ? None at all ; these superstitious fools in purple, aided by their priests and monks, were settling the difference between *Omoosis* and *Omousis* ; and, probably, the different degrees of efficacy in concomitant, versatile, and sufficient grace. With these heavenly matters upon their hands, how could these holy men find time to resist the invasion of their country ? Suppose for a moment, that by one

* Where Cicero and Antoninus lived,
A cowed and hypocritical monk
Prays, curses, and deceives.—SHELLEY.

of the Christian miracles, the great Caius Julius had started up amongst these degenerate reptiles, and witnessed their ridiculous fooleries, would he have believed that he was among Romans? What would he have said of Saint Anthony's preaching to the fishes with such "spiritual efficacy," that a huge cod looks at the preacher with a face of sanctified beatitude; whilst a beautiful salmon turns up his eyes to heaven, imploring divine light and grace?

When such shameful and degrading absurdities had thus sunk the Romans, and the contagion of the new superstition had so thoroughly and incurably vitiated the minds of all ranks, that all firmness and nobility of character were extinct amongst them; and the change was rapidly leading to the downfall of that vast empire,—dastards and mental recreants in nature, they were marked by the northern nations as an easy prey to the first invader. Little or no symptom of such a decline had appeared until after the gods of the Christians had gained the countenance of the Emperor Constantine, who did not destroy, but made a change in the worship of the Gentile gods, under whom, it was supposed, the empire had attained the highest pitch of glory and power. Yet even this Constantine, so far as regarded himself, was ever as ready to pay his respect to Jupiter, Apollo, and Venus, as to Jehovah, Christ, and the Virgin Mary,* having wit enough to perceive that the latter were mere copies of the former.

In order to conceal as much as possible the fact, that the adoption of the Christian superstition was the principal cause of the downfall of Roman greatness, it has been assumed by church historians and others, that a very considerable decline had visibly taken place during the hundred and seventy years that elapsed between the reign of Adrian and that of Constantine; but this assumption appears to be fallacious. It is true that the integrity of the empire was sometimes endangered

* He died more a Pagan than a Christian; and all the change that he in reality effected was to amalgamate, or unite the two superstitions. This is proved in the fact that, under a change of names and forms, nearly the whole of the heathen mythos was adopted and continued.

during that period, from the despotism falling into unworthy and profligate hands; but at the time when Constantine possessed himself of it, the extent of territory seems to have been undiminished at any point; for it still included the provinces east of the Euphrates (lost by the sons of this emperor), and towards the west, northern Africa, Gaul, Spain, and Britain; so that the real "decline and fall," commenced with the adoption of Christianity.* If the subversion of this immense empire had been the only political effect of this freshly compounded system of theology, the cause of humanity might not have suffered; but it is a most lamentable truth that all the ancient learning of the east was involved in that destruction; for we know from historic facts which are indisputable, that the priests, and tyrants acting in league with them, took special care, as far as it lay in their power, to destroy every root and branch of natural science; but more particularly the writings of those philosophers who exposed the immoral and wicked rites and secrets of the new sect, and its origin amongst the lowest and vilest of the populace.† As one proof amongst a hundred of the persecution of such learned Gentiles as exposed the profligacy of the first Christians, we quote part of the decree of the Emperor Theodosius, as follows:—"We decree that all writings whatever, which Porphyry, or anyone else, hath written against the Christian religion, in the possession of whomsoever they may be found, *shall be committed to the fire.*" (See the original Latin, quoted by Lardner.) Thus the Emperors soon found that, with

* The tide of prosperity and greatness followed the Romans, so long as they were reared under the moral and heroic virtues of the old religion, until the new superstition arose like a blighting meteor, shedding its baleful influence over the empire; and by its pernicious dogmas and emasculating tendency, gradually reduced the most warlike nation in the world to contempt and vassalage.

† The Emperor Julian, in a discourse to the Christians, told them that "It was enough for you at first to seduce a few servants—a few beggars, such as Cornelius and Sergius. But let me be regarded as the most impudent of impostors, if among those who embraced your sect under Tiberius and Claudius, there was a single man of birth or merit." Julian here alludes to the Jewish sect of Galileans, who had not assumed the name of Christians under Tiberius and Claudius.

the connivance and subserviency of the priests, the new superstition was much better calculated than the old for the purposes of tyranny; and that the one thing needful was to suppress all Pagan learning—to foster and diffuse the gloom of ignorance, as the only element in which their nefarious schemes for the subjugation of the human mind could prosper.

In latter times history vouches for the horrible persecutions and bloody wars, which this fresh version of Christianity occasioned throughout Europe and part of Asia, for more than thirteen hundred years, viz., from the reign of Constantine till towards the latter end of the sixteenth century, when some glimmerings of science began to dispel the gloom of ignorance, and to weaken that priestly and aristocratic despotism, which even to this day has not been entirely shaken off by any European nation.

A celebrated philosopher,* when speaking of the above period, makes the following observations:—If, says he, God deigned to make himself a man, and a Jew, and to die in Palestine by an infamous punishment, to expiate the crimes of mankind, and to banish sin from the earth, there ought to have been no longer any sin or crime amongst men, whereas religious crimes seem only to have commenced since the time when that event is said to have happened: and the Christians, by their holy massacres and burnings, have shown themselves more abominable monsters than all the sectaries of the other religions put together.† In proof of this, witness the gibbets, the wheels, the massacres, and the horrible burnings at the stake of nearly a hundred thousand human beings in a single province—the massacres and devastations of nine mad crusades

* Freret.

† The Jews may be regarded as an exception; for their history displays the most memorable examples of the evils arising from superstition and fanaticism; from these arose the numerous revolutions, the horrid and bloody wars; and at last their total destruction as a petty dependent nation, owing to their submission to priests, and their unbounded credulity. From the roguish deceptions of their *tribe* of priests alone, they became, beyond all contradiction, the most despicable people that ever existed. Their barbarous ignorance was easily played upon by Levitical commissions from heaven.

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of Christians against unoffending Turks, during nearly two hundred years; in which many millions of human beings perished—the massacres of the Anabaptists—the massacres of the Lutherans and Papists, from the Rhine to the extremities of the north—the massacres in Ireland, England, and Scotland, in the time of Charles I., who was himself massacred—the massacres ordered by Henry VIII. and his daughter Mary—the massacres of St. Bartholomew in France; and forty years more of other massacres between the time of Francis I. and the entry of Henry IV. into Paris;—the massacres of the inquisition, which are more execrable still, as being judicially committed;—to say nothing of the innumerable schisms and twenty wars of popes against popes—bishops against bishops—the poisonings, assassinations—the cruel rapines of more than a dozen of popes, who far exceeded a Nero or a Caligula in every species of crime and wickedness;—the massacre of twelve millions of the inhabitants of the new world, executed CRUCIFIX IN HAND;* and all for the honor and glory of the Jewish deity and his son!! This is without reckoning all the massacres committed in the same names, precedently to any of the above. Finding no end to this dismal catalogue of theological enormities, this philosopher shortly observes, that such a hideous and almost uninterrupted chain of religious wars, for fourteen centuries, never subsisted but among Christians; and that none of all the numerous nations called heathen ever spilt a drop of human blood on the score of theological arguments.

We are obliged to grant that all this is true; and to this may be added, that in these shocking devastations, the blind ferocity of the Christians was everywhere written in blood, whereas the behavior of their opponents was frequently marked by clemency. As an instance let us compare the conduct of Saladin with

* Under the banners and sanction of the exterminating god of Moses and of Joshua, "the Spaniards did not treat the inhabitants of the New World as human beings, because they were not Christians. All sense of remorse was stifled; and those unfeeling men, whom Europe had disgorged from her bosom, were abandoned without control to their insatiable thirst for gold and for blood."

that of Godfrey of Bouillon, and his followers, though shame and detestation would draw a veil over the contrast : when the latter took Jerusalem, an indiscriminate butchery took place ; neither age nor sex was spared ; and *after the surrender*, the streets streamed with the blood of at least seven thousand victims. When Saladin retook the place, no lives were taken *after the surrender* ; and he showed the greatest kindness to the Christian captives ; *giving those who were poor their liberty without ransom*. The massacres of Antioch and Thessalonica, by the Emperor Theodosius, may be regarded as other instances of sectarian ferocity, partaking, as they certainly did, of religious animosity. Did the Emperor Julian punish these Antiochians in any way whatever, when they heaped upon him every kind of abuse and indignity ?*

Descending from the great and general calamities which the Christian superstition has entailed upon nations, let us notice a very few of its malignant persecutions of individuals whose only crimes were superior genius, learning, and science ; and this persecution has ever been marked by a deadly rancor, which plainly shows that the study and knowledge of Nature is incompatible with, and a decided enemy to, this theological fabrication. Before the time of Copernicus, and the famous Galileo, Christians were taught by their priests, that the sun revolved round the earth ; that the latter was flat like a table, (it is quite clear that the Bible-makers knew no better) and one-third longer than it was broad, hence our terms of latitude and longitude. Copernicus showed the absurdity of these notions, and taught that the sun is the centre of his own, or the solar, system, in which this globe of ours is comparatively but a mole-hill. But knowing of the hosts of priests who were ready to pounce upon him if he discovered these truths openly, he declined to publish his works till near the time of his death, and he lived just long enough to receive a corrected copy of them.

* Did he not also spare the ten or more Christian soldiers of his own army, who were proved to have conspired against his life ?

Galileo, at the distance of more than a hundred years after the former, offended the church by defending the system of Copernicus, but still more in proving that the earth had a double motion, in revolving on its own centre in twenty-four hours, and also in its orbit round the sun ; the former being the cause of day and night, and the latter measuring the solar year. The discovery, or rather the revival, of these and many other grand and sublime truths, drew down upon the head of this great man the implacable vengeance of an interested priesthood ; and he was condemned by a wicked conclave, which calls itself holy, for daring to know and to propagate truths that are now known to every schoolboy. All that could be done for him by the wise and learned of the age was merely to save him from being burnt by the priests. He was confined for life, and died a prisoner of the Inquisition. As the sentence against him is hardly credible in the present day, we cite the following part of it :—"To assert that the earth is not immoveable in the centre of the world, is an absurd proposition, false in philosophy, heretical in religion, and contrary to the testimony of Scripture." As an instance of the malicious and inexorable nature of priestcraft, we note the curious fact, that Galileo's sentence was, in spite of the clearest light, *renewed at Rome in 1819 !*

Virgilius, Bishop of Saltzberg, was condemned by the church for maintaining that the figure of the earth is spherical ; and, consequently, the existence of antipodes.

The learned Stephen Dolet was burnt by the Inquisition for exposing priestcraft, and asserting the unity of God.

Julius Vanini was burnt by the clergy for saying that "God is both the beginning and the end, without being in need of either—in no one place, yet present everywhere ; his power is his will." For these tenets did the theologians burn the innocent Vanini.

The blameless life and manners of William Tyndale could not save him from the stake and fagot ; his great learning enabled him to expose the frauds of the

priests, and the false translations of their Scriptures : so he fell their victim, through the aid and authority of his tyrannical and blood-thirsty king.

The great Descartes died in a foreign land from church persecution.

That persecution is necessarily ingrained in priests of every denomination, and that they will have recourse to it whenever they have the power, we have a memorable instance in the much vaunted reformer, John Calvin, who, when armed with authority by the magistrates of Geneva, wrote to the high Chamberlain of the King of Navarre, (of date the 30th Sept., 1561) as follows :—"Honor, glory, and riches, shall be the reward of your pains ; but, above all, do not fail to rid the country of those zealous scoundrels who stir up the people to revolt against us. Such monsters should be exterminated, as I have exterminated Michael Servetus, the Spaniard." Now the fact is well known, that when Calvin found himself unable to cope in argument with this learned Spaniard, he took the true orthodox way of getting a riddance, by roasting him alive at a slow fire, *inhumanly made on purpose, of green wood.*

The intrepid Bruno resolutely suffered at the stake for condemning that baleful source of distraction to the human race—the spirituality of priests.

In latter times matters are not much mended. A considerable portion of the 19th century has now elapsed, and has been deemed a period of science ; yet free discussion, and the exercise of reason on all subjects have made but small progress ; and it is melancholy to reflect that plain truth is still at the bottom of her well, where she is stifled by the demon of supernatural theology and its political colleagues, from whence she has been suffered to emit only partial glimmerings of light ; whilst, from base interest, she is shunned or unacknowledged by those very men of science by whom alone she can be rescued from this detestable thralldom of the mind. By corrupt judges and packed juries she is jealously excluded from courts of pretended justice, lest she should expose, in her odious colors, the reigning hag of superstition, with

her sibyline books of mystery and fraud; hence the fines, the robberies, and the incarcerations of a great number of the most virtuous, enlightened, and most talented advocates of free discussion and mental liberty, for the last thirty years. Thus has the peace of countries been incessantly disturbed and outraged, for nearly two thousand years, by this strange fabrication of artificial theology; thus has it been perpetually in exercise as an instrument in the persecution of great and good men, and raised up the most inextinguishable flames of hatred, wars, and devastations amongst nations. Such will ever be its effects, particularly where it is iniquitously upheld as a device to strangle mental liberty, through the hopes and fears of ignorance; and as an engine of state to sustain corrupt government.

On a retrospective view of this direful superstition, we cannot ascertain from any certain authority at what time the Galileans took the name of Christians, as there is not the slightest historical trace of their using the latter term throughout the first century of their assumed existence. There appears to have been no sect of that name in Jerusalem when it was taken and destroyed by Titus in the year seventy, and it was not until full thirty years afterwards that it was mentioned by the younger Pliny (governor of Bithynia) in a letter to the Emperor Trajan. This letter was written about the beginning of the second century, and it shows that Pliny had heard nothing of Christians until he went to that province, as he speaks of them as a novelty with which he did not know how to deal, and represents them to the Emperor as a set of vile and vicious fanatics. However, it appears that the animosities and dissensions amongst the propagators of the new sect had produced effects destructive of the peace and welfare of society, at a very early period. Numerous party-gospels, and forged writings under the names of apostles, were in circulation at the latter end of the second and third centuries; all hostile to each other, and generating nothing but fraud and contention. These writings being exclusively in the hands of the leading impostors, they could alter them at pleasure, and make

any invention the "word of God." Our four adopted gospels are as spurious as the others.*

Nothing is more certain than that no man can rationally predict of the future, otherwise than by deduction drawn from the past; and, therefore, there is reason to believe that the writers of Matthew and Luke, who most probably wrote after the middle of the second century, spoke by inference drawn from their own experience, when they uttered that plain, bold, and bloody declaration regarding the future fruits of Christianity. "Suppose ye that I came to send peace on earth? I tell you nay; *I came not to send peace, but a sword.* For I am come to set a man at variance with his father, and the daughter against her mother. And a man's foes shall be those of his own household." This terrible denunciation has proved true to a tittle. Where is there another of all the New Testament predictions that has been so literally fulfilled? If such effects began to show themselves while it was yet in its infancy, and even crying out for tolerance amongst the Pagans, can we wonder that in subsequent times, after gaining the patronage of tyranny, riches, and power, it should engender a greater mass of human misery than was ever caused by all the other systems of religious plagues put together.

The artificers of this scheme saw well that the power and influence of the priest and despot, were ever in exact proportion to the debasement of man; and, therefore, they laid their foundation in that hideous sink of vice and depravity, the Jewish superstition; for there they found the examples of a numerous and rapacious priesthood, the enforcement of tithes, and a perfect specimen of the iniquitous league between civil and theological tyranny; a combination which makes an easy conquest of the human mind in a state of ignorance and renders it incapable of one liberal, manly or independent sentiment. When man is thus shorn of his native energy, and all virtuous dignity, by the surrender of his reason, these confederate powers erect

* The earliest Christians, viz., the Ebionites, Nazarenes, Corinthians,

their common throne on the ruins of his freedom, welfare and happiness. The ferocious character ascribed to deity in the barbarous books of the Jews, was no stumbling-block against their adoption, when contrasted with the mighty advantages to be derived from the precedents already noticed, and which have so eminently served the successors of the adopters in the way of trade. They were utterly reckless that the writers of these books, in the delirium of blasphemy (to use a cant word) have depicted the ruling power of the universe as a contemptible and wicked personation, with the worst of human passions, and as sanctioning or commanding the perpetration of the blackest crimes that ever disgraced human nature. By quoting these bloody examples as laudable and worthy of imitation, have not priests caused half the earth to be ravaged, and debauched the minds of princes (who would otherwise have been humane and virtuous) and made them devastators and infamous persecutors?

Some philosophers have been of opinion that the history of past ages is a true picture of what the fate of man ever must be; that he is destined for ever to be the slave of a succession of superstitions—to be the tool and puppet of tyrants in the shape of priests and aristocratic rulers. This is a melancholy representation, which implies inherent viciousness in his nature; and that there will never be a want of rogues to prey upon ignorance. In the coalition of the priest and the law-giver, we invariably find the unchangeable enemy of the human race; for, besides the mental slavery thereby maintained, anything like good civil government is necessarily precluded, that being found impossible while it is leagued with the pernicious inventions of supernaturalism. Have the majority of mankind, who are thus victimised, no remedy against

etc., denied that any of our four gospels were genuine, except that of Matthew; but they excluded as forgeries the two first chapters, containing the miraculous conception and birth, declaring them to be spurious, and not to be found in the genuine copies of Matthew. Both St. Jerome and Epiphanius allow that this is true.

this horrid order of things? * They are not entitled to any, while they find it easier to be cheated than to think for themselves, a case which will always be theirs until they become self-regenerated, by the removal of ignorance; a reform that must be effected by themselves alone, since it is evidently and energetically opposed by their oppressors. Ignorance being the only element in which priestcraft can thrive, or its concomitant, bad government be tolerated; so is it the primary source of that degradation and baseness which rears up the mind-subduing altars of superstition, whose foster-mother it is; and without whose aid no kind of secular despotism could have plunged man into the abject and contemptible condition he is in at present throughout Europe.†

We repeat, that a better order of things cannot result until man shall, by education and a virtuous reform of his moral habits assert his own dignity and thereby emancipate himself from being the devoted grovelling victim of this theologico-aristocratic conspiracy, and the unjust laws and institutions which ever must of necessity spring from it; whereby he is at all points robbed of the enjoyment of his nature, and vegetates as the regularly trained slave of the most abominable artifice.

