

THE  
FAITHS, FACTS, AND FRAUDS  
OF  
RELIGIOUS HISTORY.

A TREATISE IN TEN SECTIONS.

BY

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## LIST OF AUTHORITIES QUOTED IN THIS VOLUME.

Mons. Dupuis, Father Kircher, Mr. Bryant, Godfrey Higgins, General Hitchcock, J. F. Stewart, Count Volney, Rev. Robert Taylor, Mons. Baillie, Sir Wm. Jones, Messrs. Vale, Colebrooke, Kersey Graves, Middleton, Revs. W. Maurice and Faber, Bishops Faustus and Fell, Ovid, Berosus, Manetho, Mrs. L. M. Child, Basnage, Grotius, Gibbon, MM. Denon, Daillee, Cassini, Colonel Wilsford, Humboldt, and Forbes.

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## WORKS OF UNCERTAIN AUTHORSHIP REFERRED TO.

The Bible, Yu King, Creed of Boudha Sakia, Orphic Verses, Golden Verses of Pythagoras, Hindoo Vedas, Maxims of Confucius, Asiatic Researches.

## INTRODUCTORY.

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A FEW words will suffice to introduce the following pages to the attention of the reader.

When first their author went to Australia, some ten years since, it was her intention to give a course of lectures solely on the facts and phenomena of the great new spiritualistic movement of the nineteenth century. After a certain number of opening addresses, based on the above-named plan, had been delivered, the audience—according to custom—were called upon to select their own subjects, when it became apparent that the majority of those present on each occasion were bent on the discussion of theological problems, especially in relation to the enormous claims of Christian Hierarchies, and the fundamental principles of truth involved in religious institutions.

Prompted by the obvious tendency of popular feeling, the author's lectures were gradually directed towards analytical researches into the origin of religious beliefs, their nature and use to mankind, their authenticity, and the evidences which ecclesiasticism could, or could not bring, to prove its right to dominate over the human mind. The propositions thus called forth necessarily involved many startling and revolutionary assertions, and as the limit of extemporaneous addresses scarcely permitted the quotation of numerous authoritative witnesses, the author realized the duty of providing for her many trusting listeners, some compendious and accessible definitions of the chief points contained in her theological lectures, together with such a mass of corroborative testimony, and references to acknowledged authorities, as would place the means of verification at each reader's command.

Mrs. Britten is already in possession of an immense array of curious and recondite memoranda on this subject, furnished to her by the erudite author of "Art Magic," but as this storehouse of information was not accessible during her Australian tour, and its publication required much time and leisure to prepare, it was deemed best to put forth a small but thoroughly analytical digest of the subjects under consideration. Why the writer has so constantly given the words and opinions of far more undeniable authorities than herself, is a fact that need scarcely be commented upon.

As far as possible, the most available means of referring to the authors quoted from, have been clearly pointed out, and although but a tithe of the matter worthy of the true Free-thinker's study has been touched upon, the author feels confident that the sum of what has already been given, will suffice to point the way to the realization of purer FAITHS, and more enduring FACTS, than religious history can ever furnish to mankind, under the specious garb of clerical authority, and the tremendous shroud of that mystery which is the stronghold of priestly FRAUD and ecclesiastical imposture.

Since the first issue of this small and unpretending work, any number of essays, lectures, tracts, pamphlets, &c., &c., have been printed, treating of the same subjects as those dealt with in these pages. The largest, most elaborate, and exhaustive treatise lately published on the origin of all religious—or, we should say, *theological*, subjects—has been that written by Gerald Massey, in his learned work on "THE BEGINNINGS." As this immense literary production has been necessarily very costly, Mr. Massey has epitomized his views in different lectures published at one shilling each, and obtainable from the author. There are many minor works on the same subjects—as suggested above—but that which impels us to add these remarks to our own treatise is the mode in which such researches as Mr. Massey's and those of other *anti*-Christian writers have been treated, and that—we are

ashamed to acknowledge—not unfrequently by Spiritualists themselves, a class of thinkers whose sole aim should be to promote the truth, and never make compromise between that truth, however unpopular, and sectarian beliefs, however popular. Taken upon general grounds, the objectors (like a certain Right Reverend Bishop, allusion to whom will be found in our treatise) can scarcely have the audacity to say, “Your statements are all false;” but they either shuffle out of the difficulty by abuse, denunciation, complaints that they *love their Saviour, and cannot endure to have Him taken away*, or else they loudly affirm that our authorities are “not reliable.”

Gerald Massey indeed—whose writings cannot be dealt with by denial or refutation—has been literally pelted with abuse, and one well-known American critic has deemed the whole matter settled by calling this erudite and profound scholar “ignoramus,” blunderer, and other terms as meaningless when addressed to Gerald Massey as they are discreditable to those who use them.

Nevertheless, this is the favourite mode in which all authorities who prove too much are treated. When first this little treatise was issued, bigoted sectarians who could not otherwise answer the tremendous and damaging statements that the work contained, had the hardihood to aver that Volney, Dupuis, Higgins, Sir William Jones, Maurice, Colebrooke, and the hosts of learned authorities quoted in our volume, and catalogued at the beginning of this treatise, “were not reliable!” To such commentators we can offer no other remark than silence, following out the old but significant Biblical recommendation—“not to cast pearls before swine.”

As a proof how far the zeal of sect and bigotry will prevail over devotion and TRUTH (the only real word of God), we have lately received an assurance from one who professes to *know*, that Celsus, the great opponent to Christianity in the earliest period of its establishment—Celsus, a learned Greek and profound scholar, writing even in the second century, was *not*

*reliable*; whilst old Origen, attempting to answer and refute Celsus's arguments years after his death, *was reliable*—a statement that none but a devoted and very poorly-informed Christian would venture to make. In the face of such a spirit and such modes of criticism we are perfectly well prepared to hear all the profound and thoroughly authoritative writers we have quoted, pronounced “unreliable,” or placed in the same category as Gerald Massey, and labelled “blunderers, ignoramuses,” &c., &c.

When a Christian Bishop, who should be the interpreter of God's truth to the people, can be found to acknowledge that all the nations of antiquity had their God-men, their Messiahs, their crucified Saviours, born of pure virgins, &c., and that, long before the advent of the Jewish Messiah—but that all the antecedent ones were *myths*, or merely forerunners of the Christian one, and the last of them all—the Jewish Saviour—*was the only true one!* who can expect the followers of such teachers to be any wiser or more truthful than their appointed mouth-piece and leader? Truly is this now as of olden time, “the blind leading the blind!”

And thus, accustomed as we are to the last desperate resort of the bigot, namely, an attempt to discredit the authorities he cannot refute, we have only to add, let such adversaries say their worst; let them hold their forlorn hope as long as an unreflecting public will let them. We hereby anticipate, but shall not farther notice them. Our assurance, is that, the truth WILL prevail, though all the world should unite to crush it, for—

Ever the truth comes uppermost,  
And ever is justice done.

# THE FAITHS, FACTS, AND FRAUDS OF RELIGIOUS HISTORY.

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## SECTION I.

### NATURAL AND REVEALED RELIGION.

*“The truth against the world.”*

THE principal aim of the following pages is to trace out the primal source from whence have been derived the various systems of theology which divide up mankind into votaries of many conflicting faiths.

That all the diverging lines of religious opinion on earth have proceeded from a common centre there is ample testimony to show ; and when we remember the awful sacrifice of life, liberty, human happiness, and human brotherhood, which those divergencies have occasioned, and the enormous cost of wealth, time, and talent which their maintenance now involves, we can scarcely over-estimate the importance of any discoveries which might tend to pulverize the cruel lines of sectarian demarcation, or calculate the illimitable benefits which might accrue to the race, from building up a religious system whose only foundation stones were divine truth and practical good.

The first questions which naturally arise in this connection are—What is religion? What is its special sphere of influence, and from whence does its authority proceed? To these preliminary queries we answer, that there is in humanity a natural, original, and indestructible sense of religion, which blossoms out

into faith in Deity, immortality, and the laws of right, just as normally as affection, intellect, or any other of the soul's faculties.

Natural religion then—or that original spiritual sense which antedates the existence of all creedal faiths, and will pulsate through the life-currents of humanity when sectarian beliefs are blotted out from remembrance—may be defined as the belief in a Supreme Being, the knowledge of the soul's immortality, and the recognition of human duties and responsibilities.

Viewed from the standpoint of its origin in human nature, religion is, or should be, the crowning attribute and sum of all knowledge.

The birth chamber and the death chamber are the two portals through which every human being must pass. Whence and whitherward? These are the inevitable queries which every thinking mind must propound, as it reflects upon the stupendous mystery which enshrouds life's gates of entrance and exit. But besides these incentives to human speculation, all through the pilgrimage by which humanity wins its way between the two eternities, there is a viewless angel ever hovering at each one's side, whose voice, though differing in tone and intensity with the varieties which mark the race, is still heard and recognized by all. Men have agreed to call this unknown one CONSCIENCE, and in accordance with the acute or blunted perceptions of the listener, so does this angelic monitor remind each one of his departure from, or obedience to, the laws of right. There is no need to inquire what these laws are. Consciousness is the handmaid of conscience, and she never fails to write such a decalogue of right and wrong, as time and place permit, upon those soul tablets, which all human beings carry within them. To explain the awful mysteries of the "whence and whitherward," to stimu-

late human consciousness to a sense of right and wrong, and awake the soul to the monitions of conscience, are the special functions of religious systems ; and no religion, or rather form of religious faith, can claim the right to dominate over the human soul, that does not exercise its influence in these special directions.

Our affections, intellects, and appetites are all regulated and unfolded by appropriate methods of culture. Society enacts laws for the promotion of national interests, and courts of judicature to protect the rights of individuals. It is essentially the function of religion then to administer to man's spiritual nature, and promote all those stupendous interests which affect the soul here and hereafter. No other department of human thought can supersede the influence of true religion, or match the boundless range of its responsibilities. Religion is emphatically the science of life, and the only solution which life past, present, or future can find of all its mighty problems.

As religion is the highest element of life, and the highest form of civilization should represent the noblest phase of religion, it is to Christianity, as the faith professed amongst the most advanced of earth's nationalities, that the world has the *right* to look, to find the most perfect results of religious influence upon human conduct.

But, in addition to this, if we assume that religious progress keeps pace with the march of mind in every other direction, and remember that the representative Christianity of to-day is the culmination of nearly 2,000 years of persistent experiment, we have the right to expect that it will manifest itself, as an example to the whole human family, of all that is most excellent in practice and most truthful in doctrine.

It must be remarked, however, that the faith thus professed

by the highest of civilized nations bears no relation to the primordial and instinctive sentiment in humanity, before described as "natural religion." On the contrary, Christianity does not admit of any instinctive origin in the consciousness of man. It does not antedate other forms of creedal faith ; in fact, with the single exception of Mahometanism, it is the last and most modern of all theological systems. So far from its source existing in the efflorescence of soul growth, it claims for itself a distinct revelation ; a revelation totally outside of human experience, knowledge, judgment, or the known laws of nature ; made in a comparatively recent period of the earth's history, to a very limited number of the human family ; and that, under conditions which the natural emotions and reasoning faculties of the soul would inevitably revolt from.

Again ; Christianity claims as its revelator the direct agency of a Being, of whom the finite mind cannot have the faintest conception—even the Infinite and Eternal Author of the Universe *in propria personâ*. And this revelation is not supposed to be made by any impression or spiritual agency common to human experience in general, but by special procedures, subversive of all the known laws of nature, and under such conditions as render the possibility of testing the truth of the allegations thus put forth impossible.

To render this position still more impregnable, all attempts at enquiry are stifled, under the assumption that the majesty of God is impugned by any research into, or doubt of, His "incomprehensible ways ;" that the men who claim to be the sole interpreters of His sublime mysteries are invested with full power to punish, torture, or even kill all who dare to question whatever they choose to allege in their God's name ; and in an age when the laws of nations intervene to protect human beings

against such summary methods of treatment, mankind are scared into silence and subjection by threats of still more horrible torments extending through all eternity. "Believe or die!" has been the motto of the highest form of theological faith, amongst the highest forms of civilization, during the first seventeen hundred years of its domination. That cry is changed now to—"Believe, or be tabooed in this world, and damned to all eternity in the next!" How much mankind are gainers by the change, the spirit of the age is rapidly demonstrating.

Now, the claims above referred to are so enormous that if they stood alone, and were pressed on the world's acceptance as the special assumptions of any one sect, they would infallibly be rejected as the utterances of raving lunacy or audacious blasphemy; but just at the very point when mankind—aroused from its dream of blind superstition by the clarion trump of intellectual progress—prepares itself to apply the gauge of science and reason to the monstrous affirmations of ecclesiasticism, modern research steps in and brings to light correlated systems of belief, streaming up in full tide from the remotest periods of antiquity, and all tending in converging lines towards that point, in time and place, where Christianity enters upon the scene and absorbs all former revelations, in the impossible assumption of being their *original* founder!

Granted that modern discoveries, by disinterring the tombs of ancient faiths, entirely strip Christianity of her arrogant claim to divine favour, through an original and special revelation; the problematical question still remains as to whence arose the primeval ideas upon which all theological systems are founded? To remove the source from Judea to Egypt, and from thence back to ancient India, or even to trace its threads of ideality to the still more antique conceptions of the wandering Aryan, is only

to complicate the difficulty, and shift the ground plan, without explaining the significance of the primal legend. Why, then, do we fear to advance to the mysterious shrine wherein the veiled "Demiurgus" sits enthroned, and boldly question its nature, personality, and right to rule?

In this inquisition we have nothing to fear for true religion, which, as an inherent part of human nature, will live or die only with its author. The destruction of external forms cannot touch the deathless soul, nor annihilate that natural religion, which is the soul's voice, witness, and interpreter.

Neither has humanity aught to lose, were the very cornerstone of ecclesiasticism to crumble away into the shifting sands from which it was formed.

As for Christianity—the apex of ecclesiastical power and pride—what loss would accrue to humanity in her downfall?

The ghosts of ancient faiths arise to convict her of audacious plagiarism, and the vanished generations of eighteen centuries return to accuse her of overwhelming the earth with oceans of blood and tears.

She adds nothing to the science of true religion, for she throws no light on the solemn problems of life, death, or Deity.

She elucidates no mysteries of nature, explains no causes in harmony with science, no effects that tend to the world's improvement or instruction, and she would leave the race now, as deeply steeped in sin, sorrow, violence, and wrong, as she found it, eighteen centuries ago.

As for the brand of "Infidel," which she imprints on all who presume to question her impossible assertions, or the bugbear of eternal torment with which she has been accustomed to stifle the arguments of her antagonists, the thinking portion of the race is beginning to rank them in the same category with the promis-

sory notes which she issues, payable in the banks of a heavenly kingdom, which no sane man would desire to inherit.

But even if these many defalcations did not form a sufficient inducement to urge forward the enquiry into the sources and authenticity of ecclesiastical pretensions, the best interests of justice, reason, common sense, and true religion, demand from the age an analysis as searching for the discovery of truth, as for the exposure of fraud and error ; for the restoration of pure religion and undefiled, to a suffering and ignorant age, as for the dethronement of blind superstition and expensive idolatry. Let us enter upon that analysis fearlessly then, and, convinced that there is no truth that need fear the light, and no error that can long endure it, commence the noble warfare for truth by considering the relations between religion and religious systems, spiritual light and ecclesiastical darkness.

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## SECTION II.

### OF THE SABEAN SYSTEM, OR THE ASTRONOMICAL RELIGION.

PASSING over all the ramifications of opinion into which Sectarianism has broken up the distinctive faiths of history, we find we may resolve the latter into six well-defined groups or representative phases of religious thought, the nomenclature of which runs thus :—Brahminism, Buddhism, Parseeism, Judaism, Polytheism, and Christianity. Mahometanism of course adds a seventh to the list ; but as this form of faith stands alone, neither borrowing from, or imparting aught to, other systems, it needs no special notice here. The fairly informed student of religious history need not be reminded that there are certain

marked features pervading all the six systems enumerated above constantly repeating themselves, with no other shadow of variety than may be expected to result from differences in time, climate, customs, and language.

They all combine in teaching the fall of man, or his derivation from some pre-existent and higher state of being than that of earth, as it is known in historical times.

All preserve, more or less, the legend of a general flood, and predict the final destruction of the earth by fire. All cherish faith in one Supreme Being and hierarchies of subordinate spiritual existences.

The belief in the soul's immortality and (with certain sectarian modification) faith in conditions of happiness or misery hereafter, are also items of universal acceptance. All subdivisions of religionists supplement their doctrines with codes of morals for the conduct of humanity, and enjoin upon their followers religious observances in the form of sacraments, sacred days, places, garments, and other consecrated objects.

They all set apart certain persons, who form a priestly order, teach the efficacy of rites and ceremonials, and assume to found their special form of faith upon special revelations from divine sources. The most curious and important feature of universal belief however, is yet to be noticed, and this is, that all shades of Sectarian religionists, except the Jews, whether ancient or modern, set up for worship one central figure, whom they claim to be at once God and man, adoring him with even more lavish reverence than they accord to the Deity, yet claiming that He was the subject of human birth, death, persecution, and martyrdom whilst on earth.

And the mystery attendant on such a subject of worship deepens, when we trace out the main features of the history

woven around this God-man, and find, that though each people insist upon presenting a different personality, all however removed from each other in point of time or locality, maintain certain coincident points of similarity, for which no other account can be rendered than the fact of their origin being derived from one common source. For example : all nations, from the most ancient Hindoos to the comparatively modern Christians inculcate belief in an incarnate God-man, born of the Supreme Being, through the maternity of a woman. The mother in nearly every case is represented as a pure virgin, and all the attendant circumstances are more or less miraculous.

The birthday of the Avatar is invariably fixed at mid-winter, and the decease at spring or autumn. A royal descent is in some mysterious way claimed, and a prophecy that the sovereignty of the earth is to be assigned to the new-born babe, is represented as exciting the jealousy of some reigning Tyrant by whom the Virgin Mother is persecuted. There is also a putative father introduced, who is represented as submitting complaisantly enough to the divine intrigue, which makes his betrothed the mother of a God. By aid of this obliging spouse, the infant is always sheltered in obscurity until a certain period, when, after a miraculous infancy and boyhood, he issues forth to assume the prophetic mantle, with all the paraphernalia of fastings, baptisms, and other such divine signatures of favour as may be common to the country and time.

Then succeeds a chain of miraculous performances, many of which bear the most striking resemblance to each other whenever detailed.

The God-man is invariably a moral teacher, and a reformer of the prevailing abuses of the time. The same mysterious similarity prevails in the doctrines enunciated, whether they come in

the name of Buddha, Mithra, Zoroaster, Krishna, Prometheus, Balder, Hesus, Osiris, or Christ. All are protests against the prevailing corruptions of the age, and enunciations of those divine principles of good, which vary not with time, and are never peculiar to place or nationality.

Then follows the last act of the drama, which is the invariable triumph of adverse powers: a violent death—*generally a crucifixion*—the proclamation that the martyrdom in question is designed for the benefit of the race; a descent into hell, or the nethermost parts of the earth, to show that divine mercy compassionates even the most degraded spirits in being; a short season of lamentation, always carried on by faithful women and mourning disciples; the whole followed by a resurrection from the dead, a triumphant ascent into heaven, and the installment of the miracle-working Mediator as the future “Judge of the dead,” and the “Saviour of men.” These are the main points upon which all theologies, without exception, are founded; and though we admit there must necessarily be certain modifications in the presentation of this grand drama, growing out of the varieties of time and place which distinguish the religions of different nations, the essential features of the scheme (that is, the fundamental ideas above narrated) are invariably coincident, and never fail to re-appear.

It may be urged that we can have no means of delincating the faiths of nations whose scriptures have perished, and that when we simply reiterate the legendary opinions that time perpetuates, we may be liable to colour the prevailing tradition by our own prepossessions.

To this we reply, that for the thorough understanding of antique lore, we have three methods of interpretation, the combinations of which are quite as authentic as written history.

The first of these we obtain in a study of the Monuments, with which the entire of the East is overlaid; the second in the science of philology, which, by connecting modern tongues with their roots, or affiliations in ancient languages, forms a chain of relationship between present and past modes of expression; and the third, either by the traditions of the past or the preservation of ancient faiths in modern systems of religious beliefs—together with their symbols, modes of expression, and ceremonials of worship.

Thus the very limitations which hindered the ancients from bequeathing written scriptures to posterity, impelled them to engrave their ideas upon the far more enduring pages of stone, enabling us to derive from the sculptured remains which convert the land of the Orient into one grand, imperishable volume, a means of testimony far transcending any written scriptures in worth and authenticity.

Writings may be lost, interpolated, or tampered with in many ways. Whole libraries of polemical literature have been wilfully destroyed, or wilfully fabricated, for the purpose of maintaining a favourite point of doctrine, or confuting an adversary; but the old Temple voices of antiquity CANNOT LIE, and the mute but eloquent testimony of stony preachers, whose witness dates back through immemorial ages, proclaims, without fear or favour, revelations which Inquisitions cannot burn or torture into silence, nor the reckless mendacity of partisan bigotry misrepresent. The venerable slabs, planispheres, and ruins of Nineveh, the Zodiacs, Pyramids, the tombs of Egypt, the stupendous Cave Temples of India, together with all the colossal remains and gorgeous mementos of vanished splendour, marred, yet not obliterated, which combine to bear indestructible witness to the faith of ages, and cover the earth, wherever the footprints of civilization have

left their mark—form, in their totality, a bible, the revelations of which are becoming household words amongst the people, in this intellectual and progressive age ; revelations which no priest can ban out of existence, and no bigot can longer stifle.

It is from such sources as these, as well as by consulting the scriptures of all nations, instead of one alone, that we are enabled to re-construct the scheme, upon which—as we shall hereafter perceive—the entire of the world-wide systems of theology have been upreared.

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### SECTION III.

#### CONTINUATION OF THE SABEAN SYSTEM, OR THE ASTRONOMICAL RELIGION.

THE learned and authoritative writers who have contributed to elucidate the principles of the famous astronomical religion, may now be numbered by the score, and any one of them would afford us ample testimony to the truths of which we are about to present a brief abstract to our readers. One of the most voluminous and profound of these writers, Gerald Massey, has extended the record of his researches into such vast proportions that they are accessible only to the student or man of leisure and letters, and a large number of other modern writers draw more or less from those inexhaustible fountains of knowledge, supplied by the learned Dupuis in his magnificent twelve-volume work—*L'Origin de tous les Cultes*, or “The Origin of all Religious Worship,” so we cannot do better than open our case by presenting the reader with such excerpts from the last named author’s work as will lay down in concise terms, and in an almost literal translation from the French, the scheme of which M. Dupuis has given such elaborate details.

Our excerpts will be drawn from many different portions of the original, as we could not possibly obtain a connected idea of the author's views in such a consecutive extract as any single volume would furnish.

In the opening chapters it is said—

“Ancient civilization extended over a great part of Asia, a portion of Africa, and parts of Europe.

“The Greeks and Romans, whom we sometimes call the ancients, knew less of the antique civilization of Egypt, India, Asia Minor, and other Eastern lands than we do, for we learn nothing from them on these subjects, whilst our modern researches are adding to our stock of knowledge on ancient civilization every day. . . .

“There are marks of a high civilization existing throughout India, Egypt, and Asia Minor, at periods far beyond our means of calculation ; but, starting from an era which we may assuredly fix at five thousand years ago, we find established beliefs and customs prevailing, whose origin must have antedated that epoch by many centuries at least. . . .

“Throughout the entire of the lands of the East, including Hindostan, Egypt, Arabia proper, &c., &c., are traces of that form of antique worship, called indifferently Sabeanism, Fire worship, Solar worship, the Astronomical system, and by Christians designated by the general terms of ‘Paganism’ or ‘Heathenism.’ The truth is, one and the same system prevailed everywhere ; and, dating back from three or four thousand years before the Christian era, it seems to have been more concrete and uniform than in later times, when the scattering abroad of many ancient dynasties tended to introduce new ideas, and modify old ones, so that it would seem as if the later nations had not received, or had departed from, the old doctrine ; but that this was not the case, our finest monuments in the older nations of India, Assyria, and Egypt, do abundantly prove.”

In the third volume of his great work, M. Dupuis gives a very extended list of the nations amongst whom the Sabean system prevailed, marking especially the differences which arose, as he judiciously infers, from local or chronological changes ; but as

the pursuance of his exactitude of style would necessitate a mass of quotation which would far surpass the limits of this treatise, we must substitute the term "the ancients," as a general synonym for the numerous Eastern nations to whom he refers. With this single change in the manner of quotation, we proceed :—

"The ancients worshipped the powers of nature either directly or as leading to a superior invisible, and all-pervading Godhead—the assumed governor, of the universe. . . . That the priests of Chaldea, Babylonia, Hindostan, Egypt, and Sidonia, disclaimed any actual worship of the things seen—or the visible order of the universe—we have over and over again shown ; but they taught, as did the later Greeks and Romans, that these visible signs—such as sun, moon, and stars—were necessary objects for the vulgar to contemplate, as by them they could realize a specific idea which was represented in their motions. The fact that the true religion of the Sabeans was always celebrated by the priests in MYSTERIES, is confirmed by Cicero, Plato, Pythagoras, and the Brahmins, who all allege that the priests taught of the soul or spiritual part of the universe in *mysteries*, but through images, idols, and visible signs to the people.

"The earliest nations of the earth were chiefly employed in agriculture, and, to promote the better understanding of the seasons, to discover which were the fitting times to sow, plant, gather in, &c., the study of the stars—as the rulers or governors of the seasons—became a most necessary branch of science. It was obvious to the ancients, as to ourselves, that the sun—as the source of heat—must be the lord of life and the author of all that exists on the earth's surface. His light-giving beams, moreover, were acknowledged then, as now, to be the principle of revelation from which we derive all knowledge and all truth ; hence the corner stone of the ancient worship was the sun or rather that spiritual principle displayed in the sun's influence upon earth. The ancients, as I have sufficiently explained, taught these ideas in esoteric or spiritual doctrines for the priests, and exoteric or visible systems of worship for the people. . . .

"The variations in the seasons were not attributed to the changes occasioned by the earth's rotation, of which, as I have

before shown, the ancients were generally (though not in all instances) ignorant. Deeming that these perplexing variations were owing to the course of the sun through different portions of the heavens, it naturally came to be thought that the stars, or lesser lights, which strewed the plane of the heavens, must be in some way influential upon the benign influence of the solar ray. The ancients—destitute of our resources for converting all seasons into benefit—could not comprehend the necessity of winter, and only realized its rule as one of famine, desolation, and evil. Their flocks and herds, their fields and crops, were cut off, blighted, and destroyed; and when, in addition to atmospheric influences, fierce storms, earthquakes, cyclones, and all the awful paraphernalia of tempestuous forces prevailed on earth, people who attributed every phenomenon of nature to the direct action of invisible, powerful, and unknown intelligences, naturally enough supposed these sources of evil must proceed from powers antagonistic to the benign and gracious sun.”

Following out these leading ideas, M. Dupuis goes on to show how the ancients first set apart their wisest and most learned men to study the heavens, discover the modes of motion prevailing throughout the starry hosts, reduce those discoveries to order, and evolve thence a chart of the sidereal heavens, from which accurate knowledge might be obtained concerning the seasons, their various changes, the good or evil influences to be expected on earth, and the best means of propitiating the unknown but terrible potentates who divided the hemispheres amongst them, and marshalled their alternating forces of astral light, in the tremendous and unceasing war of day and night, summer and winter, and—from an assumed moral correspondence with the physical universe—good and evil, malign and benign influences, upon the helpless inhabitants of earth.

Father Kirchen, the learned Jesuit and Egyptologist; Mr. Bryant, the voluminous author of “Eastern Antiquities,” &c.; and Godfrey Higgins, a still more voluminous writer on these

subjects; General Hitchcock and J. F. Stewart, American writers of no mean celebrity; Mons. Volney, the renowned author of "The Ruins;" the Rev. Robert Taylor, in his astro-theological lectures, and many other eminent writers on kindred subjects, have described in detail the principles of the celebrated Sabeian system, and shown how obviously they might have originated in most ancient times, when men were compelled to pursue astronomical studies for the sake of guiding and directing the activities of agriculture.

The advances which the ancients achieved in both these branches of knowledge, are too well known and too thoroughly demonstrated by Oriental remains, to need further comment.

We again invite our readers to follow out the investigations of M. Dupuis. He says:—

"The path of the sun was traced out by the ancients as marking on the heavens an imaginary wavy line called the ecliptic, hence the sun (assumed to be the traveller rather than the earth) crossed the equator at two distinct points, and at the two distinct seasons of the spring and autumn equinoxes. The ancient planispheres and zodiacs are often found with the lines of the equator and ecliptic correctly defined, and the equatorial circle divided up into the then recognized 360 degrees. The ancient astronomers based their system on the recognition that the sun, following the wavy line of the ecliptic in the northern hemisphere, dispensed the full force of his light and heat in the beneficent influence of summer, but after crossing the equator at the autumnal equinox, and sinking into the southern hemisphere, he became subject to the adverse powers and malignant influences of winter. These primary divisions of the solar year into summer and winter, formed the first grand act of the Astral drama, evolved from the impersonation of the solar hero into the god of the earth. Subsequently, the two main divisions of the year were subdivided into the four seasons, when it became necessary to impersonate the spring and autumn months as heralds of the opposing powers of summer and winter. The belief that the stars or lesser lights were the symbols of subordi-

nate intelligences or angelic hierarchies, whose influence upon the sun was potential for good or evil, caused the ancient astronomers to map out the heavens into groups or constellations of starry bodies, which, according to their position whilst the sun was above or below the equator, were supposed to be antagonistic or beneficently disposed towards men. In this plan the wintry constellations of course signified the adverse power; those of summer represented the beneficent angels. The spring constellations were the heralds of hope and promise, those of autumn the prophets of the evil days at hand. The path of the sun about the equator being thus defined, the groups of stars through which his march was conducted, came to be called 'the zodiac,' which signified, in ancient Chaldee, *an animal*, or the living world of power through which the earth received the life and light of godhead.

"The zodiac, as the ruler and chart of the solar year, was divided up by some of the ancients into ten, and by others into twelve, groups or constellations of stars. Each of these corresponded to, and were assumed to be, the ruling powers that governed the months.

"It is needless to remind our readers, that the same subdivision of the year into twelve months, symbolized at least, if not governed by the zodiacal signs, is still preserved in our charts and almanacs to the present time. As before explained, the zodiacal circle was divided into three hundred and sixty degrees; these again into four right angles of ninety degrees each, and the whole into twelve signs, including each thirty degrees."

The constellations were named, as it is supposed, chiefly from the operations which transpired on earth at the period when the sun passed through them. Amongst the Hebrew cabalists, they were regarded as houses of the sun and were called Beth-s; amongst the Chaldeans the houses of the summer sun were termed El-s, and those of winter On-s. El or Al signified light, On darkness; and these nomenclatures were ultimately adopted by most of the Oriental nations; hence we find the winter constellations, Angels, or houses of the sun, spoken of as the

*Dragon, Appollyon, Abaddon, Dagon, &c.*, whilst the summer mansions are termed *Michael, Gabriel, Bethel, Daniel, Raphael, Azrael, &c., &c.*

All the names common amongst Eastern nations, having *El-* or *On-* as terminations or prefixes, were derived from the priesthood, who were named after the houses of the sun; or, according as different temples of worship were dedicated to the sun in different constellations.

“The names assigned to the zodiacal constellations, or the rulers of the twelve months, were as follows:—Aries, the Ram, governed March, the real first month of the year amongst the ancients. The Bull was the ruler of April, because the season of agricultural pursuits connected that animal with the group of stars then in the ascendant. May, the season when summer and winter are united in an almost equal division of time between day and night, was ruled by the Twins, or Gemini. In June, when the sun appears to undergo a sort of retrograde motion (significantly explained in astronomy), the constellation was named the Crab, or Cancer. The raging heat of summer was typified by naming the July constellation the Lion. The August constellation was called the woman (Virgin), in reference to the fruitfulness which prevailed at the harvest season. The Scales, or Balances, was the title of the September sign, to signify, once more, the equilibrium prevailing between the hours of day and night. The Great Dragon of October, the Archer of November, the Water-bearer and Fishes, of January and February, were all named in accordance with the evil portents of the wintry months over which they presided.

“At mid-winter, or that period which now corresponds to December in the northern hemisphere, the constellations were supposed to correspond to a goat or ram, surrounded on all sides by stars, which the Oriental tendency to impersonate ideas, and image forth all things into natural forms, called the Stable, or Manger of the Goat, Capricornus. About this constellation, also, were several minor groups, the most noted of which were termed the Woman or Virgin, being a reappearance of the summer group, so-called from another aspect; Boötes, or Joseph, ‘the herdsman,’ and Spica, or the ear of corn, which the fanciful

mind of the ancient astronomer placed in the hand of the Virgin, to signify her special attribute of fruitfulness.

“In summer, the constellation Virgo appears at the marriage feast of the year, when the sun turns the weak water of earth into wine; when the earth is in the plenitude of her power, and unites all seasons in the marriage anthem of gladness. Her re-appearance in mid-winter, in the stable of the Goat, occasioned her to be called the ‘Virgin about to bring forth,’ and hence the winter Virgo represents the mother of the young newly-born sun, she who ‘brings forth,’ in the stable of Capricornus, ‘*Virgini parturæ.*’

In order to make the elaborate description of the Solar scheme, which M. Dupuis has distributed through several volumes, somewhat more clear to the reader than we could do by fragmentary excerpts, we will now give the condensed plan, rendered by that elaborate work, the “Anacalypsis” of Godfrey Higgins, in which we shall find the most direct and unmistakable definition of the entire subject.

Mr. Higgins agrees with Volney and Dupuis in the belief, that the sun, as the central figure of the starry heavens, became to the ancients the representative of the Deific plan on earth, so that the path of the sun, and his “adventures” through the zodiacal circle, formed the grand scheme of the heavens, the sun being at once the hero of the sublime legend and the visible symbol of the invisible principle of Deific good. Higgins says:

“Commencing with the mid-winter constellation of Capricorn, the sun is first introduced on the gorgeous theatre of the starry universe as a new-born babe, conceived through the maternity of a pure virgin (the constellation of the wintry Virgo)—because, says Dupuis, ‘The virgin and child represented the vigour of nature in peopling the earth, of which PERPETUAL VIRGINITY, not destroyed by procreation, affords a poetical idea; also, it suggests the resurrection of the dead, annually renewed, in the return of mid-winter day each year, an acceptable and universal

type amongst the ancients, of God's best gift to man of immortality unquenched by death. . . . The same figure, sculptured for the heathen amongst the Hindoos, Egyptians, Syrians, Assyrians, and others, has since served for the Virgin Mary in our Christian religion.

"The heathen or ancient Virgin forms a prominent figure among the constellations, and, in their beautiful fables, was presumed to bring forth a son annually, as the season (Christmas) came round, when the sun awakening from the death of winter first began to rise towards the spring solstice. This feast of the ancients—celebrated even as early as amongst the Aryans at mid-winter—has been transferred to the Christian religion, and adapted to Jesus by the Catholic and Episcopal churches; the Scotch, and some dissenting parties to the above churches, refuse the application, and do not keep Christmas day, repeating the allegation of Celsus and other Greek philosophers, that it was held sacred only as the birth of the sun, and *Christians betrayed the origin of their legend only too surely when they adopted that day as the birthday of their God.*"

To return to Godfrey Higgins. He next describes how the months of January and February were deemed under the dominion of the evil wintry stars, because the sun was then comparatively hidden or obscured by the storms and tempests provoked by the lord of winter, the adversary, typified by Aquarius, the water-bearer, who pours out the vials of his wrath upon the earth. Pisces (the fishes, a constellation of numerous small stars) represents the young children whom the wintry tyrant slays, in the hope of destroying the new-born child of the virgin, who is to reign as the king of heaven, and subvert the power of the wintry god.

In some of the allegorical sculptures of the East, the zodiacal sign of the fishes is changed to multitudes of infants' heads, and the sign is dedicated to the "Innocents." During these two evil months the new-born sun is hidden, or carried away into concealment by his mother Mary, Maré, or Maria, all synonyms

for the sea, from which the spring Venus, "the mother of forms," is assumed to rise—Joseph (Boötes), the bright constellation named the herdsman, being in close relation to the wintry virgin, is called her betrothed, and aids her in her flight to conceal the young child. In March, when the genial season of spring is heralded in by the appearance of the young lambs of the field, the constellation Aries—the Ram—is in the ascendant. At this point the sun crosses the equator, ascending from the darkness and concealment of the Southern hemisphere, into the triumphant North, so full of hope, promise, and renovation to the earth, groaning under the tyranny of the wintry season.

After the sun crosses the vernal equinox, the earth is redeemed—the darkness ends—famine, want, suffering, and cold lose their sway; hence, the cross is the sign of this great redemption; the Ram\* is the redemptive symbol, and the sun himself, coming forth from the wilderness of fasting and famine—baptised by the advent month, February, dedicated to purification by water—begins his career as a miracle worker, healer, and redeemer. He passes through the sign of Gemini, or brotherhood, conquers the retrogression of the wandering disciples in June—signified by Cancer, the crab—and shines out as the sun of righteousness, in the royal sign of the mid-summer Lion. We next see him at the marriage supper of the year, when in conjunction with the virgin mother (the mid-summer Virgo), he turns water into wine, feeds multitudes from the five loaves of the wintry months, and the small fishes—now converted into the plentiful harvest sufficient to feed all comers; heals the sick, cures the afflicted, preaches peace on earth and good-will to men, until the adverse signs of

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\* The ram subsequently became changed into the lamb, to signify the lamb of spring. This change was first made in Egypt, and celebrated in the feast of Paschal or Passover.

winter appear, heralded in by Lucifer—the bright and beautiful star, that in the spring was Vesper the evening star, and now in autumn, fallen from the high place, or seat of pride in the northern horizon, appears low down on the edge of the southern hemisphere, and, by virtue of this descent, is called “Lucifer, the star of the morning.”

“No portion of the famous astronomical myth has furnished forth more food for the poetical imagery in which the Oriental mind delights to adorn its metaphors, than this apparition of the fallen star Lucifer,” says Dupuis. Higgins also, and General Hitchcock in his fine treatise on biblical astronomy, dwell with particular emphasis on the myths and legends connected with this renowned astral conjunction. Higgins goes on to depict the position of the constellations at this juncture, as ominous of woe and destruction to the power of the solar hero of the skies.

“Now enters in,” says he, “the Great Dragon of the skies, the largest of all the zodiacal constellations, sometimes known as the Scorpion, but more especially famed as the Oriental Dragon; the long train of stars which follow in his wake giving birth to the myth of ‘the war in heaven,’ in which ‘the old serpent, the devil and Satan,’ or the adversary, contends with Michael the prince of light, and drags down in his fall one-third of the hosts of heaven.”

The mythos here obviously confound Lucifer and the Dragon, but the ancient astronomers expressly depict Lucifer as a single star, one and the same with Vesper the evening star of spring. In his fall he is the leader, or herald, of the hosts commanded by the Dragon, in whose train are numbered one-third of the heavenly host.

Bryant in his “Astronomy of the Ancients,” the Jewish cabalists, and many of the learned Gnostic writers, all combine in drawing this distinction in favour of Lucifer, as the leader

of the rebel hosts, and place the Dragon simply as the follower ; in fact, the Apocalypse of St. John is the only ancient authority (and this can scarcely be considered as an antique scripture) which confounds the starry personalities of Lucifer and the Dragon. The two—say Dupuis and Higgins both—are distinct, and “their personality cannot be confounded by those who desire to master the true secret of the solar legend.” After the ascent of these ominous influences into the seats of power, the career of the Sun-God becomes one of woe and trial. “Gethsemane, Calvary—even the judgment-hall of Pilate, the crowing cock, the denial of the faithless Peter—all are found in the complications of the astral legend.” So say our various authorities, and so writes Henry Melville, in his elaborate key to the astronomical mysteries, published in London, under the title of “VERITAS,” about thirty years ago. But the final act of the divine drama is the crossification of the sun, who, in his descent or passage across the equator to the Southern hemisphere is always represented as *crucified between the two evil months of November and December*. The angels of the December month indeed relent, or become penitent, and, in token of their pity for their victim, give place to the angels of the mid-winter constellation, Capricorn, who furnishes a shelter for “the Virgin, about to bring forth,” in his stable or manger.

For three days at mid-winter, or as some legends affirm for one only, the Sun is lost, *i.e.*, stands still—when the weak and shrouded character of his influence is represented as his descent into the grave ; by other legends, as his descent into *hell*, the nethermost parts of the earth, the locale of which was only vaguely realized by the ancients. They believed that the mysterious Southern realms into which the beneficent light bringer’s rays had sunk, was the fabled hell of their fertile imagination,

and as they peopled every region with living entities, so they taught that their adored Sun-God had gone on the merciful errand of preaching to the evil spirits, imprisoned for punishment in hell, or the nethermost parts of the earth. For a given period of time, the ancients mourned their hero dead ; but even in the midst of their lamentations, loving women (the constellations of the Andromeda group) bring the glad tidings that the new-born sun will be resurrected, and brought into periodic life, through the annual maternity of the ever Virgin mother, the sea, the *Maré*, *Maria*, *Mary*—mother of forms ; in a word, that the Saviour of men is born in a manger, or the stable of the goat Capricornus, a sign which, in all nations dominated by the famous astronomical religion, was revered as the symbol of God—the Zeus of the Greeks, the Ammon of Egyptians, the Brahm of the Hindoos, the Unkn~~own~~ or Unknowable of Plato, the “ Father ” of the Christian Trimurti.

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## SECTION IV.

### OF THE HELIOCENTRIC SYSTEM ; OR THE ANCIENT NEROSSES.

WHEN or how the first priests of antiquity began to interpret “ the fiery scriptures of the skies,” and spell out the unbroken lines of correspondence between the heavens and the earth, we have no means of determining. All we know is, that the most ancient, as well as authentic of historians, date their earliest records from periods when Hindostan was grey with the accumulation of untold ages, and Egypt had long passed the culminating heights of her splendid civilization.

Assyria, Babylonia, Phoenicia, and all the great dynasties of the Orient were sinking into the night of decay, and pointing back into an unknown "long ago," when first the "Thoth"\* of antiquity took pen in hand to inscribe their histories.

When the Grecian sage, Solon, visited Egypt to become an auditor of its then renowned priesthood, and referred to what he deemed the most ancient of all eras, that of the Deucalion Deluge, one of the oldest of the priests rebuked him in the memorable words recorded by Plato:—"Solon, Solon, you Greeks are always children; you mention one deluge, whereas many have happened."

In confirmation of all other testimony, oral and written, ancient and modern, the stupendous ruins scattered profusely throughout the lands of the East, bear witness to the very remote periods of time during which the ancients pursued their astronomical studies, and the thousands of years they employed in framing and elaborating their vast system of solar worship.

Dupuis, writing on the Apocalypse, says: "We trace the existence of the Zodiac for six thousand years, and we possess, in India alone, magnificent astronomical remains nearly up to that period."

Within the last century, the researches of Sir Wm. Jones, Colebrooke, Maurice, and other eminent Orientalists, by throwing open wider fields of observation to the scholar, deepen our astonishment at the achievements of the antique mind, and the correctness of its astronomical calculations.

One of the most remarkable and startling of these ancient astronomical discoveries was that of the "precession of the equinoxes," and the division of immense epochs of time into cycles, marked by the motions of the solar and astral bodies.

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\* Thoth—The name assigned in Egyptian mythology to the secretary of the gods.

Writing of that curious piece of composite sculpture, the Sphinx, Baillie, in his celebrated work on "The Astronomy of the Ancients," brings forward many plausible arguments to prove that it was designed in the most remote periods of antiquity to record the precession of the equinoxes. The author says :—

"The seasons were formerly symbolized by the four signs most significant of the operations proceeding on earth—namely, the Bull, the Lion, the Eagle, and the Man. That these signs were the evangelists or recorders of the sun's passage through the heavens during the solar year, we have ample testimony, even in the fact that the early Christian historians adopted them to symbolize Matthew, Mark, Luke, and John, the evangelistic historians of Christ ; but the sun holds a very different relation to the signs now to what he did five thousand years ago. This change, together with corresponding variations in the order of the seasons, is occasioned by an apparent slow forward motion of all the stars round the poles of the ecliptic, called the precession of the equinoxes. And this actual position of the sun in the seasons, affords us the best evidence that astronomy was understood and identified with the worship of the ancients five thousand years ago. . . . Now, in connection with this advance of the stars, about the poles of the ecliptic, the sun appears to fall back or retrograde, a change not appreciable from day to day, or year to year, until we come to reckon about nineteen years, when it will be seen that the sun has retrograded, or the stars advanced, a well-defined section of a degree."

Dupuis, following up the same subject, says :—

"The sun formerly crossed the equator near Aldebaran, in the Bull's eye, at spring. It obtained its greatest elevation, therefore, near Regulus, in the heart of the Lion, at mid-summer, and its greatest southern declination at mid-winter in Aquarius, or the Water-bearer."