A truly wise and equitable government, so far from coalescing with the priesthood of any religion or superstition for mutual support against the justice of equal rights, would not allow itself to know anything whatever about theology and its train of distracting, misery-creating delusions. It would leave these wholly to the incurable ignorant dupes who *will* maintain impostors in idleness, eschewing with contempt all such

* "Small hopes have the nations! While reason is brought
Every hour to be laid on credulity's shrine,
Till the truth-seeking spirit submission is taught,
And the dreams of a dotard seem doctrines divine!"

† When the humane and enlightened Cortes of Spain would have abolished the *Inquisition*, the priests told the populace that it would be *an infringement of their liberties*; and the priests were believed! So true is the Spanish proverb, that "Man is an ass that kicks those who take off his panniers."

nefarious alliance, and recognising alone the infinitely more dignified principle and functions of civil policy, *i.e.*, the protection of person and property, the equality of rights, and the sacred freedom which is every man's birthright. Where is such a government to be found? To the shame of a degraded and abused world, such a government is nowhere to be found but in the United States of America; for although the populace there are exceedingly bigoted, and grievously preyed upon by the locusts of superstition, still the supreme authority has, with a wise jealousy, preserved itself uncontaminated by any connexion with, or preference given to, anyone of the religious factions, while giving equal protection to all. Nevertheless, every enlightened American will remember, with the most lively gratitude, that but for the philosophic caution and foresight of Thomas Jefferson, and two or three other patriots, the probability is that the new and glorious state would have closed with the foul embrace of some one of the contending sects (glorious then no longer), as the most importunate efforts were made by the sectarian leaders to effect that object; though nearly all of them had studiously and sneakingly stood aloof from the patriotic cause, while the issue of that noble struggle was doubtful.

In the proud rank of national greatness which the United States have so deservedly attained in the present day, and with the example of priest-governed Europe continually before their eyes, nothing more than the prudent vigilance of common patriotism is required in the supreme councils, to guard against the co-partnership, or admission of anyone of all the pernicious systems of churchcraft, to the slightest connexion with the government. But in the unsettled infancy of the republic, after the declaration of independence, when those insidious clerical hypocrites, who had kept aloof, as aforesaid, ready to join whichever party might be victorious, and, backed by ignorance and fanaticism, beset the framers of the constitution with their spiritual claims and conflicting pretensions—by incessant solicitations and intrigues, to gain their execrable ends, it required the incorruptible

virtues of a Washington, a Jefferson, a Paine, a Franklin, and a Barlow, to prevent their effecting a similar "adulterous connexion" with the state to that which is now the bane and disgrace of the mother country.

Whenever the government of these great and powerful States shall become so mentally imbecile as to favor, by an exclusive state establishment, any form of superstition,* or system of religion pretending to supernatural revelation, the fatal time of their division, weakness, and final decline and fall, will follow at a very short distance.

* Let the priest be ever kept on the same footing as the merchant—that is, maintained at the expense of the consumer. He who has no priest, and consumes none of the commodity he deals in, should not be compelled to pay any part of his hire.

END OF LECTURE FIFTH.

LECTURE SIXTH.

Let those weak minds that live in doubt and fear,
To juggling priests—fair Nature's foes, repair;
These soul-savers,—truth's blackest enemies,
I ne'er consult, and heartily despise.

EFFECTS OF THE CHRISTIAN SUPERSTITION.

(Continued.)

Its foul leagues with tyranny, persecutions, cruelty; society poisoned by its all-pervading influence; what is good in gospel morals borrowed from the ancients; its usurpation of one-seventh of man's time, and one-tenth of the proceeds of his industry; other evils which it occasions generally.

IN extending our view of the immoral, degrading, and malign effects of the Christian superstition, it is but just and fair to observe, that all other systems of religion which have successively plagued the world, founded on the pretensions of impostors to supernatural revelations, have also been destructive of human welfare, though in a degree much less subversive of natural rights. The scanty remains of ancient history and science, which Christian and Mahommedan priests and tyrants have suffered to reach us, show clearly that in all ages and countries, the ignorance of the bulk of mankind hath constantly rendered them the dupes of some sort of priests, by whom that ignorance has been uniformly cherished and promoted, as the most congenial soil for the growth of church and state corruptions. There never has been, and there never can be, any very bad government without the confederate aid

of that master evil,* the imaginary science of theology (for all is illusion that is said to be beyond the physical powers of Nature † the poetical personification of which is called "Nature's God"); and a wicked and tyrannical government, whether kingly or aristocratic, can no more do without a sympathetic priesthood, than the latter can do without their devil; hence it follows that all state authority has been pernicious in the exact ratio of its connexion with these priesthoods. This may partly be proved by the superiority of the government of the United States, (where the alloy of ecclesiastical union is strictly guarded against) over that of any European nation, not excepting England, where both houses of Parliament are sadly tainted, and one of them almost governed by the wizard influence of the church; yet, owing to the decayed, and rapidly decaying, power of this incubus, these dominions enjoy more liberty than Spain, ‡ which for many centuries has had no other executive rule than the most oppressive and irksome superstition that ever degraded and enslaved the human race; and whose sons are at this moment pouring out their blood in the endeavor to pull out the teeth, and curtail the claws, if they cannot kill, the monster.

The history of all religions, we repeat, is but a catalogue of follies, knavery, cruelty, and crime; the whole forming a continued libel upon mankind, and proving their ignorance and unbounded credulity; the tyrant, confederate with the priest, assists him to impose upon you his creed, on the strength of which he demands your faith, on the strength of which he "*demands your money*,"—not at the point of the bayonet, in the first instance, but if you refuse to *deliver*, he calls

* Plato states that religious pretences have always formed one of the most powerful frauds of political despotism; and Aristotle calls the profession of religion not only the surest auxiliary of tyrants, but an enslaving tyranny in itself.

† Divines say that Nature is wholly inexplicable without a god; that is, to explain what they know very little of, they have recourse to a cause which they know not at all.

‡ For many centuries past, the finest countries in Europe, viz., Spain, Portugal, and Ireland, have been nothing but theological bear-gardens, and so they are to this day.

in the aid of his political partner, whom he has ever taught you "to obey in all things;" so that, between the priest and "the powers that be," your money is extorted, though not by a highwayman. The iniquity of compelling a man to support an idle and rapacious order of theologians, whom he wishes to have nothing to do with, is an act of injustice too shameful to be committed by any wise and good government.

Since we can distinctly trace priestcraft so far back as the times of Hesiod and Homer, to talk of its origin would be as futile and unprofitable, as it would be to speak of the first *evil* amongst men; if the two are not necessarily coeval, certainly the cup of the latter was not full until the former filled up the measure. And, as "things naturally bad make strong themselves by ill," tyrannical governments have been enabled, through collusion with this baleful pest, to carry their oppressions to the highest pitch of profligacy and wickedness; and for a quiet submission to the degradation and miseries thus occasioned in real life, the dupes are promised a blissful remuneration, in an imaginary *post mortem* life, created for this express purpose. But every endeavor to open the eyes of the deceived, or to remove the evils arising from this mischievous confederacy, is threatened with a *life* of everlasting burning *after death*.* By thus playing upon the unlimited credulity of man, in a state of ignorance, through the delusive medium of supernatural existences, he is trained from childhood to submit to mental and bodily oppressions, which manhood would make him shake off, and spurn with indignation, were it not for these paralyzing deceptions, which, while they degrade, form the principal tower of strength against him in the hands of his oppressors. His belief in the traditionary tales of the Jewish compilation, is anxiously instilled

* "The object of the first legislators was to govern the people; and the easiest method to effect it was through the priesthood, to terrify their minds, and prevent the exercise of reason. They led them through winding by-paths, lest they might perceive the designs of their guides; they forced them to fix their eyes in the air lest they should look at their feet; they amused them on the way with idle stories; in a word, they treated them as nurses do children."

into his mind in childhood, as the word of the Supreme Power of the Universe ; and this false impression subsequently becomes so rooted and strong, that he neither can nor dares to see the immoral and destructive tendency of these tales ; and, that from them have been drawn precedents to justify the most atrocious and murderous invasions of peaceful countries. From these mischievous legends have also been drawn, as a common fountain of evil, all those conflicting doctrines, dogmas, and creeds, which the militant priests of Christendom have made convertible at will, and turned into a channel overflowing with the good things of a world which they affect to despise. This is the polluted source from which has sprung what is falsely called civilisation, which has created around man an unnatural atmosphere, wherein vice and dissimulation are the chief ingredients, rendering civilised man in many respects, the vilest of animals ; and more contemptible, because less virtuous, than the uncorrupted child of Nature.

These pernicious dogmas and creeds did not begin to show their deadly effects nationally, until the imperial apostate Constantine gave patronage and strength to one of the belligerent sects ; and by interposing his authority, prevented, for a short time, their cutting each other's throats ; but as for attempting to assimilate their wild and discordant schemes, he might as well have commanded the winds to blow continually from one point ; for as the heterogeneous mass of theological machinery arose out of the fabulous or allegorical legends of various countries, a system drawn from such chaotic materials, must be always at war in its parts ; hence the fierce and virulent animosities—the remorseless and exterminating devastations, which these maniacal notions and creeds engendered all over Europe. Such of the contending sects who, from their number or their violence, were considered most suitable for the purposes of political tyranny, were taken into league with successive governments, which gave them the power of exercising over all their opponents, the utmost cruelty and oppression. From these times till about the close of the sixteenth

century, when the science of Nature began to check the mischievous demon of theology, we repeat that millions upon millions of men, women and children were tortured and murdered in religious persecutions* and wars; whilst a sum not less than £400,000,000,000 in money, besides other property, was wrung from the laboring man, not to instruct him in a particle of useful knowledge, but to keep him in that state of abject ignorance which alone fits him for slavery. All this has been done to maintain various denominations of aristocratic tyranny, combined with rapacious priests, in whose minds were seated the deepest hypocrisy and the blackest vices—who carried humanity on their lips, and robbery and murder in their hearts. The victims of Christianity far exceed in number the whole that have fallen by all the other idolatrous superstitions which at any time have plagued the world; and most truly did it announce that it “came *not* to send peace on earth, but a sword;” a sword that never has, and never will find a scabbard, until the whole baseless fabric of delusion shall sink into merited oblivion; we would say a thousand times over—look at Spain—look at Ireland—look at any country in Europe before the 17th century, and you will see the priests reeking with gore. And if you are not utterly lost in ignorance and prejudice, you will see the effects of corrupt governments striving to force favored superstitions upon the dupes of other religions. No intellectual blindness but that which *will not see*, could prevent your seeing palpably, that all religion, except that of Nature, *is the accursed thing which occasions and perpetuates the deadly feuds between man and man*; and creates those insane animosities which embitter and poison all the natural sweets of this fair world. Such fatal results must be inevitable whilst man has the credulous folly to maintain in idleness and luxury, myriads of his own species whom his labor educates, as it were, for the express

* All religions pretending to revelation, are necessarily of the persecuting kind; and it is these alone that show an extraordinary zeal for dissemination in other countries: but the religion of Nature being perfectly tolerant, leaves its own propagation to self-evidence.

purpose of deceiving him. These are the professors of the pretended science of supernaturals, *alias*, nonentities, or at all events of unproved existences, of which the most illiterate hind knows just as much as the proudest hierarch.

The *principle* of priestcraft being unchangeable, the countries where this freshly modified superstition first gained a footing had been kept in deep ignorance by the old mythology,* so that the hierarchy of the new were safe in going any lengths in multiplying absurdities; for nothing can ever be monstrous enough to shake the credulity of the vulgar populace;† so prodigies of all dimensions grew common, and every cunning impostor, who found himself able to deceive others, had inspirations from heaven—turned priest, and dealt in supernaturals; knowing well that where mental imbecility has been successfully fostered by the craft, it is sheer silliness to be scrupulous about the means of deception, however monstrous.‡

“Bejuggled mob! you are the tools
That priests do work with, called fools.”

In regard to the theogony upon which these conjurors founded their various systems, it appears never to have been of the slightest importance whether it consisted of one, two, three, or thirty thousand divinities; though it must be confessed that the triune mythology of Christianity has answered, better than any other, the aristocratic purpose of general ignorance and

* One universal mythos, or fable wearing the garb of history, has been the basis of all religions, ancient and modern. This mythos is rooted in, and has secret allusion to the zodiac and the solar system, in which the sun and the rest of the “Host of Heaven” were turned into imaginary personages, under peculiar nomenclatures in each country; and fanciful narratives concerning them, were invented by the astronomising priests, in order to stultify and subject the minds of the ignorant populace. This deception continues to the present day, for the solar mythos was the true Christianity. “When the French, under Napoleon, possessed Italy, they examined the chair of St. Peter, and found upon it the signs of the zodiac.”

† Nothing, says the Cardinal de Retz, convinces fools so much as that which they cannot comprehend.—*Lucian Redivivus*.

‡ As the ignorance of nations grows darker, priests of all religions see their way the more clearly.

oppression. Like their predecessors, its priests have governed solely in the names of their gods, whom on all occasions they cause to speak whatever is fitting and agreeable to sacerdotal interests and power; and all this passes as the commands of God, which, they declare, must take precedence of all civil affairs. From this usurpation is formed the almost insurmountable barrier against human liberty, "the *imperium in imperio*," or the visionary empire of supernaturalism within, and either confederate with, or independent of, the secular empire. All belief in anything supernatural is a pitiable and deplorable hallucination of mind, everything pretending to be such being the offspring of sheer imposture; and until the age of reason and science shall have succeeded those ages of delusion and ignorance through which the world has hitherto rolled, the paramount power upon its surface will be priestcraft.

This craft is twin sister to witchcraft; and the former cherished and supported the latter as long as her head could be kept above water; but when the sun of science (the mortal foe of these two crafts) began to beam upon the imaginary hag, she sank to rise no more;* and men are now astonished at the credit she had gained in the world, and still more at the brutal ignorance which allowed her to shed so much innocent blood.† It is computed that about 30,000 miserable victims were tortured and burnt for this supposed offence; yet, if this blood be compared with the quantity shed by the still surviving sister, it would appear but as a drop in the ocean. But the same sun of science, in exact ratio as it is now dispelling the mists of ignorance and superstition which the mother, theo-

* Science having thus as it were suffocated the weird hag of witchcraft, a most useful auxiliary is gone of that religion which, more than all others, has been

"Blood-nursed, and watered by the widow's tears."

† The Stat. 1 James 1st, c. 12, enacts, "That all persons invoking any evil spirit, or consulting, covenanting with, *entertaining, employing, feeding, or rewarding any evil spirit*, etc., etc., etc., shall be guilty of felony, without benefit of clergy, and suffer death." Oh the height, the profound depth of the "wisdom of our ancestors!"

logy, has raised, is hastening the remaining twin's downfall. Witchcraft was one of the thousand dismal evils arising from the belief in preternatural existences, but quite conducive to the views in trade of all church mystagogues, who never failed to sanction and abet the horrid executions of the poor defenceless culprits. The priests drew their justifying precedent from that book in which the vindication of every crime may be found : in Exod. xxii., 18, the inhuman order is given, "Thou shalt not suffer a witch to live." Here we have a point-blank justification of all those atrocious immolations which disgraced humanity for so many centuries, and laid the foundation of detestable laws, in the countries of America. At Salem, where so many murders were committed for the fanciful crime of witchcraft, the accusations originated in the house of a priest were chiefly carried on by priests, who blew the terrible flame of fanaticism against the helpless accused, whose lives were acknowledged to be moral and blameless. Nineteen of these innocent victims were executed,* one was pressed to death because he would not plead to the indictment, and eight more were condemned. This hideous business ended by a declaration of the priests that, in the whole the devil got just nothing ; but God got praises, Christ got subjects, the holy spirit got temples, the church got addition, and the souls of men got everlasting benefits ! With similar views, and in such a laudable spirit, John Wesley exclaimed, "*While I live I will bear the most public testimony I can to the reality of witchcraft.*" At a torturing and burning which took place at Irvine in 1613, in the affair of Margaret Barclay and others, there were present the Earl of Eglinton, the ministers of Ayr, Kilmarnock, Dalry, and Irvine, when three innocent people were sacrificed.† What ! Were not these holy ministers prompted by their superior *learning* and *humanity*, to endeavor to save these wretched

* It is said that several of these victims were persuaded by the priests to believe, and even to confess that they had been guilty of this imaginary crime. This affords a melancholy proof that, in a state of ignorance, the credulity of man is absolutely boundless.

† See Scott's "Demonology," and Murphy's "Essay."

people? Quite the contrary, they appear to have been there rather to countenance and approve, if not to enjoy, the shocking spectacle. Such as these were the heavenly teachers, who, for more than a thousand years, asserted, preached, and practised, *that the rack was the fittest engine of conviction*, and the stake the most effectual cure for unbelief.* As conservators and upholders of every invention in the delusive machinery of supernaturalism, upon which their trade wholly depends, anything in the shape of human interference in favor of the victims, or any compunctious feelings for the barbarities which these men of *peace and love* sanctioned, were altogether out of the question on such occasions. No animal has ever been more cruel and remorseless than priests of all religions have been, in supporting those delusions which support them, *when-ever they had the power*.† The Jew books being now nullified as authorities for the existence of witchcraft, what sustains their validity in all other matters?