Owing to the forward movement of the stars, above referred to as the precession of the equinoxes, the sun now crosses the vernal equinox in Aries, instead of, as formerly, in Taurus, in

spring, and falls back to the sign of the Lion in mid-summer, instead of its former place in Virgo.

To effect the exchange of even a single sign, the ancients allowed a period varying, in different methods of calculation, from 2,000 to 2,160 years. It is evident, then, that their astronomical observations must have been handed down through many generations, and have extended over vast periods of time. Those who correctly understand the precession of the equinoxes can find the exact position of the stars at any remote period of past time, and it is by comparing the ancient zodiacs with our modern systems of calculation, and determining what must have been the position of the sun in relation to the constellations when those zodiacs were fashioned, that we are enabled to understand how very far the ancients must have advanced in astronomical knowledge at the time when we stigmatize them as barbarians and heathens.

To celebrate the precession of the equinoxes, and erect an enduring witness of its having been observed, the ancients invented the singular monument called the Sphinx, in which will be found graphically depicted a compound of the two mid-summer signs through which the sun had been known to pass—namely, the Lion and the Woman. To fix the idea still more clearly in the order of solar worship, its priests instituted a grand festival at mid-summer, or, rather, changed the original character of the harvest festivities of mid-summer into what they called the marriage feast of the year. Innumerable are the legends which grow out of this celebration. The Greek festival of Ceres, the patroness of the harvest season; the Bacchanalia in honour of Bacchus, the god of the vintage; but, above all, a mythical marriage of the seasons, typified by the union of the masculine and feminine forms combined in the Sphinx, were some out of

many other appropriate ceremonial rites by which the ancients solemnized the beneficent influence of the sun in the summer solstice, and recorded the important changes which his position in the heavens occasioned.

Dupuis, Volney, and other learned authors of the rationalistic school, point with deep significance to the story of the "Marriage supper at Cana in Galilee," when the Jewish Messiah, by *turning water into wine*, proves the identity of "the miracle" with the celebrated marriage festival of the ancients, at which the same feat was supposed to occur—symbolical of the beneficent change which the miracle-working sun effected in ushering in the grape harvest.

Both Dupuis and Godfrey Higgins allude to the symbolical rites of the ancient mysteries practised at the mid-summer season, and claim that from thence arose the idea of *feeding vast multitudes with five loaves and two small fishes*—the loaves, as in the festivities of the Grecian goddess Ceres, celebrating the growth and expansion of five ears of corn into an abundant harvest, and the fishes representing the watery signs of the Pisces of February, changed into the grape harvest of summer. Both these learned authors trace the origin of the modern society of Freemasons to the ancient mysteries, and claim that their St. John's Day besides the entire formulæ of their rites and ceremonials, are vestiges of the ancient astronomical legend, in which the adventures, death, resurrection, and annual birth of the sun during the solar year form the basis alike of the ancient mysteries and the modern order. The discovery of the precession of the equinoxes must have been made in the remotest periods of antiquity, both in India and Egypt, as is proved by the existence of long rows of colossal sphinxes, leading to temples of unknown date, whose origin is lost in the night of pre-historic ages.

We can but conjecture the processes by which the ancient priests arrived at this discovery ; but Dupuis assumes that it arose from the fact, that the feasts which had been originally established to celebrate the sun's entrance into some particular part of the heavens, in course of time began to fail in their application.

The solar hero of the astronomical legend was found to have receded in his annual march, or the constellations through which he passed had changed their ancient relations to him. To correct these perplexing aberrations, the persevering researches of many generations must have been brought into operation ; the result was, the discovery of the equinoctial precession, a motion of the heavenly bodies now recognized by modern astronomers, and one which still engages the attention of the most philosophic observers.

In connection with this complicated astronomical phenomenon, the following extract from the great work of Dupuis—"L'Origin de tous les Cultes"—may be read with interest :—

"The ancients found that the sun, starting from the equator at spring at an angle of twenty-three and a half degrees to the north and east, after traversing all the signs, at the next year crosses the equator fifty-two seconds of a degree short of a complete circle ; and this phenomenon is of constant recurrence, the sun re-crossing the vernal equinox every year fifty-two seconds of a degree less of the circle than the year before. . . . The stars, too, are found to advance—not on the line of the equator, and about the north and south poles, but on the line of the ecliptic, and about the ecliptic poles ; so that the stars shift their places in regard to the equator, both in advance to the east, called eighth ascension, and also to the north and south of the equator, called declination, so that, by this motion, stars once south of the equator, are now north, and those formerly a little north are now more north. . . . Even the north star is making a circle round the pole of the ecliptic."

That the ancients knew and accurately calculated these complicated movements we may be assured by a careful study of their

zodiacs, planispheres, statuary, and the legends by which they so sedulously strove to celebrate these motions. Another striking evidence of the mastery of the most difficult astronomical problems is proved in the accuracy by which the ancients calculated and predicted the periods of eclipses, a condition of the heavenly bodies, which, as we shall hereafter see, gave rise to the extraordinary legend of Divine Incarnations, or the births of God-men. Dupuis says :—

“ We have no proof that the ancients knew the minute motions of the moon, for she is subject to certain changes only to be understood by later discoveries ; but they had arrived at correct methods of calculating eclipses, and discovered, with astonishing precision, the periods when certain astronomical phenomena would recur. These recurrences they called cycles, Neros, or Neroses. They are generally given in round numbers as to years, days, hours, and minutes, but there still remain fractions by way of correction. The Egyptians, and their most apt scholar, Pythagoras, evidently understood these fractional variations, and knew well how to correct them.”

The simplest and most easily ascertained of the cycles were, of course, the seasons, the changes of the moon, and the place of the sun in reference to the constellations of the zodiac throughout the solar year. As soon as the precession of the equinoxes was definitely ascertained, and the priests of one generation began to consult the observations recorded in earlier ages, a fresh set of phenomena dawned upon the student, and ultimately became resolved into an elaborate and complex scheme of vastly extended cycles or Neroses.

The first of these occurred every nineteen years, when it was found that the sun had fallen back to a certain section of a degree on the plane of the ecliptic.

Passing over many less important epochs recorded in the

scheme, we next notice the completed cycle of six hundred years, when it was found that the sun and moon appeared in the heavens in that remarkable conjunction which, to the fertile imaginations of the ancients, signified far more than the inevitable eclipse which such a position would occasion. It must be remembered that the sun was esteemed in the astronomical scheme as a masculine symbol of Deity, the visible representative of the Lord of life, the Creator of forms, and the Father of men. The moon, on the contrary, was, by most of the ancients (though not by all), regarded as the emblem of the feminine or receptive principle, and, as approximating next in size and importance to the majestic sun, she was hailed as the symbol of maternity, the representative of the earth and nature, and thus designated Astarte, Queen of Heaven, Isis, Diana, &c., &c.

The apparition of these two celestial luminaries in periodical conjunction gave rise to that most extraordinary and important of all the astronomical myths—namely, the belief that at this epoch a divine man, or “Son of God,” would be born, whose celestial history was to correspond literally with that of the parent sun in his travels through the zodiacal signs of the solar year, whilst his incarnation on earth was to give him a history more or less in accordance with the solar legend ; cause the foundation of a new sect, restore a sinful race to divine favour in his character of mediator, reform the corruptions of the age, and especially of an effete and arrogant priesthood, and generally enact the *rôle* of God and man, assigned to the numerous Avatars of ancient history.

To appreciate the acceptance of this stupendous *myth* by any sane mind, whether in ancient or modern times, as an actuality it must be remembered that the ancients were accustomed to impersonate the powers of nature, and regard sun, moon, stars,

earth, elements, and all the other potencies of the universe as visible expressions of invisible spiritual intelligences.

The belief that the external universe was but the symbol, and not the actuality of the Deific or Angelic existence, constituted the heart of the ancient mysteries, formed the esoteric doctrine of a learned and philosophic order of priests, and still enabled them to govern the ignorant multitude by attributing mysterious sanctity to the visible signs. It was unquestionably in this spirit, that so many of them permitted a system of adoration to be offered to idols, and ceremonials to be practised, against the gross superstitions of which their more highly-informed reason and judgment revolted.

The calculation of eclipses, and the accuracy with which these wily astronomers predicted the changes that would ensue in the heavenly bodies, and their correspondential results on earth, inspired the people with full confidence in their teachers ; induced the belief that they were in *direct communication with the gods*, and could propitiate their favour, or appease their wrath, by the favourite and time-honoured custom of vicarious sacrifices for sin.

We need not pause upon the details of this well-known system of priestcraft, nor enlarge upon the wide distinctions of belief which obtained, in the esoteric religion of the priests, and the exoteric superstitions impressed upon the people. It is enough to remember, that the true meaning of antique worship was carefully veiled from the vulgar mind in solemn mysteries, hence it is fair to infer that the philosophers of Greece and Rome were right when they alleged "that *belief in the gods was a necessary item in the government of the people, but was only a subject of ridicule and contempt amongst the enlightened.*"

How far the celebrants of the ancient mysteries believed in the actual birth of a God-man from the conjunction of heavenly

bodies, whose periodic recurrences of position had been defined for thousands of years, we need not now enquire ; enough, that such a doctrine was universally taught by the priests of antiquity, hence the grand Neros of the six-hundredth year was regarded as one of the most stupendous in the whole astronomical scheme, and the legend founded on it has become the central figure of all the theological systems that have succeeded each other, from the first institution of the Brahminical order to the last installment of the Archbishop of Canterbury, or the Pope of Rome.

We shall presently show, by numerous extracts, that the ancients placed the birth periods of all their Avatars, or incarnate gods, at the close of the six-hundredth cycle, or about the time when the periodical conjunction of the heavenly bodies above alluded to favoured the idea of some great correspondential changes being acted out upon earth. It is not surprising, therefore, that, at or about the time when these solar conjunctions were predicted, the people as invariably expected a new Messiah, or God-man, to descend from heaven, and be born amongst them, according to the traditions of past ages, as they deemed that the Deific principles of creation were symbolized, if not actually impersonated, in the mysterious luminaries of the skies.

The spirit of anticipation thus fostered by the priests, and sanctioned by the most sacred traditional beliefs, tended to invest any exceptionally great reformer or inspired prophet who might chance to be born about the close of the six-hundredth Neros—with all the Messianic attributes. Such individuals were generally adopted by a sect of enthusiasts, and though they were just as frequently persecuted by one party as adored by another, the deeply rooted faith of the multitude sufficed to convert every incident of the new Avatar's life into additional proof of his divine origin.

Even the martyr's death, which so often closed the career of such individuals, was but a fresh point of similitude with the legend of the Sun-God. Thus it was, after the curtain had fallen on the earthly portion of the drama, its scene of action was exalted to the skies; the fervid zeal of partisanship composed such a biography of the new Avatar as would "fulfil the scriptures" of older incarnations, always taking care to make it conform in every particular to the famous solar myth, and thus was handed down to posterity the paradox of a possible existence, with an impossible history; records of a being, like the woman of the Apocalypse, clothed with sun, moon, and stars; a man metamorphosed into an astral monster, and a God degraded into an ideal man.

Reserving for future sections a more direct application of this famous myth to the different religious systems of history, and again passing over a record of many other subordinate epochs of the Neroses, we come to the three final configurations of the heavenly bodies, which completed the calculations of the ancient astronomers, and closed up the marvellous scheme which their untiring observations had discovered.

The first of these, after the establishment of the six-hundredth cycle above referred to, was the precession of the equinoxes, or the complete transition of the sun from one sign to another, a movement which has been before referred to, and which different nations recorded as occurring between the periods of 2,000 and 2,160 years. The next most important Neros of the astronomical scheme occurred at the close of every six thousand years, when the precession of the equinoxes would occasion a complete change in the earth's polar axis, when the planes of the ecliptic and the equator would almost coincide; and, as the result of the tremendous and revulsive physical changes which must necessarily ensue

upon any given spot of earth, the popular belief obtained that the world would be destroyed again, as it had been before, by the alternate action of flood and fire.

To account for the universality of man's faith in this terrible legend, it is necessary to recall the conditions of ignorance which prevailed in ancient days, concerning the extent of the earth's surface, and the variety of its peoples. The population of Oriental nations were accustomed to calculate the effects of any great physical changes only on that portion of the globe known to themselves.

Understanding therefore, that the change of the polar axis which must ensue under the configuration of the heavenly bodies above alluded to, would bring their own favoured land either into the desolation of the Arctic north, or sink it to the "nethermost regions" of the south, which their untaught fancy depicted as the realms of insufferable fire, they naturally enough conceived the idea of the earth being destroyed by the dreadful alternations of fire and flood. It was on this basis that the Hindoos constructed their celebrated doctrine of the four ages, "Yugs," or cycles of time, in each of which they taught that the human race would become more and more degenerate, and the earth hasten on, with ever increasing momentum, to the final consummation of its present state of being.

This theory re-affirmed the scheme of the Neroses, and the belief in the alternate destructions and renovations of the earth by fire and flood at the close of every six thousand years.

The philosophers of all ancient nations taught that these stupendous changes in the polar axis would break up the icy regions of the north, submerging the earth beneath a universal flood, or precipitating what was then the land of the east into the unknown regions of the south—the land of fire and desolation,

also the scene of the fabled Gehenna of lost souls. The four great cyclic changes thus described, culminated in the last and most stupendous of all the Neroses included in the famous astronomical system, and this was defined as occurring at the end of every twenty-four thousand years, when the precession of the equinoxes would have carried the solar hero through the whole of the zodiacal constellations. This formed the great astronomical year of the ancients, about the close of which clustered every idea which the wildest flights of the metaphysician could conceive of, or the heated dreams of fervid enthusiasm image forth.

\*The final judgment-day would then arrive ; the elements "melt with fervent heat, the heavens shrivel together like a scroll," and all the gorgeous pageantry of an apocalyptic millennium set in.

The visions of an Ezekiel, Daniel, and John, would find their realization in the awful wrecks of time and space ; but "the new heaven and the new earth" would, phoenix-like, spring up from the ashes of a destroyed world, and the reign of a triumphant Messiah would inaugurate the long-promised kingdom of heaven upon earth, sending creation forward on its path of inconceivable glory, through the illimitable cycles of eternity.

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## SECTION V.

### REVIEW OF THE SABEAN AND HELIOCENTRIC SYSTEMS.

ALTHOUGH the subjects treated of in the preceding pages may be familiar enough to those who have carefully studied the literature and religious systems of the ancients, they are too strange to the general mass of readers to be apprehended readily, without concise methods of narration, and some reiteration.

It is for these reasons that we have substituted condensed statements, for the elaborate writings of Dupuis, Volney, Taylor, Higgins, Massey, &c., and, with a similar end in view, shall now summarize the scheme which has already been detailed.

If our readers have fully mastered the ideas we have aimed to present, they may content themselves by passing over the next few pages ; but, if, on the contrary, they have yet to combine in one ideal grasp the full proportions of the astonishing and elaborate system touched upon, it may assist the mind to rehearse its principal features in the following brief compendium :—

The ancients evidently believed that “the skies” formed the plane upon which the whole order of creation, providential government, law and being, both here and hereafter, were mapped out ; and religion, to their apprehension, consisted in the study of this grand chart, and its application to human life and actions. In this belief, the sun, as the largest and most powerful of the heavenly bodies, was the central figure, and constituted the masculine representative of the creative energy, and the source and giver, as well as the ruler and sustainer, of life.

The moon, as the next in size and importance of the “celestial host,” was the symbol of the feminine principle, and was invested with the attributes of maternity.

The stars which clustered round the sun’s path, called the Ecliptic, were grouped into constellations, named after the activities seasonable to the several months of the year, invested with an imaginary correspondence between moral and physical attributes, and their whole groupings arranged into a consecutive legend, which formed the solar drama enacted by the sun’s passage through them during the twelve subdivisions, or months of the year. Perhaps the ancients would never have carried their ideas beyond the fanciful symbolism growing out of the sun’s

annual passage through the twelve zodiacal signs, and the moral correspondence in which they seemed to read the destiny of man, here and hereafter, had they not made the discovery that the sun every year crossed the vernal equinox 52 seconds of a degree later than on the preceding year, thus proving beyond all doubt, or peradventure, either that the sun was falling back on the plane of the ecliptic, or that the stars, through which his pathway lay, were advancing.

This discovery, since called "the precession of the equinoxes," compelled them to alter the many feasts and ceremonials which they had established in reference to the seasons, and other points of the sun's annual journey. In process of ages, however, the records of past generations compelled the belief that the whole of the astral and solar orbs were in motion, and that various complicated movements, differing in speed and direction, were constantly transpiring between the sun, moon, and stars, as well as in their relation to the earth, and the physical changes which they produced upon its surface. The sum of all these stupendous discoveries ultimated in establishing, in unknown ages of the remotest antiquity, the heliocentric system, sometimes called the Neroses, or cyclic periods. These Neroses were divisions of time into periods marked by some great change or notable conjunction in the heavenly bodies, at each of which it was assumed corresponding changes must ensue upon earth, also in the attitude of Deity towards man, and the destinies of man and his planet.

As the ancient mode of dividing up the year into months was regulated by the moon, the cycles were formed of "luni-solar" periods, and the first marked change, or Neros, occurred at or about the end of nineteen years, when the sun had receded a special section of a degree on the plane of the ecliptic. The next Neros of great importance was fixed at the close of every six

hundred years, when the sun and moon appeared in the heavens in that particular conjunction or direct line, which, to the figurative imagination of the ancients, suggested the idea of a new divine birth—the advent or renewed incarnation of the “Son of God,” from whence, by correspondence between the earth and the skies, it was inferred that the newly-born Avatar was to descend to earth, be born of a woman, and thus become both God and man; that his mission in this mysterious incarnation was to reform the world, establish a new sect, set a fresh example of righteousness to mortals, and by his birth, life, sufferings, and death in human form, become a propitiatory sacrifice to an offended Deity for the sins of a degraded and degenerate race.

All the “incarnate gods” of antiquity were claimed to be born only after the masculine symbol of Deity, the sun, and his feminine counterpart, the moon, had thus appeared in heavenly conjunction. This was only (as before noted) at the Neros of the six hundredth year; and if the earth did not at that period furnish any individual, pure and powerful enough to become the hero of the great solar legend, a fictitious history was invented, and this, in after ages, formed just as good a substratum of ecclesiastical history as a genuine earth-born mortal could have afforded.

After a sufficient time had elapsed to revive the cyclic legend, give birth to a new sect, permit the hero of the skies to return to his blest abode in heaven, and sit at the right hand of God as judge of the dead, his history was published abroad, and the old religion revived to fit the new incarnation, but always in such a form as would exactly accord with the famous solar legend, and prove the late Avatar to have been an actual impersonation of the sun in his annual journey through the twelve zodiacal signs.

The next important Neros was celebrated at the end of every 2,160 years, when the sun had passed completely through one sign, and retrograded to another, compelling his ancient worshippers to alter the date of their feasts, and change the symbols by which they signified the seasons.

The next Neros occurred at the end of every six thousand years, when the sun by passing through three entire signs, had, together with the change of the constellations, so altered the earth's polar axis as to bring the east and west to the place formerly occupied by the north and south.

In this tremendous physical change, the inevitable breaking up of what must have once been the Arctic and Antarctic regions, and the consequent melting of the ice-fields, would necessarily submerge large portions of the earth beneath those immense floods, which were analogous, in the imagination of the ancients, to its complete destruction by water. As the Neros of six thousand years must occur four times for the sun to complete his long solar journey through the whole of the twelve constellations, so the ancients divided up a grand astronomical year of twenty-four thousand solar years, into four cycles of six thousand and fractional parts in each. These were their four grand ages of the earth's present life, at the close of which the last and most stupendous of all the Neroses set in—namely, the completion of the astronomical year of twenty-four, or with the fractions allowed for, twenty-five thousand solar years, when the sun would return to the sign from whence he set out; when the end of all created things would ensue, followed by a general judgment, a millennial reign, and all the Apocryphal paraphernalia of "the new heaven and the new earth" before alluded to.

In the brief summary herewith presented of the heliocentric system, we must not be understood to give either a detailed

account of the ancient or a scientific representation of the scheme as now understood by moderns. We only point to its existence, and the relations it bore to those theological principles, which have since been claimed to proceed from the direct revelation of God and "His only-begotten Son." Whilst all ancient nations entertained the idea of dividing time by solar and astral phenomena, their means of making correct calculations were far more limited than they are in the present age of scientific attainment. The system of Neroses, taught by the Chaldeans, Hindoos, Egyptians, Siamese, Chinese, Greeks, Romans, &c., although approximating within a few years of each other in results, and dividing up the recurrence of eclipses and other celestial phenomena upon generally correct modes of observation, were still variable in the calculation of long periods, and depended for data mainly on the records that were transmitted from generation to generation. Fortunately, the ancients were lavish and indefatigable in their efforts to transmit the results of their observations to posterity by means of splendid monuments, engraved zodiacs, planispheres, and colossal imagery, temples, and inscriptions—the records of which, as before remarked, transcend in value and authenticity any, or all, of the more perishable records of later times. To one fact, however, all researches into the religious vestiges of antiquity bear indisputable record—that is, that every form of theological belief has been derived from the impersonation of astronomical signs and the motions of the heavenly bodies.

The more diligently we search into the source of theological affirmations, the more inevitably we are driven to the conclusion that religious *rites* and personages are embodied astronomical ideas only. Thus, the ancients taught that day and night, as the symbols of good and evil, must be ruled over by good and evil angels. All the divisions of time, like the hours and seasons,

though founded upon astral order, were assumed to have a moral correspondence in human action, and be influenced by tutelary angels from the realms of light or darkness. The days of the week were dedicated to planets, which subsequently became identified with the gods supposed to rule them. Months were but the records of lunar journeys ; seasons, the milestones which marked the solar highway ; Neroses of years, centuries, and ages, were regarded as incidents in the life and labours of a sun deity ; and the whole order of the heavens constituted the scenes, acts, and personages of a grand drama, in which the earth was the stage, the constellations the *dramatis personæ*, infinity the scene, and eternity the period of action. In a word, theology, with all its rites and mysteries, is astronomy in action, and ecclesiasticism is the play, composed of its legends and myths impersonated.

Gen. Hitchcock, in his fine work on Biblical Astronomy, called "Christ the Spirit," says :—

"The Chinese, Siamese, Syrians, Assyrians, Tyrians, Phœnicians, Babylonians, and Chaldeans, understood and recorded their knowledge of the heliocentric system of cycles as accurately as did the Hindoos, Egyptians, or the more modern Greeks and Romans. Indeed, Baillie, Higgins, Faber, and Cassini the astronomer, consider that the Siamese possessed a more accurate knowledge of the Neroses, and calculated them with greater exactitude than even the Egyptians."