Such has been Jewish and Christian immorality and wickedness, in punishing the guiltless for the fanciful crime of witchcraft; and in other respects we may find in these books innumerable instances of sanctioned cruelty and injustice, both in example and precept:—take the following malevolent sentiment, said to have been uttered by the all-ruling power of the universe; “let his children be fatherless; let them be vagabonds continually, and beg; let them also seek their bread out of their desolate places. Let the extortioner catch

* What terrific outrages does superstitious ignorance perpetrate. Thousands have been burnt for witchcraft. Millions have been murdered for being what bad government and Christianity have made them. And hundreds of millions are threatened with eternal tortures for having beliefs which it is impossible for them not to have.

† Belief or disbelief (being the work of the judgment, and not of the will) is involuntary; and there is neither merit nor demerit in either. You believe only that which seems to you to be true, and, in spite of your hypocrisy, I defy you to believe more. What does the Atheist less? And that which appears to you to be a lie, you *necessarily* reject, and *what does the Atheist more?*

Superstition is to be feared only when the authority of iniquitous laws rallies round her standard, for then her cruel and sanguinary nature is gratified.

all that he hath ; and let the stranger spoil his labor, let there be none to extend mercy to him, neither let there be any to favor his fatherless children ; let his posterity be cut off," etc., etc. Again, in Exod. xxiii., 3. "*Neither shalt thou countenance a poor man in his own cause.*" These are specimens of Bible morality ! He alone is the blasphemer who attributes such vicious and malevolent orders to the supreme power.

The Christians, in their presumptuous and unwarrantable assertions, assume that the science of ethics is comparatively of modern date, and that the personage called Jesus Christ was the first who taught that pure morality and virtue constituted the summum bonum of human happiness ; and that all morality owes its existence to their gospels ; and that all ethical goodness to be found out of Christendom, is entirely attributable to their Scriptures. But nothing can be farther from the truth than this evangelical detraction, with its inexorable disregard to facts. Fortunately for the calumniated cause of Paganism, we have data, chronological and historical, to show that the science of ethics was not only perfectly known to the ancients, but that the few really good things which are to be found in the New Testament, were borrowed from what is called "the divine philosophy of the ancients ;" or the moral maxims of Pythagoras, Thales, Solon, Bias, Pittacus, Chilo, Cleobulus, Periander, and many others, who lived full 500 years before the Christian era. This is so demonstrably true, that the sayings of these men are in some instances copied into the New Testament almost word for word ; but for the maxims of that book which are either bad or questionable (and these are not a few), there is no authority to be found in the ancients cited.

The compilers of the above book have also drawn literally from the moral maxims of Confucius,* who, according to some writers, has been held in great esteem in China for about 4,000 years, but all agree

* As names in eastern languages are expressive of some attribute or quality adherent to the possessor ; so Confucius signifies a speaker of wisdom.

that he lived at least 550 before our era. His 24th moral is the most precious standard maxim in ethics : "Do to another what you would he should do to you, and do not unto another what you would should not be done unto you." To impress this indelibly upon the mind, as the concentrated essence of morality, he adds, "*thou needest this law alone, it is the foundation and principle of all the rest.*" In his 53rd moral, he says, "Acknowledge thy benefits by return of other benefits, but never revenge injuries." This is a noble maxim when compared with that abject and slavish one of the "new will of God," which enjoins the holding up of the cheek to receive a second blow. The disciples of Confucius are yet numerous, though many thousands of years have elapsed since he lived. He instructed as well by example as by his precepts ; and it would be well if his morals were taught in all the schools of Christendom, instead of dogmas and creeds which are unintelligible, inasmuch as they relate to things which have no proven existence, The German writer Boll, very justly observes that, "if Christianity be got rid of, *which seems likely*, men must labor not to let such absurd ideas get into the new religion of morals, which will be established on the ruins of superstition." He was alluding to the eternal tortures of those priestly indispensables called souls, and other unsightly dogmas.

In no age of the world was morality ever found more pure and virtuous than amongst the Epicureans of old ; and no ancient sect has been so much traduced and vilified by Christian priests of all denominations, who, in lauding the most revolting system that ever insulted the understanding of man,* have been utterly regardless of truth in their foul aspersions of Paganism ;

* To the shame of credulous and priest-degraded mankind, the present superstition of Europe hath been established, as it were, in defiance of the light of Nature, reason, common sense, and all experience ; and what is still more strange and revolting, by those very means and agencies which men ought to hold most in contempt and detestation ; viz., fraud, forgery, pretended miracles and prophecies, hypocrisy, avarice, tyranny, cruelty, massacres, and wars which have deluged the earth with blood, and sacrificed hundreds of millions of human beings to its frenzied demon.

and have represented these amiable rationalists as reckless sensualists—profligate voluptuaries ; which is just the reverse of their true characters. With them the preservation of health was the fundamental principle, since there can be no enjoyment of life without that pre-requisite ; and the means they used to secure its permanence was the strict observance of temperance in everything, according to the dictates of Nature ; all excess of any kind whatsoever was avoided as injurious, and the full and proper exercise of the body was enjoined as indispensable. Free from the restlessness of ambition, the utility of their maxims was evinced in their lives, and they were generally esteemed as the most exemplary and virtuous of all the ancients, and the most noted for the value of their moral actions. We may gather from the writings of Cicero and Diogenes Laertius, that they did more scrupulously observe the laws, piety, and fidelity among men, than any other sect whatsoever, not excepting even the Stoics themselves. Like the philanthropist, Owen, they held that a man was either good or bad according to education and custom. Being, above all others, strict observers of truth and honesty, they were often chosen to manage the inheritances of orphans, and it was common with them to rear and educate, at their own expense, the children of deceased friends ; their known integrity frequently procured for them offers from the Roman consuls and emperors, to fill high places of employment and trust ; but these offers were often declined, from the strong desire they had to lead private lives, free from care and anxiety. They had no desire for posthumous renown, and denied that there was any future state of existence for man, more than for any other animal ; and teaching that mind or soul is wholly dependent on animal organisation *—the mere creature

* *Intelligence* is the result of the animal organisation of matter, and cannot be separated from, or have existence without it. "Animated matter is *not* the result of intelligence." Thought, mind, soul, or breath, call it which you will, is as much the offspring or effect of organisation as music is of the instrument that produces it.

One of the great luminaries of the church, even the Bishop of Llandaff, has given us his *own* creed respecting what is called soul,

of the brain, without which it has no existence ; and that the matter composing the bodies of men and other animals, is alone eternal, though subject to thousands of millions of different forms, modes, or states of *being*.

But in modern times, under the triune mythology (or the three-god fable), society is in a great measure destitute of such pure morality, and sound philosophy ; all being mixed up with the deleterious alloy of theology, and its ever-changing inventions in its own peculiar element of unproved existences. This supernaturalism is the only delusion that deserves the name of atheism, because it beguiles man to set at nought the immutable revelations of Nature ; and its very essence being to prevent all correct views of that Power, the pretension to look beyond it nullifies or vitiates everything good on earth. Whilst mankind shall not only continue to be advocates for those impositions which destroy their own pleasure and happiness, but pay for their degradation by supporting a mischievous canker-worm priesthood, they deprive themselves of a fair trial to see what a state of affluence and ease they might attain by very moderate labor ; and by repudiating all doctrines and dogmas founded on *spiritualism*, *immaterialism*, or any other *nothingism*, because they are words absolutely without meaning, as they represent nothing that has a real existence ; and therefore, until some *immaterial entity* can be made palpable to the senses, they will remain downright contradictions in terms, though they have hitherto served as the principle machinery of theologic deception.* Contemning all such visionary mummeries,

which savors of something more than mere scepticism. Speaking of its supposed flight into immortality, after death, he says,—“This notion was, without doubt, the offspring of prejudice and ignorance ; I must own that my knowledge of the nature of the soul is much the same now that it was then” (in childhood). “*I have read volumes on the subject, but I have no scruple in saying that I know nothing about it.*” —*Anecdotes of his own life, written by himself.*

* The learned amongst the Fathers were materialists. Tertullian says, “*Nihil incorporale nisi quod non est.*” Saint Hilary, in the fourth century, affirmed that, “*there is nothing but what is corporeal.*” Yet

and attending to the principles of their own nature, together with the physical realities that surround them, and upon which alone depends every atom of their welfare and happiness, mankind will be able by perseverance to remove the overwhelming evils of their present condition ; but in vain will they expect such results, while they continue mere automata, to be played at pleasure by superstition and despotism.

Amongst the many immoral corruptions which the present superstition of Europe has entailed on the laboring man, few have a worse tendency than the compulsory exaction of one seventh of his time, which its priests have procured to be dedicated to their purposes alone ; whereby he is compelled either to be idle, or to swell their vain pageant train to that shrine of hypocrisy called church. The observance of Sunday is, like everything else in Christianity, borrowed from the heathens ; and is merely a continuation of the Pagan festival that was held in the temples of the *Sun*, in adoration of that luminary, as the name attests beyond all contradiction ; with this difference alone, that the Fathers, as if it were to make the thing more expensive and intolerable in their Scripture traffic, changed it into a weekly festival, substituting the triune machinery of the church for that of the temple. But as the present observance of this day throughout Christendom is nowhere enjoined in the New Testament, it was customary with Christians, even in the fourth century, to perform their usual work on that day ; and, according to Mosheim, many of them held Thursdays and Fridays to be as sacred as Sunday. The entailing upon human industry this weekly curse of idleness was reserved for, and was worthy of, the Emperor Constantine, a man who had the guilt of seven family murders upon his head : and as the priests of Paganism refused to expiate those crimes (so Zosimus and others say), he abandoned their religion, and adopted that of Christianity, whose less scrupulous priests absolved him, and white-washed

our divines of the present day are at no loss to find you a vast difference between a *spiritual body*, and a *bodily spirit* !

his crimes to the purity of snow. In return for this scouring, the imperial murderer felt himself prompted by gratitude to do all in his power to establish a new hierarchy, who could make themselves so subservient to the purposes of tyranny; so he began by paving the way for finally depriving the industrious man of one seventh of his time, which was to be appropriated in promoting the importance, the riches, and the power of his newly adopted priesthood.

But even this pious man of blood (who to the very last, kept two strings to his bow, but was rather more willing to pay his respects to *Jupiter* than to *Jehovah*), wedded as he was to that priesthood, which had so kindly effaced the stains of so many inhuman murders, durst not gratify them all at once, lest he should bring a famine upon the empire; and therefore by his edict issued on the subject, the observance of Sunday was compulsory only upon magistrates, and the inhabitants of cities generally; but in regard to the people in the country, and all agriculturists, he says:—“*On the venerable day of the Sun, let those who are situated in the country, freely and at full liberty, attend to the business of agriculture.*” After the death of this emperor, the church which he had planted soon grew strong in wealth and power; and the consequent influence of the hierarchy enabled them, gradually to extend the forced respect for their own harvest-day, over both town and country.

This clerical usurpation is so far from being sanctioned by any authority, that the New Testament suffers no man to “judge another in respect to the Sabbath day, or of any holy days” (see Coloss. ii., 16). It asserts the right to esteem every day alike, “agreeably to the persuasions of a man’s own mind” (Romans, xiv., 5). It binds no man “to the observance of days, and months, and times, and years” (Gal. iv., 10). Jesus did not enjoin respect for the Sabbath, but justified the contrary (Matt. xii., 5). There being no gospel authority requiring this waste of time for the benefit and gratification of priests alone, it was not until some time in the fourth century that they fully succeeded in palming upon industry this weekly inlet to every vice; nor was it legally enforced, we believe, until a

considerable time after the Council of Nice, that foulest combination of fraud, knavery, and priestcraft that ever degraded the human race, Let us now attend a little to the glaring immoralities and crimes which are the inevitable effects of compulsory idleness on this day, that was originally the heathen festival of the glorious solar deity.

There are few exceptions to the general rule, that the industrious man is the virtuous. "By the sweat of thy face shalt thou eat bread," is the universal decree of Nature; and every violator of this law of health shall be unhappy in the precise ratio of its violation. Hence it follows that when men are compelled either to be idle vagrants, or give up their minds mechanically to a worship which appears to them at once useless and irrational, they cannot do otherwise than prefer the former; and being thus compelled to be idle, *they are virtually forced to be vicious*, which leads to the reverse of happiness. The profligacy and crime arising from this weekly idleness, is amply set forth in those scenes of drunkenness, debauchery, gaming, and quarrelling, which are of constant Sunday occurrence in our beer and gin palaces: but as the various poisons vended in these sinks of ruin pay high duties to government, and are, next to its oppressive ally, a rapacious priesthood, the surest means of keeping the multitude in poverty and ignorance, that virtuous and salutary legislation which would suppress or regulate them according to public health and good morals, is not to be expected from our present lawgivers, aristocratical and clerical, who feel a deep interest in the ignorance and debasement of the laboring classes. The orthodox Paley, who "could not afford to keep a *conscience*," alludes to such places of public resort, when he says, "the laboring classes" (being doomed to idleness) "consume their time in rude, if not criminal pleasures—in stupid sloth or brutish intemperance." He might have added, that vast numbers of young men who have ended their career by an ignominious death, have dated the commencement of their vicious courses from what the pampered harpies in black are pleased to call "sabbath breaking," or "profanation of the

Lord's day." And who is to blame for all this? Verily none but that powerful phalanx of hypocritical delusionists, who pretend to be delegated from the immaterial, invisible "Persons," who rule the upper regions; and who, in confederacy with hereditary lawgivers on earth, have, amongst other conventional impositions, not only deprived the wealth producers of their right to spend the seventh part of their time in the way most suitable to their circumstances, but enforced idleness during that time, which, coupled with that lurid ignorance called *religious instruction*, most commonly leads to vice and debasement. With a dissimulation and effrontery that is matchless out of the sacerdotal order, they pretend an interest in the laboring man's ease and welfare; that he requires the seventh as a day of rest, which day should be dedicated to the "Lord;" but as their Levitical authorities are derived from the rankest species of priestcraft that ever degraded man, they will no longer pass in the present age; for those must be mentally blind who do not see, that in all times, whatever was ostensibly dedicated as "God's share," was appropriated solely for the benefit of the priests. It is most true that the working man wants rest; but is not he the best judge when recreation or rest becomes necessary? The simple fact is, he never can have either peace or rest, or live under equitable and salutary laws, nor enjoy the fruits of his labor, whilst his mind is kept in darkness by the delusions of supernaturalism, and his industry preyed upon by its priests. To perpetuate the stultifying influence of this wizard power, whose nature it is to be adverse to the natural enlightenment of the bulk of mankind,* every corner of the country is assiduously studded with expensive temples, devoted to the exercise of its Sunday spells; but particularly for the nursing of popular ignorance. Against such an overwhelming antagonist, abetted by the government and riches of the country, all in deep array to frustrate his intellectual improvement, the laboring man has

* Hobbes calls the pretended science of theology *the kingdom of darkness*. It is indeed a perpetual insult to human reason, debasing and debauching the mind.

nothing to oppose but self-cultivation alone, which will lead him to the knowledge that it is better to think for himself than to be cheated; and that all the miseries he suffers are in reality rooted in unearthly chimeras—nonentities which, in all ages and religions, have been invented for similar purposes of deception and slavery. Until he so relieves himself from this bondage (no other power will do it for him), his condition must continue to be more abject and pitiable than that of the sturdy savage, who stalks in the pride of his mental and bodily independence; or even that of the beast of the field.

Thus it appears that amongst the Christians, the coercive observance of Sunday originated in a combination of the two crafts, kingly and clerical, as a potential auxiliary for the permanent inthralment of the human mind; for which it is indeed extremely well calculated, owing to its unceasing recurrence as the weekly stifler of reason, and the soporific of folly and ignorance; its frequency allows no breathing time for common-sense. If men *will* contemn the light of Nature and the evidence of their senses, to maintain a degrading superstition, let them not suffer their political rulers to form co-partnership alliance, offensive and defensive, with its priests. There can be no surer proof of the corruption of a government than its confederacy with the professors of any religion whatsoever. Mahommed was so sensible of the danger of priesthoods in political states, and of their corrupting *all* government, that he disapproved the allowance of any such institution, and wished every Moslem to keep a copy of the Koran, and be his own priest. But exactly as in the case of Christianity, his political and theological followers soon established "the accursed thing." The Quakers are too wise and too moral to allow this locust race to spring up amongst them.

In the leading dogmas invented by theologians, it seems essential that spiritual or divine justice should reverse the simplest rules of morality and virtue; and that Nature's immutable law of death should be held in terror as the greatest evil, though in reality it is

merely a necessary and happy transition of organised matter into another form, throughout the animated creation; and as such, an absolute good.* The ancients did not represent death as Christians do, with meagre countenance, and a hideous structure of bones; but pleasant and composed, as the image of the profoundest sleep; and such it struck no terror. As the stronghold of priests, however, it has been clothed in every imaginary horror that fraud can conceive, to render their spells indispensable for death-bed or gallows repentance, where a belief in their conjurations expiates all the crimes that may have outraged society.