Be this as it may, the parity of the scheme in all lands, and its result in a legendary system of universal belief, can no longer be doubted. Even if the astronomical basis of the myth could be proved incorrect, the universality of its acceptance, and its correspondence with the *apparent* motions of the heavenly bodies, remain untouched, and afford a clue to the source of all religious beliefs, from the authority of which, in point of unity and design *there can be no dissent*. Modern science may invali-

date the worth of antique deductions, but it cannot affect the source of the faith, nor the universality of its acceptance as the corner-stone upon which every religious system has been upreared. Vale, the American astronomer, says :—

“The celebrated walls of Babylon were, as Berosus, the Assyrian historian, intimates, constructed to meet the awful emergencies of that universal flood which had occurred before, and, according to the system of the Neroses, must recur every other six thousand years. Thus, the mysterious towers on its walls were evidently designed as places of refuge, when the plains of Shinar should be overwhelmed with the expected deluge, and their distracted inhabitants flee to the great city for safety.”

This explains the remarkable significance of the famous Tower, of Belus (Babel), wherein the builders, by its concentric circles, designed to symbolize the great serpent of the skies, or the sun in Scorpio, when, after descending through its seven concentric rings or cycles of ages, it must arrive at the Antarctic circle, at the last point of which was to ensue the final destruction of the earth by fire or water. One thing is certain—the ancient Chaldeans, *five thousand years ago*, anticipated our discoveries in the remains of tropical plants and fossils at the Arctic regions, and proved by their traditions, monumental remains, and theological myths, that they realized the changes that the Neroses would bring in the direction of the polar axis, and that they knew, to a positive certainty, that the lands of the Orient they then inhabited had once been submerged by Arctic floods, and would yet become the polar regions, when, as Berosus declared, “the land would be shrouded by the awful gloom of a long, unlighted, and tempestuous winter, whilst the benignant rays of the sun-god would only illuminate the earth feebly, during the reign of what had once been the joyful season of almost forgotten summers.” In these words the old Assyrian historian predicted that the

changes of the polar axis would carry the land of the East into the desolate regions of the poles, and that the six months' winter and six months of feebly-illuminated summer would prove "the awful judgment" under which the earth would groan during the anticipated season of the much-dreaded six thousandth Neros. The Chaldean luni-solar, or heliocentric system, represented that the first period of the earth, when their own land was actually on the temperate line, above the equator, was the golden age of humanity, during which all was bloom and beauty, fertility and plenty, and man, in correspondence with his earth, was gentle, good, and happy. The earth was then "a garden of Eden."

The first change produced by the Neroses of 6,000 years, resulted in a flood, followed by a gradual restitution of things; a second age, less fortunate and happy than the first, was succeeded by a second cataclysm at the next Neroses through the action of fire; a third period of alternate rehabilitation and destruction of man and his planet ensued, followed by a fourth epoch (styled by the ancient Hindoos "Yugs," by the Egyptians Neroses, or Cycles), and man enters the present existing order of things, denominated by all antique philosophers "the iron age," or the culminating period of the earth's present existence, and the close of the great astronomical year of 24,000 solar years.

Interpreters of the Bible who realize that it is, in a great measure, an astronomical and mythical work, will understand that the visions of Daniel, Ezekiel, and the author of the Apocalypse, receive from these premises a totally different mode of explanation to that which the letter of their mystical delineations would convey.

They write in the true Chaldean spirit of the Neroses, and aim at depicting in allegorical language celestial conflicts between antagonistic constellations with the hero of the skies, the mighty

sun. They calculate the approaching changes in the celestial and physical universe upon the basis of the Neroses, and whilst the personages of their grand dramas are seasons, suns, stars, planets, and satellites, the destinies of men are so intermixed with the hierarchies of natural and spiritual forces, that nothing but an understanding of the cyclic system, with all its complicated machinery of correspondence, could throw any light on its mystic utterances.

Beginning with the order and motions of the stars, representing the sun, as the deific hero of the skies, contending with the antagonistic principles of good and evil, impersonating every star and every element in nature, and combining the whole into one grand scheme of correspondence with the life and destiny of man ; dividing the celestial motions into periods which also found an exact correspondence in the physical changes of the globe, and elaborating this wonderful and complicated scheme through the successive generations of thousands of years of time, the whole, coloured and shaped by the fervid mentality of Oriental fancy, is it any wonder that the Sabeian system grew into a world-wide faith, or that the facts of astronomy deepened into a religion so stupendous and wrought into the nature of succeeding generations, that not all the promptings of common sense, reason, evidence, and scientific demonstration have proved sufficient to dethrone its empire over the human mind ?

We shall conclude this necessarily very brief and much abridged account of the stupendous system under consideration by a few extracts from certain authoritative writers, whose views on the Neroses are worth recording. Godfrey Higgins, on page 245 of the "Anacalypsis," says :—

"From the epochs and cycles explained by Mons. Cassini (a celebrated astronomer of the last century), we may readily infer

the mode in which Eusebius and the Christian Fathers settled the times of the festivals, the birth of John, Jesus, &c. All this dovetails perfectly with the astronomical theories of Dupuis, and into what the learned Spaniard, Alphonso the Great, said—‘*That the adventures of Jesus are all depicted in the constellations ;*’ into what Jacob is reported to have said—‘*That the fortunes of his family were read in the stars ;*’ also into what Isaiah said—‘*That the heavens were a book*’—a statement believed by the Cabalists, who divided the stars into letters.”

In a very elaborate review of biblical astronomy, and the only half-perfect way in which Josephus and other Jewish writers understood the cyclic system, Godfrey Higgins shows how thoroughly the biblical writers meant to designate cycles when they wrote of persons. The Jews computed the first great Neros at 608 instead of 600 years. As this gave many incorrect renderings, Higgins deems that the myth of Joshua stopping the course of the sun and moon was a correction of the cycle of 608 years, and he concludes his arguments in these words :—

“The Bible says, *about a day*. At that time each degree, or 72 years, represented a cycular day, the solar year being then calculated at 360 days only. Every festival then would fall back or *stop* a day in about 72 years.

“The circumstance of the moon being *stopped*, as well as the sun, is allusive to the double cycle of sun and moon. It was a throwing back of the luni-solar period. If this were not so, why should Joshua *stop the moon*? Surely the sun gave light enough without the moon! But why argue at all? I suppose nobody is so weak in these days as to take the letter of the text literally.”

In a long dissertation on the allegorical sense implied in the name, character, and writings of Isaiah, the learned author of the “Anacalypsis” shows that a similar correction of an erroneous calculation of the Neroses is implied in the cabala of Isaiah pretending to make *the shadow on the sun-dial go back ten degrees*. He says :—

“The cycles would require correcting after several revolutions, and we find Isaiah making the shadows go back ten degrees on the sun-dial of Ahaz. This is nothing but a similar correction of the Neroses, occurring at the era attributed to the reign of Hezekiah, when the correction of the cycle retarded the coming period of evil, which would ensue in Hezekiah’s reign, ten degrees.”

After very elaborately showing that the Hebrew compilers of the Old Testament had endeavoured to define the cycles as the Hindoos did, and represent the different Neroses as the advent of greatly-inspired god-men or incarnations of deity, Higgins adds :—

“I before stated that the first cycle was placed at the birth of Enoch. This cycle only fulfilled half the period—for *God took him* at 365 years—making the other half-cycle a lapse, for the corrections necessary. The cycle being incomplete, and dying out, in order to make corrections, Enoch *did not die*, but *God took him*. . . . The second cycle ended with the birth of Noah; the third with Noah’s leaving the ark, he being then *600 years old*. The fourth ended about the time of Abraham, who was also Isaac, which name signifies joy, gladness, laughter, so-called because he was the new incarnation or saviour, *not because his mother laughed at God*. . . . The fifth Jewish cycle ends when the Samaritans say Joshua or Jesus (the names are one) brought the ark to Shiloh. . . . The Jews, like the Hindoos, had many saviours, or incarnations, or persons in whom a portion of divine wisdom was thought to be incarnate.” . . .

“The next cycle must be that of Elias, or Elijah—‘The Lord God,’ according to Calmet and Cruden—that is, it means to say, an incarnation of the Zeus of the Grecks, or ‘the solar power.’ He left his prophetic power to Elisha, which Calmet and Cruden say means, ‘the Lamb of God,’ or *Aries*, the next sign to Taurus, which means the sun.” . . .

“It seems that the Bible was a collection of secret writings, known only to the chief priests, probably first exposed to the public eye by Ptolemy Philadelphus, 246 years before Christ, when he caused the Pentateuch to be translated.”

“I feel little doubt that the publication of the Jewish writings was forced, *as the Jews claim*, by Ptolemy.” . . . “After they were once translated and published abroad, there would be no longer any use in keeping them secret, and copies of the original would be multiplied. . . . At the Babylonian captivity they were not destroyed, because the desolation of Palestine happened at two different periods, so that one part of the people preserved the sacred books in their temple when all was burnt in the temple of the other.” . . .

“Of the hero of the eighth age it is said in our version, *Thus saith the Lord to his anointed Cyrus, whose right hand I have holden, &c., &c.* . . . The eighth period began about 600 years, then, before Christ. The ninth began, as the Siamese say, with Christ.” . . .

In the *Classical Journal*, vol. xix., p. 72, the Rev. Mr. Faber, a strong partisan for all the affirmations and claims of the Christian religion, makes the statement that Melchizedec was thought to be an incarnation of the Son of God. He adds:—

“It was contended that every extraordinary personage whose office it was to reclaim or instruct mankind was an ‘Avatar,’ or descent from the Godhead.”

Again, he says:—

“Adam, Enoch, and Noah, might in appearance be different persons, but they were really the self-same divine man, animating different human bodies.”

Now, unless the Rev. Mr. Faber be a re-incarnationist, and a disciple of Allen Kardec, the French spiritist and teacher of re-incarnation, he comes to precisely the same conclusion reached by the profoundest students who have studied the Oriental doctrines of the cycles, and who all contend that Adam, Noah, Enoch, &c., &c., were imaginary beings, representative of the different ages, or cycles, known to have existed in the early history

of mankind. Again, Mr. Higgins writes on page 283 of "Anacalypsis" :—

"There are few readers who will be surprised that I should look back to an existent state of the globe at a very remote period. I allude to a time when the angle of the plane of the ecliptic with that of the equator was much larger than it is now, the effect of which would be to increase the heat in the polar regions, and make it a comfortable place of residence. This easily accounts for the remains of tropical plants found in those regions."

"Every appearance of this kind is easily accounted for as the effect of that periodical motion of the earth, which, if continued, will bring the plane of the ecliptic and equator to coincide, and in process of time to become at right angles to one another."

"The circumstance of the animals of the torrid zone being found in the high latitudes near the poles, is itself a proof to an unprejudiced mind that the time must have been when, by the passage of the sun on the plane of the ecliptic, his line of movement must have been much nearer the poles than now ; hence, those which are now the northern regions must have had a temperate climate." . . .

Mr. Higgins has furnished a large amount of valuable matter on the heliocentric system and biblical astronomy. Bryant, Baillie, Basnage, the authors of "Asiatic Researches," "Universal History," "L'Origin de tous les Cultes," "La Cité Antique," &c., &c., have all contributed valuable information on the same subject ; but though we must now bring our review of this subject to a close, and only renew it incidentally in connexion with other matter, we have given our readers a fair and authoritative compendium of the whole subject, and for the more elaborate details of a system to which the history of all ancient nations has contributed, we refer the scholar to the numerous authentic writers above mentioned, or the many others quoted in these pages.

## SECTION VI.

## ORIGIN OF ALL RELIGIONS IN INDIA—BOUDHA.

WHOLE libraries have been written on the subject of the ancient man's religious opinions. Unfortunately for the cause of truth, these important topics have either been treated of in books too voluminous to be placed within the reach of the ordinary reader, or they have been distorted by the bigotry and arrogant assumptions of those who write only in the interest of a sect, or for the honour and glory of some form of creedal faith. Thus the only class of men whose educational advantages qualify them to become authorities on these all-important subjects—namely, college-bred ministers of the Christian religion—are generally the most unscrupulous libellers of all systems but their own, and the chief promoters of those un-Christian teachings which denounce, with all the bitterness of sectarian bigotry, the antique faiths, on which their own is upreared.

The aim of this treatise being to avoid the Scylla and Charybdis presented by both these barriers ~~to~~ the diffusion of knowledge on religious subjects, we shall offer that which we have to say in the most compendious possible form, and prove our freedom from egotistical bias, by grounding our assertions, for the most part, on the statements of authentic writers, rather than by presenting views of our own. In this spirit we approach that most ancient form of faith, cherished by one of the earliest of nations, Hindostan.

Without entering in this place upon the question of India's claims to priority, we take ground with most of the learned Orientalists in the belief that the civilization of Hindostan ascends into higher periods of antiquity than that of any other historic nation, and that it was from the metaphysical specula-

tions of her early sages that the first elements of the celebrated astronomical religion were derived.

Taking up her religious history at that point when her temples, monuments, and scriptures afford us abundant data for our researches, we find that ancient Hindostan taught, if she did not originate, the belief in one Supreme Being, called Brahm, a word which signifies the void, or space; also the doctrine of the Trinity, or three subordinate emanations from the First Great Cause—named, from their supposed attributes, Brahma the Creator; Vishnu, the Preserver; and Siva, the Destroyer and Re-producer. The Hindoos also taught of a paradisaical garden; the disobedience and fall of man; the alternate destruction and renovation of the earth by fire and flood; the belief in the soul's immortality; the doctrines of good and evil; rewards and punishments hereafter, and, what is more pertinent to our present researches, the division of time into "Yugs" or "Cycles," defined by astronomical observations, and the incarnation of Deity in the person of earth-born God-men, at different periods of time, according with the movements of the heavenly bodies. It would be unnecessary to discuss the question whether the Hindoos were the first authors of this system; it is enough that no other nation can point to existing evidences in the form of wonderful sculptures, monuments, and scriptures of high antiquity, and that all these refer to still earlier ages, in which the specialties of the astronomical religion are constantly found. The "Mahabharata," an ancient poem, which the Brahmins assert to have been in existence at least 6,000 years ago (a claim which Wilkins, the learned Sanscrit scholar, considers to be not altogether unfounded) descants upon all the special features of theology above enumerated. It also refers to the heliocentric system, makes mention of past incarnations of the solar power, or gods born into mortal

forms, and assigns dates for these incarnations in connexion with the cyclic system of Neroses.

The most important feature in Hindoo theology is this doctrine of divine incarnation, not only on account of its frequent recurrence in accordance with the ancient solar legend, but because the Christians founded their stupendous system of ecclesiasticism on the assumption that the incarnation of their "Lord and Saviour, Jesus Christ," was a part of an *original* scheme, acted out within the last nineteen centuries of time, for the especial behoof of those who could believe that he was the only-begotten Son of God; that he descended to earth to be born, through the maternity of a pure virgin, *for the first time in human history*, at Palestine, some 1889 years ago; furthermore, that belief in these claims is essential to man's salvation, through all eternity. Now, whether these claims are true or false, they are certainly of a very important character, and their authenticity is calculated to produce immeasurably important consequences upon the race.

The Rev. Robert Taylor has very significantly put the case in these words:—

"The *time* assigned for the historical origin of Christianity is, the three first centuries from the reign of the Roman Emperor Augustus. Any continuance of the history after that time would be unnecessary to prove the origin of the system, *as any proof of its existence before that time would be fatal to the originality challenged for it.*"—(*Vide Diegesis.*)

As the Hindoo systems of incarnation exactly meet this case, and actually publish abroad to the whole earth all the essential features of the scheme claimed by Christianity to be original, and follow it up with successive proofs recorded during thousands of years prior to the advent of Christianity, it is manifest that the best interests of the Christians themselves—in fact, we might say,

of the whole human race—demand a thorough investigation of the enormous claims put forth on the one side, and so determinately denied on the other.

Without entering into the complicated systems of Hindoo theology, we must notice those features deemed, for the above-named reasons, so highly important—namely, the several claims of its incarnate gods. Hindoo scriptures, supported by the abundant sculptures and temples of Hindostan, teach that Vishnu, the second person of the Hindoo Trinity, has been incarnated in an earthly form some nine times. The first of these incarnations was called Boudha, the last but one, or eighth, Chrishna; and as the legends clustering around these sacred personages are the most striking and best authenticated of the whole scheme, it is to their histories that we shall chiefly confine our attention. The first Boudha of the Hindoos must not be confounded with a personage of the same name, Gautama Buddha, who appeared, as some historians allege, about 1,200 years before the Christian era; others deem at a still later period.\*

“Boudha Sakia Mouni,” or Gautama, alleged to be the ninth incarnation of Vishnu, was supposed to be born at Nepaul, of royal parentage, and was of course named Boudha, rather in accordance with his prophetic pretensions and reformatory mission, than as receiving that name from his parents. Boudha, signifying a saint, or the enlightened one, was a name published abroad and honoured as the first incarnation of Vishnu, for probably more than five thousand years before the Christian era. As the Boudha Sakia of more recent date leaves a history behind him, which in no way connects itself (except by a confusion of names and persons) with the original of that sobriquet, or bears any affinity with the earlier incarnations of Vishnu, we shall pass

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\* Boudha signifies a saint, or sainted personage, and is not a name.

over his record as not essential to the purposes of this treatise, and call the reader's attention to the most ancient founder of the wide-spread Boudhist faith.

Forbes, in his "Oriental Memoirs," vol. iii., says :

"The oldest mythology of which we have any record is that of the Boudha of the Eastern nations, amongst whom are to be found all the doctrines above described—*i.e.*, the doctrines of the later Christian faith."

At page 101 of Godfrey Higgins's "Anacalypsis," it is said, in relation to blood offerings as sacrifices :—

"Tradition states that in the earliest times no bloody sacrifices took place there ; and amongst the Buddhists, who are *the oldest religionists of whom* we have any sacred traditions, and to whom the first book of Genesis probably belongs, no bloody sacrifices ever prevailed. It never was practised by the followers of Boudha, and they have constituted a majority of the inhabitants of the world." . . .

In his fifth book ("Anacalypsis") Mr. Higgins writes :—

"The time is now arrived to enter upon an examination of the doctrines of the celebrated Boudha of India, the foundation of all the myths of the Western nations, as well as those of Chrishna, and from these two were supplied most of the *superstitions* which became engrafted into the religion of Jesus Christ. I shall show that Boudha and Chrishna were only renewed incarnations of the same Being, and that Being the solar power, or a principle symbolized by the sun, Boudha being the name of the sun in Taurus, the Bull ; and Chrishna being the same solar power when (by the precession of the equinoxes) the sun receded into the sign of Aries, the Ram, or as it was termed by later writers, the Lamb."

Mons. Creuzer, in his celebrated work "Religions de L'Antiquité," vol. i., says :—

"The name and character of Boudha are purely astronomical. His birth, through the Virgin Maia, has direct reference to the

sun's annual birth in the constellation of that name at mid-winter ; his royal descent, life, sufferings, miracles, death, and resurrection are all derived from the solar journey through the constellations of the zodiac.

“The earliest Buddhists were evidently worshippers of the sun in Taurus. They were the builders of the temple of Juggernaut, in front of which the Bull projects, and were expelled from lower India, when, by the change of the signs from Taurus to Aries, the religion of Chrishna eclipsed that of Boudha.” . . .

Now, as the change from the Bull Taurus to the Lamb Aries could not have taken place in less than 2,160 years, and the religion of Chrishna, the Sun in Aries, has been in vogue for at least 3,000 years, we may form some idea of the extreme antiquity of the ancient Buddhist system. Again, on page 201 of the “Anacalypsis,” we find these words :—

“The Rev. Mr. Maurice has given a long and particular account of the ten grand Avatars or incarnations of the god of the Hindoos. . . . Boudha was universally allowed to be the first of these incarnations ; that of Chrishna was the eighth.\* At the era of the birth of Christ, nine of these incarnations had appeared on earth, and another was expected to follow before the end of the Cali Yug, or, the then present cycle.

“All the Hindoo incarnations were born—or, rather, their appearances noted to occur—at the close of the six-hundredth Neros ; hence, from Boudha (the sun in Taurus) to the eighth incarnation, Chrishna (or the sun in Aries) was a period of over 2,160 years. . . . Between the Brahmins and Buddhists there exists the greatest conceivable enmity. . . . Yet Boudha is allowed by his enemies the Brahmins to have been a divine Avatar, and the Bull of the Zodiac was his emblem. He is described as Divine Wisdom—the Sun in Taurus. This is the FIRST Boudha, or incarnation of Divine Wisdom, by many Brahmins opposed, because they confound him with a later personage, to whom the same name was given. In fact, Boudha, or *the wise*, seems to have been the appellation of a doctrine assumed by many persons at different periods of time. Rev. Mr. Faber

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\* Gautama Buddha is by some writers called the ninth incarnation.

thinks that this one person is supposed to have been incarnated many times, and from this circumstance much confusion has arisen."

The mother of Boudha was MAIA, a name also assigned to the mother of the Greek Mercury, in which Maia sometimes typifies the Sea, the Mother of Forms, and sometimes the Month of May. The followers of Boudha claim for him no earthly father, but an immaculate conception, through a royal mother, and *a ray of heavenly light*. After a long dissertation on the character, history, and attributes of the *original Boudha*, Higgins makes use of these remarkable words:—

"Boudha passed his infancy in innocent sports, and yet he is often described as an *artificer*. In his manhood, he had severe contests with wicked spirits, and finally he was put to death, we shall find, by *crucifixion*, descended into hell, and re-ascended into heaven."

In treating of the various Avatars who have so unmistakably formed the ground-plan upon which Christians have upreared their peculiar doctrines, it may not be entirely unimportant to know that their original model was neither more nor less than a negro; in short, the Christ who, eighteen hundred and eighty-nine years ago, was assumed to have been born of the Supreme Being and the Blessed Virgin Mary, has derived the principal item of his history from the *the woolly-haired, thick-lipped black Boudha*, who at a period of not less than five thousand years before the advent of his renowned Jewish imitator, was born of a *ray of light*, through the maternity of the "blessed virgin" Maia, otherwise the Sea, Marie, Mare, or Mary.

In confirmation of these statements, we shall now cite some fragments of an immense mass of testimony, combining to show that the first of the Hindoo Avatars—the most ancient Boudha

inimical to the claims of a divine revelation and special originality for the similar story of Christ. Despite the attempts of *meek* Christians, and *gentle* followers of the loving Nazarene, to crush, hide, or brow-beat the legend of Chrishna out of popular circulation, it has still gained ground, and a continued succession of Eastern discoveries, published far and wide through the pages of our cheap popular literature, have at length narrowed down the formidable ranks of partisanship to the plain common sense question, which is the original and which is the copy? That the claims of Christianity should be reduced to the forlorn hope of maintaining all its high and time-honoured pretensions only, on the condition of proving the history of Chrishna to be an imposture, or at best a spurious copy of its own original scheme, may seem a more astounding revelation in our generation than its plan of redemption would appear to any shrewd, intelligent savage who listened to its recital for the first time; but if our readers will be pleased to recall the earlier pages of this little work, especially where they are illuminated by the rays of glory which stream up from the antique heads of a Boudha, Wittoba, &c., &c., they will find that Chrishna only sets the seal upon a history already too thoroughly known and apprehended to be much longer mistaken.

Chrishna is not the only Gorgon's head which Christianity cannot look upon and live; nevertheless, this Avatar forms such a remarkable link in the chain of proof as to where our religious systems come from, that we may well ponder over the principal features of his myth, and reiterate the question, which is the original and which the copy?

Following out the plan pursued in former sections, we shall draw the materials of our present memoir from such authoritative sources, as will commend themselves to the reader's acceptance with far more force than our own unsustained statements.

We have frequently referred to a work entitled "Asiatic Researches," a voluminous mass of writing, issued about 1784, in sixteen volumes. Since its first publication, it has been revised, and added to by several authoritative writers, especially by Sir William Jones, one of the most learned Oriental scholars of the age, and President of the Asiatic Society. Fine editions of this great work are now to be found in most of the public libraries.

It is from a copy, in the magnificent Asiatic collection in Boston, U.S.A., that the author gives the following extract written by Sir William Jones :—

"That the name of Chrishna, and the general outline of his story were long anterior to the birth of *our Saviour*, and probably to the time of Homer, we know very certainly.

"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. . . .

"The celebrated poem Bhagavat contains a prolix account of the life of Chrishna. Chrishna, the incarnate deity of the Sanscrit romances, continues to this hour the darling god of the Indian women. The sect who adore him with enthusiastic and almost exclusive devotion have broached a doctrine which they maintain with eagerness—that he was distinct from all the Avatars who had only a portion of his divinity, whereas Chrishna was the person of Vishnu (God) himself, in a human form.

"Chrishna was believed to have been born from the left intercostal rib of a virgin, of the royal line of Devaci. He passed a life of a most incomprehensible nature.

"His birth was concealed through fear of the tyrant Cansa, as it had been predicted that one born at that time, in such a family, would destroy him. He was fostered, therefore, in Mathura, by an honest herdsman surnamed Ananda.

"Chrishna, when a boy, slew the terrible serpent Caliyaga, with a number of other serpents and monsters. He saved multitudes partly by his arms and partly by his miraculous powers.

"He raised the dead, descending for that purpose to the lowest regions. . . . He washed the feet of the Bramins and

preached very nobly indeed and sublimely, but always in their favour.”—(“Asiatic Researches on the Gods of Greece, Italy, and India.”)

Mrs. Lydia Maria Child, in her admirable and most reverential work, entitled, “Progress of Religious Ideas,” gives an extended account of the life, character, and attributes of the celebrated Hindoo Avatar, Chrishna. This excellent writer quotes Sir William Jones in the “Asiatic Researches,” at great length, but the following fragments of history, the learned authoress derives from other sources :—

“Next to the Vedas and the code of Menu, the most ancient and venerated of the sacred books of the Hindoos are the Ramayana, and the Mahabharata.

“The Mahabharata commemorates a later incarnation of Vishnu in the form of Chrishna. Bramins attribute it to Vyasa, and say it was written before the commencement of the Cali Yug, consequently more than five thousand years ago. Wilkins thinks there is satisfactory evidence of its being at least four thousand years old. Scriptures on the old rock temples prove that the Bramins have not assigned too great antiquity to either of these poems.

“The Mahabharata contains a celebrated episode called the Bhagavat Geeta, containing the life of Chrishna. It relates the history and conversations of Vishnu, while on earth, in the form of Chrishna.”

In vol. i., page 60, Mrs. Child comments on the history of Chrishna in these words :—

“The Vishnuites split into two sects. One is more devoted to Vishnu in the form of Rama ; the other believes that his eighth incarnation, in the form of Chrishna, is the most poetic and remarkable. The Bramins date it before the Cali Yug—that is, more than five thousand years ago. Sir William Jones supposes it to have been written one thousand four hundred and fifty-one years before Christ.”

Then follows an abridged account taken from the poem in question, but as it abounds with Hindoo metaphor and romantic accounts of various miracles evidently in accordance with the history of the sun-god, our readers will be just as well informed upon the subject by the extracts given from Sir William Jones and those that follow, as if we rendered the entire of the famous Hindoo romance.

Mrs. Child notes that representations of *the mother and child*, the *flight of the holy family by night*, and *the slaughter of the innocents*, by order of the tyrant Cansa, are sculptured on the walls of most of the temples dedicated to this Avatar. She describes the famous legend of the slaughter of the innocents thus :—

“Meanwhile, a prophetic voice had told Cansa, ‘The boy who is destined to destroy thee is born, and now livi<sup>g</sup> 3.’ As soon as he heard that, he gave orders that all the male children throughout his kingdom should be put to death. Among the sculptures in the cave-temple at Elephanta is a conspicuous figure with a drawn sword, surrounded by slaughtered infants, in allusion to this part of Chrishna’s history.”

Later on, this authoress says :—

“One of the titles of Chrishna is, ‘Pardoner of Sins ;’ another ‘Liberator from the Serpent, Death.’ In allusion to this, the image of Chrishna is sometimes seen sculptured in the folds of a serpent that is biting his foot, sometimes treading victoriously on its head.”

From the Bhagavat Geeta, the following sentences are given as examples of the conversations between Chrishna and his disciple, Arjun :—

“Although I am the Lord of all created beings, I am made evident by my own power, and as often as there is a decline of

virtue and an insurrection of vice and injustice in the world, I make myself evident. Thus I appear from age to age, for the preservation of the just, the destruction of the wicked, and the establishment of virtue. . . .

“I am animated with equal benevolence towards all beings. I know neither hatred nor predilection; but those who adore me devoutly, are in me, and I in them. *Even he who has sinned, if he adore me only, is reputed virtuous.* He will immediately have a just soul, and obtain eternal peace. Have faith in me. No one who worships me can perish. Forgetting all else, address thyself to me. I will deliver thee from all sin.”

Allowing for some difference in the modes of expression, the parity of ideas between the great teacher of India *five thousand years ago*, and what the Christians claim for their great teacher of Jerusalem eighteen hundred years ago, cannot fail to strike the reader with *astonishment*—astonishment, not at the *fact* itself, but at the unmistakable *fraud* which the modern plagiarists display.

In considering and comparing the several histories under review, it must be borne in mind that the ancient record looms up from the mists of antiquity, unlighted by the methods of modern civilization. If, therefore, the ancients may present ideas in more unadulterated shapes, they still lack the precision, excision, *interpolation*, &c., to which all Christian Scriptures have been subject, both in their production and modes of subsequent publication. It is to these different ways of treating the same subjects that we owe the preservation of the gospel of Chrishna's infancy, and the careful suppression of the same document in relation to Jesus. The “gospel of the infancy of Jesus,” although in the earliest ages of Christianity accepted as a genuine record of facts, has since been consigned to Apocryphal obscurity; while that of Chrishna has been preserved, and is often ostentatiously paraded before the world in comparison with “that pure and divine

record contained in the evangelical writings," as a witness of "the preposterous absurdities of the heathen scheme, and the exquisite simplicity of the Christian."—(*Vide Rev. Mr. Maurice.*) Had the gospel of the infancy of Jesus been presented to the world as candidly as that of the Hindoo Chrishna, instead of being consigned to a prudent state of Apocryphal seclusion, the comparison of the two would again have afforded us food for the perplexing speculation as to which was the copy and which the original. But of this, the reader shall be the judge.

On page 160 of the "Anacalypsis," Mr. Higgins writes :—

"In the first place, the Chrishna of India is always represented as the Saviour and Preserver of mankind; he is also represented as the Supreme Being, taking upon himself the state of man; that is, he became incarnate in the flesh, to save the human race.—(*Parallel Nicene and Athanasian creeds.*)

"As soon as Chrishna was born he was saluted with a chorus of Devatas (*Angels*) with divine hymns.—(*Parallel Luke, chap. ii., verses 13-14.*)

"He was cradled amongst shepherds, to whom was first made known his divinity.

As shepherds watched their flocks by night.

—*Dr. Watts's Christian Hymn Book.*

"Soon after Chrishna's birth he was carried away by night, and concealed in a region remote from his natal place, for fear of a tyrant, whose destroyer it was foretold he would become, and who had for that reason ordered all the male children born at that period to be slain.

"This story is the subject of an immense sculpture in the cave of Elephanta, the date of which is lost in antiquity.—(*Parallel Matthew, chap. ii.*)

"Chrishna was by the male line of royal descent, though he was actually born in a dungeon. Jesus' descent is traced to King David, though he was born in a stable.

"The moment Chrishna was born, the whole place was illuminated, and the countenances of his father and mother

emitted rays of glory.—(*Infancy of Chrishna. Parallel Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus, chap. ii.*)

“Chrishna could speak as soon as he was born, and comforted his mother.—(*Parallel Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus.*)

“Chrishna was heralded in, and assisted by his elder brother Ram ; Jesus, by his kinsman John.

“Chrishna descended into Hades to restore the lost dead, and returned to Vaicontha—Paradise.—(*Parallel Four Gospels of Jesus.*) Chrishna was called the Good Shepherd.

“After the birth of Chrishna, the Indian prophet Nared visited his father and mother at Gokul, examined the stars, and declared him to be of celestial descent.—(*Visit of the wise men of the East to Mary.*)

“Chrishna was carried to Mathura (Mattea) on the river Jumna, where many of his miracles were performed, and at which to this day, he is held in higher veneration than in any other place. The Rev. Mr. Maurice says:—‘The Arabic edition of the *Gospel of the Infancy of Jesus* records, Mathura (Mattea) to have been the place where the infant Saviour resided during his absence from Judea, and until Herod died. At this place Jesus is reported to have wrought many miracles, and among others, to have produced in that arid region a fountain of fresh water, the only one in Egypt.’”

We feel it due to our readers to pause here lest they should fail to remark upon the wonderful *coincidences* of history. Some four thousand years ago the infant Chrishna was conveyed to Mathura by his father and mother, to avoid the wrath of a cruel tyrant king, and there, even in his tender infancy, he wrought many miracles, amongst others, caused a pure spring of water to flow forth from the arid desert. To this day his name is remembered and honoured in that place, and many spots in the vicinity are pointed out as the scenes of his miracles. Two thousand years *later*, the infant Jesus is brought to this very spot by *his* father and mother, fleeing there for the *very same reason*—namely, to avoid the wrath of a tyrant king, who acts in the very same murderous way in slaughtering all the male children of his

district, whilst the infant Jesus emulates his celebrated prototype, by performing just the very same class of miracles at the river Jumna, and the only difference in the legends which still attach to that sacred spot is, that the Eastern nations generally attribute the miraculous works done, to an ancient saviour named Chrishna, and the Christians—such as Eusebius, Athanasius, and, on the strength of their assertions, the Rev. Mr. Maurice—attribute the performance of the said miracles to a modern saviour named Christ. Again the pertinent question obtrudes itself, which is the original, which the copy? Let the stony forms of the ancient Chrishna sculptured in temples antedating historic record; the famous sculpture at Elephanta of the slaughtered infants; the Bhagavat Geeta, with its undoubted antiquity of over fifteen centuries before Christ, as vouched for by the pious Sir William Jones; let the worship of the ancient Avatar, with its records of faith, traditions, statues, and temples; all grey with age, or ever the Jewish Avatar was heard of—answer the question, and the reader may decide which system has the facts, and which the frauds of religious history.

Our space will only permit us to make a few more extracts from Mr. Higgins's "Anacalypsis," ere we close. Page 162 :—

"After Chrishna came to man's estate, one of his first miracles was the cure of a leper. Upon another occasion, a woman poured on the head of Chrishna a box of ointment, for which he cured her of an ailment, and to show his humility and meekness, he washed the feet of the Bramins. In the gospel of the infancy of Jesus, he is represented as turning his young companions into sheep, and at the solicitation of their parents, restoring them to their proper form; a similar history is attributed to Chrishna in his youthful days. In the gospel of Jesus' infancy, he has a remarkable adventure with a serpent, which had poisoned one of his companions, matched by the young Chrishna's combat with the serpent Caliyaga, which had poisoned the cow-herds."

In the gospel of Jesus' infancy, he is represented as being sent to Zaccheus for instruction, and astonishing his master with the extent of his learning. The same tale exactly is related of Chrishna. Many other points of exact similarity exist. To all these proofs of fact on the one side, and fraud on the other, only two theories have ever been hazarded by way of explanation. The one is a vague suggestion on the part of Sir William Jones, that the Bramins, having charge of the sacred books of the Hindoos, *might* have tampered with the copies, and interpolated them *after* the Christian religion was published abroad.

The eminent character of Sir William Jones has rendered a suggestion, at once absurd and impossible, so mortifying to his numerous admirers, that it is very seldom referred to, and then only in terms of astonishment and regret. Were it *possible*—which it never could have been, to have tampered with Scriptures jealously guarded and preserved for thousands of years in their original condition as divine law—even then it would not have explained away Sir William Jones's own assertions concerning the immense antiquity of the Sanscrit Dictionary and Bhagavat Geeta, in which the learned Orientalist himself confesses to have found the entire history of Chrishna, together with all the legends above alluded to. But, worse and worse for the scholar who has been compelled to advance such a desperate effort at defence! Even his great ally and contemporary, the equally learned and equally pious Maurice, deserts him, and comments upon the petty idea in such arguments as the following, extracted from Maurice's "Indian Antiquities":—

"In reference to the opinion of Sir W. Jones, happy and ingenious as it may be, it would still afford but a partial explanation of the difficulty, many of the mythological sculptures of Hindostan that relate to the events in the history of this Avatar more immediately interesting to the Christian world, being of an age un-

doubtedly anterior to the Christian era ; while these sculptures remain unanswerable testimonies of the fact recorded, the assertion, unaided by the collateral proofs, rather strengthens than obviates the objection of the sceptic. Thus the sculptured figures copied by Sonnerat from one of the oldest pagodas, representing Chrishna dancing on the crushed head of the serpent, while the enraged reptile is seen biting his foot, together with the history of the fact annexed, could never derive their origin from any information contained in the spurious Gospels."

Rev. Mr. Maurice might have cited, with still more pertinence, the celebrated sculpture of the slaughter of the innocents, in the oldest temple in the world, the Elephanta cave. The sculptures scattered all over India of the various incidents above referred to, including the figures of the flight into Egypt and multitudes of other stony scriptures—scriptures which no interested priests could interpolate, and no interested apologist can deny the vast antiquity of—all these, together with the legends of Mathura, and the fact that the worship of Chrishna was a stereotyped form of antique faith centuries before the Christian's "Lord and Saviour" was born, combine to throw a discreet mantle of silence over the learned Orientalist's "happy and ingenious idea," and create a sincere wish on the part of his many admirers that he had never descended to the imbecility of its expression.

The second attempt to remove the fatal Hindoo witness, Chrishna, from the realm of fact into that of fraud, was undertaken by a certain Dr. Bentley, who, in his zeal for Christianity, through a series of "the most laborious researches," announced to the world about the end of the last century that he had succeeded in obtaining an *astrological* calculation, which placed the birth of Chrishna at or about 600 years later than that of Christ ; and he also alleges that the Brahmins—by a system of "back reckonings," &c., the mode of which, even according to Mr. Bentley, was so abstruse, that no one of sane mind could

follow out their demonstrations—had succeeded in imposing upon the world claims for an antiquity to which they could lay no foundation. Against the maintenance of this remarkable theory there was one very fallible point, namely, that Bentley's astrological scheme as a demonstration of the period of Chrishna's birth, would just as well have applied to the age of Noah as to 600 years after Christ, the position of the planets recurring periodically in many given epochs of time. But, even if Dr. Bentley could have succeeded in entangling the reason and common sense of his sympathizers so deeply amongst astrological calculations, that they could neither prove nor refute what they could not understand, even then there were other learned astronomers cotemporary with Dr. Bentley—such as Baillie, Higgins, Playfair, &c.—who, with a set of calculations, just as laboriously pursued, and still more exact, were enabled to demolish Dr. Bentley's theory, and reduce it to ashes. But, beyond all this, the monuments, sculptures, temples, and ancient poems still remained! Still the memory of Chrishna and his sects come looming up from the remotest ages. The wars undertaken between rival sects, the worship authenticated all over India, and the entire history engraved in characters of enduring witness which no flimsy attempts at astrological wrangling could obliterate, still remain unaccounted for. Why do we pursue the petty theme farther? Why waste time upon recitals so humiliating to their chief actors, and so desperately injurious to the system of modern faith, which bases its last chance of defence upon a foundation of mere quicksand? Why! Because some ten years ago, during the author's residence in Australia, she was called upon to read aloud to a large gathering of intelligent listeners these very self-same groundless and utterly false deductions of Dr. Bentley, reiterated in a work written and published for the

benefit of the Australian colonies by one of their own most learned bishops—a gentleman who, with the spiritual welfare of a large colony of persons entrusted to his pastorship, deliberately disinters the exploded theory of Bentley's absurd "back reckonings," and informs his uninformed readers that the history of Chrishna, that terrible bugbear of Christianity, was not published abroad to the world until some centuries *after the Christian era!*

Let us close up this ungrateful and humiliating theme, by pointing to the fact of Dr. Bentley's final *recantation*, and, in the words of Godfrey Higgins, show that even this frail reed was ultimately snapped in twain by the hand which first wielded it. On page 344 of the "Anacalypsis," Godfrey Higgins writes:—

"Long after I had written the above respecting Dr. Bentley, I found what at once settled the question; but as I think it extremely desirable, in a case of such importance, that my readers should see the steps by which I have gradually arrived at my conclusions, I shall not expunge what I had previously written.

"If any dependence can be placed on Dr. Bentley's own words, he was at last satisfied that the story of Chrishna having been copied from Jesus Christ WAS NOT TO BE SUPPORTED. In a letter from him, published by the Rev. J. Marsham, D.D., in his 'Elements of the Chinese Grammar,' is the following passage:—'July 4th, 1813. *Krishna was contemporary with Yoodhist'hira (see the Geeta), and the epoch of Yoodhist'hira's birth was the year 2,526 of the Cali Yug of the present astronomers, or about 575 years before the Christian era.'*"

The italics are Mr. Higgins's, and are doubtless intended to give point to the last admission the words contain. Mr. Higgins adds:—

"Even if Dr. Bentley were the only final authority on this subject, his admission that Chrishna lived more than 500 years BEFORE Christ, at once disposes of all the nonsense, both oral and written, about the history of Chrishna being copied from that of Christ. . . . After this, in another letter, Dr. Bentley goes

on to show by astronomical calculations and proofs, that he is correct, and that Chrishna was certainly, as he had before said, more than 500 years before Christ."

As the author of a very learned treatise on "Ancient and Modern Astronomy," Dr. Bentley was at first hailed by all *true* Christians as one of the most "able, as well as authoritative" defenders of their faith. Why his recantation has not been as widely circulated as his grave error, it remains for the defenders of the faith to prove, yet we should scarcely have expected to find a learned bishop re-affirming the well-exploded error in the nineteenth century, and that without the slightest allusion to the stupendous evidences which the entire land of India, with all its price ss wealth of antique lore, scriptures, temples and monuments presents. Weighed against the testimony which the history, traditions, and monumental vestiges of Hindostan afford, Dr. Bentley's theories for or against the date of Chrishna's advent amongst men, are no more than so many straws, set up to show which way the winds of sectarian bigotry blow.

Christian authorities have been very busy during the last eighteen centuries in the attempt to settle the *creeds* and *doctrinal* points which their Incarnate God never preached. Why have they not been more particular in placing the period of his advent upon earth some twenty centuries or so earlier? According to Dr. Bentley, if they had only removed their first Christmas day five hundred years back in time, they might have stood on safer ground; but if they had been still wiser, and, like the great "Sun of Righteousness" they worship, fallen back in time a whole sign, and set the date of their Incarnate God's birth 2,160 years before their present era, moving the Hindoo Avatar on to its commencement, what a different answer they might have rendered to the intrusive question—Which is the original and which the copy?

As it is, the Hindoo's favourite Avatar was born 2,000 years too soon, or the Christian's, 2,000 years too late. If one is the FACT, how can we fail to come to the conclusion that the other is the FRAUD of religious history?

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## SECTION VIII.

### THE SUCCESSION OF INCARNATE GODS DERIVED FROM INDIA.

RECURRING to the logical definitions of the Rev. Robert Taylor on the claim of the Christians to an original divine revelation, we might almost close our review at this point; the obvious priority of the legend attributed to Christ, in the histories of the first Boudha, and Chrishna, of the Hindoos, sufficiently demonstrating the fact that, as far as any original revelation is concerned, there is not one iota of proof to justify such a claim in behalf of Christianity.

In the best interest of true religious facts, however, and consequent abhorrence of audacious religious frauds, we shall pursue the analysis commenced in the last section, into still wider fields of observation.

Besides the two great Avatars of India above referred to, we have records in the scriptures and monumental remains of India of several more incarnations, amongst whom we may name Indra, the god of the Firmament; Salivahana, a later incarnation than Chrishna; Jao, of Nepaul, whose *crucified* figure is to be seen on many ancient sculptures throughout that province; Rama, the fourth incarnation of Vishnu, and the subject of the celebrated poem called the Ramayana; Bali, of Afghanistan, Wittoba, and Boudha Sakia, said to be the ninth incarnation of Vishnu.

We have already alluded to the various notices which ancient history furnishes concerning these Hindoo Avatars ; we must therefore proceed to consider how universally the specialties of their legend permeate the religious faiths of other nations.

#### OF RELIGIOUS FAITH IN CHINA.

THE Chinese claim for themselves an antiquity little short of the Hindoos, although the latter affirm that the land of the Mongols was originally settled by colonies from India. Be this as it may, history proves that the Chinese calculated eclipses correctly, and possessed a remarkably accurate knowledge of astronomy, besides other arts and sciences, upwards of two thousand years before the Christian era.