Amongst the Gentiles, Pliny spoke the fullest and plainest on this subject, thus: "After the interment of our bodies, there is a great diversity of opinions concerning the future state of our souls, or ghosts; but the most general is this, that they return to the same state in which they were before they were born. However, such is the folly and vanity of men, that they extend this existence even to future ages; and some crown it with immortality; others pretend a transfiguration, and others render unto the soul of the departed honor and worship, making a God of him that was not so much as a man; as if the manner of men's breathing differed from that of other living creatures; or as if there were not to be found in the world many animals that live much longer than man. Now these are surely but fantastical, foolish, and childish toys, devised by men who would fain live always; the like foolery is

* The fear of death, which Christian dogmas create, has effects the most baleful and pernicious imaginable; and has contributed more to stock the *Bedlams* of Christendom, than any other cause whatever. All animals avoid and fear bodily pain, as the greatest evil—man alone fears death. Why? Because he alone has priests and a hell. Epicurus says: "Death, which some suppose to be the most terrible of evils, is *nothing to us*; seeing that while we are in being, death is not present; and when it is present, *then we are not*." Hesiod, in alluding to those who, in the golden age (when it may be presumed, there were neither priests, hells, nor supernaturals) died without superstitious fears, sung thus:—

"They sunk to death, as opiate slumber stole
Soft o'er the sense, and whelm'd the willing soul."

The Works and Days.

there in preserving the bodies. But what a folly of follies is it to think that *Death* should be the way to a second life! Certainly this foolish credulity, and easiness of belief, destroy the benefit of the best gift of Nature—death;” (which is as necessary, nay, even as natural to every animal as life itself.) “How much more easy, and greater security, were it, for each man to ground his reasons and resolutions upon an assurance, that he should be in no worse a condition than he was before he was born.”—*Nat. Hist.*

• Among the Republican Romans, the deed that was accounted the most virtuous and heroic, was that of dying on the field of battle, in defence of liberty; and the next was the act of suicide, resorted to as the means of avoiding subjection or dishonor. And so indulgent was custom in this case, that those who were proscribed in after times, were commonly permitted to retire from life in any way they thought proper, to elude the disgrace of being public spectacles. This was humane, as far as it is possible to extend lenience under such a predicament; and as for the act itself, there was neither impiety nor the slightest odium attached to it, but the contrary. It is curious to observe that, amongst the host of evils introduced with, or generated by, the modern superstition of Europe, a total change of law and sentiment regarding this action has been effected by its priests, who, as they engrossed all learning when in the zenith of their sway, were enabled to brand everything as heinous wickedness that militated against, or seemed to evince contempt for, their avocations. And as the act of suicide affords no harvest for the priest—shuts the door against fees and confessions—punishes him in his purse, and overlooks the importance of his conjurations, it comprises every other offence; and, therefore, every ignominy and abuse is heaped upon the memories, and even the dead bodies of the self-victims, though their only crime was riding themselves of those unbearable miseries, which are chiefly caused by theology, and the laws which it has occasioned.*

* The person who commits suicide, is no more criminally guilty, and

Though reason and science have now cooled the roasting-alive spirit down to the moderate temperature of modern times, yet the essential property of priestcraft to augment, and in no rational manner ever to alleviate, human suffering will never fail to show itself, wherever its views and interests are concerned. By laws and customs procured in its all-powerful days, the mental and bodily tortures of condemned criminals are most unmercifully prolonged between sentence and execution, and their situation rendered as horrid as possible. Under pretence of the soul-saving anxiety, the dreadful anguish of their minds is, by a cruel delay, increased in a ten-fold degree, whilst they are inexorably guarded lest they should anticipate their doom by relieving themselves, and give the priest the go-by, which they are told is the acme of sin and wickedness; but if they drag out their agonising misery quietly, and give him due opportunity to play off his incantations, and above all—believe, or pretend to believe in the efficacy of his dogmas, then a heavenly pardon is secured, even at the gallows. If, in the endeavor to avoid this catastrophe, the unhappy victim of the ignorance and crimes of society—overwhelmed as he is with misery and despair, is driven to seek relief in the quiet sleep of death, he is seized and accused by the “authorities” of a “*felonious intention*” to escape from the evils with which bad laws and abominable superstitions have surrounded him; and is, therefore, absurdly required to “*find security*” that he will not again attempt to elude his wretchedness, but will quietly linger out the remainder of life in hunger, rags and cold; all entailed upon him by existing society, every element of which is pregnant with corruption.

Thus the action which, amongst the Romans and others of the ancients, was deemed virtuous heroism, has, by the selfish inventions of modern theology, been condemned as a deadly crime, and even stigmatised as

in all probability, much less insane than he who dies of fever,—they are exactly on a footing, both had supported life so long as it was supportable.

cowardice, than which nothing can be more false and contemptible. But in every attempt to depict, in their true colors and direful effects, the evils generated by that canker, there must ever be a want of words to convey adequate force of execration. Such diabolical mockeries of humanity may be authorised by modern godism, but they were not approved by that of antiquity.

In a state of society so vitiated by falsehood and crime (created by an abandonment of Nature) as to be almost wholly made up of moral evil, is it at all wonderful that a vast portion of mankind should pursue the most criminal courses to obtain a bare and wretched existence? Can we then imagine any lengths to which a hireling clergy would not go in their routine of deception to secure for life riches, honors, ease and luxury? The knowledge of this truth alone ought to be sufficient to rouse men from their sottish lethargy, for it requires nothing but inquiry to make it appear that error and falsehood reduced to a system forms the groundwork of that overwhelming scheme of delusion which procures the above *blessings* for all priesthoods, who are hired and prostituted to defend deceptions which enrich them and impoverish industry. Could you, without an aberration of mind, expect truth from men who, in order to secure all the good things the world affords, make you their victims by forcing false notions upon your weak and pliant understandings in childhood? Well may they cry out, "Train up a child in the way he should walk, and when he is old he will not depart from it."* This is a correct aphorism, and is equally true whether applied to good or bad training, for if the mind be as it were mortgaged, or sacrificed to the priest in childhood,†—

* The spirit of priestianity may be, and is, repressed by science and philosophy; but it is utterly unchangeable. The children educated by the Druids to recruit their own ranks were secluded in woods and caverns, and denied all intercourse with their parents till after they had attained fourteen years of age. By this mental monopoly it was evidently meant that the *esprit du corps*, its secret ways and interests, should be so indelibly fixed upon the mind as to be ever afterwards proof against every natural affection.

† The more outrageous against Nature and reason the false notions

"Ere yet their minds, through tender age, can choose
 What's for their good, or for their harm refuse.
 Before their natures, and their wills are strong,
 Justly to think, or judge of right and wrong ;
 Or how th' affections with the body grow,
 The self-denying doom they undergo,
 In blooming youth and innocence betrayed
 To cursed altars, thus are victims made."

Hardly one in ten thousand of such victims will escape mental slavery for life. Moreover, men dedicated to sacerdotal delusion, are bound by strong necessity to maintain their deceptions, or else give up not only their ease and luxury, but their very means of subsistence. Once enlisted in the cause, they *must* defend it; for should anyone of them, prompted by convictions from impartial research and rational experience, honestly avow opinions hostile to the national superstition, or decline to administer in the usual manner to your nursery-conceived prejudices and errors, would you not abandon him to obloquy and starvation? These things duly considered, you may ask yourselves whether you are not more likely to meet with truth from men who neither seek your money nor court your favor—who are actuated by no other motive or interest than that which the love of the principle of truth excites—who are unprostituted by hire—who, under the armour of reason, can resist and despise the venomous calumny which is cast upon every exposure of priestcraft; and who, having discharged a duty, feel it as a matter of indifference whether you shall be pleased or offended by the truth. You complain that the contemner of your religious opinions, at once tortures your feelings and arraigns your judgment; but has any judgment proceeding from your impartial investigation of that subject, ever had anything to do

instilled in childhood are the more difficult it seems to be to eradicate them. "It was said of an Arab, who was a man of sense, an arithmetician, a chemist, and, what is still more strange, a skilful astronomer, that nothing could induce him to give up the belief that Mahommed put half of the moon in his sleeve. The reformers of England had more difficulty in giving up the '*Real Presence*' in the Sacrament, than in parting with any other dogma in Popery." The *impossible* and the *absurd* are indispensable pre-requisites with all religionists.

in the matter? Did you not fall heir to those absurd whims which you are pleased to call religious opinions, in right of your mother and other relations; and if these had happened to be followers of Mahommed, would not your blind zeal for the prophet of Mecca, have been as great as it now is for his alleged predecessor of Palestine?* Your answering this question in the negative would be the highest proof of folly and stupidity. Having sadly experienced for more than half a century the obstinate and angry nature of superstition, we are prepared to expect anything but your approbation when we repeat to you, that your faith has no other basis than traditional fables, legends, and allegories—that your attempt to prove their literal truth by prodigies and violations of Nature's laws, is far more inadmissible than the fables themselves; and that your understanding is so obscured by the pestilential fogs raised by these theological absurdities, that the rational truths of Nature can find no admittance.

The usual reply to such arguments and reasoning as the foregoing, is the hue and cry of infidel, atheist, etc.; but is it atheism to prefer the known to the unknown, and to consult experience and the evidence of our senses, in preference to dogmas drawn from books of unauthenticated legends, which are remarkable for nothing so much as the numerous libels they contain against the ruling power of the universe?† When the laws and institutions of a country become so corrupted by the usurpations of religion, and the political tyranny which it engenders, as are those of Great Britain,‡ where the

* The minds of the great mass of mankind may be compared to the glasses in a tavern, which bear about whatever may be put into them. If the tavern be in Turkey, the sensual potations of Mahommed's heaven will fly about; if at Rome, the sparkling froth of Catholicism: if in any one of the Protestant countries of Europe, your features will be distorted by the acetous draughts of Calvin.

† By one Act of Henry VIII., it was high treason to have the Bible in possession; by another it was permitted to noblemen and gentlemen; and next, to countesses, ladies, etc.; and lastly to grown people, but not to apprentices and children. It was wise to allow the reading of such a book to those alone who were interested in upholding it. Reason, philosophy and science will ultimately bring it into contempt.

‡ All the ecclesiastical, and most of the other laws of Great

most grievous abuses in church and state are cherished and perpetuated to serve the ends of the aristocracy and the hierarchy, and where even the sciences are allowed to be seen only through the spectacles of superstition, are the men Atheists who seek a radical reform of them all? If there be indeed any such thing as a *post mortem* judgment seat, to try the wicked and unrighteous for their immoralities and crimes, priests will have much to answer for at that tribunal, on the score of the complicated chain of calamities which their trade hath entailed on their brother man; for they alone

"Have dared to babble of a God of peace,
Even while their hands were red with guiltless blood—
Murdering the while—uprooting every germ
Of truth—exterminating—spoiling all—
Making the earth a slaughter-house."

As sanctioning precedents for the commission of almost every crime may be conveniently found in the Jew books, in like manner they hold forth examples of the coarsest obscenities, though false translation has hidden many of them. Where shall we find vices so lewd and unnatural as those which were practised, and seem to have been of ordinary occurrence, amongst the chosen people? Would the law relating to asses and he-goats have been made if the unnatural crime which it was intended to prevent had not been in practice? See in Judges xix. the infamous doings of the men of Gibeah and Benjamin, the descendants of the chosen son of Jacob. Would any man of ordinary decency read to the females of his household passages so outrageously—nay, so matchlessly obscene, as those we frequently meet with in the Bible? For instance, Ezekiel iv., 12, and nearly the whole of the chapters xix. and xxiii. of the same

Britain, are in opposition to everything that is salutary to man, or protective of his natural rights. To the former class, every man of sound morality and virtue, ought to make a point of denying jurisdiction and obedience. All the laws and usages, without exception, that have relation to the intercourse of the sexes, are so unnatural, cruel and absurd, that they seem calculated to make them mutual snares for each other.

book. See also Hosea i., 2 and 3, and chapter iii. to the end. The Song of Solomon is evidently the lascivious* effusion of some devoted debauchee; yet such is the transcendent impudence of our priests, that these superlatively lecherous imaginings have been, by *forged headings*, called "Christ's love† to the church." The instances above cited are trivial when compared with the number which might be adduced, of obscenities‡ altogether unequalled in any other book; and we would ask any Bible advocate, "Whether any young woman who should be detected in reading a book (not labelled *The Holy Bible*) which contained a fiftieth part of the foul and rank immodesties that pervade this 'Will of God,' would not lose her good reputation for ever?"

But these obscenities are of little ethical importance, compared with the mass of moral evil which in all ages of Christianity has arisen from, and been justified by precedents drawn from the conduct of those men called "Bible worthies," though they appear decidedly to have been the very worst characters portrayed even in that book. This is not surprising, when we know that the Jewish god was an abstract personification of the will and interests of the robber-in-chief, combined with the priesthood; and the interests of all priests being essentially different, or opposed to those of the industrious producers of wealth, the men who oppressed and plundered them, and stuck at no crime in serving the sacerdotal order, were of course the favorites of "the Lord." David afforded a full and prominent

* In chapter v., 4, it is very significantly said, "my beloved put his finger, etc.;" but to damp this plainly libidinous expression, the *inspired* translators foisted in "*of the door*." No forgery can be more barefaced. The words are "Dilectus meus demittebat manum suam a foramine, cum visceribus meis fermentibus in me." There is no mention whatever of a *door*.—*Lucian Redivivus*.

† If they would call them typical of the Duke of York's love for Mrs. Clarke, they would be much nearer the truth.

‡ At a trial in London, for the imaginary crime of blasphemy, the judge very ingenuously acknowledged the revolting obscenities of the Jew books, by ordering the women and boys to leave the court while the defendant, in an able defence, was reading the Bible.

proof of this. Hickeringill, a learned Hebraist and clergyman of the English church, has let out the secret, that "David was a man after God's own heart," not in holiness, that is not meant, and would be unaccountable after his adultery, murders, his many other sins, and cursing his enemies to the lowest pit of hell; but, "after God's heart," is a Hebraism,* and in English signifies as much as, "*a man for my turn,*" (or he is the man for my money), "*he will kill and slay as the priest commands and directs.*" Here we have an exceedingly important confession from a learned churchman! That a person so profligate, wicked, and cruel, as the whole life of David shows him to have been, should acquire the above title, has no doubt astonished many people; but the exposition shows clearly *that the priests bestowed it upon him, for his pre-eminence in the commission of every crime that promoted their interest and power.* Many others of these "worthies" appear to have been the peculiar favorites of Jehovah, from possessing similar qualities (saints in subsequent times were always made out of the same sort of material), whilst with the good and virtuous few he was generally at enmity. This appears in contrasting the bloody and revengeful character of priest Samuel, with that of the plain, honest, and brave soldier, Saul; that of the cunning and deceitful Jacob, with his generous and amiable brother Esau. Amongst the numerous atrocious murders of David, do we not find that of Mephibosheth, the lame son, or brother of his peculiar friend and generous protector, Jonathan? The wholesale murders ordered by Moses, Joshua, David, and some others, are, if true, the most horrid imaginable. Blood was the order of the day among the Jews, so it flowed on all occasions. Exod. xiii., 2, shows that by their laws the first-born children were dedicated as sacrifices to the Jewish Moloch, as well as

* One of the most learned Hebraists of England, has declared that, no two translators would agree in rendering any verb from the Hebrew. Godfrey Higgins says:—"I am quite certain that I shall be able to show—to prove—that every letter of the Hebrew has four, and probably five meanings." What an accommodating language for the priests, when their interests require an alteration in their "Word of God!"

the first-born of other animals ; but it is probable that the horror which this shocking barbarity excited in surrounding countries, at last induced the priests to accept of a lamb, or other victim that was equally good to eat, in redemption of the devoted child. The poor donkey, being rather a tough morsel for "the Lord" and his priests, was to be put to death, if not redeemed by something more tender and savory ; mark the malignity of the priests ! That the Jews offered such human sacrifices, is proved in Solomon's having built a temple to Moloch, which he would not have done with the intention of observing any other rites than those of the Ammonitish god. The Jew books have also furnished Christianity with examples of private assassination, which are nowhere else matched in cool atrocity : to give two instances only, see the base cowardly treachery by which those of Sisera, and of Eglon, king of Moab, were perpetrated.

We cannot conclude this lecture without making the important observation, that, while the instruction of youth continues to be founded upon these Jew books, which hold forth such barbarous and vicious men as patterns of humanity, virtue, and sound morality, no material improvement can ever be made in the moral condition of society. These books are imposed upon the mind as the one thing needful in education, because they divert from the study of the useful and salutary truths of Nature (the knowledge of which is the bane of the priest), which stand in direct opposition to the fabulous absurdities of Jewish theology ;* and, therefore, our hireling priests, who dread nothing so much as the development of these truths, use their

* The caricatures (they do not deserve a better name) which the Jews followed by the Christians have drawn of the Supreme Power, are extremely disgusting to rational piety ; they make their deity command theft and murder : he avowedly breaks his promise (Numb. xiv., 34). He grieves and repents of his past conduct (Gen. vi., 6). He prompts his prophets to lying (1 Kings xxii., 22).

The theology of the present day, says D'Holbach, is a subtle venom, calculated, through the importance attached to it, to infect everyone. By dint of metaphysics, modern theologians have become systematically absurd and wicked, in teaching the odious ideas they entertain of the deity.

utmost energies in suppressing all such investigation ; whilst they instil such reveries only as promote ignorance, and keep the mind in childhood through life. When the fogs of religious stupidity have thus mentally moulded the audience, the pulpit becomes a fountain of the most unqualified nonsense, which is safely showered down in torrents without any danger of detection, on the part of "the long-ear'd rout," who, being taught to spurn the evidence of their senses, when put in competition with *faith*, are prepared to swallow the grossest impossibilities :—

" For zeal, fanatic zeal, once wedded fast
To some dear falsehood, hugs it to the last."