The doctrines taught by the celebrated sage, Confucius, whose period is not much more than about 500 years before Christ, must not be taken as examples of Mongolian theology. Confucius gave to his country a pure and beautiful code of morality, but he originated nothing in connexion with theological belief. In the compilation, attributed to him, of the Five Volumes, or the Chinese sacred books, he simply re-arranged, or, to use a modern phrase, edited, that which was in existence thousands of years before. In these sacred books we find all the traditions concerning paradise, the fall, the doctrine of divine incarnations, the story of God-Men being born through the maternity of a pure virgin, and the vicarious atonement for sin.

The Five Volumes state that—"The source and root of all is One. This self-existent unity necessarily produced a second ; the first and second produced a third ; these three produced all." The ancient emperors solemnly sacrificed every three years to "Him who is One in Three. . . . Tien is the Holy One without a voice. The Holy One is Tien, speaking with a

voice—(*the word*). . . . By consulting the ancient traditions, we know that though the Holy One will be born on earth, yet He existed before anything was made." One of the Five Volumes, "Yu King," says :—

"The Holy One will unite in himself all the virtues of heaven and earth. By his justice, the world will be re-established in righteousness. He will suffer much. He must pass the great torrent, whose waves shall enter his soul, but he alone can offer up to the Lord a worthy sacrifice." . . .

L. M. Child says in "The Progress of Religious Ideas" :—

"These prophecies of an incarnate God were supposed to be fulfilled in the person of Boudha Sakia Mouni, whose doctrines were introduced into China by his disciples, taking such deep root amongst the people that Buddhism has completely divided its empire over the Chinese mind with the doctrines of Confucius. The worship of Boudha is celebrated under the name of Fo, and though during the many centuries that have succeeded its introduction it has shared the fate of all legendary systems, become corrupt, degenerate, and full of mystical interpolations, the main features of the scheme are preserved, and may be summed up in the following extract :—' But though details vary much in different countries, the prominent features of Buddhism are everywhere the same. They all teach of one invisible Source of Being, sometimes called the supreme intelligence, sometimes by the name of his attributes. . . . Boudha is said to have appeared four times in worlds (or ages) preceding this, and always with the benevolent purpose of withdrawing men from the vortex of illusions in which matter has plunged them. Into this present age he (Boudha) descended, in the form of Boudha Sakia Mouni. His mother was a holy virgin (Maia), and his birth was foretold in a miraculous dream. The object of his mission was to instruct those who were straying from the right path ; expiate the sins of mortals by his own sufferings, and procure for them a happy entrance into another life by obedience to his precepts and *prayers in his name*. He is always spoken of as one with God through all eternity, and his most common title is the Saviour of the world. As he has repeatedly assumed the human form, so will there be repeated incarnations of his spirit.' "

“Lamaism,” and many other corrupt forms of Buddhism, are repeatedly cited by Christian writers in evidence of the degradation into which the heathen world is sunk, and as a proof how much said heathenism needs the salvatory religion of Jesus Christ.

Such egotists forget that the dungeons of the Inquisition, the massacres of St. Bartholomew, the horrors of the English Star Chamber, the Puritanism of New England and Scotland, &c., would form about as poor a representation of the religion enunciated by Christ as the fanaticism of Lamaism would do if presented as an illustration of the sweet and gracious teachings of Boudha Sakia. Unfortunately too, for the success of Christian missions amongst the Chinese, the learned men of the land—and there are many such—retort, as a certain Mandarin did to M. Le Huc, the eminent French missionary—“You are a man of prayer. Why do you steal our Boudha, and offer him back to us as your Christ? Go to school, and learn that Boudha was old enough to be grandfather to an age of Christs before yours was born.” William Von Humboldt publishes the famous ten precepts, copied from the sacred books of the Chinese, as an evidence that those who seek to convert them might gain something by becoming themselves the converts. They are these :—

1. Thou shalt not kill even the smallest creature.
2. Thou shalt not appropriate to thyself what belongs to another.
3. Thou shalt not infringe the laws of chastity.
4. Thou shalt not swear.
5. Thou shalt not calumniate.
6. Thou shalt not speak of injuries.
7. Thou shalt not excite quarrels by repeating the words of others.

8. Thou shalt not hate.
9. Preserve faith in the holy writings.
10. Believe in immortality.

There is much in the teachings of Buddhism which, so far from deserving the contemptuous epithets bestowed upon it, and stimulating the egotism of Christians to change it into their own system, might do honour to Christianity by being engrafted upon it—that is, always provided there were found Christians honest enough to render honour where honour was due, and allow that they derived it from the Chinese, rather than originated it after the Chinese had possessed it for ages.

#### THE EGYPTIAN TRINITY.

FEW religious legends are better known and more widely circulated than that of the Egyptian Trinity—namely, Osiris the Sun-God ; Isis the representative of nature, the spouse and twin sister of Osiris ; and Horus, the Child, the representative of the world of created forms.

The worship of Osiris, although extremely ancient, antedating by many centuries the Mosaic age, is still claimed by the Egyptians to be of a comparatively modern period, that is, in comparison to the immense antiquity claimed for the preceding theocracy by which the land was said to have been governed. Herodotus, who visited Egypt about four centuries and a half before Christ, says in his history of Egypt, that the priests told him they kept the record of a Government by a succession of thirty-six gods, the last of whom were Osiris and his son Horus, and that all these preceded the rule of mortal men, or the priests who bore the names of the special temples in which they served. From the rule of Osiris to the period recorded by Herodotus,

they reckoned nearly fifteen thousand years, and, in testimony of these immense periods, they showed the great historian three hundred and forty-one colossal images of the priests, every one of whom, in the order in which they lived, was obliged to deposit in the great temple at Thebes a statue of himself.

Herodotus, on this basis, allowing an average of three generations for every century, gives an antiquity for the period of Osiris of not less than eleven thousand years. Contemporary monuments, the known period of the great pyramid, at least a thousand years before the date of Moses' period, together with tombs, sculptures, and ruins which daze the mind and captivate the senses by their stupendous grandeur, colossal proportions, and incalculable antiquity, carry us back into those realms of physical power and spiritual perception, which present us as pigmies compared to the Titans of ancient Egypt.

And in the midst of these luxuriant unfoldments of mental power and intellectual attainment, arises the momentous question—What was the religious status of these antique giants?

From all the reliable sources open to us we have the best reason to believe that the faith of the ancient Egyptian was derived, like his national existence, from India. The wise and world-renowned priesthood of Egypt taught of paradise, the temptation and fall: of original sin, of a triune god, divine incarnation, and vicarious atonement; in a word, of all the main points of veiled allegory common to Oriental nations, and subsequently impersonated as realities by the Christians.

As the central figure of all Egyptian theogony is Osiris, the representative and embodiment of the famous astronomical legend of the Sun-God, we select from a vast mass of authentic history on the same subject, some extracts concerning this celebrated personage, from the excellent treatise on Egyptian theogony in Child's "Progress of Religious Ideas."

Our author says:—

“Of all Egyptian deities, Osiris is the name most familiar to modern ears. . . . He appears to have been like Siva of the Hindoos, in his general capacity—the fructifying or generating power of the universe—‘THE SUN.’ All the emblems of the sun were sacred to him, and astronomical ceremonies celebrating the sun’s annual passage through the zodiacal signs constituted much of his worship. . . . Reverence for the production of life introduced into his worship the sexual emblems so common in Hindostan. A serpent—the emblem of immortality—always accompanies the image of Osiris. The hawk—considered as a bird of the sun—was sacred to him, and his emblem was a winged globe, representative alike of the sun and the bird, the wings being significant of time and space.

“Osiris, called the eldest son of the, being a general representative of life and the generating principle, caused a commixture of ceremonies and emblems in his worship, which has greatly complicated the mythology of Egypt. He is represented as the incarnation of deity, at whose birth angelic voices proclaimed—the lord of the world is born!

“Having gone forth to carry the arts and sciences to other nations, his brother Typho (the winter), by a successful stratagem, shut him up in a chest and threw him into the sea. Isis (nature or the earth)—his spouse and sister—wandered about in mourning garments, seeking for the body, which at last was found; but Typho discovered it and tore it up into fourteen pieces.”—(The fourteen lunar subdivisions of the ancient year.)

“Isis gathered up the fragments and gave them burial at Philoe,” where the famous statues of the holy family Osiris, Isis, and Horus the Child, have been found, *and plagiarized as the holy family of Judea.* “After his death, Osiris, resurrected, is represented as descending into Amenti, Hades, or Hell to rescue lost souls, and re-ascending into Heaven, where he remains to dispense blessings to those who address prayers in his name; to judge the dead, and finally overcome the power of evil which destroyed him.”

The second person of the Egyptian Trinity was Isis, the Mother of Forms, the representative of nature, the inseparable

companion of Osiris, and the embodied idea of the feminine or receptive principle of life. Her emblems were numerous, and are often greatly misunderstood. The egg, the hawk's head, as twin with Osiris; the sistrum, a musical instrument which, in sex worship, represented the ever-renewed virginity of Spring; the human form with horns, significant of the crescent moon; or the head of the cow, symbol of maternity, these and many other similar illustrations imply the astronomical and mythical character of this favourite goddess. The most universal modes of representing the image of Isis are either as nursing her infant Horus, or bearing him in her arms. Horus, the third person of the Trinity, is universally acknowledged to be the symbol of created forms—the product or result of the divine principle of generation, and, as such, an indispensable figure in the symbolism of the Egyptian trinity. Egyptian theogony is (next to India) the most abundant in symbolical forms of any of the antique faiths. Rich in ideality, Titanic in the breadth and sublimity of executive power, the remains of Egyptian civilization point back to a true Theocracy—a nation ruled, formed, and fashioned by gods; a people whose ideality scaled the heavens, and brought up the fundamental bases of things from the profoundest depths of the universe. All the nations of antiquity sat with child-like reverence at the feet of the Egyptian priesthood, and it is from the inevitable succession of ideas transmitted through all ages, that we know that Egypt upreared her cyclopean superstructure of civilization upon the foundation-stone of Indian metaphysics, and bequeathed it to all posterity through the inherited lore of younger nations.

The fruitage of her stupendous wisdom has not been lost—as some writers affirm—in the mists of antiquity. Orpheus, Solon, Thales, Pythagoras, and Plato were auditors of her priests, and

interpreters of her noblest philosophy. It is now unquestionably believed that the Greeks paraphrased the famous Osiric and Isic mysteries, in those of Bacchus, Ceres, Eleusis, &c.

The Grecian gods are but poetical and flower-crowned embodiments of Egyptian ideas, and it is doubtful if a single form in the elaborate Pantheon of Greece ever existed which did not owe its birth to the fertile imagination of the Egyptians. Abraham and his successors, up to Moses, and on forward to the Evangelists of the Christian history, all derived their elements of theology from Egypt. Many authoritative writers acknowledge that the Jewish Jehovah was but one of the Egyptian tutelary spirits, or the Aleim, who ruled over days, weeks, months, seasons, and elements. Bellamy, Parkhurst, Dr. Shuckford, and many other accomplished scholars, have proved conclusively that in multitudes of instances where the words God, Lord, and the Lord God are rendered, in the common version of the Hebrew Scriptures, the original was a plural word for Deity, derived from the Egyptian Elohim, or Aleim. It is only in such sentences as "Let us make man" (Gen., chap. i.), and "The Lord God said, Behold the man has become as *one of us*" (Gen., chap. iii.); also, in Gen., chap. iii., "When your eyes shall be opened, and ye shall be as *Gods*"—that the translators have been faithful in rendering the plural, instead of the singular number, for the Deific power spoken of. Parkhurst, in his Greek and Hebrew Lexicon, shows that the Hebrews were forbidden to pronounce the name of their God—a superstition clearly derived from India. The name of Jehovah, Jah, or Jao, was that applied with modifications to a tutelary Deity of the Egyptians, one of the Elohim; a Spirit of the Mountains; not the God of Fire, the Adonai, Adonis, or Lord God, whom Moses believed in and taught of, as appearing to him in the burning bush—an allegory, by the way, significant

of the solar fire, ever burning, but never consuming the object it illuminates.

Many eminent Egyptologists—amongst them, Higgins, Bunsen, Wilkinson, writers of undoubted authority—show that the modes of Egyptian worship were almost synonymous with those instituted by Moses. The Oracle ship of Ammun, one of the names of the Sun-God, was the original of the Ark of the Hebrews, and was carried about in a similar way on poles. Abraham unquestionably derived the rite of circumcision from the Egyptians, as also the methods of sacrifice. The institution of the Levites' order, their dress and the ornaments of the priests, were exact transcripts of Egyptian models.

The fasts, feasts, and celebrations, the very instruments of music, and the sacred dances practised by the Hebrews, were pure imitations of Egyptian customs. The veneration once bestowed upon the famous Apis or Bull of Egypt, has already been shown to have originated with the worship of the sun in the sign of Taurus, the zodiacal bull. When Egyptian astronomers discovered that the precession of the equinoxes had carried the sun into the sign of Aries, and a consequent change was instituted in the celebration peculiar to that season, many severe sacerdotal conflicts arose. The celebrants of the old worship resisted innovation with the utmost rancour, and in that strife, the famous schools of Heliopolis and Ammun were arrayed for many centuries against each other. It was from the above-named change in the zodiacal signs that the celebration of the Paschal Lamb was instituted. During this solemnity, the votaries of the new faith, *i.e.*, the worship of the Lamb, in order to distinguish themselves from the Tauric worshippers of the Bull, were accustomed to mark their dwellings with a certain red powder.

By this token they announced that they had duly observed the

sacrifice of the Paschal Lamb. When the Hebrews became residents in Egypt, and insensibly fell into the theological forms of belief prevailing around them, they adopted the new worship, and in sign of conformity with its customs, marked the door-posts of their houses with blood, a piece of symbolism which the Jewish historians have mixed up with the ancient Hindoo legend of the slaughter of the innocents. Finally, they paraphrased this, as well as many other Egyptian customs, into a piece of Jewish history, and enlarged upon it until they had resolved it into the institution of an original Jewish Passover.

In chapter ii. of "Anacalypsis," we find these words :—

"The religion of Moses and the Hindoos was the same, and we find the celebrated Egyptian festival of the Passover in both countries. We have in the most solemn religious rites of the Bramins, the sacrifice of the Yajna Lamb, which, with the Hebrews, succeeded to the Mithraic sacrifice of the Bull, and both rites celebrated the Passover of the equinoxial sun in spring.

"The history of the passage of the sun and of the Israelites from Egypt affords a remarkable example of the double meaning of the Hebrew books.

"The story of the ten plagues of Egypt might be very suitable for the rabble of Jerusalem and London, but the higher classes in the former *had*, and, I should hope, in the latter now *have*, too much sense to believe such degrading accounts of Deity, as the LITERAL meaning of this history exhibits."

(Maimonides, the most learned of the Rabbins, clearly avows that the Paschal Lamb was but a type of the astronomical Lamb.)

"Before the time of Moses, the Egyptians fixed the commencement of the year at the vernal equinox.

"In the *Oriental Chronicle* it is said the day when the sun entered the sign of Aries was held as a great festival, whereat the Hebrews marked their door-posts with blood, the Egyptians with red. The Hebrew name for the celebration was *pedach*, which means *transit*, and the Lamb itself is often called *Pesech*, or the Passover. 'In India, the devotees throw red powder on one another at the Huli, or vernal equinox.' 'This powder is in imitation of the pollen or fructifying powder of plants.'

“A plant which does not produce this powder, or flour of flowers, is useless, and not typical of the rays of the regenerator of the earth—the sun in spring. This Huli festival is the origin of *Yule*, and our word *holy*.”

The erudite author of the “Anacalypsis” descants at great length on the many forms by which the opening of the Egyptian year through the Paschal Lamb was celebrated; also upon the many derivations which the name of the Lamb has given birth to, until Agni, and the Latin Agnus, became the *Agnus Dei* (“Lamb of God”) of the modern Catholic Mass. Amidst a mass of highly recondite literature, drawn from Scriptural, traditional, and monumental vestiges—as interesting to the candid seeker for truth as they would be startling to modern “defenders of the faith”—are two pieces of biography concerning the Jewish law-giver, Moses, which we do not find in any of the Scriptures so vaguely attributed to his authorship.

The first of these is found in the celebrated Orphic verses, attributed to a Grecian sage named Orpheus, a great traveller, and one who wrote about twelve hundred years before the Christian era. This compiler of the traditions of many nations alleges that Moses was one and the same with *Mises*, signifying a law-giver, and Bacchus, the sun, who, like Osiris, was represented as being picked up out of the water, in which he had been exposed for fear of a tyrant king who had caused all the male children of the kingdom to be slaughtered. The Orphic legends also name this half-mortal, half-mythical being *Bimater*, from his having had two mothers, the one who bore him, and another who adopted him. He (Orpheus) says, Mises had a magical rod by which he wrought great miracles, and which he could change into a serpent at pleasure. He passed the Red Sea dry-shod at the head of an army; divided the rivers Orontes and Hydaspes by

the touch of his rod, and passed through them dry shod. He drew water from the rock, and wherever he marched the land flowed with milk and honey.

If it be asked how it was that the characteristics of the Sun-God, celebrated throughout India as Dyonisius; in Egypt, Phoenicia, Syria, Asia Minor, Greece, and Italy, under different names, came to be confounded with Moses, the famous law-giver of the Hebrews; and especially how the slaughter of the innocents—sculptured in the most antique temple in the world, the Cave of Elephanta—could, thousands of years later than its first inscription, be repeated in the history, first of the Jewish Moses, and still later in that of the Jewish Christ—we answer that many of the best and most profound scholars, pronounce the Jewish Scriptures to be for the most part cabalistic writings, full of allegory, and written in the veiled mysticism common to the sacerdotal methods of the ancient priesthood. Some original personages, of course, formed the woof and web of the history, but the main pattern and colouring of the fabric were drawn from Oriental sources and traditions gathered up from the many nations amongst whom the Jews were wanderers. Their Noah was but the transcript of many similar legendary characters. Their Genesis contained only the fragments of most ancient Eastern legends. Their Jephthah was the Greek Agamemnon, with precisely the same history. Their Samson was the Hercules of the Egyptians and Greeks, paraphrased. Elijah, Elisha, Joshua, and numbers of other personages, believed to be men by the *literal* interpreters of these mystic writings, represented the impersonated myths of the astronomical religion, and all their prophets wrote cyclic legends, the true meaning of which can never be explained until the famous cyclic theories of Persian, Syrian, Phœnician, Assyrian, and Egyptian astronomy are fully apprehended.

To return to the reputed law-giver of the Jews.

The mere supposition that the history attributed to him in the literal phraseology of the Jewish Scriptures could be true, implies a subversion of human reason and lack of reverence for the awful character of a Supreme Being, which amounts to the insanity of credulity. Happily for the redemption of human reason from the paralysis which priestcraft has so long impressed upon it, the testimony afforded by the Orphic verses that the chief features of the history had been applied to Osiris at least a thousand years before the Mosaic era ; that it had been interwoven with the astronomical myths of Eastern worship, and celebrated in lands whose traditions were sinking into the night of decay before the Jews had an existence at all ; in a word, that the story had been said and sung until the Jews, in their communications with the Egyptians, must have become as familiar with it as our babes become with nursery rhymes, may easily answer the questions of trembling credulity, and that without drawing at any greater length on accepted authorities.

Full of overwhelming interest and instruction as the memories of Egyptian civilization must prove to the scholar, we must close our review by a brief extract from the "Progress of Religious Ideas."

In the article on the Jews, Book I., the author says :—

"Manetho,\* as quoted by Josephus, states that the provinces of Egypt rose against the shepherd race, and finally expelled them. They were permitted to depart from Egypt with all their families and effects, and make their way towards Syria. But as they stood in fear of the Assyrians, who then had dominion over Asia, they founded a city in that country, which is now called

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\* Manetho was high priest at Heliopolis, in Egypt, about three hundred years before the Christian era. He wrote a history of Egypt in the Greek language, fragments of which are still preserved.

Judea, though others say the name of their district was called— from being inhabited by the Pali (shepherds)—Palistan, the land of shepherds, and subsequently Palestine.”

Manetho narrates how King Amenophis—being desirous of beholding the gods and attaining to the Divine powers of prophecy and seership, enjoyed by one of his predecessors, Oru—learned from the priests that, to attain his desire, he must cleanse the land of lepers and other unclean persons. In performing this office, and removing the numerous lepers who abounded in the land to the deserted district formerly inhabited by the shepherds, it was found that many of the priesthood themselves were afflicted by the fell disease; hence, to make the renovation of the land perfect, these sacred personages must also share the doom of the others. The sacrilegious act of laying hands on the sacred persons of the priests was warmly resented, and stimulated the exiles to a general revolt, in which, it is said, they were led on by a ruler named Onisarph, a priest of Heliopolis, whose remarkable talents well fitted him for the office of a leader.

Onisarph, in the first place, enacted a law that his people should neither worship the gods of the land nor abstain from eating the animals held sacred under the old system of Tauric worship. Onisarph, as a priest of Heliopolis, unquestionably taught the worship of the sun in Aries, consequently his enactments must have been unpopular enough to the advocates of the old system. A long war ensued. Onisarph invited the expelled shepherds to join his standard, and after constituting himself their leader, and ravaging the country with tremendous power, himself and his forces were vanquished and driven forth from the land by Amenophis and his son Rampses. Such is an outline of the Egyptian history in which the Exodus of the Israelites is recorded

—a version quoted by Josephus, and confirmed in some measure by oral tradition.

The Onisarph who figures so prominently in these legends, is said to have become the elected leader of the shepherds, and by way of distinguishing him in his new character of law-giver, he was at first named Mises, and subsequently Moses.

His traditional history was, according to custom, made up of the temple legends which clustered around the god whom he served ; but of his real origin and character, no genuine details may ever be expected to find their way down the stream of time. As we shall have no other opportunity of commenting upon the Jewish Scriptures, and their cabalistic meaning, we will close this section by a few words of valuable and suggestive philosophy from the author of "Anacalypsis." On page 108, he says :—

"The difference between the religion of Moses and that of the surrounding nations consisted in this : the latter had become corrupted by the priests, who had set up images in allegorical representation of the zodiacal signs, which, in long periods of time, the people came to consider as representations of real deities. The true and secret meaning of these emblems, the priests (that is, the initiated) took care to keep to themselves, their object being to hold the people in a state of debasement, that they might be more easily ruled. . . . The sacrifices and rites of Baal and Moloch, and the idolatries of Tyre and Sidon, &c., were of the most horrible kind. The priests in all ages have found that the more gloomy and horrible a religion is, the better it has suited their purpose. . . . It was to keep his people from falling into this degraded state that Moses framed many of his laws. To the original religions of these countries he could have had no objection, or else he would never have adopted so many of their astronomical emblems, and called his God by the same names.

"The adoption of the names, signs and emblems of the Magi and Egyptians may be no proof of the sagacity of Moses, but they sufficiently prove the identity of his religion with that of the Magi before it was corrupted. . . . The brazen serpent set

up by Moses in the wilderness, and worshipped by the Israelites till the time of Hezekiah. . . . The cherubim, under the wings of which *the God of the Jews dwelt*—the faces of the cherubim, representing the four equinoxial signs of the ox, the lion, the eagle (formerly the scorpion), and the man—all these things were purely astronomical.

“Every ancient religion, without exception, had Cabala, or secret doctrines, and the same fate attended them all.

“In order that they might not be revealed, they were not written, but only handed down by tradition.

“In the revolutions of centuries, and the violent convulsions of empires, they were forgotten. Scraps of the old tradition were then collected, and mixed with new inventions of the priests, having the double object in view of ruling the people, and concealing their own ignorance. . . .

“The twelve standards of the Israelites were the twelve signs of the zodiac; the Ark was an exact copy of the Ark of Osiris, set afloat in the Nile every year, and supposed to sail to Biblos, in Palestine; the festival of the Passover at the vernal equinox was an exact copy of the Egyptian festival at the same time; these and all the ornaments of the temple, altar, and priest, were, in each country alike, of purely astronomical significance, though their secret meaning was studiously concealed in magical allegory and Cabala.

“The reader will perhaps ask—What, then, is the truth respecting the Old Testament? It is difficult to answer this question in a few words. . . . It is probably a collection of tracts, mixed up with traditions, histories, and rumours of events, collected together by the priests of an ignorant, uncivilized race of shepherds, intermingled with the allegories and fictions in which the ancient philosophers veiled their learning from the eyes of the vulgar.

“The Pentateuch is evidently a collection of different mythological histories, and of the transactions of Moses, the chief of a tribe of wandering Arabs, who was believed to have brought his people from the borders of Egypt, and to have conquered Palestine. . . .

“The treatises in the Pentateuch are put together in so awkward and unskilful a way, that they would have passed as the *work of one person* with none but such uncivilized barbarians as the Jews, if they had related to any of the common concerns of

life, and *where the reasoning faculty of the human mind could be brought into fair action* ; but in matters connected with religion this never has been done, and never will be. Reason has nothing to do with the religion of mankind generally. . . .

“To this the priests of to-day will reply : The circumstances which mark identity in the religion of the Jews and Gentiles we do not deny. *The heathens copied almost all their superstitions from Moses and the Prophets.* Probably to multitudes of believers this will be very satisfactory ; a satisfaction that may be expected amongst persons with whom reason does not operate. To them it is of no consequence that those heathenish superstitions which are alleged to have been copied from Moses were in existence hundreds, and even thousands of years before Moses was born or thought of.”

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## SECTION IX.

### THE PANTHEON OF INCARNATE GOD-MEN.

IN a very indu tritious compilation of ancient history, published by Mr. K. Graves, an American, under the title of SIXTEEN CRUCIFIED SAVIOURS, the author gives a list of thirty-four Avatars or God-Men, whom he names in the following order :—

1. CHRISHNA, of Hindostan.
2. BOUDHA SAKIA, of India.
3. SALIVAHANA, of Bermuda.
4. ZULIS, also OSIRIS, and HORUS, of Egypt.
5. ODIN, of the Scandinavians.
6. CRITA, of Chaldea.
7. ZOROASTER and MITHRA, of Persia.
8. BAAL and TAUT, of Phœnicia.
9. INDRA, of Thibet.
10. BALI, of Afghanistan.
11. JAO, of Nepaul.

12. WITTOBA, of the Billingonese.
13. THAMMUZ, of Syria.
14. ATYS, of Phrygia.
15. XANOTIS, of Thrace.
16. ZOAR, of the Bowzes.
17. ADAD, of Assyria.
18. DEVA, TAT, and others, of Siam.
19. ALCIDES, of Thebes.
20. MIKADO, of the Sintoos.
21. BEDDRU, of Japan.
22. HESUS, or ESOS, and BREMHILLA, of the Druids.
23. THEOR, Son of Odin, of the Gauls.
24. CADMUS, of Greece.
25. HIL and TETA, of the Mandaites.
26. GENTAUT and QUAXALCOTE, of Mexico.
27. UNIVERSAL MONARCH, of the Sibyls.
28. TSCHY, of Formosa.
29. THE LOCOS of Plato (The Word).
30. HOLY ONE of Xaca.
31. FO and TIEN, of China.
32. ADONIS, of Greece.
33. IXION and QUIRINIUS, of Rome.
34. PROMETHEUS, of the Caucasus.

Besides these legendary heroes, there are many more whom it would be tedious even to catalogue, and some few important names omitted from Mr. Graves's list, to two or three of whom we purpose to call attention in this section. We may remark, however, that in tracing out the histories of his divine personages, Mr. Graves gives an exhaustive comparison of the various items of faith professed by their worshippers, and comes to nearly the same conclusion as the author of this treatise—namely, that the chief elements of the legend are preserved in a more or less

marked degree in every case, and may be summed up thus :— The first pivotal point of all theological faith is—the worship of an incarnate God who is born of a virgin mother by a divine father.

This Avatar is prophesied of, and his appearance is always made in accordance with prôphesy, at some special epoch, which bears relation to other epochs defined by cyclic periods. These “Saviours of the world” are always born at mid-winter ; always excite the jealousy of some kingly tyrant, and, though themselves of royal descent, are born in caves or manglers ; they pass their infancy in obscurity, and not infrequently cause the “massacre of all the innocents” in the district of their birth. They are always miracle-workers, and are generally connected in some mysterious way with serpents, who either oppose them in conflict, or are made to represent the evil power adverse to them. They generally perform the same class of miracles, preach the highest morals of the age and land in which they appear ; are most benevolent, and act the part of reformers, and especially that of censors of the theological abuses of their time. They feed multitudes, cast out devils, heal the sick ; finally they succumb to the powers of evil that oppose them ; die a violent death—very often by crucifixion ; descend to the lower regions to rescue lost souls ; reascend to heaven, and thenceforth become judges of the dead, mediators, redeemers of men, who offer vicarious sacrifices to God for the sins of the people.

Without following Mr. Graves in his own circumstantial methods of comparing the myths of many nations upon the above points, we present them in summary, as examples of the kind of doctrine which is invariably found pervading the histories of all the incarnate gods, commencing with the first Boudha, and ending with the Avatar of the Jews.

THE GOD-MEN, OR DIVINE INCARNATIONS, OF  
GREECE AND ROME.

WE have already reminded our readers that the succession of ideas which the providences of history have transmitted from age to age, and land to land, bring down the main features of ancient theology in direct lines from India, through Egypt, China, Assyria, Babylon, Persia, Arabia, Asia Minor, and Palestine ; to the Greeks, Romans, Celts, Gauls, modern Europeans, Americans, and Australasians ; from pre-historic to historic ages ; from the Boudha of the Tauric constellations to the Christ of Aries, and all preserve the types of the Sun-God's history ; all impersonate his legend in the national forms of differing lands, and renew the antique garb, with the shreds and patches of ever increasing theological complications, for the benefit of modern fanaticism, and the edification of those who are contented to accept of priest-craft in lieu of religion.

Midway between the most ancient metaphysics of India and the most modern materialisms of Christianity stand the exquisite ideality and glowing philosophy of the Grecian sage, and it is to some of the most prominent embodiments of the universal solar legend, embellished by the luxuriant fancy and graceful imagery of the classical Greek mind, that we now call our readers' attention. Slight as may be the sketches here presented, we have but to transfer them to Babylon, and re-clothe them with the fervid orientalism of that magnificent land, to find our Prometheus converted into Bel ; or, with another still slighter change, to Syria or Persia, where we recognize him in the features of Adonis or Mithra.

Wandering farther north, and changing the beneficent rays of the sun, illuminating the flowery plains of Ilium, to the ice-bound regions of Scandinavia, we should recognize the beautiful Balder,

or the terrible Thor ; and a still less perilous flight across the blue waters of the Mediterranean, would convert the beneficent Saviour of mankind, Esculapius, into the same high sounding title at Palestine, or the no less revered Boudha of the ancient Cingalesc.

Commencing with a brief notice of the far-famed Samian sage, Pythagoras, we shall have no difficulty in recognizing the family likeness which the stream of time has washed down from India to Greece. The general details of this celebrated personage's life, scientific discoveries, and theurgic achievements, are so well known that we shall only touch on those particular points which bear upon the subject of our inquiry, and we cannot do this more concisely or on a more authentic basis than by extracts from the "Anacalypsis."

"The reader will recollect that in our observations on the Chrishna of India, some difference between him and Jesus, relating to the immaculate conception, was observed by Mr. Maurice, and laid hold of as a point by which he could ridicule the idea of the identity between the histories of Chrishna and Christ. The life of Pythagoras will at once show where the Christians could have found the particulars which differed from the history of Chrishna.

"The first striking circumstances in which the history of Pythagoras agrees with that of Jesus are, that the former was born at Sidon, the latter at Bethlehem, both in Syria. The father of Pythagoras, as well as the father of Jesus, was prophetically informed that his wife should bring forth a son, who should be a benefactor to mankind. They were both born when their mothers were from home on journeys—Joseph and his wife having gone up to Bethlehem to be taxed, and the father of Pythagoras having travelled from Samos, his residence, to Sidon, on mercantile concerns. Pythais, the mother of Pythagoras, was overshadowed by the *Spectre or Ghost of the God Apollo*, who afterwards appeared to the husband, and informed him of the divine origin of the child about to be born. From these circumstances, Pythagoras was known as *the Son of God*, and was supposed by the multitude to be under divine inspiration."

His youth spent in Egypt, divine life, noble teachings, the extraordinary miracles ascribed to him, the persecutions by which he was ultimately destroyed, and the fact that he lived, and his history was published abroad at least some five centuries before the advent of Christianity, are all circumstances too well known to need farther notice.

In the celebrated Orphic verses are to be found, amongst notices of other incarnate gods of Greece, elaborate descriptions of the famous Hercules. This celebrated myth has most commonly been identified with the equally mythical Samson of the Hebrews, that portion of Samson's history relating to Delilah, and his shaking the temple from its foundation, &c., being a direct paraphrase of the mythological Hercules history, as sung of in the Orphic verses described in Bell's "Pantheon," Parkhurst's "Greek Lexicon," and other classical works. There are, however, many other points of resemblance between the history of the Greek and Jewish God-men which are too striking to be omitted. Hercules, or Alcides, as he was called in Greece, was always claimed to be the Son of God (Jupiter), by a human mother—Alcmena, wife of a Theban king. The date of his birth was fixed about twelve centuries and a half before the Christian era; yet his famous twelve labours, and the remarkable virtue and benevolence attributed to him, procured him the title of "Saviour and Benefactor of Mankind" twelve centuries before it was conferred on his Jewish successor in Palestine.

The Rev. Mr. Faber, in his "Greek Antiquities," commenting on Hercules as the evident impersonation of the solar myth, says:—

*"On the sphere, he is represented in the act of contending with the serpent, the head of which is under his foot; and this serpent, we are told, is that which guarded the tree with the golden fruit in the midst of the garden of the Hesperides.*

“But the garden of the Hesperides, as we have already seen, was no other than the garden of Paradise, consequently, the serpent of that garden, the head of which is crushed beneath the heel of Hercules . . . must necessarily be a transcript of that serpent *whose form was assumed by the tempter of our first parents.*” . . .

Parkhurst, in his “Greek Lexicon,” says :—

“It is well known that by Hercules was meant the sun, or solar light, and his twelve famous labours have been referred to his passage through the zodiacal signs. But the labours of Hercules seem to have had a still higher view, and to have been originally designed as emblematic memorials of what the real Son of God and Saviour of the world was to do, and suffer, for our sakes.”

If the reader cannot recognize into what realms of comparison the joint admission of these two reverend scholars are drifting, our words of explanation could do no more by way of enlightenment.

In Bell’s “Pantheon” we have a full account of another celebrated God-man, whose worship commenced at a very early date, and, after having been established for many centuries in Phoenicia and Egypt, subsequently became transferred to Greece. From the fact that several splendid temples were erected to him, a vulgar opinion prevailed that the worship of ESCULAPIUS originated in Greece,

Some centuries after Esculapius had received divine honours at Epidaurus, he was formally adopted as one of the gods of Rome, and about 280 years before the Christian era his worship was celebrated at Rome with the utmost splendour. This incarnate God-man was represented as the son of the *virgin Coronis*, by Apollo, the sun-god, whose oracle recognized and proclaimed his divine origin. In infancy he was brought up *amongst shepherds*, who at once perceived his divine nature by [the rays of glory which encircled his head. In manhood he cured the

sick, raised the dead, and by aid of his staff, wreathed around by a serpent which he had conquered, he performed such extraordinary miracles of healing that he was always termed "the good Saviour," and, after a violent death, was worshipped as the benefactor of mankind and the judge of the dead. The *cock* and *serpent* were his emblems, and the miracles related of him are so curiously *prophetic* of the still later performances in Judea, that we cite one as an example.

The biographer of Proclus, the Greek philosopher, writes :—

"The daughter of Archiades, and wife of Theagenes, when she was yet but a young maiden, and living with her parents, was seized with a grievous and incurable distemper.

"All help from the physicians failing, her father applied to the philosopher (Proclus), entreating him to pray for his daughter. He therefore went to the temple of Esculapius, intending to pray for the sick woman to the god ; for the city (Athens) was at that time blessed in the undemolished temple of 'the Good Saviour,' but while he was praying, according to the ancient form, a sudden change appeared in the damsel, and she was immediately restored to health, for the Saviour, as being God, easily healed her."

Middleton, in his "Free Enquiry," writes :—

"Strabó informs us that the temples of Esculapius were constantly filled with the sick, and that tablets were hung all over the walls, describing the cures effected by 'THE SAVIOUR.' There is still a remarkable fragment of one of these tablets extant, and exhibited by Greuter in his collection, as it was found in the ruins of Esculapius' temple in the island of the Tiber, at Rome, which gives an account of *two blind men restored to sight by Esculaptus*, in the open view, and with the loud acclamations of the people acknowledging the power of the god."

What a pity it is that this miracle had not occurred three hundred years later ! the Christians would have been at no loss to determine from whence the Romans *borrowed* their narrative.

We conclude this sketch by an extract from Addison's trans-

lation of Ovid's *Metamorphoses*, in which the following prophecy relating to the future of the infant Esculapius, will be familiar to every schoolboy, and would be, of course, deeply interesting to every Christian, could the time to which it relates have been pushed forward, as above suggested, two or three centuries.

Once, as the sacred infant she surveyed,  
 The god was kindled in the raving maid,\*  
 And thus she uttered her prophetic tale :  
 "Hail, great Physician of the world, all hail !  
 Hail, mighty infant, who in years to come,  
 Shall heal the nations and defraud the tomb !  
 Swift be thy growth, thy triumphs unconfined,  
 Make kingdoms thicker, and increase mankind ;  
 Thy daring act shall animate the dead,  
 And draw the thunder on thy guilty head ;  
 Then shalt thou die, but from the dark abode,  
 Shall rise victorious, and be twice a god."

In the same smoothly-flowing rhymes, Addison, whose versification of Ovid has so familiarized the world with some of the most curious elements of Grecian mythology, gives us the history of still another and yet more celebrated sun-god—namely, the Indian Dyonisius, or the Greek Bacchus. The speciality of this famous myth seems to be the representation of the sun in the grand festivities of harvest, and the season of vintage. It is for this reason that the Greeks, to whom this season was of all others the most festive and welcome, commingled so strangely the rites of Ceres, the corn-harvest goddess, and those of Bacchus, the patron or representative of the solar energy in the grape harvest. In India this god was obviously confounded with, if not the actual original of Siva, the principle of generation, as well as destruction. His worship was also extensively practised throughout Phœnicia and Syria, where he was known as HESUS. He is also considered to be synonymous with Adoneuos, the Giver,

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\* Pythoness or Sybil.

and some mythologists have identified him both in history and character with the Egyptian Osiris, also the symbol of the sun in summer. Certain it is that the Osiric mysteries were transferred from Egypt into Greece, where they became the Bacchic rites, just as the mysteries of Isis (Nature) became in succeeding centuries, the mysteries of Eleusis, in which Ceres, the queen of heaven, and representative of the fruitful earth, was the central figure. Orpheus distinctly identifies Bacchus with Osiris, whose history was subsequently transferred to Moses; but Ovid and Horace describe him, as usual, as the son of a god, by a mortal woman—as concealed from the wrath of a tyrant king in a chest which was set afloat on the waters; rescued by *a king's daughter*, by whom the divine infant was brought up. Ultimately he becomes the great miracle-worker; is worshipped as the saviour of men, and their redeemer from the storms, tempests, and sufferings of winter; alternately adored as a god, and persecuted by adverse powers, he is finally torn in pieces, like Osiris; like him, however, and in imitation of the solar legend, he is annually resurrected and annually reascends to his place in the heavens, to be re-born and to re-enact the successive events of the sun-god's yearly myth.

Apollo, Mercury, and Adonis, are all incarnations with fragments of the same history, each of them being "Sons of God," by mortal woman; each being for a time incarnate on earth for the benefit of mankind; each destroyed and received up into heaven again, as mediators between the Most High ZEUS, the great UNKNOWN and UNKNOWABLE, and sinful men. The last, and perhaps the most poetical of all these Greek Avatars, has been celebrated by the renowned tragic poet Æschylus, under the name of Prometheus. There have been so many exquisite poems and popular descriptions given of this famous myth, that one is at a loss to point to the best version extant. Prometheus, "himself

a god," is represented as descending to earth, and for the sake of elevating humanity to a higher standard than mere forms of clay, he steals the divine fire of immortality from heaven, and by infusing into men the deific principle, renders them, like himself, sons of God.

For this act of sacrilege, the god-man is doomed to be nailed to a cross and exposed on Mount Caucasus, until death translates him once again to a triumphant re-ascent into the heaven, the gates of which he thereby for ever unlocks to the human race. In writing of this god, Mr. Graves says very concisely: "In the account of Prometheus of Caucasus, as furnished by Seneca, Hesiod, and other writers, it is stated, that he was nailed to an upright beam of timber, to which were affixed extended arms of wood, and this cross was situated near the Caspian Straits." The "New Am. Cyclopædia," vol. i., p. 157, says: "It is doubtful whether there is to be found in the whole range of Greek letters, deeper pathos than that of the divine woe of the demi-god Prometheus, *crucified* on the Scythian crags for his love to mortals." Mr. Graves adds:—

"In Lempriere's 'Classical Dictionary,' and the 'Anacalypsis,' may be found the following particulars:—'At the final exit of this god, the whole frame of nature became convulsed; the earth shook, the rocks were rent, the graves were opened, and in a storm which seemed to threaten the dissolution of the universe, the solemn scene for ever closed, and 'the Saviour' gave up the ghost."

Mr. Taylor makes the statement in his "Syntagma" (p. 95), that the whole story of Prometheus's crucifixion, burial, and resurrection, was acted in pantomime in Athens *five hundred years before Christ*. For further particulars concerning this celebrated Avatar, the reader is advised to study Æschylus's sublime tragedy of "Prometheus Bound," as acted in Athens some five centuries before the Christian era. Those unversed in

classical lore, may now obtain fine translations of this noble work by Potter and other distinguished writers. Failing in this, let them consult any of the four books of the New Testament, in which they will find the life, death, sufferings, and main incidents of the Promethean tragedy, plagiarized under another name. True, the Greek version of the story was published abroad at least five centuries before the Jewish ; but as the latter has been subject to thousands of revisions, alterations, interpolations, and amendments, undertaken in different centuries to suit the views of interested commentators, the reader will have all the benefit of these "modern improvements" in the gospel version. For the ORIGINAL OF ALL ORIGINALS, consult the sacred books and still older monumental scriptures of the Hindoos, in which the entire legend may be studied in its primeval freshness and antique ideality.

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## SECTION X.

### THE LAST OF THE AVATARS AND HIS RELATIVE POSITION IN HISTORY.

THERE are many students of religious history in the world, and some into whose hands this little volume may fall, who have been accustomed to think the *all* of religion is comprised in their forms of faith, and who mistake *their opinions* for well proven *facts*.

To such persons, the preceding pages will not be judged by the weight of evidence which accompanies the statements they contain, but rather by a comparison of those statements with their own preconceived prejudices, and the unreasoning belief that whatever is opposed to their faith must be false. Readers of this temper, if they deign to oppose our heretical doctrines with any show of argument at all, would do so in the usual fashion, substituting faith for reason, and asking in fear and

trembling, lest the very contact of logical reason should tarnish the mystic aura of unreasoning faith. "Where, then, do you place our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and Him crucified?"

*Author.*—Amongst all the other Lords and Saviours of history, only ranking him as the *last* of the Avatars, instead of—as you would urge—the original of the scheme.

*Christian.*—But you seek to destroy the foundation of our faith on the testimony of heathen writers, heathen scriptures, and heathen vestiges only. We who are the salt of the earth, the chosen of the Lord, and the special recipients of His Divine revelation, cannot stoop to contend with evidence derived from heathen sources, and proved alone by heathen records.

*Author.*—Who made the heathen? Do they derive their origin from the same creative source as yourselves, or do you teach of more Gods and more Creators than one?

*Christian.*—Oh, there is but one God, of course; that is, three Gods in one, and one in three, &c.; and, no doubt, this Divine Trinity created all men—the heathens as well as the Christians, but ——

*Author.*—If this be so, then why should not the testimony of one part of God's creatures be as good as that of another? and who is to determine that the legend ORIGINATED by the *heathen* is not divine revelation, as well as the COPY of that legend plagiarized by the Christians?

*Christian.*—Because we have the testimony of God's own word in the Bible,

*Author.*—How do you know the Bible is God's own word?

*Christian.*—Do not Jesus and the prophets, the patriarchs, and, in short, the Bible itself, say so?

*Author.*—Then you make the Bible witness for itself. That would not make it true. But even then, neither Jesus, nor the prophets, the patriarchs, nor the Bible itself, claim any divine

inspiration for its utterances, or any infallibility for its teachings. On the contrary, many parts of the Bible declare that it can only be understood spiritually, and that "the letter killeth." Some of its most simple narratives, such as the story of Abraham, Sarah, and Hagar, are affirmed to be allegories, and throughout its pages no claim is ever set up for its divine authenticity. In the face of those scientific revealments which resolve the chief portion of its writings into cabalistic allegories, it would scarcely matter to the true scientist, what its alleged grounds of authority were.

No book can witness for itself without ample corroborative proof, and all scholastic proof is in direct antagonism to your claim.