The imagination of the bewildered bigot fears a mysterious phantom which acts on none of his senses ; and he fears nothing so much as to have nothing to fear. If his religion was clear to human intellect, it would have no attractions for his ignorance ; there *must* be obscurity, incredible prodigies, fables, sorceries, and terrors, to keep his perverted brain in perpetual dread and agitation. By such chimerical apparatus, the priest can reduce the mental faculties of man almost to annihilation, and hence it is that the great herd of human beings have hitherto been mere congregated masses of variously compounded folly, knavery, and credulity ; where ignorance is prized and cherished as the sole medium through which clerical and secular oppressors can ride over the necks of the multitude ;* while the spider's web of superstition confines their intellects as it were within the bounds of a nutshell. In this way are the whole nations of human beings educated under traditional and legendary lies and fables ; yet so firmly does the false impressions instilled in childhood rivet them upon the mind, that myriads have died for them, as the highest service to

* "In every age, and in every country of the world, the religions that have been invented by impostors and priests, and sanctioned by rulers, have been put forth with no other intention than that of deceiving the people ; whilst the distinguishing characteristic of all religious professors has been to profess one thing and mean another.

their "God!" *This is a species of devotion which the theologues most willingly perform by deputy.*

Under such abject and debasing circumstances have the intellectual powers of the bulk of mankind been crushed and smothered throughout Europe by the juggle of church and state collusion, until about the middle of last century, when a ray of mental light burst forth from a constellation of exalted minds, headed by that most enlightened of philosophers, Voltaire, who shook to its very foundation the whole fabric of Christian priestcraft. In the present century, that light, guarded by the true emancipating Savior of the human race, the printing press,* is now becoming more widely diffused and clear, through the erudite minds of a Brougham, an Owen, a Hume, and many other advocates of education; but still the truths of Nature are so obscured by the dense fogs of priest-fostered ignorance, that no efficient political relief need be expected for Christendom, until the people reform themselves by abandoning the evils which cause their physical and mental intoxication; these are inebriating liquors, and groveling superstition. When our present ultra-Reformers, who call themselves Chartists, prate of church-going, and offering up prayers and religious hymns, previous to their vain consultations, our political rulers pass the wink to their clerical confederates, conveying as much as to say, this is all very well; for while these men continue under the thumb of any sect of theologians, or suffer their minds to be deluded and debauched by any scheme of supernaturalism whatsoever, real knowledge and sound judgment must be strangers to their meetings; whilst the animosities of sectarianism must ever prevent unanimity, without which

* Though the art of printing, so as to multiply the copies of a document to any extent, was known in Europe in the year 1444, yet the control and fear of priestly vengeance, prevented its being extensively useful for two centuries afterwards. This art, nevertheless, had been known and practised from time immemorial by the priests of Buddha, throughout the immense empire of Thibet, though confined by them exclusively to the purposes which promoted the interests of their religion. Oh, how rejoiced the priests of Christianity would be at this day, were it in their power to establish a similar monopoly of the printing press!—See *Higgins' Anacalypsis*.

they never can be formidable to the powers that be, however corrupt. When the education of mankind shall be so salutary as to teach them what they are in reality, the reform necessarily springing from it would quickly dissipate ignorance, conquer superstition and its priests ; and, in place of pretending to look *beyond* Nature, whose surface alone man is hardly capable of perceiving, he would, through the evidence of his senses, follow that unerring power as the only polestar of his happiness. For the great majority of human beings thus to reform themselves, "*they have but to will it ;*" if they *will not*, they deserve to continue what they ever have been—degraded outcasts and aliens from their nature.

Thus with strong speech I tore the veil that hid
NATURE, and TRUTH, and LIBERTY.—SHELLEY.

END OF LECTURE SIXTH.

DIALOGUE.

PHYSIOLOGICAL AND THEOLOGICAL.

Thou, Nature, art my goddess: to thy law my services are bound.

SHAKESPEARE.

"Philosophy teaches us to seek in Nature, and the knowledge of her laws, for the cause of every event; when this knowledge shall become universal, man will relinquish, with elevated satisfaction, his attachment to supernatural and vindictive theology." It is this theology that has destroyed the harmony of Nature, and demoralised the intelligent world.

LUCIAN AND MODERATUS.

MODERATUS.—In all ages of the world, the tide of human affairs hath shown that reigning opinion, however ill-founded and absurd, is always queen of the nations; and, since a man's interest and general good footing in society, are, to a great extent, involved in his acquiescence in these opinions, it is strange that you, Lucian, should venture to entertain heresies so much at variance with everything that is called orthodox. But as it is only upon hearsay that I judge of your opinions, pray let me know from yourself your notions respecting the deity?

LUCIAN.—You must first define precisely and intelligibly, what you mean by the terms deity or god: do you mean by either of them to designate a fanciful personification of the physical powers of universal matter or nature?

MOD.—No; I mean that infinite, eternal, incorporeal body in the human form*—the creator of the universe

* Zenophanes observed, that if the ox or the elephant understood

out of nothing, that is, out of himself, he being nothing, according to Christian orthodoxy.

LUCIAN.—I can form no conception of such a being as you describe; but such a phantasm may be very suitable for, as it is quite of a piece with, a religion that is made up of chimeras. If your term *nothing* has any meaning, it is the negation of matter, which is nonsense, because the mind can form no conception of *immaterial existence*. By the same rule, reason and common sense reject the word *spiritual*, because it is a term absolutely without meaning, and represents no existing thing of which the mind can possibly form any idea.* All these words have been coined in the mint of theology for the purpose of deception; and, together with the principal tool of priestcraft, called *soul*, make up the machinery of delusion. Everything rational is foresworn by a set of mystagogues, when they declare that their God was engendered before his mother, and is of the same age as his father!

MOD.—But laying aside these foolish inventions, which could only be imposed upon ignorance; and allowing that, to the question, “what is god,” no proper answer can be given, but that “*we do not know* ;” still, if all, or universal matter was created, it must have had a creator; and there being no materials to work with, this creator, being himself immaterial, must of necessity have created matter out of himself, that is, out of nothing.

—“These were Jehovah’s words:
From an eternity of idleness,
I, God, awoke; in seven days’ toil made earth
From *nothing*; rested, and created man;
I placed him in a paradise, there
Planted the tree of evil; so that he
Might eat and perish.”

And so says the church.

sculpture or painting, they would not fail to represent the Deity under their own peculiar figure. In this they would have as much reason as the Jews and Christians, who gave him the human form.

“And ’twere an innocent dream, but that a faith
Nurs’d by fear’s dew of poison, grows thereon.”

* *Spirit is literally air*, and air is matter in a gaseous or fluid form; but this is not the sense in which the word is used by the theologian.

LUCIAN.—That is going still deeper into theological absurdity. No axiom can be clearer than this,—“out of nothing cometh nothing.” There could be no creation of that which *necessarily* and eternally exists *in and of itself*. There can be but one *infinite being*, one nature, *i.e.* the boundless universe, (call it god, or by any other name you please) and this all-in-all self-existent being, produces in itself, by an internal or innate action, whatever changes matter undergoes by this essential action or motion; whether in the production of living creatures, or inanimate forms: thus universal matter is at once both agent and patient—efficient cause and subject; it produces nothing but what is its own modification. Spiritualism is supported only by fraud, and ignorance of materialism.

MOD.—Are not the words creator and creation used in the Bible? what do they mean?

LUCIAN.—The learned confess that we have a very false translation of that book. In the Talmud of Jerusalem, *creator* and *creation* merely signify the *giver*, and the *act of giving forms to matter*.^{*} There is not one word in the Bible about a creation from nothing; this notion, according to Mosheim,[†] was the invention of the Christians. All identities of matter arise from motion alone; and as no portion of it can ever cease to be in motion, that motion is perpetually destroying existing forms, and out of these producing fresh identities of matter; but this is change of form alone, and chemistry has proved the self-existence of the material *principle*, in the demonstration that no particle of it can be annihilated.

MOD.—In our Bible account of the creation, there are certainly some apparent contradictions, or incongruities, such as the getting up of three whole days before the sun was “made and set in the firmament;” now it appears to us that, as the sun is the sole source of day, they

^{*} The word *Tsour* has been adopted in Genesis, where it is, say the learned, falsely translated *creator*, though it merely signifies, “*the giver of forms*.” According to Volney, that name is also one of the definitions of Osiris.

[†] Appendix to Cudworth.

were a little preposterous in forgetting to make him first.

LUCIAN.—It must appear plain to every one not blinded by his slavish fears and prejudices, that the writer of Genesis (the cosmographical part) was entirely ignorant even of the rudiments of natural science. The god he set up, and the handiwork he makes him perform, are proofs of this. The Jupiter of the pretty and lively mythology of the Pagans, was frequently engaged in ludicrous amours;* but in general he preserved an awful dignity, and was never represented in the discharge of those mean and servile offices, which the Jews depict their Jehovah as performing; though these were nothing to the ferocious, cruel, and disgusting caricatures which are everywhere drawn of him in their books. Allowing for a moment the possibility that poor deluded man *can* be guilty of impiety towards the all-ruling *Power*, certainly his mind could not devise anything more blasphemous than to personify that power into such a deity as that set up by Moses. Ignorance of the operations of matter or Nature, has made man invent deities as causes of the effects he sees produced; these deities were so many chimeras, and these chimeras have been the basis of all religions.

MOD.—I confess that in the all-important matters of morality, the Bible presents exceeding great difficulties. Truth, justice, and mercy are immutable principles, and must not be subverted to uphold any system of religion whatsoever. That which is cruel and wicked in a man, cannot be admitted or defended in a god; and every moral feeling of the virtuous mind must be discarded ere we cease to doubt the truth of a religion

* When Diagoras of Melos declared that there were no such beings in existence as Jupiter, Neptune, Apollo, etc., their priests offered a talent for his head, or two talents if taken alive. In the latter case, the higher sum was probably offered, that they might have the pleasure of torturing him. In the 15th century what would Christian priests have done to the "*blasphemer*," who would have been so impiously wicked as to assert, that the above gods did *still exist in full power*? Priests are ever the same; but gods change names and *wills*, going in and out of power, like Whigs and Tories.

based upon the desecration of these principles. Besides, it is repugnant, if not impossible to reconcile the god of Moses with the reverential and sublime idea, which superior minds are capable of forming of the almighty power.

LUCIAN.—As the man who takes a priest for his guide will be led astray ; so, if the Bible has been his sole instructor, he is likely ever to remain in ignorance ; the first *will* not teach him anything useful—the latter *cannot*. Previous to the time when it is said the Bible lawgiver entered upon his murderous invasion of the Canaanitish countries, each of them had its local god or goddess, some of whom we have elsewhere mentioned ; these were so many personifications of the sun, moon, stars, elements, and seasons, and served as objects of adoration amongst the ignorant. As a priest of Heliopolis, Moses must have known all this, and wishing to be like his new neighbors, he set up his barbarous deity in imitation, changing his Theban name of Jahouh into Jehovah (see Strabo's Geography), charging his followers not to represent it by any emblem, as he was in vain wishful of preserving the Egyptian unity of the Supreme Power. But as the sun was then in Taurus, or the Bull, the Egyptian priests had taught the illiterate Israelites to worship a calf ; and as they were desirous of clinging to their calf adoration, Aaron, as every other priest would have done, took advantage of this religious folly, to despoil them of the gold ornaments, which, by Jahouh's command, they had swindled from the Egyptians. In this affair Moses and his brother, no doubt, understood each other well. To rob upon religious pretences, is not altogether a modern invention.

MOD.—In the supposed time of Moses, the religion of Egypt being polytheistic, Jahouh must have been one amongst many deities that were worshipped by the Egyptians ; so that if Moses borrowed that deity of the Thebans, he could not at the same time borrow his doctrine of the unity of god.

LUCIAN.—The learned Egyptian priests appear to have been decidedly *Materialists*. Infinitely above the

minor deities which they invented for the ignorant populace, they believed in the great material principle,* acting by self-existing energies and properties; infinite, therefore causeless; and constituting the unity of the Supreme Power. They represent this power by no emblem, conceiving that to be impossible; but the Greeks personified it in the god Pan. Thus the unity of the Supreme Power was the basis of the hierarchical religion of Egypt, as is acknowledged by the learned Hyde, and also by Cudworth. As an Egyptian priest, Moses (admitting his existence) must have known this, and was therefore wishful of preserving this unity in his Theban deity; though that availed nothing when neutralised by the discordant and inconsistent qualities attributed to him. In order to be justified as an invader and plunderer of peaceful countries, Moses was under the necessity of endowing his god with fierce and barbarous passions, which on most occasions led him to be cruel and unjust; as when he issued his ferocious and bloody mandate to his priests, the sons of Levi, (Exod. xxxii., 27) to sacrifice about three thousand "*Brothers, companions, and neighbors,*" in cold blood.†

MOD.—That massacre was caused by the idolatry of the people, in setting up and worshipping the golden calf.

LUCIAN.—Priest Aaron was herein the principal actor; yet he and his tribe not only go unpunished, but are employed to commit the shocking murders.

MOD.—But theologists assure us that what is justice with god is injustice with man. Christians have ever drawn a line of distinction between divine and human justice: *proving* that what appears to man cruel, partial, and unjust, in the works of god, are, in reality, justice, impartiality, and mercy towards man.

LUCIAN.—Robbery and murder are strange ways of showing mercy. It is by the hideous and pernicious dogmas you mention, that pretended supernatural reve-

* You say, "materiality cannot think;"—do you *know* of any thinking without it? Pray how does immateriality think?

† See also the inhuman mandate issued in Dent. xiii., 6th to 10th. This has justified every refinement in the cruelty of persecution throughout Christendom for more than fifteen hundred years.

lations have poisoned the pure stream of morality ; they utterly confound every idea or perception we can have of the natural principles of right and wrong ; and have sanctioned or justified the foulest enormities throughout Christendom. The principles of truth, justice, and morality, are ever the same, and immutable from whatever source they emanate.

MOD.—It is true that the Supreme Being is, upon the whole, not much beholden to the Jewish priests for the sketches of character in which he is portrayed in the Bible. But this is speaking according to human reason.

LUCIAN.—The capricious and cruel character of this theological creation, as set forth in the Jew books, is generally so demoralising as to be altogether unworthy of imitation in human conduct. The cruelty ascribed to it, is the shield behind which priestcraft has sheltered itself in all its bloody persecutions. In other respects the various menial, or bad offices and functions which it is made to perform, are truly ludicrous when said to be executed by the all-ruling power ; such as, a god-midwife (*a*), a nightly assassin (*b*), a butcher (*c*), a barber (*d*), a slave-dealer (*e*), a murderer (*f*), a fool (*g*), a deceiver (*h*), a promise breaker (*i*),* a deluder (*j*), a tailor (*k*), a shoemaker (*l*). Such was the deity who

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|--------------------------------|------------------------------------|
| (<i>a</i>) Gen. xxix., 31. | ((<i>h</i>) Ezek. xiv., 9. |
| (<i>b</i>) Exod. xii., 23. | {(<i>h</i>) Jerem. xx., 7. |
| (<i>c</i>) Isaiah xxxiv., 6. | {(<i>h</i>) Jerem. iv., 10. |
| (<i>d</i>) Isaiah vii., 20. | (<i>i</i>) Numb. xiv., 30 to 34. |
| (<i>e</i>) Joel iii., 8. | (<i>j</i>) 2 Thess., ii. 11. |
| (<i>f</i>) Jerem. xiii., 14. | (<i>k</i>) Gen. iii., 21. |
| (<i>g</i>) 1 Cor. i., 25. | (<i>l</i>) Ezek. xvi., 10. |

the Jewish priests impiously and blasphemously called the Supreme Power of the universe, though guised by them in the form and likeness, having all the

* The Jewish god never gave his chosen people anything better than *promises*.—Vide Acts vii., 5 ; and Heb. xi., 39.

In the reign of Ahab, a lying angel, or spirit, offers his services as a deceiver, which services were very acceptable to the "Lord." Here we have a lying angel, and the supreme being endeavoring to deceive by prompting to a falsehood. The belief of such impious absurdities shows that the unbounded credulity of man is the safety of the priest.

appendages and members physical, of the human body ; and possessing many, if not all the worst passions incident to human nature. And such is the deity adopted by Christianity, after undergoing such modifications, and receiving into partnership such colleagues as suited the interests of his priests. These things, in a mental point of view, have degraded man below the more rational animals of the field.

MOD.—You have evinced a strong partiality for what you call the pretty and lively mythology of the Gentiles, consisting of the numerous fabled gods and goddesses of antiquity, which, you say, the lower orders of the people were taught to consider as so many real personages, though, in the esoteric doctrines of the initiated, they were merely so many emblems of the “host of heaven,” the elements and seasons.

LUCIAN.—Precisely so ; and such is the origin of the Christian scheme also, springing as it does out of the Egyptian and Zoroastrian systems ; for as the epithet Christ physically signifies the sun, so, in like manner, has it been made to represent a fabled personage ; whilst the true revelation of this prosopopœia (the figure by which things are made persons) is now suppressed or lost through priestcraft, or its foster-child, ignorance.

MOD.—In modelling his deity it was evidently the intention of Moses to preserve his unity ; but his followers being the most barbarous of human beings, he was under the necessity of adapting his god to their ignorant and rude notions of things ; and, therefore, not blameable for the tricks and deceptions he used, since these were the only means of governing them. Why, then, should not similar means be used in the nineteenth century to answer the same purpose ? The ignorance and credulity of the mass of mankind are at all times the sufficient warrant of theological frauds. It is not at all necessary that men of learning, and the rulers of nations, should believe in the irrational fictions of any scheme of supernaturalism ; but experience seems to point out the utility of their yielding them a *pretended belief*, and a *real support*, for the sake of governing the multitude.