Beyond this, the internal evidences of your Scriptures are fatal to your assumptions. For example, all the books of the Pentateuch, the histories of Noah, Abraham, the patriarchs, and Moses, are direct and glaring plagiarisms from the Scriptures and traditions of far older nations than the Jews; nay, the very personages you claim to be such, are so confounded with solar myths, that the most learned commentators are at a loss to discover where the myth ends and the history begins. During the two great epochs of the Assyrian and Persian captivities, also, the cities, temples, records and books of the Hebrews were destroyed. It was confessedly to Ezra that the Jews owed the re-construction of any scriptural records, and that at a very late period in their national existence, and from the oral gossip of the ancient men of the tribe, from whose sayings and traditions alone, the *sacred* word of God contained in your Old Testament was compiled.

As for your prophetic writings, we have shown in former sections how useless it would be to attempt to unlock their cabalistic mysteries without the key of astronomical symbolism and cyclic calculations. Again: The entire of the New Testa-

ment turns upon the existence of an Incarnate God, whose history we have shown you was published abroad in every country of the East thousands of years before the Jews were known as a nation. You can establish no claim, then, either to originality, truth, or special revelation, until you have dealt with and accounted for all antecedent records of a similar character. The mere fact that you designate these records "heathenism," proves nothing, explains nothing, cannot blot them out of existence, or show your Incarnate God is entitled to the characteristics these records assign to others. You must produce more stringent tokens of original divinity for your Avatar before the heathen histories can be sneered or abused out of the world's logical acceptance.

*Christian.*—You throw away the Bible, deny the Son of God, revile the sacred word, and trample on the cross! How can we contend with such blasphemous infidelity?

*Author.*—Stereotyped terms of accusation, and old stories which prove nothing; abusive epithets which convey no proof and offer no rebutting testimony to our stubborn facts! PROVE that the Bible is the word of God, Jesus the Son of God; that the cross is aught more than the cross of every other Eastern nation, and that we are infidel to the truth instead of to your theories; then, and not till then, your words will have some meaning.

*Christian.*—If you will not accept of the sacred record ——

*Author.*—PROVE that it is sacred.

*Christian.*—We refer you to the history of Christianity itself, and the witness afforded by the faith of the most civilized nations of the earth.

*Author.*—We accept your new ground, and propose to select from several millions of records a few passages illustrative of the opinions of the most authoritative writers on Christianity,

and that at periods so nearly in approximation with the time fixed for the scene of the Christian drama that it would have been impossible to forget or falsify its main incidents, had they been historically true. Let our first witness be from the pages of the much-vaunted "word of God" itself. How truly its authors wrote, we may judge from the following passages:—

"But if our unrighteousness commend the righteousness of God, what shall we say?"—(Rom. iii. 5).

"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).

"For this cause God shall send them *strong delusion*, that they should believe *a lie*: that they all might be damned."—(2 Thess. ii. 11-12).

"Which things are an allegory."—(Gal. iv. 24).

"And communicated to them that gospel which I preach among the Gentiles, but *privately* to them that were of reputation."—(Gal. ii. 2).

"God also hath made us able ministers of the New Testament, not of the letter, but of the spirit; for *the letter killeth*, but the spirit giveth life."—(2 Cor. iii. 6).

We now turn to some of the most authentic of the early Christian writers, foremost amongst whom stands the celebrated Eusebius, a writer born at or about the year 288 of the Christian era, and whose works, especially his "Ecclesiastical History," are quoted with scarcely less veneration and implicit belief than the "Holy Scriptures."

In the first book of his great history, this devoted and blindly-bigoted partisan of Christianity, heads his fourth chapter with these remarkable words:—

"That the religion published by Jesus Christ to all nations is *neither new nor strange*." . . . .

"Neither new nor strange" indeed, for in several succeeding chapters he conclusively proves that all the doctrines, words, works, epistles, and gospels of Christianity, were synonymous with the words, works, and writings of the most ancient Essenes

or Therapeuts, a sect which flourished and was widely known both in Judæa and Alexandria for over two hundred years before the Christian era.

In the 17th chapter of his second book, Eusebius says distinctly :—"Those ancient Therapeutæ were Christians, and their ancient writings were our gospels and epistles." That the universal resort of the Christians—namely, to pretend that all antique truth or philosophy was *borrowed* from them—may become of no effect, we may remind our readers that the most circumstantial and complete history of the Essenes that was ever published was written by Philo, a learned Alexandrian Jew, who was himself one of their order, and who was born about forty years *before* the period assigned for the birth of Christ.

The Rev. Robert Taylor, in commenting on the important admission of Eusebius above quoted, says :—

"Lardner, in his 'Credibility of the Christian Evidences,' quotes this astonishing confession of the great pillar of the pretended evidences of the Christian religion, and shows how aware he was of the fatal inferences with which it teems."

Faustus, the learned Manichean bishop of Christianity, writing in the fourth century, says :—

"It is an undoubted fact that the New Testament was not written by Christ himself, nor by his apostles, but a long while after their time, by some unknown persons, who, lest they should not be credited when they wrote of affairs they were little acquainted with, affixed to their works the names of apostles, or of such as were supposed to have been their companions, and then said that they were written *according* to them."

Mons. Daillee, a learned French writer, in his fine work on "The Ceremonies of the Roman Catholic Religion," says :—

"The Papists took their idolatrous ceremonies and worship of images from the most ancient heathen religions."

"There is no difference between Pagan and Catholic worship, but only this, that names and titles are changed."—*Ludovicus Vivus*.

"All the heretical forms of Christianity were borrowed from the heathen."—*Epiphanius*.

"It mightily affects me to see how many there were in the earliest times of the church who considered it as a capital exploit to lend to heavenly truth the help of their own inventions, in order that the new doctrine might be more readily allowed among the Gentiles. From which source, beyond question, sprang innumerable books under the name of the Lord and his saints and apostles, which in no wise favoured even the least of their doctrines."—*Casaubon*.

"Such was the licence of inventing, so headlong the readiness of believing in the first ages, that the credibility of transactions derived from thence must have been hugely doubtful, and thus the Church of God has reasonably to complain of its mystical times."—*Evidences of Church History (Bishop Fell.)*

"Ecclesiastical history reads nothing but the roguery and folly of bishops and churchmen."—*22nd Epistle of Grotius*.

It would be needless to give here any description of the Therapeuts or Essenes above alluded to, but if the reader will study the works of Philo, or take the second book of Eusebius's famous "Ecclesiastical History," he will therein find so perfect a description of the character, doctrines, habits, miracles, and teachings of Jesus Christ, that it will be necessary to assure himself that it is the great Christian partisan Eusebius who is writing, and that he is describing a sect, *who lived long anterior to Christ*, and not a Christian community.

The learned Basnage, in his history of the Jews, says that although Philo's testimony clearly enough proves the Essenes and Therapeutæ were neither Catholics nor Monks, the Christians, Catholics, and Monks conclusively enough demonstrate their origin to have been from the Essenes, seeing that they derive all their doctrines and manners from thence—that is, if two distinct sects should not present exactly the same features without copying from one another. Rev. Robert Taylor, in a most elaborate argument, demonstrating from every possible source that the sect of the Essenes was the

root and foundation of the later Christians, concludes an array of exhaustive and unanswerable proof by showing that in this way only is accounted for, the fact, that Jesus and his followers constantly alluded to a church and church organizations already in existence, and flourishing before the period of his death and his followers' attempts to inaugurate his religion. Mr. Taylor writes:—

“Throughout all these epistles we find the gospel spoken of as already *preached to every creature under the sun*; Scriptures continually alluded to of high antiquity, churches already established, distinct orders of bishops, elders, priests, deacons, &c., exactly as described by Philo in his account of the Essenes, but an impossibility amongst a sect just sprung into existence, and one whose scriptures were not in St. Paul's time even in existence.”

From the researches of Prof. Upham, of Bowdoin College, U.S.A., whose long residence in the scenes he describes entitles him to pronounce with absolute certainty upon their geographical positions, we gather the following significant details:—

“*He came upon the sea of Galilee through the midst of the coasts of Decapolis.*’—(Mark vii. 31). The name of Decapolis was not known before the reign of Nero, and it had no *coasts*. (! !)

“*He departed from Galilee and came into the coasts of Judea beyond Jordan.*’—(Matt. xix. 1). The Jordan itself was the eastern boundary of Judea, and there were no coasts of Judea beyond it.” (! !)

The writer of the fourth gospel, claimed *U*/ Christians to have been the beloved disciple, and an eye-witness of Jesus' life and acts, writes of Annas, the high priest, at the time when Caiaphas is said to be holding that office. Again he says, “*Caiaphas being high priest that year,*” when the office was not merely an annual one, but, according to Josephus, was held by Caiaphas ten years. The same statement, repeated in Luke, and several times in John, thus—“In the high priesthood of Annas and Caiaphas,” proves the writer to have been ENTIRELY IGNORANT of Jewish institutions.

"*Bethany beyond Jordan*" is another solecism which proves the writer to have been *ignorant* of what he wrote about. There did not exist any Bethany *beyond* Jordan, and though Origen subsequently tried to account for this passage by suggesting that there *might have been two Bethanies*, most reliable authorities admit that there *might* have been—but that there were not.

"*John was baptizing in Aenon, near to Salim in Judea, because there was much water there.*" Such a place as Aenon was unknown even in the third century, and Aenon signifies a spring. The writer did not understand *his own* language, then, in pretending that a spring was the name of a place.

The account in the fourth gospel of the *Pool of Bethesda*, with all its circumstantial description and miraculously creative powers, is, like the miracle performed there—a fiction. Neither Josephus nor any of his contemporaries mention such a place; nor has any such locality, nor even a tradition of its existence, been found, except in the fertile imagination of the Evangelist.

"*Near a city of Samaria, which is called Sychar.*" No such place was ever known, and though the most elastic "explanations" have been fitted to this difficulty, in the hope of explaining it away, such great Biblical scholars as Credner, Ewald, Hengstenberg, &c., only make confusion worse confounded by striving to find places to fit Sychar that will not fit, and meanings for the term that will not apply.

Taylor, in a still longer and more damaging list of Bible impossibilities than we could find room for in many sections, describes their gross inapplicability to Jewish authorship, thus: "*He departed into Galilee, and leaving Nazareth, came and dwelt at Capernaum;*" which is much such geographical accuracy as if one should relate the adventures of a hero who departed into Middlesex, and, leaving London, came and dwelt in Lombard Street;" or, to bring the matter near home, *who departed into*

*New South Wales, and leaving Sydney, came and dwelt in George Street, &c., &c., &c.*

*Christian.*—And so you first make our Lord and Saviour's divinity a myth—an imitation of scores of other pagan heroes—and then you show, upon the strength of a few *indiscreet* remarks of the great and good Eusebius, that the very Christian religion itself was but a re-hash of some contemptible sects who flourished before Christ, and *happened* to teach, preach, and live out the same doctrines and life that he lived. Worse than all, you abuse the Word of God by attempting to prove that the very gospels were written by foreigners, ignorant of the geography and customs of Palestine! Have you never heard, O child of perdition! how the good Justin Martyr, in his famous apology for Christianity, and subsequently the divinely-inspired Chrysostom, both explained all these little discrepancies and petty difficulties by showing “*that the devil—that cunning adversary, ever seeking whom he might devour—put it into the heads of the heathen to invent these things first, so that when the Lord and Saviour of Men should really be born He should not be believed in.*” Leaving, however, the realm of polemic, and vain disputations, at least you must acknowledge that, in Jesus, the world has the highest model of the purest life, and the divinest teaching that was ever yet given to humanity.

*Author.*—Even there we cannot join issue with the Christians. Let the following examples of pagan morality and ethics speak for themselves:—

“God, who is perfect wisdom, and perfect happiness, is the final refuge of the man who has liberally bestowed his wealth, who has been firm in virtue, and who honours and adores the Great One.”

“Preserve thyself from self-sufficiency, and do not covet the property of another.”

“The way to beatitude is only open to him, who, without omission, speaketh the truth.”—VEDAS, *the most ancient of the Hindoo sacred books.*

“Thou shalt not kill even the smallest creature.”

“Thou shalt not appropriate to thyself that which belongs to another.”

“Thou shalt not infringe the laws of chastity.”

“Thou shalt not lie.” “Thou shalt not calumniate.” “Thou shalt not speak of injuries.” “Thou shalt not excite quarrels.”

“Thou shalt not hate.” “Preserve faith in the holy writings.”

“Believe in immortality.”—*Creed of Boudha Sakia.*

“Do to another what you would he should do to you. . . And do not to another what you would not should be done to you. Thou only needest this law alone. It is the foundation of all else of good.”—*Maxim 24th, Confucius.*

Let not soft slumber close thine eyes  
 Before thou recollectest thrice  
 Thy train of actions thro' the day—  
 Where have my feet found out their way?  
 What have I learned, where have I been?  
 From all I've heard, from all I've seen,  
 What know I more that's worth the knowing,  
 What have I done that's worth the doing,  
 What have I sought that I should shun,  
 What duty have I left undone,  
 Or into what new follies run?  
 These self inquiries are the road  
 That lead to virtue and to God.—*Golden Verses of Pythagoras.*

Volumes could not contain the noble truths and gracious sentiments to be found in the scriptures of Hindoos, Egyptians, Chinese, Persians, Greeks, Romans, and other heathen nations, written long ere the day when similar but neither finer nor purer teachings were enunciated in the “Sermon on the Mount.”

Confucius, Boudha, Chrishna, Osiris, Zoroaster, Pythagoras, Plato, Socrates, the Great Saladin, the English Alfred; many a crusading hero, and many a turbaned infidel; Joan of Arc, Savonarola, Pastor Oberlin, Theodore Parker, Swedenborg, Martin Luther, Christopher Columbus, John Brown, and many other such stars of goodness, wisdom, and truth, whose multitude outnumber the galaxy, and whose brightness outshines the physical sun of earth, have all inscribed names on the shining

roll of immortality, not second in excellency, or inferior in worth, to that adored as God by Christian worshippers. Narrow-minded and narrow-souled bigots! If Jesus had been God, no man could have imitated him. Being man, how could he be better than the good and true and pure of any age or any land? And it is a libel alike on God's work and man's history to affirm that there are not more truly good in the world than truly bad; or that goodness and worth, when it attains its acme, needs the idolatry of worshipping crowds to prove that it is a constant concomitant of human history.

*Christian.*—Still again the question, though I tremble at the blasphemy of propounding it. Who, then, would you say was the Lord Jesus, and where would you place him?

*Author.*—He was either a personal or impersonal representative of the Essenes, appearing in Judea about the time when the doctrines of that sect had taken deep root in many other places, and eventually came to be preached there also. He might have been the *ideal* man of the grand solar drama, which the Essenes, in common with other mystics of the East, cherished as their esoteric doctrine, whilst exoterically, they, like other ancient religionists, taught to the people a pure and simple system of theology and morals. At the same time it is possible that he may have been a man, a truly good and pure man, around whom his friends subsequently wove the famous solar myth, writing just such a history as "the Scriptures" required, for the fulfilment of the expected Avatar of that particular cyclic epoch. But even if he were a man, there is no evidence of such a personality save the four gospels, the authorship of which has conclusively been denied by the best authority to have belonged to any disciple of Jesus.

No contemporary historian makes any mention of such a personage. The events said to have occurred at his trial and

death are neither found in Roman or Jewish records, neither in the writings of the officials, nor historians of the time. Yet Philo, the learned historian of the Essenes, wrote of his period without ever alluding to him. Josephus, the voluminous historian of Herod and his times, makes no mention of him. Early in the fourth century, indeed, the unscrupulous and devoted partisan, Eusebius, claimed to have *found* a copy of Josephus in which one single passage appears descriptive of Christ and suggestive of his divine life and mission. It is needless to remind the well-informed scholar that even the most zealous of modern historians writing in the interests of Christianity, have been compelled to give up this one passage in the *one* copy of Josephus, and acknowledge that it was an audacious interpolation. No writer has more curtly or deliberately condemned this forgery to the obscurity it cannot (unfortunately) find, than Gibbon in his "Decline and Fall," &c., when he throws in a note admonishing his readers "that the passage concerning Jesus Christ was inserted into the text of Josephus between the time of Origen and that of Eusebius, and may furnish us with an example of no vulgar forgery." . . . Philo, writing at the very time when the miracles of Christ, if they ever occurred, must have been known to him, makes no mention of any such personage.

Tacitus, Pliny, Suetonius, Epictetus, and Plutarch (all learned writers, born within the very century marked as that of Christ, writing of his sect and country, and familiar with all the circumstances of contemporaneous history), make no mention of the personage, or only allude to the traditions current about him as promulgated by Christians themselves. Where, then, would you place your God, oh Christians, save with the gods of other nations, and as the last hero of a legend which has been the prophetic mantle thrown over the shoulders, now of inspired men, and now of impersonal myths, until the stern FACTS of history and corrobora-

tive testimony alone can decide which are the characters of actual fact, which of blind FAITH, and which of deliberate FRAUD?

*Christian.*—And still I WILL BELIEVE. The Christian religion is good enough for me. The Bible is my rock of ages, Christ my salvation.

*Author.*—And blind faith your standard of truth.

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## CONCLUSION.

### THE RELIGION OF THE PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE.

ON reviewing the preceding pages, every truly thoughtful reader must be prepared to consider the question, as to what conclusion he can deliberately arrive at concerning their contents. If they are false, the magnitude of the interests they assail, and the supernal character of the subjects they deal with, render such falsity an unpardonable crime against God and man. But if, on the other hand, they are true, and prove their truth by the unassailable character of the evidence upon which they rest, is not the conclusion of every candid mind inevitable? and can there be any appeal from such a conclusion? True, we have left much of the story untold. We have not attempted to unmask the tremendous frauds perpetrated during the eighteen centuries of Christianity, in reference to the Scriptures, and other forms of testimony, imposed by Synods and Councils upon a mystified but all too trusting world. We bear no record to the savage wars and cruel massacres, by which Christian lands have decimated Christian communities, and that on no other pretext, than the settlement of impossible points of faith, or incomprehensible propositions in metaphysics. We close our ears to the agonizing cries, whose echoes still vibrate from torture chambers and blazing piles, where Christians are torn in pieces, or roasted alive, for the honour and glory of other Christians' opinions.

We steel our hearts against the bitter moans and piteous wails resounding through the loathsome dungeons of Monastery and Inquisition, where many a hapless victim has died a thousand deaths, in the unspeakable horrors of ecclesiastical punishments. We cannot in this place number up the many thousands that have been haled to shameful deaths because they could not believe the baker's bread and vintner's wine, dispensed by priestly hands, could become the flesh and blood of a being whose very existence on earth was doubtful, through the magical hocus pocus of ecclesiastical jugglery; in a word—the eighteen centuries' record of all that Christianity has done, and said, cannot form a part of this little treatise. Enough has been told, however, and enough written, to give any intelligent reader an interior view of the Shekinah wherein the true secrets of religious "faiths, facts, and frauds," have been kept enshrined.

To any candid mind, the sum of all that remains of that foundation upon which proud ecclesiasticism has upreared its stupendous empire will be a foundered ship, tossing on the wild and tempestuous billows of divided opinion, and only waiting for the next lightning flash from the heaven of knowledge and enlightenment to sink into the unresurrecting abyss of oblivion—a ship with sails all rent, rudder gone, compass lost, masts level with her parting planks; captain, pilot, steersman, and crew all dead, or melting out into the visionary realms of myth and allegory, from whence their unreal forms were drawn. The world may ask—Can such a wreck as this ensue from the mere withdrawal of the veil of mystery that has so long enshrouded the hollow pretences of ecclesiasticism?

Even so. This is the breaking up of systems that have stolen the sacred garb of religion to array their idols in. The melting away of idle visions and vain superstitions, baseless theories, and legendary myths, worked up into human forms,

with æific attributes. A pageant meant at first to dramatize the solemn march of nature, but ending with the worship of the players. A farce constructed on the awful name of God ; a tragedy of darkness, wrought out of cheerful sunbeams ; a melodrama, where men pretend to call each other gods ; and mimic in their play, the tutelary angels of suns and systems.

And yet, in the midst of all the mighty upheavals which modern science, art, discovery, and reason are effecting in the fantasies of theology, and the groundless assumptions of priestcraft, let it never be supposed that either pen or voice can mar with irreverent touch the sacred elements of true religion.

God lives and reigns, although the mythical forms of ten thousand *God-men* should vanish into the airy realms of allegory and imagination. The facts of immortality can never be disproved, although the Avatars, on whom a superstitious faith has built up their only proofs, resolve themselves into solar fire, and their histories merge into sun and star beams. Good and evil are stubborn facts, and sin is a stain on the soul of man, which the conjurers of ecclesiastical "rings" can never convert into good by spells and tricks. The truths of religion were born before ecclesiasticism, and will survive its wreck. The ruins of faiths men deplore, do not affect the principle of natural, heaven-born primordial religion ; and were every form of faith now prevailing, blotted out from the earth one minute, the next would see created man worshipping his creative Father, God ; following the beckoning hands of immortal friends, with the confident assurance of their own immortality, and listening to the pleadings of the importunate witness for good and evil within, their CONSCIENCE, with the acknowledgment that they were responsible beings, and must create, by their deeds here, their heaven or hell hereafter.

Religion is not shipwrecked in the downfall of ecclesiasticism.

On the contrary, it will rise up fairer, purer, more true to God and nature, and more in harmony with the demands of life and destiny, when the tree of idolatry is cut down, and God's imperishable Bible in creation is open for the study of his creatures, unrestricted by the anathemas of priests, and the mysticisms of man-made scriptures. And all the while, the elements of true revelation are growing brighter and brighter, and bringing conviction to the soul of man that there is a veritable science in religion, the indestructible foundations of which are laid in physical nature, the crowning glory of which will culminate in spiritual existence. And all the while, and all down the ages, come bright glimpses of higher worlds than earth; interventions of higher existences than earth's; spiritual sights, sounds, and revelations, which keep alive the glorious assurance that we are not left to our own blind vision to discover truth; not compelled to grope our way without stronger guidance than our own; in short, that the invisible things of the universe are but witnesses of a higher, grander, and more permanent universe of invisible realities within, and that when we are ready for it, and the ground is cleared of the superstitious rubbish that now encumbers it, we shall be inspired to outwork the FACTS of a spiritual science, in which all motions in the universe—past, present, and to come—shall be found acting together in purest harmony; in which the immutable principles of Divine science shall not leave us any longer at the mercy of every new form of *faith* or *fraud* that man can devise; in which God and angels, men and spirits, life here and hereafter, eternal progress and supreme good, ever triumphing over evil, shall all be unfolded, combined, and linked together in the imperishable FAITHS and eternal FACTS of the religion of the future.