LUCIAN.—As an initiated Pagan priest, the conduct of Moses towards his followers was quite in character; and the religion which he manufactured was, no doubt, well suited to the extreme savageness of the Jews.* But it is wonderful that this religion, blasphemous and absurd in the highest degree, and contrived solely for the purpose of over-aweing and governing a horde of plundering banditti, should maintain a sacred influence over nations where history and science abound.† The grovelling credulity of uninstructed man is such, that all despotic rulers, aided by their iniquitous connexion with subservient priesthoods, have during centuries of darkness, shackled the necks of mankind with great success in the way you mention. But the wicked stratagem of keeping men in ignorance, in order that they may be misgoverned by theological fables, is now meeting a stumbling-block in the increasing light of reason and useful knowledge among the people. This wretched policy has already produced revolutions; and others of yet brighter aspect seem rising on the political horizon, still farther to weaken, and ultimately to overthrow, the church-contaminated governments of Europe. Superstition, though still leagued with political rule, is utterly unable to be its mainstay any longer, because of the reasonable hostility of the people whose eyes begin to be opened to the evil tendency in regard to morality, as well as to the prodigious expense entailed upon industry, in support of the voracious hydra of superstition.

MOD.—That all rational and unprejudiced minds find an insuperable repugnance at the idea of reconciling, or identifying the Supreme power, with the deity of Moses, as depicted in the Bible, is a point which I readily concede. When the man of free reflection meditates on a boundless universe, governed in the most consummate order and harmony, nothing

* "An inhuman and uncultured race, who
How'd hideous praises to their "jealous God."

† To establish a religion upon the wild reveries of an ignorant people, whose legends are in all cases filled with miraculous events against the order of Nature, and bearing on their very front the most glaring

appears to him so shocking as the impious comparison of the incomprehensible Being, the creator and ruler of millions of worlds, with the impotent, puerile, and inconsistent deity of the Jews—the contrast is, beyond all expression, revolting and abhorrent. This immutable order of all things (we are forced to the conclusion) could not exist without the guidance of an infinite Being who is not only independent of matter, or Nature, but regulates that principle.

LUCIAN.—*Matter and motion* alone constitute what we call *Nature*, which, you allow, is the essential principle, therefore, there is no room left for supposing any anterior existence; because, as the *essential principle*, it could have no antecedent—no cause; and must in consequence be self-existent and eternal. If invariable order and harmony evince the design of an artificer, surely the transcendent intellect of your supreme artificer (the demiourgos) evinces still more the necessity of a greater designer, in his production. We know that harmony and *adaptation* exist in the energies of matter, from which spring all animal organization; is it not then quite as satisfactory, and far more easy, to suppose that Nature—her harmony and intelligence—have existed eternally, than it is to suppose a time when boundless matter was not in being; and that it derived its existence from an *immaterial personage*, of whom the mind cannot form the slightest conception? As material Nature is the *infinite Being*, it cannot be an effect; it is the principle of principles, whose innate energies produce within itself the eternal routine of cause and effect.* Of this necessitated process ad infinitum, man cannot know or describe even the surface; yet has the folly to pretend to look beyond the boundless plenum!

MOD.—But may not such an infinite spiritual power as the Platonists, and after them the Christians, figured

marks of imposture, is the very acme of human folly—the pestilent mania which has convulsed nations, and deluged the world with blood.

* To become a Materialist under existing modes of education, is no easy attainment; it is the fruit of much impartial research and knowledge, arising from independent and fearless thought.

to themselves, exist and rule the universe, although the mind of man can form no definite idea of this Being?

LUCIAN.—Man has nothing to do with that which he can neither know nor comprehend;* and it is impossible for him to believe in that which is beyond his comprehension. Materialists maintain the existence of an all-ruling POWER; but every attempt to personify that Power,—and all pretensions to any knowledge of it beyond that which is gathered from the process of Nature, in her works, they hold as deceitful and pernicious; regarding all pretended revelations said to be supernaturally made to man, as the work of the most dangerous and wicked impostors: and their revelations as the direst curses that were ever entailed upon mankind. It would be a perversion of terms to speak of more than one *infinite* Being: whether then is it most rational to suppose it to be that which we *know* to exist, or that which we *do not know*† to exist? So far is it from being difficult to suppose the eternity of matter, it is hardly possible to imagine anything but its eternity. Previous to what you call its creation by your *immaterial* artificer, *was he a vacuum living in a vacuum?*‡ As the Christian's definition of his deity confounds all language, it is its own best refutation. With a face of gravity, he talks of his body spiritual that has no body; an incorporeal *something* that is essentially *nothing*; an immaterial *substance* that is non-substantial; and though this body is immaterial, it possesses the form and likeness, together with the bodily members, of a man! These are the pestilent offspring of theology—your distracting chimeras, which

* Man neither can nor ought to have anything to do with that which is confessedly inconceivable; if he pretends to know or say anything of such a being, he immediately falls into contradictions. When did a theologian understand himself when speaking of his deity or deities?—Never.

† We have five witnesses in favor of the existence of matter, viz., seeing, hearing, feeling, smelling, and tasting; but where is the proof of the existence of *anything* that is immaterial? It is fancy alone that creates such a chimera.

‡ The old fact that nature abhors a vacuum is still unrefuted; we may indeed go farther and say that *she will not allow it*, for the art of man has never produced a space where there was *nothing*.

"Your imagination bodies forth
 In forms of things unknown;—
 Turns them to a shape, and gives to airy nothing
 A local habitation and a name."

Amongst the initiated in the mysteries of antiquity, the term God was used only as being expressive of an *effect*, whose *cause* is Nature.

MOD.—Men are so accustomed to trace and find the origin of artificial objects, that a supposed analogy readily presents itself, that matter *must* have had an origin also; and, backed by superstition, they will not give up their "Great First Cause."

LUCIAN.—Forgetting that their "Great First Cause" stands equally in need of a cause. None of the phenomena of Nature prove, but all disclaim a *first* cause. Causes and effects have ever moved in an eternal circle; and that which is an effect at one time becomes a cause at another, and *vice versa*. Theology has taught man to reject that which is easy and rational, and blinded him to the thousand-fold difficulty of supposing a time when neither time* nor matter existed, contrasted with the simple truth that matter is self-existent. This is a proposition too plain and reasonable to answer the deceptive ends of the traders in that pseudo science.

MOD.—If, as you say, *no* power ever did, or can create matter, there are at least an endless series of changes—of new modes or forms of beings which it unceasingly assumes, having the appearance of creation. All this seems to require intelligence and a directing hand.

LUCIAN.—Why may not this directing hand be the essential energies of matter alone, of which motion is the chief; for without it no change whatever can take place? The word creation has no proper meaning except when applied to these new combinations, and ever-varying forms. The universe consists of infinitely-derived, and dependent modes of beings; each of which owes its existence to the power and efficacy of the one that immediately preceded it, in an infinite series of successions, *without a beginning, or original.*†

* The theologist makes god say, "before time was, I was."

† According to Hobbes, "God is almighty matter."

Existence still maintains existences,
And nought begins where no existence is.

MOD.—The intercirculation * of the parts of matter, and its unceasing changes into new states of being, in form and substance, seem to reveal the mystery of transubstantiation, which, if I mistake not, was one of the attributes ascribed to deity, long before it was adopted as a dogma of Christianity.

LUCIAN.—Like everything else in our Christian fabrication, transubstantiation was taken from the esoteric doctrines of the Gentiles, where it was allegorised in the person of Proteus, who, according to the poets, was Neptune's herdsman; and whose name properly signifies primary, or oldest, meaning that he represented the eternal nature of matter; and his changeableness was expressive of the endless operations, new modes and combinations thereof, wrought chiefly in a fluid state by the perpetual *motion* † of the sea (Neptune), and the other elements. He was said to take all kinds of shapes and disguises, turning himself into monstrous animals, fire, water, etc., denoting that in him were personified the continually varying forms of matter. ‡ He was called the servant of Neptune, and said to reside in a cave, meaning the apparent concavity of the heavens. *Time, matter and motion* form the only eternal *Trinity and Unity*.

MOD.—The learned amongst the Christian priesthood, against their private convictions, are under the necessity of supporting the dogma of creation; because the giving up of that point would destroy the foundation

* The perpetual change of form produced by this intercirculation in the elements of matter, was called by the Greeks *Omoosia* or *Omousia*. This mutual action is universal; and is proved even in "the interchange of the material of light between globe and globe in the solar system; and from the fixed stars, through the medium of some gaseous principle of matter, in the highest state of rarefaction." All is matter, and matter is all.

† It is only by *motion* that we exist, or even known that we exist. A dead animal begets motion of itself.

‡ Empedocles says:—"Those are infants or short-sighted persons with very contracted understandings, who imagine that anything is born which did not exist before; or that anything can be totally annihilated."

of their system ; but many of them have no objection to allow the eternity of time.

LUCIAN.—During which time, as has already been observed, their god, being immaterial, was the vacuum inhabitant of a vacuum ! Another plunge into absurdity. The pretended creations and false revelations inculcated by theology, have invariably operated to suppress or cripple the sciences ; particularly those of astronomy and geology. Sacerdotal deception unblushingly tells us that, something less than six thousand years ago, there was no sun, no moon, no stars, no earth, no matter of any kind ! By the invention of this tremendous absurdity, priestcraft has had the audacity to circumscribe within the comparative period of a moment, the existence of even Nature herself ; and as nothing is too gross for unthinking ignorance, even this greatest of all monstrosities goes down with the credulous herd of mankind, who dare to look at nothing but through the spectacles of this “science of god.”

MOD.—What proof have we that this globe has been in being longer than the period assigned for it by the Jewish and Christian priesthoods ?

LUCIAN.—There are innumerable astronomical and geological facts which prove the existence of this earth for millions of years.* By a change so wonderfully slow as to require perhaps thousands of centuries to bring it round, the surface of this globe is so completely altered towards the sun, that the frigid zones become the torrid, and *vice versa*, in succession. The remains of tropical animals have been found at the estuaries of the Oby and Lena, and even in more northern latitudes. Petrified crocodiles have been found in Derbyshire, at the depth of eighty-five fathoms ; which proves that the land called England enjoyed a tropical sun, in antiquity so remote as to show in a striking light, the moment sand-glass—or, if you please, the perfect nothingness—of all human chronology.

MOD.—It must be allowed that the Bible cosmogony and its stories about deity, origin of man, etc., appear

* Dr. Buckland.

puerile, contradictory, and irrational, unless they can be resolved into planetary allegories. But in regard to the creation of matter, these Jew books are not so absurd as to affirm that it was done out of nothing; that was a discovery made by Christianity. The Jewish creation is a mere copy of cosmogonies of eastern countries, all of whom, China excepted, pretend to account for the origin of things.

LUCIAN.—We had everything from the east.* The Bible makers compiled out of any oriental legends, or shreds of Pagan writings they could find; and from ignorance, turned the sublime allegories having allusion to the planets, into vague unmeaning narrative and anecdote. Even Druidism, which, like primitive Christianity, was concealed sun worship,† travelled to us from the east; and there is abundant reason to believe that priestcraft had reached the highest perfection in India, some fifty thousand years before the Jewish superstition existed. In western Asia and Europe, the usual combination of crafts had robbed man of his natural liberty, enslaved his mind, and eaten up the fruits of his industry; but in Hindustan, the consummate subtlety, and all-subduing art of the priest, has, by an utter annihilation of mind, reduced certain castes of the Hindus far below the condition of the vilest animal on earth, and with a fiendish influence, the most astonishing, it stimulates other castes to actions at which Nature stands horrified. The Christian priestcraft, even in the eleventh century, when ignorance and tyranny had raised it to its zenith of power and glory, was but a novice compared with the subtle perfection of that of India. And it was no doubt the

* Christianity stole its materials in the east—deceived the west, and now, in its purloined robes and oriental missions, “it would retrace its steps, and deceive the world.”

† “In Druidism, as in the most ancient religions, the mythos in all being perfectly the same, it was required of the votaries, that all prayers for good, as well as invocations of curses, should be addressed to the sun, under the name of Jupiter. In praying for blessings, they went round the stone, or other object, according to the course of the sun; and *vice versa* in the invocation of curses. These imprecations are very numerous in those solar hymns, called the psalms of David.

complete success of this mind-enslaving delusion in the east, which recommended and caused its adoption in the west ; for with a variation in names, it is identically the same astro-fable everywhere.*

MOD.—The absolute sway which Brahminism has over the mind of the Hindus, is perhaps attributable to its being the oldest of all known religions; its priests have the advantage of a prodigious antiquity, through which they have matured it to serve their own ends, and established a despotic power over their debased votaries.

LUCIAN.—No conceivable power over the mind can exceed that refined delusion which causes millions of human beings voluntarily to throw themselves under the wheels of the Juggernaut car, to be crushed to death on earth, in order to attain some one of those heavens which their villainous priests have invented. This astonishing power is perhaps shown still more in the effects of that religious rite, which makes it incumbent on widows to burn themselves alive on the death of their husbands. The horrible wickedness of this sacerdotal injunction requires that these victims must sacrifice themselves by this excruciating death, dressed out in all the jewels and precious stones they are possessed of ; and after the dreadful immolation, these valuables become the perquisite of the priests, whose emissaries carefully sift the ashes of the funeral pile where all the gold and gems are found, with little or no injury done them by the fire. This is either the usage now, or was so in former times, and seems to be the acme of priestcraft.

MOD.—Whether the belief in supernatural powers, which, in all ages and countries, a certain order of men has been maintained to inculcate and enforce, has contributed most to human happiness or misery, is not for me to decide ; but while a vast majority of mankind are unfitted to think for themselves, advantage will be taken of that ignorance, and combinations

* Most of the old churches on the continent, as has elsewhere been observed, show that both the *virgin* and her son were introduced into Europe, as *black Gentoos*.

formed between the rulers of states and churches for the more effectual government of the many, who, if oppressed on earth by supporting these institutions, will be remunerated by a supernatural promotion in heaven.

LUCIAN,—Just so ; under such governments, man is a mere puppet moved at the pleasures of his oppressors, who keep him ignorant, and work him thoroughly : promising him a post mortem happiness in another *life*, provided he bears the yoke of misery quietly in this :—

“ Then the mind's independence insensibly sinks
The taint of one portion enfeebling the whole,
Till oppression, preparing the doubled-twined links,
King and priests draw their victim down—body and soul.”

But you forget the immensely different degrees of evil occasioned by the inventions of theology ; in England, Ireland, and Wales,* alone, the enormous sum of *nine millions nine hundred and twenty thousand pounds* is annually squandered in pampering and enriching the dignitaries, and maintaining the rest of a body of ecclesiastics, about thirty thousand in number. This sum is considerably more than half of all the clerical revenues of Christendom ; and cannot possibly have any other source than the industry of the people, who, in return for their toil and starvation, are robbed of their senses, their judgments, and their liberties. That religion which attempts, through the aid of civil tyranny, to enforce the belief or acquiescence in the truth of its dogmas, virtually gives a premium to falsehood—renders truth injurious in society, and, by these very actions, *proves itself false*.

MOD.—The religions of antiquity must have been a down-draught upon industry also, and were used wholly for the purpose of deception. The dominant superstition of a country will always be taken into partnership by the political rulers ; not because they think it true,† but as an auxiliary and pillar of govern-

* To these countries nothing has been more burdensome and ruinous than the *expense of worshipping their gods*.

† Wherever *truth* is compelled to hide her head, there is necessarily a vicious order of things, both political and moral. If instructors and

ment, which confers upon the professors thereof many privileges and immunities, in return for their support.

LUCIAN.—The Athenians never had an established priesthood, that overwhelming master-curse of modern times ; and as for that of the Romans, it did not, from the Pontifex Maximus, down to the lowest priest, exceed from fifty to sixty persons ; and as the dignitaries at the head of these were always amongst the first men of the state, their offices were purely honorary. Under these circumstances it was quite impossible that the whole institution could be either oppressive upon industry or dangerous to liberty. As the Roman superstition was supported by the state for no other purpose than that of deception, to serve the ends of political jugglery, or as a means of enabling generals of armies to restrain the rashness of their troops, or excite them to fight with enthusiasm when required ; so, in like manner, are the more recently-invented deceptions of theology supported, and from the same motive, by the different nations of Europe, but in a degree, and with effects infinitely more degrading and oppressive to all the real wealth-producers. *Of all deceivers who have plagued the world, none are so deeply ruinous to human happiness, or so deserving of universal execration, as those impostors who pretend to lead men by a light above Nature.*

MOD.—The ignorant fears and inquisitiveness of mankind seems to require such leaders ; they cannot account for the phænomena of Nature, and therefore they keep a class of men in pay who pretend to explain to them certain personified existences superior to Nature, who work the machinery behind the scenes ; and in whom is inherent, they say, the sole power to cause and control all such phænomena. But if the hopes and fears of an ignorant populace impel them to keep such teachers, it is true that those alone who require their services should contribute to their support ; yet as riches is power, confederate political

governors were themselves possessed of knowledge and virtue, they would govern men more easily, and much better, by realities than by fables.

rulers make their adopted priesthoods wealthy, by the exaction of tithes and other imposts upon industry; in all of which they are borne out and justified by god's old will.

LUCIAN.—That was one of the reasons why Jahouh, when he ceased to be a Jew, was not made to revoke his old will, which, like his new one, was the word and will of his priests, who were not likely to permit him to forget tithes. The present condition of the English and Irish churches shows that the legal robbery of this exaction has been sadly aggravated since its first introduction into Christianity. For the first eight hundred years of our era tithes were given as alms. We are informed by Sts. Jerome, Bernard, Chrysostom, Wickliffe, Huss, and many other writers who uniformly agree, that tithes were purely voluntary. St. Augustine says: "If we (the priests) do possess anything privately which doth suffice us, the tithes, or alms, are not ours, but the goods of the poor, whose stewards we are; *except we do challenge to ourselves a property by some damnable usurpation.*" Blackstone says that at first tithes were distributed in a fourfold division; one for the share of the Bishop, another for maintaining the fabric of the church, a third for the poor, and a fourth to provide for the incumbent. When the sees of the bishops became otherwise amply endowed, they were prohibited from demanding their usual share; so that the poor became entitled to one-third. As the clergy now eat up the whole, the "usurpation" of St. Augustine has grown more and more "damnable." St. Jerome asserted that, according to St. Paul, it was "*by the instigation of the devil*" that distinctions of rank in religion were made, by the creation of bishops and other dignitaries.

MOD.—All this serves only to show that human beings, so far as we know their history, have always paid priests to lead or mislead them, through the medium of supernaturals, whether these be real or fanciful. In denying any *first cause*, or creation of matter, I suppose you must allow that *man* cannot be a spontaneous production of the earth, and therefore the admission of his origin is unavoidable.

LUCIAN.—It is in vain that we see the human species propagated exactly as are all the mammalia classes:—theology prevents a correct view of everything; and it is its business to trample upon analogy and experience, and to feed man with fables about his first production. You ask, how came man into existence? But it would be quite as philosophical to ask how the first tree, worm, or oyster, came into being.* All organised life arises from some energy in the affinities and motions of matter, that is altogether unknown to us, and which gives rise to vegetable and animal life; so that the production of man is nothing more wonderful than that of any shell fish. All generation is motion. But the rational probability is, that the various species of homo found on this globe, were always upon it; Nature propagating each upon that part of its surface that is congenial to the particular species; and that in the almost inconceivably slow process of the change, by which portions of the globe's surface become alternately sea and land, they migrated in succession, as old lands were wasted by the sea, and as new lands afforded asylums.

MOD.—Divines have long settled the question against you, that there is no specific difference in the human race, though they allow a great many *accidental* varie-

* "Let us view man when within the shell, and when out of it; let us take a microscope and examine the youngest embryos, those of the growth of four, six, eight, or fifteen days; after this age we may discover them with our naked eyes. Then we can perceive the head only, a round egg with two blackish specks, which represent the eyes. Before this time, all being unformed, we can see nothing but a pulp of marrow, which is the brain, where the original of the nerves is first formed, where the principle of feeling is first seated, and the heart, which begins already to beat in this soft pulp; this is the *punctum saliens* of Malpighi, part of the liveliness of which does, perhaps, already proceed from the influence of the nerves. Then we see the head by degree stretch for the neck, which being widened, first forms the thorax, where the heart immediately descends, and takes up its situation. The belly is framed next, which is divided into two parts by a partition, called by anatomists the diaphragm. These parts being expanded, furnish the arms, the hands, the fingers, the nails, and the hair; the other gives the thighs, the legs, the feet, etc., which form the support and balance of the body. All this is surprising, but not more so in man than in any other animal, or even in vegetation; the same luxury of Nature shines throughout."

ties ; but they declare upon Bible authority, that all these varieties sprung from a single pair—one original stock of mankind.

LUCIAN.—The absurd side of a question is the indisputable right of theology.* Wilful blindness or ignorant prejudice alone can raise a doubt, that the Whites, the Negroes, the Albinos, the Hottentots, the Chinese, and the native Americans, are altogether different species, under the genus homo. The white-skinned, bearded native of Northern Asia, could no more beget the copper-colored, beardless native of America, than a bull-dog could beget a fox ; the Negro of Africa, the Laplander ; the leopard, the lion ; the European, the Ethiopian ; the ass, the horse ; or an Esquimaux, a Hottentot. Therefore, when theology asserts that America *must* have been peopled from Asia, it is quite consistent with itself, that is, a tissue of glaring contradictions. When divines can show us how the oak and the ash got to America, and who carried over the dogs, cats, and hogs, the difficulty as to how man got there will be easily solved. Nature did there, as she has done everywhere else, in producing that species of the genus that is proper for the climate. But theology, in its *disinterested* cares for man, whose folly supports it, shows no kind regard about the migration of other animals, but is, on the contrary, their most deadly enemy ; inasmuch as the abominable doctrine that all of them were created solely for his use, has authorised those atrocious cruelties which we daily see exercised upon them.

MOD.—Your argument is, that in America, as everywhere else, Nature *always* produced the animals and plants that were proper for the climate and soil ; but according to your theory the surface of this globe is everlastingly undergoing changes, from the *motion* of the sea and other elements, which unceasing action is alternately making and reducing land ; so that the sea becomes the true creator or parent of the land. Now, if this be the case, the best criterion of the age of the

* The only proper definition of this word is—the science of priest-craft.

child will be its height above the parent ; consequently, as Asia has higher land than America, it must be older in its formation by the sea, and might, therefore, furnish the more recent continent with man and other animals.

LUCIAN.—That the sea, by its restless, mighty, and irresistible workings and creations, is the parent of all land, is a fact so demonstrable, from the proofs it has everywhere left behind it, that it is undisputed except by theology ; and though it may require many millions of years completely to alternate the surface of our globe, or to make those portions of it sea, which had been land, and *vice versa* ; yet that process and routine, though almost inconceivably slow, is nevertheless sure in endless succession. Man has no doubt migrated from land to land in the way you state ; but this would not affect the natural distinction of species, which, however much they may be crossed and mixed for a time, will assert and recur to their primitive distinction ultimately ; for Nature positively refuses to perpetuate, *within themselves*, any of the varieties. This is conclusive proof of the specific difference under the genus homo. Allowing that the height of land is the best criterion of its antiquity, America may by this rule dispute the palm with Asia, as the mountains of the former are nearly as high as those of the latter ; and, therefore, the theologian's assertion that the western hemisphere was peopled from Asia, may, with as much truth, be reversed. Whatever may be the respective age of these continents, it seems highly probable, if not certain, that the Andes of South America will be reduced to the fluid state, by the action of the sea and other elements, many hundred thousands of years before the Himmalaya mountains of Asia are levelled by these unsleeping powers ; for the former have now the great Pacific Ocean undermining their very foundations, whereas, the latter are still two thousand miles from the sea.

MOD.—The *time* required to bring about these and other changes which have relation to the celestial globes is so prodigious, that in giving it admittance we virtually set at nought not only all scripture authority,

but turn the extent of human chronology into something inconceivably less than a moment sand-glass. Yet it is quite agreeable to the opinion of a great authority among the ancients;—Ocellus Lucanus says: “The universe admitteth neither creation nor annihilation, for it ever was, and ever shall be; if any man should conceive it to have been made, he would not be able to know from what material it was made. Now, I call universal matter by the name of universe, which appellation it obtaineth in that it comprehendeth all things, being an absolute and perfect collection of all natures; and besides the universe there is nothing. Wherefore, there can be nothing without, or external to that which comprehends all things. After men and other animals finish the progress of their nature, and have passed their several ages, they die, and are dissolved, becoming in the same state they were; quo non nati jacent. There is no such thing as *quies in natura*, all things being in a perpetual circular motion. Nor hath man any original production from the earth, or elsewhere, as some have believed; but hath always been, as he now is, co-existent with the world, whereof he is a part. Nature and generation govern all things.”

LUCIAN.—Such were the opinions of nearly all the wise men of antiquity. Theology, in its ridiculous pretensions to knowledge about the origin of time, has utterly infatuated the minds of its dupes, by instilling false notions concerning it; and limiting, comparatively within the duration of a moment, the existence of the material universe! All discoveries in theology—every appearance in Nature, unite in exposing the absurdity of what is called the Mosaic account of time and creation. So exceeding slow is the resistless innovating progress of the sea, in changing the face of the globe, that millions of years must elapse before a total alteration of land and water takes place on its surface; but as the quantity of water can never immerse the whole, a certain portion of the surface must ever be land, in succession.* This alternate succession of land

* *Succession* no more implies a *beginning*, than it predicates an end.

and water is sure as fate, though imperceptible in the ephemeral life of man.

MOD.—This watery theory of yours seems not very objectionable ; but I can neither agree in the Mosaic account of the first man, nor in the opinion of Ocellus, who says, “he had no *original* production from the earth,” but was always upon it, his power of propagation existing in himself. Man is an animal so transcendent above all others in his intellectual organisation, and reasoning powers, as to warrant our inference that the supreme ruler of the world had some particular *design* in his production, such as giving him dominion over all others, none of whom are possessed of immortal souls, that distinguishing proof of excellence which is found in man alone.

LUCIAN.—You may perhaps be able to tell me in what part of him it is to be “*found*,” and what it consists of ; but until that is done demonstrably, Nature, experience, reason, and all analogy, will flatly deny that man is possessed of any immortal part that is not common to every other animal. Man is immortal and universal in his materiality alone ; as the matter which composes his body belongs to the immortal whole called Nature, or the infinite all-in-all ; and he is annihilable in his personal identity only. That which you call *design* in the production of man, the Materialists, we repeat, ascribe to the energies, adaptations, and affinities in matter, whereby all organic structure in Nature is effected. *We cannot trace the effects which these and other motions of matter produce, to anything above its own powers ;* and therefore the deceptive arrogance of the theologian, in pretending to look beyond these powers, has been pernicious in the highest degree, in preventing a more full development of Nature’s secret arcanum. The non-existence of the abstract *immaterial something*, which priests have set up as the supernatural ruler of the universe, is best demonstrated by all they have yet said of it—that *all* being downright contradiction.

The physical organisation of man is by no means superior to that of many other animals, except in his extraordinary allowance of brain, which, if cultivated for his advantage and happiness, would certainly set

him above most of the others, in intellectual qualities ; but hitherto these have been developed only to be perverted by a total departure from the laws of his nature, in everything wherein that happiness is concerned. Completely estranged at all points from the salutary paths which the mother of all things intended for his walks, he beggars himself in keeping hireling priests, who conjure up before his bewildered mind's-eye those chimerical nonentities which decoy him, like an ignis fatuus, madly to dance after them through life.

MOD.—With all your hostility to priests, you cannot do without them, as our laws and society are at present constructed : from your birth to the day of your death, the church has got something to do or say in every step you take of importance.

LUCIAN.—That is the chief evil afflicting society. There is hardly a bad law, custom, or institution amongst men, that has not been priest-procured in some age ancient or modern. They have not left even a vestige of the natural rights of women, and very few of those of men ; from the water sorcery called baptism, in infancy, to the funeral incantation of the priest, they are misled, abused, and cheated *systematically*, by the lawgiver and the theologian ; whilst every natural right is sacrificed on their altar of oppression. In room of the birthright liberties, of which man is thus robbed from childhood, supernatural excellencies (such as soul), and peculiar favors from a place called heaven, are falsely bestowed upon him, without which he cannot be sufficiently *donkified* to answer the purposes of priestcraft ; and the selfish and contemptible falsehood is palmed upon him, that the ruler of this ideal region ycleped heaven, created everything for his particular use and service. This stupid arrogance would be matchable only in the *vegetables* declaring that all *animals* were made for their sustenance.

MOD.—The pride of man will for ever prevent your convincing him that he is not the most favored creature of the Supreme Being, who has fitted him out with a soul, and given him such other qualities of mind and body, as show indisputably his vast superiority over the brute creation, to whom souls have

been refused. Your appeal to the miseries of his life, which are greater than those of any other animal, or even the frightful number of chances recorded by his priests against him, on the score of damnation, will not shake his belief in these preternatural distinctions in his favor. You complain that soul-saving in England and Ireland is too expensive; but by a late Transatlantic calculation, the average per head for saving heathen souls, in the Australian Archipelago, by the missionaries of the United States, costs the old women of both sexes, children, and fools of these States, the sum of £82 sterling. Now, reckoning the population of China and India at 450,000,000, which is nearly the half of all the human species on this globe, without including the ourang outang species of homo, in whom souls have not yet been *detected* (probably owing to their keeping no priests), the total expense of saving the whole, at the rate of £82 per soul, would cost the above description of persons among the Christian godly, the enormous sum of £36,900,000,000. We cannot for a moment suppose that these holy *disinterested* missionaries would charge a farthing above the *prime cost* in pursuing their "glorious work."

LUCIAN.—The grand support of missionaries abroad and of established priesthoods at home, is the female sex of Christendom, without whose sustaining zeal no one of all the great stocks of superstition which now infest the world would stand for another century. Whatever may be the origin or absurdity of any system of theology, set up in any country, the timidity of the female sex stimulates them generally to cling to it with fervor and devotedness, without the slightest examination. And while the priest "harrows up their souls" through the fears of his mysterious futurity, a subtle influence is exercised by them over the weaker and more uninformed portion of the male sex, whose apathy gives a tacit assent to the endless string of *inconceivables*, for the sake of domestic quiet. Here the double battery of the wife and priest is irresistible. A learned cleryman, in writing to a female friend, makes this remark:—"if, indeed, your sex should enter into the irreligious notions, which now prevail

too much among men, the next generation would be irrecoverably lost." This amounts to a plain confession that, should the priest lose his deep-rooted impulsive power over the female mind, his *trade* would be "irrecoverably lost." Women have been, in all ages and countries, the upholders of superstition, owing, in the first place, to their nature, which, according to Hippocrates, "is more weak and fearful than the nature and disposition of men"; secondly, to the delusive and mischievous theological dogma about the superintendence of what are called spiritual powers; to which may be added, the gaudy and imposing pomp of ceremonies; all of which, taken together, readily operate upon the female mind, it being, as it were, a softer and more pliant wax than that of man, to receive the unnatural impression of the priest. Before Christianity was known, Strabo made the following strong remark:—"It is a thing universally taken for granted, that women are the ringleaders of superstition; they tease their husbands into all sorts of worship of the gods, into the observation of feasts and fasts; but it is a rare thing that any man, leading a single life, is found to be such a person." I shall close my authorities on this subject, with a quotation from Selden. "When priests come into a family, they do as a man that would set fire to a house,—he does not put fire to the brick wall, but puts it into the thatch; *they work upon the women, and let the men alone.*"

THE END.

INDEX.

A.

	Page.
Aaron	12, 16
Abraham	11, 26, 27
—— and the three angels	25
—— story of, allegorical	26
Aden, or celestial garden	9
Adomah and Heva	9
Adonis, or Tammuz, allegory of	51
Agapæ, or love feasts of the Christians	127
Ahrimanes, principle of evil	6
Ahaz, dial of	17
Albert the Great, his admission	80
Allegory, Bible not to be otherwise explained	50, 52, 71, 81, 87, 95, 107, 125, 126
—— astro, the basis of all religions	125
Alexander the Great	27, 28
Alexandria, young men of, murdered	13
Ambrose, St.	84
America, United States of	142
Amphion and Joshua	18
Anastasius, Emperor, alters the four Gospels	43
Angels, names of, Chaldean and Persian	25
Antediluvians, long lives of	10
Anthony, St., and the fishes	131
Aries, or the Ram, sign of	7, 107
Aristotle	78
Ark of the Covenant	17
—— 50,070 people killed for peeping into	16
—— image of the Jewish deity carried in the	16
—— of Noah	10
Arnobius, his complaint	127
Arrian	99
Aristocracy, the monopolisers of land	112, 114
Ascensions into heaven	21, 89
Astro-theology of the Pagans, root of Christian dogmas	6, 71, 72
Astrology, the quackery of astronomy	92
Assyrians, miraculous slaughter of	20
Astronomy, veiled under allegory	50, 124
—— instruments of, in India	102

	Page.
Atheism, first Christians charged with it	127
— properly belongs to supernaturalists, and anthropomor- phists	x
— the only true	156
Athenians, famous Testament of	120, 121, 122
Augustine, St., allows the fall of man to be an allegory	9
— his veracity	69
Austria, Emperor of, wants no men of science	92

B.

Baal, or Bel, one of the names of Jehovah	6, 80
Babel, legend of	19, 81
Bacchus, prototype of Moses... ..	11, 14, 18
— one of the names of the sun	95
Balaam's ass, precedents in heathen mythology	19
Baptism of unknown antiquity	106, 107
Baronius, his testimony	55
Beausobre, his testimony	69
Begotten, definition concerning	85
Belief, or unbelief, no merit or demerit in either	152
Berosus	28
Bible false translations of	5
— Cosmogony	5, 188
— not to be literally understood	9, 31, 50, 71, 108, 149
— immorality of its precedents	28
— original meaning of, perverted	108
— compiled from astro-fables and traditions	50, 189
— allegorical of Nature's process	51
— of the Hindus	27, 74, 80
Blacks, once in possession of the sciences	98, 102
Blondel, his testimony	67
Brahma	27, 31
Brahminism, tricks of its priests	190
Buddhists of India	102
Burnet, Bishop	64, 68
Byron, Lord	76

C.

Cain, his mark... ..	101
Calf, Golden, obscene practice of playing before	16
Calmet, his testimony... ..	44
Calvin, his cruelty to Servetus	137
Capellus, his testimony	44
Casaubon, his testimony	68
Cause, first, supposition of, a principal cause of error	186
Cedrenus	7
Celsus	29, 39, 67, 79
Chaeremon, his testimony	72
Christna, or Chrisna	80, 99, 103
Christ, signification of the epithet	38, 41, 182

INDEX.

iii

	Page.
Christ, how glorified	37
— his second coming in Paul's lifetime	56
— how he became God	36
— his miracles unknown to contemporaries	41
— crucifixion of	97
— his ascension seen by no one	89
— a personification of the Sun... ..	49
— Jesus, New Testament account of, wholly allegorical ...	125
Christianity, originally Sun worship	85
— esoteric, known almost exclusively in the Papal conclave	vii
— corrupted by Platonic visions	36, 53, 73
— expense of, far exceeds that of Paganism	111, 191
— sprung from India, through Persia and Egypt	72, 89, 127, 182
— its terrible denunciations	139
— morality of, taken from Paganism	153
— its leagues with civil tyranny	146
Christians, the first, St. Barnabas' testimony of	64
— Ammianus Marcellinus' ditto	65
— not scrupulous in their morals	56
Christmas, a heathen festival, on the annual birth of the Sun	72
Circumcision, borrowed from the Egyptians	4
Conception, immaculate	86
— miraculous, numerous instances of... ..	81
Confucius, his ethics	153, 154
Constantine, Emperor, his numerous murders	70
— cause of his embracing Christianity	157
— died more a Pagan than a Christian	131
— decline of the empire commenced under him	132
— his edict	158
— his forged will	70
Cosmogony, Jewish, borrowed from the Persians	5
— Maimonides' opinion of	6
— Origen's opinion of... ..	6
— that of Sanchoniatho	5
Creation out of nothing, not sanctioned by the Bible ...	177
Cross, antiquity of, unknown	100, 101
— emblematic of different things	101
Crucifixions, or equinoctial crossings of the Sun	97
— three mentioned in the New Testament	94, 95
— in the sky	97, 101
Crusades, the	29
Cyril, St., his letter	34, 35

D.

Daniel, or Dom-el in the lion's den	88
David, the man after God's own heart	169, 170
Death, fear of	162
— Epicurus' opinion of	162
— Hesiod's ditto	162
— Pliny's ditto	162

	Page.
Decalogue, when written	24
Deity, admits of no fixed definition	176, 177
Descartes	186
Deucalion, his flood, the archetype of that of Noah	10
Devil, indispensable to priestcraft	145
Devils, legion of	47
Diderot	x
Diodorus Siculus	4, 28
Divine, its origin in Dii Vini, or Gods of wine	90
D'Holbach, Baron	171
Dramas, astronomical	49, 90, 92
Druidism, concealed sun worship	189
Druids, festivals of	72
— their education of youth	165

E.

Earth, has existed for millions of years	188
Eden, garden of	30
Egyptian plagues, or miracles, dramatical	12
Egypt, its antiquities	82
— priests of, baptised with air, etc.	107
Elephanta, temple of, and triune God	105
Elisha, his loaves	21
Elohim, or Gods, i.e., the seven planets and the Sun, the ancient Cabiri	5
Epicureans, their purity of morals	154
Equinoxes	101
Esdra, compiled the Jew books	24
Essenes, or monks	41, 51, 106
Ethiopia, its ancient extent	102
Eusebius, Bishop, his mode of writing history	64
— his pharmacopœia	54, 55
— his testimony about the Gospels	32, 41
— Baronius' opinion of	55
— notorious for forgery	64, 66
Evangelists, their correction by Anastasius	43
— entirely unknown to the five apostolic fathers	120, 121

F.

Fables, the basis of all religions	21
Fables, religious, mistaken allegories	21
Faith, definition of	109
Fall of man, an allegory of the constellation Bootes, and the Virgo	71
Fathers, early, saw through much allegory now regarded as literal truth	6
— their general character... ..	64, 70
— their hatred of Pagan authors and learning	67, 182, 183

INDEX.

V

	Page.
Fathers, early, their writings full of frauds	67, 68
—— the learned were materialists	156
Faustus, Bishop, his testimony	42
Fell, Bishop, his testimony	68
Festivals, Pagan, adopted in Christianity	71
Fiery Furnace, the three children in	88
Fire and smoke, pillars of	15
Floods, traditionary, anciently each country had its own ...	10
Fools, April	8
Freret, his description of religious massacres	133, 134

G.

Gemini, or the twins, sign of... ..	37
Geology	188
Ghost, holy, how he became a God	87
—— knew his own writings... ..	44
—— means the first genial winds of summer	36
—— an annual visitor in May	37
Ghost, holy, sin against the	37
God, the Jewish, of Egyptian extraction	4
—— lowered in character by connexion with Jews	11, 21
—— endowed with barbarous passions	180
—— requires no house	23
—— his thirty-two virgins	18
—— his miracles had Pagan prototypes	21
—— his many avocations	181
—— authorises murder, lying and swindling	11, 12, 171, 180
—— had no hand in the invention of eternal torments	35
—— his wills and testaments made by vote	32
—— why he did not revoke his old will	193
—— not reconcileable with universal power	180
—— adopted by Christianity	35
—— cannot be justified in immoral works	178
—— had no pretensions to omniscience, etc.	22
—— caricatured by his followers	23, 171
Gods of antiquity, black or white according to the color of their votaries	102
—— personifications of natural objects	88, 72, 73, 107, 124
God of Nature, or almighty matter in motion	8
Gospels, (tidings of light), first mentioned by Irenæus	42
—— different translations of	44
—— testimony of Origen concerning the	43
—— testimony of Scaliger, ditto... ..	47
—— existed in Egypt for ages before Tiberius... ..	82
—— historical blunders of	45, 91
—— contradict each other	91
Government, civil, cannot possibly be good, when leagued with theology	92, 145
—— good, would know nothing about it	141
Gregory Nazianzen, his confession	55

H.

Heaven, kingdom of	37
—— war in, borrowed of the Brahmins... ..	25
—— the atmosphere in the summer months... ..	21
Hell, descents into	21
—— definition of	21
Hercules	19
Hermaphrodite, of Genesis	8
Hermas, St., his confession in regard to truth	53
Herod, his infant massacre unknown to three Evangelists	40
Higgins, Godfrey	97, 98, 100, 103, 106, 170

I.

Ideas, innate	78
Immaterial existence, inconceivable... ..	176, 184
Incarnation, or Indian Avata... ..	7, 80
Indians, thirteen hung at a time, in honor of the thirteen Apostles	30
Infinite, there can be only one	3
Inquisition	141
Intelligence, the result of organisation	155
Irenæus, selected the four Gospels	42
—— his testimony about the books of the Old Testament	42
Israel, Abraham, and Saturn, identical	26
Isis, i.e., the annual regeneration of life, by the Sun	72

J.

Jablonski, his opinion of the crux ansata	101
Jahouh, a Theban God, adopted by Moses	4, 11
Jephtha's daughter, story of... ..	19
Jeroboam, his unhandy mistake	7, 8
Jerusalem	28
—— New	8, 68
Jesus, such a person might have lived	38
Jew books, when fabricated	13, 23
—— their exaggerations	11
—— wherefore fabricated... ..	24
Jews exceedingly barbarous	182, 183
—— never an independent nation	27
—— had no science	7
—— borrowed everything of their masters	50
Job, dramatic allegory of	49
Jonah and his fish, an imitation of the story of Hercules	20
Jones, Sir William	27, 80, 96, 98
Jortin, his testimony	67
Josephus, forgery upon	39, 66, 91
Josephus not to be trusted, when speaking of the Jews	14, 28
—— says nothing about the existence of Christ	39

INDEX.

vii

	Page.
Joshua, and the Sun and Moon	17
Justin, his testimony	11
— Martyr	69

K.

Koran	46, 161
--------------	---------

L.

Lamb of God, or the zodiacal Ram	7, 8
Las Casas	29
Laws, bad, generally priest-procured ... 59, 92, 145, 146,	192, 199
— ecclesiastical, ought not to be obeyed	167, 168
Lazarus, dramatic allegory of	48
Life, or organisation, a spontaneous process of nature ...	194, 198
— — adapted by nature for the climate in which it is produced	194
Lord, Glory of the	37
Lot's wife, story of, whence taken	15

M.

Macrobius	83
Mahommed and the mountain	46
— and the moon	166
Maimonides, his testimony	6
Man, the first, fable of, Persian origin	9
— many different species of	195
— mortgaged to the priest from birth	75, 165
— the slave of a succession of superstitions	140
— cause of his departure from his senses and reason ... 58,	197, 198
— debased by civil and theological tyranny	139
— how degraded below the other animals	147
— his dominion over them usurped	115
— superior to them only in some qualities	126
— has no reason till he gains it by experience	116
— governed through theological fables	183
— immortal in his materiality alone	198
— a caricature of what he ought to be	118
— has nothing to do with what is inconceivable	185
— viewed in embryo	194
— has the folly to look beyond nature	186
Manna, miracle of	14, 21
Manicheism, sun worship	79
Massacres, Christian	133
Materialism, the religion of the priests of antiquity	179
— not of easy attainment	184
— saying of Lalande respecting	8
Matter, the only infinite	3, 185
— its own modifier... ..	186
— and motion alone, constitute Nature	3, 185

	Page.
Matter, its intercirculation	187
— self-existent	177, 186
— immortal, mind alone mortal	198
Maurice, the Rev. Mr., his Indian antiquities	100, 105
Midianites, slaughter of	18, 30
Mind, of man, its perversions	167
Miracles, wrought by collusion	1, 2
— had Pagan prototypes	10
— a decisive argument against	2
— lying	31, 56
— the chief machinery of all impostors	1, 2
— evil tendency of	2
— not admitted by Pagan philosophers	3
Miriam, her leprosy and song	86, 89
Mithra, same as Christ	38, 79, 86, 106
Moor, his Hindu Pantheon	97, 100
Mosheim, his testimony to Christian forgery	55, 66, 177
Meses, supposed to be a priest of Isis	4
— his meekness	16
— same as Bacchus	11
— taught by the Egyptians	107
— his miracles	12, 14, 15
— his tavern squabble with God... ..	22
— leagued with his brother Aaron, in the affair of the calf	179
— his religion, whence borrowed... ..	4
— his account of creation	5
— caricatures of his deity... ..	23
Motion, essential to, and co-eternal with, matter	54, 185
Mythos, one universal solar	102, 149

N.

Napoleon	114
Nature, man knows nothing beyond	145
— has no antecedent	184
— religion of	108
— the guide of philosophy	175
— acknowledges nothing beyond her own powers	198
— priests, enemies of	56, 171
— physical powers of	4, 145
Nazianzen, St. Gregory	55
Noah	10

O.

Oannes, the preaching fish	7
Ocellus Lucanus, his opinion of the Universe	197
Origen, his opinions, etc.	6, 9, 89, 65, 90, 125
Oromazdes, the principle of good	6
Osiris	86, 100

INDEX.

ix

Page.

P.

Pagans, their writings, etc., destroyed	...	...	...	67, 133
Paine, Thomas...	...	...	...	vii, 24, 143
Pandora, her box	...	...	...	20
Paradise	...	...	...	6
Parkhurst	...	...	...	5
Pathros, or Pharos	...	...	...	13
Passover, or Equinoctial Cross	...	...	...	7
Paul, St., the real founder of modern Christianity	...	...	...	119
— his false predictions	...	...	...	31, 56
— his accusations of his followers	...	...	...	64
— confesses the use of veils and allegories	...	...	...	27
— had a smattering of the Pagan mysteries	...	...	...	122, 128
— his affirmation about Moses	...	...	...	52
— acknowledges two Gospels	...	...	...	123, 124
— his third heaven	...	...	...	129
— his astronomy in disguise, or "heavenly things"	...	...	...	123, 124
— his cunning and versatility	...	...	...	122
— his justification of lying	...	...	...	71
Pentateuch, when composed	...	...	...	13, 23, 24
— not written by Moses	...	...	...	11
Phæton, fable of	...	...	...	20
Philo Judæus	...	...	...	4, 6, 25, 72
Plato	...	...	...	8, 36, 74, 75
Pliny	...	...	...	40
Plutarch	...	...	...	72
Polytheism	...	...	...	2, 5
Porphyry	...	...	...	73
Priests, faithful to their own craft	...	...	...	43
— hired to defend deception	...	...	...	165
— pretend to look beyond Nature	...	...	...	192
— Egyptian, of Priapus, Bishops of Christ	...	...	...	123
— their cruelty	...	...	...	151
— the pests of the earth	...	...	...	145, 146
Priestcraft, perfected in India	...	...	...	189, 190
— immutability of its nature	...	...	...	60, 149
— circumscribes Nature herself	...	...	...	188
Priesthoods, Athenians had no established...	...	...	...	192
— cannot get on without their devil	...	...	...	145
— quartered upon industry	...	...	...	32, 33, 191
— disapproved by Mahommed...	...	...	...	161
— Christian, trickery of	...	...	...	34
Principles, personifications of	...	...	...	79
Principles, good and evil	...	...	...	79
Prometheus	...	...	...	96
Prophets, strolling, soothsayers, etc., etc.	...	...	...	31
Proteus, allegory of	...	...	...	187

Q.

Quakers, too wise and moral to keep a priesthood	...	...	161
Questions asked	...	...	60, 61

R.

Rabelais	...	...	...	...	16
Reason, the forbidden tree of priestcraft	...	...	...	...	9
Redeemer, applied to the Sun	...	...	...	...	78
Religions, propagated by imposters...	...	...	...	...	2
— those of the east sprung from planetary allegories	...	...	...	...	4
— supported by force, prove themselves false	...	...	...	...	191
— the greatest scourge of mankind	...	...	...	...	148
Religions, the identity of all...	...	...	...	...	103
Resurrections, heathen	...	...	...	...	21
— Christian	...	...	...	...	102
Retz, Cardinal	...	...	...	...	111
Revelation, how applied by the Pagans	...	...	...	...	53, 124
Revenues, clerical	...	...	...	...	191
Roman empire, subverted easily after it became Christian	...	...	...	...	130
— religion of	...	...	...	...	192
Rome, Church of	...	...	...	...	60

S.

Sabbath, signification of the word	...	...	...	...	38
Samson, same as Hercules,—the Sun	...	...	...	...	19
— his fox-tails, astronomical	...	...	...	...	19
Sapator, a Pagan priest, why murdered	...	...	...	...	70
Saturn, compared with Abraham	...	...	...	...	26
Savior, an epithet applied to the Sun	...	...	...	...	124
— and Mediator	...	...	...	...	86
Scaliger, his testimony	...	...	...	...	47
Sea, the parent of land	...	...	...	...	195
Seneca	...	...	...	...	40
Sex, female, the chief support of priestcraft	...	...	...	...	200, 201
Sin, original, borrowed from Pandora's box	...	...	...	...	20
Solomon, his harem	...	...	...	...	11
— his love song	...	...	...	...	169
Soul, whence derived	...	...	...	...	73
— saving, expense of	...	...	...	...	200
— immortality of, unknown to Moses	...	...	...	...	73
— denied by Job, David, and Solomon	...	...	...	...	73
— why disallowed to inferior animals	...	...	...	...	76, 199
— signifies merely the breath of life	...	...	...	...	78
Spaniards, found the machinery of Christianity in Mexico and Peru	...	...	...	...	101, 102
— their cruelties justified by the Bible	...	...	...	...	30
Sphinx, its color and antiquity	...	...	...	...	103
Spirit, or Ghost, definition of...	...	...	...	...	176
Spiritualism	...	...	...	...	177
Star in the East	...	...	...	...	40
Suicide, ancient and modern opinions concerning	...	...	...	...	163, 164, 165
Sun, the principle, or God of our system	...	...	...	...	53

INDEX.

xi

	Page.
Sun, personifications and names of	38, 49, 51
— adored as the Creator, Savior, etc.	38, 51
— astronomical births of, as Savior	79, 81, 83, 86, 87
— psalms, so many hymns to	50, 228
— the source of all that man can call good ...	37, 38, 51, 81
— preposterously said to be created after light	... .. 6
— and Moon, embargos laid upon	17
— exclamations to	38, 72
Sunday, its derivation	157
— observance of, contrary to the New Testament	... .. 158
— cause of idleness and profligacy	159
Supernaturalism, its delusions	34, 59, 111, 149
Superstition	151, 154
<i>Supernatural</i> , falsely substituted for <i>subnatural</i> , by theologians...	108
Syria, petty Gods of	23

T.

Talleyrand, his letter to the Pope	14, 91
Taurus, or the Bull, sign of	16, 179
Testament of God, old	31
— new, how made up by vote	31, 32, 34, 42, 71, 119
Theology, definition of	195
— pretends to look beyond Nature	198
— its morals peculiar to itself... ..	180, 181
— its baneful effects	59, 114, 115, 117, 186
— called by Hobbes the Kingdom of Darkness	... .. 160
— the greatest scourge of man	x
— sets bounds to time and the material universe	... .. 187
— an enemy to Nature	60
Therapeutæ, or Egyptian monks	51
— supplied matter for the New Testament ...	... .. 41
— testimony of Eusebius concerning	41
— Pagan	129
Tithes, numerous proofs of their being originally alms	... .. 193
Tongues, gift of	37
— cloven	123
Tonstal, Bishop, saying of	120
Translations, false	5, 21, 44, 49, 109
Trinity, Christian, imitated from the heathens	... .. 53
Trinity, ridiculously perverted	53
— allegorised	52
— unknown to the Jews	106
— of Nature	54, 105, 187
— Pagan	53, 105

V.

Vacuum, impossible, either in nature or art ...	... .. 185
Vanini	136
Virgo, sign of ... ..	... 9, 71, 72, 86

	Page.
Virgin Mary, worshipped as God's mother ...	34
Virgin Mary and child, numerous fables of ...	80, 83
———— numerous proofs that both were imported black ...	103, 104, 190
Volney ...	81

W.

Whitsuntide, festival of ...	37
Wine-press, blood of ...	96
Witchcraft, twin sister to priestcraft ...	150
———— one of the curses of supernaturalism ...	152
———— John Wesley's belief in ...	151
Women, easily led by priests, according to Strabo and Selden ...	201
———— the great support of all superstitions ...	200, 201

Z.

Zacharias, historical anachronism of ...	46
Zendavesta, or Persian Bible... ..	80
Zodiac, signs of ...	81, 87, 88
———— of India and Egypt ...	87
———— always supplied Gods for the ignorant ...	16
———— Zoroaster ...	87

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